

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

**THOMAS DAVIS**

*Interviewed by: Robin Matthewman  
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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: Good afternoon, it's March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023. I'm Robin Matthewman and today I'm starting my oral history interviews with Thomas Davis.*

*Tom, we'll start at the beginning – where and when were you born?*

DAVIS: East St. Louis, Illinois, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1925.

*Q: Can you tell me a little bit about your family, your father's and mother's side? For example, on your father's side of the family, were they immigrants?*

DAVIS: My father's maternal forebears arrived in Maryland sometime before 1655, remaining in Baltimore County through five generations. Grandmother's great great grandfather left wife and children to join the Virginia 3rd Regiment, Continental Army, serving from November 30, 1776 through November 30, 1779. Two weeks following his discharge from the Army, he and his wife, with small children moved west, settling in what is now West Virginia, next to the Ohio River. They remained there, on "King's Creek" until his death in 1805. Following his death, his widow, with three unmarried teenage daughters went down the Ohio, and settled next to the Mississippi. My father's Davis forebears were already settled in the same area, my father's grandfather having been born in 1800, near where the Ohio joins the Mississippi.

*Q: This was the Davis family?*

DAVIS: Yes, My father was the grandson of the last named gentleman. Whereas dad's mother was the granddaughter of the youngest teenage girl that accompanied her widowed mother down the Ohio River in 1805.

*Q: Did your mom's family have a different trajectory?*

DAVIS: About the same. My mom's grandfather, William Montgomery, was born in Ohio in 1818, and by 1850 was in Southern Illinois, having married a young lady, Matilda Jane Smith. At the time he was a police officer/marshal in a small town near St. Louis. My

mother, by the way, lost her mother to an early death, and was raised by Matilda, who was in her seventies.

*Q: Fascinating, a lot there I'm sure. Your dad's name was?*

DAVIS: Thomas W. Davis, same as mine.

*Q: Was he a farmer or by this time were there other professions?*

DAVIS: No, most of the family was out of the farming life by the mid-19th century Dad's father owned a country grocery store, did occasional surveying, wrote a weekly article for the country press, but unfortunately died in his mid-thirties, leaving his widow with two daughters and my father, then a 6-months old baby to raise.

*Q: Right, a very tough life, too. So in the '20s your parents are married and you're born in 1925. Were you the oldest?*

DAVIS: No. My mother had been married earlier, and had lost her husband to an assassin, leaving her with a three year old son, and in the initial months of pregnancy. I was the eldest child of Mom and Dad, but in the middle of my mother's four children.

*Q: What did your father do for a living?*

DAVIS: As the Great Depression began, dad was with the John Hancock Insurance Co. in Los Angeles. Subsequently he sought to make a living in various ways, including raising chickens for the market, and constructing residential housing.

*Q: Did you say your parents were now in Los Angeles and that you grew up in California?*

DAVIS: Yes, we lived in San Gabriel Valley, a few miles east of the city of Los Angeles.

*Q: What was life like as a kid growing up in that difficult time?*

DAVIS: In general people were poor relative to today's families. Jobs were tough to find. At 12, I was selling magazines: The Times, Saturday Evening Post, and Colliers. At 13, I was a newspaper delivery boy. At 14, I had a job at a gasoline station, fixing tires, and pumping gas. I quit school after junior year, worked on construction sites for a few months, and then joined the Navy. But, during those years, California, while short of jobs, was a beautiful place, with a population of five million, rather than today's forty million.

*Q: You went to public schools?*

DAVIS: Yes.

*Q: Did you have any particular interests as a kid?*

DAVIS: A job always was a priority, but Saturday often was a time to go to the beach, if necessary riding my bike twenty-five miles from Pasadena to Long Beach to do so. And, I learned early to use the library. Remember we did not yet have television, cell phones, or for that matter allowances. As I reached mid-teens, a little hunting was added with early morning trips to the desert for rabbits, none of which could be eaten, owing to worms.

*Q: Did you take up a trade?*

DAVIS: I was somewhat familiar with the construction trades, and after my Junior High School year I joined the Union for Carpenters and Joiners, as an apprentice, and worked for six months before entering the Navy.

*Q: What year was this?*

DAVIS: June - December of 1942.

*Q: So the war, we joined the war in early '42.*

DAVIS: The war started in December 1941. For Christmas 1942, my parents signed enlistment papers, and I was in the Navy a week later.

*Q: I guess your mom must have been scared? When you enlisted, were you aware you would be putting yourself in mortal danger?*

DAVIS: I wanted to go to war. Stupid teenagers.

*Q: So you joined the Navy. Where did they send you? What kind of job did they put you on?*

DAVIS: I was in San Diego Boot Camp for three months, and then was assigned to the 12th Naval District at San Francisco. I was too young for the flesh pots, and bars, and took to the books. Shortly after my 18th birthday I was promoted to Third Class Petty Officer, a non commissioned officer, and before Christmas of '43 I was promoted again, to Second Class; still too young to buy a drink.

*Q: Where were you assigned when you first enlisted? Did you go to Washington DC, headquarters, or did you get on a ship?*

DAVIS: No, following boot camp I was sent to Com 12, at San Francisco. From there I later went to the Pacific, not returning until 1946, six months following Japan's surrender. Before being discharged in May, I found myself in New York at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, and had the amusing experience of being part of a Victory Parade at White Plains.

*Q: Did you stay in San Francisco throughout the war?*

DAVIS: No, my turn to go out came in November 1944. I had just kissed my favorite lady good night, and returned to the barracks at Goat Island, where I checked the bulletin board, and found my name listed for the next sea draft, scheduled for three days hence. I telephoned my lady friend. She was puzzled, as we had just said goodnight, and was taken aback when I said “Adele, if you want to marry me, we have to do it in the morning, as I’ll be leaving the following day. She was silent for a long moment and then said “all right”. We were married by the Superior Judge the following morning, and the next morning I kissed her goodbye, and left. We were at sea two days later. 15 months later, the war was over, and I was able to send a wire of our projected arrival at San Francisco, and as we pulled in to dock, she was there. Some would say “how reckless”. It was. The marriage only lasted 66 years. She died 2010, at our home in Oceanside, California.

*Q: Were you in the Pacific theater? Do you remember the name of the ship?*

DAVIS: Yes, The last ship, and one which Adele greeted, was the Samaritan. It had been a hospital ship, but at the end of the war was carrying troops home from the Pacific and from Europe.

*Q: I’ve only been to San Francisco a couple of times. What was your wife’s name?*

DAVIS: Adele.

*Q: All right. When you got back did you have the chance under the GI Bill to go back to school?*

DAVIS: When the war was over my priority was to get a job, and support myself and wife. For this purpose I renewed membership with the Union of Carpenters and Joiners, and began work as an apprentice, earning a journeyman's certificate by early 1949. My wife in the meantime encouraged me to earn high school credits at night time, and in September ‘49 we each returned to school, with afternoon jobs, attending a small community college in Oceanside, California. In June, I received a high school diploma, and the Associate of Arts degree, and applied to Georgetown University for admission.

*Q: And what year did you start?*

DAVIS: September of 1950.

*Q: I started at Georgetown in 1975. Did your wife go?*

DAVIS: She went to work in Washington as a secretary, and worked until I received my Foreign Service appointment.

*Q: The School of Foreign Service at that time, was it a very programmed –*

DAVIS: Yes. Once you indicated interest in either government or commercial, you were required to follow a prescribed course.

*Q: So at the time you went to Georgetown, did they have the system where you went two years and took all the prerequisites, and then chose a specialty like politics or history?*

DAVIS: No. The courses for the four years were set out and required.

*Q: Did you take a language?*

DAVIS: Yes, French.

*Q: Where did you live?*

DAVIS: Glover Park, about a mile north of Georgetown.

*Q: Sort of where American University is.*

DAVIS: Yes. A few blocks from there.

Q. And you worked for the CIA, between university and your Foreign Service appointment.

DAVIS Yes.

*Q: And that was in Langley, Virginia, or was it in DC?*

DAVIS: Langley had not yet been constructed, and CIA Headquarters was at Foggy Bottom, where the National Health Institute used to be, later becoming headquarters for OSS.

*Q: How did you like working at CIA?*

DAVIS: As they say in some movies, if I tell you I'll have to kill you. (Laughter) So long ago I guess I can speak. I liked working for the Agency, good people, I was promoted several times, which always helps, and if not for the Foreign Service appointment, I probably would have stayed with the Agency.

*Q: That was in 1956, right?*

DAVIS: No, that would have been earlier, '53 and '54.

*Q: I think that would have been fascinating work.*

DAVIS: When I was at the agency, they sent me through the basic intelligence officer course. We have something like that at FSI (Foreign Service Institute), don't we? For

Foreign Service officers. When I entered the Foreign Service, for budgetary reasons it was closed, and I went directly to the field without any training. We'll come to that in a little bit. It was a disaster.

*Q: So what happened? Somewhere along the way you took the oral exam with the State Department?*

DAVIS: Oh yes. I took the written in 1953, and the oral exam the following year.

Re the oral exam. I don't know what it's like now, but at that time we were told 50 percent would fail.

*Q: And your wife was onboard about this, going overseas?*

DAVIS: My wife would have been happy if I had stayed with CIA. She loved living in Washington.

The procedure was that following a successful oral exam, the Department in due course would offer an appointment, together with an assignment to a post. If you declined the , assignment, the appointment to the Foreign Service was withdrawn., In line with that I took a phone call at my desk- the lady on the phone was very serious, saying the Foreign Service was prepared to offer me an appointment as Third Secretary of Legation and Vice Consul at Vientiane, Laos. I asked if I could call my wife to discuss the offer. and was told to call back before the day was over.”

I called my wife and told her of the offer. She ran for the encyclopedia, came back and said “Oh, no, Tom.” I asked if I should refuse, as I was prepared to go either way. I was happy at the Agency. She said, “No, you have tried all these years, and it would be wrong for us not to go ahead.

I called State back, and accepted the appointment.

*Q: Did you say the training center was closed?*

DAVIS: Yes. There was no one at State who had been to Laos, or knew much about the country or situation. Basically I spent some hours at the desk reading the chron files, arranging for passports, tickets, packing, and visiting the Lao Minister.

*Q: It's been a long time since I've heard those terms, the chron file.*

DAVIS: The desk officer was Joseph Montllor. He was an FS-04, 03, and would be my mentor for the following two to three weeks. Going through the chronology file i came across a letter from the Minister of Legation to the Assistant Secretary for the Far East –

*Q: This was your head of mission?*

DAVIS: Yes. As Minister, he had arrived at post with a very small staff, to replace Vice Consul Mike Rives ,who had been in charge, working loosely under our Embassy at Saigon. Mike met me and my wife at planeside, and as we got off the plane, he got on, and left on the outgoing flight. There was no overlap.

With Mike Rives departure, and my arrival, the post consisted of Yost as minister of legation, FSO Zeke Paddock, a couple of secretaries,radio operator, code clerk, adm officer, CiA office ,and me. In addition, a three-man USIA (United States Information Agency) post, and a small AID (Agency for International Development) presence.

