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AMBASSADOR THOMAS BOYATT

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is April 20, 2022. We're beginning our interview with Ambassador Tom Boyatt, related to his time working with AFSA [American Foreign Service Association]. But to start, ambassador, when did you enter the Foreign Service?

BOYATT: In August of 1959.

Q: As you were entering, do you recall anything about AFSA? Were you briefed on it, or were you aware of it at that time?

BOYATT: I don't think I was. I must have joined at some point when I was in the initial training. By the time I got to Antofagasta, Chile, I was receiving the journal, and when you're in Antofagasta, anything from the outside world is useful.

Q: As you became more aware of it, did you understand it to be simply a professional organization? Or did you also understand that it was also an organization that assisted members with problems related to Foreign Service employment?

BOYATT: I vaguely understood it to be a professional association. But the spark occurred in the winter of '67 because that's when the people who eventually were called Young Turks began to meet in Charlie Bray's basement. And most of us were back from one or two tours overseas. All of us were unsatisfied with the way the State Department was managed. Different members had different pet rocks. The discussions continued all winter and were very freewheeling.

The thing I remember most about that is that we all wanted change. And we came to an agreement that to change things, you must have an organization. And AFSA existed as an organization, totally professional—run, by the way, by the senior officers of the department. “Chip” Bohlen, I think, was president at that time, for instance. But we all—regardless of the other desiderata that we had—understood that we had to have an institutional base to make it happen. As you know, I went off to Cyprus, but Charlie and the others decided that they would try to take over AFSA. And they ran a slate in the '67

elections of junior and middle grade officers mostly. They won. Lannon Walker was the—I don't remember whether he was chairman or president—but he was the CEO of AFSA during the next two years, and that was the beginning. And then, the key question arose. OK, we have the institution; now what do we do? There was a lot of discussion about that, and no resolution. Nixon won in '68, and in '69, he announced that he wanted to unionize the federal service and the government in its totality responded to that. That made it a totally different ball game because the more politically astute of the Young Turks understood that if we could become a union and become officially recognized as the spokesmen for the Foreign Service, then it would be a lot easier for us to seek the kind of changes that we wanted.

Q: Now one quick question here. This period of time, you're talking about late '60s, early '70s, and unionization. There were disagreements over whether the State Department or the Foreign Service should join the larger civilian union, AFGE [American Federation of Government Employees] or develop the American Foreign Service Association into an independent union, principally representing the Foreign Service. Was that a significant debate as you were getting more involved in AFSA?

BOYATT: Yes, it was a debate that began in the last months of Lannon Walker's term. AFSA had its '69 election, and Charlie Bray and his slate won that election. And so, the board of AFSA began discussing "Well, do we want to be a union or not?" And it was by no means a sure thing that everybody wanted to go that route. Charlie and that board did the brave and honorable thing. They had a referendum on the issue. The result was that over 2,000 officers responded, which was a significant proportion for that kind of a question. And 85 percent of them wanted to have a union. By that time, it was the early 1970s. Meanwhile the government is responding to President Nixon's initiative to establish unions in the federal sector. Executive Order 11491 to establish the terms and conditions for unionism in the entire government, including the Foreign Service, was being drafted.

The Bray board had a clear indication that broadly, being a union was supported. But the question was on what terms and conditions? How will it work? And that was being debated within the Bray board. Eventually, the Board held a stand-up vote, "Will we try to become a union or not, yes or no, are we going to unionize?" And it was not unanimous, but at least a majority voted aye, and so the AFSA officially started participating in that process. Bill Macomber, who was the M [Under Secretary of State for Management] of that day, proposed four points as the basis for unionism and the Foreign Service. Bray surfaced the four points which many, including myself, opposed. Charlie again met with Macomber, and he came up with the seven points. That proposal was strongly rejected at a stormy open meeting.

At about that time, the '71 AFSA elections were looming. And, a very important development occurred. Secretary of State Bill Rogers—pretty late in the game, after EO 11491 was a reality, realized that under the terms the Foreign Service employee management system would be under the Secretary of Labor. Rogers' reaction was if we're going to have an employee management system, it has to be under the authority of

the Secretary of State. Well, that brought everything to a screeching halt, and there was a struggle over that. The Department of Labor opposed Bill Rogers, and I was told that it went all the way to Nixon, and Nixon decided, "Yes, you may have a separate employee management system, but it has to be a real system."

And so, the negotiations began for an alternate employee management system. And this was really important in retrospect, because EO 11491 gave the American Federation of Government Employees [AFGE] almost no power. The unions negotiated working conditions in their little units all over the country, and that splintered their power. In our negotiations involving AFGE, AFSA, the junior Foreign Service Officers, and State Department management over the terms and conditions of the new Executive Order 11636, the AFSA view largely prevailed. Somehow, almost everything that we fought for and won turned out to be critically important to making AFSA a strong union that could one day challenge the president. Let me describe the elements of our unique union structure.

The first one was that we would have only one bargaining unit. It would be the whole Foreign Service. You know, "What makes us different? The reason we have a separate executive order is foreign serviceness." And we won that basic point. AFGE—the units are small, all over the country. A publications unit here, a guard force there, a motor pool somewhere else, and they have a couple of hundred members and then negotiate when the coffee breaks are going to happen, or whatever. We insisted on one unit that negotiated "personnel policies and procedures" for the entire Foreign Service. And we won. That went into 11636.

We also made a very important decision, and that was that we wanted as many people as possible in that bargaining unit. That meant excluding as few people as possible. And we wanted it on the basis that the people excluded would be excluded not by their rank but by what they did. If they really managed something, like an assistant secretary or an ambassador, or the deputies or people that dealt with personnel policy—they would be excluded as long as they were in those positions. If an ambassador went off to be a diplomat in residence, he was a member of the bargaining unit while he was on that assignment. That was critically important because it meant that everybody—almost everybody, and in principle, eventually everybody—had a stake in the employee management system. That made AFSA powerful, because we could talk not just as union people, but as professional diplomats who happen to have a union and bring all of that professional knowledge to our negotiations. I mean, we were really cocky because we thought we knew at least as much about the Foreign Service as the politically appointed undersecretary for management. And, you know, the DCMs [Deputy Chief of Mission] have a little bit more experience than we do, but not a ton. We knew the Foreign Service and we knew we knew it, and that was critical. And the fourth thing that we got was the third-party adjudicators, not the Department of Labor, but our own third-party adjudicators, and we got some say as to who they would be. AFGE doesn't have any of these strengths.

Q: Here when you're talking about adjudicators, you mean the grievance process?

BOYATT: Yes, that's one dimension. But I also mean somebody that adjudicates our claim that the Department has committed an unfair labor practice. Somebody who decides, if we're negotiating personnel policies and procedures, and we come to a deadlock, then there's a disputes panel. So, there's the board of the Foreign Service, dispute panel, and grievance board, and all of those are people that are independent—supposedly independent—of the union and independent of management. But we had a say in who would be appointed. The civil service unions don't have that. Anyway, that's what I call four battles in my article in the journal. It was really five battles. The first one was, will we be a union or not? We decided we would. The second one was—and there was a strategic unity between State Department management and us on the concept of having a separate system. We all agreed on that. AFGE didn't, obviously, but anyway, we won that too. We got the kind of an executive order that gave us power and unity, and that was folded into the Foreign Service Act of 1980. It's chapter ten. Virtually, all of the concepts that I just outlined, that were in 11636, are now in the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which makes our system statutorily and legislatively established.

Q: Now, also during this period, there are some other issues that have a little bit of churn with them. One of these is the memorial wall on which are inscribed the names of those who died in the line of duty. Do you have recollections about how a final agreement was reached on who qualified?

BOYATT: Well, different AFSA boards took different positions over time. And there was one segment of AFSA that wanted and still wants the conditions to be inspirational or heroic. You know, if you die of a heart attack in a whorehouse, you shouldn't necessarily be on the plaque. And others who felt that just being overseas puts you in special danger if you die overseas. And then there was another argument over if it's just Foreign Service or does it include everybody under the authority of the ambassador, and those issues are still being debated, but I didn't have a role in that.

