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

MARSHALL P. ADAIR

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the first of September, 2011, and this is an interview with Marshall Porter Adair. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Okay, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

ADAIR: I was born in Bethesda, Maryland, on August 26, 1948.

Q: Let's talk about the Adair side of the family. What do you know about it - as back as far as you know?

ADAIR: Well first of all, my father was Charles W. Adair and he was a career Foreign Service officer. This oral interview program of yours was started after his time so unfortunately he didn't get interviewed. My father was born and grew up in Xenia, Ohio, a small mid-western town. He attended high school in Xenia, and then went to the University of Wisconsin. I don't remember exactly how he heard about the Foreign Service; but I believe his interest in it may have started as early as college. He was the

only one of his five brothers that left Ohio; going first to New York City and landing a job with the Chase Bank. I believe he was influenced in that decision by his mother who was originally from New Jersey. The bank sent him to Mexico and Panama and those experiences confirmed his interest in working overseas. When he returned to the United States, he took the Foreign Service exams. He failed the first time, but knew what he wanted; applied himself and passed the second time around. He then spent 35 years in the Foreign Service.

Q: Do you know farther back? How did the Adairs get to Ohio and what were they up to?

ADAIR: The Adair family, to the best of my knowledge, came from Scotland and Northern Ireland. An individual named John Adair emigrated from Ireland to the United States in the middle of the 19th century. He went to Pennsylvania, and got a job as a stone worker near Pittsburg. His son, Robert Duncan Adair, later moved west to Xenia, Ohio, which is between Columbus and Cincinnati. He set up a business, a furniture store, married the daughter of one of the prominent citizens of Xenia and settled in. The family, and the furniture store, continued in Xenia until the 1980's.

Q: And on your mother's side?

ADAIR: My mother's family history in this country goes back a lot further. Two Lee brothers emigrated from England to America in the early 1700's. One went to Virginia, and one to the Carolinas. My mother's family was on the Carolina side. My mother's grandmother grew up in North Carolina, and her father, Stephen Lee, was a Colonel in the Confederate Army. She married a farmer in Black Mountain, NC named John Alexander Porter, and they had three daughters and two sons. The oldest daughter married a man from New York who came down to look at land in North Carolina for a missionary society. My grandmother left Black Mountain, NC as a very young woman during World War I, and served as a nurse in France. When the war ended she followed her older sister to New York. She studied music in New York, and then met and married a banker from Missouri. My grandfather, Hugh D. Marshall had spent the war years in Washington DC working for the War Stamps administration and then for the Department of State. His family traced its roots back to Virginia and Scotland. My mother was born in Greenwich, Connecticut and grew up there.

Q: Any memories of the war; quote "the war"?

ADAIR: World War I?

Q: Hell no; "the" war.

ADAIR: Ahh, the Civil War.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Yes. There are lots of stories. We have a letter written from my great-great grandmother to my great-grandmother describing how her husband, Stephen Lee, was hiding in the hills behind the house and how worried she was that the Union troops would find him. She described how the Union army had freed the slaves and how disturbing that was for everyone there. Today, that letter and others like it are a little disturbing to her descendents. I think that Rosanna Patton Lee might have found it difficult to accept – or even imagine – that her great-great-great grandchildren would be such a mixture of European, Asian and African races. She described the behavior of the Union troops and how she eventually convinced the colonel, I think it was, to give her husband amnesty and allow him to return home. The war had been hard on them in other ways. Her husband had taken five of his sons to fight at Sharpsville/Antietam with his cousin, General Robert E. Lee, and had returned with only two of them.

Q: Oh yes. Well then, you were born in Bethesda.

ADAIR: I was born in Bethesda.

Q: How come?

ADAIR: Because my father was temporarily stationed with the Foreign Service in Washington, D.C. He had returned to the United States from Bombay, India, where he had spent the war years. During that time he had shared a house with an American Army major who, when the war ended, introduced him to his younger female cousin, Caroline Lee Marshall. They married, and I was born shortly before they were sent off to Brazil.

Q: Okay, it would probably be a good idea to run through your father's career in the Foreign Service.

ADAIR: He joined the Foreign Service in 1937. His first post was in Nogales, Mexico, right on the border. After that he returned to Washington and was assigned to Hangzhou, China. However, two days after receiving his assignment Pearl Harbor was bombed. The Department canceled his assignment – I think all the assignments to China were cancelled - and he was sent to Bombay, India. He spent all the war years in Bombay and then he came back, married my mother, and went to Princeton for a year under a Foreign Service program.

Q: Can you mention anything about his work in Bombay?

ADAIR: I don't know a lot.

Q: What was he up to?

ADAIR: He was in the consulate; and he was an economic officer. That was his specialty – I don't know if they were called "cones" then – because of his banking experience. He didn't tell me much specifically about what kind of work he did. He said he worked closely with the British colonial administration. He talked about his travels up to Kashmir

and places like that, and described the colonial life. He often remarked on the British approach to living overseas, and the importance that they placed on maintaining their own social customs and not "going native". He was impressed by the British, their organization and their discipline. He was impressed by the subcontinent, but I don't think he got very deeply involved in the Indian culture.

Q: Then he came back; you were born in Bethesda and he left for where?

ADAIR: After spending a year of graduate study at Princeton University, my father was assigned to the embassy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I was just a baby. One of my sisters was born there, and we left when I was two years old. I can remember scenes from the house, the dog that we had and a little bit of the beach but it's obviously pretty vague.

Q: Well, then where?

ADAIR: Then he came back to Washington for four years, during which time he was working on trade issues and in particular the GATT (The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). He was in the Economic Bureau; and I think he was the Director of the Office of Trade. I'm not sure exactly what it was called at that time. When that job ended, the Department wanted to assign him to the Philippines. He told me that was the first and the only time in his career that he asked the Department to reconsider an assignment. The reason was that he had spent all of his tours in tropical or subtropical places and he wanted a change. So they sent him to Brussels – perhaps they thought that was the worst weather they could find for him. By that time I had two sisters; we went to Brussels for three years. He was the economic counselor there.

Q: You must remember Brussels, don't you?

ADAIR: I do remember Brussels.

Q: So what was it like being a Foreign Service kid in Brussels?

ADAIR: When we arrived I was six years old. I don't remember having any objection to moving away or leaving friends at that point, and I had no idea what Brussels was. We traveled to Europe by ship as did most people at that time. It was the SS America. It was a beautiful and exciting place to be and to play on – but I got seasick, and then I got the mumps, on both sides. I can still remember clearly how miserable and inconsolable I was. By the time we actually arrived in Brussels I was better and very glad to be off the ship. Then, for the first time I had to adjust to a very different place. The landscape was very different because we were living in a city – in Washington we had been in the suburbs. There were no places to play or run around. We stayed in a little "pension" (inn). It was claustrophobic with only a very small and dark courtyard to play in. When I desperately tried to run around, climb the walls, etc I soon found out that most everything I was used to doing in the United States seemed to be forbidden there.

We finally moved to a house just outside of Brussels that had a big yard, a thatched roof and a terrifying, and exciting, boar's head mounted in the entrance hall. I went to the International School that was in a wonderful old house with walled-in gardens, extensive lawns and plenty of space to play and run around. I remember all that pretty clearly.

The society was very different. My sister, being younger, went to a Belgian school. I visited it fairly often and didn't like it at all.

Q: Was it- I mean, a lot of discipline, would you say?

ADAIR: Well it was a different kind of discipline. And the other thing was that my parents, because they had to go out so often, hired a woman to live in and to take care of us. I didn't particularly like her either. There seemed to be a different attitude toward kids there. She was stricter and not particularly friendly or sympathetic. And I didn't like the way she smelled. But we adjusted. She didn't stay that long. My parents eventually hired a Hungarian couple who came, with their son, and we got along better, a lot better with them. I remember playing in the backyard. I remember the hedgehogs. I remember learning French at home and at school. At that age it's easy to pick it up; and it was fun to be able to do something better than my parents. My mother used to take me into the city, to the Grand Place (the central square), to the bookstores and the flower stores. And I remember the "Manneken Pis", the statue just off the Grand Place of the small boy peeing into the fountain. That's all etched very vividly on my memory.

Q: Well then, this is up to the age of nine, I guess?

ADAIR: Yes, we returned when I was about eight and a half years old.

Q: And then where'd you go?

ADAIR: My father was assigned again to the Economic Bureau at the Department of State, and we lived in Arlington, Virginia for the next four years. My father was deputy assistant secretary, and still involved with building the architecture of the international economic system. I didn't know much about it at that time, and paid little attention to his work. All I knew was that he and my mother were often busy in the evenings at cocktail parties, dinners, etc. But that led him to another job in Europe, because one of the things that he had been working on was negotiations with the Europeans about expanding the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. It had been a primarily European organization, associated with the reconstruction and integration of European economies. Part of my father's job was to negotiate U.S. entry and to help make it a global organization. It became what is now the OECD (the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development).

Q: While you were in the States, was this between the ages nine and 12 or something like that?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: This would be 19-?

ADAIR: Well, it would have been about 1956 to 1960. We were back in the United States for the Kennedy/Nixon election campaign.

Q: As a kid were you much of a reader?

ADAIR: Yes. I loved to read.

Q: Did you find that being a Foreign Service kid in Washington was difficult? My kids found that they really didn't fit very well into the school system. Their friends were usually people who were also in the Foreign Service or foreign kids. Now did you find that or not?

ADAIR: Not at that age. When we came back I basically struggled to fit in. I didn't have a Foreign Service identity in my mind. When I had been in Brussels I was conscious of being American, and proud of being American. When we came back I went into third grade, in a temporary school that was under construction. I came in halfway through the year or so and I think everybody was in flux. By the time we all moved to Arlington's Jamestown Elementary School in fourth grade, I didn't feel that I was really any different from any of the others. I don't remember any of my classmates or friends being from Foreign Service families. They were all kids from around there.

Q: On the reading habits, do you recall early on what kind of books you were reading as a kid?

ADAIR: I loved to read the Hardy Boy mysteries, adventure stories about dogs and horses, and novels that involved magic – fantasy stuff.

Q: Oh, yes, "The Sword in the Stone;" that was a British one.

ADAIR: That was later; I read that one probably when I was in high school.

Q: Yes. Well then, did religion play much of a role in your family?

ADAIR: Yes. Both of my parents were very devout. We went to the Episcopal Church, which meant that when we were overseas we went to the Anglican churches - in Brussels, Paris and then later in Latin America. That was steeped in tradition and ritual. I got very used to it; it was just a part of life. I didn't particularly like going to church. I always found it uncomfortable, particularly in Belgium. My father wanted me to wear shorts, because it made you tougher, or something like that. I begged to be able to wear long pants, and was finally given my wish. The trousers I was given were wool and scratchy and made sitting in church a torture – but it had been my choice and I was stuck with it.

Q: I went to an Episcopalian prep school run by Episcopalian monks.

ADAIR: Where was that?

Q: It was called Kent in Connecticut, and let's say it turned me off. My wife is a devout Episcopalian but I sometimes will go to a midnight Christmas mass just to get her home on time.

Did politics intrude at all? I mean, in your experience growing up?

ADAIR: Well, the first time that I really became interested in politics was when Kennedy ran for election. That interest was partially due to friends of ours from Brussels who were very close to John Kennedy. Esther and Oliver Peterson had been stationed with the embassy there, and my parents had become pretty close friends with them. Their son, Lars, was my closest friend in Brussels. We came back and Mrs. Peterson took her son and me up to Congress. We went specifically to meet John Kennedy when he was still a congressman. I think he was out that day and we didn't actually get to meet him, but it was emblazoned in my mind. Then I began to listen, and became very impressed by him. I found myself supporting him in school discussions.

I remember getting involved in long lively debates on the school bus. During our last year in Arlington I had finished elementary school and started junior high school. My parents had sent me to a private school because they knew we would soon be transferred, and the local junior high school was having some problems. In addition the schools were just starting to be integrated and there was a great deal of controversy. My parents strongly supported integration, but were concerned about that initial disruption on top of the other problems the public school was having. At any rate it meant that I had some longer bus rides which became opportunities for discussion – particularly with one of my classmates. Her father was working for Nixon and they were quite conservative.

Q: Well then where did you go?

ADAIR: We went to Paris.

Q: Paris. How long were you in Paris?

ADAIR: We were in Paris for two years. My father was sent out as the deputy secretary general of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), which was the first American position in the OECD. We lived in Paris for two years; right near the OECD's headquarters at the Chateau de la Muette in the 16th arrondissement. I went to the American School for my first year there, which was eighth grade.

Q: How did you find the school?

ADAIR: The school was very good academically. It was also a real challenge to me socially because that's a big transition time for kids, for boys.

Q: You were what, about-?

ADAIR: I was 13.

Q: Thirteen, yes.

ADAIR: I was about 13; we were in France and we were foreigners in France. Social parameters were confusing, and there to be challenged. I wasn't brave enough to be a real juvenile delinquent, but I started getting into trouble and my studies suffered. My parents thought that wasn't so good and they learned of a British school in Switzerland that was designed specially to take care of boys that weren't getting along very well in their schools. We went out to see it, way up in the mountains. It was unbelievable. The program of hiking and skiing and all that stuff was just too much to pass up and I said sure, I'd go. So I went there for ninth grade and loved it.

Q: What was the name of the school?

ADAIR: The school was called Aiglon College and it was in Chesières-Villars. It was actually modeled on Gordonstoun in Scotland – which I believe was also a model for Outward Bound.

Q: Oh yes, with cold showers and that sort of thing?

ADAIR: That's right. We had to get up at the crack of dawn. There was a bell that rang to wake you up. Then the second bell that rang within five minutes, and you had to be outside in your shorts and running shoes for calisthenics and a run in the snow. Then you came back in and lined up outside the bathroom. They would send us, five or so at a time, into the showers. They were cold and you had to stay in until they told you to get out. It was a little rough, but it was fun.

Q: Yes, once you got used to it.

ADAIR: If you didn't die in the first few minutes, you got used to it pretty quickly! It wasn't just discipline and hard work. They gave us a lot of freedom – but it had to be earned. You earned ranks by your grades and how responsible they judged you to be. Once you got to a certain rank you could do just about anything you wanted. We could take off any time we didn't have classes; we could leave at noon on Saturday after classes and take our bicycles. We had to tell them where we were going, and the only prohibited destination was home! You could say, "I'm going to ride my bicycle to Geneva (about 8 hours away)", they'd say "Okay but you have to be back by chapel on Sunday night." That was pretty extraordinary.

Q: Well by this time how was your French?

ADAIR: I was comfortable in French. I mean, it wasn't fluent but I could get along and as a kid I had a fairly good accent.

Q: Did events, international events engage you at all?

ADAIR: I was very aware of the cultures where I was - Belgium and France – what people were concerned with and what I had to do to get along. When we were in Paris, I was aware of what was going on in Algeria because the OAS (Organisation de l'armée Secrete) was blowing up the fronts of buildings in Paris - when we were walking to the school bus. Also, the controversy over France's role in Algeria had some similarities to what was going on in the United States with regards to integration. Switzerland had another social character – but I observed that from the store owners rather than the Metro ticket takers and politicians.

Q: Well the Swiss have a reputation of being very orderly and expecting you to be orderly, too.

ADAIR: Yes. We got enough allowance to go out and get a candy bar, and we'd go regularly, but I always felt like the person who was selling us stuff didn't like us much. The ski instructors were strict. They were old, and had been on skis all their lives. They were really tough but they were nice and very helpful. And then, of course, when we'd go out on our expeditions we'd encounter different people all the time. We could be obnoxious and we would get into trouble, but never anything serious.

Q: Well then, you say you did that for a year in Switzerland.

ADAIR: Did it for a year and then my father was transferred again. He offered me the opportunity to stay there and I foolishly said I thought I should go back to the States for my high school education. I was still trying very hard to be American. So I left Switzerland and went back to a prep school in New Hampshire. My father knew he was being assigned overseas so I could not go to public high school. I thought that I'd picked one that was like the place that I had in Switzerland, but it wasn't anything of the sort. The mountains were tiny, and we had no freedom.

Q: What school was that?

ADAIR: It was Holderness School in Plymouth, New Hampshire. It was a good school, and it was very American - perhaps too American. I had come from a place up in the mountains in Switzerland where my classmates had been from all over the world: Britain, the United States, Canada, India, and Kuwait - from all different backgrounds, all different colors, and all different experiences. I arrived at this small school in New Hampshire where the boys were almost all from New England, mostly Massachusetts and New Hampshire. They were from fairly wealthy families but I found their perspectives narrow and cliquish. I didn't like it, and didn't fit in very well.

Q: Did some of the great events of the '60s or civil rights intrude at all there?

ADAIR: Well, of course I was there when Kennedy was assassinated. That was pretty significant. And then Johnson pursued his civil rights agenda and yes, that was a topic for some discussion. My closest friend at school there was from Warrenton, Virginia. I would go back sometimes with him to visit his father's farm, and there was a different attitude towards things there. It was more traditional, conservative Virginian, not racist, but more hostile towards the federal government.

Q: Earlier on you said that your parents were disturbed by the school situation. That was the period when Virginia schools were shutting down.

ADAIR: That's right. People were very emotional about it and sometimes very angry. That's why our discussions at school were, well - difficult.

Q: At Holderness did you find yourself particularly interested in any particular field of education?

ADAIR: I was interested in most things that touched on other parts of the world. I took French, and German, that I started when I was in Switzerland. I was interested in current events but I wasn't real interested in history, particularly not ancient history which was one of our required subjects. I did well in Mathematics. I was also interested in the religious studies and the chaplain there at the time was a good teacher. But it was a little difficult to be very intellectual there. Some of the teachers were supportive, and there were some individuals in the student body who were really smart and picked it up. However, most of the student body was more interested in sports than studies. There wasn't much opportunity to share with others in that regard.

Q: Well knowing the teen's voice, what about girls? Did you have a source to go to, dances or visits to other schools?

ADAIR: Not much at Holderness. We had occasional dances with a girl's school to the north, but it wasn't very interesting one way or the other. However, when I went home to Argentina and then to Panama the social life was great.

Q: Was your father in Argentina first? What was he doing there?

ADAIR: He was the deputy chief of mission in Argentina for one year, and then they made him Ambassador to Panama.

Q: Did you get any feel for the rather interesting political life in Argentina? Did your father bring back, or did you pick up any stories?

ADAIR: Well, it was not that long after Peron, so his legacy was the biggest thing on the political landscape. My father was certainly no admirer of Peron and thought that he had been very destructive for Argentina, but it was clear that his memory was still very popular with lots of people there. Some friends of mine who had both American and

Argentine parents and had lived there all their lives, impressed on me that there were two ways of seeing that. You might object to Peron for one reason, and still recognize that he was important in other ways. You also had to be careful. I had one friend who had lost his leg to a misunderstanding on this count. He had been fooling around on a train with some of his friends and they had been talking in English. They had mentioned the name of Peron or the term "Peronista", and some people on the train got angry with him, thinking he was insulting Juan Peron. They threw him off the train which ran over his leg and cut it off.

Q: Eww.

ADAIR: Well, that was pretty horrific for me. But I loved Argentina. It was huge. I wasn't so interested in Buenos Aires, but I was really impressed by the pampas and the mountains out in the west.

Q: I would imagine Panama was not as exciting for you..

ADAIR: On the contrary, Panama's an incredible country. First of all, the place itself is quite extraordinary. It doesn't look very big but it's very beautiful. The mountains are beautiful; the forests then were impenetrable, and some of them still are. The beaches are fabulous and the diving and the swimming were very accessible. I was very fortunate in that my father had been stationed in Panama before he joined the Foreign Service. Chase Manhattan Bank had sent him down there, and he had made friends who still remembered him. So when he got down there his friends welcomed him and their kids welcomed me. They were very friendly, very warm, and very generous. As a teenager I took full advantage of it and I had a wonderful time, both with them and with Americans that I met there. I didn't spend very much time in the Canal Zone though. My sisters went to school at Balboa High School in the Canal Zone and they were much more connected with the American community there.

Q: Did you get any feel for this, you know, there'd been many stories about the "Zonians" or whatever they called themselves - being sort of ultra American and distanced from the Panamanians. Did you get any feel for that?

ADAIR: Yes, and I didn't like it. It was similar to what I saw on the military bases in France and Germany. It was a very insular kind of life. They were essentially recreating what they thought was America in those places, but it wasn't America because it was a military base or isolated community. There were some people in the Zone, in the Canal Zone, who could speak fluent Spanish, whose mothers were Panamanian. In many respects they knew Panama better than I did, but they weren't the majority. There is something in American culture or society that makes us band together in enclaves when we get overseas. I don't know what it is - maybe it's true of all societies.

Q: Yes. You mentioned the British/colonial attitude in India. You don't have to be colonial but still, it can be very difficult for a foreigner to break in to host societies. I've been in societies where it's really difficult to be accepted. I was in Italy my last post and

you know when you're only there for a short time you're not going to get very far. We established good relations - business relations and superficial - but you're not likely to be invited home to dinner on Sundays. It's a different world.

Well then, you graduated from Holderness when?

ADAIR: I graduated from Holderness in 1966.

Q: And then what? Did were you pointed towards anything?

ADAIR: Well I wanted to go to Harvard or Stanford because I wanted to go to a big university. I wanted to be in or near a big city, but I didn't get into either Harvard or Stanford. I was accepted to Middlebury College in Vermont, so I went to Middlebury and I loved it; I absolutely loved it.

Q: Off to the woods again, hey?

ADAIR: Well yes, but it was a completely different world from Holderness because it was co-ed. It was 10 times larger than the student body at Holderness. It was a college, so people were actually interested in the things that they were studying - and it was beautiful.

Q: So you were there from '66 to '70?

ADAIR: Right.

Q: How did Vietnam, the '60s and all impact there?

ADAIR: A lot. I had actually been a very strong supporter of the Vietnam War in its initial stages. We were in Argentina when Johnson really began getting involved in it. During the presidential campaign he was challenged by Barry Goldwater whose campaign actually advocated the use of nuclear weapons there. I thought communism was bad and dangerous, but I was very much against the Goldwater approach. To my mind Johnson was saying all the right things about being careful but firm. Well, I got to Middlebury and I began to see and read a whole different perspective on Vietnam. In my first two years, I signed up for ROTC. I was going to go that route. But the more I read, the more I talked with people the more I came to believe that what we were doing in Vietnam was not the right thing. I also began to see the U.S. Government in a very different light and to think that perhaps we were the problem. I mean, I switched completely. I went to the other extreme and so I got more and more involved in the anti-war part, and in the whole counterculture phenomenon: music, experimentation with drugs, alternative life styles. Along with many others I began to say, "Well, wait a minute; maybe what we've been told all our lives is just as narrow as some of the other things and opinions I've experienced in my life." So it was time to take a look at some of these other things and I spent four years basically doing that. By the end of those four years I was convinced that what we were doing in Vietnam was really wrong; I thought it

was right for Johnson to resign. I wanted to see Eugene McCarthy elected president. I was ambivalent about Hubert Humphrey but I was really distressed that Richard Nixon had come back on the scene and was gaining popularity. Of course, he was elected.

Q: What sort of courses were you taking?

ADAIR: I majored in political science – at least partially because that major allowed me to take more electives than any other major that I could see. All the other ones - English, History, Psychology, etc. had so many required courses that there wasn't room for branching out. I don't think Middlebury had the strongest political science department at the time. There were some very good teachers though.

Q: Well political science has gone through a real transformation over time. What was political science like when you were taking it?

ADAIR: Well, they were beginning to experiment with quantitative "scientific" analysis, as was the Economics Department, all of which I thought was very sterile. There was some focus on political philosophy - reading Machiavelli and Aristotle – which had some interest for me. But I didn't like political theory either so I pushed into the other parts of the department, into areas like trying to look at different cultures….

Q: Comparative government.

ADAIR: Comparative government and constitutional law. I also took geography courses that introduced another way of looking at and analyzing human civilization. I did some language study, and took a number of different literature courses - American and Russian – as well as poetry. I branched out as much as I could. I found some things that I never thought I'd be interested in, like constitutional law which was one of the best courses I took at Middlebury.

Q: Well, you had already been exposed to Europe and Latin America. As you moved ahead, did you find yourself keeping an eye on developments in those areas?

ADAIR: Well absolutely in Latin American because my father was still down there. He was in Panama for my first three years in college and then he moved to Uruguay for my senior year. In Panama you still had controversy over the issue of U.S. control over the canal and the Canal Zone. There was also a very controversial election in which Arnulfo Arias got elected and then was thrown out by General Omar Torrijos. We witnessed the end of democracy for, as it turned out, a long period of time there.

Then, in Montevideo, Uruguay, there was not a collapse but a significant fraying of democracy with the development of the Tupamaros terrorist movement and then the government's efforts to crack down and contain it. There were all kinds of issues. Economics was a big part of it, and I began to get interested in that connection – though I found the economics courses in college to be incredibly boring and irrelevant. What was

going on in Latin America, and the difficulty of the U.S. position there, was fascinating to me.

Q: What were you getting from your father regarding the canal?

ADAIR: He was the one that initiated the negotiations to turn the canal over to the Panamanians. It was a very difficult position to take for an American official, I think, because…

Q: We won it, it's ours.

ADAIR: Yes. There was a very strong body of opinion in the United States - well most people in the United States didn't even know that the issue existed - but many of those that did believed just what you said. Most of the American military that I came into contact with subscribed to that attitude. It was particularly neuralgic for the people in the Canal Zone. For many of them, their whole existence was defined by the United States owing the Canal Zone. They had a position of privilege and a very comfortable life which they otherwise would not have, either in the United States or in Panama. They did not have to compete. They were there by virtue of birth or whatever. So, initiating debate that led to a decision to return the canal to Panama was very difficult. Then the coup, Torrijos and the military government coming to power put any negotiations on hold for awhile. Later, during the Carter Administration, it was restarted and completed. But my father was the one that actually started the process.

Q: Well, for your father down in Uruguay, that must have been pretty scary with the Tupamaros.

ADAIR: It was. It was very scary.

Q: Did you go down to visit?

ADAIR: I went down and spent six weeks once, and after that I was not allowed to go back.

Q: What did you do during those six weeks?

ADAIR: I researched and wrote a paper on Uruguay. Middlebury had a new month-long program in the winter where we could take a special course or do independent study. I chose to do independent study and proposed a paper on what Uruguay was going through. It was accepted. I went down and interviewed lots of people: Uruguayans, people in the embassy and people in the international community. I had a very interesting time and wrote a paper describing the origins and development of the crisis. I concluded that it was economic in origin. A socio-psychological problem had developed as a result of frustration with economic stagnation which in turn had resulted from a long history of economic and political traditions. I was fascinated by the Tupamaro movement and by the objection of young people to the way things had been handled. I was invited to a party

by Ambassador Carlos Salamanca, the UN representative in Montevideo. He and his wife introduced me to Uruguayans of my age. It was a very interesting group of people and we had a good time. At one point one of them asked me if I wasn't afraid of being kidnapped, because the danger was already pretty high then. I replied that I wasn't really worried about it; and mused that it might be sort of interesting to be kidnapped. He smiled and said he thought that might be arranged. That conversation got back to my father, and he told me I would not be returning after that visit. He basically said, "Look, your sisters are not a problem. They can come back because the Tupamaros are not targeting women and children. However, there is no taboo on young American men." Then he added, "What's more, I don't think you'll listen to me." He was right on all counts; and so I didn't go back.

Q: Well the Tupamaros, I mean, in a way they sort of fed into the movement that you were subscribing to in the States on a different level.

ADAIR: Yes, except they had chosen to murder people, and that was not part of what I was involved with in the U.S. There were people like the "Weathermen" who argued that violence was necessary to get attention. Most of us did not approve of that or go that far.

Q: Yes, there was the bombing of a lab in Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin, I think.

ADAIR: And then the real violence came when the National Guard opened fire on students at Kent State. It wasn't the Weathermen that killed the people; it was the authorities.

Q: I had a rather different perspective on that. I happened to be consul general in Saigon at the time. I'd been in the National Guard, the Massachusetts National Guard, and all I could think was that anybody in their right mind would not throw stones at a bunch of people carrying rifles - particularly not the National Guard. I knew the National Guard; these were not the brightest bulbs on the Christmas tree. I know this was probably a rather different viewpoint, but I just wasn't very sympathetic.

At Middlebury, was the faculty sort of in line with the students or did you find division between the faculty and the students on some political events?

ADAIR: That's a good question. The faculty at Middlebury was very academic. They were intellectually sympathetic to all the issues that were being raised. They were willing to talk about them. They were pretty impressive in the sense that they didn't get emotional and they were willing to talk a lot. But that in itself was frustrating because they were trying very hard to recognize both sides. We on the other hand were getting increasingly emotional as we saw this thing escalating. No matter how much objection was raised within the United States it didn't seem to have the slightest impact on what we were actually doing over there. It did have an impact on the political environment in the United States though.

Q: Sure, they elected Nixon.

ADAIR: Yes, it got rid of Johnson but eventually elected Nixon. Most of us I think saw the election of Nixon as a tragedy. From our perspective as students at the time, things were not changing, we believed the United States was doing great harm, and we were frustrated with those who advocated more debate - like our faculty who were doing just what they were supposed to do.

Q: Well did you find that you were putting your study of political science to work in a practical way? It seems that most of the 20 year old men and women who were exercising their leadership muscles by leading radical movements ended up as stockbrokers or businessmen. This was one of the few times in American academic life where the kids were able to sort of organize themselves. And were you observing that?

ADAIR: Yes, I was observing it; and I was a part of it. One of the most attractive parts of it was the hippie peace movement. It encompassed the idea that everything that had gone before was wrong and that's why we were in the trouble that we were in.

Q: Don't trust anybody over 30.

ADAIR: Well that was part of it. We thought that perhaps we had to change the whole philosophical basis of society: love one another and abhor violence. We thought that maybe if we all headed in that direction we would fix this – and that all the people arguing pragmatism were part of the problem. So we tried that. It looked good. The rock concerts and events like that encouraged us all to believe that these mass movements could be effective. Of course it didn't quite work.

Q: Well, was anybody saying, "Okay, this is fine but we really are up against a rather nasty crew. These are communists - not the communists internally - but the communist countries." The Soviets and their ilk were really not very nice people and their form of government was as repressive as any the world has known, practically. Did that intrude?

ADAIR: Yes, my father was saying that. It was a very reasonable point, even then. However, many of us began to push that aside with the argument that, "Yes, we recognize there are some horrible people there and they have done horrible things. However, there must be another dimension to all of this and we're probably not being told about it - just as we weren't being told about the corruption of the South Vietnamese regime. Maybe we're part of the problem there as well. Maybe the Soviets really feel so threatened that they think they have to go this way. Maybe there is an element to a revolution that requires getting out of the hole you are in before you can do something better. Maybe there is going to be terrible suffering and you have to get beyond that. Maybe we could be more effective by helping them get beyond that than building a wall in front of them and saying, you know, as long as you're the way you are we're not going to have anything to do with you." In that regard, we saw the "Establishment", our "Establishment" as part of the problem and that justified radicalizing ourselves.

Q: There are strong elements of logic to that.

How stood you military-wise?

ADAIR: I was in the ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) for my first two years at Middlebury. I intended to stick with that, because the draft seemed to require that I do my time in the military. However, at the end of the first two years, we had to have a physical exam to continue in the program. I passed the exam, but was then disqualified because I had had a stomach ulcer when I was 12 years old. Then shortly after that the lottery came out and I got a very high number.

I had enjoyed the ROTC training, but also did not think I would be a very good soldier. I had also been exposed to military people in my diplomatic life. While they included many friends of ours that I admired, I often didn't like the way they thought. Their perspectives on international relations and even on life in general struck me as narrow and limited. So, I decided that if I did not have to be a part of the military, I would not choose to be. I also thought that we should be very, very careful about what we put into the military and how we used it.

Q: So you're going to graduate in 1970?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: What were you pointed towards?

ADAIR: I wasn't really pointed towards anything. I knew that I wanted to be involved with something international. I wanted to do something that would allow me to continue to live in other places around the world, in other cultures, and work on relations between nations. I thought that I didn't want to do that working for the United States Government - because I thought that the United States Government was part of the problem, not part of the solution. I also didn't want to join the Foreign Service, because as a kid in the Foreign Service I didn't really admire the Foreign Service professionals. I liked them as people but I didn't like the way they thought either. I thought a lot of the people that I met in the Foreign Service, even though they were interested in other cultures and learning them, tended to be dominated by a kind of a conventional wisdom. They were extremely careful about what they said, about the opinions that they expressed, even among themselves - perhaps particularly among themselves. There was some justification for that because, first, you have to be careful as an American official what you say and how people might take it. Second, as an American official with other American officials you have to be careful because you may depend on them for your career success. And of course the 1950s and the Joe McCarthy period weren't that far away.

Q: No.

ADAIR: So, for lots of reasons I didn't want to be a part of the U.S. Government. I also decided that I should not stay in Vermont. I loved Vermont but thought by staying there I was copping out, because it was just too pretty and too easy. I thought I needed to go to a

place that I didn't like, that I wasn't comfortable with, just for my own personal growth. So, I went to New York City. I didn't like New York at all, but that's where things were happening. My ideal was eventually to work with the United Nations - for the international community rather than for a single nation or for myself. However, I didn't see any possibility of getting a job at the United Nations, so I toured New York. I talked to banks and I tried to get a job with Pan American Airways. That was a time where one could wander around, go to an office, knock on the door and ask to speak with personnel. With a little luck, sometimes they would say yes. But I didn't find anything. I decided I didn't want to work for a bank. I spent some time with one bank that was doing business in Latin America. They were consumed with worry about Allende in Chile and I didn't think that was something to be really worried about.

I finally did go down to the United Nations. They allowed me in to the Office of Personnel. I didn't have a graduate degree so I couldn't apply for the professional positions. The woman with whom I talked told me there were no clerical jobs available at the time. So, I said how about just talking with me about jobs that you might have available in the future? She asked me to wait a minute, and then lo and behold remembered that the person that she worked with, right next to her, for the last several years had resigned the day before. His responsibility was to process all of the security investigations for American citizens working at the United Nations. I got that job and spent the next year at the United Nations.

Q: And did you tie in to the FBI or similar organization?

ADAIR: Yes. The investigations were organized and processed by the Civil Service Commission, but the FBI did some of the investigations. I didn't talk directly with the FBI. The Civil Service Commission had a central manager who came and saw me on a regular basis at the UN.

Q: Did you talk to the people that who were going to be investigated.

ADAIR: No. I did no substantive investigative work. I was essentially a clerk.

Q: So you were off to one side.

ADAIR: Yes. But it was very interesting because I learned a lot about the investigation process and the people who did those investigations.

Q: What were we concerned about?

ADAIR: The United States Government was basically concerned to prevent Americans from working at the United Nations who might damage the reputation or interests of the United States, either directly or by their behavior. That meant ensuring that those with criminal records, psychotic disturbances or those who were hostile to the United States were not hired by the United Nations

Q: So, part of the concern was just that these people be stable and-

ADAIR: Right. I think that was the main part of it.

Q: How did you find the piece of the personnel apparatus where you were?

ADAIR: I was very impressed with the people who worked in my office. They were dedicated, capable and hard-working. It was run by a Chinese-American woman who was both smart and wise. She had a very broad perspective and she was an excellent manager. Her deputy was a French woman, and the secretary who initially interviewed me was another Chinese-American.

Q: So, I mean, you weren't finding yourself up against any sort of a cog bureaucracy?

ADAIR: Well the United Nations as a whole was very bureaucratic and very political. Our office director reported to a Tunisian, who also seemed to be very competent. He in turn reported to a Russian named Dneprovsky, who had been in the KGB.

Q: Well one would sort of assume that anybody with a Soviet sponsorship would have to be responsible in some way to the KGB.

ADAIR: I assume that anybody that was going to be sent to the United Nations from the Soviet Union had to be taking orders of some kind. They weren't going to let people go to the United States, live there and be exposed without some protection and without some advantage.

Q: So what were you doing? I mean, how did you operate?

ADAIR: Like I said, I was more of a clerk than anything else. I gathered the information, I put it together, and I typed it up. I was also a liaison to both the Civil Service Commission in New York and in Washington, so I talked regularly with several contacts. The Civil Service investigator came to see me, I'd say at least once a week. I also had a contact at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations with whom I talked probably several times a week. I would call her for a whole variety of reasons, and she was plugged into a different part of the apparatus. She communicated with the State Department, the Civil Service commission and the FBI.

Q: Were you looking for another job yourself?

ADAIR: Well, in a sense I was. I was really happy to be at the United Nations because it fit with my idealistic perception of where I thought I should be. However, I learned pretty quickly that there really wasn't a future there. The only way one could get to a position of influence in the United Nations was to have the backing of a national government. Secondly, I found that a lot of those people who got to the United Nations with the backing of their governments didn't go because they believed in the United Nations or because they wanted to serve the international community. They went because they

wanted to be in New York and they wanted to live a good life. That was disappointing. It was then that I began to look more closely at the Foreign Service. I knew that the Foreign Service personnel system was substantially different, based more on merit than on politics. It also had enforced flow-through, meaning that if one was not regularly promoted one had to leave, which reduces the kind of stasis that one finds at the United Nations and in the U.S. Civil Service.

Q: So, while you were there did you take the Foreign Service exam?

ADAIR: I had taken the exams the year before, after graduating from college. I passed the written exams but failed the orals because I had spent the previous three or four months up in the woods in Vermont, hadn't read any newspapers or magazines or anything and was not at all up-to-date on current affairs. But they invited me to try it again and so halfway through my time at the UN I tried again and passed.

Q: I take it you spent a good bit of your time reading "The New York Times."

ADAIR: Well I did, because the job that I had was not too demanding intellectually. Every chance I had, I would get a "New York Times" or something else and go off into a corner somewhere to read.

Q: How'd you find the written exam?

ADAIR: It was very similar to the exams that they were giving for the law boards, the LSATs. I thought it was good coverage of general knowledge at the time. It was difficult as well. Each time I took it, I thought I failed.

Q: How about the oral exam? Do you recall any of the questions or the composition of the board?

ADAIR: Oh yes. I remember them all pretty well. The first time I took it, there was just a panel of three people. They sat at a table like this, and put me at a little smaller table about 10 feet away with a single chair and a pitcher of water. There were three of them, and they just asked me questions. I did fine on the general questions, the background questions and the historical questions. I didn't do well on the current events questions. They asked me one question about problems in relations between the United States and Japan, and I went into a long song and dance about the Kuril Islands. They just stared at me and asked, "Why the Kuril Islands? That's a problem between Russia and Japan?" I replied not really, since we created it at Yalta and went on for awhile longer. At the end they asked was there anything else, to which I replied I supposed there were some economic problems. They were bemused. They failed me, but recommended that I try again. They also made a point of saying that recommendation was an exception to their general rule of allowing only one try at the oral examination.

After I passed the written exams the second time, a friend offered to help me prepare for the orals. He name was Carlos Salamanca. He was a retired Bolivian diplomat working

for UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in New York at that time – the same man who had hosted the party in Montevideo for me several years earlier. He was a marvelous, very wise character who had had an extraordinary career of his own. He sat down with me one day and said "Tell me about the exams." I told him that I was taking the exam for the "Political Cone", and he said, "Ah ha, good, tell me about Aristotle's politics. I said no, they didn't ask stuff like that, so he asked me to give him an example. I gave him an example, and he asked me what I answered. I said I told them I didn't know the answer. He looked at me without blinking and said with solemn seriousness, "You don't deserve to be a diplomat!" He waited a minute for that to sink in and then continued, "You never say you don't know the answer to a question! If you can't think of anything at least ask them to repeat the question. It will give you time and sometimes they'll give it away. If you still can't think of the answer, talk about something else!"

That did alter my attitude somewhat. When I went to the oral exam the next time, the process has changed. They had established something vaguely similar to what exists today with a whole day of exercises, and then a panel interview at the end. This time they just had four chairs in the room, with me and the three of them sitting around. They gave me little bio sheets on the individuals, and I noticed that one of them was a woman; it was Melissa Wells, who you probably know. I thought, "Oh, she's going to be the most difficult." She was. I can't remember what it was, but she asked me a question I definitely could not answer, so I followed Carlos' advice. I asked her to repeat the question, which she did – word for word. I hadn't a clue so I started talking about something else and they let me. I went on and on and I must have talked for, you know, five or seven minutes or so. When I finally stopped she looked at me and said, "That was very interesting, but you didn't answer the question. Why didn't you answer the question?" Well, I was committed then, so I went into some other song and dance. Finally, they stopped me and said that was enough. They went out, consulted, came back and said, "Congratulations, you passed." When I got up to leave, I almost fell down because I'd been sitting there rigidly with my legs crossed. My leg had gone to sleep and I hadn't known it. I barely salvaged my dignity, but then it didn't matter.

About a month later Melissa called me up and said, "We've learned that we're not going to be taking anymore political officers for the next year. We don't have any more slots. How would you like to come in as an economic officer?" I said I didn't know anything about economics, but she said, "Yes you do. You talked quite a lot about economics in your interview." I replied that was in a political context, and that I had avoided economics in college. She explained that the Foreign Service work was not the same, and then basically talked me in to it. I'm very glad that I agreed, because I found the economics cone was much more practical, much more action oriented and I had lots more contacts than most of my political-cone colleagues.

Q: So you came in when?

ADAIR: May, 1972.

Q: Did they ask questions about the UN?

ADAIR: Yes, I think they did.

Q: So what was your initial officer course, class A-100 course like?

ADAIR: We had about 20 people. It lasted the whole summer, and gave us a general orientation to the State Department and diplomatic work. One experience particularly stands out in my memory. We went out to Front Royal or somewhere and did these game-playing exercises. One was a disarmament exercise. They divided us up into opposing teams with five or six people on a team. Each team represented a country. The ultimate goal was to achieve disarmament without one's country being destroyed. The game is set up to be dangerous. The risk is so high that virtually all the teams rapidly become paralyzed and nothing happens – except for our team. I and one other person in our group argued that we should take it really seriously. We argued that the biggest problem was no one was willing to be honest about this stuff, so we should just take the initiative, start disarming and show them. The process involved sending somebody off to meet with the other group and tell them how many missiles we would remove. The meetings were inconclusive because nobody believed anybody else. At any time one team could declare war on the other. If one side had more missiles it would win. If the number were the same, both would lose. We eventually took all of ours off the table and they still wouldn't believe us. So, we offered to let them come in and see. The moderators had not told us we could do that, but we said, hey we're running this show. So we invited them in; they looked, went back and attacked us. We lost - obviously. It was an interesting lesson for us (like Nixon eventually winning the election). Most of the people in the class thought we were idiots, but one of the instructors said, "Well, wait a minute. Nobody's ever done that." It's probably a good thing no one ever did it for real!

Q: Well then, while you were with the basic officers course were you pointed towards any particular area that you wanted to go to or not?

ADAIR: No. I had heard my father talk about his experience with the assignment process, and I had this idea that they would ask us for our general preferences. Then they would pick a place, perhaps matching our preferences and perhaps not. So I had thought for a long time about where I wanted to go and I three places in mind in different parts of the world: one was Poland, one was Tanzania and one was Peru. Then we were told a list of available assignments would come out soon. There were rumors about what was on the list, and everybody was joking that someone would be sent to Fort-Lamy, Chad. Most were horrified by this idea, but that was exactly the kind of place that I wanted to go to because I'd never been to Africa. I got called into the office of the director of the junior officer course the night before the list came out. He and his deputy sat there behind the desk, smiled at me and then asked, "How would you like to go to Paris?" I replied, "No, thanks, I've already been to Paris; I've lived in Paris before." They were very surprised. Then they explained they wanted me to think about it because the embassy needed somebody right away and I was the only person in the class that had what they needed: I was an economics officer and I already spoke French. I said alright, I'll think about it. So I left, walked out the door and started walking down the hall. I can still picture the

hallway perfectly; it went straight for a few feet and then turned right. When I got to the corner I thought, "Wait a minute. They want to send me to Paris to live and work there for two years. What am I thinking?" I turned right around, went back and I said I'll go. Everybody else in the class wondered how in the world I got that assignment. Several people were really envious.

Q: Well how did you find the courses at the FSI (Foreign Service Institute)?

ADAIR: The consular course was very good. They taught us the law, the processes and the things that we needed to look out for. The exercises like that one I described were really pretty good, and they had a very good presentation on "cross-cultural understanding." I really don't remember much about the rest of it.

Q: This is the period, you were taking the course when?

ADAIR: In the summer of 1972.

Q: Vietnam was a major issue.

ADAIR: Oh yes. Interestingly, there was no post in Vietnam on the list presented to us. If there had been somebody would have had to go. In fact there was a time before us when everybody went.

Q: So you're off to Paris. What was your job?

ADAIR: I was to be a "rotational" officer. They desperately needed a rotational officer in Paris? That didn't make any sense. However, the person I was replacing was an economic officer. He had been working in the commercial section and his job had been to organize the Paris Air Show. That's what they told me I was going to be doing. Well, the Paris Air Show was only every other year and it wasn't going on the year I arrived. When I arrived they did put me in the commercial section first. I didn't see why in the world the United States Government needed to be helping American businesses overseas. American businesses were the wealthiest and the most powerful in the world. They had the most resources and they could do their own work. One of the first things I had to do was to call French companies who were behind in their payments. I was supposed to get in touch with them, inform them that they owed money and ask when payment could be expected. I was mortified and thought it was the worst possible assignment I could have. I was also completely unprepared for reaction. I got on the phone, explained who I was, etc and – then they were so nice! They were terribly sorry; they would check into it right away; and some even called me back to report when they paid. They were businesspeople; they wanted contacts in government. I had not understood that.

Then the embassy hosted a trade exhibit for American companies selling equipment for moving things around. The embassy had a whole building in Paris where the Department of Commerce organized trade shows for American companies on a regular basis. One of my jobs was to call up and invite people. Actually, I called to make an appointment and

then went and delivered the invitation in person. I went to one company, and the Director looked at me and asked if I would be at the exhibit. I said yes, I'm going to be there. He said okay, he would come. He showed up with his wife and his secretary and they were so much fun. His wife started driving some of these machines around the floor and whooping it up. Then he invited me out to his estate in the country and he said he was going to invite his secretary out as well because he wanted me to get to know her, etc. I thought that sounded great. As turned out I didn't go because someone else came to Paris who I had to host; so I had to call up and cancel. To this day I regret missing that "opportunity," though perhaps it was good that I did miss it. But again, I was surprised because I had a lot more contact with people outside of the embassy who were actually doing things and influencing things than did many of my colleagues.

Q: Yes. Well this is just one of the interesting things. You had an economic job, and you had real contact with movers and shakers – rather that the political class.

ADAIR: Right. And I saw that the political class was pretty heavily influenced by these others – they needed each other.

Q: What was going on in France at the time?

ADAIR: Well, I arrived in 1972. Four years had passed since the riots of 1968 that had led to the resignation of President Charles de Gaulle. The French had gone through a period of instability that had really scared a lot of people. By the time I got to Paris they were recouping and the conservative inclination had re-emerged. President Pompidou was just an incredible expression of that. And I remember watching and listening to his speeches on television and being appalled by the patronizing tone. However, France was doing pretty well. Their aerospace industry was growing rapidly - the Airbus and everything – and Americans were very upset because the industry was getting government subsidies. We were constantly arguing about free market versus state supported companies. We believed they were trying to protect their agricultural sector by restricting imports from the U.S. on health and contamination grounds. The French government was also subsidizing the computer industry – trying to stimulate their computer industry in the face of IBM. When I arrived our ambassador was Arthur (Dick) Watson who had come from IBM. Jacques Chirac was the minister of agriculture and he seemed to be encouraging the big demonstrations where dairy farmers were pouring their milk out onto the streets. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was the finance minister. The embassy's economic minister, Chris Petrow, used to Giscard d'Estaing all the time and he really didn't like doing it. Petrow spoke fluent French but he found it every difficult to communicate with Giscard because he was so arrogant and snobbish. Then, of course, the Paris Peace Talks for Vietnam and the secret meetings with the Chinese were taking place at that time as well.

Q: How did you feel about Vietnam from the perspective being in France?

ADAIR: I still felt very, very strongly that what we were doing there was wrong. I'd already decided at that time that if they had popped up that list and said you, you and you

are going to Vietnam and I was one of the ones that they picked I would just say no and resign.

I didn't see anything in Paris that changed my mind about that. I met refugees, if you want to call them that, from Southeast Asia - wealthy people who had fled to Paris. They were very attractive people, and they were very well educated people; but they were not the kind of people that I would have liked to have running my country.

Halfway through my tour the Department asked for volunteers to go to Vietnam for just six months, to help with the drawdown. One person from the embassy went. He thought it was a fantastic opportunity to go for a limited period of time and see what was going on. He loved his tour. I didn't even consider it.

Q: Did the air show take place while you were there?

ADAIR: No, it didn't. I'm pretty sure it took place after I left. At any rate, by that time I was no longer in the commercial section.

Q: Where did you move?

ADAIR: I went from the commercial section to the general economic policy section, which dealt with trade policy, which I was just describing. While I was there I was made the acting civil aviation attaché for a period of time. That was an extraordinarily lucky and unusual thing. The position had been filled by a person from the civil aviation board who had to leave due to illness. The job had been empty for six months and they needed somebody desperately. My boss at the time, Steve Bosworth, recommended that I be given the portfolio. I had no clue as to what I was supposed to do. I didn't know how the State Department worked; I didn't know how the embassy worked; I didn't know how anything worked. But it was great experience. I got out of the embassy; I met lots of people and got exposed to things I never would have been exposed to otherwise.

Q: What was the situation, Airbuses being subsidized both by the British and the French?

ADAIR: Yes. Well, the big one then was not Airbus; the big one then was the supersonic airliner – the Concorde.

Q: Oh yes.

ADAIR: The French and British had just finished it and they were applying for landing rights in the United States. Those landing rights were facing opposition on the grounds that it was too noisy. The French believed that the U.S. Government was going to prevent the Concorde from landing with a fabricated concern about noise, but that what we were really afraid about was the Concorde would give the Europeans an insurmountable advantage. That was certainly a part of it. There was a genuine concern with noise but I don't think many complained about the noise once it started flying.

Q: Looking at it from your perspective, were we subsidizing Boeing and other companies?

ADAIR: Yes, but in more subtle ways, I think: with tax policy, government support for negotiations with other countries, military purchases, etc. It was a whole variety of things. There was no question that those industries got and still get a lot of government support.

Q: Well the Concorde never really threatened us, did it?

ADAIR: Well American industry's view was it was not an economically viable option. It was a small niche and it wouldn't make a profit. American industry was concerned, however, that support from the French and British governments could make that calculation very different, so they had an interest in preventing it from being a success. Looking back, it functioned well the whole time that it existed, apart from that one tragedy in Paris. The people that did fly on it thought it was great, though a bit cramped - but only a few could afford to do it. It would be nice to be able to get across the Atlantic in four hours or whatever it was that it took. I don't know what the health implications were.

Q: While you were there, had the "frankenfood" situation become noticeable, the idea of special crops and all that?

ADAIR: As I recall, that was just beginning. I believe the French were concerned at the very least about importing things that they didn't understand. It was not on the level that we have now. However, there was a lot of criticism of American grain and other things for how it was treated and what kind of pesticides were used. I can't remember now to what degree there was genetic manipulation of it then. But we had cases then, as I think we had later in China, where whole shipments were stopped because they failed to meet various standards.

Q: Was there a strong element of anti-Americanism in France at the time?

ADAIR: Well there was some but not as much as I expected. President Nixon made his first trip to Europe at that time. I believe he was the first one to bring a whole fleet of vehicles to travel around in, bullet-proof car, etc. I was absolutely horrified by the spectacle that he and his entourage made when they came. I thought the French would be too. Some of them were, but many people in France were actually impressed. They were impressed by the flair; they were impressed by the show of power; they were impressed by the organization and didn't seem to begrudge it at all. I was pretty surprised by that.

Q: I would have been too, yes.

ADAIR: The other thing that was going on then was the first oil crisis, when OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) embargoed Europe and the United States for their support of Israel. The United States, as you'll recall, had a crisis at the

pump and Nixon imposed gasoline rationing. Everybody tightened their belts, turned off their lights and tried to be careful. It was a national movement that was also happening all over Europe - except in France. The French did it completely differently. They said, "We are not going to be blackmailed; we are not going to change our way of life one bit." They left all the lights in Paris on, all the street lights, and the Place de la Concorde, just outside my office window was lit up like a jewel the whole time that we were there. We thought they were crazy. W thought they were absolutely nuts, and that this is just a show of bravado that was going to cost them. Well, it didn't cost them. First of all, they very quickly mended their fences with the oil producers - much faster than we did. Secondly, their nuclear reactor program was within months of coming online. They knew that within six months to a year more than 25 percent of all their energy needs would be supplied by their own reactors. They had that to back them up so they did just fine.

Q: How important were the "intellectuals"? I mean, the chattering class who one always thinks of when you think of the French and the political movements and all that. They were a very powerful group, the commentary. Were they attacking us?

ADAIR: Actually it may have been the opposite at that time. Some intellectuals were arguing that the United States model was one they had to take seriously, even though part of their prescription was be more nationalistic. And I'm trying to remember the author, the economist author-

Q: Yes, it was the American challenge; was it "Le Défi Américain" or something like that?

ADAIR: That's right. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber.

Q: Yes, well somebody else always has "the answer." We've gone through the Japanese having "the answer," now the Chinese have "the answer." You were there when we opened relations with China, weren't you?

ADAIR: Well I was in the Foreign Service when we set up the U.S. Interests Office in Beijing, but I was not yet involved with China.

Q: Did you have much contact with the French government officials dealing with the economy?

ADAIR: Some, but not much. I made one or two demarches on specific issues but not on economic policy per se. I was a very junior member the embassy and only had oblique contact with officials. I didn't get to know any of them and really get a feel for how they thought.

Q: Well you left there when?

ADAIR: I left in June, I think, of 1974.

Q: Did you have much social life there?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: Were you married, by the way?

ADAIR: No, I was single. Paris was a wonderful place to be. I had a French girlfriend and a few French friends but most of my friends were ex-patriots, third-country nationals, businesspeople. I intentionally didn't spend much social time with other Americans in the embassy. A lot of the people in the embassy spent most of their time with other people in the embassy.

Q: Well one of the impressions one has in the Foreign Service is that service in Paris is really not much fun for a good number of the people assigned there. It's a big embassy, it's rather rank conscious and you're not treated very well. How did you feel?

ADAIR: Well, I think there is some truth to that. I was a junior officer, and at a big post like that junior officers tend to be less integrated into diplomatic work. One of the issues that bothered many of us was that we weren't on the Diplomatic List.

Q: Oh really?

ADAIR: The U.S. Embassy at that time had almost 100 Americans on the Diplomatic List. We were told by the embassy's administrative officials that we weren't on the diplomatic list because the French had asked the embassy to keep the size down. The reason given was that was the only way the French could keep the number of Soviets down. We were a little skeptical about that explanation. I was told by at least one French official that he had never heard about that reason. The administrative section also argued that we didn't really need to be on the Diplomatic List. That was specious at best, and incorrect for me. I had a case once where I had to make a demarche to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about landing rights for a very powerful American charter airline company. They had not received an answer to their application and were due to fly in three or four days. For some reason the French seemed to be delaying permission.

The embassy received a cable instructing us to make a demarche. I called up, made the appointment and then went to the Foreign Ministry. It was my first time, so one of the more senior people in the economic section accompanied me. It was Larry Raicht, you probably knew him. We arrived and were ushered into this official's office. It was magnificent, with wonderful high ceilings, huge windows and balconies – the works. He welcomed us very courteously, then sat down behind his desk and took a book out of his drawer. It was a copy of the Diplomatic List. He opened it and said, "I see Mr. Raicht here, but not Mr. Adair. Why?"

Part of me was mortified - and part of me felt vindicated. Larry leaned in and began to explain. The official listened a bit, than said, OK, he just wanted to make the point – which I assumed was don't stray too far from the rules – and asked me to go ahead and

make my presentation. I made the case; he listened and then said he would call and it would be taken care of. The next day, Saturday, I happened to be the embassy duty officer and I received a call from the CEO of the airlines in question, who had not yet received a copy of the report that we sent to the Department. The stress in his voice was fairly high. He was saying he had sent the Deputy Secretary a cable and needed to know right away…. I stopped him, explained we had spoken to the Ministry the day before, and recounted what the official had said. The relief in his voice was palpable – and by the way the flight was approved and landed.

That was done. I recounted the incident to the administrative section and to the embassy leadership – and it had absolutely no effect on their policy. No one was added to the Diplomatic List. It did though strengthen out voice within the embassy a little.

Q: Well it may have given you a little more clout.

ADAIR: Right. Then, I had to spend six months in the consular section. In principle that was required for all of us. I'm glad I did it. It was an interesting experience. After that I knew I didn't want to do that kind work though. It was a much higher level of personal stress than the work that I had been doing. I was on the visa line for eight to nine hours a day, and many of the people that I interviewed were desperate. We processed thousands of visas a day. Most of the French applicants got them automatically, so we were mostly seeing people that were third country nationals or young French women who wanted to go be au pairs. The latter was illegal at the time. Now it's fine but then it was illegal. We were only interviewing the tough cases. We didn't have any of the bulletproof glass and all that stuff then so we were just standing behind the counter and these people would come up and they'd beg and plead, and it just broke your heart. Some of them were very dignified and some of them I thought would have been great people to go to the United States but we had to apply the U.S. immigration law, and more often than not were not allowed to give them that option.

We had one case where 50 Gypsies showed up. They asked for visas to attend an international conference of gypsies in the United States somewhere, and they were going to go with their families and their caravans and essentially everything they owned. The first question we asked was the standard, "How are you going to support yourselves in the United States?" "Easy," they replied, and pulled out bags of gold and plumped them on the counter. We turned them all down because they could not demonstrate that they had an established residence anywhere to which they would return. Months later we got word from the consulate in Montreal, I think it was, that they'd showed up there and tried again. They were turned down there as well – but my guess is they eventually crossed over. The border was not very tight at that time.

Q: Yes. Well then, you left there when?

ADAIR: I left in 1974.

Q: Then where?

ADAIR: I went to Lubumbashi, Zaire.

Q: Was this a request or did you want to go to Africa?

ADAIR: It was not a request, but I did want to go to Africa. Halfway through my tour in Paris I had actually been given the opportunity to break my assignment and go to Benin. The man who had been the Department spokesperson had just been made ambassador to Benin and he was looking for an economic officer. I loved Paris, but at the time I was feeling pretty down about working at the embassy, so I seriously considered the request. I was at the embassy late one evening and I finally decided, "I'm going to do it." I picked up the phone, put the call through and the line was busy. As I hung up the phone, all of a sudden I had this horrible feeling. What was the matter? I swiveled around in my chair, and looked out the window. I had an office that was in the front of the building right above the ambassador's office. I looked out through the trees, and the lights had just gone on, lighting up the Place de la Concorde. It was gorgeous, and I asked, "I'm going to give all this up to go to Benin?" I realized I didn't want to do that. So I put the call through again. This time it went right through and I said no thanks.

About a year later, maybe two months before I was supposed to leave Paris, I got a letter from personnel.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Not a telegram, a letter, saying, "Dear Marshall, I have recommended you for the post of economic commercial officer in Lubumbashi, Zaire. I hope that the board will look favorably on this because I think it would be good for your career. Sincerely, Ed Stumpf, Career Counselor. I had never heard from this person before, and never heard from him again. Letters took about two weeks to reach Paris from the Department then, so by then the board had probably already acted. I looked at the letter and thought I had never heard of Lubumbashi, Zaire. I thought it was probably in Africa so immediately went downstairs to the library. We had this great library at the embassy in Paris under high ceilings and huge table. I took out an atlas, put it in the middle of the table and opened it to Africa. There was Lubumbashi, not just in Africa but right in the middle of the continent, absolutely smack in the middle of it. It was the old Elizabethville of the Belgian Congo. Now, I knew what that was. I told myself this was just too good to pass up.

Q: Okay. So you're off to Lubumbashi; 1974?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: You were there how long?

ADAIR: Two years.

Q: What were your friends telling you? Good idea, bad idea? What was sort of the core of your reputation?

ADAIR: Well my friends from Paris, the people I worked for in embassy's economic section, called me up from Washington and said, "We just heard about your assignment and we think we can help you out because we've got a job for you back here." They were in Economic Bureau's premier office, the "Office of Fuels and Energy". The energy crisis was still front and center. My friends said they believed they could have my assignment to Lubumbashi broken and redirected to Fuels and Energy. I replied that I actually wanted to go to Lubumbashi. They thought I was crazy, but if that was what I wanted……. so I went. I had a month's home leave in the U.S., and then about six weeks with various kinds of training. It was primarily commercially related, and didn't teach me anything about Africa. I didn't receive any area studies for Africa or Zaire. I had to do that on my own.

Q: Well what were you hearing about Zaire at that time? What was going on?

ADAIR: I read about Mobutu, I read about the economy, and the copper. I was going to the place that produced all the copper that produced almost all of the revenue for the government. I heard about some of the problems they were experiencing but I really didn't know much. I tried to read some of the history but it was more difficult then to research that kind of stuff than it is now. It was more difficult to find stuff written about Zaire than it is now; and there was no Wikipedia.

Q: Had the book "The Congo Telegrams" come out?

ADAIR: I don't recall that.

Q: This is about our involvement during the Kennedy period there and-

ADAIR: You mean Lumumba and Tshombe?

Q: Yes.

Who was the ambassador when you were there?

ADAIR: When I arrived the ambassador was Deane Hinton, who was a really, really good Foreign Service officer. He had a reputation for being really tough. He was gruff but he certainly wasn't mean.

Q: Did the Simba rebellion take place at that time – in Elizabethville or Stanleyville – when Michael Hoyt was taken hostage?

ADAIR: No, the Simba rebellion took place ten years earlier, in Eastern Zaire and Stanleyville. Michael Hoyt was Consul in Stanleyville and he and his staff were taken

hostage and held for almost four months, I think. They were eventually freed by U.S. supported Belgian paratroopers.