The Department of State simply did not know how to open a post, other than to send people and hope they made do. For example when asked what a woman should take to post, “Well the usual things, long dresses, gloves, et cetera.” In the Chron file, there was a message from the then just arrived new minister of legation to the assistant secretary of State, written a couple of months before I was assigned to the post, saying the replacement for Mike Rives had to be an experienced officer who spoke fluent French, because he’d be used on a day to day basis working with the various ministries.

When I showed the letter to Montlor, his response was” too bad”, the Department had no one else available to send out, other than myself, and the Minister would have to make do.

*Q: Did you come by plane or boat?*

DAVIS: We flew out.

Shortly after arrival - the same evening, the Minister asked me “How’s your French, Tom?”

When I replied “Schoolboy French.” his reaction was Oh!

“Oh.” He didn’t say anything further, but that night he wrote a letter to the Assistant Secretary of State saying “I wrote to you earlier I need an experienced French-speaking officer, and Tom Davis, who arrived today is neither. He should be removed as soon as possible, and an experienced French speaker sent in.

It took eight months to get somebody out there to replace me. In that time, I was not assigned a desk, nor received guidance, nor serious work to do. In the meantime, The DCM, was transferred from the post; He had come from Malta, and apparently did not have what the Minister needed, unprepared for an assignment like Laos. There were no paved streets, a small community of 25,000, people, and no stores. The meat market was an open area, with a roof, but all sides open, with cattle brought in, and butchered on the spot, the place covered with flies.

We used the minister’s extra bedroom until the Admin officer could find a place. The latter we shared with the five women. No running water, no electricity, the water we

received came from a tanker truck that would back into the Mekong River, throw a firehose over, and pump its tank full of water, as water buffalo, elephants, and people bathed, or relieved themselves in the river. The trucks delivered water to each house, filling empty fifty-gallon drums, which we had to carry in buckets to the back of the house, and there pump it to the roof, for gravity flow, to the toilet room below. Drinking water was from this as was water for showing, flushing of the toilet.

Within a matter of three or four weeks, two of the five women were evacuated to Bangkok with hepatitis, and did not return.

I don't fault Yost, or anybody else, other than Washington. They sent people without preparing for any of this.

*Q: In those eight months that you didn't have a desk or instructions, were you basically not working, or were making it up as you went?*

DAVIS: A little of both. I had the opportunity to accompany a Protestant missionary on a two weeks tour by horseback through the lower Yunnan Mountains, visiting small villages Reverend Whipple had converted to Christianity in times past. He tried to revisit at least once a year, and kindly invited me to accompany.

I prepared a report of the up country travel, but had no reaction at post, or from the Department.

A second trip was much shorter, and courtesy of the Administrative Officer. The post used gasoline imported from Thailand to operate anything requiring electricity, We were almost out of fuel, and I was asked to travel across the Mekong into Thailand, and there seek permission from the provincial governor to buy and export the needed gasoline. An added complication was the Legation had neither Thai authorization for such export, nor funds to pay for the gasoline.

The Governor was gracious and helpful, as was the gasoline dealer who accepted my promise of eventual payment. I got across the Mekong, back to Laos that evening, and telephoned the Legation to send a truck for the 50 two and a half gallon tins of gasoline.

Travel across the Mekong was by large dug out teak canoes with outboard motors.

Another story or two, regarding how I tried to keep busy, without post interest or guidance.

Based on the treaty between North and South Vietnam, the border was closed to refugee movement. We received a message from our Embassy at Saigon that reports indicated refugees nevertheless were crossing, being received in Laos and sent south into Vietnam. Could we confirm this illegal movement? I visited the Ministry of interior, posed the question, and was told no, that such traffic of refugees was not permitted.



In returning to the Legation, I visited the French Catholic Bishop and posed the question. He immediately confirmed refugees were crossing, and being assisted by the Church in their onward trek.

With the Minister's concurrence and his official jeep, I would travel to the site and view the situation on the ground. I left that afternoon, with one of our two Marines, the GSO, staying overnight at a Catholic mission about half way along the overgrown jungle trail.

We arrived at Savannakhet (sic) the second day, having experienced only one problem, namely a log bridge had fallen out from under us, while crossing a ravine, the jeep was left hanging, with left front wheel up off the road, and right rear wheel hanging down off the damaged bridge. With rope, and a lot of effort, we eventually got the jeep off the damaged bridge, and back on the trail, knowing we would have to find another way traveling back to Vientiane.

We arrived in Savannakhet a little before noon - went to the police station and inquired about refugees - were given the official denial - went to the local Catholic Church, met the priest, and were told if we drove out of town to the east we would come across a column of refugees being guided by a priest. Within five minutes we came across the refugees as described.

Not being able to return the way we had come, given the bridge problem, we took the jeep across the Mekong to Thailand, and with substantial help from Thai villagers were able to get the Jeep up to the road system heading north. We drove all night across Thailand, arriving at Theket (sic) across the Mekong from where we would cross back into Laos.

The Legation sent a telegram to Saigon confirming the refugee flow.

Of a more routine nature, I had the task of preparing the "Weeka", a weekly summary sent to the Department outlining the more important communications of the previous week;

And last, shortly before departing Laos for my next post, we were asked by Washington to prepare an Emergency and Evacuation Plan, which fell to my lot to do.

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*Q: Good afternoon, it's March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. I'm Robin Matthewman continuing our oral history interviews with Tom Davis. Tom, we had talked about your early life last time and your starting off in the CIA, while you were waiting for the State Department, then they sent you to Laos with your lovely wife, but did not treat you all that well while you were there, which was a short time. But one story that I wanted to ask about, I think that was a very small, new post, I think you did get a visit from the secretary of State, is that right, by John Foster Dulles?*

DAVIS: Yes, must have been about early February of 1955. There was a SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) meeting in Bangkok.

*Q: What is SEATO?*

DAVIS: SEATO is the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. It was created some time after we decided to get more involved in what we used to call Indochina.

*Q: The meeting was not in Laos, was it?*

DAVIS: No, it was in Bangkok.

As Dulles was finishing his two-three day visit in Bangkok, he sent a telegram asking if it would be all right to visit us. Well you know the answer, "No problem, come ahead." It was a problem, in the sense Dulles was traveling with the Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, and two or three other assistant secretaries of State, public affairs, and his security detail, plus aides and secretary, and we had no specific housing for them. But we managed to put them up. To do that our chief of mission and his wife gave up their bedroom, and my wife I gave up the Yost's extra bedroom, for their own use.

Between the Yost residence, and the office, there were two toilets, one off the Minister's bedroom. The other at the head of the stairs, the latter used by the staff. During the previous months or years the mechanism inside the cisterns of each had disappeared; requiring one to reach into the cistern to flush. Mrs. Yost came to me and asked if I could temporarily fix the commodes. Seemed incongruous to have the Secretary of State of the greatest country in the world have to put his hand in the cistern to flush the commode. I said I'd do my best. I used wire hangers from the closets and carefully rewired each of the cisterns. Seemed to work fine. After the Dulles' left, and we were returning from the airport, Mrs. Yost leaned over to me and said, "I think the Secretary of State hit the handle of the toilet too hard, broke the wires, and thereafter had to flush the toilet with his hand. Could not have happened to a better man."

*Q: Sounds like he was a little gruff, right?*

DAVIS: The visit was worthwhile, as the Secretary could see how primitive everything was, and what we were trying to work with.

*Q: It does help make Washington a little more empathetic when they can see it. That's quite a big delegation for a tiny place like that. Okay so when you were moved to Hong Kong, did you go home first for a visit or go straight there?*

DAVIS: No. We flew directly from Vientiane to Hong Kong.

*Q: Were you and your wife sure you still wanted to be in the Foreign Service? It had been a difficult posting.*

DAVIS: I knew I wanted to be in the Foreign Service, but only if the Foreign Service wanted me. We had a visit from Foreign Service inspectors shortly after I arrived in Hong Kong. It was explained that since I had left the post (they had just visited Vientiane), they could not inspect me, but wanted me to know I was doing very well where I was, keep up the good work, they were sure everything would be fine. They were right; within a few months I was promoted.

*Q: That's good. Hong Kong, first of all, it's an established city. So what were your impressions?*

DAVIS: We liked it very much.

*Q: Were you doing consular work?*

DAVIS: Yes, I was assigned to handle all consular work other than visas and passport.

*Q: That's the American citizen services section.*

DAVIS: There you've got it.

*Q: Were there a lot of seamen coming through, a lot of work related to that?*

DAVIS: I wouldn't say a lot, but we had some of everything. That was the joy of that position. I was faced with doing everything other than visas, passports and nationality matters. So anything else was my job. I did that for a year, enjoyed it very much, and learned a lot.

Regarding seamen, that related to American seamen, and foreign seamen, the latter working aboard ships bound for American ports. Under American visa law and regulations of that time, foreign vessels arriving at an American port had to have either individual visas for the crew, or a crew list visa. A crew list visa could not be issued to a vessel which had visited a communist port. An example - a British cargo vessel arrived in Hong Kong after calling at Shanghai, bound next for the West Coast. I could not issue a crew list visa as it had visited a communist port. The alternative was to consider each crewman individually, denying any that had signed on at Shanghai. The British agent was furious, when I required submission of the individual seamen books. "Freedom of the Seas" etc. His name by the way, believe it or not, was Jack Tar. He sent a telegram to London to the Ministry of Transportation. Mr. Tar went to the Foreign Office and protested to the Embassy. The Embassy reported the situation to the Department, which sent us a telegram essentially asking if we truly had done such a thing. My Consul General, reading the incoming cable from State telephoned me to come to his office, across town, which I did. He showed me State's cable, and asked if I had done this. I replied, yes indeed. He looked at me and said, "prepare a one sentence cable to State, copy to London, the one sentence to be "yes!". We have indeed done this, as required by regulations. The British agent later in the day appeared and without further protest submitted the seamen books for each crewman. None had signed on at Shanghai, thus all

were eligible for visa. Big fuss over nothing. So, yes, I handled a number of seamen matters. Always interesting.

One more seaman story. At the time, American President Lines ran a passenger service out of San Francisco, visiting Hawaii, Yokohama, Hong Kong, Manila and Singapore. On one such visit to Hong Kong, a seaman missed the ship's departure from Hong Kong, visited with his wife and probably kids while awaiting a return of the ship to Hong Kong.

When it did, he went to the operating office of the lines, where the manager had him taken into custody by British Immigrations. An officer of the latter called me with the details, including that he was scheduled to appear in court the following morning.

I too appeared in court, sent word to the judge that an American Consular officer was present, and would like to address the court on behalf of the seaman. I was permitted to do so, with a request also to suggest how the case should be disposed. I did so, pointing out that American seamen missing a ship was not a chargeable offense, but a civil matter relating to the hiring contract.

I suggested, therefore, the court order American President Lines to repatriate the man to the U.S., by air, to be paid by the Lines. The judge so ordered. Case closed. American President Lines manager was furious, but did not again try to pull such a thing.