It must have been '72. Bill Harrop went off to be DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] for Ambassador Marshall Green in Australia. I was vice president and became president of AFSA. And literally, the day after I became president, I got a phone call from the executive's secretariat saying, "President Nixon is coming to the State Department,"—you know, it was like three days—"and you have to introduce him because he's coming for the AFSA ceremony that puts two new people on the wall." And those two people were the two officers being held as hostages in Khartoum who were assassinated by Palestinians in reaction to Nixon's public statement that the U.S. will not negotiate with terrorists. FSOs Curt Moore and Cleo Noel were killed, so feelings were running really high. And Mark, I was scared to death, you know. Three days and I've got to introduce President Nixon to a group who are not totally on board with his policies. But I got very lucky again in that I came across a speech he'd made exhorting people in his administration to seek peace, "Where peace is unknown, make it known," you know, that sort of thing. And so, I took that whole segment of his address, about two paragraphs, and used it. Nixon came, and everybody was there in the C Street, and I made a little

speech saying, "Mr. President, I would like to introduce you to a group of people who are committed to these instructions that you gave to all of us in your recent speech." Then I quoted from the speech, "Where peace is unknown, make it known. Where it is weak, make it strong." I said, "Mr. President, that's what we do. That's what Foreign Service people do. And we're here to honor two people who died in that effort." I mean, it was only five minutes. Seven minutes at the most. And that was it. But he was captivated by the fact that I had used his speech. And we were doing his thing, and dying in the process. Everybody forgot about the differences, at least for a moment.

Q: That's remarkable. A masterful way to gain consensus. Not unlike the way rhetoric used to be taught using the example of Romans and Greeks.

BOYATT: Sheer luck, Mark. Not brilliance. Desperate desperation. But on that same day, I realized that the fact that Foreign Service Officers die in the line of duty was something that we should emphasize. And so, the next year, on Foreign Service Day, we had the same "Service of Remembrance" that we had for Nixon the previous year. Ever since 1974 we have had that ceremony on Foreign Service Day. The process builds the image of the Foreign Service in the public mind year after year after year. And one of the reasons that we have some support on the Hill—even from the right wing, which we do—is because we're prepared to go out there and risk death in the national interest. They don't think of Foreign Service Officers as civil servants. You know, they think of us as marines without guns, something along those lines. And of course, it's important with the media and public too.

Q: Exactly. Now, you have begun talking about the period when you were vice president and president. You also—during this time—saw what you earlier described as geometric growth in both the membership but also in the funds that begin to become available to AFSA, and your report to the organization emphasizes this. What do you look—

BOYATT: Which report?

Q: Well, according to Harry Kopp, the 1974 report on the growth in membership and the growth in funds, began to give this new union a bit more ability to make itself known, take on additional activities and so on. And what I'm wondering is, looking back from this vantage point, what was it that caused the sudden growth?

BOYATT: Well, first of all, we became a union. We won that election. And that was a David-Goliath election. AFGE had a hundred lawyers. We had one recently hired labor management lawyer, a wonderful young lady, but who didn't know what she was getting into. They had millions of dollars. We were broke and in debt because we bought the headquarters. You know, if you're going to be a player in Washington, it can't be "no fixed address." You got to have an address, so we bought the building. But once we became the exclusive employee representative, which was the euphemism for a union—it still is in some quarters—then a lot of people joined because of that.

But the key was, we negotiated a checkoff, which meant that the department collected the dues, and sent them to us. So, every month, we started receiving a check that got bigger and bigger and bigger. We called ourselves the "Participation Slate" when I was vice president—Bill was president—and we were, and that was important because what we were saying is, "Hey, we have power. We can participate in the personnel policies and procedures development, but you have to help us. You have to be a member and tell us." You know, that's the theme. But when I ran on my own the next time, we called ourselves the achievement slate. And that was fair. I mean, that wasn't a political exaggeration. We had beaten AFGE, we were growing, we were getting richer. It was all starting to snowball. And then, in the summer of '73—and recall that period. Well, you're too young but do you remember when Nixon's government was collapsing?

Q: Yeah, very, actually vividly. I remember the scene of him getting on the helicopter for the last time.

BOYATT: Oh yeah, the goodbye salute. The summer of '73, one of Nixon's counter moves was to fire Bill Rogers, and make Henry Kissinger the Secretary of State who was very popular with the media and with the public. And we had just been recognized as the union in the three foreign affairs agencies—State, AID, and USIA—in the latter part of '72 and in the early part of '73. We were having trouble getting management to engage in negotiations. We brought unfair labor practices, and we were winning them, but the department managers were still in denial. Henry became the secretary and Larry Eagleburger was his vice everything. He was the power behind that throne. And he was also a Foreign Service Officer and a friend of most of us. And so, we called him at the White House, and we said, we'd like to call on the secretary designate. And he said, "Well, he really doesn't want to talk to people until after he's at least had his hearings and been confirmed but, given the fact that you're just a lousy union, I don't think it makes much difference, so come over and see us."

Well, we did that. We went to see him, and we did our thing. He treated us with great respect, because he understood—he's a smart guy—he understood that he couldn't control us. You know, we had to be courted, or at least responded to. So, it was a very successful meeting. But the main thing was, he had not met with anybody at the State Department. Not the deputy secretary, not M [Under Secretary of State for Management], not the DG [Director General], but he met with us. And that news went like a prairie fire through the department. Our respect quotient went up, and State management started dealing with us, and we started negotiating. Boy, it was for everything from check-off and some offices in the building to kindergarten allowance. I think we tabled something like thirty-five negotiating positions that we wanted to deal with them on. And of course, it was our version of shock and awe. Then we really got them back on their heels. The process started, and it continues to this day.

Q: Was one of the developments the assigning of an AFSA rep at each post?

BOYATT: I'm not sure we negotiated, but we just did it. We just appointed one and suggested that their job was to let management know that they were there, and if there

were any questions about what our role was as a union and so on. But that was mostly an internal thing. They were there to help us and keep our flag flying and so on. I'm not sure if it actually was negotiated. Ask Harry. Harry knows everything.

Q: That's fine. Another issue that comes up, as the Vietnam war is raging and then later as you had experienced with Cyprus, is the question of dissent. Was that also something that was important for AFSA's involvement as you were moving through the management level there?

BOYATT: Yes. We had maybe four or five major, big deal issues, objectives, goals that we wanted to achieve when we started this whole thing. We wanted to be able to have a say on policy outside of channels. And that turned out to be the dissent channel, which the department agreed to. We also wanted a vehicle which could be used to challenge management's administrative decisions. A grievance system. Well, we didn't get the grievance system in the executive order, but we did pass it and because of Tex Harris's brilliance and doggedness, it became law. And I'll tell you the amusing story about that because I had been named DCM in Chile, but I hadn't left. And once I was named that, I had to resign from AFSA, which I did. And I was talking to Eagleburger one day and I said, "You know, why don't you just go ahead and negotiate a grievance system with AFSA right now and be done with it?" and he said, "The hell with that. You don't have the power to get that bill passed." And he said, "Boyatt, I will kiss your ass at high noon in Lafayette Square if this bill passes!" And I said, "Done!" And sure enough, I went on to Santiago, and sometime in '76 or maybe early '77, Tex finally got the Grievance Bill through. The bill passed the Senate and the House and became the law. And I was chargé in Santiago at the time, so I sent a cable to the department which said, "From chargé to undersecretary for management. I would like to recall that you made a commitment to me about a certain meeting in Lafayette Square," I said, "but undersecretary, I am not going to claim my right here, I said, "because after all, we management officials have to stick together."

And, the next time I saw him, he said "—you, a harsh letter follows," laughing the whole way. And, of course, that was also put into the Foreign Service Act of 1980. In a lot of ways Mark, the Foreign Service Act of 1980 is the culmination of the Young Turks' work. And, you know, we had the grievance system, we had the dissent channel, we negotiated personnel policies and procedures. We were beginning to change the way wives were treated. All of those things—within five years after winning the election—we had achieved all of those things, and most of them became the law of the land in the Foreign Service Act of 1980. So that's kind of the end of one era.

Q: Right. I just want to ask you one thing about the Foreign Service Act of 1980. I entered the Foreign Service in '84, and part of my orientation was a description, or at least a brief description of what the Foreign Service Act of 1980 did, and does, and how it affected the new entrants who were still just four years away from that law. Were there any other recollections that you have about how that law came about?