When I was in Zaire we didn't have anything like that kind of danger or violence. That was behind us and the invasions from Angola had not yet taken place. There wasn't any really serious violence other than the "rumble in the jungle", which was the Cassius Clay/George Foreman fight. There was a lot of crime in Kinshasa and there was always a feeling of precariousness, because the economy was deteriorating steadily. The military weren't getting paid regularly, and they would often set up roadblocks and pressure people for donations. They were often drunk or stoned so you never really knew what was going to happen. I think Kinshasa was more uncomfortable that Lubumbashi, and it became more so after Ambassador Hinton was declared "persona non grata" and expelled. He had been the first American ambassador to speak frankly and critically to Mobutu. I think that Hinton concluded fairly early on that Mobutu was a big part of the problem, and consequently Mobutu did not trust him, and wanted him gone.

Q: Was there talk there about the role of the CIA? It was considered that Mobutu was in the CIA's pocket or something like that.

ADAIR: Well he did have a close connection.

Q: Larry Devlin or something.

ADAIR: Yes, he was sort of "discovered" by Larry Devlin who had been the senior CIA official in Kinshasa in the 1960's. At least, Larry Devlin told us that he had discovered him. Larry was no longer working at the embassy, but he was in Kinshasa as a private citizen. He was a very interesting guy, really smart and he had clearly been through some exciting and difficult times.

Q: What the copper side? You were going to be the economic officer, right?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: So did you get a chance to go through Belgium and talk with people there?

ADAIR: Yes, I asked to go through Belgium. Before I did that though I had a course at the Department of Commerce on export promotion and they sent me out west to visit copper mines, copper companies. I went out to Utah and visited the Kennecott operation out there, a big, open pit mine. Then I went down to Tucson and visited an underground mine. That was a particularly interesting experience – because it was a Stone Age operation compared to what I later saw in Shaba Province.

Q: What was the situation copper-wise in the world at that point?

ADAIR: I think the copper prices were going down. In fact there was a serious drop while I was there.

Q: Well what did you find when you got there? Were the mining operations really better equipped?

ADAIR: The mines in Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kolwezi were much more advanced than anything I saw in the U.S. They had an underground mine in Kolwezi that looked like something out of a James Bond movie. The underground mine that I visited in Arizona was one where you got into a little cart on rails, and meandered slowly down through narrow low-ceilinged tunnels lit only occasionally by small wattage lamps. We drove into the Kolwezi mine in a bus! The tunnel had huge, 30 foot high ceilings and it spiraled down as far as you could see. At each level other large tunnels would branch off sort of like a gargantuan underground parking lot. They weren't using little trains and cars, but enormous trucks with wheels as big as this room. They would just drive straight in and get the stuff and drive out. It was a whole different ballgame.

Q: What was Lubumbashi like when you got there?

ADAIR: Well it was a very cute little city. It was beautifully laid out with tree lined streets. The trees were jacarandas, which had beautiful purple flowers in the spring. The houses were attractive and the climate was pleasant. The foreign population was a mixture of Belgians, French, British, Greeks, Americans and some Japanese. The Zairians were both local and from other areas of Zaire. The Europeans worked in all different sectors. The biggest, of course, was the mining company, which was called GECAMINES. Elizabethville and most of Katanga Province had originally been sort of a "company town" or province if you will. The Gécamines residential area was a little like an American military base – very neat and orderly. Europeans were in most aspects of the economy. By the time I arrived the Zairians had been given senior posts in all of the government industries, the railroads and post office and stuff like that; and the government had just required all European business owners to have a Zairian partner.

It was clear that the city had once been a beautiful place, but it was deteriorating - you could actually see it deteriorating. The roads were getting potholes in them; the trees that lined the streets were being cut down for firewood; the roofs weren't being fixed; the buildings were becoming shabby and there was often nothing on the shelves in the stores. Before I arrived Lubumbashi had been surrounded by farms. The farms were mostly European-owned, and produced most of the food for the city. What they did not produce was produced farther out in the African villages and was brought into the city on buses and trucks. By the time I got there most of those farms had shut down, and their owners had left. The farms weren't producing anything; and the people further out were no longer producing for the cities either, because the roads weren't being kept up and the villages were less accessible. Everything was going downhill, if not collapsing.

The day I first arrived at the airport in Lubumbashi there were only two planes at the airport: the Air Zaire plane that I flew in on and a huge DC-10 that was painted black - no markings, no anything. I asked the consul, Ed Marks, what it was. He smiled and he said that was the weekly food plane from Rhodesia. I had recently spent a year at the UN. I

knew about UDI (Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence), and the resulting international embargo on trade with Rhodesia that was taken quite seriously in the U.S. and Europe. Here I was in Africa, in a country that was a vocal opponent of colonialism and apartheid – and its economic heartland was getting virtually all of its food from Rhodesia - including flour which Katanga used to export.

Q: The consul was Ed Marks?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: What were the major concerns of the consulate there?

ADAIR: The primary interest was the engine of the Zairian economy. The copper mines in Shaba province produced the wealth that allowed Zaire to function as a nation. We needed to watch that, keep track of how healthy it was, evaluate its prospects and their implications for the country as a whole. We also were charged with looking for opportunities for American business - to sell equipment, buy copper and so on.

There was also interest in the state of Angola next door. There was a civil war going on there, and Cuba had sent doctors and some troops. The United States was very concerned about the danger of Angola becoming a client state of the Soviet Union.

Q: Well how was the copper market and Zaire's response to it? They were, what, transporting it out by truck or train?

ADAIR: When I arrived in Zaire, getting Zaire's copper to market was becoming increasingly difficult. The roads were essentially impassable. The copper had always gone by train. There were basically two routes that were being used at the time: one was out through Zaire to Kinshasa and the port of Matadi. That route was partially by railroad and partially by barge along the Zaire (Congo) river. The other one was through Mozambique. There was a route through South Africa that was functioning, but it was very, very long. The original route had been the Benguela Railroad that went through Angola. It was the shortest and most direct. However, it had been cut by the civil war so it wasn't functioning. Eventually the one to Mozambique stopped functioning because of instability and war there, so all they had was the long one through South Africa and the one out to Matadi.

Q: I speak with ignorance; how do you extract the copper?

ADAIR: The ore was mined, and concentrate was produced at the mines. The concentrate was then moved to smelters at Likasi and Lubumbashi. I can't remember if they actually had one in Kolwezi. The smelters would copper ingots, which were then exported.

Q: So this would be done before it left the African continent?

ADAIR: Yes. There was also a relatively new Japanese operation that was a little bit further away from us but still in Shaba Province. They shipped their concentrate directly to Japan.
They had all kinds of problems and I think they eventually shut down some time after I left.

Q: Yes, I was wondering, how was corruption?

ADAIR: Everything was corrupt. Corruption was a plague, but the process of bribery and everything that went with it also seemed to be the only thing that made the country functional. Everybody had to do it. We – at the Consulate and the Embassy - did it less than anybody else. It was our policy not to; and we had a certain amount of status as Americans that allowed us to keep our distance from it. We would explain to those who demanded it that we simply were not allowed to do it; and many would sort of shrug their shoulders and accept it. But it also meant that we didn't get certain things that you could only get by paying people off. If you wanted to make a telephone call it was impossible. The phone system was effectively dysfunctional without bribery. Those who knew the right people and were willing to pay a price could pick up the phone and call Brussels or Washington just like that. They would call a contact in the company, make the call, and then their contact would come by a few days later to the house or the office and call on them. The same thing went for plane tickets. You could buy your plane ticket; and you could make your reservation but you never knew if you were actually going to get on the plane. When you arrived at the airport any number of things could happen: the plane wasn't coming after all, or they didn't have seats, or they would just stall, waiting for the bribe. We would sometimes wait until that last minute and then they would finally let us on.

Q: Well how did you find the local officials?

ADAIR: Not very impressive, certainly not very interesting to talk to. I didn't have that much dealing with the actual government officials, the political officials. The head of the copper company, Gécamines, was a Zairian. He was very impressive. He was smart, and had studied at the Colorado School of Mines. He was also very pleasant and courteous. He would see the Consul, he would even see me, and we could have reasonable conversations with him. However, he was also very, very careful. He had to be, given the political climate at the time. He could not be friendly, but he knew what he was talking about and he could make sense. He also knew more than what he would or could say and you could tell that.

The man who was head of the national railroad out there was also very competent. I got to know him because I did a study of the different rail transportation routes. I used to go and talk with him fairly often. He really knew his stuff, and he was very pragmatic.

But it was difficult to get to know them beyond their professional responsibilities. They had to be very careful because at that time the relations between Zaire and U.S. were going downhill - particularly after Ambassador Hinton got PNG'd. Zairians could get in

trouble if they saw too much of us. Many of them also had very limited education. Most of them hadn't been to college; if they had it was only for a few years. Some of them hadn't had even a high school education. They were not very aware of what the rest of the world was like. They were desperately concerned with building their own career, their own security, and providing for their families. Our presence there did not have much positive to offer many of them. So, for a variety of reasons, it was not the most interesting group of people in the world to interact with.

Q: How'd you find the embassy? Did the hand of the embassy rest heavily on your shoulders?

ADAIR: No, not at all. We were very far away. It was difficult to get to Lubumbashi by plane, and that was really the only way to get there. We didn't have cable (telegrams) communication. We had a telex that sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. The only thing that we could really count on was a two-way radio, and sometimes even that didn't work. So sometimes we had no communication at all. The embassy knew that so they pretty much left us to our own devices – and that was great.

Q: Did you find the missionaries a good source of information?

ADAIR: I did not. One person in the consulate had contacts with the missionaries. He talked with them, got some stories and information; but I never found it very useful. Part of the reason was that my primary responsibility was learning about the economy. The missionaries that I met were not focused on that and seemed to have little interest or understanding of it.

The rest of the ex-patriot community was another story. They were often better informed than we were. They were much better plugged in, with friends or professionals colleagues working in the government and other places of influence. One of the reasons was that many of them spoke the local language, or languages, fluently.

One of our weaknesses was that we didn't have the local language. We could all speak French, that wasn't a problem, but a lot of the Zairians didn't speak French at all. The officials all spoke some but even my French was better than many of theirs. Most of them spoke local languages like Kiswahili or Lingala. We had no training in those languages and that made a big difference.

We were in Lubumbashi because it was the economic center and engine of Zaire, and we were to report on it. But we were also there to report on the general conditions, the politics and the region's overall impact on the way Zaire was going. Most of the ordinary African people in Shaba province didn't speak either English or French, or only in the most limited way. Nobody at the consulate, at least none of the Americans at the consulate, had any understanding of Kiswahili at all. There was no Kiswahili language training provided by the Foreign Service Institute for people going to Lubumbashi. I believe it was provided for some people going to places like Tanzania and Kenya. This

was one the places where I served during my career where the absence of that training was obvious, and I think it inhibited our ability to get very deep into what was going on.

Q: Kiswahili was not really a local language. It was sort of the travelers' language, wasn't it?

ADAIR: Perhaps originally it was limited to travelers – a long, long time ago. I think it is more than that now.

Q: How about this large war that was going on in Angola; how did that affect where you were?

ADAIR: It had cut off the Benguela railroad which had been the main source of exports and imports so that complicated life in our area. However, most of the actual observation and analysis of what was happening in Angola took place from the embassy in Kinshasa rather than the consulate in Lubumbashi. It was being watched because there were these two opposing factions, one was the socialist government that was supported by the Cubans and the Russians and one was Jonas Savimbi, who was supported by the West. Savimbi was considered to be this quite pragmatic person who understood how free societies and free markets worked. At that time everybody seemed to think that Savimbi was a great guy. Afterwards I think that changed. But we didn't get many people coming in from that area.

We did have some contact with Zambia, because we could drive down to the border, drive across and go down to Lusaka and places like that. It was a whole different world because Zambia had not yet begun to really go downhill. We would drive through the jungle on a track that had two concrete strips, one for each set of tires, with huge holes. Sometimes we weren't sure we could get through at all. On the Zairian side of the border there were a few little huts and rarely anybody around. The road ended completely and it was necessary to drive down into this big ditch and up the other side to get to the actual border. There was a bar across the road and it was locked, so it was necessary to get out of the car and go banging on doors to find somebody to open the gate. Once found, we would have to negotiate with them until they understood they weren't going to get a bribe. Finally they'd open it, and we would drive across, up onto pavement with perfect manicured sides and even lines down the middle of the road. At the Zambian customs office they were all dressed in uniforms, very polite and efficient. It was a totally different world. So we would go down, stay in nice little hotels and stock up on supplies. The expatriates in Lubumbashi kept saying, "Just wait. The same thing is going to happen in Zambia that's happening here, and it's going to be worse." Eventually it did get worse, but never worse than in Zaire.

Q: What was the process; what was happening?

ADAIR: Things were just falling apart. Everything was falling apart. The physical stuff was falling apart. The roads were deteriorating because they weren't being maintained; and they weren't being maintained because they didn't have the organization or the

resources. Well, they did have resources; but they didn't allocate them to infrastructure. The commercial and business environment was deteriorating because there was nothing to depend on. People didn't know when things were going to change. A decree would come from Kinshasa that they had to do this or change that. It was just a constant process that interfered with the ability to do business and to lead life in any kind of an orderly fashion. The businesses went to extraordinary lengths to get the money they had earned out of Zaire. The foreign exchange controls were severe, and the Zairian currency was vastly inflated in value - worth very little outside the country. They had some very imaginative techniques to get their money out. Since investing in Zaire was becoming more and more risky both expatriates and Zairians were trying to establish their security outside the country.

Q: After this exposure did you feel that you wanted to be an African hand or not?

ADAIR: No. It was a wonderful adventure. I loved going out into the country. I met people who had grown up there and knew the bush. We'd go out and go camping in all kinds of interesting places. That was very exciting. It could be a pretty good life if you got yourself oriented properly to it, and that was a fascinating intellectual challenge. However, I didn't think that Africa had what I was looking for. I wasn't really sure what that was, but I thought I was looking for some kind of wisdom about life and human organization. What I was seeing in Africa was the antithesis of that.

Q: How were things when you left?

ADAIR: Well, things were deteriorating the whole time I was there. Each time we thought it couldn't possibly get worse, but it did. After I left it got substantially worse when they had the first invasion from Angola by former Katanga soldiers. That was a real shock because it was quite brutal. For the last forty years or so it has continued to get worse.

Q: Well where were you going to go next?

ADAIR: I actually had asked for permission to take a special year's leave without pay. I had an opportunity to go out to California and study with a Tibetan lama - something different. I got the permission, and made a special trip from Lubumbashi all the way out to San Francisco to go and meet this guy. The day before I got there the lama went into retreat and wouldn't see anybody. I figured well that was a pretty clear message, so I went back to Washington and I enrolled in FSI's six months economic course.

Q: Okay, today is the 25th of October, 2011, with Marshall Adair, and we've had a sort of hiatus. We're now in 1976 and you're off to take economic training. How did you find the FSI economic course?

ADAIR: The economics course was really good. They packed what they said was a four year bachelor's degree in economics into six months. It was very intensive. Each subject took about three weeks, and they overlapped. So we had a final exam every two weeks

from July through December. The teachers were outstanding. Some were on the permanent faculty at FSI – others were brought in from major universities around the country to teach their specialties. Perhaps the best thing about it was there was no time to get bored by academic economics. I thought then that academic economics was the most boring subject that anybody had ever conceived. I hated it in college, but there wasn't time to get bored with it in six months. I even enjoyed the calculus, statistics and econometrics. They did a really good job.

Q: Well after you were finished with this and your later career, how useful was this?

ADAIR: It was useful as background. It was useful to know that all of that stuff that people in government, academia and the media refer to when they use academic terms actually had some substantive and accessible basis. It was also useful to understand the limitations of the academic economic discipline – particularly the "scientific" aspect of it. It was not so useful for direct application to the work we did, except for making it easier to talk with some people. In the entire time I was in the Foreign Service I only saw a few instances where an advanced exposure to academic economics really contributed directly to what we were doing. It was good background because it helped us to understand what the other people who were supposed to be economists were thinking. It was an important mindset for certain American officials in particular. I did try to apply it, because I went directly from the course into the economic bureau and we were engaged in international negotiations on commodities. In the 1970s, the United Nations had gotten involved through UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in a big way. Many of the developing countries were pushing hard to get individual agreements established on individual commodities that would help to reduce price instability, allow them to plan better and provide more regular income to their fragile economies.

Q: What was the American stance on this?

ADAIR: Skeptical may be the best way to describe it. Most U.S. government agencies dealing with the subject were strongly opposed to the whole idea - ideologically or because they reflected the predominant opinions of the American business community. There were some parts of the U.S. Government, such as the Department of State, that were trying to look at it objectively and determine whether any of it made sense in the context of broad U.S. interests. The business interests essentially carried the day, partially because they were powerful and influential – and partially because those of us looking for reasonable alternatives couldn't find them. I don't think the latter was due to any weakness in our economic background.

Q: While you were working in the economic bureau, did you run across Frances Wilson?

ADAIR: Yes. Frances Wilson was the executive director of the bureau. She was one of the best managers the Department has ever had.

Q: Her name has come up again and again and again, always with great, I won't say particular affection but just she'd stand good.

ADAIR: She was outstanding and made a very substantial contribution to the Department and to the nation during her tenure. Not everybody liked her, particularly people in the other bureaus and most particularly people in the central personnel system. They didn't like her because she was more effective at managing personnel to support the international interests of the United States of America than they were. And she did it from the periphery, not from the center.

Q: Where'd you go after the course?

ADAIR: I went into the Economic Bureau where Frances Wilson had a requirement: she said anybody that came into the bureau had to make a commitment of four years – not the Department's standard two or three years. She explained that we would not necessarily stay in one job for four years. Most people moved to another position after two. However, committing to four years gave her more flexibility within the bureau. She could move us within the bureau because she knew when people were going, and that way she had her own mini personnel system. She didn't have to depend on Personnel to get the people that she needed and she had a group of people that she knew. She knew their strengths and weaknesses; she knew all the jobs in the bureau as well as all of the economic jobs overseas and what was needed there. If there was a job that was particularly important in economic terms she would try to fill it with one of her experienced or knowledgeable economic people rather than rely on the personnel system with its vagaries and its competing "non-substantive" interests. Personnel could never tell her she had to do X, Y or Z, because she had more ability to fill her own positions than they did. She had more ability to help them than they had to help her.

Q: What was your first job?

ADAIR: I was placed in the Office of Tropical Products, which dealt with trade in sugar, coffee, cotton, bananas, and hard fibers, which was a mixture of products mostly from South Asia and Africa.

Q: Hemp or something.

ADAIR: Well, actually the biggest sector of what we referred to as "hard fibers" was jute. Jute is produced primarily in India and Bangladesh and is used to make a wide variety of products from burlap bags to rugs and even clothing. The "hard fibers" also included sisal which comes from a cactus like plant grown in Latin America and Africa and is primarily used to make twine; abaca, which comes from a banana-like plant and is used to make specialty ropes and paper; and coir, which comes from the husks of coconuts, is produced primarily in India and Sri Lanka and used to make mats and some rope. I was given the hard fibers and bananas; and I was made backup for sugar.

Q: Well you know, bananas sound like a rather benign fruit but bananas are big business, particularly between the United States and Europe, aren't they?

ADAIR: Well you've got to read this new book that came out called "Banana, the Fruit that changed the World." Now, bananas are sold all over the world because of the efforts of a few large companies who started their work in Central America. They "discovered" a fruit that had tremendous nutritional value and they figured out a way to organize the planting, shipment and the delivery so that they could make it an international commodity.

Q: I thought that they basically the changed the fruit to make it more shippable, too.

ADAIR: I don't think they changed the fruit so much, at least not then; they developed refrigeration techniques that allowed them to retard the ripening so that they could get it to market and with that technique they could control getting it to market fresh better than most other producers of other fruits. And they combined it with a marketing campaign and everything else that made it a phenomenon.

Q: Did you find yourself caught in a crossfire? I mean, this must have been a lively place - was it? The French had their monopolies, the Italians had their monopolies and so on - it wasn't a benign fruit.

ADAIR: It was lively. The American industry wanted no restrictions. They didn't want governments to interfere at all - except when those particular companies needed help. So the American industry was pretty much opposed to establishing any international agreements that would try to regulate supply and price. The Europeans on the other hand already had agreements with their producers.

Q: And we had it in Somalia and places like that.

ADAIR: I don't recall Somalia being a player in those discussions. Most of the African participants were along the west coast of Africa. The French and British were the primary European players. The agreements were EU agreements, so we were negotiating with the EU as a whole. The EU agreements were essentially supply agreements -- you provide us with a certain amount; we guarantee to buy a certain amount at a certain price. The Europeans were perfectly happy with that kind of arrangement, and the American companies staunchly opposed them. The Europeans didn't want their agreements messed with. The Americans would have preferred no agreements anywhere, but certainly didn't want any new ones. The developing countries wanted the whole system changed. That put Americans and Europeans on the same side versus the developing countries, but for different reasons. Both sides, both Americans and Europeans were also trying to maintain good relationships with these countries. The Europeans were willing to go a lot further than the Americans in terms of certain kinds of language because they already had controlled trade. The result was that we talked a lot, but nothing happened. I went to many meetings in Geneva for UNCTAD and Rome for FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and we just talked.

Q: What about the other commodities? Sugar's extremely political in the United States. Sugar is terribly subsidized, isn't it?

ADAIR: Well, it is strongly supported. It's been so long now that I don't know what system currently exists in the United States for sugar. Most large scale crops in the United States receive some kind of government support - one way or another. What we had in place in the '50s and the '60s in the United States was a system of import quotas that ensured imports of sugar did not threaten domestic producers. Only certain exporting countries were able to obtain quotas to ship to the United States, and they could not exceed those quotas. American producers of cane sugar and beet sugar were protected. By the early 1970s there was a brand new competitor in the sweetener world: the producers of "high fructose corn syrup" from corn. In the early '70s, the United States decided to replace the long-standing quota system with an international agreement that might address the needs of both producers and consumers of sugar. The negotiation of that agreement took place when I was in the Office of Tropical Products. It was the biggest agricultural commodity negotiation that the United States was involved in. It was carried on by the Director and Deputy Director of the office. I helped to back stop them.

Q: Who's the head of the office?

ADAIR: The head of the office was Tom O'Donnell. The deputy was Paul Pilkauskas. They both reported to Stephen Bosworth and to Jules Katz. Jules was the Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs. He had worked for the Department of State for many years as a Civil Service employee and was one of the first to work his way up to the top. He never served overseas, but he was one of the best people that I worked for in the Department.

Q: Were any of the other tropical fruits that you were dealing with particularly sensitive?

ADAIR: Coffee was the largest and most politically important after sugar. The Latin American producers in particular were both influential and important to us. It was a fascinating office. We were on the road all the time and the people that we dealt with in all of these negotiations were really interesting. I had an incredible amount of responsibility, because for two or three years I was essentially managed the positions and the delegations for my products. I had only been in the Foreign Service for four years, and was relatively junior so we usually had somebody else as the formal head of delegation. However, I was the one that prepared all of the substantive positions and put the delegations together.

Q: How were delegations chosen?

ADAIR: Usually the delegations were led by someone from the Department of State, because of the international character of the negotiations – and particularly for those being held under the auspices of the United Nations. The delegation would also include a more junior State Department officer who prepared all the position papers (thoroughly vetted with other U.S. government agencies). It would include representatives other agencies that were interested. Commerce and Treasury were usually there. Agriculture was active on sugar and cotton because there were U.S. producers, and on bananas,

because the U.S. banana companies were so big and powerful. For my delegations, we would call on someone at our missions in Geneva or Rome to head the delegation, while I would serve as deputy. For bananas, we had a wonderful person from the Department of Agriculture, Floyd Hedlund, who had been around forever and really knew the subject and the players.

Q: Did you get any feel for the term "banana republic," and organizations like the United Fruit Company and how they dealt with workers and governments in Central America?

ADAIR: Well, beginning in the late 19th century American companies involved in the production and trade of bananas played a significant role in economic and political development throughout Central America and some of South America. Both the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit Company developed extensive holdings and extensive influence, and their contributions were both positive and negative. They contributed significantly to the development of agricultural production, infrastructure and education in many countries – and they also acted to restrain development in those areas when they considered it contrary to their interests. They developed extraordinary power and influence over many governments in the region, and were able to influence the U.S. government to support them in many ways. The term "banana republic" was actually coined by O. Henry when he was hiding out in one of those countries from the U.S. law.

By the time I began working on these commodities, the influence of these corporations in the region had diminished from their heyday in the early and mid-20th century. Latin American was changing considerably, at least partially as a result of revolutionary movements inspired by hatred of what the American banana companies had done. Nicaragua was on its way to getting a Sandinista government. Even the extraordinarily long conflict in Colombia may have had its roots in the actions and influence of the banana companies.

Q: Did the geographic bureaus weigh in much?

ADAIR: They played almost no role in my commodities, and surprisingly little in the others. I think that we checked in with the India desk on jute and with the Philippine desk on abaca. However the Economic Bureau basically ran the show. That said, in retrospect, the geographic bureaus probably should have played more of a role.

Q: When did you leave there?

ADAIR: I almost left in the summer of 1979 because Tom O'Donnell, who had been the director of our office, had been assigned to Managua, Nicaragua as Deputy Chief of Mission. The Sandinistas had just taken over and the embassy was having trouble getting somebody to head the political section. Tom called me up and asked me to go down. By then I had been in the Economic Bureau for almost four years, and I was looking for a change. Tom talked with Frances Wilson and I believe with Deane Hinton who was the new Assistant Secretary. They agreed to let me go early, and I was told to be ready to go

in two weeks. I was ready – I even rented my house - but then the assignment fell through at the last minute (actually the day I was to travel to Managua) because the Latin American Bureau and Personnel had not coordinated.

I was disappointed, but that glitch made possible my accelerated transfer to Chinese language training. FSI and the Economic Bureau negotiated a deal where I would stay an extra six months in the Economic Bureau, and then get a year and a half of Chinese instead of two years. I started studying Chinese at FSI in Roslyn in January of 1980; and went out to Taiwan in the summer of that year.

Q: How did you find Chinese, the study of it?

ADAIR: My plan was to study Chinese, have one tour in a Chinese language place and then study Japanese for an assignment in Japan. However, Chinese was a lot more difficult than I anticipated. I never made it to Japanese language training.

Q: What was the particular problem? Was it the writing?

ADAIR: It was just totally different from any other language that I had been exposed to. I had studied four foreign languages by then, but they were all European languages. I expected it would be a similar experience, but it wasn't the same at all. First, Chinese is a tonal language which takes some getting used to. Second, the writing system is not based on an alphabet; it is not phonetic. You have to memorize thousands of characters. It was just completely different. Plus the culture and the environment were completely different.

Q: Well how'd you find Taiwan, the language school?

ADAIR: I thought it was very good. The teachers were good. They had their own system of doing things that was pretty effective. I was there during a period when the school did not have a professional principal. One of the senior members of the class served as acting principal while also being a student. The role of principal at a school like that, which has academic, professional and cross-cultural challenges, is very important. Not having a professional principal made things a little more confusing and a little more difficult. However, the teachers were so experienced that they managed to carry it through. That interim period only lasted one year. After that they got another full-time principal.

Q: Did you get much of a feel for Taiwan?

ADAIR: Yes and no. We were located in a little town up on a mountain, and our days were mostly spent cloistered at the school. There was a university located in the town so we got some exposure to students and life in a university town. We were able to go down into Taipei on the weekends, and sometimes in the evenings; and we took a few trips with the school to other parts of the island. I got a little more exposure to Taiwanese life, because I became close to and eventually married one of the teachers.

Q: Well then what was her background?

ADAIR: She was Taiwanese. She was the first Taiwanese teacher they'd ever had at school. All the others were people that had come over with Chiang Kai-shek from the mainland when the Nationalists lost the civil war.

Q: Well I think from her you must have had a feel about the Taiwanese attitude towards the mainland Chinese and all.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: How was it going at the time; we're talking about 1980?

ADAIR: By 1980 relations between the native Taiwanese and the mainlanders, or "people from outside the province' as they were called, was cordial. However, there were still bad feeling left over from when Chiang Kai-shek first arrived from the mainland. The new Nationalist rulers and their army were pretty brutal with the population of Taiwan. They took what they wanted – land, property, food, etc. They instituted reforms that were supposed to make things better for the general population, but much of that general population didn't see it that way. Most of the Taiwanese population really hated the new arrivals for a long time. They hated them more than they hated the Japanese who had taken over Taiwan at the end of the 19th century and ruled until the end of WWII.

Q: The Japanese rule of Taiwan was relatively benign, wasn't it?

ADAIR: Well not at the beginning. At the beginning it was pretty oppressive, but by the early 20th century the Japanese had figured out that just trying to suppress the local population wasn't going to work. They changed their perspective, and by about 1910 the Japanese had decided that Taiwan should be not just a colony, but actually part of Japan. So they were grooming the population to be Japanese citizens. The archipelago that stretched from northern Japan all the way to Taiwan would be the core of the Japanese state, and then the rest of their conquests would be ruled more like colonies. So from the early 20th century on the Japanese treated the population of Taiwan very well. Taiwanese were engaged in the government, and they had access to good education. Under the Qing Dynasty the population of Taiwan had been able to participate in the national exam system, but the Qing never paid much attention to Taiwan - it wasn't even a province until the very end of the 19th century - so most of the population only had limited access to education. By the late 1940s much of the population of Taiwan considered themselves to be Japanese. Chiang Kai-shek's arrival was viewed as a foreign occupation and it was pretty bad. By the early 1970s the economy was growing rapidly though, so people were focusing more on that than on other things. In the late 1980s a Taiwanese became president and the local population's political voice was growing. In the 1990s an indigenous Taiwanese political party was voted into power. The atmosphere has changed, but I'd say there's still probably a majority of people on the island of Taiwan that would prefer not to be a part of China.

Q: Was there a feeling of menace from mainland China?

ADAIR: Not so much when I was there. There certainly was before, and the United States had been Taiwan's principal security guarantor. A great many people in Taiwan were very disappointed – and worried – when the United States transferred its recognition of the Republic of China (Taiwan) as the official government of China to the Peoples Republic of China (Beijing). For some people on Taiwan, primarily those who came from the mainland, it was a betrayal. A lot of work from both sides (Taiwan and America) went into patching it up, and some progress had been made when I was there.

Q: Did you feel you were being hit by propaganda from the teachers?

ADAIR: Not really. The teachers at FSI in Arlington were more vocal in their political opinions than were those in Taiwan. In Taiwan, they certainly had their own perspective, and if you asked them they weren't shy about expressing it. But they were very professional. Sometimes their perspective seemed a little bit strained, sounded much like the pronouncements by the government, but not that much more than you get in this country.

Q: Were you yourself pointed towards any particular place?

ADAIR: I had an assignment to Hong Kong. I'd been given a choice before I left Washington of being the head of the economic section at AIT (American Institute in Taiwan) in Taiwan or being the deputy head of the economic section in Hong Kong and the head of the reporting unit that dealt with mainland China. I chose Hong Kong; both because I wanted to experience Hong Kong and because I thought I'd be dealing more with mainland China there than I would in Taiwan.

Q: So you went to Hong Kong.

ADAIR: After a year of study in Taiwan I went to Hong Kong in September. I returned to Taiwan in October to get married and then Ginger and I both settled into Hong Kong for three years.

Q: Well did you find your Chinese studies paid off or did you end up by speaking English mainly?

ADAIR: The official language in Hong Kong was English, and the language of most of the population was Cantonese. I had learned Mandarin Chinese. I actually used the Mandarin that I had learned quite a lot. There were many people in Hong Kong – people originally from the mainland that had fled to Hong Kong after the civil war and more recent arrivals who preferred to speak Mandarin rather than English. I also spoke it at home, because my wife didn't speak much English at the time. However, I didn't keep up my reading as much as I should have.

Q: Who was the consul general when you were there?

ADAIR: For most of the time that I was there the consul general was Burt Levin, who put in one of the most impressive performances I saw in the Foreign Service. That was a very tough time for Hong Kong. The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) made its push, and increased the pressure on Great Britain to negotiate a turnover of Hong Kong. The UK agreed to negotiate and concluded the agreement to return Hong Kong to China by 1997 while I was there. That caused a crisis of confidence in Hong Kong: anxiety as to what was going to happen, a financial crisis over the Hong Kong dollar and a massive effort to emigrate to the United States, Canada or Europe.

The United States could have just played a quiet, neutral kind of a role. We also could have speculated and been more alarmist. Many people in the United States were as skeptical as the population in Hong Kong about the prospects for freedom and prosperity in a Hong Kong under PRC rule. There was a great deal of doubt that the PRC could or would actually honor any agreement made with the United Kingdom – or that it had any intention whatsoever of allowing Hong Kong a degree of independence. In these circumstances Burt Levin arrived in Hong Kong, and immediately made it very clear to everyone that he believed what the British and the Chinese were doing was right. He told the doubters at the consulate general, "You guys are all wrong. The Chinese are perfectly capable of this. They have no intention whatsoever of spoiling what they've got here in Hong Kong and this is going to work." He repeated that to the media and to all others that would listen. He was very articulate, and his arguments were powerful.

Then he pulled everybody in the consulate together - it's a big consulate, bigger than most embassies in the world. He said this was what he believed, it was the policy of the U.S. government, and it was what we would say to the public and to the world. He told everyone in the consulate that we could and should question that policy within the consulate, and that we could write analyses and reports that the consulate would send back to Washington. However, no one was to question the policy outside of the consulate. Inside – anything goes – but outside we would exercise strict discipline. And he pulled it off.

He had very solid experience in Chinese affairs, and great political and cultural understanding. His Chinese was really good, and he developed extensive contacts with both Hong Kong and PRC Chinese. I think that he, the consulate and the United States really contributed to stability in that area and helped to make it easier for the UK and the PRC to negotiate an agreement which has worked so far.

Q: The British had the real responsibility - but we had to worry about our relations.

ADAIR: Well we had lots of interests. We had strategic interests, because of the harbor and the extent of our reliance on Hong Kong for transportation and communication in Asia. The strategic interests were not quite the same as they'd been during the Vietnam War, but we certainly wanted to continue to have access to Hong Kong for both military and commercial shipping. We had economic interests. There were many American companies in Hong Kong; and there was substantial trade between the United States and

Hong Kong, as well as trade between the United States and China that transited Hong Kong.

Q: Well you were what, number two in the economic section?

ADAIR: Well as it turned out I wasn't number two, because the then head of the economic section changed that before I arrived – another lesson for me in the fickleness of bureaucracy. However, I was still the head of the economic section's China reporting unit.

Q: So what was your responsibility?

ADAIR: My responsibility was to watch what was going on in China, and to analyze and report on trends in the Chinese economy.

Q: What was your impression of the Chinese economy at the time?

ADAIR: In 1981 changes were already taking place in Chinese economic policy and on the ground. However, we were not aware of many of the changes that were happening, and we did not understand how long the reform effort would last or how extensively it would impact China's economy and politics. The PRC leader at the time, Deng Xiaoping - and the PRC official government statements - had begun to articulate changes to China's economic system – allowing supply and demand to operate and giving more freedom to individuals to engage in economic activity. There was a huge amount of skepticism among "China watchers" that they were actually going to do it. I personally was really skeptical.

We had several Chinese working for us in the economic section who had been studying the Chinese economy for some time. One in particular, a man named David Wong, had been watching the Chinese economy for the American consulate since he fled to Hong Kong from Shanghai when the Nationalist government fell. He was probably the best analyst the U.S. government had of what was going on within the PRC economy; and I had the privilege of working with and learning from him. Other analysts and observers of the Chinese economy would come from other U.S. government agencies in Washington or from universities in the United States on a regular basis to talk with him, to get ideas about what was going on, and to bounce their ideas off of him. He demonstrated to me what a "tea leaf reader" actually was. He would read all of the volumes of material coming out of China, pick out obscure references or apparently mundane stuff, and say, "Look at this. This means……" and then he would explain things that the rest of us would have completely overlooked. We had constant competition within the consulate from the political section, because economic and political analysis would naturally overlap. What the economic policy was going to be in China was going to depend on the political configuration – and vice versa. So we were all looking at the same general picture. David, however, was just much better at putting the pieces together than anyone else.

For many years the constant job of the China watchers had been to say, "this person's on top, these are the factions around him" and so on. The constant battle for power was usually the primary focus. David Wong was the first one to say, "Wait a minute. That struggle for power is still going on in principle, but it's been subordinated." He argued that Deng Xiaoping was clearly in control, that he was setting China on a path that had been inconceivable for the last 30 years in China, and that China would stick with it. There was only one other person in the U.S. Government that I was aware of that was willing to go that far.

Q: Who was that?

ADAIR: That was Chas Freeman, who at the time was the deputy chief of mission in Beijing, and previously had been the director of the Office of Chinese Affairs. Deng Xiaoping had declared that China would quadruple its gross national product by the end of the 20th century. Most in the U.S. government, including myself, thought that was absurd. Both Chas in Beijing and David Wong in Hong Kong said, "No it's not absurd." David was a little more skeptical than Chas about China's eventual success, but he said they were definitely going to try it. They did, and they succeeded.

Q: Were you there during Tiananmen Square?

ADAIR: No. I was only in Hong Kong until 1984 and then I went to Beijing. I was actually in Burma when the crackdown in Tiananmen Square happened in 1989.

Q: What about the other foreign powers who had consulates in Hong Kong; were they all pretty much on the same wave length or were they hedging their bets? What were they doing?

ADAIR: I think most of them were hedging their bets.

Q: Were you in your job in close touch with your British counterparts?

ADAIR: I had lots of contact with people in the government in Hong Kong but I had less official work with them than did some other colleagues in the consulate, because my job was to look at mainland China, rather than work on the bilateral relationship with the government of Hong Kong.

Q: What was happening to the China watchers now that we had an embassy in Beijing? Before, we'd been sort of looking at the tea leaves from afar in Hong Kong. What happened to that whole apparatus?

ADAIR: Well most of the American diplomats that had been working on China over the previous thirty years tried to get assigned to the mainland. They had the background. They had studied Chinese history, politics and culture; they had studied the Chinese language; and they had been analyzing developments there for years. However, they had not been able to set foot on Chinese soil and actually look for themselves at what was

going on. The openings of the Interests office in 1972, and later the embassy and consulates after 1979 were fantastic opportunities to get in and see, finally, what it was like.

That said, in those early years it was still very difficult for them to produce the kind of analysis and reporting that would expose trends and accelerate our understanding of China, because their access in China was so limited. The circle of government officials that they could see was small, and most of them wouldn't say very much. They were very restricted in terms of the people that they could meet and talk to on the street and in the society; and their physical travel within and beyond the cities was restricted as well. So they were in these little bubbles – that seemed to grow oh so slowly. Because of that there was still a role for "China Watchers" in Hong Kong. During that particular time, I think those of us in Hong Kong were able to do more than most of the posts in China in terms of analyzing developments and trends.

Q: The apparatus in Hong Kong, which had been designed to look at developments in China, had not been disassembled?

ADAIR: There were less resources going into it but it had not been disassembled. No, there was still a huge effort to learn from business people, intellectuals and others who moved back and forth between Hong Kong and the mainland. Most of those people were very relaxed about sharing their experience and their knowledge. There was a growing group of Chinese officials who were in Hong Kong then as well. They were mostly assigned to the PRC press. We tried to get to know them, talk with them and learn from them. In the early 1980s, I would say there were more opportunities in Hong Kong to get that kind of information and give a balanced appraisal of it than there were in the posts in China.

Q: Could you travel into China?

ADAIR: Yes, but I didn't travel very much because I didn't have the budget to do it. I made two big trips and several smaller ones. It was pretty easy and inexpensive to visit the areas near Hong Kong like Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, and Shenzhen, the new "special economic zone" (SEZ) that the Chinese were building there.

In addition, I traveled to Shanghai in the fall of 1981: and - I'm not sure whether it was the winter of 1982 or the winter of 1983 - I went to Beijing and made a trip by rail down to Zhengzhou, Xian, Xuzhou and Shanghai.

Q: When you studied these new economic zones, did they appear to be viable?

ADAIR: Again, I was skeptical that the Chinese authorities would really allow or promote the kind of freedom necessary to allow those places to grow and prosper; and therefore skeptical that the SEZ's would have much of an impact. What I didn't understand at the time was that the government in China didn't need actually to do much to promote economic activity. The Chinese people seem to have almost unlimited energy

and determination, and given even the smallest opportunities will take hold and develop them to – and often beyond – their limits. In China, for thousands of years, the government's job has been more restrict the population of China – to prevent it from reaching that critical mass that might result in an uncontrolled explosion.

So when the government of the PRC announced that it was going to establish these SEZ's that would allow people more freedom to engage in economic activity than elsewhere in China, my reaction was, "I'll believe it when I see it." The Chinese, however, poured into those zones from all over the country. The response was beyond what was expected officially or permitted officially. However, the people basically took the reins, pushed the envelope, and what happened was phenomenal. In the case of Shenzhen, they took something that was a little bigger than a fishing village and made a huge city out of it, with industry of all kinds – and in almost no time it was competing with Hong Kong.

Q: How did you find social life in Hong Kong?

ADAIR: Hong Kong's a very busy, active place. Nobody is ever going to be still or isolated for long in Hong Kong. Ginger and I spent time with a variety of people in Hong Kong. Some were British - people that I met in the government or through running with the "Hash House Harriers". We met Chinese whose home and ancestors had been in Hong Kong for a very long time, and others who were more recent arrivals from the mainland. Some were through my work, and some were people that Ginger met in the course of her daily activities. Of course, we met quite a few people from Taiwan. We had American, British and "third-country" friends from the business community and other consulates. We didn't do a lot with officials from the PRC because at that time they weren't engaging much in social encounters. We were pretty much restricted to visiting them in their offices or an occasional official lunch. There were, of course, the Americans at the consulate as well; but I've always tried to avoid spending too much time with the official Americans wherever I go.

We had some social connections with the large Chinese entrepreneurs. We got to know some people who were doing business in China and whose families were still in China. There was a huge expatriate community of Europeans and Americans in Hong Kong. If I had been single, I might have spent most of my time with them. However, because Ginger was from Taiwan she had a natural connection to the Chinese world, and I was lucky enough to be able to share that.

Q: I speak as an ex consular officer, now. What about Chinese coming to you - nervous about the changeover - and wanting your assistance in going to the United States?

ADAIR: Yes. Well, first of all I was not in a position to give anyone much assistance in going to the States because I wasn't in the consular section. Yes, people did come to us and ask for help. I could give them advice, and I could refer them to officers the consular section, but I couldn't influence what happened next. Some of our Chinese colleagues at the consulate asked for my advice on what they should do when the financial crisis when

the Hong Kong dollar seemed to be going down the tubes. I was a little reluctant to give advice, and when I did it turned out to be wrong.

It's insane for anybody that's not really deeply involved with currency fluctuations to give advice. In this case the trend was sharply downward. However, when it looked like there was no where for the currency to go but down, the British government stepped in to support it. At first people said they're crazy, and they're going to lose money too. However, the support was given without reservation and it worked. The Hong Kong dollar, which had been selling on the markets for something like one-third of its value went right back to where it was.

Hong Kong in that time period was a crazy place. The economy was booming and the rapidity of change was something that I had never seen in the United States. For instance, when I arrived, there was a building being built across the street from the consulate when we arrived. It was a small skyscraper and it went up pretty fast. However, when finished it remained empty for about three weeks and then the owner knocked the whole thing down and rebuilt it bigger - just because that was the way things were going. Hong Kong was also way ahead of the United States in terms of applied technology. There were people using cell phones in Hong Kong in the early 1980s and by the mid and late 1980s everybody had them. The cell phone phenomenon had barely started in the United States. I think Hong Kong is still ahead of the U.S. in applied technology. And, of course, most of those things were far less expensive over there.

Q: Were you computerized at your office?

ADAIR: Only in a very limited way. In the 1970s only a few offices in the Department of State had computers. We tried to experiment a little bit with the beginnings of online data collection and stuff like that but it really wasn't going anywhere yet. In Hong Kong we had the systems that the State Department had begun to put in in the 1970s, the Wang word processing system. But at that time the Apple personal computers began to come out. There was a whole section of Hong Kong where the copies came out and they were one-tenth the price of the Apples selling in the fancy stores. Everything was pirated.

Q: Did you get involved in anti-pirating?

ADAIR: There were some discussions with the Hong Kong government, but I was not involved. The Hong Kong authorities would occasionally raid these places but that kind of activity had been going on for a long time – like with watches and high end name brands. In the case of computers, most of the merchandise was consumed in the Hong Kong market.

Q: I go back to the time when I was in Saigon and we used to drop off in Hong Kong. Were American military making port visits and that sort of thing?

ADAIR: Yes but not on a big scale. The ships would come in, but you really didn't see that many American sailors and military around the streets of Hong Kong. It was very

interesting when the fleet came in, because we got to visit the aircraft carrier and talk with the crew.

The British military presence was much more noticeable of course. I got to know them not through work but because I would run with them in the evenings, the Hash House Harrier groups.

Q: When you leave Hong Kong?

ADAIR: 1984.

Q: Eighty-four. Then you were off to where, Beijing?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: How was that? Was it different?

ADAIR: It was really different. Hong Kong was a big, bustling international city where you could get anything and everything was available. People were available, information and communication were available. When we moved up to Beijing it was a completely different atmosphere. We didn't even know when – or even if we would get an apartment. For years before we got there some people spent their entire tours in a hotel. As it turned out we were lucky and got a little apartment in the diplomatic area within a few months.

The city, of course, was very different. It was still much more like it had been for the last 30 years than what it is now. There were almost no cars on the streets, mostly bicycles. There were virtually no stores except for the big government centers. We could not go to those. We were limited to the "Friendship Store", which was created specifically to cater to foreigners. But things were changing. Little places began to pop up in little nooks and crannies of the buildings where people lived, teeny little places about the size of this room. They started out selling food, extra produce that the government distribution centers didn't want, then food that enterprising farmers brought in to the city, then articles of clothing and so on. These stores began to mushroom. In the beginning they were very uncomfortable if we went in, because people were not sure how they should behave with foreigners. Many people at that time, even in Beijing, had never seen foreigners; so that made them uncomfortable. Those who were more familiar with the phenomenon understood they had to be careful in dealing with foreigners and it wasn't clear how far they could go.

We had to be very careful in our dealings with other people. Sometimes they would brush us off or try to isolate us – sort of like germs. We understood that it was difficult for them, and that they had to be careful, but it was hard to avoid taking it personally sometimes. There seemed to be a tone of xenophobia or racism sometimes as well. I think that most of it though was that they just didn't know what they were allowed to do.

Then there were the government officials. Some of them were required to deal with us. Some of them were simply allowed to, and many more were not allowed to deal with us. We could request appointments and call on government offices. We could try to have conversations, try to understand what they were doing, and deliver our own points of view. Language, of course, was a limiting factor since my Chinese was still limited – and there were lots of different accents and vocabulary that I had yet to assimilate. We also had a few American interpreters to help us with formal communications, and some of Chinese staff could help as well. Nevertheless, for the most part we didn't get very far. The Chinese officials either didn't have much to tell us, or they didn't want to tell us, or they'd been told not to tell us. Sometimes they knew more than we did about the intricacies of international trade and regulations. It was sort of hard to predict.

In Beijing I was in the economic section, but I was working on bilateral U.S.-PRC relations, rather than the analysis of the Chinese economy. I wanted that change. There were two areas that were particularly active then. One was the textile negotiations. The PRC wanted to export more textiles to the United States, but Chinese exports were limited by the existing system of American import quotas for textile imports. Those negotiations were very active. Since the Chinese were very interested in them, we had more access to and more contact with those government offices.

The other was the civil aviation relations. American airlines were very interested in gaining more access to Chinese destinations. When I first arrived, there was only one American airline that had official permission under a bilateral agreement to fly to the PRC, and that was Pan American. Pan American wanted greater access – to more cities; and other American airlines – like Northwest - wanted similar access. However, at the time, the PRC had only one national airline. Their attitude was sort of, "We have one airline with access to your market. You get one airline with access to our market." There was a systemic difference. China had one government airline with access to all parts of China. The United States had many private airlines with access to different parts of the United States. It was really difficult to mesh these things. There were legitimate worries on the part of the Chinese in terms of competition, because the American airlines were more experienced, more developed and – at least at the time – had more money. There was also a security aspect, because in China the air space was controlled by the military and only certain civilian routes were allowed in through that military air space. In the United States it is just the opposite. But in some respects we were negotiating with the military in absentia. The civil aviation authorities probably had to clear everything that they said to us with the military. The military did not seem to have much incentive to compromise, so communication between us and the civil aviation authorities was usually quite sterile. It was very frustrating.

But the city itself was – there. We could walk around. We could even drive around. Ginger and I took a small car up that we had purchased in Hong Kong. It was fascinating to wander around and just look. There were almost no stores, and the buildings were very grey and dingy. However, if you went beyond the diplomatic area and the area of government buildings and looked more closely most of the buildings, streets and alleyways were quite old.

We could also visit the Forbidden City, which was and is a national museum. For centuries that magnificent royal city had been pretty much off limits to ordinary people. There were temples that we could go to. There was a Tibetan temple right next to the Forbidden City. We were able to drive outside the city as well. We could drive to the Great Wall, and out to the Ming Tombs.

At that time there were a few Western hotels that had been built in Beijing, so we could go there for different kinds of food. And the city was constantly changing. Every month there were more changes. You would see it in the people as well - the people that we dealt with.

As I mentioned, it was difficult to associate with Chinese officials when we arrived. About a year into our tour, however, the embassy received some movies that were just coming out in the United States. One of them was "Kramer versus Kramer." We decided to try inviting some Chinese officials and see if they come. Each section of the embassy got to invite people. Most of the sections did not get much response. However, the economic section got a big surprise. The Deputy Minister who led the PRC textile negotiation team arrived and brought his wife. That just blew us away because we almost never got to meet officials' families in those days. In addition, when he arrived he wasn't wearing the standard blue Mao suit. Some government officials had Mao suits that were made of better quality material than the people on the street, but the design was essentially the same. This man wore designer clothes from Hong Kong, and was friendly and gracious to match. Things really were changing.

That didn't mean that people could pull out all the stops, or even relax. I met an academic from another city in China on a trip, and later he called on Ginger and me when he visited Beijing. We took him out to dinner, and then back to where he was staying. We talked for a fairly long time in the car, because I thought it might be a little safer to talk there than in the restaurant. A week later we got a message, an informal message, from him saying he had been warned not to talk with us and asking us not to contact him again. Things were still being controlled. People were still being watched, and we had to be careful not to get others into trouble.

Q: During what time period were you there?

ADAIR: From '84 to '86.

Q: There are always incidents. Chinese tennis players or dancers would defect or something would happen. There would be collisions. Did anything like that happen while you were there?

ADAIR: The incident with the tennis player, Hu Na, happened in 1982, before our tour in Beijing. The asylum in the embassy for Fang Lizhi, the Chinese astrophysicist, happened in 1989 after we left Beijing and before we served in Chengdu. We didn't have any major incidents of that sort when I was there.

Q: What was the city of Beijing like?

ADAIR: We both actually ended up liking Beijing a lot. In the winter it was cold, and the pollution was pretty bad because they mostly used coal for heating. It was actually very pleasant in the spring and even in the summer. The city itself was fascinating. We had a book called "In Search of Old Peking" that had been published in the early 20th century. It seemed to be a pretty accurate guidebook to Beijing, though a lot of the buildings and places that it described were no longer there.

Q: I understand that old quarters would just disappear.

ADAIR: Yes, well that is what has been going on recently. What we saw was the results of the destruction that Mao Zedong's regime wreaked on the city. In some respects what we could actually see was less significant that what we could no longer see. Beijing used to have magnificent protective walls all around the city. Those walls were almost entirely gone when we got there, torn down in the frenzy of the Cultural Revolution. But it wasn't like the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. The walls around Beijing were 60 feet high and 40 feet wide. It must have been a monumental effort to tear them down. Some pieces were still left along with some of the entry gates to the city. It was pretty amazing stuff, and very sad that it and so many other historical buildings were gone.

Q: What about visitors? I've talked to people who served in the economic section I think maybe a little before you. They used to talk about death by duck. The Chinese would invite visiting delegations out to have Peking duck, which is awfully rich. You do that a couple of times a week, and perhaps you're not looking forward to doing it again. How did you find it?

ADAIR: Well it wasn't so much the duck that was dangerous as what they served with the duck – the famous Chinese "baijiu". It's made from grain and is extremely strong. It's "white lightening" with several thousand years of refinement behind it. When I had been stationed in Paris I really loved drinking the wines and trying all the different kinds of alcohols. I tried it in Taiwan as well. Drinking is a long and honored tradition in China – well, not honored by everyone. It seems a little bit more civilized than what I have heard about in Russia. It is primarily designed to loosen you up and promote friendship. The phrase "gan bei" means "drain your glass" and they do it. There is also an element of competition, and one has to be careful. I wasn't careful and learned the hard way. Within the first month after I arrived we had a delegation of American mountain climbers come through from Seattle. They were led by Lou Whittaker, and were going to make an attempt on Mt. Everest. The Chinese Mountaineering Association hosted a dinner for them at the big Peking Duck Restaurant in the middle of Beijing. It was just an immense restaurant, and foreigners called it the "duck factory" because that's what they specialized in.

I was representing the embassy because the ambassador or the DCM either couldn't go or knew enough not to go. I sat next to the head of the mountaineering association, a very

jovial and very tough gentleman who loved to drink. I was determined to keep up with him and I did. I counted. I kept track of how many glasses I was drinking. It was served in shot glasses, and I drank 20 of them.

Q: Good God!

ADAIR: At the end of the dinner I wasn't sure if I was even going to be able to stand up. But I managed to stand up, say good night respectfully and walk out to the car. I managed to walk out, get in the car, and go back to the hotel. Ginger met me in the lobby. She says I smiled and said proudly that I drank 20 glasses, then went upstairs and was sick for three days. It was awful. I had poisoned myself. After that I was more careful.

Q: Well you must have been quite busy with visiting business groups.

ADAIR: Not so many business groups, and they were primarily hosted by the Commercial Section. The American business community was almost invisible in China. The embassy had really increased the size of the commercial section; bringing people up from the Hong Kong business community who had lots of experience with American business there. They worked really hard. There were some American business people on the government delegations that came to negotiate on things like textiles and civil aviation. There were certainly visitors from banks and big corporations, but compared to the Japanese and the Hong Kong Chinese the Americans were barely players at all.

Q: Why? Why was this?

ADAIR: American corporations were risk averse – at least when it came to China. Several years later, when I was the consul general in Chengdu, I traveled to Hong Kong to try and encourage businesses to come up and take a look at Sichuan province. The American Chamber of Commerce organized a meeting for me. Not very many people came to my presentation. I think those that did mostly came because they'd known me when I had been in Hong Kong before. Afterwards, I talked with several of them and they said if I could give them a guarantee of profits in the range of 25-50 percent, then they would think about coming up and looking. Otherwise they were not interested. Because American businesses have this really short timeframe and they have to make a profit within a certain period of time - otherwise their boards and stockholders get unhappy - it's just too risky. And the Japanese and others were going in for the next 20 to 50 years. Americans were way behind – and I think they are still far behind.

Q: Were there any efforts on the part of business organizations or something to look at the Chinese market over a long period of time or just no effort to change this?

ADAIR: Well the Chambers of Commerce constantly pressed the U.S. Government to work on Chinese trade barriers and things like that, but in my career I have not seen much evidence of the American business community planning very far ahead – with the possible exception of resource extraction companies. Some companies in the China field were willing to take some risk. They found people that were Chinese language scholars

and were willing to - wanted to - go in and spend time in China. Many of them were very good. They got around and learned a lot. But they also had trouble getting their companies to step forward. Admittedly the risks were pretty high. It's difficult now to go into China and deal with the national and local governments and the population. It was even more difficult then.

Q: Did you have to have a Chinese partner?

ADAIR: I think the actual requirements for investment varied. Foreign investors did not necessarily have to have a Chinese partner in the same way that the business people in Zaire had to have a Zairian partner – or the way foreigners had to go through Chinese intermediaries in the 19th century. But they did have to deal with a myriad of requirements imposed by both the national government and the local governments, and those requirements were changing constantly as the national government experimented with policy and the local governments and local officials sought to enhance their own profits and power. So for a lot of businesses that was difficult.

Q: Well then you left there in '86? Where did you go?

ADAIR: After that I went back to Washington for two years.

Q: Okay, just before we leave, who was your ambassador while you were there?

ADAIR: Part of the time it was Art Hummel and part of the time it was Winston Lord.

Q: How were they?

ADAIR: Well Art Hummel was an extraordinary person. He had good Chinese, and he knew China really well. His own personal experiences, as you know, in China were almost unbelievable.

Q: He fought as a partisan.

ADAIR: He was a prisoner of war of the Japanese in China. He escaped and then fought with the Chinese guerillas against the Japanese. He was very good with the Chinese officials, and had tremendous patience. I would go into his office and argue that we should take various measures, including punitive measures – reciprocal measures - to get the Chinese to reduce certain barriers to trade. He would just cut me off and say we're not going to get into that business. And he was probably right at that time.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: It's a hard call.

Q: How about Winston Lord?

ADAIR: Winston Lord was very different. He's smart and a very nice person. He had experience on the policy side - obviously, with Kissinger and that first trip to China. And his wife, Betty Bao, is Chinese so she understands the milieu and I'm sure helped him to understand it better. He was a very energetic and dynamic ambassador. But he did not have the kind of Chinese background that gave him a personal understanding of the whole dynamic that Art Hummel had, and that some of the ambassadors after him had, like Jim Lilley and Stape Roy.

Q: Can you explain how a deeper understanding of the background of a country makes one a better ambassador there?

ADAIR: That's a little difficult to describe. With China, we are dealing with a whole civilization that is far older than ours, and far more complex than ours. It has a dynamic, an inertia and wisdom that most people who haven't been exposed to it can barely imagine. We tend to deal with everybody in the world in the here and now. We tend to look at the past as perhaps being a nice cultural picture, but primarily an encumbrance, a drag upon progress. We don't see it as being a foundation for something else. We see the negative part of it, the part that weakens our potential adversary or partner, but not the positive side. Consequently, we are less likely to study it carefully. As a result I think that when we have dealt with truly old and established cultures we have been at a disadvantage. Both China and Japan are in that category.

We dealt with them, we thought, from a position of power; Japan because we defeated them militarily, China because it was a basket case. In the 19th and 20th centuries we thought we were superior because of our greater military and economic power. We also considered ourselves to be very philanthropic with our missionaries and the effort to save Chinese souls. However, in actuality the Chinese have a more solid foundation on which they are standing than do we.

Some of the people who have studied Chinese and Chinese culture and have immersed themselves in it understand that. Art Hummel understood that. Stape Roy understands that. Their perspective is substantially different. Therefore, the way they deal with individuals, and the decisions that they make are different. They're dealing with both the past and the future; whereas the others tend to be dealing solely with the present. It would be very difficult for someone without a deep knowledge of Chinese history, Chinese government and the Chinese character to do what Burt Levin did in Hong Kong. He arrived and said categorically, "This transfer of power is going to work. You don't understand the Chinese. Chinese communism is a blip on the screen. Hong Kong may be the most profitable city in Asia after Tokyo, but it is just a pimple on the rump of Mother China. They've got a perspective in Beijing that we don't have here." So he was able to say with perfect confidence that, although it looked like total chaos for the next three years, in 10 to 15 years it would be fine. Most Americans don't do that.

Q: Okay. Well we'll pick this up in 1986 when you're off to where?

ADAIR: Back to Washington.

Q: What are you doing there?

ADAIR: I went back to the economic bureau.

Q: Today is the 27th of October, 2011, with Marshall Adair.

Marshall, you're back to the EB Bureau; when did you go back there?

ADAIR: In the summer of 1986 we returned to the United States from Beijing. I had been recruited to go back to EB by Tom O'Donnell, who'd been my boss previously when I was in the Commodities Office. He got in touch with me and asked me if I'd come back to be a division chief in that office of which he was now the director. I was to be the division chief of the office of strategic materials which dealt with the minerals like copper, tungsten, etc. As it turned out I wasn't in that position for very long though. After six months I moved to another part of the Economic Bureau.

Q: Well let's talk about the six months there first. What were the issues from the American point of view that you had to deal with?

ADAIR: There were lots of routine things going on: meetings overseas with different governments, companies and so on - work that had been going on for many years. But at this particular time the biggest single issue was the Comprehensive Apartheid Act. It had been passed by Congress, and was designed to increase the pressure on the apartheid regime in South Africa. The legislation mandated a study of the possible impact of sanctions against the South African government and companies doing business with South Africa. The Administration had to pull itself together and do an assessment of our economic interests in the region and how they would be affected. I think one of the reasons that Tom O'Donnell brought me back was that he knew I had been stationed in that area before. I had been in Zaire, which was right in the middle of it, and as I said earlier, I had done a study of the transportation network in that region. South Africa was a critical part of that system.

Q: Was South Africa sitting on important mineral resources of its own? What were our strategic economic interests there?

ADAIR: Well, South Africa certainly had mineral wealth of its own. It was the largest producer or one of the largest producers of gold, diamonds, platinum, manganese and chrome – all of which were important to us. If the United States were to enforce sanctions on those exports we had to consider how it would hurt us. That was obvious. What perhaps was less obvious was how sanctions on trade with South Africa might hurt other countries which were important to us, both in terms of the general economic and political stability of those countries and the availability of resources from those countries. One of the most important transportation routes for Central Africa went through South Africa, because the other routes had fallen to bits, either as a result of lack of attention and corruption, which was the case in Zaire, or war, which was the case in Angola, or both,

which was the case in Mozambique. If the South African rail route were to be essentially cut by sanctions it would affect the export of important mineral resources from those countries and essential shipments of food and other things to those countries.

Q: How did we deal with this? I mean, this obviously was not a secret; it was known to those that put the embargo, or whatever you want to call it, in place.

ADAIR: Well, yes and no. Congress does things partially on the basis of what they consider U.S. strategic interests to be, but at least as often on the basis of more immediate domestic political interests. Some elements of Congress don't necessarily pay a lot of attention to how these things will affect our nation as a whole. That little office in EB ended up doing a great deal of coordination throughout agencies of government. We laid out many of the issues, and tried to explain the impact that this would have on things that we needed from Central Africa, on U.S. corporations that were working with that area and on relations with the other countries in the area.

Q: Well what was the price of copper?

ADAIR: As I recall, when I was there copper prices were still pretty flat, but they then went up sharply in the second half of the decade. The U.S. made a proposal that we put together an international study group that look at the challenges to copper production and copper trading internationally, and come up with ideas for what the international community might do. One of the things that I did was to present that proposal to governments and companies.