I made it up to the company, and its manager subsequently, when a crew member announced in advance he did not intend to continue with the cruise, to Manila and Singapore. The manager called me with this information, and challenged me with "what was I going to do" about the problem I told him to keep the seaman in his office, and I would be with them in short order I was, and told the seaman if he missed the departing ship, I would have him arrested for violating British immigration regulations. He stayed with the ship, completing his contract, and the manager of President Lines did not think I was so bad after all, even upgrading our cabin when we sailed home at the end of the assignment.

*Q: It was English speaking, at the time still under British rule.*

DAVIS: English was a common language, but also the languages of China

*Q: Did you start to learn any Chinese?*

DAVIS: Not really. Although I took a language course an hour each morning.

*Q: If I'm right they speak Cantonese, not Mandarin?*

DAVIS: Cantonese indeed is the common man's language. But on the other hand, it is an international city. Beautiful part of that is the restaurants also are representative of various areas of China.

*Q: You arrived in what year?*

DAVIS: 1955.

*Q: Okay. My last little stint overseas in the Foreign Service was in Curacao, a consulate that didn't have an embassy above it. Is that what Hong Kong was? It was part of Britain but our Embassy in London was not managing you from afar?*

DAVIS: The Consulate General reported directly to the Department of State.

*Q: So the consul general, the principal officer, is also the chief of mission except not titled as ambassador.*

DAVIS: Yes.

*Q: That was like Curacao; these two are very different from the rest of our posts.*

DAVIS: We worked as though we were an embassy. I would add that at Aden we also reported directly to the Department, having no ongoing relationship with London, Aden looked to NEA for direction and support, whereas London was under the direction of European Affairs.

*Q: Who was the Consul General?*

DAVIS: Everett Drumright. Before Hong Kong he had been deputy chief of mission in Korea, and from Hong Kong he went to Taiwan as Ambassador.

*Q: You mentioned that Hong Kong was very important to us; do you remember what the key issues were?*

DAVIS: Hong Kong was our door on China, given we were excluded from China, officially and otherwise. The role of the consulate-general was a listening/watching post; political, economic intelligence, et cetera.

*Q: Were the Chinese from mainland China friendly with Americans? Or was there suspicion?*

DAVIS: It was more than suspicion. We had no relationship with the mainland, nor its people, They were still holding American political prisoners. I shared with a political officer the meeting of individuals, as one occasionally was released, one meeting train and the other ship, if a vessel was expected in port at the same time.

*Q: Was there military action going on in China at that time?*

DAVIS: No. The Communist Chinese had taken over China in '48, '49. By '55, they had been in firm control throughout China for seven years.

*Q: So the Nationalists had already gone to Taiwan.*

DAVIS: Yes

*Q: Did we have a lot of people arrested or in jail?*

DAVIS: I presume you mean in China, not in Hong Kong? Regarding the latter, there were no Americans in jail during my time at the Consulate General. There were a small number still under detention in China, with one or two released from time to time.

*Q: Did you do much traveling? Hong Kong's a small place.*

DAVIS: We went to Macau several times; that was always interesting. Macau was there before Hong Kong, so our first treaty between China and the United States was signed in Macau. Interesting to go to the old cemetery, and see markers describing seamen having fallen to the deck, and been buried there, or deaths by cholera, so forth, in those earlier years.

*Q: Was Macau in those years Portuguese?*

DAVIS: Yes, it was a Portuguese colony. Historical point of view; when we were building the Union Pacific across the west, we in general used Irish laborers on the eastern part. But on the western side, Provo, Utah to San Francisco, almost all the laborers were Chinese. They were recruited at Macau, and went to the U.S. under contract. The recruiters were not allowed into China, but set up their hiring hall in Macau, and Chinese would come across the river from China. Therefore, almost all the Chinese who came to the United States in the nineteenth century came from the province of Guangdong. So, Macau historically has been a very interesting place for us.

*Q: For some reason I think of Macau, I think of gambling, a lot of casinos.*

DAVIS: Yes, they set up casinos there, especially in more recent years. But I think Macau has been returned to China.

*Q: You mentioned that Drumright was respected, as the consul general. Did you have a boss of the consular section who helped to do some of the training and background that the Foreign Service Institute did not give you before you left? Was he a good mentor? I'm assuming he was a he.*

DAVIS: The consul ran the section. Regarding mentors, if one wanted to call them that, were the local employees. There were two in the notarial unit, one in the unit handling shipping, seaman, protection and welfare, and one handling annuities, such as military pensions and Social Security. Given the extensive correspondence, I had a personal secretary, first British, and then a German lady. All were very able people. I don't recall

the Consul ever visiting my section. When we spoke, or otherwise consulted, it was in his office. There was no mentoring, or training. We, of course, had the related manuals.

*Q: So you were happy with living and working there?*

DAVIS: Very much so. You asked about the consul, what did I get from him? I got from him self confidence and appreciation. confidence in me, and appreciation of my work. Mentor? Didn't need that. I had the Foreign Service manuals, and the Foreign Service indigenous personnel.

*Q: How many visa officers were there?*

DAVIS: I'll describe the consular section for you. The passport and American citizen unit was run by Ruth, a Foreign Service Consul/ staff officer. She had two vice consul/ Foreign Service officers ( working with her, Dick Post and Cleve Fuller, each on their second assignment). The visa unit was headed by a Foreign Service officer/ consul, plus two Foreign Service staff officers, and one other Foreign Service officer. The Section Chief, was a FSO/Consul, formerly an Immigration Officer.

*Were you a tight team? Did you work in the same place as the political and economic officers, or were you separate?*

DAVIS: No. We were separate, and had little professional or social connection with the substantive people. The political and economic officers were in the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank Building, with the consul general, as well as our colleagues from the Agency. Consular, administrative, and security were several blocks away on Garden Road.

*Q: So this is your first or second time, depending how you count, working on consular work; were you starting to look around and see the kinds of work you would like to do in addition to that, in the future? Did you see things about how the consular work that were intriguing to you?*

DAVIS: No. I was neither asked nor offered an opportunity to express a preference. At the conclusion of two years abroad, a telegram arrived announcing my assignment to Port-au-Prince, as chief of the consular section, with language training en route. That was fine and seemed reasonable, given my Hong Kong assignment. There was no mentoring, It was where the vacancies were, and getting a body to put in it?

*Q: Were there notable events that happened while you were in Hong Kong?*

DAVIS: I'll respond to the question as relating to consul work, rather than political events, such as Great Britain and Israel seizing the Suez Canal.

We notarized certificates of origin to identify commercial products as of American origin. If for example the United States granted dollars to Korea to help financially, such a grant required the money be used to buy American products. If you were at a trans-shipment

point, say Hong Kong, and you were shipping to Korea, you would come to the consulate, and swear to a “certificate of origin”.

That was a great opportunity for fraud, and I decided not to notarize unless I had evidence to support the claim of American origin. That proved impossible. A can of Abalone was presented as evidence of American origin, as it said California, but said “Lower California” which is in Mexico. “Sin Ger” and “Par Ker” products were presented as Singer, and Parker products, A Certificate of Origin was presented for bales of clothing, of which the size of the product was greater than the shop where it was certified as being stored. For these reasons I concluded the threat of fraud was so great that the Consulate General should stop notarising the certificates.

Regarding the subject of mentoring or supervision, I made the decision without either, using my common sense, and authority.

*Q: Because you hadn't got one that was trustworthy?*

DAVIS: Another story. This one relating to Shipping and Seamen. A Chinese gentleman, T.Y. Fong had a contract with the United States Navy to carry scrap iron from Subic Bay, Philippines, to Japan. He owned a ship, called the *Pan American*. Problem: if he ran between Taiwan and China, he could be stopped by the Chinese and fined. Sailing to the east of Taiwan would increase the time and cost. The solution, he felt, was to fly the American flag, which he did for some time. We didn't know about it until he came into Hong Kong for some purpose, and his international certificate of safety at sea expired, while the ship was in port, and he could not sail without it being renewed. He went to the American Shipping Agent for a new certificate, but the latter couldn't issue one without permission from the consulate, which brought him to me.

Problem: You cannot legally fly the American flag unless the vessel is American owned. But, only an American can own an American vessel, whereas T.Y. Fong was of Brazilian nationality.

The ship was tied up in Hong Kong for a year. The company that sold it to him was fined. When he flew to the United States, I alerted the Attorney General's office as to when he was arriving, and he was arrested. He was put under a \$500,000 bail to appear in court at a given time; he jumped bail, and left the States.

To complete the story, after the above and the lapse of a year in port, the U.S. authorized sale of the vessel to a Dutch firm, to be used for salvage work in the North Atlantic.

*Q: Way back in the 1950s, huh?*

DAVIS: Chinese are good people, I like them. Very interesting people, but you have to watch what you do.



*Q: Very enterprising, right. So I think we have time for one or two more Hong Kong stories if there's anything else you think gives us the flavor.*

DAVIS: Fine, I have a story about Protection and Welfare. My notarial clerk came to my desk and said "there's a lady at the counter who wishes to speak to you." So I went to the counter, and there was a young American woman. I would guess in her early twenties Do you know what a cheongsam (a Mandarin gown) is? It's a Chinese dress that has a high collar and is split up the leg; Her dress was unbuttoned at the collar, and on her feet she had Grecian sandals, with a strap up her calf. She was very nice looking.

She said, "May I speak to you in private?"

I said "Yes of course."

I brought her to my desk and as she sat down, she slapped the desk as hard as she could and said, "I am not a prostitute!"

I immediately agreed with her and asked, "What's the problem?"

She said, "As you probably know, the British immigration authorities periodically go through the colony and pick up prostitutes and ship them back to Manila, where most of them are from. They put me on the damn list. I'm not a prostitute, I have a contract at the Queen's Theater in Kowloon, where I dance with bubbles. I'm a bubble dancer."

*Q: I never heard of bubble dancers, had you?*

DAVIS: Oh, yes. A woman, hopefully little on, has two or three big bubbles, like balloons, and moves around as she dances, concealing herself. And all the men in the audience go "ooooaaahhhh!" Kind of a burlesque thing. Obviously it can be nice, or it can be raunchy. But at the Queen's Theater, a decent place in Kowloon, they had matinees between movies, and always had some type of event. So they had her under contract for a week, which she wanted to carry out. I called British immigration and was told to offer her their apologies.

She was very pleased. While she was with me, Dick Post, a vice consul colleague, walked by, saw this good-looking girl sitting at my desk, came over and said, "Excuse me Tom. May I interrupt" and then to her, "Didn't you dance at the Crown Prince's wedding in Ethiopia last summer?"

She replied, "Yes I did."

He says, "You're the bubble dancer!"

What a coincidence. The vice consul had been in Ethiopia and seen her.

*Q: She was an American citizen?*

DAVIS: Oh, yes.