BOYATT: Yeah. I think the real impetus was politics because Jimmy Carter came in with a plank of reforming the federal service. And that took some time, but that resulted in the Civil Service Reform Act of '78, which took care of the vast majority of public and federal employees in the Civil Service. And everyone realized that there had to be some parallel legislation for the Foreign Service. And so, it was that that got management talking about it. And of course, once that started, AFSA had its own desiderata. One of which was changing the pay structure so that middle grade officers got more money. But you know, it became a negotiation between quite two sides of the same coin. You know, AFSA has always been an alternate universe. Harry Barnes could have been the president of AFSA. It could have been the other way around. And so, AFSA supported it, and without AFSA's support, it would have been very hard to get it passed. But, you know, the modern Foreign Service—it began in some degree with the act of '46, but it was the act of '80 that codified rigorous and impartial entrance procedures; that codified rank and person; that codified worldwide service; that codified the promotion system based on peer reviews and not management. All of those things define the modern Foreign Service that you served in and came through AFSA into the act.

It was in the process of happening, I guess, when you entered, because we were a union by then, we were negotiating, and then Jimmy won, and it was sort of a bottom up and top-down vote.

Q: After the Foreign Service Act of 1980, there are also class action suits brought against Department treatment of personnel. Here one thinks of Alison Palmer and the suit regarding the appropriate treatment of women in the Foreign Service. Was that something that you became involved with?

BOYATT: You know, they didn't have a vote. I wish I'd been in the vanguard of the women's movement, but I wasn't. I was trying to win elections with what we had. We were going to war with the Foreign Service we had. And I didn't pay enough attention to those issues that I should have. But I had a lot of compatriots that did, particularly Tex Harris and Rick Melton and other people who did see that that had to happen. And Alison eventually got AFSA support, but she didn't get it as soon as she should have gotten it.

Q: During that period, have I overlooked an issue—during these years up to the Foreign Service Act and immediately following—that AFSA was involved in?

BOYATT: Well, we were a vanguard for treating spouses with respect. That was a big change from when I entered the Foreign Service. When I entered, wives were considered an extended work force for the ambassador's wife. She told the wives what to do. It's astonishing when you tell them that, "Well, you will attend this meeting on such a day, and we will decide what you're going to do at the ambassador's reception next week." Literally! And their ability to adequately entertain embassy contacts was judged as part of the Officer's EERs [Employee Evaluation Reports]. Looking back on that, it was incredible that such a system existed. And we were in the vanguard on that, and we eventually won that inside the system without really going to lawsuits like Alison had to do. The department got on board too late, but they got there with Bill Macomber who

made a lot of changes. I think he was as responsible as we were for not requiring women Foreign Service Officers, who got married, to resign, for instance.

Q: What about tandem couples where both spouses are Foreign Service Officers?

BOYATT: The whole concept of tandem couples and all of those things came later with a lot of pushing from the ladies, but AFSA was there in that trench too. The whole dissent thing was driven by Vietnam and that experience. And the officers that saw it clearly just couldn't get through it and get through to management. But once the grievance system was stabilized, it snowballed, and it made a difference. The biggest difference it made was not that the dissent channel messages were being used every year, but that ambassadors realized that they weren't tyrants of a small city state, and that other voices had to be heard. It was almost as if dissent was sort of institutionalized. It wasn't a death sentence as it was earlier.

Q: You mentioned dissent and ambassadors, and that ambassadors shouldn't feel like they were little tyrants. Well, from '78 to '80, you were ambassador to Burkina Faso, and from '80 to '83 ambassador to Colombia. Did you take a different view of AFSA during those periods when you were now in management and facing perhaps some challenges from AFSA?

BOYATT: I was as supportive of AFSA as I ever was. I did some things that the bureaucracy really didn't like, particularly in Bogota. It was very dangerous in Colombia. Particularly in the early days, all of our embassies hadn't become fortresses when I was in Bogota.

At that time in Colombia, we had two constituent consulates, one in Cali, one in Medellín. And in each of those cities, a crime lord ran things. So, I took the position that I didn't have the resources to defend those people, and the thing that pushed me over the edge was that we discovered a bomb right next to the consulate general in Medellín. A big one. It would have been a killer. It was just luck that kept those people alive, and I made a decision that I was not prepared to risk the lives of my troops, just so that USIA [United States Information Agency] could have regional shows, or the locals get visas at the consulate, which they loved. I said, "I can't do it. We have to close them. If we can't defend them, we close them." I think AFSA took a position against me because of the USIA, but I never even noticed. I did what I had to do. The department backed me to my surprise. They didn't want blood on their hands either.

Q: USIA, for a while, chose to be represented by AFGE, but eventually came in under AFSA. Was there something in particular that changed that attitude among the USIA people?

BOYATT: That's a good question. Well, we beat AFGE in USIA, in the first round of elections in 1972-73. And then, at some point there was an issue, I just can't remember what it was. I was a management official by that time, and I had a lot of problems of my own. Was it all of USIA or just a part of USIA?

Q: As I recall from the Harry Kopp book, I think it was all of USIA, at least initially.

BOYATT: Yes. And then for some reason, subsequently, there was another representation election, and we won it back, and I don't know the issue on either side of that.

Q: Another issue that derived from the Foreign Service Act of 1980 was the separation of the Foreign Commercial Service from the State Department and its move to the Commerce Department. Again, did AFSA have an interest in that? Did it express any opinion about that?

BOYATT: AFSA was, I believe, opposed to it when it happened. But once it happened, there were, periodically, efforts to bring it back. And by that time, the commerce rep was an independent rep on the AFSA board, so no AFSA president was prepared to divide the house along those lines.

Q: As you now leave the position of president of AFSA, and we begin to get into the 1990s, you become treasurer.

BOYATT: Yes. Well, I left AFSA in 1975 when I became a DCM. I returned after I retired in 1985.

Q: How did your position as treasurer differ from what you had been doing in the earlier days of AFSA?

BOYATT: What happened was that I retired at age 50 in 1984, and then spent 35 years in the private sector. I was vice president of a large company, president of a small company, a principal in a consulting group, and for several years, a trustee of Princeton University. Over these decades I accumulated a great deal of knowledge and experience totally foreign to FSOs: how to generate income, and how to manage large amounts of endowment funds and other assets on a balance sheet.

In the federal government employees learn how to spend money but not how to generate income. The income arrives automatically through a congressional process of authorization and appropriation. In the public sector, the money is just there. In the private sector, you have to earn it. The result is that FSOs do not instinctively know how to raise money or how to manage the profits they make and keep.

When I returned to AFSA in the 1990s and thereafter, I was a different person. I had special skills and experience learned in the private sector and I brought these best practices to Foreign Service organizations such as AFSA and the American Academy of Diplomacy [AAD].

And it dawned on me that none of the organizations in the Foreign Service family were very well run financially. Not AFSA, not DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired]. I don't think the Academy [American Academy of Diplomacy] had been

founded yet, but they weren't well run. I knew all of this, and I knew how to change it. So, in Tex Harris' first term, I volunteered to be on the finance committee of AFSA. I helped with the budgets and was a voice for fiscal sanity on the board. And then the treasurer left—it was a lady in USAID—and went overseas, and Tex said, "Hey, look, you're doing all the heavy lifting on the budget. Why don't you just be treasurer?" So, I became the treasurer. And one of the first things I did was, I called the executive director, Susan Reardon—wonderful lady—and I said, "Susan, how do we invest our funds? We have a pretty robust scholarship fund and we have other assets. We have our own money. How the hell does it work?" And she said, "Well, the truth is that we buy what the president and others think are good things to buy" and I said, "What?" and she said, "Yes, in fact we've got a real problem, because we have a bundle of Mexican government paper." And this was just about the time of the Latin American financial crisis, and I said, "You have what?" And we were down fifty cents on the dollar. Anyway, I reformed the whole process on the Princeton model.