Q: You did this for about half a year?

ADAIR: Only about six months, I think. The first George Bush had just been elected. His new Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs (EB) believed that he needed to have a lot more presence on the Hill, so he created a new office of legislative affairs. EB's Executive Director, Dave Burns, asked me if I'd be willing to take it on.

We started developing our own contacts with the various economic committees in Congress. Our goal was to get the people in the Economic Bureau who were experts on different subjects up to Capitol Hill to talk with the members of congress and the congressional staff who were interested in these issues. In principle that's the job of the Bureau of Legislative Affairs – the "H" Bureau - but H's small staff was swamped. They dealt almost exclusively with issues that were direct importance to the secretary of state. What energy they had left was devoted to telling the rest of the Department we should not be going up to the Hill. They had a legitimate concern to avoid confusion and ensure that the State Department spoke with one voice, but they ended up being too constraining and not enough enabling. My job was somewhat at odds with that. It was not a comfortable position to be in, but I think we were right to be more active

It turned out we got very deeply involved with a major issue of the day. There was a new piece of trade legislation called the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Bill. It was huge. They meant it when they said "omnibus." It was over 1,000 pages, and offered an opportunity for virtually every member of Congress to tack on their own pet projects. Certain elements of were dangerously protectionist, or we at least thought so. One of the most high profile provisions was a thing called the Super 301 Provision. Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 already provided for studies to watch imports coming into the United States and examine whether they were being sold fairly or being subsidized. It they were being subsidized and endangering U.S. industry, then the legislation gave the president certain powers to restrict those imports. However, taking action was optional. The new legislation proposed to make action mandatory and tried to set up a list of things that the president would have to do. It was very broad, and would have put the United States in the position of taking unilateral action in likely violation of our obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It was particularly ironic since the United States had been the primary force behind creation of the GATT in order to establish rules for the world trading system.

There were lots and lots of other provisions in the legislation that we had problems with, so we spent a great deal of time on the Hill talking with the committees, and encouraging other to talk with them.

Q: How long did you do that?

ADAIR: I did it for a year and a half until I went overseas again. But I took on other responsibilities as well. The reorganization also folded the former Office of Commercial Affairs into my office as well as the public affairs portfolio. The new office became the Office of Commercial, Legislative and Public Affairs. We were the institutional link to the American business community and the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service in the Department of Commerce. We set up more regular briefings for the business community, and more public appearances for the assistant secretary.

Q: Well how did you find this omnibus bill, particularly these obligatory sanctions and al? Were you able to make any inroads into Congress?

ADAIR: Yes, Super 301 didn't happen. I can't claim that our office that was responsible for that success, but we did add a certain amount of push to the administration. One of the things that we had to do was not just with Congress; we had to get into the Office of the Trade Representative in the White House where the administration's position was being coordinated. They initially invited only a representative from the H Bureau, because they wanted to keep the number of people down. But the H Bureau didn't know anything about it and it wasn't sufficient to just brief them. Economic issues were just not very high on their priority list. It was a very delicate process. The political pressures were powerful and the administration was trying to respond. Without a prominent voice from the economic part of the Department of State some of those political pressures might have carried the day.

Q: Yes. Well this of course is always one of the great problems of the State Department dealing with Congress. Elements of Congress spurred by business interests, by ethnic interests or something, will take an issue which has much greater ramifications than just the issue itself and run with it unless the State Department can show them the costs.

ADAIR: And there's a whole variety of ways to do that, but we don't often get the opportunity to use all of those ways. We have to make sure that our voice is heard early enough in the process that the players are still open to a more complete argument. If the door is shut early on it's much more difficult to get to that senator or that congressman.

Q: Well what about the H Bureau? I mean you're breaking into their rice bowl in a way.

ADAIR: We were, and they were not happy about it. They tried to stop us; they tried to discipline us; they tried to prevent us from going up to the Hill. There were different levels of the H Bureau and different levels of the Department, of course. Basically the Department at the most senior levels wanted us to go ahead and do this. And the assistant secretary of the Economic Bureau had a good relationship with the senior leadership.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary?

ADAIR: It was Doug McMinn. He was a political appointee. He wanted us to do it and he had sufficient clout with both the seventh floor and the White House to insert his bureau into the process. However, it was still difficult to institutionalize that approval. There was a bureaucratic element of H that was trying to protect its turf. I got into fights with them all the time. I got along reasonably well with them as individuals, but even those relations did not always hold up. I remember reporting on a meeting at the Trade Representative's office that I wasn't supposed to have attended, and one of the senior people in the Economic Bureau commented that, "Marshall's got sharp elbows, and can get himself into these meetings." He meant it as a compliment and I felt good about it but – but I didn't have "sharp elbows", and it was very difficult for me to do that kind of thing. Then, you get into the meeting and somebody says, "Well, who are you?" I'd have to do a song and dance about who I was and why I was there. They never kicked me out, but it never got comfortable. Nevertheless, in the end I think it worked out pretty well.

Q: So it was basically an ad hoc insertion?

ADAIR: That's right. I went because the assistant secretary had called the head of this process over there and been told his representative would be always welcome. However, he wasn't willing to say that to the rest of the Department. The message went very quietly by telephone to the person who told me to go. I went, but still had to battle my way through the lions. Anyway, that's the way it works, that's government.

Q: Well for somebody reading this transcript at a later date, I think one of the things we're trying to show is how a bureaucracy works. This is an example that probably would never appear on the books.

ADAIR: There is an element of government that only works based on the aggressiveness of the participants in the process. I don't like that because a lot of times the most aggressive people are not the ones that I think understand the issues or have the best interests of the country in mind. But that is an undeniable factor. It is a universal factor. It's always there.

Q: What were some of the most contentious issues?

ADAIR: The most contentious issues with the trade bill?

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Well, I mentioned the biggest one, the Super 301 provision. There were many other issues that I would have to go back and refresh my memory on. Two people in the Economic Bureau produced a very impressive briefing that we took around to a number of different agencies, including to Jim Baker who was Secretary of the Treasury at the time. One of the issues that I personally was particularly concerned with was one that was relatively small in the overall scheme of things. It was a provision dictating to the Department of State how to organize the embassies overseas and what titles to give to the different people in the embassies. It mandated that the representatives from the Department of Commerce and I think Treasury and Agriculture be given the title of minister counselor. We argued that undercut the authority and the responsibility of the ambassador to run his post and organize his post in the most efficient way. That was a very difficult argument to make both on the Hill and in the White House. Everyone wants their voice to be heard. Very few are concerned with the principle of maintaining clear operational authority in the field.

Q: And we are talking about an ego issue?

ADAIR: Yes, there's ego in there as well. But I remember going up to the Hill and arguing this point to several people who looked at me quizzically, and said they were not saying the ambassador wasn't in charge. I replied, no, but you are telling the ambassador how to suck eggs. It was interesting to see the dynamic of the Hill on this regard. Everybody had their own interests and they pursued them first. Nevertheless, there were still people up there that were fairly objective and had a broad perspective – they just didn't always have the clout.

Q: Were you able to use them?

ADAIR: We did our best to convince them, and then to strengthen them with effective arguments. We would provide experts from different parts of the Economic Bureau that would be able to give them more material, more understanding, and more ammunition. We did that within the administration as well.

Q: What were the other departments of the government doing in the process? I mean, were they a pretty good team or not?

ADAIR: In principle they were all part of the same team, and the designated leadership of the Trade Representative in the process was intended to enforce that. But in reality all the departments were pursuing their own interests. That was partially because the legislation was so broad which made it difficult for the administration to develop a clear unified position on all issues. However, some of the departments had been involved in lobbying members of congress for their own interests before the bill was even put together – and they continued to pursue those interests. The Department of Commerce was trying to strengthen its prestige, its budget and its influence overseas. It was supposed to be primarily helping U.S. corporations to increase their exports. To do that the Department of Commerce had its own commercial service, which it still does. In principle it needed to put those people in the places where they would have the most impact. In practice, they often tended to put them in places where it was the most fun to be. So there were big commercial sections in London and Paris and Bonn - places where U.S. corporations were perfectly capable of functioning on their own. Where those companies really needed help was in the third world countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America; countries whose governments either did not understand how commerce worked, or wanted to control it completely for their own purpose. The Department of Commerce always seemed to be less interested in those places.

Q: I had a little taste of this. I was economic officer and commercial officer in Dhahran. This was back in the '50s. The Persian Gulf was a significant small market then, but had lots of potential – it has now has gotten much bigger. But we couldn't get businesses to come. When they did come they would arrive on the Friday flight and leave on Saturday. Friday in Saudi Arabia is not a day to do business. We really needed an aggressive element somewhere to tell business, "for God's sakes, go to Saudi Arabia and start working on this."

ADAIR: Right. I think that that was part of the idea behind the foreign commercial service. But I don't think it has really worked that way. The Foreign Commercial Service ends up trying to help those companies that have already decided what they wanted to do – and primarily in the big places where they don't really need help. It has not been successful in going to the U.S. hinterland to encourage U.S. corporations to adopt a more aggressive and universal focus. It has almost never had a strategic perspective based on U.S. national interests. Part of the reason for this is that any kind of U.S. Government planning is ideologically suspect in our country. U.S. corporations want USG money and help with what is already in their program, nothing else. The exception perhaps is with U.S. military spending which offers a huge guaranteed market.

Q: There are also difficulties caused by competition between American companies for the same markets overseas, aren't there? If two different companies that make fighter planes approach the American ambassador in Italy and ask for help selling them to the Italian government you have to give them equal attention – even though one might be head and shoulders above the other?

ADAIR: That's true. If the ambassador and his staff are thoughtful, courageous, conscientious and aggressive people they can find ways to adjust. If they saw clearly what we needed in a strategic sense and they believed one of those corporations was significantly better, then they could go back to Washington and lobby for support - within the administration, within Congress - to do what is right in the interests of the nation. But that is a lot of "ifs". It is a very difficult and shifting path to follow. You have to be really prepared to work hard at it and be very flexible to find your way through that thicket. Most ambassadors don't have the time to do that. Many don't have the inclination to do it, and just fall back to what you suggested: just give them equal time; we can't take sides. Well, often that's wrong. We have a side. That's the side of our country which has a national interest. We're supposed to be defending and promoting that.

Q: It seems that American companies are up against other companies which have the full support of their governments, like Britain, France and others

ADAIR: That's true, too, yes.

Q: How did you find the Economic Bureau when you came back? Was it the Economic Bureau you'd known or things had changed?

ADAIR: It was still a good bureau. The two assistant secretaries that I worked for, Doug McMinn and Gene McAllister, were both very smart guys and very active. However, I think that we lost something by going the political route there. I think that it was more difficult for both of them to tap into and fully use the very special resources that the Economic Bureau and the Foreign Service provided. I don't think that the Economic Bureau in 1987 was quite as good as the Economic Bureau had been back in the mid 1970s, when it was run by people like Jules Katz and Deane Hinton, and assisted by people like Stephen Bosworth as deputy assistant secretary and Frances Wilson as Executive Director. David Burns was a very good executive director. He had learned from Frances but he didn't stay that long. I don't think the Economic Bureau has ever really been able to make up for the loss of Frances Wilson.

Q: And she stayed.

ADAIR: She was there for 30 some years.

Q: This is something that's often forgotten. The State Department's system has considerable turnover for both institutional and political reasons. Someone, particularly a civil servant, who stays can develop remarkable clout and effectiveness.

ADAIR: Yes. People like Frances Wilson and Jules Katz were examples of that clout and effectiveness that were used for good. There are other people that have come and stayed that are not such good examples. I won't give their names but I think that some of them have hurt the Department and hurt our broader interests in ways that are unfortunate.

Q: Did you sense, while you were in the Economic Bureau, a gearing up or at least consideration of the new China? You know, things had begun to change a little there; or had they, economically?

ADAIR: You know when I was there in the mid-1980's the Economic Bureau was not really focusing that much on China. To some degree that might have been legitimate, because the Economic Bureau focused more on multilateral economic issues rather than economic issues with individual countries. EB probably should have been more concerned with and involved with the issue of preparing China and ourselves for China's eventual entry into the international trading systems and its various institutions.

There were definitely issues that the Economic Bureau was interested and involved in such as those that I had worked on at the embassy in Beijing: textile trade and civil aviation. However, the Economic Bureau was not so much charged with looking ahead and asking, "What does this mean for the future?" One notable exception I think was Assistant Secretary Gene McAllister's advocacy for the creation of APEC, the Asia Pacific Economic Community. Today APEC is a reality and an important forum for discussing and coordinating economic issues around the Pacific region. In the mid-1980's very few people in either the Economic Bureau or the East Asian Bureau were interested in it. It took an outsider like Gene McAllister to push it forward. He made an important contribution.

Q: Well this is one of the hardest challenges that we've had. Right after World War II, George Kennan set up the Policy Planning Bureau which was supposed to think strategically and long term – to ask, " what's coming down the pike and what should we do about it?" And it's turned into a speech writing office.

ADAIR: I don't think it has ever successfully done what it was intended to do. For one thing it can't work unless you have a Secretary of State who understands the need and is willing to pay attention to it. George Shultz might have, but I'm not sure that he used the Policy Planning Office much. He was instrumental in getting the Economic Bureau to set up its Policy and Analysis Staff in the 1970's to apply econometric analysis to international economic issues.

Q: Well George Shultz has come through as being probably, of the people I've interviewed, the most admired secretary of state. I mean, as far as a manager goes. It's often forgotten that it's not a matter of running around the world shaking hands and making pronouncements but also it's a big apparatus with worldwide effect.

ADAIR: I would agree with that. I think that George Shultz, of all the Secretaries of State that I've seen, was the strongest presence as a leader. To be fair, it is also a factor of the President and the President's willingness to give the secretary of state the scope and the support that's needed.

Q: You know, one can look at how George Shultz got the job. Alexander Haig's ego or sharp elbows got in the way of the White House. Shultz, by his patience and immovability

was able to outlast the little leprechauns who worked around the president in the White House.

ADAIR: Yes. The choice of Haig was probably not a good idea. To some of us it was not a good idea right from the beginning, but not just because of the kind of person that he was. He was very smart and capable. However, I don't think that a military background is the best background for a secretary of state. It just isn't. No matter how smart they are, no matter how well educated - there are lots of advanced academic degrees in the military today because it is free for them - they do not have the same kind of perspective. They don't have the breadth and the flexibility of understanding of how all the different issues connect. George Shultz had that more than most.

Q: Well then, how did you find working in the Department in the Economic Bureau? Were you somewhat removed from the missiles that were coming from other bureaus and all or did you get involved in those conflicts?

ADAIR: Well I was directly in the path of some of them. I was directly on the firing line with the H Bureau. In addition, in the interregnum between Doug McMinn and Gene McAllister, when Alan Larson was the acting assistant secretary, he asked me to oversee the quality control of memos and presentations to the secretary and the seventh floor. It was not very comfortable for me or for some of the other offices in EB. I often knew less than they did, but I was put in a position of critiquing their work; and asking, "Is anybody who doesn't have a PhD in esoteric economics going to understand this?" So I was in a lot of peoples' sights.

Q: How would you say the Bureau viewed the rise of the European economic entity, which has gone through several changes?

ADAIR: Well, when I worked for EB in the 1970's and 1980's our relations with the EU were both competitive and cooperative. American companies competed with European companies for markets not just in North America and Europe but all over the world – and their respective governments supported them. Our regulatory systems had important differences, and we were constantly struggling to overcome misunderstandings caused by those differences, or manipulation of those differences for gain by one side or the other. But American and European companies were also inextricably intertwined with shared investments and shared interests.

In addition, when you look at the U.S.-EU relationship from a global perspective, what we have in common far outweighs our differences not just economically, but politically, strategically, historically, culturally and so on. It's the pre-eminence of the Atlantic Alliance.

I was aware of it long before I joined the Foreign Service myself. My father worked in the Economic Bureau when he was in the Foreign Service, and worked on our broader relationships when he was posted to Brussels and Paris in the 1950's and 1960's. I understood from his conversations was that this progression in Europe was something

that the Economic Bureau (and the USG) believed was essential and did everything to encourage.

That said, I assume that most understood that as this entity in Europe became more cohesive and more active, we would face different kinds of challenges like competition, access to markets, etc. Now it covers almost every single issue you can think of. I even got involved in it with consumer affairs - protecting consumers on safety issues, labeling and so on. The responsibility of the Economic Bureau on a day to day basis often focuses on preserving access for American companies, preventing the growth of non-tariff barriers and so on. Sometimes the Economic Bureau was the only voice within the State Department arguing for economic and commercial interests as opposed to political and strategic issues: how do we face the Soviet threat; is the whole European continent going to go communist; NATO, etc. Those kinds of questions can make it more difficult to address things like whether U.S. agriculture products are being legitimately or illegitimately restricted in the European market.

Q: Well of course, I mean, when one looks at it way back in your father's time and all it's sort of gotten lost in the shuffle. But the whole idea of the European integration was to keep these damn people from getting into these wars. It has been eminently successful, but it wouldn't have happened without an awful lot of work on the part of many diplomats, especially Americans.

Did you get involved in agricultural matters? The protectionism of farms in France, Germany, Britain, - and America turns into a very touchy issue.

ADAIR: I got involved in multilateral agricultural issues when I was working on tropical product commodity negotiations in the 1970's. U.S. and EU interests coincided more often than not on those issues – even though our systems were different and our relations with producing countries in Africa and Latin America were different.

When I was in Paris in the early 1970s disagreements over agricultural policies were very prominent. The American conventional wisdom then was that the Europeans were being protectionist. They were creating different arguments in order to protect small farms - for political reasons because those farmers were an important political group whose support was needed to get elected. France and the EC were seen to be opposing the trend towards globalization which would allow products from all over the world to move freely across borders and allow producers who had the best competitive advantage to supply – to dominate- the markets.

I subscribed to that view to a certain degree when I was in Paris, and then later when I took the economics course but I was always a little bit suspicious of it. In hindsight, when you look at what has happened to the United States with the almost complete loss of small farms, the massive growth of these mega-agribusiness corporations in the middle West, and the overall decline in the quality and diversity of agriculture in the United States, it's beginning to appear the Europeans were pretty smart to protect those small farmers. In the United States, we have given very little attention to planning with regards

to the interests of the economic wellbeing or the health of the American population - to say nothing of the overall health of the American economy, which has been threatened by this as well.

Q: Alright well, how long were you doing this with the EB bureau?

ADAIR: Until the summer of 1988, so it was two years.

Q: Were you at all tempted to vie for the commercial service?

ADAIR: No.

Q: Why not?

ADAIR: Because first of all I was interested in the relationships between nations, of which economics is one part. The economic work of the Department of State is done in the overall context of those relations and our broad national interests. The Foreign Commercial Service was focused on one thing and one thing only and that was promoting exports. I would not have been interested in just doing that, even if I thought the FCS was doing the job that it was supposed to do and doing it effectively.

But secondly, I didn't think that it was doing it effectively. Because of the nature of our political system, and the nature of our businesses and corporations, the FCS can probably never function as a real partner with these corporations. We do have a basic ideological bent against government being part of the process. The corporations won't trust government services – and often with good reason. The FCS doesn't have the resources to be really effective, and doesn't use the resources that it has effectively. I liked and respected many of my colleagues in the FCS and Department of Commerce, but I found the atmosphere of the Department of Commerce to be rather deadly. I would get sleepy just walking in the front door of the Department of Commerce.

Q: I remember when I came in 1955 as a junior officer and we were briefed by the Department of Commerce and we were under special instructions not to fall asleep when the briefing happened.

Well, so where did you go after EB?

ADAIR: We went to Rangoon, Burma. I had applied for jobs in a number of different places. The place that I really wanted to go was Chengdu, China, but I wasn't on their preferred list. Other people with more extensive credentials lined up for that from the Asian Bureau. One of the posts that I bid on was Rangoon, Burma - the position of political economic counselor.

I hoped for a principle officer or DCM position, because management experience was important for advancement in the Foreign Service, but perhaps the timing was not right. Burt Levin was the new ambassador to Burma. He had been the consul general in Hong

Kong when we were there and knew me. When he was back in Washington for a visit I had a talk with him and he encouraged me to go to Rangoon. I was very frank and I said I'd love to work for him, but what I really wanted was the DCM job. He said he already had a DCM but promised me I would have plenty to do. Chris Szymanski was his new deputy chief of mission and had a great reputation. There was a possibility of a principle officer job in New Zealand, and David Burns was trying to help me with that. However, Ginger and I talked about it and decided that Rangoon would be the best choice. Our son was then two years old. I had been pretty busy, working long hours, in Washington. We thought well, you know, nothing had happened in Burma for 30 years. It would be fascinating to go there and it'd be quiet. It would be a great place to have a good family life.

Q: Contemplation.

ADAIR: Right. We had heard that there was a compound there with a swimming pool and that it was good for kids and family. The family was the deciding factor. I was intrigued with it because when I worked at the United Nations back in 1970 one of my closest friends there had been a Burmese woman named Aung San Suu Kyi. She had been working at the United Nations, in the professional service. We were introduced by a mutual friend, the Bolivian man who had tutored me for the oral exam. I was curious to see this country that she had loved so much but that she had been uneasy about going back to.

So we accepted the job and headed out. Before leaving Washington I went around and did all the obligatory calls on the different departments, businesses – and I think Congressional offices. I went to Commerce, the Department of Energy and the CIA. At every place, including in the State Department offices, I asked, "Where is Aung San Suu Kyi right now?" I was very surprised to find that no one knew. I was surprised because her father had been the founder of Burma's post WWII state.

So we went out to Burma. We arrived I think on the 20th of August, 1988. In the spring of 1988 they'd had some of the first serious demonstrations against the regime in 30 years. Ne Win, who had run the country all that time had stepped back and turned leadership of the country over to his top general, Sein Lwin. Then, there had been a severe outbreak of demonstrations on the 8th of August, 8-8-88, a very auspicious date. When we arrived there was still blood on the streets from the severe crackdown that Sein Lwin had ordered. Chris and Jean Szymanski picked us up at the airport. As we drove in, they pointed out where these things had happened.

Q: When you got to Burma, how would you describe the government?

ADAIR: When I arrived in Burma, the government was ostensibly civilian. Ne Win, who had ruled the country for more than 30 years, had stepped down and formally turned over power to his right hand man, General Sein Lwin. However, General Sein Lwin had also resigned after the violence on August 8. The government was headed by man named U Maung Maung, a very elegant, elderly person, who was also a former general. He was

serving in an interim capacity, but there was no indication of how long the interim would be. The government had the same basic structure that had existed under Ne Win, and most people believed that Ne Win was still calling the shots one way or another.

Anyway, after the Szymanski's dropped us off at our house, the person who was going to be my senior Burmese FSN came by the house to introduce himself. We sat around talking about a variety of things, and then I asked him, "By the way, do you have any idea where Aung San Suu Kyi is?" He looked at me in surprise, and said, "Well yes, she's here." She had returned in the spring to help take care of her mother who had been very sick. I thought how bizarre it was that neither the State Department nor the CIA had known, because the embassy knew and they would have told the desk.

Two days after we arrived she made her first public speech. It was at a hospital downtown and a huge crowd gathered. It apparently was a surprise to her and to her supporters that so many people showed up. So they scheduled another speech for her to give at the Shwedagon Pagoda on August 25. My house was about three blocks away from the Shwedagon Pagoda. I walked over there with my senior political officer and with this Foreign Service National. We sat on the grass right - let's see - on the west side, I think, of the pagoda where she was going to give her speech. We listened; it was all in Burmese so I didn't understand it. But my assistant did. He translated a little bit for me and then they translated it completely afterwards. The weather was really, really hot; but there were thousands and thousands of people there then to listen to her. From that point on the interest in her and the demonstrations just kept on growing.

Q: What was the embassy doing during this time?

ADAIR: As the demonstrations increased, Ambassador Levin increased his calls on senior government officials, and took me with him. We called first on U Maung Maung who met us with several of his senior associates. We also called on General Khin Nyunt who had been head of military intelligence and seemed to be moving into the position of overall military leader. Ambassador Levin tried to talk with them about what was happening, what they thought about it and how the government was going to respond. They were extremely polite and genteel - but had nothing to say, except to try to reassure us that it was not serious and we should not worry. By that time there were many thousands of people in the streets.

Q: What about the political opposition?

ADAIR: There had been no legal political opposition for more than 30 years, but it had been slowly organizing and growing since the spring of 1988. After the ambassador had called on the senior government officials to talk to them about what was going on, he began calling on those who appeared to be senior opposition figures. This became easier as the government withdrew as an obstacle to their activity. The most prominent people the ambassador called on were: U Nu, the former president who had been deposed by Ne Win in the 1950's; a former general named Aung Gyi,; Aung San Suu Kyi and a former general and national hero named Tin Oo who had been recently released from prison.

There were two Tin Oo's. One was a notorious former chief of military intelligence; but the one we called on was the one who decided early on to ally himself with Aung San Suu Kyi.

Q: During this time of turmoil had you made contact with Aung San Suu Kyi?

ADAIR: The call with Ambassador Levin was the first time that I saw her in Burma. We went to her house. It was also the first time that I met her husband, Michael Aris, who I'd heard about before they were married. He was there in Burma with her at that time. Aung San Suu Kyi was in the process of establishing the "League for Democracy", and she was making regular speeches.

Q: What was she telling you?

ADAIR: Well she believed that it was time to establish a democratic government in Burma; it was time to have a government of the people. Burma had run by a dictator for the last 30-some years, and she believed that his regime had caused tremendous problems for Burma. She blamed a lot of Burma's backwardness, poverty, and corruption on Ne Win. But she never spoke about him or his government with bitterness or anger. She was logical, practical and almost forgiving. But she was also firm and clear about the need for change. She said she had great faith that the people of Burma were capable of democratic government, would support responsible and compassionate leadership. She pursued everything that way. She believed also that the people of Burma would listen to her and support her - at least partially because there was still a great deal of affection for her father in Burma, and that was true. In fact the population was absolutely ecstatic about her.

Q: Well when one looks at that whole area, there have been some significant women leaders: Sukarno's daughter, Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto.

ADAIR: Good point, yes.

Q: I mean, they're daughters of former rulers who were really accepted as being part and parcel of their fathers' legacy.

ADAIR: Yes, it's interesting, isn't it?

Q: It really is. So how did things develop then?

ADAIR: Shortly after the Ambassador's calls on senior government officials, the government withdrew from everything. It stopped providing services. The police disappeared; the banks closed – and there was little response to the growing demonstrations. The government also opened all the prisons and let everybody out – political prisoners and those incarcerated for theft, murder, etc.

Then we began to hear reports of divisions not just within the government, but within the armed forces. Until that time the demonstrations had been peaceful, and we did not think there was really a danger from that part of the population – in spite of the official television reports which regularly reported various violence and atrocities that we were unable to corroborate. However, with the possibility of conflict between different parts of the military our calculation of danger had to change. The ambassador called several of us in and asked what we thought – specifically, should we evacuate the families and non-essential personnel? I remember saying that I would be more comfortable if I knew they were safe. The Ambassador decided that was what we should do, and within two days we evacuated everybody.

It was pretty ironic. Ginger and I had chosen to go to Burma for family reasons – to have more time together, and within two weeks of our arrival Ginger and Charles had to leave.

Q: Where did they go?

ADAIR: They went to Bangkok.

The government - the authorities in Burma were very upset that we were doing this. I went over to the foreign ministry and met with the head of the American and European Bureau. He was appalled with our decision. He insisted that there was absolutely no danger to any of us, and that it was all under control. I replied that we had to take this step, but that the embassy would remain open. When it came time for us to go out, we found that the government had withdrawn all the personnel from the airport: everybody that ran the airport, the towers, the baggage, the counters, they were all gone.

Q: Was that to shut down the airport or did it just happen?

ADAIR: That was their way to do it. They pulled the personnel out so that the airport was dysfunctional.

I'm not sure if that was before or after the Thai Airlines flight that we had chartered came in, but I think it was actually there. Ambassador Levin said we would just have to do it ourselves. So we all went out to the empty airport and essentially took it over. The assistant defense attaché was an Air Force officer and knew something about traffic control. We manned the tower, and loaded the bags onto the plane ourselves. It was terrible for all the families. They had to wait at the airport while this was being done. Of course all the air conditioning had been turned off. But we finally got all the bags and then all the people onto the plane. It took off safely for Bangkok, and we all went back to work.

Q: Were any other embassies still there?

ADAIR: Some others left, but not on the scale that we did. In any case most of the other embassies were smaller. The Chinese definitely didn't leave. The biggest embassies were the Chinese and the Russian, and they stayed put.

That night there was actually some fighting. I stayed out at the residence of the DCM, which was further out of town than my house, and we stood out on the front porch and watched the tracer fire go over the city, with occasional explosions. So something was going on.

After that the demonstrations grew and grew until there were millions in the streets. And then we had to face a number of other issues associated with the growth of popular demonstrations and the lack of government services. One example was the possibility of food shortages, and people believed that this was partially the work of the government to try and put pressure on things.

The rice shortage issue was a concern and we had some discussions within the embassy of whether we should bring rice in from the United States. I thought it really didn't make sense. Besides the fact that it would have taken weeks or months to get PL-480 rice from the United States, we knew that there had been a good rice harvest that year. There should not have been any scarcity. We concluded that the reason for the lack of availability of rice was that people were scared. They didn't know what was going to happen so they were hoarding. Also, the banks had all been closed by the government so there was some difficulty with cash. So we came up with the idea that we would bring in money. The ambassador had a $25,000 discretionary assistance authority that he could use immediately. We thought that if the ambassador used that money to start buying rice it would bring the rice out of hoarding.

There was only one catch – we didn't have $25,000 worth of Burmese currency – and the banks had all been closed by the government. The answer was to go to the Sino-Burmese business community. They had access to a separate, non-governmental financial system that spanned all of Southeast Asia. We figured this was not illegal because there was no government and the banks were all closed. We weren't violating any laws; because there were no laws operating. So I went out to see if I could find someone to change $25,000.

It was a wonderful experience. Rangoon had barely changed since World War II. I followed my senior FSN down back alleys between picturesque old decaying buildings. There was an air of secrecy about it – skulking in dark alleyways rather than just walking – though we were not being secret at all. We eventually entered a completely non-descript door, went up a flight of stairs and entered a large room that had very little decoration and just some chairs and a coffee table.

We were welcomed with almost no formalities by an older man. He looked Chinese to me, but he was Burmese and speaking Burmese. I told him briefly what we wanted to do, and asked him if he would be able to change a large amount of money. He said, "Well, what's a large amount of money?" I told him $25,000 U.S. Dollars, thinking he would have to consider it. He looked at me first as if I was joking, then as if I was a child – then he laughed and he said yes, he could do that. Obviously, when I said a large amount of money he was picturing something much more. I think he was disappointed.

Anyway, with that we knew that it could be done. But also with that the word got out quickly that we were asking. Before we could even begin to change money, the rice just started pouring out. All of a sudden it was everywhere and the market began to function again. In the end, we even have to change the money. We didn't have to buy anything.

So that crisis passed, but the demonstrations were still happening - and still growing. In some ways it was very exciting for us. The square in front of the embassy was a central location for the demonstrators, who would march past the embassy shouting "Deemocracie! Deemocracie!" It was nice to experience the United States being placed in the roll of hero again rather than villain. Then one day the government said, "Stop! We're not going to allow this to go on any longer. Don't come out tomorrow!" Well, many people didn't believe them. They came out anyway – and so did the military. The city was much quieter, because people were scared. But a group did come to the front of the U.S. embassy.

This time it was different. The troops pulled up at the end of the street. They got out and warned the crowd to move. The crowd didn't go - so the military just started shooting them, right in front of the embassy. They did it all around the city, wherever there were demonstrators. We estimated that thousands of people were killed; the government said no way was it that many but there was never any way of finally resolving how many. Then the government imposed a curfew, 6AM to 6PM and the city – and the country – was shut down.

Q: While you were there during this tricky period, the government was still located in Rangoon?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: So they were there but not available?

ADAIR: Well, during the period when most of the government shut down the senior leadership was not available. It was not even clear who they were. The people in the ministry of foreign affairs were available to us, and defense attaché was still able to see some of his previous contacts. There were other people in the embassy such as in the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) office who continued to have some contacts with the military and others as well.

Q: Well how did we feel about the government that was there? Was it in the hands of drug lords? Was the government using the drug lords for their own purposes or what? What was going on?

ADAIR: Well with regards to narcotics, we had been working with the government of Ne Win for many years trying to control the narcotics trade. There had been some cooperation and some success, but basically the production and trade of opium continued. Many believed that senior levels of the Burmese government were involved with it, one way or another. Because of that, many believed that nothing that we did would ever be

completely successful. It would always be undermined by various interests within the Burmese government.

There was actually an apparently successful effort to replace opium that was being grown in the lower Shan states with coffee. The coffee did beautifully and the coffee that was produced was fantastic; some of the best coffee I've ever had. But the opium production simply moved further back into the mountains. The biggest area was controlled by a warlord named Khun Sa close to the Thai border. He was often fighting with the regime in Rangoon. But the fighting was off and on, and there was apparently cooperation as well. Burmese generals or other officials had contacts one way or another with him and seemed to be making their own profits. It was a constantly moving game. The Burmese regime was playing a moving game with all of the different ethnic groups, and there's a huge number in Burma. Many are in areas that are more or less inaccessible, and they've been constantly at war with the regime in Rangoon since at least World War II. The regime's policy had been to play them off against one another rather than to seek any real resolution and integration. Narcotics were just one piece of that overall moving game.

Q: How stood the tribal situation when you arrived there?

ADAIR: Well the regime was constantly at war with one ethnic group or another.

Q: Were the tribes trying to take over each other or just trying to maintain their particular area?

ADAIR: I think they were mostly just trying to maintain their particular areas.

Q: Was there any connection with events in Thailand or groups in Thailand?

ADAIR: Sure. There were groups along the border with Thailand, the Karen down in the southeast, the Shan further north. Those ethnic groups were on both sides of the border and always had plenty of communication across the border, and legitimate or semi-legitimate trade as well as narcotics.

Q: Did we have DEA agents when you were there?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: What were they up to?

ADAIR: Well, they were still trying to work with relevant agencies of the government – mostly the military - to control the larger opium trade out there in the Shan states. However, their contacts and work became more and more difficult as the government became more focused on repressing the democracy movement and as relations between our two governments deteriorated.

Q: What was life like when the families were evacuated? Did you just hunker down?

ADAIR: Well, particularly after the crackdown and the imposition of the 6PM to 6AM curfew, we pretty much hunkered down. Since anyone out after 6PM was in danger of being shot, we all just went home after work – and we didn't work late! I would read. I would try to get in touch with Ginger and Charles in Bangkok – sometimes I could get through and sometimes not. It was sort of a hit or miss kind of a thing. When the curfew was eased to 9PM it was possible to have an early dinner with people, but even then it was a little bit dicey. You had to leave early because you never knew what you were going to encounter on the roads.

Q: Well earlier on and maybe today the one sort of place that one could make contact with the government was playing golf. How stood that at the time?

ADAIR: That was true at one time. I tried to take up golf specifically for that reason. However, it never really worked because by then our relationship with the government was really pretty bad. We criticized them for the severity of the crackdown; and it became apparent based on the meetings that we had, that we were not going to get anywhere with them. Government officials, particularly military, were not willing or able to have any real conversations with us. The statements that they did make were almost nonsensical in light of what was going on. There was a growing sense that the people in power were not just heavy-handed or cruel, but rather unenlightened rulers. They certainly didn't have the interests of their people very high on the agenda.

We didn't know to what degree they were just pursuing their own interests or even what their specific interests were. They had a pretty good relationship with the Chinese government at the time. This was in large part because the Chinese government was taking the position that it wasn't going to interfere in Burma's internal affairs. The Chinese interest was primarily to avoid instability – including excessive foreign involvement – in that corner of the world. They didn't want a massive influx of Western economic and political activity there. There was also a growing trade between China and Burma resulting from the economic reforms taking place in China. China was becoming much more dynamic economically by that time. There were lots of Chinese goods from across the border in Yunnan Province crossing the border and going into Mandalay and then down to Rangoon.

Q: How about the Russians or Soviets?

ADAIR: The Soviet Union was still in existence at that time. They were fairly quiet. They had a big embassy there, and we had regular contact with them. Even they were distressed with what was happening in Burma, and with the way the authorities in Burma were handling the situation.

Q: Did you get a feeling that the military was becoming sort of a class?

ADAIR: The military was already a class unto itself. That was pretty clear. When Ne Win had been in power, his government was ostensibly civilian, even though he himself

was a former general. The military maintained the power, but took orders from him as a civilian head of government. It wasn't until after the uprising took place and the crackdown occurred that the government itself, under the leadership of the State Law and Order Restoration Commission, became clearly military.

Q: Okay, it's probably a good place to stop. We'll pick this up in Burma after the crackdown. I'd also like your impression of the Buddhists.

Today is the 3rd of November, 2011, with Marshall Adair. And where do we stand?

ADAIR: We had started on Burma, how we got there and what happened shortly after we arrived.

Q: Was this when the monks came out into the streets?

ADAIR: Everybody came out into the streets; monks, nuns, businesspeople, government employees, farmers, storekeepers, even some of the military.

Q: Well what was the initial feeling at the embassy?

ADAIR: Well it's hard for me to describe the initial feeling at the embassy because I wasn't there when it first happened. We didn't get there until the 20th of August. The first major wave of it had already happened. But when I got there it was clear that people at the embassy had been very disturbed by the crackdown on August 8 - horrified. Many people had been killed and most of the international community was shocked. However, right after that the general who had been in charge, Sein Lwin, resigned and a civilian was put in charge of the government. That seemed to be a step in the right direction. After that there were no serious demonstrations or crackdowns until after I arrived. I think that people at the embassy hoped things were getting better, but nobody knew really what the government was or what it was thinking.

Q: Had you seen Aung San Suu Kyi before she came out?

ADAIR: Had the embassy seen her? No, no one from the embassy had called on her.

Q: But had you?

ADAIR: I had not seen her, no; I hadn't seen her for about 18 years.

Q: Can you talk a little more about the character of the embassy's contacts with the government and the opposition in the period leading up to the crackdown?

ADAIR: Well, as I mentioned, shortly after I arrived Ambassador Levin made an effort to call on the senior leadership of the government. During the meeting with President Maung Maung, he and his associates were extremely courteous, but there was no substance to the conversation. We tried to talk about the origins of the popular discontent

and what they thought might be done to address it. However, we didn't get any kind of acknowledgement that there was even a problem. They just said don't worry, this will all pass. It was as if by saying that they believed they were absolving us of any need to worry. When the Ambassador met with General Khin Nyunt and got the same kind of "reassurance" he took a more aggressive tact. He explained to Khin Nyunt what we were seeing, gave our opinions on what it meant – and then suggested several things the government might do to address the discontent constructively. Khin Nyunt actually got quite angry and put an end to the meeting – still without giving any substantive exchange. We were quite surprised. The ambassador had been an Asian specialist for a very long time. He had lots of experience in dealing with China and the Chinese, so it wasn't as though he was a newcomer to authoritarian governments. But it was the first time that he had dealt with a government where all of his contacts were so opaque, so uncommunicative – to the extant that they themselves actually didn't seem to know what was going on.

Q: Well, I mean, were there any other form of contact? I don't like to use the word because it's a loaded word, but were you able to penetrate the government?

ADAIR: Oh, everybody was working on it. All sections of the embassy: political, economic/commercial, military, narcotics control, consular, cultural and so on had contacts in the government. A number of them had specific contacts in the military. But few if any were really providing any insights into what the government was doing, thinking and planning.

Q: Was the same true of your contacts with the opposition, Aung San Suu Kyi?

ADAIR: The opposition was quite different. After those calls on senior government officials and after the government began to shut down services, we concluded that we needed to really expand our contacts with the opposition. Until that time the embassy had very little contact with leadership figures that were not in the government. It wasn't possible. But when the situation began to change, we immediately started calling on the senior opposition figures. As I mentioned there were basically four: one was the former president of Burma, U Nu. A second was a retired military general named Aung Gyi, who had been Ne Win's second in command for a number of years until he had a falling out with him. Aung Gyi had not been in the government for, I think some 20 years, but he resurfaced in the spring of 1988, first to offer public "advice" to the government and then to present himself as an alternative. The third was Aung San Suu Kyi and the fourth was the retired general Tin Oo.

We went and saw each one of them. Let's see, we saw U Nu at his home; I can't remember exactly where we saw Aung Gyi; we saw Aung San Suu Kyi at her home; and we saw Tin Oo, I believe, at an office. Those conversations were completely different from the ones we had with the government.

Q: What were they saying?

ADAIR: Each was different, but all focused on the popular movement, the grievances of the population, the policies that had caused this, and the things that were needed to rebuild the government and the country.

The disturbances themselves had started almost a year earlier when Ne Win had demonetized a lot of the currency. Just all of a sudden, without any warning he had invalidated most denominations of currency, leaving only a few that could still be used. For many people that was the final straw after 30 years of economic decline. They had been very passive for the previous 30 years, but began to say enough is enough.

The people who we went to see were willing to talk about all of those things and more. U Nu was very old; I think he was in his mid to late 80s at that time and he was still very articulate and he advocated a stronger role. I should not go into details, but he advocated a stronger role for the United States and for the international community. Aung Gyi sounded a lot like the government officials with whom we had recently met, except that he said things should change. At the time, he basically was advocating working with the existing government to turn things around. He was not advocating replacement of the whole government, just replacement of the senior leadership with himself. Aung San Suu Kyi was the most articulate of all of them. She seemed to have and was able to express to us the most sophisticated understanding of the grievances of the Burmese population and what kinds of things were needed to redress the situation. She had been a long-time admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and his non-violent movement and that's the way she wanted to pursue things. She was very disciplined; she was very determined and she was also pretty polite towards the regime, although as time went on she became more and more directly critical of them. Tin Oo was very similar to her and eventually the two of them formed an alliance. She became the head of the League for Democracy and Tin Oo became the number two person.

Q: People obviously change, and she certainly had new stature. Was she a different person from when you knew her before?

ADAIR: No. She wasn't a different person at all. She was definitely much more experienced. She had continued to study and to look into these issues and had a better understanding of international relations than she had had, you know, 19 years or so before but that was natural. She had more experience; she had raised a family; she had studied in Japan; she had done many things, and seen many places. She had been back in Burma for, I guess about six months. The big difference was her orientation, her commitment. Basically she said she had raised her family - her sons were both teenagers at the time. She declared she had done that job and now it was time for her to serve her country. She said she had made that clear to her family. She was still devoted to and loved her family, but her primary commitment had to shift to her country. She was prepared to make any sacrifice for it. Her family had accepted that. Certainly her husband had accepted that. I didn't know her sons very well, but they seemed to have accepted that, at least as far as they understood it.

Q: Well at this point when you consulted with everyone, where did you and the ambassador and all come out? I mean, what was going to happen?

ADAIR: Well, we didn't know what was going to happen. We thought it was possible that as the demonstrations got bigger and bigger the government would step back and allow a new process to take over. The population was behaving pretty well, and the opposition leadership was speaking very reasonably. We thought and hoped that the military would find some way of making an accommodation with a new set of civilian leaders in which the military would retain its role of protecting the country and maintaining order, but the government itself would be managed in a different way. Whether that was initially brought about by elections or by negotiations or whatever no one could say.

We always knew that there was a possibility that the military would come back in and crack down. We were pretty certain that if they did that it would be bad not only for the demonstrators but for the country and even for themselves. Although they had acted that way in the past, to continue their past approach would have run counter to the sort of trends that were taking place globally at that time. We hoped that they might see that – though our conversations with them certainly never gave us any support for that hope. I think that we were trying to be optimistic and we were certainly influenced by the optimism of the public demonstrations. The demonstrations got bigger and bigger; everybody was very enthusiastic and it was peaceful.

Q: Well now you were in Rangoon?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: What was happening in Mandalay and other places?

ADAIR: Similar demonstrations in most of the population centers around the country.

Q: How'd it play out?

ADAIR: Well, eventually the military made an announcement that they weren't going to tolerate any more demonstrations. One evening they broadcast, by radio and loudspeakers and so on, that there were to be no more demonstrations and everybody was to return to their homes and their offices. The next day people were very worried. It was a lot quieter than it had been, but some people still tried to come out - and one of the places that they came out was in front of the embassy. When I drove into the embassy that morning, there was already a crowd in front. Very soon however, the military came and set up a position down at the end of the street. The embassy faced a park across the street, and the military set up a barricade out to the left and again warned everybody to leave. The crowd didn't leave, and then the soldiers started shooting. They shot everyone who couldn't take cover, and there was almost no cover. Later when ambulances came to try and help they wouldn't allow the ambulances or the doctors to go in. I don't know how many people died there in front of the embassy. I think it was less than 100 but I'm not sure. When the

shooting started we told everyone in the embassy to lie on the floor to avoid stray bullets, but some still went to the window to watch. I watched very briefly and it was not a nice sight.

We stayed in the embassy until late afternoon. Then we had to leave because there was a 6PM curfew, after which we would be targets. By that time the military had allowed the ambulances to come and pick up the dead and the wounded. Some of the students had sought refuge in the embassy before the shooting began. They were brought in by an elderly monk who was sort of the first warning. He came up to the door, asked to see the ambassador and explained to the security officer that he thought something terrible was going to happen. He asked if he could bring some of the young students that were with him in. The security officer came up and asked the ambassador who said, "Absolutely, bring them in." I can't remember how many people they brought in. I think there were about 15 or 20 students. Right after that the shooting began. Later in the afternoon we very quietly let them out the back door of the embassy and hoped that they all got away safely. I knew that the monk did because I saw him again later.

Q: Well what did we think at that time? Did we have any idea of how this was decided, what was going to be done?

ADAIR: We didn't know exactly who had made the decisions. Shortly after that the "State Law and Order Restoration Commission" (SLORC) was established made up entirely of military officers. We didn't know if that was truly the makeup of the leadership or if it was a front for Ne Win reasserting his power. I'm not sure at that time if anybody really knew. It was still being played out behind the scenes. As it turned out the generals asserted their power more and more. Ne Win, I think, continued to be a leadership focus and influence but he was less and less a force. Eventually, he too was pushed to the side by the generals that had asserted power.

Q: This must have had a dramatic effect on the staff of the embassy, didn't it?

ADAIR: Well yes. Of course, the staff of the embassy was fairly small at that point because we had sent most people out. We were prepared for pretty much anything, and had thought that civil war might even have developed. That was why we sent the families and most personnel out. I have since wondered whether our decision to send people out might have had some kind of influence on the government making its actions less restrained and more violent than they might have been otherwise. It might have been a consideration for them. They were definitely worried about what the United States might do. When the 7th fleet was ordered to the general area as a precaution for a possible evacuation of embassy personnel, my counterpart at the Foreign Ministry asked me with alarm what it meant. He thought it might be a prelude to an invasion. I told him it was solely a precaution, which was true, but he would probably have assumed that was what I would say in any case. In the end, I don't think that what we said or didn't say had a big impact on them. Short of a military invasion by the United States, they were going to do whatever they needed - whatever they thought they needed - to do to reassert their power. We had a responsibility to get as many people as we could out of harm's way. There's no

telling whether they might have been in more danger if there'd been a larger number of people there.

Q: Were other embassies playing any role?

ADAIR: The British were playing a role. The British were always active there. The British embassy was substantially smaller than ours, of course. They had good contacts and they had good Burmese language capability. The Australian embassy was also quite active, but I think less connected with the regime. I mean, when I say "connected" I don't mean supportive but having the ability to make contact with the right people.

Probably the most well connected and influential embassy in Burma at the time was the Chinese embassy. It was a large embassy; and had people there that spoke excellent Burmese. The political counselor at the time had been the interpreter for Ne Win when he traveled around China – and she later returned as ambassador. The Chinese had a strong interest in Burma. It was a growing interest, both strategic and economic; and they did not make the government's policies towards its population an issue in their relations. The Chinese position was: the government of Burma is the government; what it does within Burma is its business unless it affects China. They were not critical of the government; they did not try to establish contacts with the opposition, and they were not supportive of the opposition. They stayed out of it.

Q: Well were you getting any pressure from non-governmental organizations to do something or from other groups?

ADAIR: That's a good question. I don't recall any of the international organizations coming to us and asking us to do more – in the sense of intervening. We made it as clear as we could that the United States was not going to intervene with force. We also made it very clear that we supported the democracy movement and we believed that was what Burma needed. I think most people understood that intervening with force was not really an option.

Q: Was Washington concerned about this and at what level?

ADAIR: Washington was very interested in what was going on. This was a massive pro-democracy movement, and it was peaceful. The streets were packed, you could barely move on the streets. It was happening apparently across the whole country, and it was also very pro-American. One of the main attractions for the crowds was to come by the American embassy – to cheer and wave American flags and chant democracy, democracy. We hadn't seen that for awhile - anywhere.

Q: It must have been pretty disheartening for you all, to see this thing sort of die.

ADAIR: It was - and it wasn't a slow death. It was pretty violent. It was crushed. Of course we were disappointed. We were particularly disappointed for the people of Burma, because after the crackdown there did not seem to be any good prospects for them. Of

course the regime had said that it was doing this to establish order and protect the country. The authorities publicized all kinds of stories of terrible things that had happened, and then said they were going to allow a democratic process to continue, that elections would be held, and so on. The regime soon announced that it would hold elections in the spring of 1989; that different political parties could be established and campaign and that people would be allowed to congregate. We were very skeptical and so were much of the opposition. Nevertheless, opposition leaders, like Aung San Suu Kyi and the League for Democracy and Aung Gyi and some others, said they would give it a try and participate in the process. They had to give the regime the benefit of the doubt.

There was a very, very tight period for several months after the crackdown. After that they took the curfews off, and allowed people to move around, not just Rangoon but across the country. Aung San Suu Kyi, in particular, traveled all over Burma. Everywhere she went huge crowds came out and they kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. The government occasionally intervened, but on the whole it did not interfere with the campaign process, not up until the very end. Then, after the election had taken place and the National League for Democracy had won 80 percent of the votes, the government shut everything down, said it wouldn't recognize the results of the election, and put Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest. Many other leaders of the National League for Democracy were put in jail and everything was shut down tighter than a drum.

Q: Was there any consequence to this for the Burmese government or they had been so isolated it didn't make a difference?

ADAIR: They'd been isolated before. They were used to it. They seemed to prefer it. We tried to encourage them to open up. When the Burmese government announced that they would allow foreign oil companies to bid on exploring for offshore oil, I argued within the embassy that we should actively pursue that, and that we should encourage American oil companies to come out and negotiate with them. I thought that kind of presence and that kind of activity could help to erode the isolation that the Burmese government regime was enforcing. We did encourage the American oil companies to participate, and they did go out. It did not have the effect that we hoped for. Subsequently, some have argued that if anything the companies helped the Burmese regime to continue its policies. I'm not sure whether that is true or not.

After the crackdown the United States began imposing sanctions - a fairly extensive set of sanctions. I can't remember to what degree they were adjusted to allow oil companies to continue work that they had already done.

Q: Did you have any contact with the pro-democracy groups after that?

ADAIR: Oh yes. We stayed in contact with them on a regular basis from then on. Well, you mean after the crackdown or after the election? After the election we couldn't have contact. There was no access. The morning that everything was shut down, I got a phone call from Aung San Suu Kyi asking me if I could come over to her house. It was 6 AM,

and I replied with some surprise, “Now?” She said, “Yes, now.” So I went. My driver was already there and we drove over.

When we got to her house there were military vehicles - trucks and armored personnel carriers - all over the place. The driver said to me what do we do now? And I said well, there’s nobody in the driveway; just pull in and see what happens. So we pulled into the driveway, the gate opened and we drove in. Suu came out and explained the military vehicles had just appeared. Nobody had talked with her yet, and she didn’t know what was going to happen. She told me she didn’t know whether they were going to take her away and put her in jail, put her under house arrest or kill her. She honestly didn’t know what was going to happen. She was scared, but she was ready to accept whatever came. We talked a little bit and I said, “I have to be honest with you. I don’t know what we the United States can do to help you here because we have a line that we are not likely to cross in terms of direct intervention.” She said she understood that, and then I left.

As we started down the street an officer came out and put up his hand. I told the driver not to stop. He was uncomfortable, but did as I told him. The officer just stepped out of the way and let us go. That evening the driver came up to me and said sorry, but he could not continue to work for me any longer. I said I understood perfectly, and not to worry about it. He was not only scared that our encounter with the military could have turned out differently. His father was a military man. By continuing to work for me, for the Americans, under those circumstances he would have endangered not only himself, but his father and whole family. He knew that he couldn’t continue his association with us under those circumstances.

After I left the house, Aung San Suu Kyi was put under house arrest and she was incommunicado. She wasn’t allowed to talk with anybody. The only one person as far as I remember who could go in and out of that compound was the woman who managed her household, cooked and so on. She was allowed to go out and go to the market and get things that they needed and go back in.

Q: Where did we see things going? Was it a position of stasis?

ADAIR: Well, that’s a good question too. We didn’t know where this was going. The Burmese military had the power to maintain, for at least some period of time the position that it had chosen. We did not know how to what degree there was unity within the military on this. We didn’t know whether there were groups that were dissatisfied that might have either tried to overthrow it or tried to soften it.

We were pretty sure that the economy and the standard of living of the population would continue to go down. The military, of course, immediately started engaging in all kinds of cleanup operations, cleaning up the roads, painting things and stuff like that to make it look good but none of that helped the economy. And, for the last 20 years or so the economy has not grown very much, except perhaps for increased trade and investment with China.

One of the reasons the Burmese regime was able to survive on this course was that it had the basic support of the Chinese government. There was a lot of economic activity with the Chinese, particularly trade going across the Yunnan border. Even before the events of 1988, there were increasing numbers of Chinese products in the Burmese marketplaces.

Q: What was going out of Burma to pay for this?

ADAIR: I don't really know. The Burmese had rice to export. I don't think China really needed rice at the time, but they could have transported it on to other markets. There were other natural resources like timber – teak – and rare precious stones – rubies and jade. There were still narcotics exports, and we believed that through a variety of mechanisms the heroin that went out from the Shan states area of Burma went through China – though it is hard to believe that the Chinese government would sanction such trade, given their previous history with narcotics. Burma also had potential oil resources, which the Chinese would have a long term interest in.

Q: What was the role of the Thai during this period?

ADAIR: The Thai weren't playing a very big role, didn't seem to be playing a very big role in Burma at the time. They had a very important border which was problematic for them. The Thai government and many people in Thailand were very upset with what was going on for two reasons. They were disturbed by the human tragedy; and they were concerned because disturbances in Burma could – and did - result in population flows across the border. That put Thailand in the position of having to care for their humanitarian needs, and having to deal with some social and political disruption in Thai communities along the border.

The southeastern part of Burma along the Thai border is home to different ethnic groups of Burmese who have often been disaffected with the government. The campaigns that took place in ensuing months caused significant refugee flows into Thailand.

Q: Did the government up its campaign against the tribes?

ADAIR: Not right away, except in so far as they deemed it necessary to crush the democracy movement. However, the regime did get back into the cycle of war with those different ethnic groups eventually.

Q: So the crackdown comes; was the embassy able to operate?

ADAIR: Yes, and about four weeks after the crackdown we brought all the families back from Thailand. Life resumed. We still had a curfew but in some respects that made things easier. You knew you had to be home before a certain hour, so you didn't work late, didn't go to diplomatic events - you just went home.

We continued to look for ways to stay in touch with people on the political and economic side. As soon as it was allowed, we started traveling around the country. I made several

trips around Burma. It was always a bit iffy, because you never really knew whether the government was going to give you permission to go or not. I made a trip up to Mandalay and into the northwest part of the country. I also went down to the Delta, and then up into the eastern part of the country. On those trips I would try to talk with as many people as possible. Often the government people were not available. We were also followed – which meant we had to be careful not to compromise those with whom we met. People could get in trouble for their association with us.

I went into the Delta area of Burma with the agricultural attaché from the embassy in Thailand. He had regional responsibility and did an annual or bi-annual study of the Burmese rice crop. That was fascinating because we went into all the villages and talked with the village leaders and the farmers. We stopped along the road and talked to people that were working in the fields. The rice was spread out on mats on the roads drying. The agricultural attaché had been there before. He could compare the situation then with before, and he was able to estimate whether the crop was sufficient for Burma's needs and how much would be available for export.

But it was a struggle; it was a struggle to find people that would talk with us, to find people that knew anything – and then to piece it all together.

Q: Well you must have been hit, from time to time, with the media, with Congress, with the State Department and other area departmental groups coming to see what the hell this was all about.

ADAIR: Well not so much because it was pretty difficult to visit Burma. It was difficult to get permission, to get a visa. It was probably hardest for journalists so we rarely got visits from journalists. When they did enter the country it was usually incognito and so they had to be careful about visiting the embassy. I only remember one congressional visit, and that was Stephen Solarz. He visited just before the crackdown and called on both government officials and opposition leaders. We didn't get very many visitors, and we were not a target for either Congress or the media. There wasn't pressure on us in that regard. We were providing more information from Rangoon than anybody else in spite of the access difficulties. The other factor was that anybody in Congress that was in the least bit interested in Burma was primarily interested from the human rights/democracy perspective. We were actively supporting that, so there was no incentive to criticize us there. Overall, we got pretty decent support - at least moral support - from the Department and from Congress. The only real exception to that was during the evacuation of families and staff. The Department tended to be very bureaucratic. The administrative people in the Department tried to tell us that we had to send all the families back to the United States.

We avoided that for two reasons. First, we knew that if we sent them back to the United States it would be extremely hard to get them back to Burma - because the Department would have inertia and that inertia would be against us. Second, we were also confident that the evacuation would not last long. We were pretty sure that the window of instability was small, the danger was limited, and it was going to be over soon. The real

danger that we were concerned with was the possibility of a split in the military forces and civil war. That would endanger the lives of the families and personnel. After the government crackdown there was no longer any possibility of dissension and conflict within the government; and we were ready to bring them back. We started arguing, I think, within two weeks after that to bring everyone back. The Department dragged its feet for another several weeks. However, if they had gone back to the United States, it would have been virtually impossible to get them back within any reasonable period of time. Throughout all this time there was a fair amount of anxiety on the part of both family members and people in Rangoon, because we never were sure what was going to happen with the families in Bangkok. It was difficult for the embassy in Bangkok, too. They didn't want that burden and there were plenty of rumors that some in the embassy were lobbying with the Department to send everyone back to the United States. Nevertheless, I think that most there were supportive. They did their best to help, and those of us who were under stress probably tended to worry about it more than we needed to.

Q: Just looking at the map, India has a border with Burma. Did they have any issues or anything?

ADAIR: As I recall, the Indian government was one of the hardest on the Burmese regime. They were one of the most categorically opposed to what the Burmese authorities were doing. I think it took a fair amount of time for the Indians to reestablish normal diplomatic relations. They didn't close their embassy but they were the most critical. Bangladesh was worried, because of the potential for refugee flow. The Southeast Asian nations were concerned and didn't like what was going on, but were reluctant to be openly critical of Burma.

Q: Well you left there when?

ADAIR: I left Burma six months earlier than planned. In the late fall of 1989 I got a call from the State Department asking me if I would be willing to break my assignment in Burma and go up to Chengdu, China. I had always wanted to go to Chengdu. It covered western and southwestern China, and included in its consular district Tibet. I just thought that would be fascinating, but I'd been unable to get on the Department's list because there were others who wanted to go, and I was relatively new to the China field. In this case, the person who had been sent out there as consul general had gotten sick and had to leave post. The Department waited for awhile, hoping that he would be able to return. By the fall they realized that he wasn't going to go back soon. It had been almost six months since the Tiananmen disturbances, and there were still difficulties associated with that all over China. The Department decided it shouldn't wait any longer to get somebody else out there. The China Office was aware of my sustained interest in the area, and so they called me up and asked me if I'd be willing to go. I talked to Ambassador Levin, who was not enthusiastic about the idea. Nevertheless, he knew that I wanted to go. Things were shut down pretty tightly in Burma still, and there was a limit to how much the embassy could do. So, he agreed. I left in January of 1990 and went directly up to Chengdu.

Q: Before we get to Chengdu, how did the effects of Tiananmen hit Burma?

ADAIR: Well, first of all, I think it served to reassure the Burmese regime that its actions - cracking down on the demonstrations, voiding the election results and imprisoning the opposition – had been right. It removed any possible doubt that there would be any pressure on them from China.

What was particularly interesting for me was that in the fall of 1988, after the Burmese crackdown, the people in the Chinese embassy that we knew were as distressed as we were. They were shocked and appalled by what the Burmese government had done. One very senior person commented with some force that this would never happen in China – the Chinese government would never turn its guns on the Chinese people. That was not a casual comment.

Then, less than a year later, Tiananmen happened. One has to wonder in this case if it was the Burmese who influenced the Chinese. Did the Chinese government draw conclusions from the Burmese action that influenced their decision to employ force against the demonstrators in Tiananmen and elsewhere in China? Perhaps not; they did what they thought they had to do.

Q: Okay, you're off to Chengdu. Now, describe where this is.

ADAIR: Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan Province, which is in central western China. It's really right in the geographic middle of China, including Tibet. Sichuan Province is very special in China. It is surrounded by mountains. You have the Himalayas on the west; the Hengduan Mountains on the border with Yunnan where the Yangtze River goes through; the Tianshan, Qinling and Dada mountains on the north; and then lower mountains on the east. Sichuan province is essentially a basin through which several rivers flow. The rivers have made that basin a very fertile area. The mountains protected and isolated it from invading armies. It has a mild climate so it's very easy to have agriculture pretty much year round. The fertility of the basin was enhanced by one of the world's first major irrigation projects more than 2,000 years ago. With irrigation Sichuan became a major food producing area. It seems to me that over the long course of Chinese history different groups, when they were defeated, sought protection in that basin, creating a concentration of civilization there that's special in China.

The weather is unusual because all those mountains, they trap the clouds. The Sichuan basin has a thin layer of clouds all the time and you very rarely see blue sky. It's not dark, just hazy all the time. That also means that it is more humid and damp. That has affected agriculture and that has also affected Sichuan cuisine. One of the reasons that Sichuan's food is so spicy is it's designed to counteract that humid climate. And it's got a very unusual spice that's used almost nowhere else in the world that I have seen: the Sichuan peppercorns. These are not the little Thai spicy green peppers. These are peppercorns that grow on a tree. They have a very pungent, numbing taste and that is specifically useful for getting rid of excess moisture in the body.