To wrap it up. The next day I received a letter from the girl's mother in Seattle. The mother was writing about her daughter who was dancing her way around the world, with a little monkey, writing a book to be called *A Monkey's Eye View of the World*, and she had not heard from her daughter for two weeks. Usually her daughter wrote every week; and last she'd heard, she would be in Hong Kong, and would I find out if she was safe and tell her to write, please? What a wonderful thing. I had fun calling her on the telephone and asking her to write to her mother?"

*Q: I have three more minutes so I wanted to ask, how did your wife spend her time there? Was she working?*

DAVIS: I don't think I said this about Vientiane. The minister found out she was a secretary, and insisted she work for him, his secretary having been evacuated. That worked out for her, so they got something out of my family even though they felt I wasn't worth a damn.

*Q: Did she have a chance to work in Hong Kong?*

DAVIS: No, as the British had wives seeking employment. The wives all tended to be middle-twenties, friendly with each other, and we all did a fair amount of entertaining. The ladies had plenty to do with teas, and shopping in the Chinese markets. After Laos, she was busy and happy.

*Q: We'll move on to Haiti next time.*

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 and I'm continuing our conversation with Tom Davis. Tom, we are now in the year 1957, I believe, and you had an assignment to go from Asia now to Haiti, which is something very different.*

DAVIS: It was indeed.

*Q: So I would like to hear about what your job was, who the ambassador was, and what was going on in Haiti at that time.*

DAVIS: I might just pick up at the airport in Miami. My wife and I were waiting for the plane to take us to Haiti. I looked across the waiting room and saw this distinguished gentleman, and thought that's my ambassador." I had never seen him before. I turned to my wife and said, "I think that's my ambassador; if so, I feel silly, I should go over and introduce myself."

She said, “Oh, don’t,” not wanting to be embarrassed if it was not the ambassador.

But I walked over and said, “Excuse me, but are you Ambassador Gerald Drew?”

He looked at me and said, “Yes, I am.”

And I said, “I’m your new consul.” And with that we began a conversation that extended for the next two years. To begin with, when we got on the plane he invited (which means required) that I join him. I left my wife sitting by herself. She thought I should be sitting beside her. But anyway, I spent the time en route to Haiti sitting beside my ambassador. He explained to me that he expected me to take over the consular section, would support me as Consul, but expected me to do the job, and not get him in trouble. I said that seemed fair enough, but I was a vice consul, not a consul. (had already ordered engraved Vice Consul cards). No, he said. “ I want you to use the Consul title”, which I did, not otherwise being so entitled, until I was promoted two years later, after leaving the post.

At Port-au-Prince, he was met by a chauffeur and driven away. I was met by Joe Gross, who was the consul until that day and was leaving. We greeted each other, he got on the airplane and departed. My wife and I were taken to a small hotel called Sans Souci, which was used by the embassy to put up new people until they could find a house. It was run by George and Gertie Heraux.

This was on a Friday afternoon, so I thought I would have Saturday and Sunday to get used to Haiti, and then on Monday I would go to the embassy, meet the people I was working with, et cetera. That was not to be. Sunday morning before breakfast I was called and told an American wanted to see me. It was a businessman by the name of William Talamas. He had come because he had been to the embassy and was told the new consul was at the Sans Souci Hotel.

The police were said to be hunting for his brother, another small businessman by the name of Shibley Talamas. We went to the ambassador’s house; Talamas was there. He had gone to his house early that morning and found the house had been searched, his safe broken into, and from the neighbors learned the police were looking for him. Frightened, he had gone to the ambassador’s house seeking information and help.

I was directed to go to the police station, where I was told several policemen had been killed the night before at an outpost in the mountains, and Talamas was involved. They wanted to question him, and ask for him to come to the police station.

I returned to the ambassador and Talamas. His two brothers were there, and it was understood as a businessman he had little choice but to respond to the police. It was agreed I would accompany him, with his brother, William. At the police station we met with Major Beauvoir, and Shibley was detained. We were assured he would be treated with respect, and we could visit him the following morning.

When we checked the following morning, he was not available at the police station. The vice consul, Jay Long, was told he was at the prison, but there, Jay was told they knew nothing about Talamas. The ambassador called for an appointment with the foreign minister. The latter refused to receive him, saying this was a consular matter, not a diplomatic matter, and he would talk to the consul but not to the ambassador. This made no difference to us because I was a diplomatic officer as well as consul. I went to the foreign minister's office, taking Jay with me and as we sat down in a courteous atmosphere, we were told Talamas had died of a heart attack while being questioned.

The Foreign Minister, Colonel Romain, agreed to an autopsy to confirm the cause of death. Jay and I went to the morgue to see the body; the morgue was under army guard and we could not get in. It took us a couple of hours to finally view the body. It was obvious from bruises on his shoulders, chest, he'd been beaten. Without going into all the details, we shipped the body to New York City to have a forensic examination by professionals; it was confirmed he'd been beaten to death. That began my first three months in Haiti.

*Q: Were the Talamases, Haitian-Americans?*

DAVIS: No, they were from Texas; children of a much earlier Palestinian emigration to the States.

*Q: They were unlikely to have been involved in any police killing?*

DAVIS: Correct. During the three months we worked on this case, trying to get an apology, indemnity for widow and child; and punishment for those involved, we learned his child had been born the night of the alleged crime, with Talamasin in jail for curfew violation. He was in jail because he had taken his wife to the hospital and had driven to the nearby community of Petionville to get a doctor to send to the hospital. When he entered Petionville, he was kept all night, so he could not have been involved in killing the policemen.

We were seeking an apology, indemnity, and punishment for the offenders. For the next three months, that was much of my job, trying to achieve that. The Haitians continued to refuse to discuss it at the diplomatic level, which put me out front.

Finally, a deal was made, not a satisfactory one. The Ambassador was not happy, nor was I, but Haiti paid \$50,000 to the widow, apologized, and slightly increased the promotion time for the four men responsible. I was told by the Ambassador we had to accept it. Part of life in Haiti, I guess.

During that period of time, Haiti was moving from government by Junta to that of a dictatorship by Papa Doc Duvalier. He was taking over with his secret police, the Ton-Ton Macoutes. His task, as he took over, was to dominate the army, which he did very successfully. After several months, the country fell completely under his control.

The senior officers of the army were retired, a younger group brought in, no better, no worse.

In response to Embassy opposition to the new regime, we were instructed to stop the latter, and support the Duvalier Government, notwithstanding the atrocities being committed. To ensure our support, the office director for Caribbean Affairs came down, met with the Ambassador and officers during and following dinner. Although the excuse was not offered, I presume the Department's position was based on fear of communist insurgency, such as was taking place in Cuba, occurring in Haiti, thus the willingness to support the dictatorship. At the same time we, of course, were financing the government.

During that time, New Year's Eve arrived. Shortly after midnight New Year's Eve, an American woman visiting from Chicago with her Haitian husband, was in a taxicab returning to his family's home from a party. The taxi was stopped, for what reason I don't know. She and her husband were taken to the police station, this about 1:30 in the morning, and held without charge. She asked to call the American consul; but was refused. About 2:30 the chief of police arrived. She complained, and allegedly he said she was lucky she had not been treated like Talamas. She was released and told not to cause trouble and to stay away from the embassy.

She went with her husband to his family. The family apparently knew Genera Kebreau (sic) and went to see him. They again were asked not to make trouble and not to bring the Embassy into the situation; yes, she had a right to go to the embassy, but to remember her husband was Haitian. She was not intimidated by this and in the morning was at the Embassy to complain.

I asked for a sworn statement, to which she readily agreed, as I intended to discuss the allegations with Colonel Daniel Beauvoir. The latter was the brother of Major Jean Beauvoir, Chief of Criminal Investigations, who had taken Shibley Talamas into custody several months earlier.

After the afternoon plane took off for Miami, the couple safely on board, I went to the police station and asked to see the chief of police. He was called from home, and we went upstairs to his office and had a pleasant conversation, during which he denied everything the American woman had alleged. Unfortunately as we concluded our conversation, he asked who did I believe? That was a mistake on his part; I made a worse one by saying I believed her, I had her affidavit and no reason not to believe her. The Colonel put me in my Embassy car, and returning to the Chancery I made a note of the conversation, and more or less forgot it. I had made my protest, but the accusation was denied, I expected little else.

*Q: Were there later ramifications from this incident?*

DAVIS: Yes. Monday morning our commercial attaché, Peter Albay, walked into my office and said, "Last night at about midnight, Colonel So-and-So, my neighbor, who's part of the junta, woke me up to tell me there had been a meeting of the junta, and the

chief of police had requested authorization to kill the American Consul. Reason being, he had been insulted by the Consul and felt honor-bound to kill him. Permission was granted, with the admonition he should make it look like an accident.”

I said “Thanks, Pete” and went back to work. Lots of nonsense, you hear all kinds of things. So I paid no attention to it. The next day, a Haitian friend, who owned and ran a tourist hotel, came in, and told me that at a dinner the previous night, attended only by Haitians, the chief of police had said he was going to kill the American consul.

That got to me. I went to see the DCM, the Ambassador being away for a few days. and told him what had happened, to which he responded, “I’ve heard the same thing. and sent a telegram to the department, but no answer yet. All I can do is this, and he reached into his desk drawer, pulled out a Colt .45 automatic, handed it to me, and said “Protect yourself.” We did not have a security officer at post in those days.

I was concerned my wife would hear of the threat. We were going out almost every night, I with the .45 behind my back. Gossip goes around and everybody soon knew the chief of police said he was going to kill the American Consul, and the latter was carrying a pistol.

*Q: Do you think he was trying to get you to leave the country?*

DAVIS: Perhaps. A couple of weeks went by, and every night I would give a sigh of relief that another day had gone by. We never heard from the Department.

About two weeks went by –I’d just sat down in my office one morning, my secretary came in all of a-fluster, immediately followed by Mr. Beauvoir, Minister of Foreign Affairs. I leaped to my feet. “Excellency, what can I do for you?”, all the time thinking I’m in trouble. If you’re a junior officer and senior people visit, they’re not supposed to be seeing you, but the ambassador, or at least the chargé d’affaires.

He said, “I’ve come to ask for a favor.”

“Of course, whatever I can do to be of assistance ,would be my pleasure.”

He turned and said, “I think you know my nephew.” I had noticed he was accompanied by another civilian. I looked, and it was the chief of police. He was not in uniform and looked much smaller in civilian clothes. He did not have a pistol on, and that made him look even smaller. We acknowledged each other. The foreign minister said, “I’ve come to ask you to give a transit visa to my nephew”. He added, “We are sending him to Germany as Ambassador, and he has to transfer planes in New York to Lufthansa. Will you please give him a transit visa.”

Well you know, as I do, that you don’t refuse a transit visa to a diplomat However, Mr. Beauvoir was certain I would do something to screw it up, embarrassing the Beauvoir family. Of course the visa was issued. Pan Am flew out each day from Port-au-Prince to

Miami, on to New York, and left about 3:15. I called the station manager at the airport, to confirm the chief of police had been on-board when the airplane left. With that confirmation, I walked upstairs to the chargé, took the .45 automatic, put it on his desk, and said I won't need the damned thing after all.