In the Princeton model, the responsibility is with the organization and the board. You can't duck that. The way you maximize your fiduciary responsibilities is this: you hire a financial advisor and then that financial advisor helps you to decide how you're going to invest your liquid assets: how much in bonds, how much in growth stocks, in short, the asset allocation. And then, once the board approves the process, then the financial advisor recommends to you the specific money managers. We have focused on managers that buy companies that are growing their dividend. Anyway, you get the managers. Nobody in AFSA makes the decisions on what stocks to buy. And then the further responsibility of the advisor is—once a year or more frequently, if you like—to brief you on how the managers are doing. And if one of your managers slips below the index for that particular discipline, you change them. It is said, "you can't beat the averages." It's not true, but you've got to have the discipline to change your hands-on manager when that manager doesn't keep up. We did that and AFSA's financial situation improved markedly. We finally got rid of the goddamn Mexican bonds. As their maturity date approached, they gained a little bit, but we probably got out with 25 percent, 30 percent loss, but we got out.

And from that point on, we had sensible management. And in those days, in Tex's second term, I established a general fund. We had a scholarship fund, but we didn't have a sinking fund. And I said, "You know, we've got to have a war chest." And what happens if they change the law and we don't get a checkoff? What happens if we lose the exclusive representative? What happens if we have to hire a big-time lawyer to pursue something that is an existential threat to the Foreign Service? You've got to have mad money. So, we established a general reserve fund. It's not targeted to do anything except make AFSA financially sound and ready for the crises. And the general fund started to grow and grow, and basically compounded because we weren't spending it on anything. When the building was renovated, we loaned two million dollars to AFSA from that fund, which allowed them to do the rehab, and then they paid it back, I think in a year and a half or something, and that was all agreed. And since then, it's grown and grown and grown, and now I understand it's over four million.

I did that in AFSA, and then I did it in DACOR, and then I did it with ADST, and then I did it with the Academy when they almost went broke. And so, they all have, essentially, the Princeton system for investing their monies.

Q: Did any of the work you did in establishing all of these funds require any vote by the membership?

BOYATT: Yes, there were referenda in all the organizations and, of course, monitoring by their boards.

Q: The only other reason I'm asking the question is that, throughout those years at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, there were calls for disinvestment in South Africa or disinvestment in other things. Did that ever create issues for you?

BOYATT: Well, it was a hell of a problem for me as a board member of Princeton, because the students were pressing that we divest any company operating in South Africa. However, that never came up when I was treasurer of AFSA.

Q: To continue on this theme, you've created these funds, and they get healthier. Were there significant contributions other than dues that AFSA was able to solicit?

BOYATT: Well, our scholarship program, which began during the Depression, when Foreign Service Officers really needed help getting their kids through colleges. Our scholarship program and DACOR's are both legacies from those days. And various Foreign Service Officers have left money to those. But again, times change. Princeton doesn't give students loans. If they accept them, Princeton pays the cost. It's not the same now as it was many decades ago. In AFSA and in DACOR, I encouraged those organizations to get money into their general funds, which they could use to defend the institution and the people thereof, and out of scholarships. But in some cases, there's a donor agreement. You have a contract with a donor that you will give the money to a student that goes to Yale, then you must finance that. But with most of the scholarship gifts, there were no donor restrictions. And I encouraged AFSA to deemphasize the scholarships as they have. AFSA has a real responsibility to the people it represents, to maintain AFSA's financial viability.

Q: At this time of growth, the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity remains separate from AFSA, but at times, there were complaints and so on, that would nevertheless involve AFSA. Is there a relationship between the two? Or how do you see that working?

BOYATT: Well, there's the legal framework, and then there's the political framework. When we were elected the exclusive employee representative, one of the rights granted by law is that nobody else other than AFSA can purport to represent people in the Foreign Service. And if there are special organizations like the Thursday Luncheon Group—black FSOs—If they meet with the secretary, or the director general, we have a right to be present, but we never exercised that right. But there is some tension there.

Q: There are many special interest groups within the department. And they all have goals or objectives, and it is a little curious to see how they all interact with AFSA.

BOYATT: AFSA tries to avoid conflicts in that area. So far, I think they've done a pretty good job. But that may be ending because there is an EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] case against the department now, which is basically attacking worldwide service. I don't know exactly what is so evil about worldwide service that it has an EEO impact, but the suit is out there. And given the department's lawyers' inclination to switch rather than fight, there may be some real trouble brewing over that.

Q: And that, of course, does bring us into a newer era that I think we've agreed we're going to treat as a separate meeting tomorrow. I didn't want to get us too far ahead because your involvement with AFSA and so on after the year 2000 or so has additional activities that I wanted to go into a little more detail with you. So, if we're using the year 2000 or so as the benchmark for the conclusion, is there anything else I've neglected to ask you about the development of AFSA up to that point that you wanted to add now?

BOYATT: Well, when are we going to talk about Kissinger?

Q: I mean, absolutely. That—

BOYATT: I think that John Naland wants all of that in the record.

Q: All right, so what I'll do is I'll pause the recording here.

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Q: Today is April 21, 2022, we're resuming our interview with Tom Boyatt with regard to his engagement and activity in the American Foreign Service Association, AFSA. And Tom, you wanted to go back for a moment to a very important election related to AFSA's subsequent character from the 1970s on, so why don't you go ahead and start there.

BOYATT: Okay. Thank you, and good morning. I want to go back for a minute to the situation in 1971. Externally, we were in the process of writing the special executive order for the Foreign Service employee management system. Internally, right in the middle of this, AFSA had an election. It was in the fall of '71. And there were two strong slates nominating candidates for all the officer positions and all the board seats. I was a member of Bill Harrop's Participation Slate, and we took the strong view that AFSA would be best served if it were both a professional organization and a union. Our argument being that the knowledge of the foreign service of a professional organization and of the substance of diplomacy would inform the decisions and arguments made by the union. And conversely, the union would bring political and congressional support and power to the professional organization. Opposing us was another talented slate led by Lars Hydle, who was president of the Junior Foreign Service Officers Club. And they took a strong view that we had to confine ourselves to being only a union. That was, for

want of a better term, the view from the left, the more junior officers. And they supported it very strongly. We argued the issues in open meetings and debates and in written statements. The differences were clear. The Participation Slate won every officership, and every board seat, but the top vote getter on the other slate was very close to our bottom vote getter. It was a real election. And it was very important because, as you know, I think looking back over fifty years, what has made AFSA as strong as it is today, and just a few years ago, in '17, '18, '19, and '20, AFSA defeated the President of the United States and OMB [Office of Management and Budget] on the issue of the size of the Foreign Affairs Budget. And that would not have been possible, if we had not been a union accumulating congressional and public and political power over all those years. I just can't let go over the old battles, but they did make a difference. If that election had gone the other way, AFSA would be a different animal today. I just wanted to get that back in the record.

Q: Now, the other thing that was also going on in the early '70s as you got elected is, of course, the Vietnam War, the rise to the position of Secretary of State by Henry Kissinger, and you had a few things to say about your interactions with Henry Kissinger.

BOYATT: Yes. I'm doing a memoir, and I'm devoting a whole chapter to me and Henry. Well, as we covered in the first meeting, we met with the great man when he was Secretary of State-Designate in August of '73. Larry Eagleburger arranged this, and I think the only reasons that he met with us were, one, curiosity. And two, you know, a union for his employees was a new thing. He never had to face a union before. And, since we weren't official, he thought it would be all right for him to meet with us when he would not meet with others until he was at least before the Senate formally. So, myself and Tex Harris and Hank Cohen, President, Vice President, and Chair of the negotiating committee trooped into Henry's White House office on an August morning—weekend morning, as I recall—and of course, we were more than nervous to put it mildly. We in AFSA had a long discussion and debate about what I should say, and I had a very tightly woven pitch. And we came in and sat down, and after the amenities, I just started on my pitch. I went right, you know, a, b, c, d, and I got to telling him who we were, how we got to where we were, and what changes we would like to see. And I got to the end of my little screed. The last point went something like this, "And Mister Secretary Designate, I want you to understand that in situations in which the administration nominates someone for an ambassadorship, who we believe on a reasonable basis is totally unfit for that position, on behalf of AFSA, I will testify against that nomination." And he said—I love to do my Kissinger imitation.

Q: Right.

BOYATT:—"You must understand that in certain circumstances, political agencies will require me to do what I otherwise might not do. And I said, "I do understand that, Mr. Secretary, and I hope you will understand that I am the creature of the board. And if a board of AFSA decides that I testify against a certain political appointee, I will, of course, do my duty. And he said, "You should remember that I can always send you to Chad."

Eagleburger burst out laughing, Henry's going, "Ha ha ha." Even Cohen and Tex are laughing. I didn't think it was funny.