Everything about Sichuan is unique. That concentration of different peoples has created the largest and densest concentration of people in China. When I arrived in Chengdu, Sichuan was the most populous Chinese province with well over 100 million people. Technically now it's no longer the most populous province, because the metropolis of Chongqing (Chungking – the WWII capitol), has been broken off and made an independent municipality.

Q: That's very interesting.

ADAIR: So Sichuan itself is special and it has a history throughout China of being special in terms of people and culture. We've seen that during World War II it was important in an even larger sense than it had been in some of the other historical times. This was where the government of China retreated to in the effort to fend off the invasion from Japan. The capital was in Chongqing with armies throughout Sichuan and Yunnan. That was their redoubt, and we helped them out. We put the B-29's and the Flying Tigers in and around Chengdu and down around Kunming in Yunnan Province.

After World War II and after the Chinese civil war, when China was becoming so isolated during the Mao Zedong period, they also moved some of their strategic industry away from the coastline and into the interior. A certain amount of it went into Sichuan. So it continued to be a strategically important and strategically sensitive area.

Q: What was its relation to Tibet?

ADAIR: Well, first of all, it borders on Tibet. Secondly, what is now Sichuan Province includes not just the central Chengdu plain that I was describing, but the easternmost part of the Himalayan mountain range. That part used to be part of the Tibetan Kingdom. It was called Kham in our transliteration. Today, it's a part of Sichuan Province. It is not included in what China calls the Autonomous Region of Tibet. So, Sichuan Province borders on Tibet, has a portion of what used to be Tibet included in it, and, when I was there, it was the principle place from which one left to go to Tibet. That was the flight path - from Chengdu into Lhasa. There were land routes that went in from Qinghai and Yunnan, but most short-term visitors to Tibet would go from Chengdu.

In the foreign affairs structure of our embassies and consulates, Tibet was placed in the consular district of the consulate general in Chengdu. Back in the mid 1980s, when we negotiated the consulates in China, I think the two that were of primary importance to us were Shanghai and Guangzhou. The third was Chengdu. Then we established one in Shenyang, which was up in the northeast. We also negotiated agreement to establish a consulate in Wuhan, which is in the industrial center of China. However, we never opened that one because of budgetary shortfalls.

Q: Well you were there from when to when?

ADAIR: I arrived in January, 1990, and left in July, 1992.

Q: So what was the situation in that part of China at the time? Had things at Tiananmen left an impression or was it sort of business as usual?

ADAIR: No. Tiananmen definitely left an impression. It was fairly tense. It was tense all over China after Tiananmen. We had a difficult relationship because the United States had so openly disapproved of what the Chinese government did in Tiananmen Square. Things were especially tense in Sichuan and in Chengdu. I was told when I was in Sichuan that the Chinese government was not surprised by the expression of dissent that manifested up there in Beijing. What they were surprised by was that the strongest manifestation of it was in Beijing. They were actually expecting it to be in Sichuan, in Chengdu. I don't know to what degree that's true, but Sichuan traditionally has been a problem for the central government of China. It has always been unruly. It has always maintained a sense of independence, and the people in Sichuan are quite volatile. The central government therefore expected trouble in Sichuan. There were serious demonstrations in Sichuan, the most serious after Beijing.

Q: Well had the Chinese kept non-Sichuanese troops in Sichuan?

ADAIR: My understanding is the Army of the Peoples Republic of China is not local. Military personnel are moved around regularly. That lesson was learned that a fairly long time ago – actually that was true during imperial times as well.

Q: How big was the consulate and what were you up to?

ADAIR: Let's see, we had five American Foreign Service Officers, and one Foreign Service Secretary; so there were six official Americans with families and about 20 to 30 Chinese staff. We didn't have our own building. Our offices and our residences were the Jinjiang Hotel in Chengdu. We had an entire wing of the hotel. The offices were on the ground floor and then we had rooms to live in on the next two floors. It was a fairly high profile operation. Everybody knew we were there. There was only one other consulate in Chengdu at the time, and that was the consulate of Nepal. They were there part-time. Our job was to represent the United States, to get to know as many people as we could, to understand what was going on out there, to have a dialogue, and to provide services to the officials and the population in terms of visas and information on the United States.

Q: Well, what were your main activities? I would imagine the visas must have been busy.

ADAIR: The visa section was very, very busy. There was one consular officer and there were always people waiting. That was really hard. The consular officer had the most stressful job of all - and that was true for China in general. There were just a lot of people that wanted visas, and not a lot of people met the criteria that had to be met in order to give non-immigrant visas. It was just too difficult for many people to prove that they wouldn't stay in the United States.

Q: Yes. Well I saw something in the paper, I think yesterday, saying that for students, Chinese students coming to the United States, it's very difficult because they seem superb on paper but are not always what they are cut out to be. In other words there's, you know, considerable fraud.

ADAIR: There may be. Chinese students have to show that they're able to pursue study in the States. They have to show that they're able to pay for it. They have to be accepted, of course, into a college in the United States. Now there are lots of places in the United States that are willing and able to present documentation saying that they will accept Chinese students. There is also lots of money that's available to support them, from overseas Chinese, from organizations in the United States, from the Chinese government, and increasingly now from people in China. Many Chinese students are extremely qualified. Many also have insufficient English language. They have to pass the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exams, of course, but even then consular officers have to talk with them to make sure that they actually can speak and understand. It's amazing that young Chinese can learn as much English as they do but some of them still don't have what they need. Some of them are just too scared when they get to the consulate, and appear more inarticulate than they are. They are also not sure what they should say and what they shouldn't say there, because they've dealt with bureaucracies all their lives.

Then there is the crux of the difficulty for our whole system, and that is the determination whether they intend just to go to the United States, study and return – or whether they intend to remain indefinitely in the United States.

Q: You know, as an old consular officer, my feeling was hell, the students don't know whether they want to stay.

ADAIR: I agree.

Q: I mean, that's that period in life when it depends on what cards are dealt to them at the time.

Did the Sichuanese who were going either to be students or just to visit have a particular area or areas they were headed for in the States?

ADAIR: Neither geographic nor substantive as far as I recall. Also, it was not just Sichuan. We had people from Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Tibet in our consular district. All had to apply in Chengdu for their visas.

Q: How stood things in Tibet? It must be a difficult issue to work on. I was driving behind a car yesterday which had a license plate engraved with "Free Tibet." That was sponsored by one of the states around here. How did you deal with that sort of thing?

ADAIR: That's a huge issue. First of all, we as a nation have always wanted to support freedom and self-determination for other people around the world. We believe that

people should be able to define their own nation, determine their own form of government and express themselves and their culture. We want to be able to support that. Second, Tibet is an intriguing and romantic image for us. It's a colorful and exciting mountain kingdom far away; it's Shangri-La, it's what "Lost Horizons" was written about.

Q: By James Hilton, yes.

ADAIR: Yes, and when you see the people, they're striking. They're beautiful, colorful, dynamic, and energetic. There is so much there that we like and admire. On top of that they have a mysterious and intriguing culture. Tibetan Buddhism with all of its bells and whistles (literally) is intriguing for a lot of us. In addition, this mysterious and intriguing culture was invaded and suppressed by a larger neighbor; one that we were once taught to revile and see as the ultimate extremist and inhumane enemy. Not that long ago, the Chinese communists were painted as the most evil, dangerous threat to the world ever. The combination of all those things made it almost impossible, I think, for Americans not to want to support Tibet. We made it a cause; we almost had to make Tibet a cause. It's a part of our psychological makeup. We would have done the same thing to support some of the Indian cultures out in the western United States - if we hadn't been the ones that were actually destroying them.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: So, it's almost a given that Tibet is going to be a subject of interest, intellectually and emotionally, for Americans. We had to deal with that. I have to admit that I was one of those Americans interested in Tibet for all of those reasons. That's one of the reasons I wanted to go to Chengdu. We also had to deal with the fact that Tibet is extremely important to the Chinese government. The United States accepted long ago that that Tibet was a part of China. When we recognized the PRC in 1979 that was no longer an issue for us – in terms of foreign policy. Nevertheless, we had opposed the invasion and the forcible imposition of PRC control. Since we did not recognize the PRC at that time as the lawful government of China, that position was not difficult to take. We went further, and clandestinely tried to help Tibetan freedom fighters oppose that invasion and control. The CIA had provided support to Tibetan resistance fighters in the 1950s and we certainly gave them moral support for decades. But now we are faced with the reality that we recognize the PRC as the lawful government of China and that Tibet is a part of that China. We recognize it, and so does most of the international community. I could go into in much more detail but I don't think we want to here.

It was a real challenge for the consulate and for me personally. Tibet was part of our consular district and we were responsible for all aspects of U.S. foreign policy in that area. We did have human rights concerns. We believe as a nation that concern for the human rights should be part of our foreign policy and part of our relationship with other governments. It is our policy to promote respect for and protection of human rights in all countries. Therefore, it was a part of our dialogue whenever we dealt with Tibet – whenever we visited Tibet. Every time I went to Tibet I had a list of people that we were

concerned about. We had reports of people who had either disappeared or been abused or whatever. Sometimes we knew they were being held in prison, sometimes not. I would give that list to the authorities – to whoever I met with in Tibet - and I would talk with them about it. I would ask them for information, and they would usually give me the standard reply that this was none of our business, that it was the internal affairs of China. I would say of course it's the internal affairs of China, and then I would explain our broader concern with human rights. I would explain the principled part of it, and I would explain the practical part of it. The practical part was that this was the reality of the United States; and that we would continue to make this an issue in our relations. Then I would appeal to them, in the interests of better relations between our two countries, to do the best that they could. They maintained their principled position, and out of humanitarian concern they did come back and give me information on many of those people, which I would send back to the Department.

On one case I actually went and visited the prison in question with the ambassador who was making a visit to our consular district. I arranged for him to visit; we went, we saw the prison, we saw the conditions, we met with individuals, we talked with them and did a full report on it back to Washington. What I saw, though, was that we weren't always helping the cause of the Tibetans, individually or culturally.

When public statements were made in the United States about Tibet, by members of Congress or other notables, these would be heard or read about by people in Tibet. Often this would encourage them to take greater risks. Not too long after something like that happened in the United States, activities would surface on the streets in Lhasa. People would demonstrate and they would get carried away. Then there would be a crackdown and people would get hurt, killed or put in prison. That part was unnecessary. It wasn't helping. It set things back for them. Unintentionally we were often causing problems, I think, for people in Tibet. We were causing them problems rather than helping them.

Q: Did you have good contacts in Tibet?

ADAIR: My contacts in Tibet were primarily official. I worked through the foreign affairs office there, which I had to do in all of the areas that I worked. In the case of Tibet, the head of the foreign affairs office was actually a Chinese diplomat who had been assigned to Tibet after his return from Yugoslavia. So he understood the dynamic; he understood the position I was in; and he understood the implications of this for China's relationships with other nations. He did his best to help. He was always available to talk with me. We would have our official meeting, and have fairly extensive discussions. He would try to get me access – to people in the monasteries, to people in the government up there in Lhasa, to economic officials, to prison officials, etc. He got me regular appointments with the governor of the autonomous region of Tibet.

The one person he never got me a meeting with was the party secretary. The party secretary at the time was Hu Jintao, who is now the chairman of the communist party of China and the head of state. But I never got to see him. On the whole the access that I had in Tibet improved. Part of the issue of access was just getting around. Initially when I

went up, I was pretty much confined to Lhasa. When I had been at the embassy in Beijing earlier I had managed to make one trip to Lhasa as a tourist and had gone out to the southeastern part of Tibet, but it took me awhile to get to other parts, to get to some of the monasteries.

Q: Did you find the Tibetans well informed? I mean, were they a savvy bunch or were they provincial?

ADAIR: That depended on who one was talking with. Some of them were very well informed – like the governor and some of the people in the foreign affairs office. They knew what was going on in China and they were aware of what was going on elsewhere in the world. There were business people and some in the monasteries who recognized the reality of the political situation, but were distressed with certain aspects of it and wanted to find solutions to that. And, then there were monks and other individuals that I met at various times in Lhasa who just wanted the Chinese out at whatever cost. That wasn't an option.

I had one long conversation with a monk in one of the big monasteries who expressed concern that the quality of their religious instruction was declining. He believed the new, younger monks weren't getting the kind of guidance they needed because many of the older monks had fled. That would be a serious problem in any religion but it was particularly serious in Buddhism and in Tibetan Buddhism, because they have to go through not just instruction, they have to go through training. If they don't have people that have gone through this themselves and are wise enough to see where they are in their own spiritual, emotional, psychological make up, it's very easy to get off track. That was a legitimate concern, but they probably weren't going to be able to deal with it effectively.

Q: This is probably a good place to stop. We'll pick it up the next time'

Q: Today is the 8th of November, 2011, with Marshall Adair. Marshall, we were talking about your experiences in your representation in Tibet. Could you set up sort of a permanent office there or was this a no-no or what?

ADAIR: No, I don't think there was any option to set up a permanent office. I don't think the Chinese would have let us do it, and I don't think that we could have found the money to do it even if they had. It would have been an interesting place to be but I don't know how much it would have helped anyway, really.

Q: Well to a certain extent the very existence of such an office would mean that you would be constantly petitioned or demonstrated.

ADAIR: That's right. It probably would have generated more trouble; and that wouldn't necessarily have helped the Tibetans.

Q: It wouldn't advance any particular cause?

ADAIR: I don't think so.

Q: What were your connections, if any, with the Dalai Lama at the time?

ADAIR: I didn't have any connection with the Dalai Lama; and I didn't have any communication with his people at the time. There was communication off and on, I think, between some people back in Washington on the China desk but not that much. I had met the Dalai Lama once in Washington on my own, and had pictures of him and Ginger talking together. People in Tibet revered him, and they were ecstatic to receive pictures of him, because they were publicly available in Tibet. We had taken some pictures with us when we visited the first time back in 1985 and the reception was really quite extraordinary. The Chinese officials tried to stop us from passing them out, but they weren't heavy handed about it, at least not at that time.

Q: Was there a serious liberate Tibet movement in Tibet?

ADAIR: There was serious sentiment for Tibetan independence, but there was no effective organization that I saw. The Chinese government control of it was pretty effective. However, there were plenty of people that were available to demonstrate if the occasion arose.

Q: How about India? A lot of the monks, of course, ended up there. Was this a significant center of Tibetan activity outside of Tibet?

ADAIR: I don't have any personal experience with the Tibetan community in India so I really can't talk about it effectively. India provided refuge to the Tibetan exiles, and has allowed them to live there as a government in exile for many years now, for decades. It's really quite an extraordinary thing. There's a community there and a government there that has all of its officials and travels all over the world contacting people. It has its own procedures and resources. That is certainly serious. That's who many governments around the world deal with.

Q: Did you get any good reporting, a feel for the education within Tibet and how it reflected on both Buddhism and on the history of Tibet and all?

ADAIR: As far as I know, the principle education on Buddhism and that kind of history of old Tibet existed within the monasteries. It was education that was given to the young monks, the novices. The people that educated them were the older monks. There were older monks there but many of the more accomplished monks, had chosen to leave Tibet, either when the Dalai Lama left or later.

The Chinese had no reason to provide education on Tibetan Buddhism in the public school system, or perhaps anything that was favorable to the religion itself. The government of China is officially atheist. For decades it actively discouraged religion in

any form. They are still suspicious and view organized religion as a politically and socially disruptive force. Nevertheless, even during some of the worst of times they allowed somewhat more autonomy for the study of religion in places like Tibet than they did in other parts of China. However, even after China began to relax those kinds of controls, I don't think it became part of the regular curriculum. Teaching religion and Tibetan culture I think depends more on the Tibetans themselves, and they have limited resources to continue it.

Q: Now what about visitors from outside, including Americans; were they bringing "the word" back? I mean, spiritual support or not?

ADAIR: You mean taking it into Tibet or taking it out of Tibet?

Q: Taking it into Tibet.

ADAIR: Well first of all visitors from the United States and other countries continued to be restricted. The severity of that restriction would ebb and flow, mostly in relation to the political and security atmosphere. Access to different parts of Tibet has certainly grown in the last two decades; it's grown tremendously. Foreigners, particularly Americans and Europeans, that had an interest in Tibetan Buddhism would visit. They would want to talk with monks and different people in the religious communities. But I wouldn't really describe it as them taking the word in. I think most of them were going in for their own edification, for their own education.

Q: Were you able to go to Tibet at will or did you have to get permission each time?

ADAIR: I had to get permission each time. When I was in Chengdu we pretty much had to get permission to go just about anywhere. But I don't think I was ever told no. I went a total of, I think it was seven or eight times while I was there.

Q: What about traveling around Sichuan province? Was it easy to travel?

ADAIR: No, it wasn't easy to travel. Again, we had to get permission. From Chengdu, we were allowed to travel, without permission, a certain distance out along several roads and it varied. Beyond that we had to get permission to visit anything other than tourist-type places, and sometimes permission was required for those as well. It was very restricted. We could ask for permission and we would often get it, but we were also turned down a significant number of times. That was particularly true if we wanted to go off into places where foreigners didn't often travel.

The government had a number of concerns. Number one, they were still in the process of opening up. It was still a little bit difficult for foreigners to travel in China in general. It was getting easier every year but they didn't have their political, supervisory system, or whatever you call it, set up to watch and take care of people. The first concern was that we might cause trouble for them.

The second concern was for our safety and well being. That was partially a genuine humanitarian concern, and partially because the local government was responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the diplomats. So in some respects it was just easier for them to say no, you can't go there because we don't have the facilities, than it was to try and set up a system for care and feeding of the foreigners. It was evolving, but only very slowly. One of my objectives was to expand the area to which we were allowed to go without permission. I talked with the local officials quite a lot, and they were not about to do it. They probably didn't have the authority to do it anyway. We didn't get any real response from the authorities in Beijing either. So I went to the embassy and I went back to the State Department and I argued that we should restrict their movements in the same way that they restrict our movements. In other words, their diplomats in the United States should be restricted.

That's something that the State Department has always tried to avoid doing, because that sort of tit for tat is sort of small-hearted; and it can cause more problems than it solves sometimes. It's more difficult for us to set up those kinds of restrictions, and once we do it may be hard for us to remove them. So for those reasons and the danger that they would cause even more problems for us in other countries we tend not to do that. However in this case I argued it forcefully – and incessantly - and people finally agreed. I went back to Chengdu, pulled out a map and looked at the different consulates in the United States. I then recommended that we make an analogy between Chengdu and the Chinese consulate in Houston, Texas. At the time Chinese diplomats at the Chinese consulate general in Houston were free to go anywhere they wanted, and see anybody they wanted. I crafted restrictions on the diplomatic personnel in Houston that were as close to what we experienced in Chengdu as I could; and presented them to the Office of Foreign Missions at the State Department. The Department imposed the restrictions – which was really quite surprising to me. Within two weeks of that action all the restrictions were taken off of us.

Q: Good God.

ADAIR: I think that the reason it worked was basically that it was good for both parties. China is a huge country with a huge government which is a huge bureaucracy. There is tremendous inertia. There are many different factions with different interests. Those interests may not be mutually exclusive. They may not be totally in competition, but the competition is what comes first and sometimes it is difficult to get beyond it and find the common interests. The Chinese intended to lift many restrictions on foreigners eventually, but many of these competing interests stood in the way. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in principle would be interested in helping us, but in practice it would have been difficult so they would be inclined to avoid it. However, when we told them that they were going to be similarly restricted that clarified their interest. It also gave them an important argument to use with all those other factions, whoever they might have been. In other words, they could now say that Chinese national interests would suffer in a specific way if they didn't take action.

The other reason that it worked was that it didn't come out of the blue for them. I made sure they knew that this was going on. I included our Chinese employees in the consulate in the whole exercise. So they were reporting constantly about what we were doing. They knew that it was coming. They might have been surprised when it actually happened. They also knew that it wasn't being done as a punitive exercise. It was being done out of necessity on our part, as constructive thing to promote our access, and that was in the interests of both countries as well.

Q: Well then you basically could go where you wanted?

ADAIR: Our access was significantly improved. There were still some areas that were restricted. At this point I can't remember exactly what they were, but they would have been areas that were considered to be particularly sensitive.

Q: Nuclear?

ADAIR: Well they had a space launch center out there.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: I visited it by invitation for the launch of an American-made satellite. There had been some American personnel from American companies working out there to make it possible, and they made a big deal of the launch – which turned out to be successful. Many people attended. I went from Chengdu. There were people that came up from Hong Kong, including some big Hong Kong investors like Li Ka-Shing.

Q: Did you have any sort of tribal groups that were restive?

ADAIR: No, not when I was there that I recall. There are lots of minorities in southwest China. Quite a few are in Sichuan. There are even more in Yunnan and in Guizhou. The Chinese government makes a big deal of the fact that these minority groups are allowed the autonomy to pursue their own customs – and to some degree their own social and quasi-political organization within the larger context of China. When you visit these areas it's very colorful. Their villages may look the same as they have looked for centuries. Their clothes, their language and many of their customs are unique. They are all still part of China. They have their own representatives in the Communist Party and other organizations. In some respects I think they've been able to maintain their own cultures better than similar minorities in the United States.

Q: How about academics? I would think that his would be a place where aspiring academics from the United States and other countries would love to go and study.

ADAIR: Yes, I think so. There weren't very many when I was there. There were a few in the university in Chengdu. There was one in Tibet. Some came to the consulate to register with us, but I didn't see very many of them. I think there are more now.

Negotiations were underway when I was there for the Peace Corps to send out people to that area. I think the first group went out soon after I left in 1992.

Q: You were there when they were working on the Three Gorges Dam?

ADAIR: They were beginning, yes.

Q: Was that hitting your area?

ADAIR: It hadn't yet, but would eventually. There were villages in our consulate district that knew they were going to be moved. The whole process was just beginning. I believe there was still a chance to back away from this big project. But they didn't.

Q: Was there room for dispute? Was the Chinese government allowing contrary opinion to come out at all?

ADAIR: Well, they weren't encouraging it. Most people that I talked with just assumed that the government in Beijing had decided to do it, and that any discussion of it was not going to change the basic direction. All you could do was perhaps was soften it a little bit. One of the reasons was that it was the brainchild and the pet project of the prime minister of China, Li Peng. He believed that it should be done for a variety of reasons and he was the power in Beijing.

Q: In talking with the officials in your area, how did they refer to Beijing and all? Did they kind of roll their eyes and-?

ADAIR: No, absolutely not. There was almost no expression of any kind of disagreement with Beijing. The officials that I dealt with in Chengdu kept their distance from me. I saw them when I asked to see them and it wasn't always easy. I'm talking about the senior officials. Most of them had very little interest in dealing with the American consulate or American personnel. I think that that was partially because they had other things on their plate, and partially because there was a lot more downside for them than there was upside.

Q: I would think so.

ADAIR: Particularly since this was the period after Tiananmen and there was still a fair amount of tension. When I talked with them the conversations were fairly shallow. We didn't get very deep into issues. There was virtually no expression of personal opinions. Of course, it's not only in China that you encounter that.

It's not to say that there were no officials in the area with whom we could talk. There were some who were in positions that were not sensitive or in positions that where they were supposed to deal with us on various matters. That included economic officials who wanted to promote trade with the United States, and support officials, people that dealt with us on an administrative support level.

Q: Did you get involved in cultural affairs?

ADAIR: We had a public affairs officer at the consulate and she got involved with bringing American musicians and speakers to the area. They were well received. We ourselves visited sites in the area. We went to the temples, we got to know some of the artists in Chengdu, we went to the markets, we met people that were educated and with whom we could discuss history and different things about Chinese culture.

Q: Did you find you were besieged by parents and kids who wanted to go to the United States to school?

ADAIR: Yes. We were besieged by people applying for visas in general. Students were certainly a big element of that. There were parents who wanted to get their kids to school in the United States, because they wanted to get them out of China and give them different opportunities. Things were changing in China but they hadn't gotten to the point where they are now; where the opportunities in some respects are better than they are in the United States. We gave lots of visas to people to go to the States to study and to visit. We also had to turn many down.

We had one incident where a businessman who I had met in Guizhou Province came to the consulate with a relative of his who wanted to go to the United States. He brought 30 bottles of Mao-tai, which is expensive. It's one of the most famous drinks in China and came from Guizhou Province. I went down and I talked to him. I told him that we could not accept his gifts, because these visa issues had to be decided on the merits. I asked him to take his wine back. He insisted that this had nothing to do with the visa; that he was bringing it as an expression of friendship between nations, etc. etc. I knew that technically I should not accept the gift. However, I had also been raised, basically, to believe that if somebody offers you something it's impolite not to take it. There's an element of that in some cultures that's true. I finally said he could give this wine to the consulate but it will have absolutely no impact on the decision. He said fine. We took the 30 bottles of Mao-tai and then gave them to all of the Chinese employees in the consulate. His relative went in and saw the consular officer who interviewed him and then refused him the visa. I thought, well, at least that's going to spread like wildfire and it would be unlikely to happen again.

Subsequently, I concluded that the decision was half correct. What I really should have done was then go back to that man who had come in and take him out to dinner so that he didn't lose face personally. But I didn't do it, and that was wrong. There are many things in my career that I would like to be able to revisit.

Q: Yes, well in these interviews of course we play by one set of rules and they play by another.

ADAIR: And we, for the most part, are not able to play them as intricately as they do. And it was really hard. You were in the consular cone and you know how difficult it is to

do that kind of work. But it was really hard for the consular officers all over China. I would not want to be a consular officer in China.

In Chengdu it was especially hard. The volume was high. I think that the individual consular officer in Chengdu had close to the same number of cases as individual consular officers in Beijing or Guangzhou or Shanghai. However, in Chengdu that consular officer was alone. He or she had no one else to share the burden with. They also had no privacy. There was no respite because they couldn't leave the office and go to their home and be private. They left their office, went around the corner and upstairs into the same hotel. Access to the hotel was not restricted. They could be cornered in the hotel or on the hotel grounds or just about anywhere. They were in a fishbowl, and people could go after them at any time. So the stress for those consular officers was just tremendous. I admired them greatly for the poise that they maintained.

Q: Well did the fact that they were in China compensate those officers for the stress they had to bear? America's fascination with China goes back many, many years. Did this make a difference?

ADAIR: Of course. Most of us who were in China were there because we were interested in China. It wasn't because we had just been told to go there. Most of us were fascinated with the circumstances that we found ourselves in. Most of us understood that there were many different levels to it and that when we were restricted in one way or another or stressed in one way or another, it wasn't a one dimensional thing. It wasn't just directed at us. We understood that there were all kinds of reasons for this, and that the people with whom we were dealing were going through something infinitely more difficult and complex. Those of us in Chengdu at that time had it better than the American diplomats who first arrived in China in the 1970s, and better even than when we were in Beijing in the mid-1980s. There was more freedom to walk around; there was more freedom to associate with others. We could talk to people. We still had to be careful because we never knew whether somebody that talked with us would get in trouble or something. But we could communicate with individuals. We could talk with the old woman who was selling something on the street and exchange smiles. We could have a philosophical discussion with somebody at a teahouse or in the park. I think most of us appreciated that we were able to get quite a lot out of it. When I was there there was only one American officer in the consulate who didn't have Chinese language. That was the administrative officer, because the Department had had trouble finding somebody. He was from USAID and he volunteered. He and his wife were probably two of the most enthusiastic people who were there. They got out and they went all over. They took full advantage of the opportunity to see the place and to communicate with people. There were lots of people there that spoke some English and wanted to practice their English too.

Q: Were there any particular points in the United States that students were headed for? I mean, established connections or not?

ADAIR: I think there were a few places that were better known than others.

Q: Yes, I was talking to the headmaster of my prep school, who was saying he couldn't say it in public, but China's become almost a cash cow.

ADAIR: I've seen that in a number of private schools.

Q: I mean, he said they were getting superb students. They were not lowering their standards.

ADAIR: I know some schools that are actually going to China and recruiting.

Q: Was the question of religion at all taking root from where you were?

ADAIR: Religion of one form or another was becoming more prominent in many places around China. Chengdu didn't seem to be unusual. I was aware of more resurgence in the Christian religion in Beijing and in Guangzhou than in Chengdu. I don't recall visiting a Christian church in Chengdu. However, the Buddhist and Daoist temples were very crowded and active.

Q: Were you sort of off the beaten track for visitors to China, government visitors?

ADAIR: Pretty much so. We certainly didn't get the same number of official visitors as Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou. We did get some. Some made a special effort to get out to southwest China because they had a personal interest. Some came out for specific government or business purposes. I only remember one group coming through to Tibet. That included Dick Holbrooke and John Holdridge, who were both private citizens at the time. We also had a number of visits from officials who were focused on Yunnan because of the narcotics issue.

Q: Were drugs a problem in your area?

ADAIR: Not in Sichuan. In Yunnan there definitely was a problem along the border with Burma. It was a problem that the Chinese government was concerned about. They were taking a variety of measures to deal with it, both law enforcement and rehabilitation. Drugs were being moved from the border with Burma across China and down to Hong Kong, though detailed information was hard to come by. We made some efforts to begin building a relationship between our Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) people and the Chinese public security bureau. It started in Beijing, but when I arrived in Chengdu it was still sort of tentative and nothing had happened in our area. I thought that that was a good time to try, so I went down to Hong Kong and talked with the DEA people there. They were enthusiastic, so I then went to Yunnan and talked with the foreign affairs office there. They were responsive too, and organized a trip to the border with Burma. The Director of the Foreign Affairs Office in Yunnan, and the Director of the Yunnan Public Security Bureau took me and one DEA officer from Hong Kong. It was the first time that any official American had been to the Chinese side of the Burma/China border since before the Chinese communists had taken over in 1949. It was fascinating. It was really fascinating for me, because I had recently lived in Burma, and I had not been allowed to

go to the Burmese side of the border. It was completely off limits to foreigners and specifically to Americans.

I had seen the Chinese and Burmese mixing and working together in Mandalay. I had begun to be able to see when someone in Burma had Chinese ancestry. On the Chinese border I had to try to see it in reverse. In some ways it was more difficult, because that area of Yunnan has so many different minorities of its own. That's a big part of Yunnan's identity. On that trip, we only went to one place on the border, a town called Ruili, where most of the trade was crossing. There was clearly an important Burmese influence on the Chinese side, and probably an even bigger Chinese influence on the Burmese side.

The trip was successful in that it initiated direct ties between DEA and the Chinese Public Security Bureau in Yunnan, and nothing untoward happened. There was no downside to it, and everybody was more comfortable working with that relationship afterwards. Not too long after that the assistant secretary of state for narcotics (INS) also visited. We took him to the border as well. Then we did a longer trip, went to more places and visited rehabilitation centers. We were able to wander along the river there where the border was and talk with people.

Q: Did you have Americans caught in drug smuggling or anything like that?

ADAIR: No. Not when I was there and I'm not aware of any since then either.

Q: How about Chinese dissidents? Were they of a presence where you were?

ADAIR: We didn't have any issues with high profile political dissidents in Chengdu when I was there. Sichuan is a very volatile area, and traditionally the people of Sichuan have been as upfront as any Chinese about expressing disagreement with the central government. For that reason there was probably more effort made to keep that kind of expression suppressed.

Q: Were there any American firms dealing there?

ADAIR: Yes, there were a few but not many. There were a few companies dealing with larger Chinese operations. Hughes sold a communications satellite to the Chinese government and had personnel at the rocket launch center in the west of Sichuan Province. McDonnell Douglas had some personnel working with an aircraft manufacturer near Chengdu. There were virtually no entrepreneurs that I saw in that area when I was there. I tried to encourage people to come and didn't get any takers, except for one, McDonald's.

Q: Well let's talk about it a little.

ADAIR: Well, close to the end of my tour in Chengdu another mountaineering group came through. This was the second American mountaineering group that I'd seen come into China to climb Everest. The first was when I was in Beijing, led by Lou Whittaker

from Seattle. This one was led by his twin brother, Jim Whittaker. This group was going to climb with the Chinese and with a Russian group. I think it was called the "Climb for Peace." When they came through they stopped in Chengdu on the way, and we met with them. When they left I asked Jim Whittaker what we could do for them when they came back. What would they like? He laughed and said, "How about a Big Mac?" I said okay.

So I called the headquarters of McDonald's in Hong Kong and I explained the situation to them. I didn't know whether the team would succeed in getting to the top of Everest or not. They did. However, I thought McDonald's could get a lot of good publicity from catering a welcome back event. They thought about it and said yes. They filled up an airplane with all the stuff for Big Macs and flew it to Chengdu with their own personnel. We worked with the local government and local businesses and set up the event at a major hotel in Chengdu. We let the climbers know when they got down to Lhasa, put up big welcoming banners and invited about 300 people. The mountaineers loved it, and I thought everybody loved it. Driving to the reception I was sitting with Jim Whittaker and I explained what had been set up. He asked me if I wanted him to speak. I replied that if he wanted to speak, sure, but that this reception was for them to enjoy so the choice was his. He said very well, he would just eat. So that's the way we did it. I introduced them; and he got up and made a big deal of taking a bite out of the Big Mac. Afterwards I got a nasty letter from one of the American professors who were at the university there, saying he couldn't believe that the U.S. Government would do such a crass material thing, promoting American companies and not even give Jim Whittaker a chance to speak. I replied to him, but I guess you can't make everybody happy.

Q: How about corruption? Did you run into this?

ADAIR: Chinese corruption?

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: When I was there Chinese corruption, in the sense that we usually speak of it, did not appear to have really gotten started yet. There wasn't enough freedom yet. Corruption always existed in China, of course. There are always people who will try to use whatever power they have to do something for themselves that is outside the bounds of what is permitted. During the period of Mao Zedong's rule in China the corruption was still there. It just was not on the business side because there wasn't any business. The currency of corruption wasn't dollars or yuan. It wasn't money. The corruption came in the form of whether you would get a better apartment, or a car to take you around, or your child would be allowed to leave the country to go study overseas. The economic opening that began in the late 1970s and grew through the '80s began to provide economic incentives for corruption through profit. But it hadn't really had a chance to be that noticeable in Chengdu in the early 1990s, at least as I recall. It was probably growing pretty quickly in construction related areas though.

Q: Well I got a certain insight into this from a book by this Peace Corps volunteer who then became a New Yorker. I think it was called "Driving Around." It's a book about

driving around Beijing and China. He documents corruption related to cigarettes. Apparently there are categories of cigarettes and you tell how much clout you have or you think you have by the cigarette brand that you smoke.

ADAIR: I think those kinds of things can take many forms. I took a congressional delegation to Yunnan Province and we visited a tobacco company. I can't remember where the congressional delegation was from. When we finished the tour of the plant, the company gave everybody several cartons of cigarettes to take with them. They had one kind of cigarette that was an experimental combination of tobaccos unique to China. And I asked the company if they would give me a couple more cartons of that, because I thought I would take them to a friend in Hong Kong who might be a good advertisement for them. One of the people in the congressional delegation sort of raised his eyebrows and asked if that was appropriate - could it be considered a kind of a bribe? I laughed and said I didn't think so, but I suppose someone might have thought so.

Q: One of the things that certainly was prevalent at all our embassies and consulates for years may still be going on, and that was the Christmas gifts.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: At one point because other countries were undergoing real privation we used to give out things like bottles of Scotch, but also razor blades and things of this nature. And you know, after a time I think we've probably gotten away from this, but this was giving the customs officials and others with whom we worked the message that we really care for you and we remember you; remember us.

ADAIR: Right.

Q: Now, did you do any of that sort of thing?

ADAIR: Yes, we often try to give gifts to people. In China and elsewhere I tried to give gifts that were about the United States.

Q: Books.

ADAIR: Books, particularly picture books of the United States. I tried to get them from USIS (United States Information Service). When we could we would give American whiskey, but that was difficult to get in China, particularly in Chengdu.

In Chengdu, we mostly took people out to dinner. In China there is a whole culture of eating. You don't go out one-on-one. You get a big group of people; sit at a big table where a seemingly endless array of dishes is served; and it's very loud and boisterous. That was part of Chinese culture and it was permissible for Chinese officials to accept those invitations. It was also less compromising for them, because these were public, multiple person events. They were less vulnerable to potential criticism. So we tried to do that as much as possible for the people that we dealt with – at least as much as we could

afford it. It was a way of showing our interest in them or gratitude for services that they had done for us. We would often take the head of an office and a number of his people - anywhere from five to 15 or 20 of them. They liked it because we would take them to good restaurants that many of them wouldn't otherwise have the chance to go to. There weren't any foreign restaurants in Chengdu at the time; it would be Chinese restaurants. It was nice for us because we got the chance to visit with them in a way that was less formal – and because it was something that we could actually do for them.

Q: I was just thinking of the problem that diplomats have had, certainly in the former Soviet Union, probably Russia now, with drinking. Was trying to drink you under the table part of the Chinese system?

ADAIR: Oh, very much a part of it. I told you about my experience in Beijing.

Q: Let's talk about it some more now.

ADAIR: Okay. There is a part of Chinese culture where drinking is very important. It's done as a social thing, it's done as a competition thing and it's done as a personal thing. People who get drunk together can form a bond. In China it has been also carried into art forms. Some very famous poets have composed poetry when they're drunk. I suppose like Coleridge and his drugs. I don't know to what degree paintings were done that way. Even in martial arts there's a whole style called "the drunken master."

I was first exposed to it in Taiwan when I was studying. The teachers tried to teach us the danger of this. I was less concerned about the danger. I wanted to experience it - try all the different wines and stuff like that. And I did that to some degree in Taiwan and to some degree in Hong Kong. But I didn't get really exposed to it until I went to Beijing. Beijing in the mid 1980s was still pretty closed down, but official drinking was permitted. As I described earlier, I way overdid it. In Chengdu I was more careful.

Q: Are there any tricks?

ADAIR: Oh, there are. People have all kinds of tricks. The first one I learned was from Russians at the UN in New York back in 1971. They said if you eat lots of butter before you go and drink, you won't get drunk. I tried that. It didn't work for me – just made me sick. The Chinese actually have a variety of medicines that you can take before and after that help significantly because they protect the liver. The butter or oil prescription may protect the stomach, but it hurts the liver. So the Chinese know how to do it.

The best story I heard, though, was from an uncle of mine who was an American military officer stationed in Kunming during World War II. He had to have dinner with a local general who was a famous drinker – and I guess not a very nice person. He secretly arranged some deal with the people at the restaurant so that only the general was getting liquor – he was getting something else. He won that competition, and somehow the ruse was never discovered. If it had been, I suppose things might not have gone well for the restaurant owners.

At our wedding reception in Taipei, when we made the obligatory toasts to each table of guests, I had tea in my glasses, which was the same color as the wine. At the time I had a stomach ulcer and alcohol was dangerous. However, my ruse was discovered by one of Ginger's uncles who started to broadcast it until he was stopped by his mother who had recommended that course of action to begin with.

Q: Did you get any reflections on the WWII participation by Americans in Chungking when you were there? What is Chungking called now?

ADAIR: Chongqing. There were still strong memories of that period, and of the American involvement in both Chongqing and Chengdu. There were American bombers stationed outside of Chengdu. The Flying Tigers were near Kunming in Yunnan province.

Several times during our stay in Chengdu, people came up to me on the street, older people, to say they remembered the Americans who protected them when we most needed it. They would describe seeing the Flying Tiger aircraft over the city. The Flying Tigers were the fighters that protected the cities from the Japanese aircraft. The B-29s were bombers would fly out across the lines to bomb the Japanese positions. When these planes flew overhead, the people knew they were American - that somebody was with them. That meant a lot to them and they had never forgotten it. That was really touching, particularly since for the previous 30 years our two countries had been mortal enemies. Some of these people even made a point of saying that during all that time they never forgot what we did to help them.

When I was there the Chinese government also memorialized Joseph Stilwell, the American general who was in charge of U.S. military forces in China and the liaison to General Chiang Kai-shek. A small museum was set up in the house where he had lived. Some of his family members came out for that and I attended the ceremony. And that was pretty nice, that the American general would be recognized that way; that he would be given an official place in their history.

Q: You know, every once in awhile, we have an incident with the Chinese. They get very touchy on things that often are either their fault or our fault. I'm thinking of the collision with the reconnaissance plane that forced it down, and also the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. Did anything major like that that happen while you were there?

ADAIR: When I was in Chengdu we didn't have anything specifically of that nature. We did after I left. One of my big projects in Chengdu was to get the permanent consulate building completed. When I went out to Chengdu, the consulate was in the hotel. There was a site that had been selected for the consulate, and a Chinese construction company had actually built the shells of the buildings. The project had stopped because communication between the Department of State's OBO (Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations) and the Chinese had fallen apart. OBO had put the project on hold indefinitely. I spent a lot of time trying to resurrect that project, and succeeded. It was a

lot of work, and quite difficult to get through the bureaucracy. But we finally got it restarted. I didn't move into it but my successor did.

One of the issues had been a question about setback. There was a wall around the whole compound, but the consul general's residence was right against the corner of the wall. It didn't meet the standards – a 100 foot setback – that I think had been established after the initial construction started. I argued that was less important in a place like Chengdu where China would always control the security. Well, after we bombed, by mistake, the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, there were demonstrations in Beijing. A mob stood around the embassy in Beijing and threw stones at it breaking all the windows. There was a picture of the ambassador looking out through the broken windows. Well, what they didn't show was what happened in Chengdu, where the mob burnt down the residence of the consul general. Luckily no one was hurt, but that showed me the downside to my aggressive argument that we could apply a different security standard in China.

There's a very strong emotional side to the Chinese population. It may take some time to come into play. They can go through an awful lot before they finally react, but when they do react it's pretty serious. It can happen when there is a perception that their national honor has been damaged beyond what can be justifiably accepted. The Chinese government does not always try to defuse those situations – enough said.

Q: Perhaps understandably in some cases. As an old Belgrade hand I wondered, how the hell could we have done that?

ADAIR: When my Chinese friends have talked with me about that, I have said that it would make no sense for the United States to do something like that. It would serve no rational purpose. But I also said, "Never underestimate the ability of any government to make really stupid mistakes like miscalculations using out of date information, improper maps, etc. – and that includes the United States for all its wealth and power. With us, the bombing of an embassy is pretty unacceptable. If that happened to us we would be pretty difficult to please. We always have to be careful. There are lots of ways in which the lines may be crossed inadvertently, and the reactions – of either side - might surprise us.

Q: Well for example court cases. I mean something dealing with a Chinese plaintiff in a court case determined in, you know, East Bygosh, Pennsylvania, might not get much attention in Pennsylvania, but once it gets played up in China it could be a different story.

ADAIR: Yes. I think another area where difficulties may grow over time may be visas. We have made it difficult for Chinese to get visas to the United States. It's expensive, and many Chinese have felt insulted in their efforts get visas to visit the United States. We see now that it's becoming very expensive for Americans to get visas to China now. Perhaps at some point it may become difficult for Americans to get visas to China at all. The Chinese may tell us they are just doing it out of reciprocity. They are telling us that now, and there is some truth in it – some. I think we gave some multiple year visas to

Chinese when I was in Chengdu, but I can't get one now to China. These kinds of things stick in peoples' memories and get interpreted differently over time.

Q: Well as far as relations with China, it strikes me that here is a population that can be encouraged to really be beastly, including go on rampages against other countries. It strikes me that this would be a real factor that we'd almost have to consider in our relations with them...

ADAIR: Any population can be encouraged to be beastly - any population.

Q: I know but the Chinese-

ADAIR: The Chinese have a larger population than anybody else.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: The Chinese stand on a much deeper and older civilization than anybody else in the world. They have an ancient social organization – which has survived in spite of the Cultural Revolution - and many traditions that restrain them. But those restraints can be taken off. And, perhaps because they have such a complex set of restraints, if there's any green light that says "you're relieved of these restraints," then maybe the explosion is larger than it would be in other cases. Maybe that's part of the reason the Japanese behaved as they did during the war. Their society has some of these restraints as well. I don't know.

Q: Was there any action while you were there, in your area, on encouraging Chinese-American military cooperation of any kind?

ADAIR: Well yes, we were trying to establish more contacts between our two militaries. It was happening very, very gradually and the embassy was playing a role. American and Chinese military attaches in many places around the world were increasing their contacts. When I was in Chengdu I didn't have any contacts with the military per se. I met some military officials at the satellite launch that I referred to.

However, that part of the relationship was very limited. In the long run it is a really important part of our overall relationship. One way or another, our respective defense establishments have enormous influence on our national and international policies. In China there have been periods when the military was not just heavily influential, but dominant, in government decision making across the board. It may have been less so in the 1980s and early 1990s because that seemed to have been part of the plan - to move them back a notch, get them involved in other things, and give them a stake in opening to the rest of the world. In recent years, the Chinese military seems to be reasserting its role again. China has become wealthier. It can pour more money into the military, and is taking a much larger role on the international stage.

To some degree, this is natural and perhaps necessary. As China grows more powerful it will have to play a role across the board: political, military, economic, cultural - everything. The question is, what kind of balance will there be? One of our largest concerns from the beginning has been to promote a relationship with China that is not an antagonistic relationship. We had an antagonistic relationship in the '50s, '60s and part of the '70s because both sides chose to make the relationship antagonistic. In more recent decades, both sides have tried to overcome that legacy. However, there are still forces in both countries that would like to return the relationship to an adversarial one. I think that we have to be real careful about what we do all around the world – even in apparently unrelated areas - because what we do can affect the balance between those who would promote a more friendly and constructive relationship and others who would prefer something very different. When I was in Chengdu, the United States undertook the first Gulf War. In the minds of most Americans, it was done for the best of reasons: we intervened to protect Kuwait, a small and friendly state, from Iraq, a more powerful, territorially aggressive and not so friendly state. We intervened, with the approval of the United Nations, to restore internationally recognized boundaries and to maintain the integrity of an international system intended to avoid catastrophic conflict. In addition, we considered our intervention to be quite restrained. We didn't go in and occupy Iraq. The first Bush administration was really impressive in the way that it did that.

On the other hand, our display of massive technological warfare was so extraordinary - and so flamboyant - that I think it had a profound impact on Chinese observers. It surprised most Americans that we had those capabilities. I think it also surprised and worried many Chinese.

Q: Oh yes.

ADAIR: The Chinese were impressed and they were also concerned. If I were a Chinese official in Beijing at that time, I would have been asking, why would the United States be willing to take its power halfway around the world to protect this little teeny country with which it had no protection treaties? Oil would not be a sufficient answer since the United States had other sources, and also could have simply restored the apparently friendly relationship that it had had with Iraq not too long before. I would also have been concerned by the demonstration that the United States could apply unbelievable force anywhere on the planet. Then we demonstrated the willingness to do it again with the second Gulf War, and the invasion of Iraq – even more worrying because we were willing to go in and occupy.

I think these factors strengthened the voices within China pressing to view the United States as the enemy, as a threat. Some 3,000 years of history have taught the Chinese that they will suffer when they ignore potential threats from the outside, whether it be from Mongols, Tibetans, Manchurians, British, Japanese…….or Americans? So now we see them pouring more and more resources into the military - traditional forces, navy and even space. They've always been concerned about Taiwan. We have been flying intelligence gathering planes off the coast of China as a matter of course for years. That's got to be a concern for them. If China were to fly spy planes 12 miles off the coast of

California we would go apoplectic. Why, I don't know what we'd do because it's almost inconceivable that they would do that. It was a surprise that they made such a show over the Hainan incident; but on the whole both sides were fairly restrained. There will be more of these situations, particularly since that whole area of the South China Sea is very important to China. I don't know how it's going to play out.

Q: Because it's not as though there are other countries in that region that look with pleasure on the Chinese laying claim to the area.

ADAIR: No, they don't.

Q: Okay, when did you leave?

ADAIR: I left China in the summer of 1992 - July.

Q: Alright, and for the next time, where did you go?

ADAIR: I came back to Washington, went into the Senior Seminar for a year and then went into the European Bureau.

Q: Today is the 15th of November, the Ides of November, 2011, with Marshall Adair.

And we're going to go back a bit. I made a note to ask you, how did your wife find being a Taiwanese in the Middle Kingdom and all?

ADAIR: That's a very important question. People from Taiwan had a very special status in the PRC at that time; and for many of them it was not comfortable. The government officially welcomed them, but of course welcomed them as citizens of China. The official policy was intended to be very accommodating: maintaining the political position, recognizing differences. In a sense it was a courtship, one where both sides had interests but not necessarily interests that coincided. It was particularly challenging for women from Taiwan who were married to American diplomats and officially American citizens.

Before we went to China we had heard stories about how difficult it was for ethnic Chinese spouses to get along in China. Public security officials often restricted them from entering the embassy, either by misunderstanding or possibly intentionally. The guards at the embassy, some officials at the hotels and even people on the street sometimes tended to give them a hard time. The assumption was that there was some envy because the people from Taiwan were wealthier and better dressed; or anger because they were considered by some them to be traitors to China. There were all kinds of stories.

Ginger was aware of that, and decided to address it head on. When we arrived in Beijing, while we were still living in the hotel, one of the first things that she did was to tackle the relationship with the embassy guards – the young policemen or soldiers from the Public Security Bureau. She put on this little hat, a somewhat ordinary hat except that it had a cute little duck embroidered on the front. It stood out. Then she went and visited all of the

guard stations at the embassy buildings and the around the area – there were probably ten of them. The embassy itself had three embassy buildings: the ambassador's residence, the main chancery and the administrative building. In front of each of them and at each entrance to the diplomatic residential area was a guard-stand. She took her ID card, went up to each of them and she introduced herself. She said I'm Mrs. Adair, the wife of Marshall Adair, who's such and such at the embassy; I come from Taiwan, etc. She was polite, smiling and friendly - and they had never seen anything like this. They were all just taken aback. She wasn't asking to go in, she was just introducing herself and telling them that she would be going in – and she wasn't going to cause them any trouble. I don't know exactly what she said to them, but after that they all remembered her. She was never stopped, which was very unusual. She was never given any trouble. They would even smile when they saw her coming and wave to her when she came in. Lots of the other people continued to have difficulty.

She figured out pretty early on something that I often forget, that there are two sides to people. There's the side where people are worried or angry or afraid or whatever and there's the other side of people that want to be friendly and helpful and so on.

Related to that were the restrictions placed on all of us as foreigners, and particularly as foreign diplomats. I didn't like the restrictions that were placed on us, didn't like the idea that we were constantly being listened to, constantly being followed; didn't like the idea that we were told we couldn't go here or we couldn't go there. I didn't like the fact that when we went into restaurants we were only supposed to eat in certain areas, and that when we rode the trains we could only ride in first class - and pay more and so on. Most of us saw that as an imposition. We believed that these were restrictions exclusively for political reasons.

Well, restricting us for political reasons was a big part of it, but it wasn't the only part. The other part was that officials at most levels had instructions to make sure that nothing happened to us. If anything did happen to us they were responsible. So they were extra careful. Ginger could see this pretty clearly, and she figured out ways to reassure those people rather than get angry with them. She learned how to appeal to their better side. It took me years to see and accept that. Obviously she could communicate with them better because she had fluent Mandarin. My Mandarin wasn't fluent.

She was also able to connect with people in China that I was not able to connect with. I had some obvious disadvantages: I was a foreigner with a different face and limited Chinese language. I had some less obvious disadvantages: I more often didn't recognize what people had to offer personally. I was focused on officials or things that I had some understanding of. There was an awful lot out there that I didn't understand. I didn't understand the art world, the performing art world, the literature world. Everyone was all dressed the same in these dingy blue overalls, and they seemed to act the same way. Actually, they were all different and had some very different backgrounds. Some were not educated at all. Some were extremely well educated - not just in terms of the ruling party and what you were supposed to believe - but classical educations that went back way before the communist takeover in China. Ginger picked up on stuff like that just by

talking with these people briefly, meeting them on the street or whatever. As a result of that she met people that were beyond the normal environment of the embassy and beyond what was normally accessible to embassy personnel. And when she met them, I got to meet them too.

For instance, there was a Buddhist association in China. At the time, in the mid '80s, China had already begun to relax its restrictions on religion. There was a national Buddhist association and there were Christian churches and there were various other things. She got to know some of the monks and lamas and others associated with those communities; and she was actually able to study with them, which was very unusual. I made an official call on the head of the Chinese Buddhist association before I made that trip to Tibet, and Ginger went with me. When we talked with him, he found out that she had an interest in Buddhism and he said, "Oh, you should go and meet this person." That was pretty rare at that time as well.

So Ginger exposed me to a much broader segment of Chinese society. She helped me to understand that the restrictions that were being placed on us by the official community had two sides to them. They could restrict us but they could also help us sometimes. Some of these people, who we saw primarily as obstacles, could give us better access to some places than we could get on our own, because some of those people were very, very well connected. And as a result we were able to meet people, go to places and do things that otherwise might not have been possible.

Q: Did you have the feeling at the time that there was an effort to seal off problem areas in the Chinese community from foreigners or was this more a matter of trying to keep you out of trouble?

ADAIR: Well it was both. They didn't want us to get into trouble but they didn't want us to foment trouble. There were areas that they were watching that they were concerned about. They didn't want foreigners going in and making things more difficult for them. One of these areas was religion and particularly the local Christian churches. The government had decided to provide them with more freedom to worship and follow their faith, but they didn't want that to spill over into the political arena. They were concerned that if these groups grew too much or too rapidly they would spill into the political arena. And, historically they had some evidence for concern.

Q: Well I was wondering. I've talked to people who have served in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As time went on, communism as a belief was losing an awful lot of its appeal. People were going to lectures on the principles of communism and falling asleep. This is compulsory for some, but it had lost its appeal up and down the line. Towards the end you couldn't call upon people to be good communists, because they'd almost laugh in your face. What was happening at the time you were in China to the appeal of communism, the teaching of it?

ADAIR: In the late '70s Deng Xiaoping made the decision to begin relaxing the controls on the economy, because he recognized that the command economy imposed as part of

communist doctrine and philosophy had not worked. But, in other parts of the world the free market economy had been much more successful in using resources, harnessing the energies of the people and stuff like that. So he and others decided to move government back from control of all economic activity and give more freedom to people to participate in it on their own. By necessity that included allowing other freedoms in society like association, movement, education and so on.

However, they also determined that the communist party had to remain in power – partially because some form of legitimate authority was essential and probably also to protect the leadership's own position. The senior leadership had been "communists" for a long time. Most of them had to believe in at least some various principles of communist theory and philosophy. They were not prepared to junk it. The communist party would continue to be the power governing China and it would not accept any questioning of that. The realm of political organization and governmental management was off limits at the beginning to these reforms. Communist ideology, loyalty to the party and the party's control of all mechanisms of government and security had to be maintained; they were determined to maintain them. Now, what his vision was for the long term, 10, 20, 50, 100 years, I don't know. I'm still speaking of Deng Xiaoping because he was the force behind this.

Clearly there were some contradictions. Ideology was important, because it had been an active tool in holding a very large and diverse population together. It also held the party together. Relaxing the command economy was antithetical to standard communist ideology. So, they had to do an ideological dance to smooth and explain this change. They came up with the phrase, "socialism with Chinese characteristics." They inserted Chinese-ness, or what I call Han nationalism or Han chauvinism into the equation. Cultural nationalism can be a very useful unifying – and disciplinary - tool.

Essentially what I think was happening was the communist party was moving into the position the imperial court and bureaucracy had occupied for more than 2,000 years before the chaos of the 20th century. The party would retain absolute authority, but allowed the rest of the country to operate more freely as long as it was healthy and not threatening the stability of the nation. It would retain the power to stop any problems that might develop. How that has actually been done in terms of the education of communist party members and stuff like that, I don't know. I don't know how this has really played out in those inner circles, but it's a work in a progress. My own view is that eventually they're going to go back to something like the imperial system that they had for some 2-3,000 years.

Q: Were you picking up from anybody a change in how students viewed communism? I mean, you know, courses and other things that were going on?

ADAIR: I think in the beginning some, perhaps many, believed communism was flawed. But most of the people that had any connection to the establishment would be careful about how they expressed that. In so far as students were concerned, I think Deng Xiaoping's initiation of reforms encouraged a renaissance in the importance and

attraction of formal education. Parents determined to obtain the best possible education for their children, within China or abroad. Students once again focused more on their studies than on political activity. For many people, it has seemed for the last several decades or so that the best educational opportunities were overseas, because the institutes of higher learning in China were limited by outlook or by resources. Access to the best Chinese institutions was more available to the children of those who were already in power. So a lot depended on where you stood in that hierarchy as to how you saw the system.

I was able to meet a few young people that were fairly high up in that hierarchy when I was in Hong Kong and occasionally in Beijing, but not very many. Those that I did meet were very well educated and intelligent. They were not doctrinaire. Their thinking processes were not controlled by the slogans of the previous decades.

Q: The Little Red Book had disappeared pretty much?

ADAIR: Pretty much, yes. The leadership of the Communist Party had decided on the direction that China was to take, and that direction was substantially different from China's trajectory of the previous 40 years. However, they also knew that if they were going to maintain authority within China, they had to act within certain parameters and they had to maintain loyalties in their relationships. And they did it.

Q: I have to say that I spent four years in a religious prep school run by monks, Episcopalian monks, and there was compulsory chapel. Later, when I joined and worked in the Foreign Service, I did so with the profound feeling that this whole God business is nonsense – but within the context of the Foreign Service I didn't say so. Now I'm older and I can say it. But one can live in community with others and abide by their morays.

Now, back to your wife. What about the Taiwanese factor? Did she find herself either challenged or just plain questioned? I'm sure that this was a burning issue, but one that normal Chinese necessarily had much exposure to.

ADAIR: Well, that's right. Basically, at that time the Chinese were very concerned about Taiwan. One of the nation's primary goals was to bring it back into the fold, re-establish connections and reintegrate it into China. So, at that time they were very interested in people from Taiwan. Luckily the government's perspective was more long-term. They weren't trying or hoping to do this in a period of five or 10 or 15 years so there wasn't a lot of pressure behind it and emotions were under control. They were especially interested and curious about people who were actually Taiwanese. There were a lot of people in Taiwan who were not Taiwanese; people that were born on the mainland and had gone to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek. Ginger was Taiwanese. Her father's family had been there for some 300 or 400 years; and her mother's family had been there much longer because much of her mother's family were the aboriginal people – related to the Pacific Islanders.

Issues related to Taiwan actually started when we were in Hong Kong. She was very upfront about this. I remember a conversation with a taxicab driver, who labeled her as Chinese. She replied, "No, I'm not. I'm Taiwanese." "What? Taiwan is a part of China." "No, it's not." That was her personal answer. The taxicab driver went apoplectic. His whole universe was being challenged. Ginger was very straightforward with the people that she met in Beijing. She considered herself Taiwanese, and would show people a picture of her family that she carried around with her. - "See, we look different." She considered herself part of the Chinese tradition, but as far as she was concerned Taiwan should be an independent country. But she was not political. She didn't seek out political arguments. It was only if they pushed her that she would answer. She was happy to talk about her family, she was happy to talk about culture; but she did it in a Chinese context, where you don't spill your guts to just anybody. Americans are much less restrained.

Q: Was she ever called upon to talk in public, like on a radio talk show or something like that?

ADAIR: No, and she wouldn't have done it. I don't think that the embassy would have wanted her to go. She made it very clear that she wasn't interested in politics in any form whatsoever. That was one of the things that made it easier for her to go and study with the Chinese monks and the Tibetans. She didn't want to get involved in those kinds of questions. There were other things that were far more important to her and were more important to them as well, so.

Q: While we're talking about religion, what about movements in China like the Falun Gong?

ADAIR: Yes, that's a quasi-religious, quasi-political movement centered on the phenomenon of "Qi" - the basic life energy that exists in and around all of us - and how to tap into it. The concept of "qi" - and how to use it, "qigong" - runs through thousands of years of Chinese history and culture.

Q: The "Boxers" would have been something like that.

ADAIR: Yes. Today, Falun Gong is presented as a philosophy and a religion. But historically these movements in China have gone beyond the bounds of personal development into social and political arenas – and they have presented challenges to existing governmental authority – sometimes serious challenges. So the current Chinese government has banned it. Lots of people are up in arms about that on the grounds that it violates human rights. But the Chinese government is very clear about it. Historically, when these movements have started they've gotten out of hand. This one looked like it was getting out of hand. The way it's pursued here and in other places is very political.

Q: Well now did that impact at all on your service in China?

ADAIR: No. We have met people that are interested in Falun Gong. We have certainly met many more people that are interested in qi. Daoism is focused on this. Buddhism

teaches a lot about it, but goes at the whole process of personal development in a different way. Daoism focuses on the physical manifestations. Qi is a big part of Tibetan Buddhism which focuses on the body and the cultivation of it as a means to enlightenment. The Taiping movement and rebellion in the 19th century was a quasi Christian manifestation. At one time or another, all of these have been, or have been used by some as mechanisms to challenge existing authority. This phenomenon is something that successive Chinese governments for thousands of years have realized that they have to keep in check, because they can threaten the foundations of government and order in China.

That concern is what was behind the restrictions on Christian communities in China as well. The government would allow them to exist and to function up to a point, but if they became too evangelical and moved into the sociopolitical realm that was when they were restricted.

Q: Were you having problems in 1993 or so? I spent three weeks in Kyrgyzstan preaching the culture of how to set up a consular establishment, part of a USIA-sponsored program. There were many Christian faiths sending people out to these areas. They were having a wonderful time, converting and all this. Some of them were, you know, akin to snake handlers practically. Was any of this going on?

ADAIR: Yes. It was harder to do it in China, because the Chinese government kept pretty tight controls on it, but there were people constantly trying. This included Americans. They were so proud when they got through customs with Bibles in their suitcases that had not been discovered. They thought that they were doing such a favor to the Chinese people by spreading the word. I grew up in the Christian faith, and the Christian Church has been an important part of my life. I think it has a lot to offer people and I think it's done a lot of good. It's also done a lot of harm; and I've always been very uncomfortable with both the concept and the practice of evangelizing. It's one thing to share something and teach people. It's quite another to demand that they behave in a certain way and follow the faith that you tell them to follow unquestioningly. It's very difficult for Americans, perhaps for anybody, to draw the lines there.

Q: I was wondering; I would think one of those Christian sects is one that many Americans are uncomfortable with as the election in 2012 approaches - that's Mormonism. The Mormon Church puts a great deal of emphasis on conversion.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: -and in Asia particularly.

ADAIR: That's right. That's one of the reasons I was uncomfortable with the choice of the last person we sent as Ambassador to China.

Q: Huntsman.