*Q: And that took care of the danger? He left the country?*

DAVIS: Sometimes I think consular officers have all the fun, depending on the place.

*Q: I really like that story. I like the idea you were able to get rid of a mortal danger to the embassy and yourself, by issuing a transit visa.*

DAVIS: You will wonder, as others will, why did I, a junior officer assigned to consular duties, be involved in what were serious political matters. Let me explain; it might be of interest historically.

This was 1957. The previous year, State had integrated the Foreign Service, expanding from 1500 officers to 3400, including what had been Foreign Service staff officers, and Civil Service officers who had staffed State officer positions. When I arrived in Haiti with two assignments behind me, the ambassador and I were the only officers at post who had come in through the examination process, and had been Foreign Service officers before the integration. For some reason, that put the ambassador and me kind of together. He would call me at quitting time, to come up and chat about what was going on, etc. Drew, by the way, had been ambassador at three posts, Jordan, Bolivia and Haiti, had been Director General of the Foreign Service. and would be Inspector General, before retirement.

Telephones in Haiti were uncertain, and mobile radio-telephones were just coming into limited use. We tended to live up the hill, as it was a little cooler, and at nighttime the breeze would come down from the mountains and be very pleasant. I, the DCM (deputy chief of mission), the CIA guy, and the ambassador each had one of the radio-phones.

At 5:00 A.M. one morning I awakened to, "This is Papa" (Papa was the Ambassador.) "Foxtrot, Foxtrot, this is Papa." I was Foxtrot. "Shooting has been going on since midnight, it's about time you get down here." That was the first I knew about it. He added, " go up to Petionville" (the next community up the hill) "get Landreth" (Rod Landreth was our CIA guy) and come down to the Residence.

I got Rod out of bed, told him to go to the Residence. Driving to the residence, I detoured to go by the airport, to see if anything was happening there. There was a small military base across the street from the airport, and all was quiet, nothing going on.

I drove on to the residence, and the three of us sat in the kitchen drinking coffee until 7:00. At 7:00 the ambassador got up (the shooting was still going on) and said, "Let's go into town." The chauffeur put the flag on the car and we rode into town. The embassy in those days was located across the plaza from the so-called White House, and the "Grand

Quartier Général”, military headquarters. We couldn’t see anything going on. The ambassador sent the chauffeur to tell female staff members not to come in until notified.

About 8:00 I walked out to the street, ran into the French second secretary, we stood there gossiping, wondering what the hell was going on. The shooting had rather quieted down. About that time a van turned the corner fast, drove down the street a block and stopped, men jumped out of the van, ran into the backyard of the house, the firing resumed, lasted a few seconds, and stopped. That was the end of the firing. They got back in the van and drove off.

I reported the above to the ambassador. At 9:00 a Haitian major came in, asked to see the consul, and informed me the general would like me to come to the “caserne”, the barracks, and identify the American dead. I told the ambassador, and he said to go as requested, but take a second officer.

I asked one of the CIA guys to accompany me, and we went across the plaza to the military barracks. The gates to the barracks were open, no sentry. The barracks were situated as some military bases are around a large parade ground, one side abutting against the White House, one side lined with one-story offices, and the other with two-story barracks. The parade ground was full of civilians running around dancing and yelling, waving bloody clothing. Upon seeing me and my companion, they yelled for us to identify the American dead.

My companion and I were taken into the offices and there were bodies scattered about. Outside I could see the building was holed, like a sewing machine might stitch cloth, machine gun bullets, two or three inches apart in a straight line. Yes, there were white bodies, but all had been stripped of clothing; that’s where the bloody clothing being waved outside had come from, they’d stripped the bodies and were waving clothes with blood smeared on them.

When I came out, there were no military people, just these civilians, all yelling for me to identify the American dead. They were very excited, and of those close to me (waving machine guns, et cetera) I asked to be taken to the general, General Maurice Flambert. He and I knew each other well, during the past three months I’d seen him fairly often. He’d always been very courteous. I was taken to the office of the military representative of the president, where Flambert was, together with a number of civilians and another officer in uniform.

The other officer had a helmet on his head with a major’s insignia and a .45 slung on a belt around his waist. General Flambert pointed at this gentleman, and I thought my God I just turned my back on the president of Haiti. It was Duvalier, standing there with his wife and eight or ten men, I could see one was Barbeau the chief of the secret police, others were the minister of commerce, et cetera.

I was told that at the police station, I could review the identification taken from the bodies, demonstrating they were Americans. First, I went to the morgue, and there were



four bodies. They had large wounds you would expect from heavy caliber weapons. From there I went to the police station, and they showed me that yes, these were Americans. Three of whom had been carrying sidearms, holsters, belts, emblazoned "Deputy Sheriffs of Dade County, Florida."

*Q: What?*

DAVIS: Three of them. One other had the identifications of a reserve lieutenant in the United States Air Force, and the fifth had identifications which we subsequently found out indicated he had been dishonorably discharged from the Army. There was identification for five men, including pictures taken on a boat from Marathon, Florida. With unwarranted hubris, they had taken pictures of each other en route to attempt a coup d'état, with three Haitian retired colonels, who hoped other officers would join them, bringing about a general uprising against Duvalier.

I went back to the office, reported what I had seen. A few minutes later I was joined in my office by newspapermen who had flown in from Miami. They had just come from the morgue and wanted to talk to me about the five Americans. I said "there aren't five, there are four." They said there are five, I said there are four. So we got into our cars and went back to the morgue, and now indeed there were five bodies. The fifth body did not have large wounds, just one wound about the size of a pencil eraser. My thought was he had been captured and executed.

Unfortunately, our military attaché had been seen driving by the caserne some minutes before the affair took place; he was going home after a date. Allegedly, he knew nothing about it. He was immediately declared persona non grata and left Port-au-Prince. The word went around that the ambassador would be declared persona-non-grata. Then word went out that they would throw the American consul out. But in the end my vice consul, Jay Long, was declared and asked to leave. Not his fault, but he had to go.

In the meantime, the story came out. The three retired Haitian officers had recruited the five Americans, had sailed from Marathon with a fisherman, or somebody who had a boat, had landed on the coast, hijacked a station wagon, drove into Port-au-Prince at midnight, went to the gate at the barracks, demanded admittance (they had Haitian uniforms on, and claimed to have American prisoners). They were permitted entry, killed the sentry, dominated those in the barracks, called upon the president to surrender, and called fellow army officers to join them.

The president had sent his chauffeur to the Venezuelan embassy, asking if he could have asylum? The Venezuelan ambassador said yes, the limousine came back to the palace, sat there all night, just in case. The rebels were not joined by anybody. The officers came into town, but went to their headquarters across the plaza from the palace, and waited.

In the meantime, we later read in the Miami newspaper that at 5:00 in the morning an aircraft was stopped from taking off from Miami airport by U.S. Customs, it was without

documentation. On board were fifty armed men., said to be en route to the Dominican Republic.

*Q: Which shares the island.*

DAVIS: On the other hand, if fifty armed men had arrived at the airport in Haiti before the officers had made up their minds what to do, well your guess is as good as mine. What did happen, at 7:00 Duvalier called upon officers at the grand quartier général, and General Flambert, to get off their backsides and help him. So they did, and with the secret police, overran and killed the eight men.

With five Americans at the morgue, the Haitian government prepared a white paper condemning and accusing the United States government. The five Americans were accused of attempting to carry out the attack

They demanded my signature, which I refused. The Ambassador sent me a note supporting my position, not to do anything I thought would be wrong. I said I would sign the paper relating to the four (I initially had seen at the morgue) but would not sign it relating to the fifth, as I did not know what had occurred with him.

The Foreign Ministry refused to release the bodies. At that time in the Caribbean, electricity was very uncertain, and there was no air conditioning at the morgue. Their custom, as in many third world countries, is to bury the dead the day after death. They do not embalm.

Since they would not release the bodies to us, unless I or the ambassador signed the White Paper, the bodies continued at the morgue. Every several days I would be called to meet a representative from the Foreign Ministry at the morgue. It got so bad that each time we would meet further away from the building where the bodies were. Eventually we were about a block away.

I decided I would not do this any longer (we had met about four times), and told my colleague from the Ministry that this was the last time I would see him on the subject. I was returning to the embassy and they could either release the bodies to us that day, or they could keep them. I would notify the families that the government had refused to release them to us and that would be it.

An hour or two later we had a telephone call from the Foreign Ministry; releasing the bodies We returned four to families in the United States; the fifth we buried locally.

One more story. I've already explained why I got involved in so much. During these days, our ambassador was not in the good graces of the Haitian president, and State was not very supportive.

Duvalier had supporters in Washington. We always have in the United States people who support foreign governments, and not their own government. An

Ambassador-without-portfolio, visiting Washington, gave a statement to *The New York Times* saying Ambassador Drew was not very helpful, and they were considering asking for his recall. The ambassador waited for the Department to issue a statement, either removing him, or confirming support. Or, a gesture from the Haitian government. The DCM had left post, and I was called to the Ambassador's office, and told "I'm going to take Mrs Drew, and go to our cottage in the mountain, staying until one way or the other, this is clarified".

Kyle Barnes, our administrative officer, was told he was in charge administratively, and I for other matters Every morning I was to bring his secretary and telegrams to him at the cottage. "They'll get the message."

So we did this. The rumors went around, what is going on? We have this problem between our governments, and the ambassador is up at his cottage."

One afternoon, I received a telephone call from a Haitian businessman, a friend. We continued to be friends long after I left Haiti; I called him Bobby. He said, "Tom, I've been asked by a senior government official to offer dinner tonight at my home, and to ask you and your wife to be there. It's hoped you and the government official will get together after dinner, and discuss what is considered a serious mattera relative to the ambassador being away."

I said, "I don't know what my wife has planned, but I'll speak to her, and if we are free, we'll be happy to be with you." We were and we did. Turned out the senior government official was deputy minister of commerce. A decent sort of person. After dinner we sat down, the two of us. He said there was concern on the part of President Duvalier that the Ambassador had absented himself from his post, and what was wrong, and what could be done about it.

I explained what had happened in Washington. saying "You know that was a grievous insult; my ambassador is not a man to hold this against the president, but he is a man of some dignity, and expects to be treated as due his position of ambassador."

He said, "what can we do?"

I said, "If the president and his wife were to invite my ambassador and his wife to dinner, I suspect they would find it hard not to come, and have dinner with the president, and if that happened, I should think the conversation that ensued would take care of the problem, don't you?"

He said, "I think so."

So when I went up the mountain the next day with the ambassador's secretary and the telegrams, I took with me a letter from the President of Haiti to the ambassador, and he and his wife returned to their residence that afternoon, and that evening had dinner with the president. That took care of the immediate problem.

*Q: I missed something. What was the connection of President Duvalier to somebody in Washington saying that Ambassador Drew wasn't very good? Was it a Haitian official who said this in Washington?*

DAVIS: Oh yes, A "minister without portfolio" would visit for a few days, acting as Duvalier's personal representative, over the regular Ambassador.