Q: You can express your opinion. And you could end up in—
BOYATT: And Mark, five years later, I was sent to Ouagadougou and more than one friend said, "Henry strikes back." Anyway, that was my first encounter with him, and it was, in fact, amusing. My second encounter occurred just a few months later on Foreign Service Day, which in those days were in the fall. It switched at some point, I don't remember why, but in any case, it was time for the joint reception given by the Secretary and AFSA in connection with Foreign Service Day. Eagleburger called me up and he said, "God damn it, Boyatt. I want you to meet the secretary at his elevator at exactly 7:05 and escort him into the reception and get him to the speaker's podium as quickly as possible. Is that clear?" "Yes, sir. It's clear." So, I had really valuable intelligence. I knew Kissinger's route to the podium. Maxine and I were recently married. We'd been married about eighteen months. She's English, and came to the United States at age twenty-five with a thirty-seven-year-old American diplomat, and she wasn't really sure whether she'd made a good decision. You know, I wanted to impress her. So, I said, "Darling, look, you stand by the table where all the oysters are in their bed of ice, because Henry has to go right past that, and I'm escorting him. When we get there, I'll introduce you to the great man." So, Maxine stationed herself there, I met the secretary at his elevator, I escorted him into the seventh-floor area, and there by the oyster table was my beautiful wife, and I said, "Mr. Secretary, may I introduce you to my bride, Maxine." And he gave Maxine one of his baleful looks, and he said, "What does he say about me at home?" Maxine was staggered and I rushed him off to the podium. But you know, it was amusing. Let's face it, he has—still has to this day—a sense of—I don't know—self-deprecating humor, even though he's a bully and he's not always funny. But you know, that's the way it was.

The next one was the following year, on the same occasion, and I'm escorting him to the podium. And by this time, he was probably the most powerful man in Washington, in the fall of '74. He was Secretary of State, he was president for foreign affairs, in effect. And people are crowding around him and making life difficult for me, and I turned to him, and I said, “Mr. Secretary,”—trying to make conversation—“if I had your charisma, they'd probably make me president for life of the American Foreign Service Association.” And he looked at me in all seriousness, and he said, "Boyatt, if I had your WASP smile, I'd be President of the United States." I didn't know what the hell to say, so I didn't say anything.

Q: Right, exactly.

BOYATT: I got him over to the podium. But it's interesting, because it never occurred to me that he would be ethnically sensitive in that way. He was being absolutely serious, in a friendly way, but it's a very revealing comment, I think.

Q: Yeah, absolutely. Well—

BOYATT: Okay, just two more.

Q: —Oh, go. No, please go ahead.

BOYATT: I told John Naland I was going to get the "me and Henry stuff" in the record. Susan Johnson agrees strongly. It should be on the record. I did disagree with Henry violently over Cyprus policy. I made the mistake of being right about what would happen if we didn't call off the Greek Junta. And I said, "You know, if the Greek military overthrow Makarios and install a government responsive to Athens, the Turks will invade, and then we'll be in it up to our ears. So, we have to stop this now, and the way to stop it is by going to the colonels and telling them in clear language to knock it off." Well, we didn't, and the colonels did overthrow Makarios and Turkey did invade, and I was exiled. In fact, Larry Eagleburger worked very hard to keep my career alive, and he arranged for me to be sent to Santiago as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] which was exile as far as Henry was concerned but as far as I was concerned, it's a great post and an ambassador maker. Traditionally, that particular DCM has gone on to bigger—anyway, it was Larry that made this happen.

Q: Just a quick question on the Cyprus thing. Was your memorandum a direct one to the appropriate authority in the department? Or was it through the dissent channel?

BOYATT: From 1972 until 1975 I was the Country Director for Cyprus in the NEA Bureau [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs]. My responsibility was to monitor all dimensions of the Cyprus problem: mainland Greece, mainland Turkey, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots on the island, the UK as a Guarantor Power, and the UN contingent on the island. The policy objective was to prevent the Cyprus problem from exploding and complicating more important U.S. policy objectives. In late 1973 and early '74 I became increasingly concerned that the ruling Greek Junta was preparing to use right-wing Greek Cypriot irregulars on Cyprus and the Greek military stationed there to overthrow the elected Greek Cypriot President, Archbishop Makarios, and install their candidate. I predicted that if that happened, Turkey would invade Cyprus, defeat any Greek efforts to stop them, and partition the island between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. That result would make shambles of U.S. policy in the eastern Mediterranean and NATO. I also proposed an uncomplicated policy of making clear to the Greek Colonels that would oppose their reckless and self-defeating plans.

Initially, I drafted a standard cable to our ambassador in Athens, instructing him to make clear to the Greek Junta, the United States would oppose any intervention by Greece in Cypriot affairs. And Joe Sisco was the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and I had been his staff assistant for a year when he was assistant secretary for NEA. He picked me for that job. We respected and liked each other. But I had to clear the cable with the NEA assistant secretary. I finally, after 3 months of efforts, got the assistant secretary to agree. I then took the draft cable to Undersecretary Sisco, and he signed off on it. I thought it was a done deal. I went back to my office at NEA and he called and said, "Tom, I can't put this in writing. I'm gonna call the political counselor,"—who was a friend of his—"and have her get this message to the junta." Well, that never happened.

So, it's part of the tragedy of those days. It didn't happen, and the Turks did invade, and it was the usual mess. And then I sent a dissent message, which said, "Here's what's happened, and here's what you have to do now."

I argued in the policy process for my interpretation and my policy solution for the first 6 months of 1974. I came close to success but, in the end, the USG [United States government] did nothing. In July the Greek Junta overthrew Makarios but failed to kill him although they tried. The Turks did invade, the Greek Junta did fail to mobilize, much less fight the Turks. U.S. policy was in shambles. I, then, submitted a Dissent Memorandum describing what had happened and recommending the next steps. A few days after my submission, I was fired as Director of Cypriot Affairs.

Q: I see.

BOYATT: And my dissent memorandum "The Boyatt Memorandum" was subpoenaed by Chairman Pike of the House Special Committee on Cyprus, Henry fought it, but he eventually received a redacted version.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: That's all background to the next meeting. So, I'm down in Santiago, and Henry comes down on an official trip to speak at the OAS [Organization of American States] meeting, which was in Santiago that year. After the meeting the Secretary convened Embassy staff to express his thanks. Henry made a few remarks, including, "Thanks. First, I want to thank David Popper." I won't imitate him this time, it's getting difficult. And then he said, "And I also know your DCM, Tom Boyatt. And it got very, very quiet because everybody in that room knew about the clash, my exile and the whole thing.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: And he turned to me, and he said, "Tom, what was that job you had with the Union?" And I said, "Mr. Secretary, it was President. You see, that's an elected position," taking a shot at his appointed position. And when I said that, everybody in the audience laughed and clapped. And this was all being done in good fellowship, you understand?

Q: Sure.

BOYATT: And then Henry smiled, and he looked at me and he says, "Well, I can't tell you how happy I am to see you, down here." Additional laughter. We were all walking away, Bill Rogers, the Assistant Secretary, turned to me and said, "Kissinger. Two sets to one." Finally, it's now 2003, we're all retired, Joe Sisco is chairman of the American Academy of Diplomacy. And the Academy organized a debate between Richard Holbrook and Richard Perle, the left and the right in foreign policy, in the morning. Then Kissinger spoke at the lunch. I know what happened now, but I didn't know this at the time. At some point, Joe Sisco said to Henry, something along these lines, "Henry, you

dealt wrongly with Tom Boyatt thirty years ago, and you need to apologize for that." Here's what happened. He spoke at the lunch, and Sisco said to me, going up in the elevator, "You make sure you ask the first question to Henry," and I said, "Yes, sir." So, as soon as Henry finished his remarks, I threw up my hand. Kissinger called on me and I asked him some questions about China, I don't remember what it was. And he said, "I want to tell you all something about Tom. During the Cyprus crisis of '74, Tom did a very prescient memorandum that did not receive the attention it deserved." And then he stopped and said, "I see now that my masochism has gone too far. Why am I torturing myself like this?" An explosion of laughter. That was it. That was his public apology and the 150 members of the Academy understood that.