ADAIR: Yes. I just don't think it's right to send people who have another agenda. But, you know, this is not new to China. The Jesuits were there, in the courts of the emperors, hundreds of years ago, and the Jesuits had the same goals. Their goal was to convert people to the Christian faith; they just did it in a different way, and perhaps with a longer timeframe. There were Nestorian Christians that came in from the west of China, using the Silk Road, and established places of worship, teaching their faith in a number of places in China. Muslims have gone into China and done the same thing. So have the Tibetans. The Tibetans conquered - occupied the capital of China - back in the late 700s, I think it was. A lot of that was an energy that came from religious belief, religious conviction. It may start with a belief in the divine, but in the long run it becomes all too human. It's more easily corrupted than any other form of power, I think. It does as much harm as it does good.

But before we leave the subject of China, I would like to talk about the family experience there. I talked a little bit about what Ginger did in Beijing earlier. When we got to Chengdu it was the same story, but on another scale. Ginger was able to access parts of the society in Szechuan that I was not able to. In the city of Chengdu she went around to places, met people and met organizations that I would either not have known about or might not have been permitted to contact. I might have been kept at arm's length because of my face and my position. First of all, she took our son, Charles, to schools because she considered enrolling him. He was only 4 1/2 when we got to Chengdu but she thought that it would be good for him to go to a local school - to have kids to play with and to learn the language and stuff like that. She eventually decided against it, because the schools that she visited were conducted a dialect that was unintelligible to most Mandarin speakers. She had some concerns about the safety of the school building and things like that as well. So we ended up tutoring Charles at home.

But Ginger also went to the service organization that helped the consulate and said she wanted to visit an orphanage. She had always had an interest in orphanages. The government people wanted to take her to a model orphanage, but she said no - what else was there available? She ended up going to a much lower profile orphanage where many children had been left because they were disabled in one way or another. It wasn't a real happy sight, but they did the best that they could. When she visited it, she took Charles, and then they continued their visits. She wanted to make a contribution, but she was uncomfortable making a monetary contribution because she didn't know how it would be used. So she went to the market. At that time China was producing lots of down jackets for export, and there was a substantial surplus domestically – but they still cost money. She bought lots of warm jackets and comforters and took them to the orphanage - enough for all the kids. And they were somewhat taken aback. Nobody had ever done this before. Also, Chengdu has a fairly mild climate so they didn't really know what to do with it. But they accepted it and they were really pleased that someone would show this kind of interest. Then, that winter it snowed for the first time in 30 years or so - so they were really pleased to have that gift. To this day, I have no idea how Ginger anticipated that.

Ginger was able to meet people and have an impact on the way they viewed us as well. Yes, she was Chinese, but they also knew who she was – eventually. In the case of the

orphanage, they concluded that her gift was an official gift from the consulate. It wasn't – it was personal.

We lived in the hotel, and most people didn't like living in a hotel for extended periods of time. When we got there we heard all kinds of stories about the people that managed the hotel – that they were uncooperative, and that particular individuals were difficult to deal with, and so on. There was a great deal of frustration. Ginger approached it completely differently, just as she had in Beijing. She would talk with the hotel staff about their families, she would give them little gifts - things that we had at the consulate like books or something that she found on the street - just little gestures. And she developed a really close relationship with them. One result was the people in the hotel helped us more and more.

We had two organizations in Chengdu that were sort of responsible for us. One was the Foreign Affairs Office, which was sort of a mini-foreign affairs ministry. We were to conduct our relations with the government through them. They seemed like they didn't want to deal with us at all. They were very uncomfortable when we would come because there was really no upside to the relationship for them. There was a downside - this was post-Tiananmen. They would do their duty, but tried to keep it to a minimum. There was another organization called the Foreign Affairs Service Bureau, which was the organization that provided us with all our staff, and they were the ones that actually had to support us. In the past, that relationship too had been a bit of a struggle. But Ginger helped to change that. I would talk to them formally; but she would drop by from time to time just to have tea with them and chat. They felt more comfortable. She learned what they could do, what they couldn't do; and how we should ask for this - or how we could help them as opposed to just being a one-way street. It changed the dynamic of the relationship tremendously.

If I had been a bachelor it would have been a very different kind of an atmosphere. If I had been married to an American woman it probably would have been a different dynamic, even if she had excellent Chinese. All of those things made a difference - and our son Charles too. He was four years old when we arrived and six years old when we left. He learned to ride his bicycle in the rose garden at the hotel; he and his mother would travel by pedi-cab and go to the park every day and stuff like that. But he introduced me to a lot of things that I wouldn't otherwise have noticed.

Q: How was that?

ADAIR: Well, for instance, stuff that he saw in the park. He would say, "Oh, you've got to come," and he would show me what he and his mother had done: having tea; watching the waiters come and pour the tea from three feet away into the tea cups; watching the people do their exercises in the park. One day he found something else that I would have missed. I had been trying to think of ways that we could do things with our Chinese staff, to improve the team spirit. We had about 30 Chinese staff and there were only about six of us Americans, so we relied on them. My birthday was coming up, and Ginger and I had thought maybe we should do something for my birthday that would include them.

When Charles was in the park with his mother he saw something that he had never seen before and he wanted to show me. I went back with him, and he showed me a bumper cars arena. The park had set up a carnival like arrangement with bumper cars, and I said, "That's it; we're going to invite all the Chinese staff to come over to the park with us and do the bumper cars on my birthday." We did and it was hysterical. I don't think any of them had seen it, and they had certainly not driven them. Charles had found it and made it possible.

Q: Did you find this focus on children sort of opened up people? Often in societies the way to get to know people is through children, usually with parents of other kids. How did you find this?

ADAIR: That's very true in China. It always made people more comfortable, even the highest officials. It was nice for them to be able to focus on a child and then ask you about that afterwards. And it always made me feel good. I mean, you always feel good when somebody asks you about your kids. And Charles was a really cute kid.

Q: How'd you come by the name of Charles?

ADAIR: That was my father's name.

Q: I'm a junior Charles. My son is Charles Stuart Kennedy and we just had his son, Charles Stuart Kennedy IV.

ADAIR: The IV, wow. Charles is III.

Q: Or in Mafia terms he'd be known as Charlie Three Sticks.

ADAIR: I'll remember that.

Q: Okay, you're going back. Having been in an all consuming world of Chinese affairs, how was it coming back to Washington?

ADAIR: Well, I was happy to get a break from things Chinese - and in that sense I would include Rangoon in "things Chinese." It was Asian with a heavy Chinese influence. So I came back to Washington to the Senior Seminar. I had been told that the Senior Seminar was a good place to start trying something different, so I had that in mind.

When we returned, we moved into the house that we had bought here in Arlington when Charles was born. It was perfect timing, because he was just going into first grade. Our house was about five or six blocks away from a very good elementary school, so he and his mother would walk to school every day. It was really nice to come back and be able to participate in all the American things that you do with kids because that hadn't been available in Chengdu. We had actually tutored Charles using the Calvert School correspondence materials. Back in Arlington, he was able to go to school and make friends with other children his age. It was a challenge for him, because he was now in a

place where there were all these white kids. His mother was Asian and I was American but he knew that he looked different from the majority of the kids in his class. His first grade teacher was a light complexioned black woman, and for most of his first grade year he thought she was Chinese.

As you well know, coming back to the States there are re-entry issues, even for me. I was always happy to come back to the States and I considered it my home but it was still difficult to readjust. After you live overseas for awhile, you see things that people here don't see; you understand things that people here don't understand - so you're different. I was different, even though I didn't look different; but Charles had both. He had a different perspective. He had seen different things and he looked different. So it was doubly difficult for him. I think it is doubly difficult for most children in the Foreign Service whose parents are mixed race. Coming home can be confusing.

Q: And it's also difficult, our family went through this; I mean, three kids, having gone to international schools and, you know absorbing that thing and then all of a sudden to come back and find that here kids have grown up together in class and maybe either in the seventh or eighth grade or something and you're not accepted very much and it's a difficult time.

ADAIR: It really is. Now Charles in one way was very lucky, because he came back and went into first grade. So he started at the same time as all the other children, and was here all the way through eleventh grade. That is unheard of in the Foreign Service. It was never my intention to be in Washington that long, but that's the way it worked out. So that was probably a good thing for him. I mean, Charles missed out on some of the other benefits of living overseas, but of course we traveled regularly to Asia to visit Ginger's family, and we also went to Europe pretty regularly because I have a sister who lives in England and France.

Q: Well then, you went to Senior Seminar from when to when?

ADAIR: From the late summer of 1992 until the spring of 1993.

Q: How did you find it?

ADAIR: I think the Senior Seminar was one of the smartest things that the Department of State ever did, and I think that eliminating it was one of the stupidest things the Department of State ever did. The concept was fantastic: take people who have spent most of their careers overseas, and bring them back to Washington just when they're moving into positions of management and policy formulation responsibility. Reintroduce them to the United States; give them exposure to parts of the United States that they missed because of being overseas. Renew their perspective, and offer them the beginnings of contacts, of a network, to use in those senior positions. In the Department of State you can't do anything effectively unless you work with your counterparts in other government agencies and the military. They all play one way or another. For me it was really important because the positions that I went into subsequently had to deal with

all those sectors. I would not have been as effective if I had not had the introduction provided by the Senior Seminar.

Q: Did you go on any trips that particularly impressed you?

ADAIR: Yes. First of all, we visited lots of military bases. We went to bases all over the country that had different functions. We talked to the people and we talked to the commanders. We had classmates from all branches of the military in the seminar, so they were engaged in all of our discussions. They saw how we thought, we saw how they thought. The whole point was to talk about the issues, about how we're organized and what we do. We would see their reaction, they would see ours, and then we'd talk about it. One of the questions that I asked at each base was how they managed their budgets. I had discovered when I was in China that the budgets of constituent posts were created by the administrative section in the embassy who didn't know squat about what was going on out in these places. The consulates had very little say in the process. I convinced the management of the embassy to devolve some of that budget authority to us and it worked. At least it worked while I was there. I don't know it reverted to the old way when I left. I was very curious to see how the agency of government that dwarfs all others in terms of money and resources managed its budget. I wondered how familiar the generals were with their budgets. They weren't. I asked every commander, "What is your budget," and not one of them knew. That was interesting. When I went to SOCOM (United States Special Operations Command) later, they knew, but there was very special reason for that. They knew because Congress had decreed that they would have a certain budgetary independence which no other command had. Government is often criticized by the private sector for not appreciating the bottom line. There is some justification for that criticism, because we are often not involved in the budgetary process.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Anyway, that was one of the things that impressed me. Another was our trip to Alaska. Every year the Senior Seminar used to take a trip to Alaska, and it was right at the beginning. We did a lot of studying beforehand, traveled by military aircraft, and visited many sites, including the North Slope oil fields. We met with government officials, private companies and Native American organizations. Alaska was particularly interesting because of the mix of indigenous populations and people that had moved into Alaska, and the fact that Alaska has oil and mineral resources. Alaska has experimented with a sort of reverse taxation whereby the resource extraction corporations pay taxes to the government and the residents of Alaska receive tax payments rather than paying taxes. It was a fascinating idea, particularly for the indigenous population. I think it hasn't worked as well as people hoped though.

We traveled all over the country, visiting big cities, small town and farm country. We visited Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Seattle. In Chicago and in Los Angeles we focused particularly on the inner cities, racial problems, law and order, and education. I hadn't been into those areas. One of the things that I was most interested in was education, the American education system. I have been exposed to other educational

systems since I was very young. I was pretty distressed with our educational system because it seemed to be in such a shambles. We don't have a strong intellectual tradition or cultural support for education, and are not willing to devote the resources it needs. Our schools are all over the map, and we don't have a core of knowledge that we teach to everybody – so as time goes by and our diversity grows, we have less and less in common with each other.

In the seminar we the students were responsible for developing a program of study. We went to Congress, meeting with staffers and some members. We also did short trips to Mexico and Canada. Our budget was tight and we couldn't go to some of the places that other Seminars had visited. In Mexico we visited the embassy and a number of organizations in Mexico City. In Canada we visited Vancouver, Ottawa and Quebec. At that time Quebec was getting ready for a very important vote on whether they would opt for independence, so that was very lively.

On the whole it was a fantastic year. As I said, at that time the budget was already being constrained. That was the beginning of the Clinton Administration when they really cut the State Department severely and caused that terrible hole in the career service that they've never really been able to repair or recover from. The Clinton Administration did a great job of addressing the budget deficit and stuff like that but they took too much out of the Department of State.
Anyway, that one's history; and so is the Senior Seminar. It eventually succumbed to continued budget cuts.

Q: What were you looking at? Did you want to get out of the China field?

ADAIR: Yes, I didn't want to go back to Asia right away. I talked to all the bureaus, except the African Bureau. I ended up in the European Bureau. A lot of it was luck. I talked with a deputy assistant secretary in the European Bureau. We got along well and she went to bat for me; though the job didn't come through until the very last minute. It was the director of Southern European Affairs, which meant Greece, Turkey and Cyprus.

Q: Did you get a chance to talk to your colleagues in the East Asian Bureau, and was your view of where China was headed different from theirs?

ADAIR: I did have a somewhat different perspective from some of the people in the East Asian Bureau. For one thing, I had never worked in the East Asian Bureau in Washington. In any bureau it's important to have worked in Washington as well as having worked overseas, because you develop different kinds of contacts, you know how the bureau works and stuff like that. I had only been overseas with the East Asian Bureau. I did not have a bureaucratic persona other than with the Economic Bureau. In most of my career, I was also somewhat contrary in the way I dealt with the conventional wisdom of the Department of State and the Foreign Service. I usually challenged it. I also preferred working on areas that were receiving less attention rather than being right in the middle of things. I think that I was also probably more impatient than a lot of my colleagues in the China field. In the Foreign Service and the Department of State, like

any organization, we often tend to choose people to work with us who think like us, right?

Q: Oh yes.

ADAIR: I'm sure I do it as well but I also liked to have people that don't think like me working for me. After I left China, I never got back into the China field. I still had colleagues and friends, and I did go knocking on the door several times. I tried at one point to apply for the job of DCM in Beijing. In that case the director general had already gotten involved and gone directly to the new political appointee to recommend a different person – someone she knew apparently. The Bureau was nice enough to offer me another good position in China, but I thought it was too similar to what I had already done. Nevertheless, my China experience continued to serve me well in the European Bureau and elsewhere.

Q: One more question before we leave China again. The Soviet Union was collapsing at this point or had already collapsed, right?

ADAIR: Yes, in 1989.

Q: Did you find that China was being used to replace the Soviets as an enemy? Often organizations and countries are not comfortable if they don't have a clearly defined enemy.

ADAIR: Yes. I continue to be very concerned about that, and I think it has been a concern of the East Asian Bureau as well. There have always been people who have wanted to make China an enemy; or at least make the Chinese communists an enemy. Yes, that was already poking up its head. Certainly, many people in the military saw it that way.

Q: They have to be following this.

ADAIR: That's right. And yes, I think that many Americans find it easier to label countries like China or Russia as competitors or enemies to be defended against or overcome, rather than as complex communities with whom we must try to get along.

Q: Well then, you ended up with the Office of Southern European Affairs which included Greece, Turkey and Cyprus.

I've interviewed people who were working for the European Bureau back in the '70s, I think - when they brought Greece, Turkey and Cyprus into the European Bureau. Those countries had previously been in the Middle Eastern Bureau. This was when things got hot, and it looked like there might be a war over Cyprus. The European specialists were horrified because, these "Katzenjammer Kids" were being brought into their domain. I mean, you just didn't do this in Europe. So, I guess you certainly got stuck with the troublesome end of Europe.

ADAIR: I did; and I think I had a much more interesting job than most of my other colleagues in that bureau.

Q: Okay, let's talk about it. What was the situation for your particular area? You were there for how long?

ADAIR: From '93 to '97.

Q: Okay. Well, what were you up against?

ADAIR: Well when I arrived it was tense. The eastern Mediterranean is often tense, but it ebbs and flows. In 1993 it was pretty high. Throughout the '80s Turkey had been a key strategic ally, because it bordered there on the Soviet Union and it was a traditional competitor with Russia. We had put a lot of aid into Turkey because of that, both economic and military aid, primarily military. Well, the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989 seemed to have eliminated that threat for the time being. Also, the shattering of the Soviet Union had released many different ethnic forces in that region. The nation of Turkey had been formed in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire that for centuries had defined and controlled political and cultural relations in and beyond that region. When I took this job the region – and the world – was dealing with the wake of another imperial collapse – that of the Soviet empire. Turkey was facing some very different and difficult circumstances. In Washington, policy makers tended to focus on the nations that had been freed from Soviet domination and the opportunities we might have to help them, and not so much on the challenges they presented to Turkey – and what we could do to help it.

The disappearance of the Soviet threat reduced Turkey's strategic stature in the minds of many people in Washington. This was not necessarily true for those who had some history of working with Turkey, but there are always competing interests. Those who were working to solidify the new freedom of the former members of the Soviet Union and encourage democratic reforms in that region got first dibs on the attention of State Department and White House leadership as well as on resources.

The apparent decline in Turkey's strategic importance – and I stress apparent – also provided an opportunity for those in Washington with historical and emotional grievances against Turkey to pursue their agendas. The United States has sizeable Greek and Armenian communities that actively encourage support to the nations of Greece, Armenia, and Cyprus as well as their Diasporas in other countries. Some of those advocates also believe that punishment of Turkey is synonymous with assistance to their other clients. When I was in the European Bureau this often took the form of pressure for human rights sanctions on Turkey.

At the same time Turkey was having a resurgence of domestic terrorism by Kurdish separatists. The PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) or Kurdistan Workers Party was an organization determined to secure an independent Kurdistan from Turkey and other

nations in the region with Kurdish populations, and it was serious. Many Turkish soldiers were being killed, there were bombs going off in cities, people being assassinated and so on. The Turkish government was trying to deal with it, and their approach was forceful. The human rights lobby in Washington, supported by other anti-Turkish elements was also forceful.

Q: Especially the Armenians.

ADAIR: Armenian Americans and Greek Americans were the most forceful.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: So the question was, "What was this relationship between the United States and Turkey supposed to be and how were we going to work together?" The Turks were really having a difficult time. We were their ally; we were the one country with which they had a relationship that they had come to rely on to a certain degree. One of the things Turkish officials said over and over - it became a sort of annoying mantra – was, "We live in a rough neighborhood." Okay. They did live in a really rough neighborhood, and as a result they were rough as well. They could be very, very rough; but when I came into the job it seemed that most of our energies had gone into criticizing – almost whining about how they should be doing this or that. We were not perceived to be upholding our side, and to a very large degree we weren't. We were trying to perform a balancing act. Actually, it was less of a balancing act than it was trying to please all of these different groups, particularly the Greek-Americans. The Clinton Administration, when it came in, was very attuned to ethnic politics, and it was very difficult for it to say no to anybody.

Q: Yes. And one has to point out that there was no real Turkish constituency in the United States.

ADAIR: Absolutely, there wasn't.

Q: I mean, hardly any immigration – but big Greek and Armenian communities.

ADAIR: And the Armenians are important in key areas and very aggressive. Elements of both groups, Armenians and Greeks, expressed the perspective in strongly negative terms: the Turks were bad, they were the enemy. I overheard one Armenian-American once explaining to another American who Armenians were. With considerable pride he said, "That's who we are. We hate Turks." Clearly that is not all Armenians, but unfortunately in politics the most extreme voices are often the ones with the strongest impact.

So, we had this political difficulty, and it was compounded by the fact that Turkey was going through economic difficulties. Turkey had had several years of really high inflation; inflation that would have decimated social order in the United States. The Turks were coping with it. Turkey still had a productive economy, but they were looking for

help. Turkey was a democracy with all the flaws of democratic governments. It wasn't really efficient. The government came to us looking for economic assistance.

Greece was also going through a big transition. Socialists were coming back into power. Andreas Papandreou was coming back into power after having been out for a long time. He had a reputation for being a demagogue and for being anti-American - or fostering anti-Americanism in Greece.

This was also the time of the Balkan mess. Yugoslavia had collapsed, and violence was beginning in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia. The first violence was between the Catholic Croatians and the Orthodox Serbs; but the most neuralgic religious divide was between Christians and Muslims. It went back centuries to the days of Ottoman expansion. As troubles increased in Bosnia between the Muslim Bosniaks and the Christian Serbs and Croatians, they struck a chord with many Greeks who still retained nightmarish visions of the previous Ottoman occupation of Greece. The Greeks tended to be sympathetic to the Serbians and antipathetic to the Albanians and Macedonians.

The Macedonian issue which developed seemed quite weird to most American observers. The Greek government opposed international recognition of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under the name Macedonia, because it considered the name Macedonia as well as most ancient symbols of ancient Macedonia to be proprietarily Greek. Many Greeks considered Macedonia to have been an integral part of Greece historically, and the idea that any other nation could say that its name was Macedonia was absolutely preposterous to them, threatening their very being and identity - so they took an absolutist line on that. "There is no such thing. You cannot use that name, you cannot use those symbols. Those are ours. It has nothing to do with you." Many of us believed that both sides were talking and acting nonsense. First of all this was thousands of years ago. Second, Greece seemed to be using its positions in the EU and in NATO to block any sensible resolution. Eventually, Greece even went so far as to close its border with the new Macedonia and cut off that country's principle line of trade and communication.

Then there was Cyprus, as well. We had for years been trying to promote a settlement in Cyprus that would resolve the by then long-standing crisis over the division of the island between a Turkish north and a Greek south. This is a big issue in the Greek-American community, who are still angry about the Turkish government's 1974 intervention to protect Turkish Cypriots which culminated in the island's division. The Greek-Americans and the Greek-Cypriots continuously lobbied the U.S. government to pressure the Turkish government to return what they considered their land, property and heritage. The reply of the Turkish community on Cyprus was they didn't want to go back to the pre-1974 situation. Their view was that their Greek-Cypriot neighbors had tried to massacre them during the 1974 Greek coup d'état, and the Turkish government had saved them. Their attitude was, "Leave that line, that "green line", where it is. We don't trust them. We don't trust anybody but Turkey, because we know that you're all going to sell us out to them." We, the United States, wanted to resolve it because among other things it was a flash point for the relationship between Greece and Turkey. The Soviet threat had been

an important factor in holding these two NATO allies together. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the Soviet threat, who knew what these regional actors might do?

We had at the Department of State a "Coordinator for Cyprus Negotiations", who at the time was a Foreign Service officer with an ambassadorial title. The structure within the European Bureau was a little bizarre. We had an office director for Southern European Affairs; we had a deputy assistant secretary that supervised the area. We had an assistant secretary and then we had this coordinator. This coordinator was supposed to be in the European Bureau, but considered himself to be on a level with the assistant secretary and didn't want to talk with the office director. The result was that it was rather difficult to "coordinate" anything.

On top of all of this, of course, we had a new administration, the Clinton Administration, a brand new assistant secretary for European Affairs, brand new people in the White House; and everybody was trying to rethink all of these things. Everybody was very much into talking and meeting and intellectualizing. Most everybody was very reluctant to do anything, because nobody really knew what to do.

It seemed to me that everyone was particularly reluctant to deal with my little corner of Europe. Nobody wanted to get involved with it; because there was no way that you could be "right." In the political atmosphere of Washington at that time, almost any decision that could be made would be nailed by somebody. The Greek and the Armenian lobbies were very active, their representatives in Congress were very receptive of them, and the easiest target as usual was the State Department.

So, during my first months in the job, I couldn't get anybody to make any decisions. Every time I went to my supervisors with a problem they'd want more memos, more think pieces, more options papers but they'd never pick an option. It was always go back and rewrite this. It took me several months to realize that if anything was going to be done I had to make the decisions myself, and then I discovered that the people above me were happy to have me do that. Let me say that I really liked the people I was working for. They were smarter than I was, and they were very competent. It just took me awhile to figure out the dynamics. Once I did figure it out things began to work a little bit better, though it didn't make me very popular with some interest groups.

Q: You are describing the situation in your corner of Europe as what - quagmire, minefield….?

ADAIR: Minefield is better than quagmire.

Q: Yes, you know I spent five years in Yugoslavia and four years in Greece. Just the other day I taped something, talking about Cyprus as a failed American policy. It was a Greek perspective that started with showing Turkish paratroopers landing in Cyprus. The implication was that it happened out of the blue, as opposed to a Greek government inspired coup by Sampson, an acknowledged Greek assassin.

ADAIR: Right, there was probably no mention of threats to Turkish Cypriots in the villages. There was a very real fear among the Turkish population. Luckily, it was never as bad as in the former Yugoslavia - perhaps because the Turkish government's reaction was so swift.

Q: OK, we'll continue this next time.

Q: Today is the 22nd of November - a day which people of our generation don't forget. It's the day that President Kennedy was assassinated.

ADAIR: I had forgotten the date. I hadn't forgotten the day.

Q: Marshall, you landed in one of the sweet spots of European geopolitical conflict, and that is Greece, Cyprus and Turkey. We've talked about the kind of situation you encountered, and your frustration with the reluctance of leadership in the Department of State to make decisions about it. So how did you deal with this?

ADAIR: Basically, I ended up making the decisions myself. Instead of asking for permission or for guidance, I would report what I had done. At least the people in the European Bureau seemed to be comfortable with it. I think some of the higher echelons of the Department might have been less comfortable, but they didn't object directly. I never got them into trouble so eventually they left me alone.

Q: Well now you were doing this from when to when?

ADAIR: I arrived in the summer of 1993, after the Senior Seminar, and I was in the job of office director for Southern European Affairs until the summer of 1995. Then I was moved up to be deputy assistant secretary from the summer of 1995 to the summer of 1997.

Q: Well let's review the situation there. How stood things in Turkey when you got there?

ADAIR: Well during the 1980s the relationship between Turkey and the United States had become very close for broad strategic reasons. As tensions increased with the Soviet Union, we provided more and more assistance to Turkey, both economic and military. There had been a coup in Turkey back in 1980 and the military took over for awhile. That made our bilateral relations more difficult, but when Turkey returned to civilian rule we repaired the relationship and strengthened the strategic posture vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. That was the period of highest military assistance to Turkey. When the Soviet Union disappeared, our focus changed. There was less reason to maintain a high level of military assistance; and the decline of the strategic threat offered an opportunity to certain interest groups with an anti-Turkey bias to try to downgrade our relationship. That was the dynamic of the early and mid 1990s.

When I came into the office in 1993 there was a convergence of several factors. Turkey's economy was very problematic at the time with high inflation. They didn't know how to

deal with it, and they were trying to get help from us. Secondly, there was increasing terrorism from the PKK, so terrorism was becoming a major concern. The last time terrorism had been a really big concern for the Turks was in the late 1970s just before the coup, so all of that was percolating. Thirdly, there was a change of government in Turkey. In June of 1993 the Turks elected their first (and so far only) female prime minister, Tansu Çiller. That presented a whole new dynamic. A female Prime Minister was unprecedented. Tansu Çiller was a very dynamic politician but there were lots of questions about her. There were allegations of corruption and the influence of her husband, so a lot seemed to be in flux. That's what was happening in Turkey.

Those challenges were enhanced by changes in Greece. The previous conservative government led by Prime Minister Mitsotakis had taken a relatively moderate approach to Turkey, but the new Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, had a reputation for being somewhat demagogic. So in Turkey there was a concern as well that they might have to worry about what was going to happen with this new Greek prime minister.

Q: Well from the American point of view, could we do anything about these things?

ADAIR: We were not in a position to respond to requests for traditional economic assistance; but we did several things. My predecessor had proposed the idea of a "Joint Economic Commission" between the United States and Turkey. The idea had been accepted both in Ankara and Washington, and the first meeting of the commission was to take place in Ankara in December of 1993. So when I first arrived, I was immediately presented with the task of putting that together. Part of the objective was to increase communication between all the different agencies of the U.S. Government that might deal with different elements of the economic relationship, get them more actively involved, and then coordinate with the American business community. We hoped that we could stimulate more business activity and investment to compensate for the decrease in government assistance. The commission was successful on several counts. First, it substantially increased the energy that both governments devoted to the relationship. That included getting senior levels of both governments more directly involved. Second, the meetings of the commission also introduced some reality on both sides. The Turkish side was confronted with the reality that the United States was not prepared to simply transfer financial assistance; and both working level and senior officials were made more aware of the both the demands and the opportunities presented by existing bilateral and multilateral trade and investment mechanisms. The American side was educated more about the difficulties faced by the Turkish government at the time, and senior policy officials were given the incentive to look for, or listen to, some more imaginative alternative actions.

One of these had to do with Turkey's request for a huge infusion of capital to deal with debt and cash flow issues at that time. The initial request for a grant from the U.S. had been summarily rejected. During the fall I talked with lots of people in Washington, looking for ideas. Then a lawyer in the private sector described to me how he had helped put together a massive loan guarantee program for Israel some years back. Because of the political strength of the Israel lobby in the United States doing something like that was

easier for Israel than for Turkey. However, there was significant business interest in Turkey, and at the time there was increasing recognition of the convergence of Turkish and Israeli strategic interests. So, it looked like the idea was worth pursuing. He went to work on his contacts, and I went to work on people in the State Department, the NSC and the Congress. It took us many months. The State Department really didn't like the idea. It was like running into a wall with the Economic Bureau and even with the European Bureau and the seventh floor.

Q: Well what was the problem?

ADAIR: Well, it was primarily inertia. "This sort of thing just wasn't done." It is very difficult to persuade bureaucracies to take on something new – big or small. We tried to point out to the economic players that this was a practical, low cost, low risk way of providing material assistance to address important economic problems. We argued to those with strategic responsibilities or sensibilities that there were also important political benefits, such as demonstrating to the Turks that we were still friends they could depend on.

Confidence can be quite fragile, particularly in that part of the world. Many Turks believed they were seeing their relationship with the United States falling to pieces - and that it was our fault. Some believed that we were abandoning them because of their enemies in the region: the Greeks, the Armenians and some Europeans. They were feeling more and more isolated, and needed reassurance. We were not being very good about giving reassurance to the Turks at that time. Nobody would categorically repeat the mantra, "we're still your friends, and we're still your allies." We would take that silently as a given, and then we'd list all the problems that we saw in Turkey – not only economic problems, but a good deal of human rights issues. What the Turks were hearing from us was that we were more concerned with the way they were treating the PKK terrorists than we were concerned about what the terrorists were doing to Turkey. That was very difficult for them.

This loan guarantee program could address a whole range of issues. Those of us who were looking at the Turkish economy, and who had studied economics, could see that their situation was not dire. However, it was problematic and if the government didn't get its political and economic acts together, the situation could become dire. Some of us also believed that the effort, the joint effort, to find a solution might be as important as the final result.

Anyway, I argued that position within the Department – all the way to the seventh floor. I succeeded at least in removing the objections of the seventh floor to my working on it. They didn't want to be involved but they left me alone. I found people in the National Security Council who were interested - for whom it resonated. We took it to the Treasury Department and worked on people there. We worked on key people in Congress that were interested in Turkey. We ultimately succeeded in getting the secretary of the treasury to agree that this was a reasonable thing.

That particular issue actually played out over about a year as I recall. But going back to that summer of 1993, we were also faced with the prospect of several high level official visits. A visit was already scheduled by Turkey's head of state, President Demirel, for the fall. I remember looking at all this stuff when I first came in, looking at Tansu Çiller, and thinking, "Wow, here's this brand new force in the Turkish leadership. It's sort of too bad that she's not the one coming to Washington." Our invitation to the president was natural and appropriate because he was head of state, and it had also been issued before Çiller became Prime Minister. My thinking though was that this new person might be more likely to click with our new president than would President Demirel. Demirel was a longtime politician and competent leader in Turkey, but he was very traditional and formal. What we needed was somebody who could establish a personal relationship with the president that would help to overcome all the other political forces in the United States that were nibbling away at the relationship.

When I first came in, naturally one of the things that I did was to start going around and trying to meet different people in Washington that understood Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. One of these people introduced me to a very influential Turkish journalist who worked out of Istanbul. He was coming to Washington, it must have been in early September, and we got together for lunch. I was a little bit naïve. We were having a very friendly lunch and we were casually discussing a variety of issues. I made the offhand comment that it was sort of too bad that it wasn't Tansu Çiller who was coming because she might be able to make a real impression on this new president. About two days later that story was in the Turkish press, and about a week later the official visitor was Tansu Çiller, not President Demirel. I felt terrible that I had done that to the president of Turkey. Even if the final result was positive, it was wrong and unfair for the president – or any individual to get a message that way.

Q: Professionally we're trained not to do that but we do sometimes.

ADAIR: I'm saying I felt terrible personally. I think it was the right thing; the result was what I had imagined and hoped for. She did come in October; it was a good visit; she made a real impression on the president, and that had lots of ripple effects.

Q: The president was who?

ADAIR: Clinton.

Q: Yes. He had a reputation for being rather aloof from women but still. That's said with sort of tongue in cheek. Oh, he's very good; I mean Clinton was very good at relationships - professionally.

ADAIR: He was/is a brilliant man and he was good at that and what I hoped for did happen. There was a personal relationship and a certain amount of respect that was established. At any rate it really helped the dynamics.

Q: I think this is something that people that are reading this should understand. These visits of top leaders to each other and the relationships that they develop can be extremely important. One thinks of Roosevelt and Churchill, Reagan and Thatcher. Of course the reverse happens sometimes too. Carter and Schmidt didn't get along.

ADAIR: That's true. There's always that danger. But when it succeeds it's very helpful. The whole relationship moves up a notch in importance, because the leaders are interested and willing to address it. That's the first thing. The second thing that it does is it makes all the people in the chain below them more aware of the relationship and more willing to deal with tough issues. They know they can take them up to the top if they have to. It also gives people lower down in the chain more direct access to those senior people.

When Tansu Çiller came to the United States in October, many of her people came. She met with the president, she met with the heads of departments; and her people met with their counterparts. When we traveled to Turkey in December for that joint economic commission meeting, the delegation was led by the assistant secretary of state for European Affairs, Steven Oxman. He had access not only to all of his counterparts in the joint economic commission, not only to the ministers, but also directly to Prime Minister Çiller. We visited her at her house in Istanbul as I recall. At that time, we didn't just talk economics. We were trying to get movement started on resolving the Cyprus problem. We found that she was more willing to work with us on Cyprus and to actually apply Turkey to the whole thing than her predecessors had been. I think that for the first time we really got a commitment from Turkey to work seriously on that.

Q: How did you find the Greek parliament? I mean your impression of how it worked and the dynamics within it.

ADAIR: The Greek parliament. I didn't have very many dealings with the Greek parliament itself. My work was with the government, with the cabinet. When I made my first trip to Greece, I did go and call on people in the parliament, as I did in Turkey. I don't recall it making that much of an impression on me - or me making much of an impression on them. The people that I worked most with on the Greek side were in the Greek embassy in Washington and in the foreign ministry.

Q: How about the Turkish side.

ADAIR: I did call on several parliamentarians, but I didn't work with them personally. They were more courtesy calls for me, as director of the office of Southern European affairs. My direct association with people in Turkey was with the ministry of foreign affairs, with the journalists, with businesspeople and to some degree with the military. It was harder for me to access the military. I met with Turkish parliamentarians of different parties and discussed a variety of issues. I remember particularly talking about the PKK problem and human rights. Some of them were quite sympathetic. They agreed that Turkey needed to be more careful and make more effort to integrate Turkey's Kurds into national life. The whole Kurdish issue in Turkey was very neuralgic because of the

terrorism and the immediacy of the threat. There was a strong concern among many Turkish strategic thinkers that the objective of the Kurdish movement was not so much to provide them with more freedom within Turkey as it was to create a separate Kurdish state. That would mean hiving off a part of Turkish territory in the southeast and combining it with parts of other countries in the region with Kurdish populations such as Iraq. That concern went all the way back to Atatürk and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Some people pointed out to me that originally Turkey was supposed to be called the "Republic of Turks and Kurds." When the modern state of Turkey was formed, they might have had the opportunity to establish a true republic of Turks and Kurds and meshed the two. Instead what they chose to do was to emphasize the Turkish part and elevate that to the point where the Kurdish population became frustrated and began seeking a different direction. I don't know to what degree there was actually such a choice – this is hindsight. Anyway, the difficulties had been going on for many decades, so it was unlikely that we were going to be able to completely change the dynamic.

Q: Was there significant support for the Kurds here? I may be wrong, but there's no particular Kurdish movement in the United States, is there?

ADAIR: Some, but there's not a large population of Kurdish-Americans. They haven't been able to form a power unto themselves, but they have appealed to other ethnic groups in the United States who do have significant populations and political influence - specifically the Greeks and the Armenians. The general human rights movement in the United States has been receptive to them. There is a part of our population that has adopted human rights in general as their cause célèbre around the world. These are for the most part good and honorable intentions, but the movement is also susceptible to corruption by other forces.

Q: Well then, was there a general feeling, political philosophy, whatever you might want to call it, within the State Department about should there be a Kurdistan or not?

ADAIR: There was nobody within the State Department that I came across that argued the case for an independent Kurdistan. There were individuals within the Democratic Party who were arguing it, like Peter Galbraith. We Americans have a remarkable ability to avoid consideration of the strategic dimension of emotional issues. We have a whole human rights apparatus within the Department of State, backed by Congress and legislation, which operates this way. Some of that's good, some of it isn't. I had to deal with quite a lot of that in my work with regards to Turkey.

Q: What were the Turks doing to the Kurds that came to the attention of human rights advocates?

ADAIR: Well when the government of Turkey went after the Kurdish terrorists sometimes they did it in a rather big way. There were accusations were that the military indiscriminately bombed villages and killed innocent civilians. The Turks said no, they weren't, the human rights advocates said yes, they were. There were certainly times when innocent people were killed and when the use of force, even to me, appeared excessive.

However, the challenge that the Turkish government faced was extraordinary. We have subsequently discovered that ourselves in dealing with the aftermath of 9/11 in this country. Our reaction, good heavens, has been way beyond what the Turks have done – and our human rights community has been remarkably quiet about it. The Turks didn't have a 9/11 with the World Trade Tower either but they did have a lot of issues. We tried to be balanced. Our job in the Office of Southern European Affairs was to find ways to ensure that the U.S. Government stayed balanced in the face of all the pressures that were on it not to be balanced.

Q: Okay, the Kurds spilled over national boundaries. They were in Syria, Iraq and Iran. And we at one point sponsored the Kurds in Iran didn't we, or was it Iraq?

ADAIR: We have had a close relationship over the years with the Kurds in Iraq. I tried not to get too involved in the Kurdish problem per se, but I would meet at least once a week with the Near Eastern Bureau to talk about northern Iraq. We were often at loggerheads because the sanctions that we imposed on Iraq after the Gulf war to try and contain Saddam Hussein hit Turkey harder than any other country in the region. The Turks were paying very heavily. They had lots of border trade with Northern Iraq. They had an oil pipeline that brought Iraqi oil to Turkey and through Turkey to the West. These had provided important revenues to Turkey in general and to the eastern part of Turkey in particular. We cut it off. That was one of the things that was contributing significantly to Turkey's economic problems, and why there was some legitimacy to their request for U.S. assistance. The Turks were coming to us and saying you caused this problem, and now we need your help. They didn't say "you have to." They said, "We need you, we're your ally, we're your strategic ally. We've tried to support you with all of these things, and you've caused us hundreds of millions of dollars of losses with these sanctions. Please compensate us." We were trying to find ways to do that.

Q: How stood Turkey at that time with their Middle Eastern neighbors? I think Syria is one. Turkey is very important today, but at that time was it much of a player in the Middle East?

ADAIR: Well Turkey had very careful relations with all of its Middle Eastern neighbors. I don't think you can describe them as friendly. They were difficult. The Turks were very careful diplomatically. They tried to be very careful strategically, to defend their own interests and to avoid stirring up trouble. They were not able to develop close relations of trust or whatever with all of those countries.

Part of the reason was historical. The Ottomans had dominated the region. These other countries didn't want any suggestion of being dominated by the Turks. For some there was a history of resentment. Countries like Armenia had terrible memories of the Ottoman Empire and what had happened. But also, Turkey under Atatürk had made a conscious decision to look west, not east. They were trying to be more Western, trying to adjust their focus towards Europe and the West. I think that also played a role in preventing Turkey from getting too close to some of these other regimes in the region.

We put them in a very bad position with some of our policies, because we were making it difficult for them to even maintain neutral relations with these other Middle Eastern players. Iraq has a huge Kurdish population. If you go back and look at the history of the Kurds, all the way back to the time of Greece and Alexander the Great, you see that nobody could get along with them. I'm not trying to be critical of the Kurds but it's always been difficult for peoples in the area to associate with them. The Turks have a whole section of what is considered historical "Kurdistan" in Turkey. It is something they have to live with and deal with. And here we were, Turkey's number one ally, in an increasingly hostile relationship with Iraq which was the most important other Middle Eastern player on Kurdish issues. Rather than being sensitive to Turkey's situation and trying to adjust our policies to shield our ally, we were trying to get Turkey to reinforce that hostile relationship; to impose sanctions, to cut off any kind of positive relations that they had with Iraq. As long as the cross border trade existed, the Turkish government, the Turkish Kurds and the Iraqi Kurds had something in common – something they could work together on. We forced them to cut that trade off, damaging those relationships, and damaging the economy of Eastern Turkey where most of Turkey's Kurdish population lived. It aggravated the unhappiness, the unrest, and the Kurdish resort to terrorism. When the government cracked down on the terrorism, with resultant human rights problems – we then criticized them! It was a terrible dilemma.

Q: Were we still supporting Kurds in northern Iraq with Operation Provide Comfort?

ADAIR: In the 1990's there were several American military operations directed at protecting the Kurds in northern Iraq from Saddam Hussein's regime. Some was based in Turkey, some was based elsewhere. At the Department of State, the Near Eastern Bureau was most involved and specifically the office responsible for Iraq and Iran. The United States was constantly looking for ways to reinforce our relationship with the Kurdish leadership in Iraq, and this naturally caused problems for and with Turkey. I had lots of disagreements with the Middle Eastern Bureau.

Q: What about Israel?

ADAIR: Turkey had a convergence of mutual strategic interests with Israel. That convergence was becoming more obvious when I was there, and I tried to encourage it. I met with representatives of the Israel lobby in Washington and briefed them on Turkish issues. I hoped that they might provide some balance to the pressures against Turkey in the American Congress, and I think they did. As time went on the relationship between Turkey and Israel strengthened and grew strategically, politically, and economically. It grew pretty steadily up until recently. Perhaps the gradual move of Turkey from a determinedly secular state towards more self-definition as a Muslim nation has put strains on the relationship with Israel. Israel has also done some things that have not made it easier.

Q: Gaza.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: Well now, looking at this relationship during this time, you must have been confronted with the Turks and their relationship with the European Union - whether they would come in or not. What about the whole EU business?

ADAIR: Okay. Turkey was a member of NATO. It played a really important part in the whole strategic definition of Europe, at least from our point of view. As the European Community and then the European Union grew in both economic and political importance, it seemed natural to many of us in the United States that Turkey should be included in that union; as part of Europe. We believed that a potentially very prosperous and dynamic Turkey could add a lot to Europe. So the United States has always been positive about strengthening relations between Turkey and Europe. Our public posture has varied, because Europeans in general are very neuralgic about Turkey – not just in the Balkans. Historically they cannot forget the invasions of Europe by the Ottoman Empire, and the physical and psychological terror that they inspired throughout European civilization. The history of medieval and renaissance Europe is as alive today for Europeans as the Civil War era is for Americans. The siege of Vienna is a part of their history and identity – not to mention the crusades. Historically, it's very hard for Europeans to conceive of Turkey being a part of Europe. In modern terms there are real concerns, both economically and politically, about the potential impact of Turkish immigration. All of these concerns were there when I joined the European Bureau. It was interesting – and frustrating - to talk with Europeans about the subject. I thought I was being completely rational. They sometimes responded as though I was completely naïve or stupid.

At the same time, there were many people in Europe that did want to establish a stronger relationship with Turkey. Some believed that over time that relationship could contribute to the economic growth, wealth and health of the European continent. They also saw the strategic value with regards to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia. We began to support it more vocally and more directly when I was in that office.

One of the issues that I was particularly concerned with was volatility of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean. The danger of an actual conflict between Greece and Turkey, two NATO allies, has never really gone away the whole time that they've been in NATO. Periodically tensions grow between the two, and when I was there tension was going up. There were more disputes in the Aegean, more close encounters between military aircraft, and naval challenges. Many people believed, or chose to believe, that this was just a kabuki dance and didn't really present any danger. I didn't believe that, because when it's being done with fully armed supersonic jets that can get across the Aegean in minutes it's just too dangerous to play those kinds of games. If Turkey became a member of the EU, it might encourage more coincidence of interests between Greece and Turkey and lower tensions over the long term.

The other flash point in the eastern Mediterranean of course was Cyprus. The division of the island had resolved to some degree the physical danger that the Greek and Turkish inhabitants presented to each other. However, it was unstable because the north was not

recognized as a country. It was supported only by Turkey, and it was a cause célèbre for Greeks not only in Cyprus but in Greece and all over the world. So again, we thought that if we could get Turkey more closely associated, more integrated into Europe, that would help. The issue at the time was whether Turkey would become a member of the EU Customs Union, which would be a step in the right direction. There was some opposition within Europe, and strenuous opposition from the Greek government. There was always a litany of reasons why progress towards EU membership should not be allowed for Turkey. That litany included Cyprus and other historical issues. What reasons were given depended on who one was talking to at the time. We tried to discuss regularly, and we worked with our representatives in different countries, particularly with Stu Eizenstat, who was the ambassador to the EU in Brussels, to promote this whole idea. It really didn't move forward until Dick Holbrooke became assistant secretary. He then startled everyone by proposing that we change our policy on Cyprus being a member of the EU in order to remove opposition to this step of Turkey becoming a member of the Customs Union.

Q: I find it very difficult to believe that a plebiscite in France would admit Turkey to the EU. Was there concern that a formal rejection of Turkey might make things worse?

ADAIR: Well, the possibility of EU membership even being considered was still a long ways away. While there was significant opposition – both rational and emotional – to the idea of Turkey being a member of the EU, I don't think the prospect of membership in the EU Customs Union engendered as much emotion. Some of us also believed that we should be trying to encourage more leadership on this issue from people in Europe who had more moderate views.

Until Holbrooke came along, there was almost no one in the European Bureau, and possibly in the U.S. government who was willing to try to overcome inertia and start the ball rolling on this issue. Holbrooke was willing. He was willing to argue the case directly to people, but he was willing to listen to see what people really wanted and needed. That's how he came to his position on Cyprus, by calculating that if he could give key people something they really wanted by encouraging the Europeans to remove their prohibition on considering Cyprus for membership in the EU until the whole Cyprus division was resolved, then an exchange could be made for Turkish membership in the EU Customs Union.

Q: We had listening bases up along the Black Sea and we had a big air base at Incirlik. Did these facilities cause any particular problems during your time?

ADAIR: No. I don't recall any significant problems. There were problems with Incirlik after I left though. And we certainly had plenty of military issues to work with. In the 1980s we provided Turkey with a big arms package that included advanced fighter aircraft. When I came into the office director position the issue on the table was whether or not to provide tanker aircraft to Turkey for refueling capacity. In many respects it was very logical, particularly to strengthen their ability to contribute to NATO's strategic defense – on Turkey's northern and eastern borders. The neuralgic issue was the potential

danger that they might use it on their western border. It wasn't really that serious an issue on the western border, because Turkey and Greece were so close that if either wanted to attack the other they didn't really need that refueling capability. But it was still an issue of perception, so for at least the first year of my tour I adamantly opposed moving forward on the issue of tankers. The business community was not happy with me, and kept up the pressure. I didn't oppose it in principle. I opposed it on the basis of political relations and perceptions. Then, a time came after about a year and a half on the job when Greece came to us with some new military requests. When that happened, we were able to move forward on both requests.

Q: What about, going back to the movie "Midnight Express," what about Americans, civilians caught up with drugs in Turkey?

ADAIR: That was very much an important memory and issue in the minds of some of the people who were criticizing Turkey for human rights issues. That image was very much with them and it really undermined sympathy for the Turks, particularly on the Hill. The Turks can sometimes be - well many of us can be our own worst enemies. But I don't remember any issues with either narcotics or American citizens coming to the fore when I was there.

Q: You also had prisoner exchange, didn't you, in that period of time when Americans could choose to serve out their time in American jails?

ADAIR: Perhaps, but I don't recall it being an issue with us then.

Q: Well let's turn to Greece, my favorite country.

ADAIR: It's one of my favorite countries, too. I had visited Greece once, back in the mid 1970s, and spent two weeks on the island of Lesbos with a close friend. I had a wonderful time. I loved the place, the people, the music, and the food. I liked the whole atmosphere. One thing I didn't like was the "we hate the Turks" attitude. Some people found that very amusing and sort of picturesque, but I didn't.

Then, when I worked on this area from the European Bureau, I encountered so much of that attitude. It made it very difficult for us to work with Greece. Some of our counterparts were smart, wise, considerate, and they were trying so hard. And yet, there was this atmosphere of absolutism and demagoguery, as if the country was almost trapped by its own political conventional wisdom – actually in recent years our country seems to be headed in a similar direction. In the early 1990's the Balkans were an all consuming problem and passion. The breakup of Yugoslavia had produced terrible conflicts between Croatia and Serbia and Serbia and Bosnia. The Americans and the Europeans were struggling to restore reason, and trying to get people to work with us. Some of the Greeks, on the other hand, seemed to be just upping the ante. They were encouraging the Serbs, and they were picking fights with both the new republics, with Macedonia and with Albania. It really seemed quite incredible to me. They had a terrible argument with Macedonia, which I mentioned earlier, and closed the border between

Greece and FYROM (Federal Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). They were also arguing with Albania and making various threats. They were worried by Albania because the population was Muslim and the common border was long and potentially difficult to defend. However, the problem with Macedonia was sheer politics and demagoguery. I tried but I was never able to see any real logical strategic issue there, except in so far as some wanted to define the Greek nation in a way that it hadn't been defined for several thousand years.

Q: How did they want to define the Greek nation?

ADAIR: Many Greeks look back to the spectacular success of the Macedonian empire, when Alexander the Great conquered much of the known world. With some legitimacy they see that as a Hellenic empire. With less legitimacy, I think, they consider the symbols of the Macedonian empire to be proprietary. Some would also like to claim the historical homeland. It's hard to find another explanation for why some of them were so adamant about the application of the name Macedonia to a country separate from Greece, and the use of symbols like the Macedonian sun - other than to say they believed that this shouldn't be a nation unto itself, but should be a part of Greece. Their concerns were probably defensive as well. Irredentism is alive and well in the Balkans. Many communities either fear it, or employ it, or both. It was very difficult to talk with many Greeks – and even some of the Greek-Americans - about these things. We were trying desperately to put an end to the war in Bosnia; we were trying to promote a reasonable regime in Albania, which had been a hermit nation for decades and was really backward; and we were trying to encourage stability in the other newly created nations. Greece, for the most part, was just making these things more difficult.

Q: Well, in the first place, let's look at the government of Greece. How was Papandreou viewed?

ADAIR: Well let's be fair to Andreas Papandreou. He didn't come to power until several months after I arrived on the desk. He became prime minister, I believe, in October of 1993. The Greek government had already been asserting itself on both Macedonia and Albania before he came in. Andreas Papandreou didn't have a very good reputation in the United States. He was seen as a demagogue; he was seen as anti-American, and he had been seen in the past as pro-Soviet, communist, whatever. All of these things were sort of simplifications, but when he came in people didn't really know what to expect. They didn't know how he was going to deal with these various problems. They didn't know if he was going to increase the volatility of the relationship with Turkey or how he was going deal with these countries on the periphery.

When he was elected I argued early on that we should invite him to come to the United States. He had previously spent time in the United States and been educated here, receiving a PhD in economics at Harvard and teaching at several universities. He had been a U.S. citizen, and had been married to an American.

Q: Served in the Navy, too.

ADAIR: That's right; he served in the armed forces. Then he renounced his U.S. citizenship. Well, when you renounce your U.S. citizenship, particularly back in the early 1960's, that was almost like declaring war on the United States. When he was in the Greek government during the Cold War, he was not a bosom buddy of the United States. He tried to establish some kind of neutrality. Well neutrality was not, you know, looked upon kindly by the United States at the time. He tried to argue that Greece should be more independent of the United States. Those were the kinds of things that the United States didn't react well to in those days. We don't react well to it now, either, as we saw in spades when French President Jacques Chirac tried to argue very reasonably that we shouldn't invade Iraq.

Nevertheless, we did not know what to expect from Andreas Papandreou, and I said look, let's get him here. We had the experience of Tansu Çiller coming, and that had really helped our relationship. I thought, "Well, we've got to work with both of these countries, and we've got to have good relations with the leadership in Greece in particular. If we don't, then the ethnic lobby in the United States will be a negative rather than a positive force. I also had a particular concern. When Richard Holbrooke came into the European Bureau as assistant secretary in the, I think it was in the summer of 1974, he asked me to do him a memo on relations between the United States and Greece. One of the things I said was Greek leaders don't lead. They are constantly putting their finger to the wind to figure out which way it's blowing - sort of like our own politicians. But Papandreou seemed to be a strong personality, and I thought that if we could get him over to the United States early on for meetings with Clinton and others, then we could build on that dynamic, and his strength could be a force for good in the region.

So we did that. We issued an invitation to him immediately, and he actually came in April of 1994. I went to meet him at the airport. When he came off the plane, I said, "Welcome back, Mr. Prime Minister." He looked at me, smiled broadly and said, "It's been way too long." And I thought, "Man, that's a great way to start." It was a good visit, and influenced many aspects of our relationship.

Q: Well this would be a different type of visit than for many leaders who have not seen the United States.

ADAIR: He didn't need to do the tourist thing, right. But those visits made a difference. We established a Greek-American Business Council, and our embassy in Athens seemed to become more active as well. Our ambassador in Athens was Tom Niles, who had been previously the assistant secretary for European Affairs. He had a good solid knowledge of what was going on Greece as well as how Washington worked.

We also had a high level military commission meeting with the Greeks early on. I think it was in January, 1994. It was the first time I had really dealt with military issues. My other jobs had been economic. We were working on improving security in the Aegean and we got them to agree intellectually that they and the Turks needed to work on some confidence building measures for decreasing tensions in the Aegean.

Q: This seems a peculiar thing. It's not talks between the Americans and the Soviet Fleet. This is two allies!

ADAIR: Two allies, right. As long as that Soviet threat was there, the problems between those two allies were easier to keep under control. When the Soviet threat was no longer an issue, the local issues took on more prominence. There are all kinds of issues between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean. The most difficult one, at least in the first year that I was there, was management of the airspace. The Turks were constantly trying to assert their right to half of the airspace. The Greeks took the position that most of the airspace over the Aegean was theirs. They had some legal basis for doing so, but it was not definitive and the Turks challenged it constantly to avoid any charge that they had ceded their position by default. At some point before I arrived, I think, both sides had re-armed their aircraft. Previously they had been unarmed. Armed aircraft raised the danger and the stakes. In that first meeting with the Greeks we started talking about confidence building measures, and the prime one was to get both sides to take their arms off of the aircraft. I feel like an idiot, now, because I can't remember which side agreed first. One of them had to agree first and do it for the other to see it. I can't remember which side did. Publicly, their statements suggested it was impossible, and many people in our country believed it was impossible. However, our quiet discussions indicated that both were willing.

Q: Did you find that the various Hellenic organizations in the United States, in other words the Greeks, were changing or did you have to bypass them? How did they play?

ADAIR: They were very active; they were constantly pressuring us to take steps to promote their causes, and to defend whatever the Greek government was doing. It seemed that no matter what the Greek government did – on Macedonia, Albania, Turkey, whatever - the community here, or at least some members of the community, tried to defend them. That didn't mean that all the members of the community did. First of all, they would all say they were Americans first. Many of them were very reasonable, and could see both sides. Many of them could also see the strategic dimension, and they wanted to support our government in its efforts to promote American interests. Within that context, however, they wanted to make sure that we were not ignoring things that were important to them. But there was also a more extreme element that was louder than everybody else and tended to influence the official presentations of the group. For them the Turks could do no right, and the Greeks could do no wrong. They expected us to resolve the Cyprus issue (in favor of Greek interests), prevent any actual or perceived threat from the Turks to Greece, protect Greek minorities in Turkey from any perceived persecution or slight, and protect other minorities in Turkey. Dialogue with these individuals was very difficult. Some people handled it better than others. Richard Holbrooke is an example. He did a better job of dealing with them because he would start right off by thumping the table and declaring how important Greece was as an ally. He could hear what they were saying about certain issues, and try to find ways to help them. It was more difficult for me. I'm somewhat ashamed to say that I would try to avoid them

as a group because it just seemed a waste of time. There was no upside to it, only a down side. Nevertheless, I had tremendous respect for some of them as individuals.

Q: There are several members of Congress, including the Senator from Maryland.

ADAIR: Paul Sarbanes.

Q: Sarbanes, who seemed to have knee jerk Greek reactions; they learn it from their mother's milk or something like that.

ADAIR: Before I met him I got that impression as well. Later, he was quite supportive. Let's forget names; but many representatives in Congress, in order to respond to or to please their constituents, will present their constituents' cases publicly. Sometimes they may get more credit if they present their demands to the executive branch in somewhat extreme form. Often that's the only message that we receive: the public proclamation of these positions. Sometimes it is not actually coming from the members of Congress, but from their staff. Some of the staff have agendas of their own. Some of those representatives who are strong public advocates can be more "reasonable" in private, more willing to listen to strategic arguments. For others, no interests trump their own.

Paul Sarbanes was a very wise, I think, and very responsible member of Congress. He had to be supportive of his constituency, but when it came to the crunch, when we really needed to do something and we really had a difficult row to hoe, like on Cyprus, if we went to him quietly, laid it all out, explained what we were doing and showed him how one piece balanced the other, he would be supportive. That was true of Lee Hamilton as well. Lee Hamilton had a strong Greek constituency and when I first encountered his staff and even him, I was appalled by some of the things that they were saying and some of the positions that they were taking. Once we were able to talk more, that changed some. It was hard for me in the beginning to defend some of the positions I was taking because I didn't know enough. I didn't have all the arguments and they were very aggressive. Overall, I was disappointed that I was never able to establish a close working relationship with the Greek community.

Q: Which brings me back to something I forgot to ask but I'll cover now; the Armenian community in California.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: -when you were dealing with Turkey, how did you find that?

ADAIR: I found them to be more extreme than the extreme elements of the Greek community. They were well plugged in politically, and they were absolutely vehement about Turkey. One of their biggest objectives was to get the United States to formally declare that the extensive deaths of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 were genocide. I opposed that as being substantively wrong, and politically very damaging to our interests in the region. I was not able to do a lot of research myself, but I did talk with

academics that had done the research. I was told that in the files of the Ottoman Empire on this period, there was no indication that the Ottoman Empire was trying to eliminate the Armenian population. What the Ottoman regime was trying to do was deal with a very dangerous threat from Russia. The Armenian community, or parts of it, had sided with Russia; increasing the strategic danger to the Ottoman Empire. Their solution was to try and move the Armenians away from the border to where they would no longer be a threat. A terrible number of people died in that process. It was a horrific event, and probably never should have been undertaken. However, as far as I know, the intent was not to destroy a population, which is the definition of genocide.

And yet this community was constantly pushing it with all kinds of rhetoric and gradually obtaining more and more support from members of Congress. They seem to be essentially rewriting history by demagoguery.

Q: Back now to Greece, how stood Greece in NATO at that time?

ADAIR: Greece was a full member of NATO. They participated actively, and many of the other NATO allies found the Greeks to be a difficult ally.

Q: I remember when I was consul general in Naples the head of our military forces and the SOUTHCOM was Admiral William Crowe. I asked him how he was doing with the Greeks and the Turks, and his reply was, "With great difficulty."

ADAIR: When were you there?

Q: This is 1978, '79.

ADAIR: Okay. That was another uneasy period.

Q: But, did Greek willingness or unwillingness to pay taxes raise any warning bells about the economy?

ADAIR: Well I think that the Greek economy was never seen as being particularly healthy. There were always problems with it, and I think it was clear that many Europeans were not happy with it. One of the arguments against bringing Greece into the European Union was that it was likely an economic problem. And it was.

Q: Did we deal with our relations with Greece in isolation or did we discuss them with other nations like France, Italy, Britain or Germany? For example, if you were having trouble getting access through Macedonia and all that.

ADAIR: We did discuss Aegean and eastern Mediterranean issues with other members of the EU, but I don't think I discussed our bilateral relations with Greece with others like that. I don't think it would have been useful, or appropriate. When we were working on Cyprus we certainly worked with other European countries, Britain in particular because of its historical and ongoing interests there. The Scandinavians had some interest in

Cyprus, and when I took on responsibility for northern Europe later on, I had a number of discussions about Cyprus with those governments. I would go in to brief their foreign ministries, their offices, their desks, on our position because a lot of them didn't have the information that we had and we wanted them to support what we were doing.

Q: Would you talk a little more about your experience in dealing with the Balkans?

ADAIR: OK, let's talk a little more about the difficulty that we had with relations between Greece and the new Republic of Macedonia. When I came into the job it was the summer of 1993. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the various wars there were well underway. The problem was consuming policymakers not just in the European Bureau but throughout the government. Nobody knew what to do. The administration's foreign policy leadership was focusing on Russia. The Soviet Union had collapsed in 1989 and there was the whole issue of how Russia was going to go, whether it was going to become more democratic, how we were going to deal with the nuclear weapons, and how were we going to deal with Eastern Europe. My sense at the time was that everybody was dancing around on eggshells. They were terrified that they were going to do something wrong, and that democratic trends that started in 1989 might collapse. The growing problems in the former Yugoslavia were a real threat to that.

For the first year that I was in the job of Southern European Affairs it was very difficult, as I said earlier, to get any decisions made about anything. But the conflict in Bosnia got worse and worse. The Europeans were not able to deal with it effectively. The United States Government's approach of following the European lead wasn't working either. It wasn't until the spring of 1984, when Holbrooke left his position as ambassador in Germany and came back to Washington to take the job of assistant secretary for European Affairs that things began to change. He came back with a mission: to bring an end to the war in Bosnia and the Balkans. The dynamic of things changed.