*Q: A Haitian ambassador without a portfolio? Oh, okay. So he's the one that met with the New York Times.*

DAVIS: Not just the political representative of President Duvalier, but his personal representative; made it all the more serious because it was known the man spoke in the name of the Haitian president.

*Q: I see. So the insult was from Papa Doc himself.*

DAVIS: One further thing. We heard the president – whenever I used the term president, I'm speaking of Duvalier, not our own. We had a rumor that President Duvalier had suffered a heart attack; and sent State a telegram to that effect. Washington responded with the words "Don't let him die".

*Q: Right, so the Caribbean office of the American Republics Affairs (ARA) bureau.*

DAVIS: I forget the formal name.

*Q: This was the period of John Foster Dulles. Dulles was the Secretary of State until 1959.*

DAVIS: Yes, that would have been Dulles.

*Q: So under John Foster Dulles and Eisenhower, they had decided because of the way the Cold War was going and the domino effect viewpoint, that they were going to support people like Duvalier.*

DAVIS: Indeed, that was it. Put it this way – we at the embassy had our opinions but we did not have the large picture, in their eyes. And that's fair enough; the Department of State directs the embassy and we should do what we're told, and we did.

An example. When we heard the president had probably had a heart attack. That required an immediate telegram to the Department, which the ambassador sent. We had an immediate telegram back. It was, "Don't let him die. The Ambassador called a meeting at his residence, this being Saturday night, to discuss what to do.

I, being the only graduate of a Jesuit university, thought it was proper to have a suggestion (I'm joking). I said, "There are two things we need to accomplish. One, we

needed to kill the rumor that Duvalier had a heart attack, because this encourages the opposition to attempt to make things worse, even provoke riots, in the hope of causing another heart attack. So we need to do something to stop that. And two, we need to do something to help the man. So I recommend we send to Guantanamo for the best heart doctor the Navy has or can get quickly, to be secretly put into the “White House” to take over the care of the president.” That was done.”

To stop the rumor, I suggested “if the ambassador is prepared to lie for the Department, he should, with the agreement of the palace, visit the president”. There will be reporters waiting for him to come out. And when he does exit, they will ask ‘how is the president?’ and he should reply, ‘I hope he doesn’t give me his cold.’ And walk off, don’t say anything else.” He did make the visit, and gave that statement. The Haitians went further, and bundled the president into his limousine, drove him about town for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then put him to bed, and our heart specialist took over for a week or two, until he was sufficiently recovered to leave him.

I’d like to talk about the Embassy and its people for a moment or two. As I noted in the beginning, the officer staff, other than the Ambassador and myself, were new to the Foreign Service. The staff included the Administrative officer, finance officer, commercial officer, junior officer, who worked as political officer, a FSO /vice consul working with me, and a Staff vice consul. In addition there were two Agency guys, the code clerk and three Foreign Service secretaries. The consular and administrative sections were supported by local staff. Two of whom were mine. And, of course, we had about six Marines.

The DCM had a year earlier been integrated into the Foreign Service, and was at his first Foreign Service post. He previously had been head of the Department’s Aviation Division, and during WWII had held the rank of Brig. General. Obviously a man of some background, a graduate of Princeton, and perhaps of family money.

The Ambassador probably was not busy enough, and did not need a deputy. Our telegrams from the Department or elsewhere came via Cable and Wireless, which closed each evening at 7 pm. The Ambassador’s hours regularly kept him in the office until then, whereas almost everyone else was able to keep regular hours. That often meant that about the time I wanted to leave, the Ambassador would telephone and call me up to his office. Good for my self image, but not so good for the daily relationship between Ambassador and DCM. Separately, when I might be walking upstairs to talk with the DCM (my direct boss) the Ambassador would call me into his office, which was across the hall from the open door of the DCM’s office. Thus, the Ambassador was well informed about what was happening consular-wise, but I was left with little to discuss with the DCM.

Two other comments about Embassy people. Don’t know why, but before my arrival something apparently happened between Vice Consul Jay Long, and the Ambassador, which left the latter very unhappy with Long. Nothing had been said to me on the subject, until shortly before it was time to write Efficiency Reports. I was called by the DCM, and

told the Ambassador wanted me to write Long up in such a way he would fail probation as a junior officer, and thus leave the Service.

Given my earlier personal experience in Laos, I was not about to do such a thing, and so told the DCM, adding that their displeasure could be set forth in the report's review, but I felt Jay had been doing a good job for the consular section, and deserved to be so described.

The DCM obviously was not pleased, but the Ambassador said nothing to me on the subject. My report was, as I promised, laudatory. In addition, I included in the report that I was aware of disagreement on the part of the reviewer.

Unfortunately, after Jay left the post I never heard anything further about him. I suppose he was let go from the Service. Too bad, in my opinion.

Separately, shortly after arriving at post, my wife and I received an invitation for dinner from the DCM and his wife, marked "Informal". We arrived to find our host and a second guest in black tie, whereas I was in a tailored topical-weight blue suit and tie. Months later when the DCM did his report on me, he did not forget to add that I apparently did not understand that "informal" meant "Black Tie" Games we play. Several years later, I was on the White House Staff, with dining privilege in the Mess. I invited Paul to be my guest at lunch. Games we play.

Davis: The Haitian people are good people. I feel sorry for them, I've always felt sorry for them. They have a situation that they have not been able to and I don't foresee them overcoming. Nobody is willing to take the steps necessary, steps to ameliorate, steps to stop the violence, but not the steps that are necessary to provide a means for these people to support themselves, never mind even talking about the subject of democracy. I say this because we're in a situation today that's even worse than when I was there.

*Q: Right, and many years later in 2021, Colombian mercenaries were hired and brought into Haiti, in connection with a murky assassination of the president. Almost seventy years later, an assassination that was successful.*

DAVIS: Yes. I believe there was an assassination there, but as to who did it, I've never read. There have been accusations.

*Q: Yes, I think you are right.*

*Q: Tom, going back to Papa Doc, did I understand correctly that it was true he had a heart attack and was rather ill.*

DAVIS: That was correct.

*Q: But he did survive and then he stayed in power for a long time?*

DAVIS: He survived for more than ten years. So I guess we obeyed our orders; we did not let him die.

*Q: I can just see that as the title of a book!*

DAVIS: One further thing. During my next assignment, I was in Washington, and part of the period at the White House. On one occasion I had the privilege of sitting with the President, and my boss, the Military Representative to the President, and talking with the President about Haiti, and its dictatorship, and then setting up a meeting with States' desk officer to go into more detail, given I no longer was involved in Haitian affairs.

*Q: What did he say or ask?*

DAVIS: I am not going to tell you.

*Q: Wonderful stories, Tom, I feel honored you took the time today. Shall we end the interview today and go back to your work in intelligence and at the White House at our next meeting?*

DAVIS: The next time we can talk about my Washington assignment. I would add one thing there. I was due to go overseas again, and had been told by personnel they were prepared to send me, and when I returned from that meeting with personnel, I was called into the office of my boss, a senior officer in the Intelligence Bureau, and asked, "If I can further your career, would you be willing to extend for one year?"

I said let me think about it. By then Gerald Drew, my former ambassador, was the chief inspector of the Foreign Service. I went to his office and he was kind enough to receive me, and I told him what I just told you and said, "What do you think?"

He says, "In my opinion, get out of Washington as soon as you can."

I went back and accepted the appointment to go over to the White House for an interview and was accepted for the assignment to the White House. Do I regret not following the advice of Ambassador Drew? No. I respected his advice, but decided I would see what was over on Pennsylvania Avenue, and I don't regret that.

*Q: I'm looking forward to hearing about it.*

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and we are continuing conversation with Tom Davis. Tom, I left you in Haiti, right? You came back to Washington DC to work in 1959 or 1960?*

DAVIS: We left Haiti in September of '59, but by the time our home leave was over it was almost December of '59, just turning into '60. We had arrived in Haiti a family of two, and left a family of three.

*Q: A typical position for a relatively junior officer on their first tour is to work as a staff assistant, where they work in a bureau helping move the paper around and prepare the bosses for meetings and things; is that the job you took first?*

DAVIS: No. I was assigned to what had been a Civil Service job in the Bureau of Intelligence as liaison between the Bureau of Intelligence at State and ACSI "G2" (military intelligence staff). I spent mornings at the Pentagon and afternoons at State.

*Q: So in 1960 when you first arrived back, this was still the Eisenhower administration, and of course this was his second term, the end of the administration for sure. What were the intel issues that needed liaison work with the Army?*

DAVIS: routine, routine. In general a liaison job is to prevent problems. Thus nothing dramatic should require attention. Mainly an easy job, seldom anything of any significance.

*Q: You're saying they're intelligence because we're gathering information? But we're doing it openly.*

DAVIS: Exactly. As Foreign Service officers working abroad, we normally are not involved in national intelligence. National intelligence is bringing together the intelligence from the various agencies at the top level and turning out national estimates for the president and others.

*Q: What is a national estimate? An analysis of a particular subject?*

DAVIS: Yes, indeed. I will just talk off the top of my head, may be completely wrong. You have a situation at the moment regarding Turkey, part of the southern flank of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), one of the largest armies in NATO, a very important ally is in considerable difficulty. It has not been very supportive regarding what we're doing in Ukraine. On the other hand it has used the Montreux treaty to prevent the movement of Russian naval vessels through the Bosphorus into the Black Sea, so it's a mixed bag. If I'm the president, I'd want to know what's happening, what am I looking forward to, what should we be doing if anything at this time, and I might ask the intelligence chiefs for their joint opinion, so I can know Turkey's likely options, and if we have a role which should be played.

*Q: Let me add one aspect to this wonderful description. A lot of these intelligence agencies send in or look at particular, discrete pieces of information; they call that raw intelligence. But when you're doing a national estimate report —*

DAVIS: That's finished intelligence.



*Q: Which means what?*

DAVIS: I headed up a consulate in southeastern Turkey. Nobody was going to ask me about the national intelligence estimate I just spoke of. But the bits of pieces of my reporting might have been used. Similarly, they would certainly want the opinion of our ambassador; what does he think is happening? He is not in a position to know what the heads of the intelligence agencies know, because he does not have a need to know. See what I'm getting to? So what he reports and recommends is very important, very significant, but it does not constitute a national estimate.

*Q: Because finished intelligence differs from raw intelligence because people have compared all the different pieces and put it together and made their best judgment on which pieces are true, which might be misleading or out of context, and with all those different strands of information, they end up coming to a conclusion, right?*

DAVIS: Then you come to another part of it – what is the human element at the top? Does it matter what the intelligence is, if it is not used by those who have the power to do so?