Q: But in the meantime, as well, you also worked with real famous AFSA presidents and other people who have engaged with AFSA, Tex Harris and so on. Are there other recollections you have of them, of a particular moment when their unusual abilities really came to the fore?

BOYATT: Well, every one of the original "Young Turks" was extraordinarily talented in one way or another. Lannon Walker was an instinctive politician. He was really good at it. He was the first Young Turk president, and he was the first one to confront management as an equal. And he made some enemies because of that. And then I think he started the negotiations on buying AFSA headquarters across the street, which as you know, was really important. And then Charlie Bray, who was my Princeton classmate and close friend, succeeded him and was equally brilliant in his way. He himself decided that unionism was the answer. And he organized the plebiscite, in which the majority of AFSA members voting voted for the union. Charlie also called the vote in a board meeting, which formally committed AFSA to running in the election. Bill Harrop was a genius at getting the right person in the right job. When he was president of AFSA, and I was vice president, he put me in charge of the election and the employee-management system, and he put Tex Harris in charge of the grievance system. Look how that turned out. We eventually established both systems and they became Chapters 10 and 11 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: In the 1975 AFSA election, the Young Turk candidate lost, and the problem was my fault. I told this to Harry Kopp, but he didn't put it in his book. I was the reason John Hemenway became president of AFSA.

Q: Yeah.

BOYATT: Okay. The madman of Foggy Bottom. The reason John Hemenway won is because of a mistake I made. The mistake was that the head of the American Foreign Service Protective Association—and shortly before that, AFSPA was part of AFSA, and we had split, and each became independent. The president of AFSPA (also president of the credit union) came by to see me. He was really worried that AFSA might seek a seat on the credit union board, or to somehow flex its muscle with the credit union. I should

have said, "Let's talk about working together." I didn't. I gave him no assurances. He was the senior officer, and he ran for the AFSA presidency to protect the credit union. And he took a lot of senior votes away from the guy who should have won, who was Rick Williamson. Hemenway, because the rational vote was split, won a plurality, not a majority, and he became president. That was a disaster, and he was eventually overthrown, and then AFSA got back on the track with Lars Hydle and others. Bill and Tex and I never left, in a way. Bill Harrop became the head of his family foundation, the Delavan Foundation, and has been funding good works over the years. And Tex came back to AFSA as President, and I worked as his treasurer. And so, in a sense, the three of us never left and made contributions to AFSA over the decades.

Q: Now, I want to take a moment with you as treasurer, because there are some initiatives taken, as you mentioned yesterday, but I want to go back to AFSA-PAC [Political Action Committee] and the value you see in that organization since you were one of the leading, if not the leading voice in creating that organization.

BOYATT: Yes, I proposed it formally to the AFSA board, I think in 2002 or 2003. Just after the turn of the century. AFSA had maintained a congressional presence, but it was informal, and we were always asking the staffers, "Will you please get us an appointment with the chairman or the ranking member on this one or that issue? It occurred to me that we were citizens of the United States and had a constitutional right to petition the Congress. Why not take advantage of it? So, I discovered how to do that, formally, how to become a political action committee, and what you can do and what you cannot do. And I proposed it to the board because I was convinced that it would significantly increase our ability on the Hill if we could spend time with the members. And the board voted for it. I was astonished that there were people opposed to it, because it was so obvious to me that it would enhance our abilities on the Hill. When people think of PACs, they think of millions of dollars and presidential elections. That's not what we did. I don't think we ever had more than $40,000 maybe in the first or the second fundraising effort. What we did was to attend breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, which are on a continuing basis given by more sophisticated lobbyists than ourselves. But everybody that wants to go can go as long as they paid the 1,000-dollar tag, and we started doing that, myself and sometimes other members of the PAC or a senior member of the AFSA leadership. It was really interesting, because if you give somebody money, you have a whole different view of a relationship than you have if you're always asking them for something. It became clear that if we would do this on a regular basis, with the right people, the chairs and ranking members of our authorization and appropriation committees in both houses, and with others who might be friends of the Foreign Service like Chris Van Hollen's kid—Anyway, it got to the point where we could make things happen. They happened because I or somebody else was personally involved with the relevant senator or congressperson. A good example of that was a breakfast with Bob Corker. Barbara Stevenson had just been elected President and she went with me. We had breakfast, and at the time, we were arguing with his staff who were putting up a Lateral Entry Program, and they wanted to put it into the State Department authorization, and attach that to the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act, legislation that usually gets voted on every year. An awful lot of the other authorizations never go anywhere. The staff wrote "lateral entry" into their

version of the authorization. At that breakfast, I said to Corker's Chief of Staff, "We are totally opposed to this, and if you don't do something about it, we're going to do everything we can to get John McCain"—who was one of our interlocutors—"to not put this as an attachment to the NDAA." And he said, "Now, wait a minute, let's talk." He said, "What can I do?" And I said, "Well, look, we need two things. I know you want this very badly, but let's make it a practice that it's only going to be authorized for three or four years, and we'll see how it works. And two, that none of those who are candidates for entering the service can do so until they personally pass the foreign service exam." In fact the staff put that into the bill, and as a result of that, and for other reasons, the Senate never appropriated any money for it, and the idea died. I don't want to overdo this, but we had a seat at the table, and we still do. Eric Rubin is passing legislation, standalone legislation. So far, it's nothing controversial, but nonetheless, he's getting it done, and I think it puts another arrow in AFSA's quiver, and AFSA becomes part of the congressional system.

Q: Now, one thing about AFSA-PAC is, it came into existence in 2002, if I have my dates right.

BOYATT: That's what I remember too.

Q: And immediately before that, for the six years of 1995 to 2001, our favorite Senator, Jesse Helms, was the head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Did you interact with him in the run up to the creation of the AFSA-PAC? At the back of my mind, I'm wondering if that could have been one of the reasons you felt obliged to create an AFSA-PAC.

BOYATT: You know how our business is. What goes around comes around. And earlier, when Jesse was just on the committee, he came to Santiago when I was DCM [Deputy Chief of MIssion]. We put him up at the residence, and made a fuss over him. I kind of liked the old bastard, and he was helpful to the Foreign Service in some of our positions. I mean our internal positions. The fact that Foreign Service Officers are subject to selection out and retirement for time in class and time in service, he thought of regular FSOs more as the military. He did something that I thought was very good for us and for diplomacy, by bringing the USIA [United States Information Agency] in under the State Department. The public diplomacy purists think that was a terrible thing, but it brought them much closer to policy than they had ever been. They were no longer somebody else's afterthought. They got a seat at the table of making the policy that had a public diplomacy dimension. Jesse did that, and as I recall, we supported him.

Q: Right. Then, of course, Jesse leaves in 2001. Dick Lugar took his place, and he was favorable to AFSA-PAC?

BOYATT: Yes. When we first created AFSA-PAC, I had been calling on him as an AFSA activist. And it turns out that he went to one of the small colleges in Ohio.

Q: Oberlin?

BOYATT: No, it wasn't, it was Denison. Lugar had been president of Sigma Chi. The guy that was president of Sigma Chi right after him and his sort of competitor as the biggest man on campus was a Wyoming High School classmate of mine, Bill Bowen. Bill Bowen went on to become the 17th president of Princeton University. So, I had all of these tie ups with him, as both Ohioans, and both friends of Bill Bowen, and so on. Anyway, when I told him about the PAC, he said, "Good." He said something along the lines of, "It's hard for me to recruit members of the committee because there's no financial payoff being on this committee." And he thought that was a great idea, but he was a supporter of the Foreign Service long before it was the thing to do.

Q: Yeah. Also, during this period, you as an AFSA leader began to see the reduction in ambassadorial assignments and assignments at the level of OC/MC (Counselor/Minister Counselor) of career officers. More and more political appointees coming in, reducing the number. How did AFSA respond to that if it did?

BOYATT: Well, we tried and tried and tried. In my day, we testified often against political appointees, and we always lost, except in one case. Stan Anderson, who was not a bad guy. He was one of the bright young men around Nixon. And he had done something at the White House and wanted to become ambassador. I think it was to Costa Rica. And we fought it, and for some—I think it was in the time of Watergate. Anyway, the White House gave up on it. They did not nominate him because we raised so much hell, and they didn't need any more hell being raised.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: But our victories were very few and far between.