Greece was part of the Balkans, so Greece had some relationship to the difficulties in the former Yugoslavia. There were sympathies on the part of some Greeks for the Serbs: religious sympathy, historical sympathy, anti-Muslim sentiment and so on. Some people in Greece were supportive of what the Serbs were doing. There were even stories that some were more than just supportive; they were encouraging the Serbs. However, that was not official Greek policy, at least as far as we knew.

There was one area of the Balkans where Greece was integrally involved – officially, and with the sanction and encouragement of much of the Greek population. That was the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia. I have previously listed some of the reasons for Greek concern there. Greece was very forceful in international, the UN, EU, NATO and others, in opposing any progress for this new republic. Greece even put an embargo on all trade that was going through Greece to Macedonia, imports and exports. That was a real problem for Macedonia, because the country's main supply route ran through Greece. This was an extremely frustrating situation for American policymakers, international organizations, the EU and everyone concerned. To most observers, the Greeks were

looking extremely unreasonable; not just unsympathetic to the tragedy that was unfolding in the region, but antipathetic. They were making it worse.

During the first year of my time as office director, there were people in the Department of State and elsewhere in the government who argued that we should just be much more forceful with Greece. My argument was constantly, "You can't just clobber them; they're an important ally. We have to find some way that will fit everybody's needs."

When Holbrooke came in he was consumed for the first year with building the process that lead to the peace negotiations at Dayton. He and his Balkans team did lots of shuttling around and by the summer of 1995, they were ready to make their big push. My office was peripherally involved because of the proximity of our region to the conflict. But at some point during the summer, we concluded that we were not just peripherally involved. We were directly involved because of the ongoing Greek embargo of Macedonia. It was a kind of satori moment. As we watched the others shuttling back and forth, occasionally complaining about Greece and Macedonia, we thought, "Wait a moment. This is still a problem. It can't be resolved between the two countries because their own democracies won't let it get resolved; the politicians have no flexibility because they have no incentive. But if we put it into the context of something larger, like the push for a Balkan peace, which almost everybody believes is necessary, maybe we can move it."

So I went and talked quietly with the Greek ambassador in Washington. He was an extraordinary individual, one of the best diplomats I had the privilege of working with during my career. I sounded him out – personally. I didn't ask anyone's permission. I was confident that I could trust him to understand that at the time this was solely my own thinking. I asked him if he believed it was possible and worth a try. He thought it was; that if we did that we just might be able to give the Greek government enough of an incentive, enough of an impetus and enough protection to be able to make a move that they in essence wanted to do themselves. Everybody wanted to stop this from getting any worse. It was hurting both sides economically.

I went and talked with the person who was the office director for the former Yugoslavia, and he thought it was worth a try. So I went to Holbrooke and laid it out for him. My argument to Dick was twofold: 1) Give Greece and Macedonia a chance to be part of something bigger; and 2) Success there will demonstrate to the others in the region both that we are serious and that it's possible to solve these things. I didn't even have to finish. He said, "Yes, do it." So, we started. I worked with Chris Hill, the other office director, and his people. We worked with the chargé in Skopje, Macedonia, and we worked with the embassy in Athens, and we worked with Matt Nimitz, who was the United Nations representative on this issue in New York.

We got it started in the late summer. We connected it to the message to all of them that there's going to be a peace settlement in the Balkans, and you should be a part of it. All the pieces of the solution were already floating around. This impetus pulled them together. Matt Nimitz brokered the actual signing of the agreement at the UN in New

York with the permanent representatives of Greece and Macedonia, but we coordinated the timing and the process from my office at State. For several hours we had a four-way telephone communication going: Matt Nimitz; our charge in Athens, Tom Miller; our charge in Skopje, Vic Comras; and me. Tom was talking directly with Prime Minister Papandreou. Vic was talking from his cell phone outside the Prime Minister's office in Skopje. We had all three lines open and all three lines were coming into my office. I would tell Vic, "OK, we have everyone lined up in New York. Go to the Prime Minister." I would relay his reply to Matt, then call Tom and do the same thing. It went on for hours. Holbrooke came down at least once to ask anxiously why it was taking so long; but we finally got it and it was formally announced in September. Holbrooke was able to take it to the parties in the Bosnian conflict that he was talking to and say, "Look, we just resolved this apparently intractable issue just to the south; you guys can do it too." I think it helped to give an impetus to the whole Dayton process.

Q: This was a fiery issue and Papandreou had the reputation of being a demagogue. Why would he let a principal card like this go?

ADAIR: Well, there were several factors, I think. First, to use your analogy of the card, that card was less something to be played than it was something playing them. There were some legitimate concerns on both sides; but the most powerful forces driving the leaders were political – domestic political factors in both countries. There's a dynamic in most countries whereby groups that want to be influential will take advantage of emotional issues to get a response from the population. That happened in both of these countries. The leaders bore some responsibility as well, even if they didn't start the process. In any case, once it was going they didn't have the power to stop it individually. If any one of them tried to stop it individually they could be crucified by their own political process, by their own allies as well as their enemies.

I think that by the summer of 1994, most responsible players in those governments recognized that the dispute was hurting both countries. It was hurting both countries economically and it was hurting both countries politically, particularly in multilateral institutions. It was becoming more and more problematic for Greece in the United Nations, the EU, and in NATO. They were pretty much isolated in all three of those places. Although Greece has demonstrated often enough they are willing to be isolated for their principles, the principles here were less and less clear. Ultimately there wasn't a real principle there. They were concerned about territory, they were concerned about the future, and those concerns were addressed in this process as well. The name was the most obvious problem and basically both sides agreed to use the name the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for international purposes. Macedonia continued to call itself the Republic of Macedonia but the international organizations for at least a period of time were going to use the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United States was going to use it. That wasn't such a big change. It was basically an agreement that things weren't going to get worse.

The other thing that had stood out was the flag. The government of Macedonia at the time had chosen to use the Star of Regina, which was this bright golden, many pointed, maybe

16 or so pointed star that was quite impressive on a red flag. And the Greeks were incensed about this because they said the Star of Regina was a Greek symbol. It was from early Macedonia but they insisted that it was a Greek symbol, already being used by Greeks in a variety of places, and it shouldn't be used by the Macedonians. The Macedonians were equally firm. Nobody was budging. The solution was to make an abstract version of this star.

Q: Did you hire any illustrators-?

ADAIR: I can't remember who came up with that.

Q: Well you know, I mean this was time of creativity; Bosnia was given a flag, eventually they had several but the flag they ended up with had none of the colors or symbols of any of the Muslim, Orthodox or Catholic faiths. It was sort of a mishmash.

ADAIR: Yes. I guess the point here is that you have to have all of these things. You have to have reasonable alternatives for bridging the gap; you also have to have an incentive to bridge the gap; and you have to have protection for the people who are going to make the decisions to change. The incentive and the protection was provided by making it all part of a larger process.

Q: Yes. Well, I would think that one of the things going for you was Greece sort of dangles out there in NATO. With the Soviet Union gone, it's not clear there is a reason for NATO having Greece in it. But, from the Greek point of view it is absolutely vital to be in NATO to have protection against Turkey.

ADAIR: I don't know if that was part of the calculation for anyone. I don't recall anybody seriously questioning the necessity of Greece remaining in NATO. And I think that there were basically two reasons for that. The first was that the Eastern Mediterranean was a dangerous, volatile place and NATO was an important element in maintaining the stability of that area - not least by having two of its members there. The other was that NATO was in the process of trying to expand its membership and its influence to include the countries of Central or Eastern Europe. Any problems with existing members would have been very problematic in that regard.

Q: Well tell me, what was happening with the border. Why was it important that it was closed?

ADAIR: Remember, it was the principle supply route for stuff to Macedonia. There was a lot of traffic that went through. Macedonia needed those supplies for its economy.

Second, the trucking companies that were carrying much of that cargo were Greek. Greek companies profited from the trade. Some of the goods were actually produced in Greece, so the Greek economy was also losing export revenue. Even without the embargo, both sides were facing economic challenges. They didn't need more. I think that ongoing

depravation tended to reduce the enthusiasm in the popular mind for extreme attitudes towards the issue in Greece as well as in Macedonia.

Q: Going back to the Balkan wars, there was a nasty terrorist movement, IMRO or VMRO, which was a Macedonian terrorist group. Was there concern about terrorism?

ADAIR: I don't recall terrorism being an active concern in that area and time frame.

Q: During this particular time, how stood the situation in Kosovo and did that have any influence?

ADAIR: Kosovo had influence on a lot of things. It occupied an important emotional place in history for the Serbs; and there was a great deal of concern that it was a dangerous target for reprisals, and possibly even for genocide.

Q: Did the Turks play any role in this Macedonian/Greek standoff?

ADAIR: I know that their general attitude was one of support for the Republic of Macedonia to call itself what it wanted. Turkey, like most everyone else opposed the Greek embargo, but I don't recall Turkey giving the issue a very high profile. The Turks, at least when I was working there, were pretty careful not to criticize the Greek government indiscriminately for this, that or the other thing.

Q: When the issue was finally resolved, were you able to help pass the word that everybody won or something like that?

ADAIR: Well that was our message all along. This was not a victory for one side or the other. Everybody benefited and everybody needed to keep working on resolving the outstanding questions. My message within our own bureau and in our own department was that we needed to keep working on this. I had a reputation with some in the American-Greek community for being anti-Greek and pro-Turkish. I probably had a reputation among some of the Turks for being pro-Greek. Within the bureau I was about the only one who would speak out for the Greeks and for the issues that they were facing. I didn't like the way they dealt with a lot of those issues, but they were an important ally, and they were important friends. We could recognize that they had issues of concern as well, and we needed to be active in trying to support reasonable resolution of these issues rather than by taking sides. Taking sides only made things worse in that whole region.

Q: Of course.

How about another area, which maybe didn't flare up particularly but was always there: Greece and Albania? I remember when I was in college and we studied the Corfu Channel incident when the Albanians fired on British ships sailing the Corfu Channel. How stood things there while you were there?

ADAIR: Relations between Greece and Albania were uncomfortable. The Greeks were very concerned with their border with Albania. They worried that the Albanian population, which was predominantly Muslim, was growing faster than theirs and would put pressure on their border. It didn't come up on the radar screen very often, but it was there. There were some human rights concerns about the way ethnic Albanians were treated in Greece. The Albanian government at the time was difficult as well.

Q: Well the Albanian government in a way hadn't been operating in the real world for very long, had it?

ADAIR: It had been isolated for a very long time and was trying to open up. It was trying to open its economy, and it was also trying to become more democratic. There was both hope and concern. The individual who emerged as leader, Sali Berisha, was smart, capable and popular, but not very democratic. I didn't get very involved with our own relations with Albania. I visited it once with Holbrooke. We met with the president and other officials and I basically took notes. That was the extent of my participation.

Q: What was your impression of Holbrooke?

ADAIR: Well, I'll start by saying the very first time I met him I was not impressed. It was at a dinner party in Beijing, when I was stationed there back in about 1986. I didn't particularly like him. But subsequently I met him when he came through Chengdu. He was on his way up to Tibet with a delegation of retired notables. I briefed him when he came in, and then he briefed me when he came out. I was more impressed then and enjoyed the interaction with him. When he joined the European Bureau as assistant secretary I was really impressed with the change in atmosphere of the bureau and the department as a whole. I enjoyed working for him very much because he was committed, energetic, willing to take a stand and make decisions. He was very intuitive and sized up situations and people very quickly.

Q: Yes, you mentioned your experience with him on the Greek-Macedonia situation.

ADAIR: I didn't finish my presentation; he finished it for me. He was willing and able to listen. You had to accept that when you went in to present something you were just as likely to get beat up as to succeed. But he wouldn't just ignore you unless he concluded that you weren't worth listening to. Sometimes you had to sort of force your way in, you had to be almost as obnoxious as he could be in order to get his attention. Once you got it though, you could do something, and do it quickly. The Greece-Macedonia proposal was one example. There were other times when I really disagreed with what he was doing. He won most of those arguments, but I occasionally got some changes.

I had to learn his parameters too. Early on, I was aware that I could get to Holbrooke and I could get to him any time if necessary. He was working almost all the time. One evening there was an issue that needed to be resolved that night; and it was like 7:00 or 8:00 PM. I knew that he was having dinner with someone, and decided to call him. He listened and then very curtly said, "Marshall, that's an office director level decision, don't

bother me with that stuff," and he hung up. So I made the decision; it was done and it was gone. That was very enabling. It was risky too. Another time I used that discretion and agreed to a budgetary issue. It was something that I'd been fighting for two years and I finally just gave up. I had not gotten it fully into my head that the dynamic of things had changed with his presence in the Department. When the word got to Holbrooke that I had agreed with the budget people in the department to making this particular cut, he called me up to his office. I walked in and he immediately read me the riot act. The new principle deputy assistant secretary, John Kornblum, was there and Holbrooke shredded me. I was sitting in front of his desk on a straight backed chair and the only thing that was missing was a floodlight on my face and handcuffs. I felt bad, but mostly because I realized I'd been really stupid. He was right, he was absolutely right, and he injected a dimension to the whole thing that hadn't been there before. He even took it a step further, and said he might agree that I was substantively right – I wasn't – but if the cut were to be made it would have to be done differently – by preparing members of Congress extensively. People at the Department of State rarely talked that way; but he was connected and he was willing and able to go to bat for things that way. On the whole, I thought he was terrific. I thought in a way that he saved the Clinton Administration, which had been mired in paralysis for the first couple of years of his term and was faced with a real crisis, humanitarian and political, in Bosnia. I'm not at all sure there was anybody else around that could have done what he did at least not in that administration. That's a rather sad commentary on a nation as large as the United States.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: But, there didn't seem to be anybody else in any of the other countries that could have done it either.

Q: Well then, let's turn to the Aegean.

ADAIR: Okay, but please keep in mind that I'm not going to be able to give all of the details of the disputes. There was a time when I could do it fairly comprehensively but not now.

The Aegean is a fairly small sea and there is not much distance separating Greece and Turkey. There are lots of islands in the Aegean, most of which are Greek. They are internationally accepted as being Greek, and accepted by Turkey as being Greek. There are some islands or rocks that are still disputed. The legalities are debated. There are a number of different treaties that apply, as well as ancient claims. The most important treaties as I recall were the Treaty of Lausanne 1923 and the Treaty of Paris, of 1947 I think. Those treaties dealt with the borders in a variety of different ways. There were unresolved issues of sovereignty over the islands, and also of sovereignty over the seas between the islands. Traditionally, the territorial seas that were allowed around the islands were six miles. Greece claimed more than that; I think about 12 miles. Some of those islands are just off the Turkish coast, and they have found ways of accepting a quiet status quo for many years. However, all kinds of things can challenge that and spark problems. It happened several times when I was office director.

There was also the issue of the continental shelf and who had claim to it. When I was there it didn't come up very often, perhaps because it was both dangerous and expensive. There was also the question of airspace. If you can't decide who controls the land and the sea, then it's pretty hard to determine who controls the air. There were international civil aviation agreements. The international civil aviation organization tended to be more favorable to Greece than to Turkey, but it was not definitive. Turkey felt the need to reassert its position periodically. Both countries generally would try to assert their positions in ways that wouldn't aggravate the other one too much, but there was still a lot of emotion. There was more obvious emotion on the Greek side than on the Turkish side but there was emotional potential on both sides. And when the emotions got involved and the politicians responded to the emotions things could get quite dangerous.

The single most dangerous time was the incident between Greece and Turkey over the rocks, Imia/Kardak. I believe that it was in January of 1996. Imia/Kardak was not far from the Turkish coast in the eastern Aegean. The Treaty of Lausanne had demilitarized most of the islands in the Aegean. Both countries had agreed that they would not introduce military forces to them. As long as the islands remained demilitarized they could not be a threat to Turkey. In the case of Imia/Kardak, a series of incidents happened to escalate problems. As I recall there was a Turkish merchant ship that went aground or that had problems near Imia/Kardak. This was an almost uninhabited rock. I believe there were some sheep, and one shepherd who was Greek. Some Greeks accused the Turks of creating the incident on purpose, and some Greek forces were sent to the island. The Turks responded by mobilizing army and their naval units in the area. They sent a naval force to occupy the island and evict the Greek forces.

We had faced a couple of incidents like this, not quite this serious, in the time that I had been there. Holbrooke believed that they had gone beyond the point where they could resolve it themselves. Neither side would accept the other's reassurances or the other's commitments. Holbrooke believed that the only way they could stand down was for the United States to step into the middle and say will you give me your assurance, Greece? Yes. Will you give me your assurance, Turkey? Yes. Then the United States would say to Turkey, I give you the assurance of the United States that such and such will not happen; and the same to Greece.

On the Greek side he was talking directly with the foreign minister; and on the Turkish side he was talking directly with the prime minister and her representatives. We started, I think, in the afternoon, probably 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon, and we went right through until about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. Holbrooke would call one and then the other. I was there in the room participating in all of the conversations.

At the same time, we were monitoring this ourselves through our own sources. We knew what both sides were doing. We knew where they were; and we knew what their orders were. We were trying to get the orders changed. And at the very end communication stopped - 10 minutes before the Turkish forces were supposed to land. There was a point where we had actually gotten a report that they had landed, and we thought we were in

the middle of a war. The damage that kind of a war would have done would have been huge, because the two forces had actually met with everybody mobilized and the planes in the air. The devastation would have been terrible, not just to military forces. Of course, the damage to NATO would also have been very serious. Luckily, it didn't happen. In those last 10 minutes the Turks turned around; they didn't land. I certainly think that Holbrooke's intervention made a difference.

Q: Did you get the feeling that Holbrooke from time to time would say, "Oh for God's sakes, these squabbling Turks and Greek. I've got bigger things to do than coming in and resolving their unwelcome problems?

ADAIR: Well, I reacted that way. But one of the most impressive things about Holbrooke was that, even though he very impatient with petty bureaucracy and bureaucrats, he could be incredibly patient with some of the most outrageous behavior of other people and nations. He understood the dynamic, and he understood that getting personally upset didn't help.

Q: How about just operationally in the Department? Did he have deputies and were these a pain in the neck?

ADAIR: I thought he was very good at choosing the people around him. He looked for people that would be as active as he was. He was not at all afraid of people challenging him so he picked the strongest and the most aggressive people that he could.

Q: Absolutely.

ADAIR: He also gave his staff tremendous authority; and most used it responsibly. If they didn't he would not hesitate to reign them in. Some had a reputation for being overbearing – looking back on it I suppose I was sometimes – but I saw very little pettiness in the people around him. I probably shouldn't use that word.

Q: But there is pettiness. I mean when we're talking about operations, there's ego involved.

ADAIR: Well a lot of it has to do with leadership. The leader has to be aware of how his staff is accomplishing things. He wants them to get things done, but he has to keep tabs on how it's done, because that is going to affect what he wants to do next. In my experience, Holbrooke was always aware of that. If I did something and caused him more trouble somewhere else I would be shredded. I thought it was a pretty good team. I admired the people that he picked, the deputy assistant secretaries that he chose when he first came in: John Kornblum and Bob Frasure were both excellent diplomats and managers.

Q: How did you find the desk officers for Greece and Turkey? How did they work?

ADAIR: I was very, very lucky. I had really good people working for me. It was luck, because I didn't know any of them before. All the people I had were smart, imaginative and willing to stick their necks out. They were willing to go and work actively with a variety of other actors. Each one of them had his or her own personality, and each had quirks, but it was a good team.

Q: Did you find a different sort of working atmosphere between the East Asian Bureau and your part of the European Bureau?

ADAIR: Well I'd never worked in the East Asian Bureau. The only bureau I had worked in was the economic bureau. I liked the economic bureau. I admired it and its people in it. I thought the dynamic was terrific. The geographic bureau was very different, because we were dealing with relations between countries. There was a lot more contact with a wide variety of actors in other nations than there had been in the Economic Bureau. I should qualify that statement, because when I was in the Economic Bureau I was relatively junior. When I was in the European Bureau I was close to the top. As a more junior officer, I probably had more responsibility and more direct contact with a broader variety of people from other countries than did many of my counterparts in geographic bureaus.

Q: Yes. Well then, you were also in the European Bureau at a unique time. Every once in awhile fissures open up in the international community and the world, like in 800 when Christianity split in two. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a big one, too. You were there when things opened up.

ADAIR: Yes, many things were opening up, and it was not all good. The collapse of Yugoslavia and the tragic conflicts that resulted probably would not have happened if the Soviet Union had not imploded. When I was Office Director of Southern European Affairs, I was peripheral to most of that. Later, when I became deputy assistant secretary and was dealing with Eastern Europe, I was more involved.

Q: Well then, shall we move to your change of focus?

ADAIR: Well we need to talk about Cyprus a little bit more.

Q: Yes, let's talk.

ADAIR: Again, this is one where it's hard for me to talk about the details, because I'm too far away from it. In some respects it's all about details. Everybody's concerned with their particular part of the pie. They can and do describe every element to you. Some can describe everything that anybody else has done for the last 1,000 years to interfere with their part of the pie. Faced with that kind of barrage, it's hard to see the big picture. You've always got to question whether the view you're getting in any particular presentation is correct.

Cyprus was a problem, because back in 1974 it had been divided. It had been divided when the Turkish government intervened in a crisis and drew a line across the island

separating a chunk in the north from the rest, as a safe haven for the Turkish population. When the coup took place, there was genuine fear that the Turkish population was in danger. The Turks believed they had an obligation to intervene and protect the ethnic Turkish population. The Greeks considered the intervention a violation of Cypriot sovereignty in which many of them lost property in the north. They lost the entire city of Famagusta, which when I was there was still a ghost town. I arrived in 1993, which was almost 20 years after the fact. The island was still divided then; it is still divided now. Americans and Europeans had tried many times to repair the damage and find an acceptable resolution of the division.

Q: We'd had special envoys.

ADAIR: We had had what were called "Special Cyprus Coordinators." This was a somewhat weird and difficult bureaucratic tool. I can't remember whether the Cyprus Coordinator was created by Congress or whether it was created by the administration to make Congress happy. Congress was very involved because of the interest of the Greek-American community. The United States, of course, had these two allies and wanted to promote a solution that would work over time and not endanger other things. All efforts prior to my arrival had failed, and most people in the Department and elsewhere in Washington that I met seemed pretty pessimistic that new efforts could succeed. Most of those people also believed that past efforts had failed because the Turks were intransigent.

Well as I read into it I didn't see it that way. It was not clear to me that they were being any more intransigent than the Greeks. To be fair, I did get more exposure to the Turks than to the Greeks – meaning Greeks in Greece, Cyprus and the U.S. – in the first months of my tour. My exposure was also to a new set of Turkish leaders. The government of Tansu Çiller turned out to be considerably more forthcoming than had been past Turkish governments. In those early months, I became convinced that there really was a chance to succeed where others had failed. Sadly, we did not succeed either.

Now, the process was made more complicated by the structure that we had set up. We had a coordinator who was in the Bureau for European Affairs who was supposed to be reporting to the assistant secretary, but also had a responsibility to report to Congress and others. So he didn't consider himself to be entirely within the European Bureau. He also believed that the Office of Southern European Affairs was always trying to undermine him, which we weren't. I tried to communicate with him, but he wasn't particularly welcoming. We did our best, but it didn't work very well. Basically, it just introduced an additional complication and additional stress. When Holbrooke came in he changed the dynamic again by bringing in yet another person from outside the Department to be a "Special Emissary for Cyprus." He brought in a businessman from New York, Richard Beatty, who he believed could be the next Cyrus Vance. At that time the Special Cyprus Coordinator position was vacant, and I recommended that it be filled immediately with someone who could work with Beatty and complement him. I recommended a person who had worked in both Greece and Turkey and spoke both languages; someone who

could work with the bureaucracy without creating more problems and who was pretty active. He accepted.

We also changed the emphasis of the effort from a final solution to confidence building measures that would lead towards a resolution at a later date. We developed a package of confidence building measures, one of which was the return of Famagusta to the Republic of Cyprus. Then we started talking, and we got a very positive reception from the government of Turkey, all the way to the top. The prime minister herself said, "I will support you and we will do this thing." That was a stronger, more obvious commitment than had been made in the past.

When we went to the government of Cyprus, the response was not quite so positive. They said they wanted a solution, but they were very cautious about discussing anything specific. When we talked to the government of Greece, they were cautious also, but they made clear they wanted a solution and they would not try to sabotage the effort.

Then we went to the leadership of Northern Cyprus, Rauf Denktaş. Many people, particularly in Cyprus and in the Greek-American community, believed Denktaş had been the real obstacle all along. Privately, I was told that Denktaş' opposition was both practical and emotional. It was practical in the sense that he believed that nothing that he negotiated would be as good for the Turkish Cypriots as what he then. It was emotional, because he felt he had been personally betrayed by the Greek Cypriots, and specifically by the Cypriot leader Clerides. He believed that they wanted to kill him and his people, and he was never going to trust them as long as he lived. However, I found a channel to get to him and have a little more real dialogue with him than had been previously possible.

We came very close to agreement on the confidence building measures. We got agreement from the Turkish government, and we got agreement from the Turks in Northern Cyprus. That had never happened before. However, it was rejected by the Republic of Cyprus. I concluded that the Greek Cypriot government didn't really want an agreement – or at least an agreement that involved any kind of a compromise. Either compromise was distasteful to the leadership, or they felt that they couldn't manage it politically, that they would be too vulnerable. One person, who I considered to be very well informed, actually told me that the senior decision maker wouldn't do it because he was afraid he personally would be assassinated if he agreed to anything with the Turks.

Q: Well you know this is not an unfounded thing. I mean, we only have to look at the fact that our ambassador was assassinated there by Greek Cypriots. This was not a children's game.

ADAIR: Right. Even after that failure, I still believed that it could be done. However, it would have to be done in the context of something bigger, a little bit like resolution of the Greece/Macedonia problem, because the people that did it would have to have some kind of protection.

Q: What was your impression of the two sides: the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus?

ADAIR: Well, each side accused the other of being just a puppet of somebody else. The government of the Republic of Cyprus was internationally recognized, and I believed it was representative of the Greek-Cypriots. In the not too distant past it had been radically impacted by the 1974 coup, supported by the military government in Athens. That wasn't a Cypriot coup. In the 1990's, however, there did not seem to be any Greek government interest in repeating that kind of involvement, but Cyprus was still viewed as a key strategic asset in relations with Turkey.

Many people that I talked with at the time, including Greek-Americans, believed that the government on Northern Cyprus was purely a Turkish creation and had no power, no influence, no anything of its own. I thought that was wrong. In fact, given the flux of Turkish domestic politics, the government in Northern Cyprus perhaps had more influence sometimes on the government of Turkey than vice versa. Nevertheless, if the government of Turkey decided that a particular action was in its strategic interest, it had significant potential to influence the Turkish Cypriots. For the most part the government of Turkey didn't want to do that. So it was a moving target in both places.

Q: Did you feel that the Cyprus government, the Greek Cyprus government was moving away from its direct connection to the Greek government?

ADAIR: They had certainly moved away from the relationship they had in the 1970's. I don't think they wanted to be integrally tied although they did want a defense relationship. They didn't want to be told by somebody else what to do, but they did want the support and protection.

Q: Were there any efforts in either side to reach out administratively or socially or something to the other side on the island?

ADAIR: I never saw any of it. I think there were things going on. Some of our ambassadors tried to encourage things like that: getting kids together in the United States and things like that. However, there was just too much suspicion and lack of trust and confidence.

Holbrooke tried to introduce a new element himself by injecting the EU into it. The EU had basically taken the position that Cyprus could not be considered for EU membership until the island's division was resolved. The United States had agreed with that stance. Holbrooke decided to try and change that. He believed that left to itself Cyprus would never resolve this issue; that it had to be resolved in the context of something bigger. He thought that Cyprus could be impacted by EU membership like Ireland had. He believed that the situation in Northern Ireland had been defused essentially by the opportunities offered by European integration, and that by encouraging the EU to take Cyprus in as it was that it would subject Cyprus to other forces that would change the dynamic. So, he recommended to the European countries that they do this and balance it by including

Turkey in the EU customs union. He sent me to several European capitals to begin laying out the rationale for that move. He hoped that including Cyprus in the EU would not only help to resolve the division of Cyprus, but even facilitate eventual Turkish EU membership. Cyprus has subsequently become a member of the EU, but we so far seem no closer to either of the other two.

Q: Did any of the other states or political parties in the Middle East intrude?

ADAIR: Into the Cyprus question?

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Not that I recall.

Q: It didn't become a Muslim/Christian thing or something like that?

ADAIR: No, at least not when I was there.

Q: What about the British. They had a base in Cyprus, didn't they?

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: How did that play while you were there?

ADAIR: We tried to work closely with the British. They had historical interests in Cyprus and still maintained a base on the island. They played an active role in the UN. There was a British Cyprus negotiator, Jeremy Greenstock, who later became the British ambassador to Iraq. I visited the British base on Cyprus with our Ambassador at the time, Richard Boucher. They took us up in a helicopter and flew us along the green line and over Famagusta. It was fascinating.

Q: Greenstock was the British ambassador to the United Nations.

ADAIR: Yes, after I left the European Bureau in 1997.

Q: In the European Bureau, you moved to a different slot, did you or not?

ADAIR: Yes. When I was there Bob Frasure, who was the deputy assistant secretary for Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and my supervisor, was killed. He was killed just outside of Sarajevo when a mountain road collapsed under the weight of the armored car in which Bob was traveling. Holbrooke eventually asked me to replace him, after several other colleagues turned the job down.

Q: Why were they turning him down?

ADAIR: I'm not sure – a combination of professional and personal reasons.

Q: Did Holbrooke have a reputation of being difficult to work with?

ADAIR: Yes, he did, but a lot depended on the circumstances and the relationship one had with him. For some reason, I had a good relationship with him. I also enjoyed working for him because he was focused on actually doing things and he did not try to micromanage his staff. Nevertheless, I was very surprised when Holbrooke called me. I had no expectation that he would; there was no reason for him to ask me. I also no desire to hold that position. I had watched Bob Frasure beat his head against the wall month after month. He was there for incredibly long hours; and I remember commenting once that I couldn't see why anybody would want to be a deputy assistant secretary there. Holbrooke called me from his plane somewhere over Europe at about 2 or 3 in the morning, and asked me if I would do it. I replied, "Well, if that's what you want, I'll do it." He said, "Good, I want you to start tomorrow morning. Go in, take over the office. Oh, and by the way, I've already talked to Strobe (Talbott) and he wants to talk with you soon. Set it up." So I did.

Q: Okay. So we'll pick this up. You have just been asked and accepted the position of deputy assistant secretary for European Affairs. We haven't talked about what that consists of, but you haven't met Strobe Talbott yet, so we'll start at that point.

Today is the 5th of December, 2011, with Marshall Adair. Marshall, can you explain where we are now?

ADAIR: In the previous two years I was office director for Southern European Affairs: Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. Then in the summer of 1995 Bob Frasure, who was the deputy assistant secretary for Europe, was killed as he was trying to caravan into Sarajevo with Dick Holbrooke. They were driving over the mountains because it was too dangerous to fly into the airport and the road collapsed; he was in an armored personnel carrier, and it rolled down the mountain. Two other people in it were killed as well, one from the Defense Department and one person from the NSC. A couple of weeks after that Dick Holbrooke gave me a call from his airplane and asked me if I would take that job. He said that I would not be working on Bosnia and the Balkans. Chris Hill would continue to do that, but he wanted me to pay more attention to Eastern Europe. He thought that the Balkan mess had absorbed all of the State Department's resources, and that we had not paid sufficient attention to the rest of Eastern Europe, which he called Central Europe.

Q: Could you explain what he meant by Central Europe?

ADAIR: His point was that in the Cold War we had divided Europe into West and East right where the Wall was, plus the Soviet Union. In fact, Europe extended to the Urals. What we were calling "Eastern Europe" was essentially what used to be the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and that was more appropriately called "Central Europe." "Eastern Europe" was Russia to the Urals.

Q: And so Central Europe would include what countries?

ADAIR: So the countries that I then inherited were, I'll see if I can remember, starting in the south: Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Albania and the countries of the former Yugoslavia would by his definition, fit into Central Europe. In his European Bureau, Chris Hill had responsibility for that area and reported directly to the Assistant Secretary, Holbrooke.

Q: Did that include Kosovo?

ADAIR: Yes. When I became deputy assistant secretary I also kept Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. About a year later, I was also given responsibility for the Nordic countries - all of Northern European to Iceland.

Q: What year was this?

ADAIR: Well I became deputy assistant secretary in the late summer of 1995 and I stayed there until the summer of 1997.

Q: So this is all under the Clinton Administration?

ADAIR: This is still the Clinton Administration and Holbrooke was the one that asked me to take the job and he was still the assistant secretary. But he only remained until the late spring or summer of 1996.

Q: Did you feel that by this time the Clinton Administration had sort of worked its way through its initial indecisiveness, and now had a real policy towards Europe?

ADAIR: Yes, but only because Richard Holbrooke had moved into the job of assistant secretary of European Affairs. In the White House the leadership still appeared to be confused, and this confusion still continued in other parts of the State Department. The administration was still primarily focused on Russia and the continuing implications of the end of the Soviet Union. They continued to believe their biggest challenge was the future direction of Russia. Was it going to be democratic? Was it going to be friendly? What was it going to do with its nuclear weapons? How was it going to build its institutions for the long term? What was its attitude going to be towards its neighboring states? From my perspective they were consumed with that, and everything else was secondary. Everything else that needed to be done, in the European area, we had to do ourselves in a way that didn't get them upset.

Q: This is Strobe Talbott, wasn't it?

ADAIR: Well Strobe Talbott was by then the deputy secretary of state and he was the one that was managing the policy towards Russia. At the time we had a separate division of

the State Department, the equivalent of a bureau, which was dealing with the former Soviet Union, all of the "stans" and all of the former Soviet republics.

I needed to work with them and actually over time I was able to develop a reasonably good relationship with them. We had our differences, but I thought that the people in that area were outstanding people and working really hard. I had to struggle to get my perspective across. Sometimes I succeeded, sometimes I didn't.

Q: Okay, let's break your area of responsibility into problem areas. What was the top problem?

ADAIR: Well I could never let the Greece/Turkey/Cyprus area alone.

Q: The tar baby.

ADAIR: Well I wouldn't really call it that, but it did continue to raise its head. The Imia/Kardak crisis that we talked about earlier actually happened in January of 1996, after I'd been in the front office of the European Bureau for several months.

In Eastern Europe, or Central Europe, the main issue was that of NATO expansion – whether it was going to expand, and if so, whether it was going to expand a lot or a little - whether we were going to try to get all of those countries into NATO or only a select few. It seemed that most of the direction for all of that was coming from the White House and the NSC. It was hard to get people in the State Department to really talk about it. It was as if they had their agenda but they didn't want to tell anybody what it was. It was pretty clear to me that they had a few countries in mind. Those were essentially the countries that the person on the street would have named as "Eastern Europe": Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. They were also - surprise, surprise - the countries that had the most political clout within the United States in terms of ethnic American interest groups.

I had absolutely no disagreement with Poland being in that group. Poland was clearly, in my view, the most strategically important country to us in that region. It was the largest; it had the biggest economy; it was situated in the most critical area between Western Europe and Russia and so it should get the most attention. The other two I was more skeptical about. Nevertheless, since those three countries were already getting plenty of attention within the administration, I chose to focus on other countries. I was taking Holbrooke seriously when he said we had been ignoring this region for too long. I would focus on the countries that were not getting enough attention.

Q: Poland being such a dominant country within that area, it was already getting the attention?

ADAIR: It was already getting plenty of attention from the White House, from the State Department and from other European nations. Its voice was being heard. We were aware of what was going on.

Q: And the Czech Republic for psychological reasons?

ADAIR: A lot of it was psychological and emotional. It was there that Dubcek had experimented with increased freedoms and where the Soviet tanks had ended it in 1968. It was there that the "Velvet Revolution" took place in 1989. Many people that focused on that region had a kind of a love affair with Václav Havel, who certainly was a very impressive man. Prague is also a gorgeous city, and of course that was the original home of the next secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, who was born Czech. She was the ambassador to the United Nations so she was in the cabinet and she was an important voice in the administration.

Hungarian-Americans also had influence within the administration, so Hungary had its voice. They didn't need me. When I looked at the region, the country that stood out to me was Romania. After Poland, Romania looked like the country that had both the greatest upside potential and the greatest downside potential for U.S. strategic interests and therefore I thought we should pay more attention to it. Its location was very interesting. It was right there on the Black Sea, close to that very difficult area that I'd been dealing with. It had oil resources; it occupied the mouth of the Danube River, and if things went bad there, it could destabilize all of its neighbors including Hungary, Bulgaria and the Balkans.

Q: In a way, Romania has never really fit, going back to Roman times. I mean it had a different culture and different language, a romance language, surrounded by Slavs and Germans. You know, sort of odd man out.

ADAIR: Yes, and oddly that was the way it seemed to be treated when I was in the European Bureau. It was very similar to my experience with Greece, Turkey and Cyprus: nobody wanted to deal with Romania. When the possibility of Romania as a candidate for NATO was raised everybody just sort of shuddered, because they saw it as being a mess. Ceauşescu had been a rather frightening kind of a ruler, particularly towards the end of his rule which was terrifying for a lot of people. The country was a mess. People weren't sure whether it would be democratic or whether extremist elements would take it in a different direction. They had an ongoing dispute with Hungary which maintained irredentist claims on Romanian territory. The Hungarian Diaspora, including many in the United States, aggressively supported Hungarian claims. Domestic politics in the United States and in European nations made it more difficult for us to deal with Romania in a rational way.

Hungary has a history that goes back for more than 1,000 years. Its culture is really quite interesting. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was one of the world's great powers in the 19th century, and some people believe that the Hungarians were a more important part of it than the Austrians. There was a lot to admire then, and in the 20th century there was great tragedy. The Jewish experience in Hungary was terrible, but there were stories of heroism which elicited admiration and nostalgia.

Q: This does bring up a point that in the United States our foreign relations are a function of both policy concerns and folkloric impressions. In some cases these impressions play a very important role.

ADAIR: Absolutely. We've talked about that before with Tibet, Greece, Cyprus and Armenia. All of these things are important to different groups for different reasons, but they can strike a chord with a larger segment of the U.S. population as well.

So when I came into this job I wanted to focus on Romania, and I wanted to focus on the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Those were the ones that were right next to Russia. They were the smallest; they were the most vulnerable; and Russia had made statements that were worrisome to many people. There were also ethnic Russian populations in these countries that were left over from the years of Soviet rule.

Q: Well I think one of the three Baltic republics became sort of the designated place for Russian officers and their families to retire to.

ADAIR: Well, the largest ethnic Russian population, I believe, was in Latvia. But there were ethnic Russians in Estonia and Lithuania as well.

Q: What about Moldova?

ADAIR: Moldova was not one of my countries. It was included in the bureau dealing with the former Soviet Union.

When I started as deputy assistant secretary, as I told you before, Holbrooke told me that Strobe wanted to see me. He told me the night he called to move my stuff into the office the next day, and then call Strobe's office to make an appointment. I did that, and went to see Strobe. He was very gracious. He said this was not a job interview, and that he was not clearing on Holbrooke's choice. He asked me a little bit about myself, and we talked. But he didn't convey to me any instructions, or for that matter any real perspective on what he would like. He seemed to be sounding me out to see what he was going to be dealing with. I didn't have a whole lot to say, because I didn't have any perspective on the area at all. So it was sort of a non-meeting except that, as I say, he was very gracious.

Q: Well, maybe it was a non-meeting, but I would take it as two people taking a measure of each other.

ADAIR: Probably. I wasn't sure what kind of measure he took of me, and I wasn't sure what to think of him.

Q: During your time with the Cyprus/Turkey/Greece thing, did you have a reputation of being prickly or easy to get along with or what?

ADAIR: Well, I was probably more prickly than easy to get along with. Basically, that was because I found that the only way to get anything done there was to try and do it

myself. I set up and managed a structure of interagency coordination that operated below the formal level of inter-agency task forces. And I was not hesitant to argue my perspective and what I thought should be the European Bureau's perspective, not just at the assistant secretary level, but on the seventh floor as well.

Q: How did that go over with the NATO expansion issue?

ADAIR: I was pretty careful with the issue of NATO expansion, because I knew my background with NATO and with Russia was so limited. I did form my own opinions, like on Romania, and did argue them to colleagues within the Department. I voiced them beyond the Department informally, but always as my personal opinions, and with the clear stipulation that I was not part of the decision making process on that issue.

NATO expansion was definitely a very neuralgic issue for Russia. It was anathema for some Russians, but not for all. My understanding was that when the Soviet Union collapsed and they began to move in a different direction, they knew they had to deal with NATO and they began to look at ways in which they could deal with NATO. There was still a lot of worry about what NATO's real objectives were, and a lot of suspicion, so they had to be very, very careful. But there were certainly Russians and influential Russians who were willing to look at NATO and look at concepts for how Russia could work with it.

That said, the area that was probably the most immediately sensitive was the future of the Baltic countries. Russia seemed to have made a decision, by allowing them independence, that Russia was not going to try and reassert itself and make them part of Russian territory again. But many people in the Baltics and in the West believed that was not a safe assumption. Everybody certainly recognized Russia's historical concern was to protect itself from outside aggression, and it continued to see the Baltics as either posing a threat of aggression (by others) or as insurance against aggression. I was probably less overtly sensitive to that than were my colleagues who had more experience in the Russian area.

Q: Probably just as well.

ADAIR: Well, in a sense I had to be. These were my clients, those were their clients. I wasn't personally pushing for the inclusion of the Baltic States in NATO in the immediate future. I didn't think that was necessary, because I was confident that they would receive the backing of the West in any crisis even if they were not NATO members.

But there were other things that I thought we should pursue with both the Baltics and with Romania to strengthen their own democratic reforms and their relations with the West that couldn't be done necessarily in a completely under the radar fashion. Many of us believed that they should begin joining other organizations, not just NATO. All of them wanted to start the process of, you know, application to the EU. I thought that the

OECD was an important organization for those countries because it focused on economics and the application of international rules that could be very beneficial to them.

We were taking a very proactive role towards those former Eastern European nations in terms of what they were doing with their own governments and economies. We weren't just sitting back and saying okay, it's up to you; tell us what you're going to do and we'll support you. We wanted them to have democratic governments, and we wanted them to have economies based on market forces, because we believed that would promote their own stability and independence faster than anything else. We wanted them to have good relations with their neighbors, because if they were always bickering with each other that would undermine all kinds of things, including the broader strategic issues. And, we wanted them to have open communication and long-term relations, security relations, with the West, with NATO, with Europe.

So we were pushing all of those things and in so doing we would bump up against the concerns of our colleagues in the Russian area from time to time. It wasn't really serious, though it was frustrating sometimes. We were basically all on the same wave length in terms of where we wanted to get in the long term. It was more difficult for me with Romania, because I believed that the often antagonistic relationship between Romania and Hungary would cause problems if Hungary joined first. Number one, it would be discouraging to the Romanians; but number two, it could give the forces in Hungary with irredentist objectives a leg up vis-à-vis the Romanians. I thought it could make it more difficult to get the two to develop a positive and constructive relationship. So I, within the State Department, primarily within the State Department, to some degree within the NSC, I kept arguing the case for Romania. A part of me was uncomfortable about it because Romania was obviously less ready in terms of its military, economic and political systems. The others were further advanced. There was more instability in Romania. But I thought that the risks of not doing it outweighed the risks of doing it so I kept up my voice. It became clear pretty quickly that my voice wasn't going to sway the policymakers, but I at least continued to do it so that they wouldn't forget.

Q: The Department of Defense was obviously an important player on the NATO issues. Did it weigh in at all on any of your other issues?

ADAIR: Oh yes. When I started as office director for Southern European Affairs, my counterparts at the Defense Department were some of the first that I called on. I knew that they had some pretty strong interest in the eastern Mediterranean, and I found that the people over there were extremely helpful and very cooperative on a whole range of issues. It was very easy to work with them, and so I tried to do the same thing on Eastern Europe. I found a lot of receptivity. Many of the people that I talked to at the Defense Department shared my interest in and my concerns about Romania. That was gratifying and reassuring to me because it said to me that there was less danger in the long run about Romania being left behind. However, I still was afraid because the whole NATO apparatus was so complicated and so political that once they got one thing done they might be inclined to wait indefinitely to take the next step. As it turned out they didn't

wait that long; it was about five years between when the first three came in and when Romania joined.

Q: Well were you overseeing a process for getting these countries into NATO?

ADAIR: I wasn't overseeing the NATO expansion process. I was never entirely clear on who was overseeing it - except the president perhaps. Ultimately, it was the president, including his national security advisor, and the secretaries of state and defense who were doing that. But it looked like it was a process that was being created as they went along. That's partially because we didn't dictate to NATO. NATO is an alliance of countries; all of which have a vote, and the decision making process can be sensitive. Everyone played their cards close to the chest, even at home.

The prospect of membership in NATO, which all of those countries wanted more than anything, was a very useful incentive to get them to do certain things within their own countries politically and economically that otherwise they either wouldn't have wanted to do or wouldn't have been able to do politically. If they could tell their populations and their competing political factions that it was essential to do X reforms in order to be considered by NATO, it became a lot easier to them to get political consensus at home to actually do X reforms. There was a lot to do in all of those countries to move towards democracy and market economics. It was not easy for populations to accept the suffering that some of those steps entailed. In some cases their economic safety umbrella was being taken away, so they needed something else to balance the hardship. NATO membership appealed not only to the strategic leadership of those countries but to the populations, because it was the closest thing imaginable to a guarantee that the period of Soviet domination would not be repeated.

So, all of these things were related, but in order to make them apply we had to do what Holbrooke had said, give those countries more attention. We had to be going there and talking to them more. Our ambassadors were talking to them but they needed to have people coming from Washington as well.

Q: So, you were called to be sort of a front man for these states in Washington. How did this work out? I mean, what did you do, jump up and down and say hey, don't forget Romania, Hungary, Poland or something at staff meetings?

ADAIR: Well several things. First of all I personally went out to all of those countries, met senior people in the governments and began getting a feel for the places and the personalities. We talked about their concerns, the things that needed to be done, shared ideas and brainstormed. We began an informal dialogue. I brought that back and shared it with my colleagues at State, Defense and the NSC. When I was working on Southern Europe, I had set up an Aegean Working Group that included a number of different agencies. I tried to do a similar thing at a slightly higher level for Central Europe.

It didn't work as well, partially because it was a higher level. People were too busy to do it regularly, and less willing to speak openly. But in that first year Holbrooke was still

there, and I could go to him, bounce ideas off of him and appeal to him for help if necessary. He was constantly plugged to the other agencies, the White House and to Congress.

I found a number of projects that I thought needed to be done. They were just sort of sitting there, and I flagged several areas of potential danger that nobody seemed to be paying attention to. One of them was the relationship between Romania and Hungary. The two countries were working on a treaty of friendship designed to set aside grievances and be mutually reassuring. They had been talking about it off and on for years and it wasn't going anywhere. The conventional wisdom in some parts of the State Department and in the NSC was it wasn't likely to go anywhere. But when I talked quietly with people on both sides, it became clear to me that there really was interest – on both sides. It was similar to working with the Turks and the Greeks. If the discussion got up a level that was public domestic politics would paralyze or kill it. But if it was kept below that level until it was ready, then with the right circumstances it could fly.

After I had been on the job for about a year, Holbrooke recommended to Hillary Clinton that she make a goodwill tour of Eastern Europe.

Q: At this point she was first lady.

ADAIR: Right. She agreed with him and it was set up. I accompanied her with another colleague from the NSC. We visited most of the countries with great fanfare. She made lots of speeches and met with all of the senior people. I had been skeptical of its utility when I first heard about it, but it turned out to be a very useful trip. From my perspective the most useful part of all was when we visited Hungary and Romania. We visited Romania first, and at a reception I started talking with the foreign minister of Romania, Meleşcanu. He was a very impressive man. I had met him on my first visit in the fall of 1995. I asked him about the Romania-Hungary friendship treaty negotiations; and said I had been told by the Hungarians that Romania was unwilling to do A, B and C. He looked surprised and said that was not true. He looked at me and said, "I promise you, we are willing to do that."

I said that was an important difference and I would raise it at the next stop. We flew on to Hungary, and I arranged for me and my NSC colleague to have breakfast with Hungary's chief negotiator for the treaty. I raised what the Romanian Foreign Minister had told me right away. He too was surprised. Then I said it was important for Hungary to take this step, and that it would help facilitate the NATO accession process, because the continuance of friction and instability between Hungary and Romania made it more difficult for NATO to move forward. He thanked us for telling him that, saying it both clarified the treaty talks and strengthened his ability to overcome inertia there. I think it was a matter of weeks from that conversation to when the agreement was signed. It made a huge difference to the relationship between those two countries; it really did strengthen the argument for moving ahead with NATO, and it made a difference for the region - just like that thing between Greece and Macedonia made a difference to the Balkan process.

When people see that some of these things can be fixed, they are willing to make progress on other things.

Q: Well do you think this is a case of the diplomats on either side in Hungary and Romania not really getting to their principals and telling them. Sometimes the message gets obscured.

ADAIR: Sometimes yes, but I think it's more than that. You remember the way I described the Imia/Kardak crisis and Holbrooke saying to the Greek foreign minister, "you give me your assurance and I will give the assurance of the United States to Turkey and vice versa"? So that they had the assurance of the United States, not just the assurance of the other guy who they didn't trust? With Hungary and Romania it wasn't exactly the same, but it was a similar dynamic. It was more difficult for them sometimes to speak directly to each other. The interjection of a third party, that they respected and needed, made something possible that wouldn't have been possible otherwise. Also, when these things go on for a long time, they can develop their own negative inertia. You tend to get jaded and cynical. Sometimes you get angry with your counterpart for being stubborn, and you choose to believe they really don't want to do this stuff, that they're the problem. A third party who is not infected with the discouragement or the suspicion of the original parties can shake things up to the good. It just makes it easier emotionally, takes some of the stress off those on the spot. The third party can also protect the negotiators personally and politically by taking on some of the responsibility.

Q: Tell me, from your perspective as a Foreign Service officer at that time, how did Hillary Clinton perform at that time when she was First Lady? Did she know her brief, and how did she handle herself?

ADAIR: I think she handled herself very well. She's a very smart person. And she was able and willing to listen to different ideas or different perspectives. I had a slightly different perspective from the NSC representative who had been steeped in the area for a long time. It was not very comfortable for me. She didn't like me very much. I think she may have thought that I didn't like her, which wasn't really true. But early on we made a side trip from Paris out to Giverny, and on the bus we were briefing her. She always had a photographer with her and people were taking pictures with her. One of her staff invited me to have my picture taken with Hillary, and I said, "No, thanks." I said no because I was uncomfortable with the cult of doing pictures. It's got to be a little bit annoying for the celebrity in question. However, she glared at me as if saying, what was the reason for that? Instead of explaining, I just glared back at her. Her attitude was catching. You would think that a career diplomat would have handled that better. Anyway, she apparently decided I was her enemy. I tried to patch it up towards the end of the trip, but didn't succeed. Nevertheless, she was still willing to listen.

She was very good at making speeches; and she was also very good at meeting with groups of people who were like minded: pro-democracy, community activists, etc. She was not particularly comfortable meeting with people who were different. One meeting in

particular stood out; that was her meeting with Prime Minister Mečiar of Slovakia. It was quite tense and uncomfortable.

Q: As you were doing all this was there essentially a NATO representative who was attached to you, saying what had to be done?

ADAIR: No. On the trip with the First Lady, the NSC representative, Dan Fried, had considerable experience with European affairs and NATO, so he could handle any questions on NATO. On my first trip to the region, another officer from the European bureau accompanied me. And, I got better as I learned more.

Q: You mentioned working to resolve problems in the region. Can you give us some examples?

Well, there was a somewhat bizarre dispute between Italy and Slovenia that nobody in EUR was paying attention to. Italy had claims against Slovenia for some real estate issues and Slovenia was upset with Italy for something else. At that time Slovenia was one of the prime aspirants for EU membership.

Q: It was sort of everybody's favorite, wasn't it?

ADAIR: Well, it was certainly a favorite of certain European countries. However, the government of Italy was sort of holding any progress on EU membership hostage until Slovenia agreed to Italy's terms on this particular property deal.

Q: Well, you know the Trieste issue goes back to the very end of World War II.

ADAIR: Well this wasn't Trieste. We looked at it and we could see that it wasn't that difficult to resolve. It was just that everybody had gotten their backs up so that they weren't willing to budge. Both sides had made it an issue of principle. I thought we should try to help. Both NATO and EU enlargement were important tools in stabilizing that region of Europe. It was hard enough without creating new emotional issues to squabble over. So, we tried to find a way through it. To succeed, we needed the active help of both our embassies in Slovenia and Italy. Our ambassador in Rome was adamantly opposed to raising this issue with the Italian government, and for many in the bureau that was enough to drop the issue. However, I thought he was just reacting to the idea of having to raise one more issue, particularly one that didn't appear to have strategic significance. I had not been able to talk with him directly; all I got was messages from the office directors that I was not going to make any progress on it. One day, I saw that he was back in Washington for consultations, so I asked if I could meet with him. He came up to my office and immediately started expressing his opposition to the idea. I said, "Wait, let me explain." So I went through the whole thing, explained our perspective and then laid out how I thought it could be done. He leaned back on the couch, looked at me and said, "Oh, we can do that." And he did. He went, made his pitch to the Italians and they agreed. The Slovenians agreed and it was done; gone; no longer

an issue. It was just a matter of looking at it in a different way. Nobody really had to do very much.

Of course, it didn't always work. We had no magic wand – well, NATO was sort of a magic wand. But there was at least one place it didn't work. Lithuania and Latvia had a dispute concerning sovereignty over continental shelf. Both sides wanted to drill for oil, but each claimed sovereignty. To me the solution was simple. Both countries needed revenue; and the legal boundaries appeared very difficult to resolve. To resolve the sovereignty issue in favor of one or the other would take years, if it could be done at all. So, I suggested they form a joint corporation to do exploration and then split the profits. I even raised it directly with the president of Lithuania; but didn't make any progress. So, not all of those things work.

Q: No. Well let's talk, just before we leave this, let's talk a bit about your perspective on the governments. You didn't have Bulgaria?

ADAIR: No, I didn't. It remained a part of the office that dealt with the former Yugoslavia and continued to report directly to the assistant secretary.

Q: Okay. What about Romania? What was the government like at the time you were dealing with it?

ADAIR: It was a democratic government. They were struggling to be more democratic, and they had all of the difficulties that democratic governments have. They had parties and factions and extremists, and it was messy. But they also had some very, very impressive individuals in key places. The foreign minister and the ambassador in Washington were very smart, very active and very open. They were approachable, pragmatic people. So were the people that worked on defense.

Q: Well did the, let's see, the Romanian embassy know how to play the Washington game?

ADAIR: They were getting pretty good at it; particularly the ambassador. There were two ambassadors that I dealt with during four years in EUR that I considered particularly outstanding. One was the Greek ambassador and the other was the Romanian ambassador. There were lots of really good ambassadors but those two combined knowledge of their own countries, ability to influence their own countries and an openness to pragmatic solutions that was very impressive.

Q: Yes, one of the things that I've noted over the years doing these oral histories is the effectiveness and the non-effectiveness of ambassadors in embassies. The example that stands out most for me was the difference between the Indian and Pakistani ambassadors some years ago. The Indian ambassador sort of reflected his government in that they were very prestige conscious and they only wanted to talk at the top of the State Department and government. As a consequence, he didn't get very far. The Pakistani ambassador on the other hand would get down and talk to the desk officer and others.

You've got to learn how to play with or versus the media and all sorts of other organizations.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: Okay, let's talk about Hungary. What kind of a government did they have?

ADAIR: All of my countries pretty much fit the general description that I just gave for Romania except for Slovakia. At this point, it's a little far in the past for me to discuss details.

Q: Well but this is a good indicator.

Okay, let's talk about Slovakia. Slovakia, you know they had this split in Czechoslovakia without a referendum or anything else. Slovakia seems to have retained more of the communist character after that split.

ADAIR: Yes, it was much more difficult for Slovakia to move onto the democratic track, partially because the man who surfaced as the most energetic and effective politician was Vladimir Mečiar. He was a former communist boss or apparatchik. He was also an effective demagogue and very intimidating towards his foes. He was willing to use intimidation, the threat of violence and even violence itself. Yet, he wanted to be treated in the same way as we were treating all the other countries. He wanted to be on an equal track with the Czech Republic to NATO membership. We had to say constantly to him and to all of his people that we could not support Slovakia for those things until they were ready to establish democratic protections and an objectively open political system. Those discussions tended to bounce off him and his officials – and they depressed the officials that they didn't bounce off of. That was a little bit the problem with Hillary's meeting with Mečiar. She was appropriately diplomatic while he was somewhat obtuse. When he tried to be friendly it came across as condescending and made things worse.

The very next day a couple of us went with Madeleine Albright who was also traveling with us, and she met with him and this time in a very different way. When Hillary met with him they were sitting next to each other on a couch, in a formal reception mode. The more they talked the further they got from each other, both in substance and in terms of the distance between them on the couch! But the next day when Madeleine went to meet with him we sat across the table from him. She sat directly across the table, a small, not a big table. I think there were maybe five or six of us altogether at the table. Madeleine was very direct with him, even blunt. She said these are our issues, these are our problems, and he listened. He listened and he responded. I was impressed. She really knew how to connect, to communicate with people in that region.

I remember another encounter when a very senior man in the Slovak government visited Washington. The Slovakian ambassador invited me over to his house for dinner to meet with him. I couldn't go for the dinner, but went over after the dinner. I sat down with the visiting official, just the two of us and we talked for over an hour. He was acting as a

semi-official emissary from the prime minister, who he was personally close to. However, he had a very different personality. He seemed very sincere, and just couldn't understand why we would not take the steps they were requesting. So I laid it all out again for him. We went round and round; talked and talked, and at the end I felt like he had at least heard what I said. We hadn't resolved anything. We hadn't alighted on any pragmatic path forward, and he was very disappointed. However, I did sense that he would be able to go back and explain our position with some credibility.

There was some concern in the senior levels of the State Department that this man might reestablish close ties with Russia and ask for Russian intervention. I thought that was close to being an absurd concept. I thought it was so unlikely for a whole variety of reasons that it wasn't worth wasting a lot of time talking about. However, they wanted to talk about it so we did.

Q: Well geography for one thing would have precluded it.

ADAIR: Yes, it would have made it more difficult.

Q: Well okay, turning to Poland which is of course the big enchilada within the area. I would have thought that the politics of Poland would have gotten entwined in the Polish Diaspora. There are so many Poles in the United States; I would think they could complicate our relations.

ADAIR: I didn't see that happen. Maybe it was happening, but if so it was very subtle. It certainly wasn't happening like I saw it with the Greek-American community. One reason might be that Poland was on a clear trajectory by the time I arrived. It was moving forward; things were going well for it. The government was pretty stable. There were far fewer voices of extremism that seemed to be influential there. They had absolutely committed support from the highest levels of the U.S. Government, so it wasn't necessary to lobby us. Sure, there were issues, and we had some very interesting discussions when Hillary visited Poland. That was a great visit. I went there once with Holbrooke and we had some interesting discussions as well. But as I recall, the discussions that Holbrooke had were as much about issues beyond Poland as about Poland itself. We also had a very, very good ambassador, Nick Rey.

Q: One of the things that I think concerned many people, and I've heard it expressed many times, was that if the Soviet Union collapsed Germany might try to reassert itself there. Germany had the economics, the ties and all, and it might become a German lake or something.

ADAIR: Well that wasn't an issue because Germany was consumed with its own problem of putting itself back together. It didn't have time, resources or desire to go beyond that.

Q: When you were dealing with this area, were any of the other European powers involved.

ADAIR: They were certainly involved: bilaterally and through NATO, the EU and other multilateral organizations. I had relatively limited contact with them. I went once or twice to Brussels to meet with representatives of the troika.

Q: Troika being?

ADAIR: The troika was a set of three member states of the EU that was responsible for conducting much of the EU's foreign relations. It included those that, at the time, held the positions of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the European Commissioner for External Relations. We met to discuss common areas of concern, and to bring each other up to date on our respective views and activities.

Q: Well did you come away with the feeling that the European Union, which should have been the dominant factor in the whole European-wide equation, was not much of a factor?

ADAIR: No, I did not; though there was often a significant degree of frustration with the EU. First of all the European Union was "the" most important factor in terms of the future of all of the countries in Eastern Europe. NATO was important because they needed defense and security. But membership in the EU was probably even more important, because with that they would become integrated with Europe economically, politically and so on in a way that would be irrevocable. That seemed to be their best bet for future prosperity. Each of those countries had ongoing detailed relationships with the EU, because they had to set up roadmaps and programs for moving closer to membership. We, the United States, were the number one security partner. I sort of saw us a little bit like a sheep dog, running around, saying, "Wait a minute, you've forgotten this thing; this leg's got to get back over here," etc. But most of the work was being done by them. It's just that the EU is both bureaucratically inertia-bound and politically messy. It's difficult for them to deal with crises, because they have to get consensus to make decisions. If they've achieved agreement as to the basic direction then the machinery goes into play and it runs it. In crisis situations, much tended to fall to us. The Imia/Kardak crisis was one example. We did it basically on our own. We tried to keep the EU informed, but even that is difficult when things are moving fast. Resolution of the war in Bosnia, the Dayton Accords, was done by the United States – to be precise, by Richard Holbrooke. But I think he was very careful to stay in touch with his European colleagues.

Q: You left this position when?

ADAIR: I left in the summer of 1997.

Q: Did you feel things were really coming together?

ADAIR: Yes, I thought things were pretty much on track. I was disappointed with the Greece/Turkey/Cyprus region, because we hadn't resolved Cyprus. I thought that we

could have, but we could only do it if we had the right people in the government and we had the right support from our government. I didn't think we had either.

Q: The right people who were in Cyprus or in our own government?

ADAIR: In our own government. Holbrooke left in the spring of 1996 which, in terms of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean was too soon. I think to a certain degree it was too soon for Bosnia as well. Had he stayed we might have been able to move the Cyprus thing to resolution. He could have folded it into something larger. I think the Clinton Administration made a huge mistake when they named Madeleine Albright secretary of state instead of Richard Holbrooke. In my view, they made a political and personal decision; political because Madeleine was a woman and was popular and had political support and this would play well in the country; and personal because a lot of people just were uncomfortable with Holbrooke because he was so aggressive. However, by not choosing him we lost a tremendous amount of momentum that we could not get back.