I'll give an example. I was office director for Cyprus affairs. We became aware there was a conspiracy between the Turks and the Greeks. to solve the Cyprus problem. The latter from time to time had boiled over, and threatened war between Greece and Turkey, which would have destroyed the southern flank of NATO. Now, we might have cared less in a hard-boiled real policy regarding what happened with Cyprus. But we cared a hell of a lot about what happened to Turkey and Greece and their relationship. So as office director for Cyprus affairs, I was unhappy when my assistant secretary wanted to let the conspiracy go ahead, to get rid of Makarios. For me, as the office director, that was not wise, nor in our interest. Basically it was not a solvable problem, but rather one to keep from boiling over, and harming our interest. It's not in our interest to have even a slight risk of confrontation between Greece and Turkey. The U.S. was not trying to solve the Cyprus problem, but trying to keep it quiet. As long as it was quiet the southern flank of NATO was secure.

I had to bring together the office directors for Turkish and Greek affairs, and the equivalent from the Bureau of Intelligence, with my assistant secretary, and argue this point. Thankfully he agreed, and we alerted our respective ambassadors to let those countries know that, while we did not know anything about it, nevertheless if something like that were to happen, we'd be unhappy. So we did that, and the plotting went away for three years.

Three years later, intelligence again warned of a Greek/ Turkish plot against Cyprus. Unfortunately, the assistant secretary had become under secretary for political affairs, and no one was prepared to confront him on the issue. Because of our inaction the Greek/Turkish conspiracy when ahead, failed, resulting in the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Turkey still occupies the northern part of Cyprus, and Cyprus' problem has not

been solved, but intensified. As Cyprus is a member of EU (European Union) it will not permit Turkey to be voted in as a member of the EU. Each country in the EU has a veto as to who may join, so Turkey has been prevented from becoming a member of the EU, and Turkey's damn mad about that, and that's why so many of our problems with Turkey have arisen in the past few years.

From the personal side, the unfortunate results included the assassination of a friend and colleague, Ambassador Rodger Davies, who with his secretary was killed in his office.

*Q: Got it. That was about ten years later, that was in the '70s.*

DAVIS: '73

*Q: So as to my original question. For these years in Washington were you dealing with the intelligence community, what were the areas of the world in general that were bubbling up at that time? Were Greece and Turkey on the horizon, or was it Cuba or other places where we worried about the domino effect?*

DAVIS: We have a situation between the United States and China that might move us toward another Cold War. At that earlier time, a similar threat existed, we were moving toward interference in Vietnam, and working toward the Bay of Pigs. Cyprus had recently become independent, but remained troubled, which would result in Greek Turkish confrontation a few years later. In Europe, NATO feared armed confrontation with the Soviet Union, leading to a European war.

Separately, Kennedy in June/July 1961 met with Khrushchev in Vienna. Kennedy came home feeling he had been looked down upon by Khrushchev. The latter had told him there would be no war between the two countries, but rather the Soviet Union would defeat the U.S in the third world, one country after another, through wars of national liberation - Latin America, African, the Middle East. Kennedy returned to Washington determined to prevent what Khrushchev had described and threatened, called his Military Representative, General Maxwell Taylor, and directed him to create/establish a "counterinsurgency" plan/program to defeat the described threat. I'll come back to this. but first another comment or two about the then intelligence situation.

I left my personal situation describing mornings at the Pentagon and afternoons at State, working as Liaison Officer between State and ACSI. Returning one day I was asked to see Allan Evans, the deputy director of the Bureau of Intelligence, my boss, although I had not previously met him. I knew he was the number two in the Bureau, having come to State from OSS, and before then MI6, in the U.K. In other words a British gentleman, which he was.

I promptly trotted over to his office, and was received, told the President had formed a small group to review the state of American intelligence, and he was State's member of the small group. His peers each had assistants and would I like to carry his brief case for the next few months, which would include travel within the United States and Europe.

I said it would be my pleasure. Security clearances were obtained immediately, as in Intelligence your Top Secret clearance will not get you through the door, without an escort. We were discussing the above around one o'clock, and by two o'clock were en route to that afternoon's meeting of the Study Group. The chairman was Kirkpatrick, of CIA, former head of covert activities, and at the time Inspector General. The other members were General Erskine Graves from Defense, Macy, the Director of the Budget, and Allan Evans.

We spent the next five/six months meeting every day, traveling by DOD planes around the country, to military and other bases. eventually spending a month in Europe, divided between the UK, France and Germany,. Essentially we reviewed and evaluated U.S. intelligence collection and coordination efforts, and then prepared a report for the President, with 117 recommendations. One of such was to create DIA, under the Secretary of Defense.

We wrote the report on the S.S. United States enroute to New York from Europe. The procedure was a meeting of members and assistants in the morning, assignment of writing for individual afternoon work, meeting the following morning with the principals to review, amend, and approve. By the time we reached New York our report was completed and ready to present to the President. I then was unassigned, but available in the Bureau.

That lasted a day or two, and then I was assigned as staff assistant to one of Evans' division chiefs, handling interagency intelligence matters, and separately staff assistant to the head of the Bureau for his weekly meeting at Langley, where he and other intelligence chiefs met to discuss preparation of national security estimates.

Returning to the Kennedy/Khrushchev Vienna meeting, and Kennedy's "counterinsurgency" program. Under "Ike", the Chief of Staff of the Army had resigned over a long running dispute with the Air Force over inter agency budgeting. When Kennedy became President, he recalled General Maxwell Taylor to duty, appointing him Military Representative to the President. One of his principal responsibilities was to represent the President regarding covert activities, under the NSC 5412 directive.

*Q: What did this group do?*

DAVIS: Established by the National Security Council in December 1954, the 5412 Group was the senior group to review and recommend whether a proposed covert activity should be approved by the President. Chairmanship of the Group was one of General Taylor's responsibilities, until he left the White House in September 1962, as the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff The Group included Taylor as chairman, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Director of CIA, the Under Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, and the Chairman of the JCS. By directive no member was allowed to be accompanied by staff. Thus the meetings were restricted to the principals, and its

Executive Secretary, who also served as Special Assistant to the Chairman I had that honor.

Following the weekly meetings, General Taylor would inform the President of the matter under consideration, and seek his authorization for the proposed action. The President would either make a decision at the time, deny the proposal or take it under advisement.

*Q: For covert activity.*

DAVIS: Yes. That is beyond the scope of the Foreign Service per se, but not beyond the scope of the Secretary of State, and the Deputy Under Secretary for political affairs, the head FSO in the Department of State. The Under Secretary, however, can't handle everything, so some of that devolves down to the Bureau of Intelligence, and there a few Foreign Service officers become involved.

So that comes to me again.

After the President asked for a counterinsurgency program, it fell in the lap of the Special Group 5412. However, after a few meetings, the members decided they should form a separate Group, given counterinsurgency is political rather than intelligence activity. In forming the new group, General Taylor asked the Deputy Under Secretary to send over a Foreign Service officer to be Executive Secretary for the new Group, and to serve him as Special Assistant. I was asked if I'd like to be interviewed for the position, I met the General, and was accepted as his Special Assistant for Counter Insurgency.

I was with the General for about six months, until he was appointed Chairman of the JCS, and returned to the Pentagon. The General was going out to Vietnam to review the situation (September 1962), and the Attorney General would take over as Chairman of the Group. I was asked to stay for a couple of weeks to support the Attorney General, until he selected someone as his assistant. No problem. I was happy to do so, assuming about two weeks, and then back to State, probably for a foreign assignment. After a couple of weeks I mentioned my thought, and was surprised to be told no, that he would like me to remain as his assistant. I was pleased to do so, and enjoyed working with him. We were about the same age, and had each served in the Navy as young enlisted guys.

After leaving and going abroad on assignment we corresponded from time to time until his assassination. During the Cuban missile crisis he was busy with the President's working group. leaving me relatively free, and the Group's members were otherwise involved with the President as well I happened to be in the Pentagon Reconnaissance Office when the Naval officer who had flown over and photographed the missile sites arrived, still in flight suit, he was taken to the Secretary of Defense, and with him to the White House, and then to the UN where the photos were shown to the Security Council members, demonstrating the Soviets were lying when they denied the situation.

Something we did with reconnaissance planes might be amusing and interesting. Neither the Soviets nor the US had yet put a man into space. The Soviets were planning to soon

put a space capsule up with a monkey. Our Air Force hoped to fly under the spacecraft as it reentered the atmosphere, and read out the information the Soviets would be receiving.

The Foreign Service came into play, as one has to ask friendly nations for operational permission. At that time we did not want to ask the South Africans for cooperation owing to the Black issue, a different thing altogether but important to us. So where else would the spacecraft come around? The president of one target country, when asked by our ambassador, said “Mr. Ambassador, I know the United States, and I know whatever you’re trying to do will be in our joint interest; you have my blessing.” You may be sure that subsequently that country was a favorite receiver of United States aid.

*Q: These were the kinds of considerations you were trying to give guidance, recommending that things be done a certain way to maximize our effectiveness.*

*Q: When you came back on the ship, the study group for intelligence had completed its work?*

DAVIS: Yes. My role on the study group was over when the group was disbanded, following completion of the report, but I still belonged to the Bureau of Intelligence, So I became a staff assistant to the director of the Intelligence Collection Division, which basically was coordination with other agencies. Separately I was staff assistant to the Director of Intelligence, and accompanied him to meetings relating to national intelligence estimates. It might have been to prevent me from going overseas again until the things I knew had cooled off and were no longer current. I don’t know. Probably not.

*Q: That’s what people in the NSC (National Security Council) do; they coordinate. Fascinating stuff, from Haiti and Laos to doing these major policy things.*

DAVIS: As a Foreign Service officer, you catch whatever is put on your plate and do the best you can. We tended to think we were the best, and often were several grades junior to working peers from other agencies, intelligence, or military. At the time of the Study Group I was an 05 FSO, whereas my peers, working with the other principals were two, three or four grades senior. It was the same difference when I was on the White House Staff, although I was promoted to 0-4 while there.

*Q: Did the attorney general remain in charge of the group for longer than a couple of weeks?*

DAVIS: Yes, the president did not get around to naming a new chairman. He considered several but none resulted in the president selecting someone suitable to succeed General Taylor. Nothing against any of them. He interviewed one man who had been a friend of his before either of them married, a two-star general and ambassador to a couple of countries. I went to the Department of State to pick him up in a White House car for his interview with the president. He told me en route, “The president’s not going to accept me, we know too much about each other as previous bachelors.” After their meeting I took him back to the department, and he said “No, I won’t be taking that job.”

Anyway, Bobby continued. I refer to him here as Bobby; but never in person to person; I think we liked each other, he treated me very well and I liked him, but he was the Attorney General.

*GQ: Do you think he liked chairing this group?*

DAVIS: Ahhhh. At one meeting – the group never had aides with them, as Taylor said, “if we have aides present, we won’t do our homework, but be turning around to consult. If you come without aides, you may show your ignorance, and the rest of us will know.” So there were no aides other than the executive secretary, and that was me, I kept notes, prepared the agendas, et cetera. In the midst of one such meeting, Bobby stood up and said, “I’m sick of this crap” and walked out.

Well, all of the people present were gentlemen; you don’t speak that way with them, and they don’t speak that way with each other. So it was kind of awkward.

Before the next meeting, I went to the Attorney General’s office to brief him, and as we walked back to the White House, with Bobby’s black labrador, he turned to me and said, “After last week, what do you think they feel about our meeting today?”