Q: Yeah. Now, similarly, in this era when you were creating the AFSA-PAC, the Foreign Affairs Council was also created, also having an influence to some extent, both in the Department and Capitol Hill. You had mentioned the creation of it yesterday, but you didn't go into any further details about any of its memorable activities. I'm wondering if any come to mind now.

BOYATT: It was one of those things that's been hiding in plain sight forever. But in that period, around the turn of the century, by just happenstance, I became president of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation for six months. I was an officer at AFSA, I had just been brought into the Academy. In DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired], I had helped fix the financial situation. It occurred to me that we were all in the same family, but we never got together for Thanksgiving. And so, I created the FAC [Foreign Affairs Council], unifying several organizations supporting the Foreign Service. Probably the most important thing that the FAC did was, for several years, it did a report on the secretary of state as a leader and a manager, not policy. A leader and a manager of people and assets. And because we did that, people listened to us. We did it when Colin Powell was Secretary of State, and he was so good in this area that we really said some wonderful things about him in our report. That got us a lot of access. We met with Colin

once every six or eight months, something like that, and it didn't hurt that his management, Undersecretary Grant Greene, Grant and I had worked together for Frank Carlucci at Sears World Trade. We were extraordinarily influential, and we were clearly a force multiplier. Everything he wanted to do on the Hill, all twelve of us tried to support in some way, shape or form. The next Secretary of State, which was Condoleezza Rice—she was much colder. We met with her once and never got back. Our reports on her were not bad, but they were not as good as Colin's. Particularly on achieving additional Foreign Service positions. She wasn't prepared to fight for that.

Q: Yeah.

BOYATT: I think that the next Secretary was Hillary.

Q: Yeah.

BOYATT: And we made a decision. Everyone knew she was grooming herself to run for the presidency.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: So, we did one report on her. And then, as I recall, decided not to do any more, because it was too political. We just did not want to be commenting on what everyone thought was going to be the next president of the United States.

Q: Sure.

BOYATT: Our access waxed and waned over the years and, in that era, it waned. It's been up and down. But we've held together, and the main thing is, we support each other. When the Council of American Ambassadors' politically appointed guys have something, we attend. We help each other, and we meet informally just to exchange views, periodically. So, from time to time, I would testify, but that's very hard to do with a group that big.

Q: Sure.

BOYATT
We couldn't, for instance, get agreement to testify against the bad ambassadorial nomination, because the political guys didn't want us to do that.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: But we're still there, and we do have influence, and we use it when we can, but the main thing we do is support each other.

Q: Now, without wanting to rush you, you do continue, though, to have positions in AFSA, even as late as 2015–2017. How did that come about? Because now that you've been a retiree for a while, you can't keep away?

BOYATT: Well, it started out on the financial side. We talked about that yesterday when I sort of accidentally became the treasurer under Tex.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: John Naland asked me to run with him as treasurer one time, and then he came back, wanted me to be—it was mostly the financial side. I would come back as a financial guru, but the other thing I had that was useful was that I really knew the Foreign Service Act of 1980. I really knew about the employee management system because I helped design it, and I knew the way it was supposed to work. And when I came back to AFSA, somewhere along in that timeframe in the early 2000s, I discovered that—and this is a little sensitive, but there it is, it's a reality—that our legal staff had taken over the business of nominating or approving the nominations of members, the chair of the grievance board, the chair of the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board, and the members of the Disputes Panel. The trouble with that was that our lawyers, really, in my judgment, don't understand our system. They're all trained in law school on the cases of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Well, we're not the civil service. Our Employee Management System is very different as discussed before.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: The legal staff didn't pay much attention to the nominations, and what they looked for was experience in adjudicating grievances. That's not what we need. What we need are people that really know the Foreign Service. They're much more likely to vote for us and these adjudicatory disputes. So, I started a campaign, and it took me about four years to convince everybody that our legal staff wasn't doing it the right way, and that the board would have to make these nominations, the perfect nominee being someone who had been a Foreign Service Officer overseas, but also had something to do with AFSA, or even with management, but had some familiarity with the labor management system. With FSO candidates, we started winning a lot more cases. And toward the end of my terms, we won a very big one, on the use of instep increases as rewards for those that came close to being promoted but weren't.

Q: Right. Meritorious—

BOYATT: And we got Hank Cohen on the FSLRB (Foreign Service Labor Relations Board). Because we argued that the department wasn't keeping its contract and paying these people the way we'd agreed they would pay them. And so, when Hank was a member of the FSLRB, we won. And that winning put about a million dollars into people's pockets. Then, Hank was pushed off the board, and we didn't get a Foreign Service person to replace him. The Department brought up the same issue in another year and we lost. I got two more Foreign Service Officers named to the board, and they

recently overturned the other loss, and we wound up getting the instep increases on a merit basis for a lot of members amounting to about three million dollars' worth of benefits. But the point is to have people that really understand the Foreign Service on those adjudicatory bodies and are not from the civil service side because their experience is irrelevant.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: The civil service through AFGE, as I pointed out yesterday, negotiates minor issues in small units all over the country. Work conditions, not personnel policies and procedures on an agency wide basis, which is what we do. So, the people that know one don't know the other. That was one of the biggest changes that I managed during my Renaissance.

Q: Was there a particular event or a particular contribution that you made for AFSA-day on the Hill in 2001?

BOYATT: Well, I'll tell you what happened, and you judge.

Q: Yeah.

BOYATT: We were meeting with Paul Sarbanes, a personal friend of mine from Princeton. And suddenly, he was called away from our meeting, and he returned for a second and he said, "Something's going on in New York, you better get the TV on." And we turned on the TV where we were, just in time to see the second plane hit the second tower. So, we knew that it was trouble, serious trouble, and the decision we had to make was this. Our next call was on Frank Wolf, Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee for the 150 account [International Affairs Budget]. Very important to us. The Congressman represented my district in Virginia, I knew him personally, and I knew him from going to his parties. I said to everyone, "We cannot snub the Chairman. We've got to go. I don't care how dangerous it is." Just about that time, we're walking by the Supreme Court, from the Senate side to the House side. There was a pall of smoke arising from Virginia. Someone said, "They've hit the Pentagon." Of course, they had. So, myself, Tex, Susan Reardon, who was the executive director of AFSA, and a couple of other people went into Wolf's building, and started down toward his office only to meet all of them coming the other way. They had been ordered to evacuate. Yes, and it turned out that the Capitol was one of their targets. That's the plane that went down in Pennsylvania—the rugby players took them out. But of course, we didn't know any of that. I met him in the hallway and shook his hands, and he said, "You know, we've been ordered to leave here. I think we have to go." I said something like, "Understood, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted you to know that we were going to keep this appointment no matter what." He said, "Well, what has happened?" And so he went that way, and we discussed next steps. The problem was, we had Tex with us. He weighed 300 pounds with bad knees and we were all on foot. We knew there was no hope of driving and we decided that we should make for AFSA headquarters because we knew there was drinking water there and toilets. There we would rest and then we could try to find out

what was going on and take it from there. So, we walked from the Hill, block by block, and waited for Tex and helped Tex the whole time. We finally got to AFSA, and we learned that the metros were running. So, we decided to go up to the Foggy Bottom stop and get into Virginia if we could. It turns out we did. We got close to the house of one of us, I can't remember which one. And from there we called our wives who were frantic. They came and picked us up, and the war was over for us.

Q: Yeah. Did you ever get the chance to go back and see Frank Wolf?

BOYATT: Oh yes, many times. I supported him personally, as well as via AFSA-PAC. We met often. For example, there was an issue with the Commercial Service. They weren't being funded. Myself and John Limbert, who was president of AFSA at the time, and the commercial guy called on him. I said, "Frank, we have a commerce problem. Let us tell you about it." And so, the commerce representative said, "The problem is we're not getting an authorization for the Foreign Commercial Service." Frank said, "Hang on a minute." He picks up the phone, and he calls somebody. The International Affairs Budget was changed, right there. We're talking forty-six million dollars, or something like that. He was a great friend.

Q: Interesting.

BOYATT: It's still paying off.

Q: Now, a more general question, but before we go on, over time, AFSA, the PAC, and so on, began using the tools of social media, the internet, and so on. Did that, overall, help AFSA in its work and make it a somewhat more powerful presence.