With regards to the Cyprus issue, that effort needed to be pushed. People needed to be brought together to make some very difficult decisions. We could have done it, but we needed the full participation of the U.S. Government. It had to be led by somebody that was dynamic enough to bring in all the pieces: the administration, the Congress and the political interest groups outside the government.

The other was Bosnia. We did Dayton; we got the military in there; we stopped the war; we created stability; and then we dropped the civilian part of it completely. We did not pay attention to the civilian task of restructuring, restructuring that nation and that area. We essentially left it to the people in the region – pretty much the same people, the same economic and social dynamic that existed previously. We did not provide continuing guidance and discipline. The office of the high representative created by the Dayton Accords had no energy, no teeth and no consensus for years. When Paddy Ashdown came in he made a valiant effort, but it was too late; and even then he didn't have the support that he needed. The whole effort needed somebody like Holbrooke to do that, just as it needed Holbrooke to actually get us to focus on it and put the peace together. We needed somebody like him, who had the vision, the energy and the political ability to keep everybody's noses to the grind. It didn't happen.

Q: I would like to ask some of our interns if they have any questions.

Intern #1: I was just wondering if you could elaborate more on the Balkans and what was happening there. Were there refugee movements; and how did the countries you worked with see the breakup of Yugoslavia?

ADAIR: Well, with regards to the Balkans, the countries that I dealt with were primarily Greece and Turkey. Greece was very worried. The Greeks were worried about possible refugee movements from Albania – those could be political or economic. They were worried about Macedonia because they thought that Macedonia had irredentist claims on Greece. They felt that they had to assert themselves. They were also worried about the

whole Christian/Muslim issue. The Greeks still have a national phobia of Turkey left over from the Ottoman period, and Islam is associated with that. The Greeks tended to have an emotional sympathy with the Serbian population, and were sometimes were overtly supportive of the Serbs. That worried us.

I don't know to what degree the Hungarians were worried about themselves from all of this. Hungary became a critical place from which to provide support to the peace effort in Bosnia. Hungarians offered a military base in southern Hungary as a logistical jumping off point for the American military that moved into Bosnia as a result of the Dayton Accords. They did it at least partially to improve their standing for NATO membership.

The whole process of the Yugoslav breakup and the recognition of the different parts of the former Yugoslavia that broke off was very distressing for the people that were working in that area in the State Department. They believed that some of the European governments leapt to recognize these countries for their own selfish or domestic political purposes; and their actions encouraged things to unravel much more. Later, I had the chance to spend some time in Bosnia myself as a political advisor to the peacekeeping forces. I talked with many Bosnians about their experience. What happened there was tragic and horrible. It was also very sad in that most of the people I talked with had been very happy to be a part of Yugoslavia, as long as Yugoslavia was a unified entity. It was only when it began to breakup and some of these nationalist forces bubbled up that many people in Bosnia decided they would have to break away too.

Q: Very sad. I think this is probably a good place to stop, and I think the next time we will begin discussing your next job. What did you move to next?

ADAIR: I went to work for two years as a business advisor to the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Stu Eizenstat. I needed a different place to hang my hat. The leadership of the European Bureau changed again. I was offered the possibility of an Ambassadorial assignment, but I couldn't take it for family reasons. So I stayed in Washington.

Q: Was Asia beckoning at all?

ADAIR: Well I tried, but there wasn't any opening.

Q: Today is the 19th of December, 2011, with Marshall Adair. And Marshall, we have you moving to the office of Stu Eizenstat.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: What was his position and what were you doing?

ADAIR: Stu Eizenstat was the undersecretary for economic affairs. Attached to his office was a position called the "Senior Coordinator for Business Affairs." This function had existed in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) for many years. For awhile it resided in the office of commercial Affairs. I had run it once before it when the office of commercial affairs was subsumed into the office of commercial, legislative and public affairs. Sometime later it shifted from EB to E - the undersecretary for economic affairs. That was partially to provide the business community with an easier bureaucratic path to the undersecretary and partially to provide a position for political appointees. Its mission was to help the undersecretary and, of course, EB with relations with the business community.

The position has always been a bit artificial. Most of the undersecretaries for economic affairs already had strong ties to the business community before they came to the Department of State, and most of the offices in EB already worked closely with businesses in the areas of their responsibilities. When I left the European Bureau, I was given the position of "Acting Coordinator," because the coordinator job was still reserved for a political appointee.

Q: Well, before we get into that, I wonder could you describe the background and the method of operations of Stu Eizenstat. He's a figure whose name keeps coming up in government; he's an important person.

ADAIR: First of all, he's extremely intelligent, dedicated and hard working. I first saw that when he was ambassador to the EU; it was very true when he was the undersecretary for economic affairs. He was interested in all the issues, and he learned them thoroughly. He listened carefully to his staff. He worked long hours – constantly - and he had extensive contacts throughout the government, the Congress and the business community. When he worked on a subject he would address it – well, like a lawyer. He would go through all the details, and then he would pursue it relentlessly. He was not flamboyant, so working for Stu was very different from working for Dick Holbrooke. I thought he was very kind to ask me to do the job, because I basically had no assignment when I left EUR. The position was empty, and a mutual friend had suggested he call me and see if I would do it. I was on leave when he called. I had worked briefly with him before when I was deputy assistant secretary and he was the ambassador to the EU, and I thought very highly of him. So I took the job. The first thing I did was to go and meet with him. He invited Al Larson, who then was the assistant secretary for EB join us. I asked both of them what they wanted me to do with this job. Aside from a few predictable comments, neither one of them had an answer, even though I tried to draw them out. It was clear that the office was peripheral, and I would have to work hard to make a useful contribution. However, Stu was very good at including everyone in his office in his affairs.

Q: Do you think that this "peripheral" character was a function of the Foreign Service outlook towards business?

ADAIR: Actually, I do not think so. I had worked with business in every assignment of my Foreign Service career. I was in the economic cone; and I found working with

business on a whole variety of different things to be both useful and fascinating. The best people in other parts of the Foreign Service – political, consular, public affairs, even administration – also reached out to and worked with the business community. But I also found that you had to work with business on issues that they were already interested in; there needed to be a payoff for them. In general, you couldn't work with them in an intellectual kind of a way where you just sat down and talked about issues. They didn't have time for that.

No, this office was peripheral because the business community already gets involved with the State Department at a number of different levels. Most of them also only want to be involved when they've got something specific that they need from the State Department. Sometimes it's information; sometimes it's help overseas doing specific things, and sometimes it's help in Washington with specific areas of interest to them - if their time horizon is long enough to see what's coming up and when the State Department can help them out.

That said, those that are really interested in the State Department are usually the very big corporations. The leadership of those companies often have personal relationships with the people at the top levels of the Department of State. As I said, Stu Eizenstat had extensive contacts with the business community. He knew them, he knew them personally. They would call him directly if they had something that they really needed or really wanted. Otherwise they wouldn't go to the Department of State; they would go to the places that were specifically designed to help the business community: the Departments of Commerce, Treasury and Agriculture, and the Congress.

When I was in that job I had to look for things to do, look for ways to be useful to the Department and to be useful to Stu. We had one issue that came up not too long after I started in the job. There was a push to strengthen sanctions on Iran, and to enforce them with penalties on corporations that were doing business in the region. This was a big political issue, but it was also very complex. Many people understood that enforcing those kinds of sanctions could have a far reaching impact on American companies and the American economy, but there was little factual data on it.

The Department had to gear itself up and work with the White House, the Treasury Department and others to determine what the administration's position was going to be, and then try and get it accepted elsewhere. They began the normal process of consultation within and beyond the administration. They were talking policy, but they didn't have a lot of facts to go on. In my view they were speculating from afar, and didn't really know what the impact would be on the business community. So, I thought we should go to the business community, talk to as many of them that might be vulnerable and then estimate as closely as possible what would be the impact of this legislation. What would the actual costs be? I didn't ask Stu or others. I and one other person from my office just started calling up people in the business community. We went and interviewed them. "What would happen to you? What is at stake? What is the extent of your interests? What are your relationships?" They were very, very reluctant to share any information with us. For one thing some of it was proprietary information. They were also competing with each

other and had to hold their cards close to the chest. They didn't want to go on record as saying they had certain relationships. I explained what I was trying to do. I promised to hold the information very closely: nobody else in the Department of State would see it other than I, the person who was with me and Stu Eizenstat - unless we were forced to give it up and then we would give them fair warning. We did make some progress and we briefed Stu on our findings: we talked with X number of companies; imposition of the sanctions would cost the business community and the United States Y billions of dollars. We actually gave him a figure that he could work with. And it was substantiated.

As it turned out, the work that we did was not necessary. Enough people within the administration and other power centers in Washington were opposed to increased sanctions that they didn't need the extra ammunition that we were trying to provide. But that's an example of my trying to make this job a little bit meatier than it seemed to be.

We helped Stu with speeches, and set up speaking engagements for him with the business community. When he went down to the International Environmental Conference in Buenos Aries that was a follow-up to the Kyoto Conference, he asked me to go down with him at the very last minute. Several days before the conference started he said I should go down. It was so late that we had difficulty finding hotel rooms. Again, he had all of his contacts, and he knew all the issues. It was not clear what I was supposed to do. So when I was down there, I got out the list of business advisors and I just started talking with them – on the edge of the conference, at lunch, in meetings. I would try to understand what their concerns were, and to explore where their interests might coincide with what the environmentalists were trying to do. Some of them were strongly opposed to the whole environmental movement; others were supportive but had specific concerns. I think that I helped to funnel some of their direct concerns into Stu during that conference, and I may have given some more of a feeling of inclusion in the process. It was an education process for me, but on the whole it was hard to convince myself that I made a contribution.

Q: What was your impression of the business community and its relations with foreign countries in general?

ADAIR: Many companies were - still are - extremely sophisticated in their dealings with us and other governments. Many of them were very well informed about the countries in which they operated, spoke the language, and so on. Many of them had very good contacts. Some of their contacts were better than ours.

Often we had overlapping interests. They were looking for profits for themselves, but were also contributing to economic growth in the United States and overseas. They were often well plugged in to certain circles, but their timeframe was usually much shorter than ours. We tended to be more knowledgeable about what was going on with the government, what the broad trends were in the countries. They were often more knowledgeable about specifics. On the whole I think there is a very constructive relationship between the U.S. Government and U.S. businesses overseas - as long as the leadership of the embassies has some understanding of what the businesses are trying to

do. That's not always the case. We have to work at it, we have to give it some priority, and we don't always do that. We have to recognize that government and businesses have different goals; and we have to work to find where those goals mesh and where they conflict. We have to encourage the places where they mesh and we have to try to do something to avoid the conflicts. Sometimes that means trying to talk the business community out of certain things. Sometimes that means they have to talk us into certain things. But it has to be an active process, and all too often it's not.

Q: What was your impression of the effectiveness of sanctions?

ADAIR: I saw much more the down-side to sanctions than the up-side. I saw very few examples of sanctions really being useful. We used sanctions to put pressure on regimes. We've used them against Burma, we use them against Iraq, and to some degree they work. They do create hardship in those countries. Very often, however, the regimes that we are trying to influence are capable of taking the burden of those sanctions and transferring them to the rest of the population. The regimes themselves sometimes avoid the burden. So often, all too often, those sanctions that we impose hurt the populations that we're trying to help, and hurt our own businesses, but really don't constrain the regimes or affect the direction that they're going.

That's the practical side of it. There is also the domestic political side of it. Very often sanctions are imposed on other countries for U.S. domestic reasons. Our population may be outraged by another government's treatment of its population; or members of congress may respond to ethnic interest groups in the United States; or congress and/or the administration wishes to posture for any number of audiences.

But it's difficult to gauge the impact of sanctions internationally. They can be an international statement of our disapproval of a regime, of a policy, of an ideology or whatever. They are a concrete action, and therefore may have more impact on public opinion than just a verbal statement. Sometimes you have to take a stand against certain things even if it's going to hurt you. However, I think it is hard to point to ways in which sanctions have really helped.

Q: Another thing that complicates our relations with business is the fact that we have to treat all American businesses equally. This seems particularly true with military hardware. Whereas the French can push the Mystère fighter or something like this, we may have three different fighters competing.

ADAIR: That's right.

Q: How did you deal with this?

ADAIR: Well, first of all we have to be up front with the host governments that in general the United States is obliged to represent all U.S. companies. Sometimes we have just one company in the running, and then it's easy. Sometimes, there are three or five. Sometimes we have to represent all of them equally. In those cases, we may simply

explain to the host government that it is very important to us that they accord these companies the same access and the same consideration that they give to companies from other nations. We ask for a level playing field. We can also argue the generic benefits of going with an American company as opposed to one of the others, and sometimes that's easy to do.

Q: What happens if you have a company that is not really a very dependable company in competition with a more dependable company?

ADAIR: Yes, that's harder. You have to judge each situation on its merits. But, first of all making the judgment that you just described may be very difficult. We have to be careful about making subjective evaluations. If there really is a clear case where one company is a problem, then you have to consider the potential damage to broader U.S. interests of its participation. If it is just that there are several bidders and one or two stand out we have to be careful to remain neutral. If one is really bad and endangers U.S. interests then the U.S. government should take some kind of action, either at home or with the host government.

Q: Okay, you were doing this from when to when?

ADAIR: From 1997 to 1999.

Q: Okay. The acts were in place about corruption and payoffs and no payoffs and all that. Did you find this a terrible inhibitor?

ADAIR: Well I think by that time American companies had gotten used to the fact that they were prohibited from engaging in certain kinds of activities and it was built into their method of operations overseas. They had also found ways to get around it that were legal. During that period of time I don't recall any specific violations by American corporations of the Corrupt Practices Act to have been an issue.

In some cases it did put them at a disadvantage. There are some countries where bribery of one kind or another – what we would call bribery – is necessary to operate at all. However, in most of the markets where they really wanted to be, American companies could find ways to mitigate that, ways that were legitimate. Sometimes they would need our help. They would come to us and say, "Look, this is the situation. We have to compete in this country with X Corporation from X country, and they're doing the following. Can you help us? Sometimes we would intervene with the host government, and the host government would take action to resolve the problem. Sometimes government officials were receiving payments without the knowledge of their superiors. There are many variations on the theme. The immediate challenge was to protect the individual American company from discrimination. The longer term challenge was to encourage structural change within the host country's system to provide a level playing field for all American companies and to promote healthier economies in those countries.

We did have one very interesting situation with an American company operating

overseas, and I'm going to have to be very vague on this. A major American corporation was well established in another country, and competing for some very, very big projects. There competition came from large corporations in other countries, countries with which we have close relations. Those other corporations were engaging in practices from which our corporations are prohibited. In this particular case those practices were truly extraordinary. They included bribery, financial extortion and the threat of physical violence. We took the information to the leadership very quietly and were able to resolve the problem.

Q: When you say "the leadership" you're talking about-

ADAIR: The leadership of the nation.

Q: Nation, the political leader.

ADAIR: Yes, the political leadership.

They were surprised or at least acted surprised. They agreed that it shouldn't be happening. They provided protection for the people that were being threatened and they stopped it.

That was a fascinating exercise. I had never gotten involved in anything like it before. It required communicating with the companies, working with different parts of the Department of State, keeping Stu Eizenstat briefed all the time; and getting some very high level, very sensitive messages through. It appears to have succeeded. Sometimes those things work.

It's the kind of thing where you have to be active. You have to focus on the issues, take them seriously and build them into our overall interests. Sometimes there are some people who would argue that this is a big corporation and it can handle the issue itself. We shouldn't waste taxpayer money holding their hand. Or it's a big corporation and it's exploiting these other countries so we shouldn't be involved. Or we've got better things to do.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: Well, sure, we've always got important things to do but all of these people are players on the international stage and it's in our interest to have them working with us, not against us. We as a nation and as a government can sometimes guide the actions of these other players, private players, in ways that help our national interests and prevent harm to other countries - without damaging the individual interests of those corporations. But very often we're reluctant to get involved because we either don't understand it or we have an ideological attitude towards it.

Q: You know, you're coming in I'd say somewhat late in this process. I remember, when the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act was being considered, there were many people,

including in the Foreign Service, who said we were being naïve and that we're cutting our own throat for ideological purposes. Have we really changed the playing field, would you say?

ADAIR: That's hard to answer. I think that by bringing the issue of corruption out in the open to some degree and making it an international issue we have raised awareness in many circles of the problem. In some places, to some degree, we've been able to roll it back. We've been able to get a general consensus globally that this is not a good thing and should be avoided. We've been able to give American businesses in individual nations recourse other than simply paying up. Of course, all of these corrupt practices have a purpose and sometimes the purpose is to get things to work in an environment where nothing works otherwise. But they're called corrupt practices for a reason: they corrupt the people and they corrupt the system, and they can disable the system in the long term. I think that by making it an issue in our country and then internationally, we've been able to slow that corrupting process down a little bit, and encourage people around the world to work on the effectiveness of their own national systems.

Q: How did you find some of our major trading partners - Britain, France, Japan, Germany - work within this system? Did you find cooperation or opposition?

ADAIR: I think there are both – unofficially and officially. Many in those nations would prefer to have a world system where you don't have to grease the skids every single time you do something. Many of them have interests that coincide with ours in the sense that they would like to see countries truly develop - politically, economically, and commercially - because in the long term that is better for all of us. There are some people that don't feel that way, that see an advantage in being able to pay a certain price to get at the head of the line to exploit a country's resources. But that's a relatively short-term perspective, and something that the U.S. Government is committed to oppose.

Q: Right now I'm reading a book about the Barbary Wars. This was a case where most European powers had simply concluded it was less onerous to pay off the pirates rather than risk losing ships and crews, or going to war. The United States eventually built a navy, which we didn't have before and went and beat the hell out of them. I mean, this is kind of American.

ADAIR: Yes, it is kind of American. And historically we have been proud of our refusal to be threatened, our willingness to stand up to "bullies", and our ability to use force to do so. In a more negative sense, we have also been proud of a certain intolerance and impatience on our part, and an unwillingness to negotiate and deal with others on their terms.

Q: Well how did you find working with the other bureaus? Did you find that you were treading on bureaucratic toes or not?

ADAIR: Perhaps, sometimes. I remember that we were able to work very closely with ARA, the Latin American bureau on a very sensitive case. It was troublesome on many

levels and had there been different personalities in the bureau at the time, we might have more difficulty. However, the bureau's leadership was very courageous.

In other places we were not on the same wave length at all. In some cases it was just me that was on a different wave length. We had a case which involved both AF - the African Bureau - and NEA - the Near Eastern Bureau. The government of Egypt had a proposal for a huge development project that would take the water from the Nile River and extend irrigation out into an enormous section of desert, creating a whole new agricultural/commercial megalopolis. They were trying to get American corporations interested in bidding. Some American companies really did want to go and bid. The leadership of the African Bureau was strongly against the idea. They were very concerned about the economic and political implications for upstream neighbors. The Near Eastern bureau, as I recall, was concerned about the downstream implications. Their arguments didn't seem very well developed to me, but they had been successful so far in discouraging bidding by American companies. I thought that was wrong, that until we actually had a formal position that was carefully considered and developed with the input from all sectors, we should not be denying American corporations a role in this. One of the arguments I made was that if the government of Egypt was determined to go ahead with this and did go ahead with it what was the sense in preventing American companies from participating in it? We had several meetings and Stu chaired some of them. He asked me to work on it. I tried to continue it, but got no support at all from the geographic bureaus. It didn't go beyond that. I probably wasn't diligent enough.

Q: Well then you left there when, that job?

ADAIR: I left in 1999. But let me mention one other area that I started working on when I was in EUR, the oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the west. There was substantial oil production in the Caspian Sea area. Azerbaijan has big oil fields and was beginning to develop. As long as Azerbaijan had been part of the Soviet Union that oil had to go into the Soviet Union and into the Soviet Union's pipeline system. When the Soviet Union broke up, Azerbaijan began to look for other routes by which it could get its oil to market, routes that would not be subject to Russian control. The most obvious was to go directly south through Iran and then out into Persian Gulf. That is the shortest route, and it was supported by most international oil companies, including the American oil companies – although at the time American oil companies could not use that route because of our sanctions on Iran. There was another alternative, and that was to construct a pipeline from Azerbaijan across the Caucasus and through Turkey to the Black Sea or to the Mediterranean. I argued this was something the U.S. government should be interested in, because it would link the Caspian/Central Asia area more closely with the West, and that by doing so we would be promoting a vast range of U.S. interests.

When I started making that argument I got pushback from almost everywhere in the Department and other parts of government. Their response was that it was not the business of the United States Government to either tell companies how they should invest their money, or to invest in such projects itself. This was a job for the private sector; they can make better supply/demand evaluations and all that kind of stuff. Generally, I agree

with those points, but here we had some strategic interests that would likely not be realized if it was left solely to the immediate profit and loss calculations of competing private companies. First, we had an interest in directly connecting Central Asia's economic interests with the West. Second, we had an interest in making Turkey a part of the connection. Turkey was, and is, a critical ally of ours. We should do everything within our power to ensure its long term prosperity, stability and integration with western interests. I found that it was difficult to find people that would listen to that argument. People in the U.S. Government were opposed to it, people in the business community were opposed to it and you could just sort of go on and on and on. Only a few people in the NSC and the White House agreed with me. It took six years before the various players came around and the project got under way.

Q: Yes, I've talked to, I think Beth Jones, who talked about working on that Trans Caucasus Pipeline.

ADAIR: Yes, she could see the value, because she was out there in central Asia, in Kazakhstan.

Q: I would have thought that anything dealing with Iran was so septic that anything would seem like a good idea.

ADAIR: You would think so. The oil company position was interesting. They didn't want to invest more money in infrastructure. The Iran route was shorter, and much of the infrastructure was already there. They seemed to believe that either Iran was going to change, or our policy towards Iran would change. Businesses pride themselves on thinking pragmatically. That was not very pragmatic.

Q: Okay, well then let's move on. Where'd you go after you left Eizenstat's office?

ADAIR: I went to the American Foreign Service Association.

Q: Doing what?

ADAIR: I served two years as president of the Foreign Service Association.

Q: Okay, could you explain that? What is the organization and what does it do?

ADAIR: The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) is first, a professional association that is concerned with the standards of professional American diplomacy. Second, it is the legally recognized representative to management of the membership of the Foreign Service. That includes Foreign Service professionals in the Departments of State, Commerce, Agriculture, and USAID. It is their representative to management for a whole variety of issues. It has existed for decades, starting out purely as a professional association that would talk to the management of the Departments but without any ability to negotiate with them. That has changed over time. Now it is an organization that the Department and the other agencies of government are required by law to deal with on a

variety of issues. Part of the arrangement is that the president of the Foreign Service Association is always an active duty Foreign Service officer, elected by the membership of the organization. It's a two year term.

Towards the end of my time with Stu Eizenstat, the then acting president of AFSA, Dan Geisler, recruited me to run in the next election. I had never even thought of something like that. Back in the mid '70s I had helped an individual who was arguing that the Foreign Service Association should have the powers of a union to negotiate with management.

Q: Who was that?

ADAIR: That was Bob Pfeiffer, who I'd met in Paris in the early 1970s. I was intrigued with this later approach, and discussed it with Dan and two former AFSA presidents, Bill Harrop and Tom Boyatt, who for years had continued to support this organization. I decided that I would like to do it and so we put my name on the ballot. There wasn't anybody else that year on the ballot so I won.

Q: Sometimes it's rather bitterly contested.

ADAIR: Yes, it has been bitterly contested recently.

Q: And I go back a ways and I remember Hemingway. That practically destroyed the organization.

ADAIR: Yes. That was a bad time.

Anyway, this time I was elected without controversy. I wondered what a president of the Foreign Service Association could actually do to help change things, and decided to spend some time focusing on the community of retired Foreign Service officers. In my work with EB, with EUR and with Eizenstat I had a fair amount of interaction with Congress. I saw that the members of Congress respond to their constituencies and I thought we might be able to get retirees to be more active in their communities and with their representatives. I specifically hoped they could address issues like the budget. The foreign affairs budget had been declining, at least in relative terms, for years and the Department of State and the Foreign Service were seriously strapped. So we worked to develop a program to generate interest more activity. We had a director of legislative affairs at AFSA, Ken Nakamura, who was very knowledgeable about Congress and worked very hard. The second thing I was concerned about was the issue of security for all of our diplomats overseas. We'd had the bombings of the embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and in Lebanon before that. We'd had the Crowe Commission study and their report of what needed to be done to strengthen embassies overseas and protect personnel overseas. However, it seemed that very little was being done. Not only was the money not being appropriated but the Department was not even asking for the money to be appropriated, at least not on the scale that Admiral Crowe had recommended. We developed a series of talking points; we looked at the budget and showed what it was

doing historically, compared it to the Defense budget and I went around the country talking to Foreign Service retiree. We got some response, but not a lot. We kept thumping the table with people in Congress, but again it was hard. We also spent a lot of time talking with the Department's budget people. That was one of the most difficult challenges of all. They were very defensive, quite secretive and not very willing to consider working with us or using us as a resource.

Q: It sounds like this must have come from the top.

ADAIR: I don't know. There are many levels in the Department of State, and most claim to be speaking for the Secretary in one way or another.

I think traditionally it's been difficult for the Department of State to argue budgetary matters on the Hill, because the Department of State has no constituency. There are relatively few members of Congress that feel they have anything to gain from the Department of State. They don't want to allocate scarce funds that they could use to build or promote something their district. They have little interest in funds going to the Department of State that's going to use it somewhere where they think they or their constituents are not likely to see it. Some of them are directly antagonistic to the Department of State, but many of them simply don't care. They are primarily interested in their own district. For many of them it's a zero sum game. It's difficult for the Department of State to go up and argue these things in the appropriations committee. The Department has very few allies. It is constantly being pushed to do things by special interests that are contrary to the interests of the nation, so there's friction.

OMB (the Office of Management and Budget) is responsible for putting together the administration's budget proposals and orchestrating the discussions with Congress. The people working in OMB are not necessarily strategic thinkers either. They are more financial and political people. The Department of State seems to be a bit of an annoyance for them. OMB has constantly to make tradeoffs with Congress and there's often not much the Department of State has to offer there either. The only way the Department of State gets its voice heard effectively in Congress is if the President of the United States understands the importance of it and will simply make that a priority of his or her administration. Few presidents in recent times have been willing to do that. The Foreign Service Association goes up and beats its head against the wall. Sometimes we did find people that were sympathetic and would talk with us. On the whole it was an interesting exercise, and I met a lot of good people, but I'm not sure that we made much of a difference.

We also had a big battle with the administration of Secretary Albright. During her tenure, the Latin American Bureau proposed sending one of its Civil Service employees who was an office director in the bureau down to Lima, Peru, to be the DCM. The ambassador, who was a Foreign Service officer, wanted to have her as his DCM because he liked and respected her. We found out about it indirectly at one of our regular meetings with the director general's office. My immediate reaction was that it was a bad idea.

I pointed out that these were Foreign Service positions for a reason. They require knowledge and even more importantly experience that is developed over many years of service overseas and in the Department. Each job at each level is both a functional position and a training experience for higher positions. They are also rewards for demonstrated proficiency and accomplishments at lower levels. These are essential elements of a professional diplomatic career service. I said that I and AFSA were all for finding ways to provide Civil Service employees of the Department of State opportunities to serve overseas. However, that did not mean the senior management jobs that Foreign Service officers work for all their careers for and need for the acquisition of management experience and credentials. Many of the Civil Service professionals in the Department of State are superb, but they're not going to have the same kind of experience that Foreign Service officers have developed over 20 or 25 years of overseas service. The deputy chief of mission job, we argued, is the senior professional job in embassies overseas. Ambassadors can be, and often are, political appointees from other departments or outside the government. The president can choose a Foreign Service officer, a congressman, a businessman, a person off the street to be ambassador. However, the deputy chief of mission job is and should continue to be a critical Foreign Service position. So, the union went to bat. Many people were furious with us. The director general's office was upset, because they were trying to use this appointment to be seen as doing something for the Civil Service. The women's groups in the Department of State believed that we were opposing a woman; and this particular woman was quite popular. The secretary of state, who was a woman, and her staff appeared to be 100 percent behind the move.

We argued on the merits, and got nowhere. They had their own reasons for making this decision, and those reasons had little to do with protecting or maintaining the professional Foreign Service. We did our research and discovered there was actually a formal agreement that had been established between the management of the Department and the Foreign Service Association about 15 years earlier which said they would not do that. That agreement had been concluded after the Department had forced the assignment of a senior Civil Service employee to a consul general position in Australia. When we brought that agreement to the attention of the Director General's office, they were pretty surprised and upset to find out that the Department had made such an agreement, and that we had legal standing for our position as well.

Nevertheless, they maintained their intention to proceed. We had to take them to court. We went through the established legal procedures and we won. There was a lot of blood on the floor. I got some nasty messages from senior women colleagues in the Foreign Service. One of them, somebody that I admired and felt very close to, sent a letter blasting us for our position and actually dropped her membership in the Foreign Service Association. She had not tried to discuss this in any way with us other than by sending that letter. In the end the legal decision was that this could not be done. However, there was an escape clause for the Secretary. If the secretary of state determined that it was essential to the national security interests of the United States, the assignment could be made. She immediately did make such a pronouncement, which was complete nonsense. To say that it was essential to the national security interests of the United States to send

one particular individual who had essentially no overseas experience to the position of Deputy Chief of Mission in Peru, when there were qualified Foreign Service Officers available and willing to go, was ridiculous. The Secretary was able to avail herself of the escape clause, but the appointment could only be made for a limited period of time, a year and a half or something like that.

In this dispute a lot of people supported AFSA, and quite a few did not. Some people were really angry with me personally for pursuing it. Right at the start, though, I went to the individual who was proposed for this position and I said clearly and honestly this was not about her. This was a principle that we were fighting for. We had absolutely no objection to her. In fact, I told the assistant secretary for Latin America and the director general of the Foreign Service that if they wanted to propose her as an ambassador to one of those countries that would be fine with me and fine with AFSA. But we were opposed to her assignment as DCM.

I also said to her and to others we were not advocating discrimination against the Civil Service. There has been a certain amount of resentment within the Civil Service because the Foreign Service has more prominence in the Department of State. That kind of thing happens in many organizations. It is natural and appropriate that in an organization whose principle responsibility is the conduct of foreign relations the professional service with experience in foreign relations would be prominent. In recent years, however, feelings of resentment have been aggravated by political maneuvering and people in leadership positions pandering to those who were complaining rather than really trying to find a solution. To my mind allowing the appointment of a single individual to one of these places was not a way to address the long term interests of either the Civil Service employees in the Department of State or the national security interests of the United States. What we needed was a program that would actually give them the opportunity to serve overseas at different levels, without compromising either our immediate foreign policy interests or the integrity and sustainability of the professional diplomatic service. To some degree this was already possible. The Department could assign Civil Service employees to "hard-to-fill" positions. I also tried to lay out an additional alternative program.

I invited a number of people, senior people from the Civil Service to come over and meet with us at AFSA, including the individual proposed for the DCM position in Lima. I first asked them if they had any suggestions of their own – other than permitting broad access to Foreign Service positions. They did not. I then laid out my suggestion, which was to obtain from OMB a number of positions, five, 10, 20, whatever we thought was appropriate, and allocate them to the geographic bureaus. These positions would be Civil Service positions, and the bureaus could distribute them to their overseas posts as they deemed necessary. The bureaus would need flexibility to move these positions around to meet their needs. That would provide them with opportunities to serve overseas in places where they're needed without damaging the career service of the Foreign Service, which is fragile enough as it is. It is fragile for lots of reasons, one of them being the continuing desire to provide non-professional access to Foreign Service positions through

bureaucratic or political influence. That pressure has existed for decades, but has strengthened considerable in the last 20 years.

Not surprisingly, my suggestions didn't go anywhere.

Q: Why?

ADAIR: I don't know. Perhaps one reason was that we were in the middle of a dispute that had a great deal of emotion attached to it, and no one wanted to be side tracked. I think the main reason, though, was that nobody in the Department leadership wanted to address a systemic issue. That would have involved more work over a sustained period of time. They were trying to satisfy, or appear to satisfy, political demands that were being made of them rather than to actually address the real needs. To be fair, it's a lot more difficult for an organization like the director general's office in the Department of State to establish a program and have to deal with the White House and the Congress and stuff like that, than it is to say simply we're going to put this individual in X place.

Q: As you say, this was not the first time there have been problems associated with the dual personnel system at the Department of State. Was there any call during this time for a program like the "Wristonization" of the 1950's which transferred large numbers of Civil Service personnel into the Foreign Service? I came into the Foreign Service at that time through the regular Foreign Service exam process. As I recall, that program which bypassed all the stringent entry requirements caused a great deal of morale problems. It also didn't seem to work very well.

ADAIR: No. I think that the first reason was the Civil Service demand for Foreign Service jobs was not that large. Second, most of the Civil Service people who were interested in the Foreign Service positions were decidedly not interested in becoming members of the career Foreign Service. They did not want to take on the obligation to serve worldwide or the "up-or-out" risks of a Foreign Service career. They were interested in serving overseas on their terms. Third, I think that at that time, there were still sufficient people who believed that maintaining a professional diplomatic service was important, and who understood that the combination of opportunities and responsibilities was necessary to retain. It is an accepted concept for the military. You don't pull somebody out of the FBI, Agriculture or Congress and stick them in as a full colonel in the military. That doesn't happen. It is less broadly understood in the context of the Foreign Service.

Q: Except during the Civil War.

ADAIR: Okay, "never say never," though as I recall those political appointments to the military were often counterproductive. And we did do "Wristonization." I think it's important to remember though that there are almost always alternative solutions to problems that may be better than the initial approaches.

Q: What sort of pressure did you get from the secretary's office and maybe other offices?

ADAIR: I never got any real pressure. The director general talked to me several times. He asked if I couldn't just see the situation that they were in and help them out. I said I could see the situation that they were in, but I did not agree that the solution that they were proposing was the right way to go. In fact, I believed that it could severely undermine the Foreign Service and therefore I had to oppose it. I guess he was subject to a variety of political pressures. They seemed to be mostly inside the Department; and there wasn't anybody who was willing to look at this in a bigger sense.

Q: I think you're getting at something that I feel is a basic problem with the Foreign Service. Not enough people look upon it as a career profession - not even some people in the Foreign Service. What we're doing now, this oral history project; if ADST (the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training) wasn't doing it nobody would do it. Nobody is looking at what the people in the Foreign Service do with a view to passing on that knowledge and developing it. This is all part of what I would call professional development, and I don't think there's much of a spirit of that.

ADAIR: I agree with you. One of the other things that I tried to do when I was president of the Foreign Service Association was to encourage the development of an academic discipline of diplomacy. We looked out at the academic world and saw there was a school of Foreign Service at Georgetown; a Fletcher school of law and diplomacy at Tufts and lots of international relations programs. But there did not appear to be a widely accepted professional discipline of diplomatic studies. I thought that we should work on it, and tie it into the continuing education in the Department of State. It seems that most military officers have graduate degrees, and most of them are paid for by the Department of Defense. In contrast, the Foreign Service has actually discouraged work on graduate degrees by Foreign Service officers. Most Foreign Service training is on the job. That is probably the way it should be, but more academic training of the right kind could also help. We have short-term training in the Foreign Service; and there are no academic credentials that go with it. We have a few opportunities for FSO's to take a year off and attend a university. However, they are one year programs; and at one time at least there was a belief that they should remain that way, because if FSO's got degrees they might be tempted to leave the Service. If that assumption were ever correct, I don't think it is any longer.

I thought there should be a way that we could connect the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) with the National Defense University system, which is accredited, or with a private university and get its courses accredited. That way, when an FSO attended FSI and studied political tradecraft or consular law he or she would get credit that could go towards a graduate degree. That in turn would make it more attractive for individuals in the Foreign Service to make themselves available for training. Most people have a real dilemma about going into training. It takes them out of the active service for a period of time and can affect their chances for promotion adversely rather than helping them, as is the case in the military.

To go this route, or even to look at it requires getting the seventh floor and some of the people at FSI on the same wave length. The obvious choice for cooperation would have been the National Defense University. When I went to talk with the leadership of FSI they had a visceral reaction to that. They didn't want to have anything to do with the National Defense University. Basically, I think they were afraid of being subsumed in it. They argued that one does not need a graduate degree to be the undersecretary for political affairs. I happen to agree that having the credential of a graduate degree does not ipso facto make one a better diplomat than someone who does not have one. However, the right graduate study is likely to make any given FSO more competent than he or she is without it. In addition, there are lots of people in government, in Congress and in many other places that are very impressed by all of those letters that go after peoples' names. In addition to that, when FSO's do retire from the Service, having those credentials makes it more likely that they would be able to teach in the university system or get a an influential position at an international organization – places beyond government service where they can continue to make a difference. I'm afraid I did not succeed in pushing it forward.

Q: No, but I think you're up against a real attitude.

ADAIR: Yes, there is an institutional mindset and much inertia that needs to be overcome. This was another reason that I had hoped that the President would choose Richard Holbrooke as Secretary of State when Warren Christopher stepped down. I thought that Holbrooke was capable of looking at things like this, and of understanding the need for certain basic changes that would enhance the profession of diplomacy and the institution of the Foreign Service. It was necessary to break through certain conventional wisdom barriers that people had placed on themselves, and bring together a coalition of interests that went beyond the close associates we normally work with. It would require different parts of the administration, Congress, both Democratic and Republican parties, the business community and interest groups beyond Washington, DC. Holbrooke was capable of doing that. I don't know if I and others could have convinced him to spend his capital on that, but I think we might have.

Q: It's a little self serving, but in this regard I do want to make mention this oral history program and also the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. This is something that's self generated by a bunch of Foreign Service people and it's flourishing. With the exception of the military, we've got probably the biggest oral history program - frank oral history - in government going. I think ours is much stronger than the military's, because we go into things in considerable depth. However, the State Department has taken an essentially passive role. In one sense that is fine, because we're not censored. But how is it going to be used? This is our next problem. I mean, we're working on this; we've got this collection of 1,700 histories now. People coming into the Foreign Service or Foreign Service officers arriving at a new post – suddenly they are on their own. They need to know what happened before. They are supposed to change things, turn policy around – when actually it's been turned around before and before and before.

But anyway, there we are.

Can you talk about the local employees – the Foreign Service Nationals? Did AFSA represent them or not? I mean, most of us know how much we depend on the Foreign Service nationals to do our jobs. Because they represent the collective memory at posts and provide expertise and substantive continuity as Foreign Service Officers come and go.

ADAIR: AFSA was not recognized as a legal representative of Foreign Service Nationals. AFSA representation of Foreign Service nationals is a really interesting question. I would be very careful about advocating a formal relationship with them for the Foreign Service Association. Number one, yes, they perform an absolutely critical role at posts overseas. They have an institutional knowledge, a historical knowledge and knowledge of the place. They have contacts; they can do stuff, things that we could not do for ourselves. Very often they make remarkable personal commitments. They are often very courageous; they help and protect us in ways that go way beyond the bounds of what we can or should expect of them. They risk their lives for us sometimes. They risk their families. We owe them a lot. To some degree we pay for that not just with salaries but also with pensions. In that regard, we probably do not pay them enough in either category.

But we also have to recognize that although some individuals may be as committed to us and to our country as we ourselves are to our country, most of our Foreign Service national employees are not or cannot be. They have their own relationships and their own responsibilities that they will not or cannot avoid. They have obligations to their families, their communities and their governments. If they shirk some of those their lives and/or the lives of their families could be at stake. So they have pressures on them, and obligations that are legitimate in a larger context, which would make it difficult and possibly dangerous for us to accord them a status like members in a government union.

Now, that said, at individual posts they can organize themselves to speak with one voice to management. That is appropriate, but we have to be very, very careful not to undermine the authority and the flexibility of the post to deal with those employees in the manner that's most appropriate for our national interest.

Q: Yes, and of course too we have to consider the fact that each country has its own union regulations and own employment regulations, and those obviously have priority.

ADAIR: We have to conform to those, that's right.

We also have situations where we have people working for us that we know are reporting to others. There are security people in our government, within the Department of State, who would say that is absolutely anathema and should never be permitted. That's utter nonsense. First of all you can't avoid it and second, it's better to know who is reporting and be clear about our constraints. Third, there are advantages as well as disadvantages to this. I knew that in at least three of the countries where I worked, Zaire, China, and

Burma, some people working for me or for the office were certainly reporting to others. In at least one case, I knew one was working actively to compromise me personally.

Q: That's part of the game.

ADAIR: Yes, and not necessarily bad as long as you are clear about the risks. That individual was probably more helpful to me and to us than any of the others working for us - as long as we knew. It was perhaps a little more difficult to compromise me with personal blackmail. I may do stupid things but I had absolutely no interest in cheating on my wife in any form whatsoever. I've known for a long time the dangers of monetary corruption, however small, so I was sort of vaccinated against those forms.

Not everyone sees these things the same way though. My successors at that post fired that particular individual after they discovered that, horror of horrors, he was reporting to somebody else. Well, of course he was; and they denied themselves and the U.S. government the advantages of that situation. I'm not talking about espionage or special operations missions here. It's not that secretive or exotic. It's common sense with some political sophistication. We have to have the ability to work with those kinds of people. If we rely too heavily on institutional protections we limit and even paralyze ourselves, and that doesn't make sense. But it's tough to explain that to some of our own colleagues.

Q: Okay, well then, this is a good place to stop, I think.

ADAIR: One more thing. Before we finish with the Foreign Service Association, I would like to do a mea culpa for the record. Overall, I did my best to do what I thought was right. For the most part, I'm pleased with our effort. I would have liked to have been more effective, but I tried. However, I did make one really big mistake. Well, it was not earthshaking, but it was a mistake personally and it was a mistake in terms of my effectiveness in representing the Foreign Service.

I had been concerned for some time that successive administrations, and successive Department of State leaderships, had been undermining, either intentionally or unintentionally, the unique status of the Foreign Service as a profession. I believed that they were trying to be responsive to a variety of social and political demands, and I thought that the path they were on was both unnecessary and dangerous, not just to the Foreign Service but to the nation.

AFSA had worked for a long time to get an award for Foreign Service officers that made particularly noteworthy contributions to the nation, including the sacrifice of their lives. We had come up the idea of the Foreign Service Star – a medal. We had worked with Congress and the administration and succeeded in getting agreement. Then, at the last minute the Department of State announced that it would be called not the Foreign Service Star, but the Thomas Jefferson Star. Their reason was that way it would not be exclusive to the Foreign Service, but available to the Civil Service as well. As I recall, all mention of the Foreign Service had been deleted. Colin Powell was the secretary of state, and he

had FSO's serving in the positions of undersecretary for political affairs and assistant secretary for administration.

At the same time, the Department was renovating the area that had been known as the Foreign Service Lounge. This office and this function had had this name since the 1950's, I believe. I remember it from that time period, because my father used to mention it. It was where Foreign Service personnel who were stationed overseas plugged back into the Department when they came back for consultation, home leave, or for reassignment to the Department. It was called a "lounge" because it was also supposed to give these people a comfortable place to relax and take care of their affairs: official, contacting other offices; and personal, contacting family around the country. The Department declared that the name would now be changed to the "employee service center", again, to provide services to all employees. In recent years the "Foreign Service Lounge" had been a fairly small operation. It still made available computers and telephones to transient FSO's, but changes in technology were reducing the demand for those services. It also provided a rather unique function of retaining both official and personal contact information for FSOs.

I went with several of my AFSA colleagues and met with the assistant secretary for administration. We said we believed the Department was going too far in its efforts to pretend that there were no distinctions between the Foreign Service and the Civil Service. We asked him to retain the Foreign Service name in both cases, and we offered alternatives. He stonewalled us completely. We got nowhere. We went back to AFSA and talked about it, and that was where I made my mistake. I assumed that in a case like this the assistant secretary was speaking for the Secretary. We decided to send a critical letter to the Secretary laying out the case one more time – and we sent it simultaneously to the Secretary and to AFSA's membership. I should have realized that the Secretary probably had not been informed of AFSA's position at all by his staff, or if he was it was a prejudicial explanation. I should have asked to see the Secretary and made the presentation myself – or at least I should have waited for the Secretary's reply before sending the message to AFSA membership. The Secretary read the letter and agreed to the alternative we requested on the award – the Thomas Jefferson Star *for Foreign Service*. However, I had surprised him, criticized him unfairly and lost his trust. There was no excuse for the way I acted. I had met the secretary of state when he first came in because I went to ask him to remove the order from diplomatic security (DS) that kept all retired Foreign Service officers out of the Department of State. He did it, and invited me to come and see him any time. I didn't take him seriously because I thought he would be just too busy. Well, that was stupid. He must have felt betrayed.

He had really been trying to help the Foreign Service. I failed in my job as AFSA president to develop and maintain a relationship with the secretary of state, a relationship which can be beneficial to all sides. Big mistake.

Q: You left that job when?

ADAIR: I left it in the summer of 2001.

Q: Alright. And where did you go after that?

ADAIR: I went to the OIG, Office of the Inspector General.

Q: Today is the 9th of January, 2012, with Marshall Adair. Marshall, where did we leave off?

ADAIR: I had just finished two years with the American Foreign Service Association. I was trying to stay in Washington, something I had never wanted or tried to do before. However, for family reasons I needed to stay closer to home. And I was offered a job with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Q: Okay. You were in that job from when to when?

ADAIR: Just one year.

Q: What year was that?

ADAIR: It was 2001. I think it was from about August of 2001 to June of 2002.

Q: Well, maybe you'd better describe how the inspector general's operation worked at that particular time because it changes over the years.

ADAIR: Yes. When I arrived the leadership was trying to put it back together. It had been pretty damaged by the previous inspector general, a political appointee who some believed had almost paralyzed the organization.

Q: Who was that?

ADAIR: Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers

Q: What had been the problem?

ADAIR: I wasn't there then so I really can't speak to that. But she apparently had made lots of changes. She had moved people with experience out and put other people in for a variety of reasons, some of which seemed to be unrelated to the inspector general's work. When she left, the deputy inspector general had the job of putting the pieces back together. Ann Sigmund was a senior Foreign Service officer who had served one tour as an ambassador. Among other things, the OIG was substantially behind in its inspection schedule. The legislation which created the OIG required that all overseas Foreign Service posts be inspected at least once every five years, and a lot of posts had not been inspected that way. I came in as a team leader, which was an exception, not from the rule but from the practice, because usually the team leader is someone who has served as an ambassador. I had not. I'd been a deputy assistant secretary; I'd been offered an

ambassadorial assignment but I couldn't take it, for family reasons. But at any rate they decided that I had enough experience to do that job in that time frame.

We had a two or three week orientation period for people who had not actually worked in the inspector general's office before, and then we were given our assignments for the fall. I was given an inspection of three African posts: Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory Coast. In 2001 that was a pretty interesting assignment. Sierra Leone had just come out of a really horrific civil war, the one where they were chopping each other's arms and legs off. Liberia had also gone through a terrible time, and no one knew whether it was going to be able to put itself back together.

Q: This was with Charles Taylor?

ADAIR: Taylor was gone. He had been kicked out. But the aftermath was still very messy. Ivory Coast was also in a difficult situation.

Q: It split almost.

ADAIR: Well it hadn't split, but it had its first coup attempt - I think it was the first coup attempt since independence.

The other thing, of course, was that these inspection assignments came out in September, 2001. On September 11, we were still in our orientation training course. We were sitting in a classroom over there in Roslyn. We were just beginning an exercise when somebody came into the room and said, "Stop what you're doing and turn on the television immediately." A plane had hit the World Trade tower. The Pentagon hadn't happened yet. We turned it on and about five minutes later the same person came in and said, "Turn off the television set and go home. No one is permitted to remain in the office." By that time the plane had hit the Pentagon. Some of the people in the office had seen the plane coming in and thought it looked a little strange, awfully low. Some of us wondered whether we should go home or whether we should try to help somehow. Most of us decided that at that stage we weren't really going to be able to help, we were just going to get in the way and so we better head home. I went downstairs, got my car and drove home. It took me 15 minutes. 20 minutes later it became really difficult to get back.

Q: Were people at the time speculating who did it?

ADAIR: I think it was pretty clear that it was a terrorist attack. I don't remember if there was much speculation about who the terrorists might be.

Then, two weeks later we went out on our inspection. There was some discussion about whether that was appropriate. However, several of us at least believed there was no reason not to go out on the inspection. We thought that in fact we better get going, because we weren't going to be able to do much else to help and if we didn't get going now there was no telling what turmoil in Washington would do to the future inspection

schedule. Plus there was another good reason to go out: posts were going to have to factor this in to their overall set of priorities.

Q: While you were getting your training, was there much talk about the previous inspector general? This was the beginning of the George W. Bush Administration. The previous inspector general (IG) would have been a product of the Clinton Administration. Was there any talk?

ADAIR: There was a good deal of discussion about the purpose of inspections; and that was very likely a function of the trauma the office had gone through previously. However, I don't remember any really discussion about the previous IG. There were comments, but you know, after a while we and other professional civil servants get numb to the changes, damages and/or improvements imposed by political appointees. It is a phenomenon like rain. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad.

Our discussions were about the purpose of these inspections and what we could do to make the best use of them. I had pretty strong views on that. I had been through a few inspections during my own career, and I had seen the inspections work even before I joined in the Foreign Service, because I grew up with them. I was pretty clear on what I thought the legitimate purpose of inspections was; and I had gone through what I would call a hostile inspection when I was in Burma. That inspection, in my view, was designed to punish the ambassador in Burma. The inspectors that came out were not looking at the post per se or the management of the post's diplomatic objectives. They were looking to find things that would damage the reputation of the ambassador. It was a "gotcha" kind of inspection.

Q: Who was the ambassador again?

ADAIR: The ambassador was Burt Levin.

Q: What was the problem?

ADAIR: He had made a number of people in the Department unhappy when we evacuated the post. We evacuated the embassy in 1988 as the uprising against the Burmese regime increased and began to get messy. We had evacuated our dependents and non-essential personnel and they had gone to Bangkok. Ambassador Levin fought very hard against the administrative bureaucracy in the Department of State who wanted to make all of those evacuees return to Washington rather than remain in Bangkok. The Department of State had a general policy that when a post was evacuated, all should be evacuated to Washington. First of all, administratively it is easier to have a "one size fits all" approach than to tailor each action to the particular situation. Another reason was once the evacuees were returned to Washington the Department didn't have to pay for them, whereas if they were overseas the Department had to foot the bill for per diem. And a third reason was that evacuees could present a substantial burden to the receiving post. In this case, the embassy in Thailand had been somewhat concerned about its ability to take care of all these people from the embassy in Rangoon. However, the ambassador in

Bangkok, Dan O'Donohue, told us that he would support us, and the embassy there did its best. Ambassador Levin used all the influence that he could bring to bear to ensure that the evacuees could stay in Bangkok. Our reason for advocating an exception to normal evacuation policy was that we were pretty certain the evacuation wasn't going to last long. In fact, we recommended everyone return after one month and the Department agreed to let them return in six weeks.

I think that some people in the Department were irritated by the ambassador's success, and they determined to punish him. I think the OIG inspection was used to do that. I have worked twice in OIG. The process is supposed to be objective, and many of the professionals in OIG work hard to remain objective. However, it is possible to influence or program individual leaders. There have also been periods when individual inspectors general have changed the tone of those inspections. I think this was one of those times, and the team went out looking for ways to damage the ambassador's reputation. In fact, the inspection team didn't behave so well themselves. They were violating some of their own rules and doing some of the things that they were trying to accuse embassy personnel of doing.

During a subsequent training session at OIG in 2006, I used that inspection as an example of how not to run an inspection. I said we had to focus the inspector general's efforts primarily on the purpose of the post, i.e. the conduct of our diplomatic relations and the pursuit of our strategic interests. We had to make sure that the posts were obeying the rules and regulations, but that also had to be done in the context of the challenges that the posts were facing. These inspections were designed to help the posts carry out their mission rather than to hurt the people in them.

Q: How was that received when you pushed this?

ADAIR: Well nobody disagreed with it. Some of the people whose primary purpose was to ensure that regulations were being adhered to weren't really sure what I was getting at and may have felt a little bit threatened. But on the whole everybody basically agreed. I found that the people in the inspector general's office, both the Foreign Service personnel who were there for two to three or four years at a time, and the Civil Service personnel, who were there for five, 10, 30 years, were really very dedicated people. They wanted to help the posts. They went out willing to work hard, to comb through all the stuff with the goal of helping the posts do a better job as opposed to just writing a really good report that was going to get a lot of attention. And that was pretty impressive.

Q: Well, many of these posts that you went to were in volatile places. Did you look at the question of whether it was worth keeping our people there at the time? If it was dangerous, should we get the hell out and stay out for a long time?

ADAIR: Well, that consideration was always part of the mix, but I think it would be unusual for an inspection team to recommend closing an embassy. For one thing, the bureaus would likely be far ahead of OIG on a decision like that. For another, that is a decision involving a magnitude of issues, including historical knowledge that an

inspection team would not necessarily be equipped to deal with. It is possible that a bureau could be considering such a move and ask the OIG for an objective opinion. The first inspection tour that I did was to a region of West Africa that had recently been through a war, and was still unstable. The decision had already been made to reopen one of the posts that we went to, in Sierra Leone, and we had to look at a number of issues related to that decision. Embassy Freetown had been evacuated twice in the previous two or three years. Foreign Service personnel had only just returned. There was a skeleton crew, and even the Marines weren't back yet. When we were there a newly appointed ambassador arrived. His goal was to try and put the thing back together, and that included making determinations as to what the role and the size of that mission should be in the future. We looked at things like how had the evacuations been done; how had the previous people managed those crisis situations. We also looked at the current security issues and tried to anticipate what future security challenges would be. One of my principle concerns when I was president of the Foreign Service Association was improvement of existing embassy facilities. That was a serious issue in Freetown. The embassy was right downtown. It had no setback, and was very vulnerable. It had received a fair amount of rifle fire and there was an unexploded rocket grenade embedded in the interior wall of the ambassador's office.

One of our recommendations was to move the embassy from that place as soon as possible. There was no way to protect it. It was a wonderful location: on a little square in the middle of town with excellent access to the city and government offices; but it could not be protected. We even spent some time driving around looking at other places to which they might move the embassy, and we recommended that the Department allocate the funds to do it. I don't know if they did.

In Sierra Leone, I was also introduced to another phenomenon. There was a fairly substantial Shiite community in that area of West Africa. They were traders, and some of them had been there for a long time.

Q: Mostly Lebanese, weren't they?

ADAIR: Yes, very good. Many of these people were associated Hezbollah, because Hezbollah was a popular charitable organization that did a lot of good work. These traders contributed to Hezbollah for that reason. Some people in Washington suggested that we take a look at this, because there was some concern that these communities were providing funds which might be channeled to support terrorism in other places.

We did try to look at that. We talked with the people in the embassies, who at the time did not really have terrorism on their agenda - except for being more conscious about protecting the embassies from attacks like in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. But they were not focused on trying to get to know these communities better for anti-terrorism purposes. To some degree they already knew them for economic, political and social reasons. In Sierra Leone, our inspection team was invited to a wedding reception in one of those Lebanese communities. Everybody was just as friendly and welcoming as they could possibly be.

Q: What about the other posts?

ADAIR: Well first of all, in order to get into Sierra Leone we had had to fly in by UN helicopter from Conakry, Guinea. Spending two days in Conakry waiting for that flight was an experience as well. It was not a really nice or happy place. We flew from Conakry to Freetown by helicopter. Then, after Freetown, we went to Monrovia, Liberia on a Ukrainian charter plane.

Monrovia was a different situation again. The really dangerous time was past, but security was still uncertain. The embassy situation was completely different from Freetown. The embassy in Monrovia had been there for a long time; it was a compound that had been established during a period of good relations. It was large and surrounded by a wall. It was not in the middle of town, but on the edge and right on the ocean. The compound had its own water and electricity and was fairly self-sufficient. During the really bad times, as I recall, Marines had been flown in to protect the embassy. They actually had two compounds separated by a public street. We looked at both from the point of view of security, money and utility. Monrovia itself didn't have any electricity when we were there. At nighttime it was without electricity and dark. Other services like running water and sewage were also unreliable. We had to look at a number of issues related to security and embassy discipline, including some sensitive personnel issues, which I won't go into.

Then we flew on to Ivory Coast. That one was particularly interesting for me, because when I was in Zaire in the 1970's, Ivory Coast was considered the garden spot of Africa. Its capitol, Abidjan, was considered the Paris of Africa. When we got there we could see how beautiful it had been; but it was deteriorating. This was disturbing to me, because that process of deterioration reminded me of Zaire. We had not taken the embassy's advice in choosing our hotel. We decided to stay at the famous hotel, Hotel Ivoire, which was not really close to the embassy, because it had such an important history. The embassy was right that the hotel near the embassy was both a better hotel and more convenient to our work. However, I also think we were right to stay at the old hotel at least for a while. It showed us what was going on. On the surface it looked great, but as you looked more closely you began to see the hotel wasn't being taken care of, the staff wasn't interested, supplies were becoming scarce, and things were quite literally falling apart. It was so much like Zaire when I'd been there that it was scary.

There was no ambassador when we were there. The relatively new DCM was Charge. The previous ambassador had not been a career State Department Foreign Service officer, as I recall. I think he was from the Foreign Commercial Service, and had not even been able to speak French. The embassy was functioning, but was not really doing its job. The reporting on the situation in Ivory Coast was insufficient. Also significant, there didn't seem to be any communication with the French embassy, probably the single most important foreign presence in the country. It appeared there hadn't been any communication because the American ambassador didn't speak French and so he couldn't communicate with the French ambassador. I called on the French ambassador

and talked with him about it. He was actually a fairly well known French legislator who had had a lot to do with French policy in Africa. He had played a role in changing French policy in Africa. France was no longer taking responsibility for its former colonies – he described it as the "Americanization" of its policy. He said that he would really appreciate more contact with the American ambassador; and one of our recommendations was that the next ambassador make that happen.

One of the things that we had to look at was the future of the embassy in Abidjan as a regional center. The Department gives certain embassies that are located in strategic or conveniently located places around the world regional as well as bi-lateral responsibilities. They have personnel, sometimes from a variety of USG agencies, who provide services to other embassies in the region. This is particularly important in Africa where many embassies are too small or in too unstable an environment to warrant stationing certain personnel there permanently. Abidjan had served this function in a big way. At one time it had even been a regional finance center until that function was moved to Paris.

Well, since there had been that recent coup attempt, people were asking whether the situation had changed sufficiently to require reconsideration of Abidjan's regional responsibilities. We looked at it, and the incoming ambassador argued strongly that the responsibilities should be retained. I allowed myself to be talked into taking a moderate position, i.e. Abidjan had its problems but it was still more stable than anywhere else in the region. Therefore, it probably had a future as a large post and a regional center to support other African posts. We therefore recommended that work on the new embassy continue. Well, the security situation has just continued to go downhill in Abidjan ever since and I should have stuck to my gut assessment. Part of me was inclined to be more radical, but I was trying to be bureaucratically responsible. So, that was the end of my first inspection.

Q: Question. I've interviewed Chas Freeman who was ambassador in Saudi Arabia. In retrospect, he thought that the Department had been overly understanding of people who wanted to get out. Under the threat of fire, some people wanted to get out who probably should have stayed on to do their duty. I mean it's an awful term to use, but it's a matter of courage. Did you find this an issue? Do we allow key people to leave just because they are nervous?

ADAIR: I've seen a number of evacuation situations, and in my experience, most people choose to stay if they can. That was the case in Burma, where more people wanted to stay than we thought should stay. The African Bureau has pretty much taken the attitude that everybody who goes to these places is a volunteer. AF has vacancies in a lot of embassies but it's not only because people are worried about security. It's because we don't have enough people in the Foreign Service to fill all spots. I don't think it has been an issue of enforcing discipline in most places.

I've watched the effort to fill the slots in Baghdad. The Department has been pretty adamant about only taking volunteers, and they've been able to get volunteers. So we're

able to do the jobs that way. The downside is that it makes it even more difficult to get the people that you want or need. A lot of the people, particularly in the African Bureau that go out to those hardship posts are going for adventure or for the extra pay. They are not always our best people in terms of diplomacy.

Q: Getting away from marital problems do this?

ADAIR: Some of that does happen, yes.

Q: I was in Saigon and I noticed we had some of that.

ADAIR: With regard to your question, though, Chas was speaking from the point of view of the ambassador and that's important. The ambassador has to have a lot of leeway in choosing his people. He should have a substantial say. He also has to have the authority to be able to say to somebody who wants to leave, "No, I can't let you go now." Ambassadors should have the ability to say, "I can't let you go for the next one or two or six months, but if you will help me I will help you." The Department should back the ambassador up in those situations.

Q: Well then, was there any consideration of recommending that any of these posts close at a certain point?

ADAIR: That was one of the things that we looked seriously at with regards to Freetown, but we concluded it should stay open.

Q: Why?

ADAIR: We thought that it had a job to do. We thought that it could be of help both to Sierra Leone and to U.S. interests in the region. It didn't have to be a big post, but this is what the Foreign Service does. This is what people sign up for. If the civil war had still been going on, then it would be different. In that situation diplomacy might have had less to contribute, and could not have been possible at all without expensive military protection. There's a point at which it's no longer worth it in terms of our national interests. But maintaining a small embassy with good people that have a low profile and basic protection to deal with a changing threat should be possible. The same was true in Liberia, but there we recommended substantial downsizing. We said the whole compound across the street should go.

Q: How well did you feel that your suggestions were carried out?

ADAIR: In principle, posts and bureaus are required to comply with any formal recommendations made by the OIG. They can appeal those recommendations, and negotiate with OIG to adjust them. Often in that process the recommendations are changed. There is a formal compliance process undertaken by OIG that checks to make sure the recommendations are carried out. I have to admit that I don't know whether those recommendations were carried out. I assume that most were. Policy

recommendations are different. The OIG is given the responsibility by legislation to comment on policy as well. It is competent to make suggestions, because most of the inspectors are FSO's, but only rarely do the inspectors have a depth of knowledge and experience in a particular country equal to the bureau or the post. Therefore policy recommendations tend to be more suggestions than binding recommendations.

I think that we helped to strengthen the hand of the African Bureau with regards some sensitive personnel and security issues in Sierra Leone and Liberia. I think that we also strengthened their hand with OBO (Overseas Buildings Operations), the organization within the Department of State in charge of all diplomatic building construction overseas. OIG recommendations can augment arguments for resources within the central budgetary process. We certainly helped AF's position with regards to maintaining Abidjan as a regional hub - though that might not have been the right thing to do.

So the office of the inspector general can have a significant impact, but it can't dictate. It shouldn't be able to dictate, because basically it's an additional opinion. It's supposed to be an objective opinion.

Q: Well you came back from those inspections. Did that pretty well take care of your year?

ADAIR: No. That was only the fall. OIG felt sorry for sending me out on my first inspection to war torn posts in West Africa - where we had to subject ourselves to malaria and other exotic dangers. So, for balance they gave me Switzerland for the winter months.

Q: Not exactly a war torn country.

ADAIR: No. It was wonderful. I love Switzerland. I love Geneva. We inspected Geneva and Bern.

Q: I have the impression that Switzerland has more resident American ambassadors than anywhere else. They are almost always political appointees, and either they're renting out their rooms to political contributors or chasing their secretaries around the desk or something like that.

ADAIR: Well, I didn't see any evidence of chasing secretaries around desks. There are quite a few American ambassadors in Switzerland though. At that time, we had three political ambassadors there whose operations we were inspecting. We had the ambassador to Switzerland in Bern; we had the ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva; we had the ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. There is also an ambassador to the World Trade Organization and one to the UN Human Rights Council.

I had spent a lot of time going back and forth to conferences at UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), before and so I had some familiarity

with the mission in Geneva. There were some administrative issues. The only one that I can specifically remember was a little silly; it was a parking issue. It was silly that the problem existed, but it was causing some bad blood. The embassy said it had limited parking and so it was denying parking passes not just to people in the diplomatic mission, but also to the representatives of other U.S. Government agencies who were either stationed there permanently or coming out there for extended negotiations. The mission's administrative section simply said this was all they had and drew lines about who should have them. Now, I have somewhat of a prejudice against those kinds of arguments from our administrative people, so when I got this complaint from several agencies in Washington, I said I would look into it.

We went out and looked, and yes, the parking lot at the embassy was full. But there were also several other parking lots around them that weren't full. These belonged to different organizations, Swiss and international as I recall. After a series of long talks, we convinced the mission's administration people that they needed to start talking to some of these other organizations and see if they could make a deal. They did. This was a case where bureaucratic inertia had reigned unchallenged. It was possible to change it, and changing it turned out to be not such a big deal.

Q: I have to say that, as anybody who's worked in bureaucratic organization understands, after pay matters parking can be one of the most important focal points for dissatisfaction.

ADAIR: Yes. And it doesn't need to.

Q: Sometimes there are solutions.

ADAIR: Yes, there really are.

Anyway, that was one of the issues. The second one was security, both in Geneva and in Bern. We were looking at the measures that they had taken. We had guidelines for how to evaluate all the buildings and compounds. We had people on our team who were security experts in that regard. So we looked at the chanceries and the consular offices. We didn't find any serious security issues in Geneva. Those offices were in pretty good shape.

We did find more when we got to Bern. The embassy there was right on the street. It didn't have any setback. They knew that it was a concern. After 9/11, the embassy had asked the city government to shut the street off to traffic. The city complied, but that infuriated all the residents as well as some local politicians. There had been sympathy right after the 9/11 attack, but six months later patience was running out. The attitude in much of Washington was,
"Hey, nothing's going to happen in Switzerland," so there was little support for allocating resources to a whole new embassy. We said that was ridiculous. If Washington and New York could be bombed, so could Bern. The embassy had found another building that was actually closer to the downtown area. It didn't have the full 100 foot setback, but it was definitely far better than what they had. Anyway, we looked at the whole thing and we

recommended that that Washington support their move to this other building. That did happen.

The third major issue was that these political ambassadors were not talking to each other. If anything, they were competing with each other. They had little fiefdoms that didn't make sense in terms of either security or policy. They needed to cooperate because they had overlapping responsibilities, and there was quite a lot that they could do to coordinate policy. These guys were not ideologically in different worlds. They were reasonable and amiable people. I had long talks with each of them, and made some suggestions for how they might start improving coordination. They said they would; I don't know if they did.

The final issue was one that we did not make progress on. That was a recommendation to reopen the consulate in Zurich. The consulate had been closed several years before, because people believed that the personnel at Embassy Bern could cover Zurich. It wasn't that far away, and they believed it was too expensive to maintain a full office and stuff in Zurich. I wasn't convinced by that argument before I left Washington. When we got to Bern and started looking at it, I became increasingly convinced that that had been an unnecessary and bad decision. Our final report recommended that it be re-established. There was still an office there that the USG was renting; and there were still Swiss employees of the USG working there; but there was no diplomat in residence. The embassy was only sending people occasionally. Now, Bern is the capital, but Zurich is the financial, the corporate and the security center of Switzerland. That's where we needed to be talking to people about the serious issue of anti-terrorism coordination, and that is where we needed to be talking with the major corporate entities. That's where the big corporations were and that's where the scientific research was being done. We argued that a lot of those contacts could not be developed sufficiently by traveling to Zurich from time to time. It needed a responsible and thoughtful person there on the ground that could get to know the community, participate in events, go to dinners, play tennis with them and so on.

When I had called on the assistant secretary of the European Bureau before traveling to Bern, she had admonished me not to recommend reopening Zurich. When I did so anyway, she was pretty annoyed. I had gotten along with her pretty well before that, but afterwards she was noticeably cold.

Q: Were the ambassadors behaving themselves? In the past, some political ambassadors in Bern have not.

ADAIR: There have been problems in the past, but in that time frame I saw no evidence of problems. The ambassadors that I inspected were pretty responsible people.

Q: Sometimes political appointments can be a throwaways, which is dangerous because some of these are important posts.

ADAIR: Yes, and there is the additional difficulty that if you send somebody good there they can be bored. I think that the ambassador in Bern was a little bit disappointed. He

was very close to the president and had managed the Bush family finances. I tried to suggest to him ways that he might make this more interesting for himself and really play a role, but I'm not sure that he did.

Q: Did you have more inspections?

ADAIR: Yes. In the spring we did Slovenia and Croatia. I can't remember why we didn't do Belgrade, but it might have had something to do with the whole atmosphere at the time.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: This area was particularly interesting for me, because my colleagues in EUR struggled with it after the breakup of Yugoslavia. At one time during the travels related to the Dayton negotiations, I had been stuck in the Split Airport (Croatia) and had to negotiate my way onto a military flight to get back to Germany. Now I got to see these places up close. We went into Ljubljana first. It was a lovely, quiet little embassy with not a whole lot to do. Slovenia was a very stable place. The embassy was small, and it had a very good long-time career ambassador, Johnny Young

Q: Yes, I interviewed Johnny Young.

ADAIR: He was handling it well. The embassy was happy; they were doing a decent job; it was one of the easiest inspections I ever did. The only issue was security, and they had already done pretty much what they could do there. We made a few suggestions and tried to get them some more money to consolidate protection of the embassy. That was it.

Then we went on to Croatia, which was also doing a good job. It wasn't a really big embassy. Their main issue again was security. The chancery was in a beautiful old building right on the main square. It was absolutely impossible to justify in security terms. It was also an old building that had lots of maintenance issues. A site for a new embassy compound had been selected, and OBO was building this big new embassy there. It was on the edge of town, which was too bad, because it was going to put them away from the city. It would be harder for them to connect with their government and other counterparts on a regular basis. It was going to put them in a compound surrounded by a wall so it would be harder for people to come and see them. It was a really neat building, and OBO was really proud of it. The head of OBO, General Williams, came out to visit when we were there. I'd gotten to know him when I was with the Foreign Service Association. It was impressive – except for one thing: it was right next to the airport. I asked him the obvious question, "Did anyone consider how easy it would be to fly a plane into the compound?" I was told they didn't think this was any kind of a problem. Thankfully that hasn't happened, and hopefully it never will.

Q: I hark back to much earlier times, when it was all one country. There were ethnic and cultural divisions, but they had not broken out in war as happened later. Did you find

that there was much interest in Serbia, or had it been wiped off the memory chart of our people in Croatia?

ADAIR: Serbia was not the main issue then. The issue was how we could encourage Croatia to do the reforms that it needed to strengthen its democracy and its economy and become a full-fledged player in Europe and NATO. They wanted to.

Q: How stood matters from your perspective with Bosnia?

ADAIR: We didn't get into that when I was in Zagreb. But one of the things I did do was to get on a helicopter and fly down to Bosnia from the military airport outside Zagreb. By that time I already had been given my next assignment, as political advisor to the NATO force in Tuzla. The general down there sent a helicopter up to Zagreb to pick me up. I went down for a weekend, met him, looked at the base and talked to the people there. That was fascinating. For one thing I'd never had an extended helicopter flight. It was so beautiful flying over those hills.

The general that I met was not going to be the general I would work for. He was rotating out. The American units only stayed for six months at a time. His unit, the 25th Division was headed back to Hawaii, and he was moving on to be the commander of the 85th Airborne. The replacement unit would come from Pennsylvania.

Q: Okay. So, your next assignment was to the military. How did that come about?

ADAIR: Well, for the first time in my career, I was trying to extend my stay in Washington. I'd been in Washington since 1992, but I'd been trying to get out of Washington and back overseas since 1995. When Holbrooke moved me up to be deputy assistant secretary there was an obvious reason to stay longer and that position received an automatic exception to the six-year rule. When I left the European Bureau, as I said I was offered an overseas assignment as an ambassador but there was no school for my son and he was too young, in my view, to send away to boarding school. So, I asked not to be considered for that.

I then got another dispensation for working for the undersecretary for economic affairs and another when I became president of the Foreign Service Association. At the end of that time it was time for me to go overseas, but they made another exception for the OIG. I believe that the first exception that I personally asked for was after that. I made it because at that point my father was in the most difficult transition stage of Alzheimer's. He was really disorientated; he was losing his ability to recognize where he was and who was with him. However, he still knew that he was losing it - so there was just tremendous anxiety. It would have been very difficult to take him with us anywhere. He was living at Goodwin House West, a retirement home in Falls Church. At that time he was still in assisted living. He was the main reason for my requests. In addition, my son was by that time going in to eleventh grade. He could have moved. The rest of us could have moved. But I asked to be allowed to stay at OIG for an extra year. The inspector general also requested it. The director general just turned us down flat.

So I looked at the jobs available. It was at that point that I was offered this job in Tuzla – a one year job, unaccompanied. My wife and son would remain in Washington. Ginger would be able to take care of my father, so he would not be left alone. I would be away from all of them for one year only. Then I would return with no restriction on a Washington assignment. However, the director general even objected to that and tried to force me into another assignment, a three year overseas assignment. At this point, it became clear to me that it was personal, probably related to my time with the American Foreign Service Association when I had been very critical of some of their policies. They actually threatened the head of the political advisor's office, telling him that if he didn't back off it would hurt his career. He refused to be threatened, and the Political Military Bureau continued to push for my assignment. I was eventually paneled and went to Bosnia.

Q: Who was the director general at the time?

ADAIR: The Director General was Ruth Davis, but I think it was others in her office that were responsible. I liked Ruth Davis and admired her as a person. I could understand the denial of my request for another exception to the 6-year rule, but threatening to hurt the career of another FSO for advocating my assignment to that bureau's position was not her style. That was the work of another senior person in her office. Anyway, I went off to Tuzla – and one of the weirder assignments of my career.

Q: Well could you explain why we had a military post in Tuzla, Bosnia?

ADAIR: Okay. When the Dayton Accords were negotiated, a key factor was that NATO would provide a sufficient military force to guarantee the peace within Bosnia. NATO sent 20,000 soldiers into Bosnia, fully armed with tanks and the whole show. Most of the force was American. The force itself was strong enough to withstand any local challenge, and it was fully backed by NATO and the United States. All of the parties to Dayton were willing to agree to a peace settlement, because the NATO force ensured that none of the factions would be in a position to take military advantage of a peace. The headquarters of the NATO force were in Sarajevo, and elements of it were scattered throughout Bosnia. Initially there were lots of little bases all around the country. They were gradually reduced, and when I arrived there were three main bases. One was in Banja Luka, which was up in the northwest of the country. It was primarily British and Scandinavian. Another was in Mostar, in the southeastern part of the country. That was French, Spanish and German. The third was in Tuzla, which was the northernmost major Bosnian city. It was also right near the largest part of the Republika Srpska, which was the Serb part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Americans were put into Tuzla because that was considered to be the most dangerous. They were stationed on a base that was called "Eagle Base". I can't remember its Serbo-Croatian name. It had been a Yugoslav air force base and had all the infrastructure that was needed. Initially, the NATO force was led by a three-star general, an American general stationed in Sarajevo, and two-star generals headed the other three.

Just before I arrived, they downgraded all those generals by one star. When I flew down by helicopter from Zagreb, Tuzla's last two-star was still in place. When I moved to Tuzla the first one-star was just arriving. We had an American political advisor to the three-star in Sarajevo, who then became a two-star, and we had an American political advisor to the American sectoral commander, in Tuzla. We also had an American representative up in Brčko, a special district formed between Serb and Bosniac areas of northern Bosnia that had been one of the most seriously affected areas. Bill Farrand just wrote a book about his experience there as Brčko Supervisor.

So I went out to be the political advisor to the American force in Tuzla. When I arrived, it was the 28th Division from Pennsylvania, which was a National Guard force. They were there for six months, and were then replaced by another National Guard unit, the 35th Division from Kansas. I had never been a political advisor before. I really wasn't sure what I was going to do. I had some knowledge of the Dayton negotiations and the whole process of putting that peace accord together, but I was not an expert in the region. I did not know Serbo-Croatian, and I really wish that I had because it would have made a huge difference.

I first met the 28th Division when I went out to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to observe them for the end of one of their exercises. I was very impressed by their dedication and the seriousness with which they took the exercise, but the exercise itself seemed very shallow to me. Perhaps training exercises almost by definition are sort of shallow. And I watched this process it intensified my question about how I was going to help these guys. I had my first interview with the general with whom I was going to work. That was interesting. He was a smart guy but he was a unique personality, and he was not particularly popular with his soldiers.

I went back to Washington, cleaned up my stuff and then flew out to Germany to meet them at the American training base near Hohenfels. Our military had set up a whole training region with a village and roads similar to Bosnia. They put them through all their peacekeeping - or their peace maintaining - exercises and this whole group spent I think two weeks out there basically practicing their daily routines. They started in the morning with intelligence briefings, handed out assignments, and then went out in their vehicles, drove around, met Bosnians in the village and stuff like that. They were given a variety of problems and tests. I spent about a week with them, attending their meetings, going through the exercises and making comments where I could. Then we went on to Tuzla.

They were wonderful people, and really excited about doing this job. They were National Guards people so it was all temporary work for them. But they loved the military and the time that they spent doing their military work. Many of them were really smart and very good at what they did. I hated going through all the organizational, bureaucratic nonsense that they go through; but it seemed to be necessary given the size of the group of people that they had to manage. Every evening there was a large command meeting where every unit had to make a report. They had built a large auditorium with bleachers, but each level of the bleachers had desks, and every desk had a computer. The general and the heads of all of the sections - and I - would sit down on the stage looking up at all these

people. The general would listen to the reports and give his instructions - and this would go on and on and on and on. I didn't have much to do in those meetings – except to keep awake. I was able to help a little more in the early morning meetings when we were getting the intelligence briefings and trying to assess what was coming in.

I tried to get out as much as I could. The military would go out on their patrols but they were still required to go with a minimum of two vehicles, usually more, in full battle dress with all their weapons. Of course, when they did that it was a little hard to talk to people. Nevertheless, the people in the Bosnian countryside were happy to have them there, given what they gone through just a few years earlier. They also seemed to like the Americans, and they wanted to have a lot more contact. However, the Americans were not permitted to leave the base except on official duty.

Q: There were a lot of complaints. I was there earlier as an election observer. The Brits went in, you might say, with soft clothing - without the helmets and the armor - and sort of drifted around. But when the Americans came, they were fully buttoned up and rather formidable. We were not going to take any casualties.

ADAIR: Yes. It was a little bizarre, particularly when I was there, which was five or six years after the Dayton Accords. There must still have been some threat, however, because every once in a while the helicopters would detect radar locking on to them and have to take defensive measures. By the time I arrived there was also a growing concern about terrorism. The stabilization force was not only concerned with preventing war between the factions. They were also after terrorists.

Q: If there had been this perspective, you might point out why they would worry about terrorists in that area.

ADAIR: During the war there had been a fairly significant influx of people coming from Muslim countries in the Middle East, Jihadists, who came to help defend the Muslims against the Serbs - and there was truly a need for it. Some of the people who came in to help were political extremists themselves. Quite a few of the fighters chose to stay in Bosnia. It was a beautiful place, and some of them married people there. Many of them settled in and made Bosnia their home. After 9/11 we began looking more closely at many Diaspora Muslim communities; and some of the Jihadists that went to Bosnia were from more extremist sects, like Wahhabis. The American military in Bosnia had to consider the possibility of threats to its soldiers and facilities from all quarters – and this was one that was particularly sensitive after the 9/11 attacks. Some people believed that Bosnia was an area where international terrorists could hide and likely were hiding. It was a place from which they might move into Europe or go elsewhere to attack the United States or others. Therefore, looking for these kinds of people was one of the missions of this group. After 9/11, when so many people in the United States wanted to see some kind of action taken to punish those who had attacked the United States and to thwart any future attacks, targeting potential terrorists in Bosnia was something to which the military could respond enthusiastically. I believed that it was given too high a priority. Specifically, it detracted from the ongoing task of looking for war criminals like

Karadzic and Mladic. When I was there, particularly with the first group, there was no effort to go after war criminals. Several of the people told me that they'd been told before coming that wasn't their job. Even the embassy did not seem to be particularly engaged.

Q: You know, I heard that the French were making great efforts to avoid confrontation, because they had to deal with the Serbian republic.

ADAIR: Well everybody was making efforts to avoid confrontation. The Serb areas were mostly in the British and American sectors. I didn't get over to either Banja Luka or to Mostar for any length of time. There was more of the Croatian influence down in that area around Mostar than Serb. It had been a terrible battleground between Serb and Croatian forces. The historic bridge in Mostar – the Stari Most - which was a beautiful thing, was destroyed by the shelling, and has only recently been rebuilt.

Q: It had a "T" on top of the thing way back, way back. This is back in the '60s.

ADAIR: Really? Did you ever see any of the kids diving off of that bridge?

Q: No, I never did.

ADAIR: Well I saw a couple of them doing it when the bridge was being rebuilt. It was very high and looked like a pretty scary dive.

Q: How did you find your relations with the political side? First, with the American embassy there.

ADAIR: Well, I tried. I was fairly far away. It was a long drive from Tuzla to Sarajevo. Occasionally we could go down by helicopters but most of the time I would drive. I would call on the ambassador and others in the embassy. I knew the DCM who had been in the European Bureau when I was there before. I spent some time with the defense attaché as well. But I never felt like I had a lot to offer them, and they of course were very busy. Some of them had no reservations about sharing information with me if I had specific questions. If I had been in the embassy - particularly if I'd been the ambassador - I would have wanted to have the political advisors in all of those places talking to me or my staff on a regular basis. I would have been giving them assignments. But it seemed they were primarily focused on their own little world.

We also had an American Ambassador who was head of the OSCE office in Sarajevo, and another who was the deputy high representative to Paddy Ashdown. I knew both of them from before. We had an American who was the UN representative, Jacques Klein. All of these guys got together and talked, of course, but it didn't seem like there was a great deal of synergy. Synergy was something that seemed to have been elusive right from the outset. Perhaps in the Balkans it is difficult to get people to work together even if they don't come from the Balkans. There were plenty of stories not just about policy and strategic differences among the international players in post-Dayton Bosnia, but also petty personal differences.

Q: Well that's Europe.

ADAIR: Perhaps, but in Bosnia it was silly and could be tragic.

Q: Well yes.

How'd you find the elements of the Bosnian government that you dealt with?

ADAIR: I didn't deal with the central Bosnian government in Sarajevo that much. We dealt with the city administration of Tuzla. I met with the mayor fairly often. The commanding general and I called on the local governor, who was a very impressive guy, and had played an important part in holding the community together during the war. I met with mayors in the smaller towns as well. I had dealings with some of the Serb officials in the Republic of Srpska. That's where some of the problem areas were. We had to go talk to them about issues such as reintegrating the people that had fled the ethnic cleansing, and protecting the rights of minorities. We had to keep tabs on them, and ensure they were complying with the terms of the Dayton Accords. We sometimes had to pressure them, or even recommend their removal by the high representative. There was an office of the high representative in Tuzla and the head of that office was an American Foreign Service officer at the time. I would see him quite a bit. He held a monthly meeting of all of the international organization representatives in Tuzla and the surrounding region. Some of them would come in from outlying areas like the Republika Srpska. We would talk about the issues, and about how we could bring our different resources to bear on various problems. We had some synergy there.

The Tuzla government and the Tuzla environment were really interesting. Tuzla during the war had been an enclave. I don't think it was completely surrounded, but it had been besieged by the Serb Army. It had been shelled. The local government had been pretty enlightened. They had resisted the pressures to engage in ethnic cleansing. When the Serb army began shelling the city, there had been some pressure to take retribution on the Serb population of Tuzla. However, the leadership of the city, which was Bosnian, had said, "No; they're our neighbors and fellow citizens, and we're not going down that road. Anybody that wants to leave is free to leave, but we are one community, and we're going to protect our own." Almost everyone chose to stay. They protected each other, and it was really pretty amazing.

Q: Yes, I was impressed. I went there when I was an election observer. It was pointed out to me that there were orthodox and catholic churches as well as mosques, and they were not destroyed.

ADAIR: Right.

Q: The Serbs went around blowing up all the mosques and all that.

ADAIR: In other places.

Q: In other places but not in Tuzla.

ADAIR: Right, it was very impressive. They talked a line and they lived it.

Q: I realize you were in one part and all but did you get any feel that Bosnia was beginning to coalesce?

ADAIR: They were trying to, or at least some people were trying to. However, one of the problems was that much of the political and economic power was still in the same hands as before the war or during the war. I don't know exactly how to say this, but in times of trouble - certainly in times of chaos - economic power tends to fall into the hands of people who are clever and strong, don't necessarily play by the rules and have relatively little civic commitment. When Dayton was negotiated, the parties basically agreed to keep the status quo. Therefore, many of the people who had benefited from the nastiness of the war kept their gains. Some of the people in prominent political positions were vulnerable, because the high representative had the power to remove them from their positions if he concluded that they were obstructing the process of the accords. That didn't necessarily apply to people in the business community, and they of course continued to exert substantial influence. That made it more difficult to really change things, and perhaps also more difficult to help all those who had just barely survived the war. Those people looked around and saw that the real power was still in the hands of the people who had been doing the damage. I think it was very hard for many of those people to accept that the future was going to change. They still had to play the same game.

There was an organization in Tuzla that had been put together by a few women who were refugees from Srebrenica. Many of the women of Srebrenica had fled to Tuzla with their female children, but without their husbands and older male children who had been killed. Many of them didn't have any way of supporting themselves. Several of these women created an organization in Tuzla that employed the refugees making wool carpets and clothes. We used to go down there to talk with them and get sweaters and things like that. And I remember once talking with one of the women who was running it. I asked her what she had planned for the weekend, and she said she was going back to Srebrenica with her daughter. I said, "You're going back to Srebrenica?" She replied that she had a house in Srebrenica and she was still working on trying to get it back. Remember, this was eight years after the peace agreement! When I asked how that was going, she sort of looked at the floor and shrugged. Clearly it was difficult for her. I don't know if you've seen that when people really don't have a whole lot of hope they sort of shrug as if they are trying to push off something that is imprisoning their spirit. Then she explained that the person that she had to work with in the government that was managing the return of all the houses was the same man who had separated her from her husband. It was a Serb soldier that separated her from her husband when the city of Srebrenica fell. That individual, the man who she had to see as responsible for the death of her husband, was the one that she had to sit across the table from and negotiate the return of her property in Srebrenica. How do you deal with something like that?

If that kind of thing is repeated over and over again, how can the population have any confidence in the process of reform and democratization? It was really hard to say honestly that it was going to get better. In fact, I tried to argue - and I had no standing or voice to really do so - that the withdrawal of the NATO forces, which was being planned then, was premature. The reason that it was premature was that the civilian side of the equation was still incomplete. The office of the high representative had been extremely ineffectual, most of the time. Sometimes hadn't done anything at all. When I was there Paddy Ashdown was really trying. He was trying harder than any of the others, and he was being more successful than his predecessors, but it was too late. And in addition, he was faced with the prospect of all those forces going.

I tried to make my argument in Naples at the regular meetings of political advisors there. I also went back to Brussels and talked with Nick Burns who was the U.S. ambassador to NATO at the time, and I laid it out for him. He told me it was just the military making plans, and that there was no political approval. Of course, the problem was that the only ones making plans were the military, and things went exactly according to their plans. I argued in the book that I wrote recently that this was potentially dangerous for Europe in the long term. We'll see. I don't know a lot about what's happened in Bosnia recently but it's certainly not been a whole lot better for the people. Jobs are scarce, and I think that organized crime and that kind of stuff is still pretty serious.

Q: When did you write the book?

ADAIR: I just finished it and it will be published this summer.

Q: What's it going to be called?

ADAIR: "Watching Flowers from Horseback."

Q: Okay.

Well, how long were you working in Tuzla?

ADAIR: I was there for a year. That would be more like 10 months.

Q: From when to when about?

ADAIR: I think I actually got there in September. I left probably in the middle of June.

Q: Of what year?

ADAIR: I got there in the fall of 2002 and I left in the early summer of 2003.

Q: So, where did you go after that?

ADAIR: I went to Special Operations Command. Another Political Advisor job.

Q: Okay. Could you explain what the Special Operations Command was?

ADAIR: Okay. Prior to 1985, a number of the military services had specialty units that were highly trained for special tasks, and they were usually fairly small. The most well known was the special forces of the U.S. Army – the "Green Berets." In the 1980s, some members of Congress decided that the U.S. military needed a more effective special operations capability, and that the human and material resources should not be left scattered around in the different services. With the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1985, Congress created, over the objections of the professional military leadership, a command that was equal to the other branches of the service - and in some respects more equal. It had far less people but it was really quite elite. The Special Operations Command was set up, headed by a four-star unified combatant commander. His forces included units from the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Marines were invited to participate, but they apparently made the argument that they were already "special," and did not want to be part of another command.

The individual forces themselves still technically belonged to the different services. Their salaries were paid by those services, but they were seconded to the commander of Special Operations Forces, called "SOCOM," and that commander had command of training and how and when they would be used overseas. SOCOM was also given its own separate budgetary authority. The others didn't have that. The budgets of the other services were negotiated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but the Special Operations Command had its own budget, did all of its own planning; and talked directly with the Congress. Congress wanted them to be as independent as possible, because otherwise the Special Operations capability would always be subsumed under the needs and the philosophy of the other branches of the military, all of which were thinking bigger and heavier rather than smaller and more flexible.

Q: Now, I know that we have to be careful in this discussion, because there is sensitive information which must remain protected. Bearing that in mind, what did you feel was your responsibility when you got there and what was your attitude towards this assignment? Isn't the State Department generally skeptical about these agencies that are given "special" missions overseas?

ADAIR: Well, the answer to your first question was I really wasn't sure what my role was going to be when I went to SOCOM. I had a little bit more understanding after having spent a year with the Army in Bosnia. However, the year that I spent there had not given me a lot of confidence that I could contribute effectively in this role of Political Advisor.

In this particular time frame, the Special Operations Command, SOCOM, was challenging, because the secretary of defense had assigned to it lead responsibility within the Pentagon for the "war on terror." This meant that SOCOM had responsibility not just for conducting special operations and being the best there was in that regard, but for strategizing how to go after terrorists and terrorism, and for coordinating and leading the

other branches of the military in that regard. This was all very new stuff, and it became apparent to me at least that nobody really knew what the secretary of defense had in mind (including possibly the secretary himself). It seemed to fall to the Special Operations Command to define it and put the pieces together. That's quite a challenge, so it was an interesting time to arrive there.

With regards to your second question, of course the State Department is skeptical of other agencies given special missions overseas, and particularly the military. The U.S. military is given extraordinary resources by the American people, or at least by the American political system. No other organization; no other nation; no other human power in history has ever wielded the military might that the U.S. military has today. The American political system has bestowed those resources on the military in the name of national defense, and there are certainly lots of potential dangers out there to defend against. But it is one thing to employ those resources in a system of static defense, or even in a war – like the two world wars of the last century; and quite another to employ those resources around the planet when our nation is not fighting for its existence. The military has the power to take action. Actions have consequences. The military may be the most competent organization we have to assess the consequences of military action in wartime, because in war the most important consequences are military. It is less competent to assess such consequences in peacetime, because in peacetime those consequences are a more complex mix of political, economic, psychological, and cultural issues. The State Department's area of expertise and responsibility is the management of our strategic and everyday relations with other nations, and it deals everyday with the vast complexity of those relations. In spite of the fact that it is one of the smallest Departments of the federal government with a mere fraction of the Defense Department's resources, about one twentieth, it is the most competent single organization to deal with those responsibilities. So again, of course the State Department is skeptical of other organizations operating in this realm, because it knows there will be consequences. And, yes, I was worried about the potential damage a power like SOCOM could do, particularly in an area like international terrorism that very few people seemed to understand in depth.

Q: You did it from when to when?

ADAIR: I did it from 2003 to 2006.

Q: Was sort of the - again, I realize I'm treading on ground that we can't tread -

ADAIR: That's alright; just ask and then I'll say what I can.

Q: You'll respond as such. But I would assume that you were fully concentrated on the Middle East and, al Qaeda.

ADAIR: Well we were certainly focused primarily on the Middle East, but not only on the Middle East because the terrorist threat was considered global.

Q: Well, what areas were we concerned about?

ADAIR: Al Qaeda started in the Middle East and its primary powerbase and leadership was there. However, it sought the support of Muslim populations around the world, and its targets were global. It was going to attack Americans, official and otherwise, anywhere in the world where they thought it might be possible and pay off.

Q: Were there other somewhat comparable organizations, say with the British, French, the Germans and all that we were in contact with?

ADAIR: Yes. Many countries have Special Operations forces. Certainly the British were the most obvious and the ones that we had the closest relationship with. We hadn't had as close a relationship with the French military as we should have for awhile, but when I was there the French Special Operations forces expressed an interest in strengthening cooperation so we worked on that. Poland had some pretty impressive forces that were working with us in Iraq; so did the Lithuanians and the Italians. We also had a visit from Mexican Special Forces. Shortly after I arrived at SOCOM, a big conference was hosted in Hawaii by the Pacific Command, PACOM, that brought in representatives from Special Operations forces from all over the Pacific to talk about the challenge of international terrorism and to promote the idea that we should all be working more closely together.

Q: On the American side, could we look at the problem posed by domestic militia groups or individual terrorists and attacks like the terrific explosion in Oklahoma City. Were we looking at domestic operations or was that beyond the scope of SOCOM's work?

ADAIR: SOCOM's domestic responsibilities were very limited. Within the United States, the primary responsibility for defense against terrorism or dealing with terrorist incidents lay with federal and local organizations other than the military. The Special Operations Command's focus on terrorism was primarily external.

Q: I would think though, that if one of these militia hate groups in Nevada or elsewhere got going that the military would be the most capable of dealing with it. A military group would be more capable than the Nevada State Police could put together.

ADAIR: There is tremendous capability in non-military organizations. The president has a variety of tools that he can bring to bear. Operating within the United States was not foremost in the minds of the Command.

Q: How did you fit in? I would think that almost any operation in a foreign country would cause the State Department POLAD to say, "Yes, but….," and then start naming some of the negative consequences of our doing something, and that is goddamned annoying if you're planning something in the military.

ADAIR: Absolutely.

How did I fit in? I was a member of the Command. I was working for a four-star army general, Doug Brown. His command group was a group of one- to three-star generals and admirals. The command structure was similar to other Unified Combatant Commands, though the names of the components had been changed. With a few possible exceptions, I participated in all of their meetings and strategy sessions with regards to terrorism and the possibility of any overseas activity. I had essentially two functions.

The first was to be a foreign policy advisor to the Commander on an everyday basis, bringing my experience, my knowledge of American foreign policy and how things work and don't work overseas to their discussions of daily intelligence, new and old operations, potential challenges, immediate challenges, etc. In that regard my voice was usually different from those of the other people around the table. I was not the only civilian, but the other civilians were civilian employees of the Department of Defense performing a variety of support functions. I was also not the only representative of another agency in Special Operations Command. There were other agencies represented there, and efforts were under way to expand other agency participation to help with the "war on terror" responsibilities. While I was a civilian, I had the equivalent rank of a two-star general, which meant there were only three people in the Command that out-ranked me, in military terms.

The second function was to provide a connection between SOCOM and the Department of State. I was the State Department's representative to SOCOM and SOCOM's window into the Department of State. I was there to assist the command it its communication with ambassadors overseas.

Was I annoying to them? I'm sure that I was sometimes. My perspective was different, and could be perceived as being more negative. However, I was part of their operation. I was not just an outsider looking in and being critical. I reported to the Commander. I was his asset, and my job was to apply my perspective to help solve problems that he faced.

In that regard, there was a hugely important issue that was raised by the war on terror and by the designation of the SOCOM commander as the lead for it within the Pentagon, and we all had to deal with it. All over the world, in each country, the American ambassador is the personal representative of the President of the United States. The ambassador is designated by the president of the United States as the single person with authority over all other agencies of the U.S. government in that country – with only a few exceptions. That means that any time any other official or agency of the U.S. Government wants to undertake anything in another country they have to be in sync with the American ambassador there. They have to have the permission of the ambassador. That principle has been established and maintained for, I would say, at least five decades.

Q: This is the famous President Kennedy letters to his ambassadors, I think. It was Kennedy who, to the best of my knowledge, wrote a letter stating the ambassador's authority.

ADAIR: President Eisenhower sent the first letters, and President Kennedy affirmed the practice and strengthened the authority. There have been different viewpoints and challenges to that authority over the years, but it has held. One of the most challenging areas has been the delineation of authority between the ambassador and American regional military commander overseas – now called Unified Combatant Commanders or "UCCs". Those commanders must have authority over their personnel and authority to conduct operations; but the bottom line is that the resident American ambassador has to be in agreement with whatever they do in a particular country.

This is a relationship has been accepted and refined over the years. Generally speaking there aren't too many serious problems. However, with the introduction of a new combatant commander into the picture, i.e. SOCOM, there was a potential for problems. For one thing, SOCOM didn't have a clearly delineated regional responsibility. Regional UCCs have clearly defined territories. They know that one of the things that they need to do is establish a personal relationship with every ambassador in that region and they do it. Both sides work on that relationship. When the Secretary of Defense gave SOCOM the authority within DOD for the "war on terror," all of a sudden there was a UCC with global responsibility. There was a new player, and it was unclear to ambassadors how that was going to work. It was also a little unclear to the Pentagon how that was going to work because it wasn't just a question of SOCOM's relationship with the individual ambassadors; it was also a question of his relationship with those regional UCCs. So there was a lot of stuff that was in flux.

One of the things that helped was that the Special Operations Command, for some time, had been inviting newly appointed ambassadors down to Fort Bragg, North Carolina to be introduced to the capabilities and the people of the Special Operations Forces. The reason for this program was that this was a special arm of the military that might be called upon by Washington or even by the ambassadors to address special situations in their countries. It was important for the ambassadors to know what those capabilities were and to know how to call upon them. It was also useful for the ambassadors to have some idea of who the people were that were actually wielding those resources. SOCOM did an excellent job with this program, and so had at least the beginnings of a relationship.

Part of my job was to help the general in his relationships with those ambassadors. That might mean explaining the ambassadors' concerns to the general; or explaining the general's concerns to ambassadors. The latter sometimes required some reassurance, because there were not a few people in the Department of State and in embassies abroad who were worried that SOCOM specifically would try to undermine ambassadorial authority. I was a little uneasy myself in the beginning, but soon concluded that SOCOM was both willing and able to work effectively with ambassadors and respect the traditional authority. On several significant occasions, I was able to convince individual ambassadors that they could work with SOCOM, and they proceeded to do so. There were also some times when I was not successful.

The commanding general of SOCOM often made trips outside the United States to visit forces in the theaters like Iraq and Afghanistan; and he also traveled to areas outside of war zones, calling on the ambassadors in key places and meeting some of his counterparts in those countries. I naturally helped him with that. We made many trips to the Middle East, to a number of countries in Asia, to Europe, and even some into Africa. We made one trip to Colombia, but I couldn't convince them that they should allocate the time to go elsewhere in Latin America.

Q: Well, it's a little hard to think of questions that aren't going to be horribly sensitive.

ADAIR: Well go ahead and ask the sensitive questions and we'll just deal with it.

Q: Well, were you seeing threats unconnected to al Qaeda?

ADAIR: Yes. There were also groups that claimed to be connected to al Qaeda, but the connection was not clear. If there was a possibility of a connection that possibility had to be taken seriously and evaluated. Some groups were primarily or exclusively separatist. Some were just criminal.

However, it was logical that a group like al Qaeda would reach out to groups like that, particularly if there was an Islamic identity, to try to extend its reach. That's partially how it became more global. At times it looked like almost no place on earth could be ruled out, and one of the biggest concerns was preventing any new havens. We had had experience with al Qaeda being protected in Sudan and then in Afghanistan, and nobody knew where else they might find that kind of safe haven from which they could work with dangerous effect. The challenge was to look at all of those different possibilities, evaluate them and then determine what level of resources could be allocated to them.

The military is action-oriented and tended to be more enthusiastic about determining a potential threat was actionable than was I or others in the Department of State. There were several instances where I got actively involved in talking with both the people that were proposing certain kinds of action and the ambassadors in the field to come up with compromises and different approaches that we thought would do the same thing but with a lot less danger and fallout. This went beyond the Special Operations Command, because the regional commanders were tasked with anti-terrorism work as well. I was generally more conservative than my military counterparts, but not always. On several occasions I also found myself arguing for a more active approach than either a resident ambassador or the military. Everybody was really trying to do their best to work together, and that's not always an easy thing to do.

Q: Well one of the things that has struck me the most about this war on terror is that, except for some very specialized things, this is really a matter of good intelligence and police work. I mean the threats with which we are confronted are not usually military units.

ADAIR: Absolutely. Traditionally, terrorist threats have been handled with that kind of approach. Many people believed that terrorist threats should continue to be addressed with that kind of an approach, and thought that using the military forces of the United States to do it was not a good idea. However, something important had changed the equation in U.S. decision making: the United States had been attacked successfully by terrorists on September 11, 2001. That event caused what I would call psycho-political trauma in the political culture and apparatus of our nation. With psycho-politico trauma debate disappears. It is not allowed or at least very strongly discouraged. And so that was a problem. We essentially disabled an important part of our discriminative democratic process.

The other problem is one which is not exclusive to the United States, but perhaps more serious here because of the extent of our military power. Historically, when we have a big challenge our political culture tends to look to our biggest weapon - the military. A few years before 9/11 we were trying to use the military stop narcotics, and that didn't work very well. There was a little bit more justification for using the military against terrorism than there was for using it against drugs and narcotics, very little justification for making it the primary tool -- and no justification at all for using it to go to war in Iraq.

And the third, of course, was that we had this resource in the Special Operations Command of extraordinarily capable people who could do extraordinary things and in some cases they could do things that other agencies in the government, police enforcement or intelligence agencies we're not capable of doing, certain kinds of operations behind enemy lines and stuff like that. And the terrorist threat was seen, I think, to be in some ways sort of a paramilitary threat more than just individuals running around.

Q: Well now, one of the tools that we have been using with apparently real effectiveness has been the drone missiles. That's been done mainly by the CIA, from all reports. Was this one of your operational things?

ADAIR: It was just starting, and people were hopeful that it would be effective. They were looking at all kinds of technological possibilities. Some of them sounded quite extraordinary. Many turned out to be far less than they were made out to be.

Q: As Americans we immediately look for a gimmick or a gadget.

ADAIR: Yes, and sometimes it pays off.

Q: I mean did you find you were overwhelmed by gadgetry?

ADAIR: There were certainly lots of proposals being made to SOCOM. I don't think they were overwhelmed. They were very enthusiastic about looking at every single possibility, and I think disappointed when some of them didn't work out. But they handled it in a very disciplined way.

Q: What do you know about the role of Special Operations Forces in the 1989 operation to take Noriega out of Panama? I've been retired for a long time, and I have no access to classified stuff. From what I gathered though, it sounds like that operation was very poorly planned; the embassy wasn't protected, we were needlessly annoying the Papal Nuncio and so on. We had overwhelming force and there was no doubt about the outcome. Was there a look back at how things had been done, with an idea of that we could do better the next?

ADAIR: I think that Operation Just Cause was the first major use of Special Operations Forces after the creation of the unified Special Operations Command back in 1985. Part of the impetus for the Goldwater-Nichols Act that created SOCOM had been the failure during the 1983 invasion of Grenada to use special operations forces as "special forces." They were used as subordinate units of regular forces and many believed that their special capabilities had been wasted. The invasion of Panama was planned and commanded by Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), and SOCOM was in a support role. The special operations forces were given specific assignments that fit their capabilities better than had occurred in Grenada, and SOCOM believed that they had performed their duties well. However, in that first big operation, they probably still were not fully up to speed. Part of the problem was failures in intelligence and that kind of coordination. Since then I think SOCOM has paid a great deal more attention to that part of the equation.

Q: I spent four years as an enlisted man and I've studied military history quite a bit. Once planners start working on something, even if it's wrong, it's kind of hard to say, "Enough." It seems to fall to the State Department, to the Foreign Service Officers, to stand in the way and say, "Wait a minute, there can be consequences." The use of military force in a foreign area has all sorts of consequence. Did you find yourself, you know, sort of standing in the railroad track holding up your hands at an oncoming train?

ADAIR: Well there were a couple of times when we did get in the way. And I say "we" because it wasn't just me. In those times we were pretty sure we were right, and I think that even those who were frustrated with our opposition agreed - with one possible exception. There was one case where the military (not SOCOM) was planning to do something in a very important place without informing the ambassador. We found out about it and got the word to the ambassador. As a result it was deflected. The military was still able to accomplish most of what they wanted to do, but in a different way. It is difficult and really dangerous because the military – specific individuals in the military - are tasked with jobs. Just to use a hypothetical, they might be told, to get so and so in such and such a country, and stop him from bombing a building in Washington, DC. That's their job. Their success is going to be determined by whether or not they get this guy and stop him. They learn that there's a 50 or 60 percent chance that he's hanging out in a room in a bar in X-place. They know that they can fly in a helicopter or 10 helicopters and pull them out of there or bomb the place or whatever, and if he is there and if they do get him that will be success. So that's their perspective, and when others say to them, "Wait a minute, that's going to have other consequences – and you're not absolutely certain that he's really there, are you," well that can be very annoying.

We might have a very important relationship with this particular nation. If we undertake an action like that, even if we are successful, we might make an enemy of the leadership – or weaken the existing leadership in such a way that others will come to power who really are our enemies. Or, we might start a string of events that takes them to war with a neighbor, and so on. There may be many dangerous consequences. Well, we think part of our job is to bring that into the equation. But to be fair, sometimes we get so tied up in our own concern about all the different possibilities that we may create our own lack of perspective.

Q: Yes, one looks at these things and realizes that there are times when okay, just, damn it, do it.

ADAIR: Sometimes we have to act. It's really, really, really hard to know when it's right. The military tends to err on the side of acting, or at least they did when I was working with them. We tend to err on the side of not acting.

Much depends on the character of the administration at the time, as well. I was extremely frustrated with the Clinton Administration's reluctance to be decisive when I was working on European affairs. Then, I was far more distressed with the George W. Bush Administration's determination to take our country to war in the Middle East without recognizing or even considering the consequences.

Q: Well tell me; while you had this job, Don Rumsfeld was the secretary of defense. Do you have any comments about him during this period?

ADAIR: Well I think that he's a very smart guy. He was very much an action-oriented person, but he was also extremely arrogant and I think that compromised both his wisdom and his management ability. I think we would have been better off had he not been there.

I also think I might have personally enjoyed working for him. I enjoyed working for Dick Holbrooke, and he could act arrogantly and aggressively. When I was in Bosnia, I had heard some good things about Rumsfeld: that he was able to cut through bureaucracy and he was able to respond to people on a personal as opposed to a bureaucratic level.

I remember he visited the Special Operations Command once when I was there. He had a reputation for being very disdainful about the State Department, but I was trying to look beyond that. I sat in on the Command welcome ceremony for him and the first briefing. When he came in, he walked around and shook everybody's hand. When he came up to me, I introduced myself – and where I was from - and said, "I'm very pleased to meet you, Mr. Secretary." He looked at me as if he had been caught off guard, and then replied that he was pleased to meet me too. Now, I've met lots of people in lots of high places, including several Secretaries of Defense; and I have never had response that was less sincere than that one. I was pretty disappointed – and I don't mean personally. Later, I heard from some of my colleagues that in a restricted session he had made some very

disparaging remarks about ambassadors in the field. That kind of thing is both unnecessary and counterproductive from that kind of senior official.

He directly tried to undermine the authority of the ambassadors overseas in the minds of senior military officers. By doing so, he was a force that was undermining the only unified line of command that we had overseas. I was surprised, because I thought that the concept of unified command was essential to the military. However, I saw in the few years that I was there that the military – or at least the Pentagon - is as guilty or guiltier of violating that principal rule than almost any other agency in the government. They have lots of conflicting chains of command. In this case the Secretary of Defense was specifically trying to undermine the one that went straight from the president and included all agencies of the government. I guess that was his style.

Q: Were the flag officers of your command sort of nervously peering over their shoulders at the secretary of defense or trying to keep him out of the decision making loop?

ADAIR: Well, I think first of all that part of Secretary Rumsfeld's management style was to try to keep many of his subordinates on edge, so some of them perhaps were a little more nervous with him than with other secretaries of defense. However, I didn't see evidence of anyone trying to keep him out of the decision making. They worked very closely with him. The commander or his deputy was up at least once a week up in Washington. They had good relations with him, and I think he had confidence in them. I think some of them were uncomfortable with his more radical pronouncements, but most senior military officers are very careful to be respectful of authority. I saw this not just in their relations with their superiors, but on the issue that we talked about before, that of the authority of individual ambassadors over all official Americans in their country of responsibility. I was repeatedly reassured by senior special operations flag officers that they fully supported the concept of ambassadorial authority and had confidence that they could work effectively with it.

Q: Well you know we've got a peculiar system of ambassadorial appointments, at least compared to most other developed nations. We have always had a mix of political and career appointments. I don't believe that career appointees are by definition better than political appointees. You can get some very astute political appointees and you can get some dumb or ineffective professional appointees. Still, we're probably fairly fortunate in that we put our probably least qualified political ambassadors in Europe, where they really can't do much harm because of the system there. But did you have problems with ambassadors?

ADAIR: No, in this particular job I can't say that I had trouble with ambassadors in the sense that they were being particularly obstructive or pursuing policies that I thought were wrong. I was disappointed in some of our ambassadors. There were a number of ambassadors that I believed could and should have worked more effectively with the Special Operations Forces but did not do so. In most of those cases the ambassadors' reasoning was not solid policy-based or intellectually-based reasoning. It was a more emotionally-based, collective distrust of the military that was allowed or encouraged by

conventional wisdom within certain parts of the Department of State and accepted by ambassadors that were less inclined to think for themselves.

I went to a meeting of the African Bureau where they had brought in all of their ambassadors. I went with another political advisor to the European Command, and we listened to a discussion that went on for about 45 minutes where one after another complained about the military. They were reinforcing each other and getting nowhere. Finally I stood up and pointed out that every one of them had visited the Special Operations Command and received an extensive briefing not only on the capabilities and intentions of the command, but also on how to communicate with it. They could not complain that they did not understand it unless they had not been listening. I said we certainly could not rule out the possibility that some of the people in the field were behaving inappropriately. However, all of those ambassadors knew that the Department of State had sent a political advisor to the command to assist with communication and help to resolve problems. Many of them knew me personally, and none of them had contacted me to express any of the concerns they were complaining about in that meeting.

My intervention had absolutely no effect as far as I could see. We, as any other organization, tend to have our own culture. We become comfortable in it and we get lazy. We find the things that we all agree with and we build our relationships on those things, and many of us are reluctant to go outside that little circle.

Q: Yes, I think there is something that's happened, like slow erosion, due to a lack of exposure to the military by so many people and politicians. I joined the Foreign Service in 1955. We were almost all male and we'd all been in the military. I spent four years in the barracks. I was not in a command position, but I obviously was interested in what went on and we talked the same language and we had the same appreciation for good officers and bad officers. Today, my understanding is you've got a whole new group coming in, many of whom grew up sort of in the '60s and all with an aversion to the uniform.

ADAIR: Well, I think we've gone far beyond that group. Now we're talking about those that have grown up in the '70s and '80s. It's more dangerous, because the cultures in some respects are becoming further apart. This is the downside to President Nixon's decision to create a professional military. The professional military can become a culture unto itself. We are losing permeability and intuitive understanding between these different segments of society. And we have expanded and strengthened the interest groups that press for pouring more and more resources into the military. We're creating a culture within a culture. We're not as far down the line as some other societies, but we're moving faster than in that direction.

Q: Well Eisenhower actually warned about the danger of a military industrial complex.

ADAIR: Yes. He warned against it, and not enough people paid attention.

When I was working on Greece, Turkey and Cyprus I got a view of the Turkish military, which was almost consciously created to be a country within a country. When I was working in Bosnia, Turkey hosted a meeting in Istanbul for all of the NATO political advisors. The military officers were really impressive, and they treated us very well. It was also fascinating talking with them. They were educated within their own system from a very early age. They started as children and went right through high school – and they stayed in that system. Atatürk intended the military to serve as protectors of Turkey's secular democracy, and they have intervened significantly a number of times in Turkey's political system. Today the tide seems to be turning in favor of non-secular forces and perhaps the military's role will diminish. However, I believe that the danger of creating a culture within a culture is something that our nation needs to be very careful about.

Q: How did you find your colleagues in the State Department treated you during this time? Were you connected?

ADAIR: For the most part, I was only connected as far as and so long as I connected myself. If I made the effort to establish the connection and to communicate with others in the Department of State, most - not all - would be responsive. I could call on them and get briefed on things. Sometimes people didn't have time; occasionally they were even hostile. However, I can only recall one or two instances when any of my colleagues at the State Department took the initiative to get in touch with me about something. The same was true of the embassies. The ambassadors had a resource, but they didn't use it. That surprised me a little, because when I had been in the European Bureau as deputy assistant secretary I did reach out, and I found that the political advisor in the European Command (EUCOM) was very helpful on certain things.

Q: Is there anything else? I realize we can't get down to specifics about when did we take out Suriname or something like that. Was there ever any temptation say, "why don't we just send our troops in and take out such and such a government?"

ADAIR: I don't recall ever thinking quite that way. After I left SOCOM, there was one instance in which I thought we might have been more aggressive, but I was no longer in a position to argue one way or the other. That was the Haiti earthquake. In my view, when that earthquake happened we should have taken a much stronger stand than we did. We should have essentially taken over; used a combination of military resources and military organization to help clean up, put in health care and begin rebuilding. We should have set aside the myth that the government of Haiti and the Haitians were capable of rebuilding, and taken over for one to five years. That's the only way it would have actually been rebuilt; and we might have also been able to establish the foundations for a more reasonable and more stable country – something that we could argue is in our national security interest as well as a moral good. I realize that is pretty radical and contrary to most U.S. foreign policy; but I think it would be more justified in a place like Haiti than in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Q: We're just going through the year's anniversary of the earthquake and it seems that very little has been done.

ADAIR: That's my impression.

Q: Where did you go after this time?

ADAIR: I spent one year longer in the Special Operations Command than I had intended. I was invited to stay longer by the commander, and seriously considered it. However, then I got a call from a colleague in the Foreign Service who was just finishing a tour as an ambassador and said he was really interested in doing that job. He had been an ambassador, and he had experience in the Middle East, including Arabic language. I thought that he might be more useful to the command with that experience – and he would be available to them for at least two years. So I explained that to the general and said I thought I should return to Washington. He was very nice and said okay, if that's what I wanted do. So, I returned to the Department, and took a one-year job at the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) managing our inspections. Following that I retired.

Q: When were you doing this job?

ADAIR: From the summer of 2006 to the fall of 2007.

Q: Did anything strike you about the management of the operation? Did you find things had changed since you last were there?

ADAIR: Well, the OIG was going through a difficult time. The inspector general at the time was a political appointee who was very intelligent, but not a good manager. He also had difficulty with personal relations, so morale and efficiency were suffering. I got along with him reasonably well, and agreed with many of his criticisms of the OIG; though I disagreed with the way he chose to address those problems. I was one level removed from his immediate management circle. I was the deputy assistant inspector general rather than the assistant inspector general for inspections and that meant that I did most of the everyday management of what was actually going on. But I was over in Roslyn across the river; I wasn't in the same suite of offices as the IG himself in DC.

While it was a difficult time for the people in Washington, the inspection teams were still doing a pretty good job. I had gotten to know many of the Civil Service people who stayed for their whole careers in OIG when I'd been there previously; and I got to know them better during this last tour. We had some interesting challenges with individual inspections, particularly with security inspections, but nothing momentous. It was interesting to manage and talk with the different inspection teams. However, the bureaucratic component was much heavier than I believed was necessary or healthy. I definitely would not have wanted to spend more than a year there.

Q: Well then you retired when?

ADAIR: I retired in the fall of 2007.

Q: And then what'd you do?

ADAIR: I basically split up my time between Washington and New Hampshire. We got a little place up in the mountains up in New Hampshire and spent the summers up there. We travel to China once a year to visit family and friends. I also spent time writing a book about some of our experiences in the Foreign Service, which I finally finished. That was not an easy thing for me to do.

Q: Has it been published?

ADAIR: No, it is supposed to be published this summer.

Q: Do you have a title for it?

ADAIR: My title was, "Watching Flowers from Horseback;" but the publisher changed that to "Lessons from a Diplomatic Life," with my title as a subtitle.

Q: And so anybody who wants to get it can go that way.

ADAIR: Yes.

Q: Okay well, looking back on of this, do you have any thoughts, not so much about your career but on how we conduct foreign policy? What strikes you as good, what strikes you as bad?

ADAIR: I think that first of all the Foreign Service of the United States has done a pretty good job over the last 50 years of conducting and in many cases managing our diplomacy and the strategic foreign policy issues that face this nation, an extraordinarily good job considering how small the Foreign Service is.

Q: Yes, the officer corps has never really been much bigger than about 5,000.

ADAIR: Right. The Foreign Service is small, extraordinarily poor in terms of resources, and receives little support from the American public – which for the most part is ignorant of its existence - and the centers of political power in Washington. Given all of that, I think that the people in the career service have done an extraordinary job. However, I also think that as a professional service we're getting worse, not better.

The Foreign Service is being increasingly politicized and bureaucratized. It has been protected – even isolated - from Washington politics probably more than any other service of the government. I think that many in and around Congress have long resented their more limited ability to pressure the Foreign Service politically, both on policy issues and on personnel issues – like securing jobs for their people. Historically, at least since WWII, the Foreign Service, under the protection of the president, has been able to maintain some of the best objective quality in the U.S. Government. It has hired personnel through a very competitive examination, and maintained a career Service that

isn't padded as much by political insertions as other services. I believe that has changed significantly in recent years.

This is a very "politically incorrect" thing to say, but I think that affirmative action policies have reduced the overall quality of the service. I personally support the concept of affirmative action, but it is very difficult to implement it well. Additionally, in recent years there has been a strong push by career people in the Department of State who are not in the Foreign Service to blur the lines between Foreign Service and Civil Service and to insist they should have equal access to positions not only in the Department but overseas. That is not appropriate. The Civil Service personnel, with a few exceptions, do not have the same skills and experience as Foreign Service personnel. That does not mean that they are not smart, accomplished and better than Foreign Service personnel in some of the things that they do. It means they don't have the same range of skills necessary for the conduct of diplomacy that Foreign Service personnel have acquired both through education and experience. In addition, they have not signed on to the same obligations as Foreign Service personnel. I am not advocating an "elite" service in terms of privileges. I do advocate a disciplined service with clear professional standards, obligations and rewards that is protected from erosion or dilution from political forces. That's my concern about the professional diplomatic service.

I have a broader concern about our overall social and political system, and how it guides and supports our national community. Our educational system has not kept up with the demands of a rapidly changing world. Ironically, one of the reasons for that is that we have spent so much time adjusting to pressures of the moment, that we have neglected and lost track of the core purpose of education: to introduce our children to and train them in the historical, philosophical and moral building blocks of our civilization. That means the things that we have to have in common to hold us together as a community. This is admittedly more difficult for the United States than for many other nations, because as an immigrant nation we have a tremendous diversity of backgrounds. It can be more difficult to agree on the things that we should decide to have in common. We tend to fall back on materialism, i.e. the opportunity to prosper economically. That is dangerous, both because it is relatively fragile and fleeting and because it can corrupt us. So, we need to devote time and effort to establishing and strengthening the educational core that defines us as a nation.

To the degree that we can do that, we can then move on to strengthening our tools for dealing constructively with the rest of the world – learning more about the other cultures and nations with whom we need to share this planet peacefully. The most obvious of these is languages. We're better than some countries in the world; but we're worse than most of the ones that we have to compete with. In order to do our job well, and for the United States to be effective in many parts of the world, we have to have people that can speak the languages of those places, whether they're world languages or not. We don't do that, not enough. That is a challenge for the State Department and its resources, but it's more a challenge for the whole country. These things should be taught in our educational system. Look at China and Taiwan. In Taiwan they teach English to kids in the elementary school. You go to China and in all the big cities you can get around without

any Chinese at all. You can always find people that speak English, and when they speak English it's often really good English. We don't come close to that with the numbers of people that are studying Chinese in this country. Our schools should probably be teaching Chinese and Spanish to everybody in the United States: Chinese because it is the strongest and deepest culture that we have to deal with; and Spanish because they are our closest neighbors.

I don't know what we can do about our political system. I think we're in a very dangerous time.

Q: I think so, too. I mean I feel frankly that it's absolutely corrupt. The extent of political contributions is simply extraordinary. There's a culmination of many years of corruption at the upper levels. It isn't particularly bad at the local level. In other words you get your driver's license, you walk in and you wait in line unlike many other countries where you have to pay, but as far as the basic laws, particularly tax laws but other laws, it's corrupt.

ADAIR: Well, it probably always has been. It may be worse now, and I think it is definitely more dangerous now. I think that our democracy is in danger of becoming either totally ineffectual in terms of running the nation and dealing with other nations; or being ended as our form of government – perhaps like Rome in its transition from the republic to the empire. Perhaps, overtime that's an inevitable evolution that governments make.

Look at China. It's the oldest civilization on the planet and it's the only place where the same culture and political system have basically been intact for more than 4,000 years. Democracy is probably not in the cards for China. Some of the people that I've met there, who I've respected, have said it never will be, because you cannot govern a nation with the size and complexity of China with democracy. One very formidable historian and philosopher, Professor Nan Huai-Chin, explained to me once that China tried democracy - 2,500 years ago - and it didn't work. In terms of China's experience, it's a failed system. I just wonder if in the long term they might be right – Winston Churchill notwithstanding. Are there other ways that we can ensure public participation and the protection of individual rights?

There are many good things about our democracy, but we have really fouled our nest environmentally with our unrestrained and unplanned approach to development. Just look at what we've done to the face of our country: the cities that we've built and the land that we have lost; the pollution that we've created, both immediate and long-term. It's staggering what we've done. And now it's not just to our country, we're doing it to the planet, and we're encouraging everybody else to go that direction.

Q: Well one last question, Marshall. China is being portrayed, you know, as the Soviet Union had before, as being the great threat to our country and all. How do you feel about China? Whither China?

ADAIR: Well I think first of all, the Chinese are human beings just like us. Human beings are very difficult creatures. We constantly fight with each other. Throughout many thousands of years of history, we've never been able to get beyond war, and the idea – or the fact - that there's always somebody who is trying to take away what we have. Recognizing that the Chinese are just as human as we are, it would be foolish to say that we shouldn't be concerned and careful about them.

On the other hand, many of the bad things that human beings do are done to protect themselves against what they anticipate from other human beings

Q: Do unto others as they would do unto you but do it first. That's Mark Twain.

ADAIR: Yes. So we need to be much more aware of the effect that our actions may have on others – and this is particularly true with the Chinese. We have proceeded through most of our history as a nation with the idea that, as long as we are energetic enough, positive enough and good enough we can do anything we want - and we should. We have very little concept of the consequences of our actions. We forget that when you do something to somebody over there they're not necessarily going to forget. We need to speak and act with China in ways that will avoid putting them on the defensive and encourage constructive behavior worldwide. Today it is even more difficult because the perceptions of a nation like China are not influenced only by how we behave with them, but also by how we behave with others around the world.

Q: Yes.

ADAIR: I can't predict how the Chinese are going to be. I do believe that the Chinese have built a civilization that is much deeper than any other in the world; that they have built more discipline into their culture than others have, and they have given a higher place in their socio-political philosophy to basic morality than have many other civilizations. This can help them. It can also help us, if we take the time to study it.

Right now the Chinese are trying to cope with the domestic disruptions that are resulting from the extraordinary pace of economic development in China. That is a very important and difficult challenge. There is also a danger that they may be less concerned about. That is that their power is growing so fast that it can easily outstrip whatever wisdom their society has been able to build up and apply over the last several thousand years.

In the United States I think our power has outstripped our wisdom. Perhaps we never had a whole lot of wisdom, although some of our founders and leaders did. But our growth and power, which has been phenomenally fast in historical terms, has brought us to the point where I think we're more destructive than we are constructive. China in its history has tended to be more constructive because it hasn't been a really aggressive nation. The aggressiveness that it has exhibited has usually been in reaction to persistent threats that it couldn't meet in other ways.

Today, China is becoming a global power. It has to be global for its own protection. Perhaps it will behave globally as it behaved regionally in the past. We should be studying how and why they acted the way they did then to understand how they may act in the future. While there are certainly individuals within the leadership of the communist party that are pretty impressive and pretty balanced, I'm not sure that the party itself has quite evolved. I still wonder if the party could evolve into a new form of imperial bureaucracy, but then the question is who or what would be the new emperor. Who knows what's going to happen now.

Q: Okay. Well on that note we'll end this discussion.

End of interview