BOYATT: Yes, it did. And it also makes it possible for much smaller organizations like the American Academy of Diplomacy, which has 300 members—AFSA has 16,000—We also get the Foreign Service story out. Not that I understand it. I don't, and not that I know how to maximize it, but I do know that maximizing it is good.

Q: Okay. Now, this does bring us almost up to date with a question on the changes in the bylaws that took place in 2019.

BOYATT: Yeah.

Q: How did you contribute to that?

BOYATT: Well, the bylaws of AFSA are always a sensitive matter, because we have a complicated governance structure. In normal organizations, boards set policy and officers execute. But in AFSA, boards set policy and also vote on a hell of a lot of execution issues. There was Barbara Stevenson, who wanted a stronger executive, and I did too, but I didn't want it to be so strong that it would be—so, I was trying to organize in a way that would give the executive additional power, but at the same time, preserve the strength of the board. And we also cleaned up a lot of things that needed cleaning up like duration.

Once a policy is approved, we changed the duration clause so that it lasted until it was changed. They had gotten into the mode of having to revote every policy with a new board, which is a waste of time, and you lose momentum when you do that. So, we fixed that and some other issues like that. Then, eventually, peace prevailed in the tent.

Q: Now, looking back then over the period of the Trump presidency, and the troubles that the Foreign Service had, how would you describe your concerns and how were they expressed? In other words, the organization, either the PAC, or AFSA itself had many allies on the Hill, but it also had quite a number of enemies, and there were moments when things looked grim. From where you stood, can you describe what happened in that period?

BOYATT: Here's what I think happened, and I played a small part in it. Very small. Trump's first budget proposed a 37% cut in the Foreign Affairs budget. AFSA then put together an informal caucus, on the 150 account. The purpose of that caucus was to save the diplomatic development function from such cuts. For four years in a row, Trump proposed reductions between 25 percent and 37 percent. So, that caucus—composed of every Democratic senator, plus somewhere between a half a dozen and a dozen national security Republicans like John McCain, like Tim Scott, and Ron Johnson, and Portman from Ohio, and others voted against such cuts and, in fact, increased budgets for the 150 account.

Q: Very interesting.

BOYATT: I mean, think about that. An employee union, AFSA, beat the President on a budget issue, four years running. If you'd said that to me ten years earlier, I would have said, "Dream on, citizen."

Q: Right. Is there a particular victory that sticks out in your mind that Trump's OMB [Office of Management and Budget] or others in the administration were trying to eliminate, and through your work, you successfully prevented it?

BOYATT: Well, we successfully prevented that young man who was going to be named director general, who had been an FSO. I think he left as an FSO-6 or something, went back to Indiana, wound up working for the Governor, who happened to be Mike Pence, and Mike Pence wanted him to be Director General. We stopped that. We stopped it because we recruited George Shultz. I think the Academy may have had more to do with that than AFSA, but clearly, we were working together. Shultz got through to enough people to convince them that that name wasn't worth the candle.

Q: Yeah. And of course, with the Academy, there are so many retired Republican ambassadors and other leading lights that they eventually got through.

BOYATT: Yes, that's exactly right.

Q: Okay. As you look back then from today on AFSA, what would you recommend, blue sky? Would you recommend any changes or initiatives that haven't been taken yet?

BOYATT: Yes. I think that we probably have to rewrite the Foreign Service Act of 1980 before somebody else rewrites it for us in ways that destroy a career Foreign Service, which is by design an "elite" service. And I think the dangers there come more from the left than from the right.

Q: Interesting.

BOYATT: Well, here's the reality. There is a built in conflict
between an elite Foreign Service based on a "robust and impartial entrance procedure," based on peer promotion boards, competitive advancement, mandatory retirement at 65, and termination of service through up or out procedures, DEI, and the elements of DEI.

An elite, competitive Foreign Service is established by law in the Foreign Service Act of 1980, whereas the elements of DEI are the result of current policy.
Article 3, Section 3 of the Constitution requires all executive officers "to ensure that the laws are faithfully executed.".

Q: Right.

BOYATT: Without the above special conditions, we are so close to the civil service that you can't make the argument that we're special, if we're not prepared to go anywhere, anytime, on the orders of our superiors.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: You can't have a Foreign Service if you don't have a selective entrance procedure. It takes you right back to the spoils system. It may be a different spoils system, not based on party but based on racial quota, or based on this, based on that. It will no longer be an elite Foreign Service, and that's existential. Any aspect of that that comes up must be defeated. And a lot of people say, "Well, if one opens up the prospect of a rewritten Foreign Service Act, then you open up the prospect of being defeated at every turn," which is true. There is risk. I would argue that there's more risk in death by 1,000 cuts. We can preserve the Foreign Service by getting a strong Foreign Service Act through Congress and signed by the President.

Q: And with regard to people with disabilities, there's no way to do what the service had been doing up till then, which is provide necessary accommodation as required under the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act.]

BOYATT: Well, the claimants argue that our system is so discriminatory that the status quo must be changed.

Q: I understand. Okay. So, that certainly is one thing, but once again, initiatives and recommendations for AFSA.

BOYATT: If I were AFSA, I would go to work rewriting the Foreign Service Act that AFSA wants.

Q: I see.

BOYATT: And have it ready to go. And I would also—on these things that are the little bites that are being attempted—I would take this one right now. The effort to do away with worldwide service, and I would sue the Department on the grounds that it is not unconstitutional to do that. In fact, it's the practice all over the government. Fighter pilots have to see damn well. They have to have good reflexes. It's just a reality. Members of Seal Team Six have to have a lot of stamina and be prepared to kill people. Not everybody can do that. So, you select those who can. The Foreign Service is equally elite with special requirements. If we are not a selective, competitive service, we are no different than the Civil Service.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

BOYATT: So that's existential. I would sue the Department because I believe the Department is settling the current EEOC case on the terms that those who brought the case will accept. It is, first of all, unconstitutional, in that they are nullifying the Foreign Service Act with an administrative decision.

Q: Right.

BOYATT: Further, this kind of "discrimination" is not unconstitutional. We won a case like that some years ago, on early retirement, having it as a special situation for the Foreign Service, and we won that one. And if we took this EEOC thing to the current Supreme Court, we would win. Sooner or later the conflict between DEIA and an elite Foreign Service based on competition and special service will have to be settled.

Q: Yeah. Recruitment retention issues?

BOYATT: Do we have a retention issue?

Q: Well, you had mentioned yesterday that you're beginning to see Foreign Service Officers who were beginning to contemplate the Foreign Service as a temporary kind of job and something that, perhaps, they do five years, maybe as many as ten, and did not really think of themselves as being a career officer. Does that remain to you a major problem that you're seeing into the future?

BOYATT: It's hard to get statistics out of the Department.

Q: Right, of course.

BOYATT: Definitely on these kinds of issues. But I've been hearing that retention is a problem for fifteen years, and the data just don't support it. It's been about 4 percent attrition, for a variety of causes, forever. And it's not 12 percent now, maybe it's 4.6% or something. I don't think there's a problem to fix, but maybe there is. But the very fact that the Department has not let AFSA know anything about this EEOC case, nor anything about the details of the settlement, ensures it's not in our interests. And I'm not prepared to let a bunch of civil service lawyers who don't know anything about the Foreign Service drive this decision, and the only way to stop them is to sue them, which is what I would do. And I would use that four-million-dollar fund I established years ago to do it.

Q: Right, I certainly understand. I have come to the end of my questions, but that doesn't mean we're at the end of the interview, because you may still have a few more recollections that stand out in your mind about major events or major developments in the course of the history of AFSA that you would still like to relate.

BOYATT: If something comes up, I'll call you. Is that possible? Can I do that?

Q: Of course. We've just reached the end of this interview. But if thinking subsequently to this time, other things come up, we are delighted to set up another appointment.

BOYATT: —And just do an amendment. Okay, good.

Q: Right. Well, thank you very much. Let me pause there.

BOYATT: Thank you very much.

End of interview

ADDENDUM

For an in-depth understanding of how AFSA became a union and its indispensable role in impacting legislation affecting the Foreign Service, we recommend reading Amb. Boyatt's article in the January-February 2023 edition of *The Foreign Service Journal* "When Lightning Struck Twice, How AFSA's 'Young Turks' Launched the Union"