I looked at him, grinned and said, “I think they would prefer you didn’t come.”

He laughed and made a comment.

*Q: You started to say you went to say goodbye to him after two or three meetings.*

DAVIS: Yes, After our first two briefings, I said “Thank you very much, Mr. Attorney General, it’s been a pleasure working with you.”

He said, “What do you mean?”

I said, “I’ll be going back to the Department of State this week.”

He looked at me and said, “Well, that’s not my thought. I want you to stay and be my assistant.”

Well, that was flattering, in fact an honor. The Attorney General of the United States wanted me, and so I happily stayed, assuming it might be for a month or two. I stayed with him for about eight months. I liked working with him. He always treated me very well. I would go to his office to brief him. He might be in a meeting with other people and necessary for me to wait awhile. No problem. Once, he called his secretary to see that I had lunch while waiting. That’s pretty nice. He would thank me for my service.

With very senior men, all act very properly, very gentlemanly, but it’s clear who they are and who you are. And then, there are others who treat you like a member of the team, be

it in senior staff meetings or person to person. One assistant secretary of State, disdained Foreign Service officers, his office directors. He had been Civil Service, but happily accepted integration. But I won't get into that. When you work for people it's nice to work for people you respect.

Before Taylor returned to the JCS, he often would take notebooks to the President on a Friday afternoon, so the President could read briefing material over the weekend and be that much ahead on Monday. Well, generals don't carry anything; that's why you have assistants. So I carried the books and went over to the Oval Office. I had not yet met President Kennedy, and General Taylor described what he thought would happen, saying, "We'll wait in the small room with O'Donnell" (special assistant to the President for everything) "and after a few minutes, the president will come to the door and I will introduce you, take the books from you, give them to the president, and you can excuse yourself and go back to the office."

When the president came out and I started to leave, he said "Oh no, join us, come in." So I had the opportunity to sit on a loveseat across the cocktail table from the general, with the president in the rocking chair, to my right. I knew as a junior officer to keep my mouth shut when seniors are talking. But the president kept bringing me in, I thought he was a pretty great guy obviously. Wash your hands, you know that old story? Yeah, I didn't want to wash my hands. He was special. Relative to what we now read about his personal life, I won't get into that, as I knew nothing about it, and in those days didn't speak about such things. I do recall standing by the office window, overlooking the President walking out to his helicopter, and Mrs. Kennedy crouching next to the foundation shrubs, holding her two little children so they might see their father departing.

*Q: Well, Tom, I'm going to have to conclude our meeting for today but I did want to ask in case it is relevant that we could talk about next time. So, you were there working with them, the Kennedys, on covert action coordination, in 1962.*

DAVIS: 62 and '63., but the covert action assistant was a senior CIA officer. We shared a small office and a four drawer filing cabinet in the office next door to the General, and in fact shared our briefing time with the General.

*Q: In '62 and '63. Of course in the fall of 1962 was the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.*

DAVIS: Late October 1962.

*Q: Was that something you were involved in meetings about? I do have to go now but I was wondering if we might want to pick up with that next time.*

DAVIS: We can pick this up then. There's more I can say about my duties at the White House. We could do at least part of the next interview on the White House, and then my next assignment abroad, where I was consul in southeastern Turkey.

*Q: In the consulate of Adana.*

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and I am continuing my oral history conversations with Tom Davis. Tom, today we're going to talk to you about your posting in Turkey, but before we do that, I did want to ask if you could give us a little feel for what it felt like working in the White House during the period of the Cuban Missile crisis.*

DAVIS: There were many activities going on at the White House, all of which took a back seat when this subject arose; it attracted the entire attention of the president and his principle advisors. I was not a principal advisor and I was not part of that. Except I was able from time to time to glimpse what was happening.

To begin with, by coincidence, I was at the Joint Reconnaissance Center at the Pentagon when the Naval Reconnaissance pilot came in, having just returned from photographing the missile sites. He was still in his g-suit, carrying the photographs. He was taken immediately by Colonel Stakely, commanding officer of the Center, then to the Secretary of Defence, and then with the latter to the White House, for the president to see the films. Anybody who has read on this subject will know that the films were flown up to the UN, given to Ambassador Stevenson, our UN ambassador and presented to the Security Council, demonstrating that the Russians had been lying.

*Q: How did it feel? Was it very scary?*

DAVIS: Very! The Soviets had installed nuclear missiles in Cuba, capable of reaching Chicago. Soviet ships, with additional missiles, were approaching Cuba. We had placed naval vessels between their ships and Cuba, with a demand the Soviet ships turn back; and had assembled hundreds of war planes in the U.S. southeast, prepared to take out the missile sites, and the Soviet ships. High Noon" indeed! We obviously hoped for a solution, but were ready for war Obviously we were happy when a solution was reached.

*Q: Was there discussion of something going on, something that would help defuse the situation in Turkey, was there some discussion of that in your hearing?*

DAVIS: No! I knew nothing about it.

*Q: It was a very tightly held issue.*

DAVIS: We began to hear from newspaper articles of the package deal with the Soviet Union.

*Q: Did anybody that you saw working on this stand out to you for great wisdom or foresight or lack thereof?*

DAVIS: No! I had nothing to do with the situation. It was quite a surprise to everybody that the Soviets had installed missiles in Cuba.



*Q: The initial detection was a happenstance?*

DAVIS: It was a high-level U2 flight. But to confirm, the president then ordered low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba.

*Q: Did you feel like a lot of it depended on the president and his team's estimation of Khrushchev?*

DAVIS: I wasn't close enough to have a feel for that.

*Q: Right. It was just a very perilous time that you lived through, a historical time.*

DAVIS: I might describe the special group for which I was the executive secretary. As I explained earlier, it was comprised of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the head of CIA, the under secretary for political affairs at State, the deputy secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General. It was these people and a few others who sat in with the president and handled this particular matter. But it was very separate from what I was working on; that is, counterinsurgency.

*Q: I appreciate it, Tom, it was such an important time of history and you happened to be in a very key place.*

DAVIS: You mention history, I just might say from a Foreign Service historical point of view, there were two Foreign Service officers at the White House at that time. One of us was on the National Security Council staff, concerned with East Berlin matters, and I was on the White House staff concerned with counterinsurgency.

*Q: Do you remember the name of the other officer?*

DAVIS: I wish I did. The two of us ran into each other after retirement, at the Del Mar Race Track, with our respective wives.

*Q: So, what was your next posting and how did that come about?*

DAVIS: For the White House assignment, I had agreed to extend in Washington for twelve months. That date was approaching, and I was working for the Attorney General, whereas I had worked for General Maxwell Taylor, until he left to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Robert Kennedy had become temporary chairman of the special group for counterinsurgency, and asked me to stay as his assistant, which I was happy to do.

As the year passed, it seemed to me the President's purpose had been achieved, counterinsurgency had been brought to the attention of the several departments and agencies as a subject of concern to the president. A doctrine had been developed, as had policy and programs, such as Civic Action from the military point of view, and police training and equipment from the civilian. This had not been recognized formally, but the

fact the President had left the position of Chairman of the Group vacant for over six months, with the Attorney General holding the reins, appeared to support the thought.

I voiced the thoughts to Robert Kennedy, and at his request agreed to put them on paper for his consideration. I followed through, and in due course gave him what I thought would be between the two of us, leaving me free to speak as his assistant, not as an advocate, with my thoughts shared with the Principals. Unfortunately, my thoughts on the matter were circulated to the Group's principals, including the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

I quickly received a call from my previous boss at State, in effect ordering me to immediately report to him. I did, and got taken over the coals, including the threat of ending my Foreign Service career. I interpreted the latter as coming from the Under Secretary of State, who was his immediate superior.

The meeting left me very unhappy. I returned to my office and related what had happened to my secretary. If I spoke of it with my boss, the Attorney General, the President's brother, he would have been furious, and without doubt have challenged the Under Secretary. Obviously the latter was interfering with a cabinet officer and his personal assistant. I decided not to even think of going that route. On the other hand, If my career was to be threatened, based on advice I might offer my principal, in good faith I could not continue in the role of his assistant. I decided to make no comment about the threat, complete the year extension, then ask the Attorney General to release me, for career reasons, ask for a Foreign Assignment, and get the hell out of Washington, the latter as suggested by my previous Ambassador.

In the meantime the promotion list was due out., I hoped for promotion, but was aware the Under Secretary's displeasure might well ensure it would not be forthcoming. The promotion ceremony was held on the South Lawn of the White House, with the Under Secretary, U. Alexis Johnson presiding. A keynote in his speech recognized that although the Department of State administers the Foreign Service, that the latter represents first, the United States Government. Yes, I was on the promotion list.

My thoughts, as expressed in my memo to the Attorney General, and had provoked the extreme ire of the Department were not immediately accepted, but did reach acceptance over time, with the subject matter being included to various classes at the Foreign Service Institute. Ironically, as Office Director for Cyprus Affairs, a few years later, I was prevailed upon to attend such a several day FSI class.

For myself, it was time to move on. I asked for a foreign assignment, and returned to State in early May, and by mid-summer was in Turkey, where several months later we learned of the Kennedy assassination.

To back up for a moment, as a year had gone by, I took the opportunity, while sitting in the attorney general's limousine, returning from a meeting, to point out that as a Foreign Service officer, my career involved Foreign Service, and although I had enjoyed very

much working for him, hoped he would not take it a miss, but I would like to return to State for a Foreign assignment.

He looked at me very hard, perhaps thinking I really was saying “I no longer want to work for you” . It was difficult, as I did not feel that way, I liked working for him very much, he was a very fine man in my opinion. But he accepted my expression of desire as a Foreign Service officer to return abroad, and said he couldn’t understand anybody wanting to do that, but thankfully some did, and wished me godspeed, and to go ahead and let the Department know it could go ahead with personnel action.

I notified personnel I could be available. Until I had such approval, personnel would not look for an assignment. I was offered a political position in Ankara, but was told the gentleman who was being transferred would like to renew and I therefore could have the principal officer’s job in Adana,, if I preferred.

I was only a class four., I’d been in the service about nine years. It was very tempting to have my own post, and I accepted it. Whether that was a good step career-wise, that’s another question. But I enjoyed my time in southern Turkey as consul very much.

*Q: Did you get any language training?*

DAVIS: I pointed out when I was offered the posting I did not speak Turkish. The personnel officer laughed and said he realized that, but for the principal officer, more was needed than a Turkish speaker, and two vice consuls would be Turkish language officers.

*Q: So there were two vice consuls doing consular work. Did you have somebody doing political and economic work?*

DAVIS: Hm. The consular work was done in Ankara, other than protection and welfare, and some nationality matters. Ankara had three constituent posts: Istanbul, Izmir, and Adana. The latter’s consular district included the eighteen provinces of southeastern Turkey, running along the borders of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the Mediterranean, about halfway through Anatolia. We had activity from the Embassy in the form of AID, other agencies of government, including military attachés,. As principal officer, I was the senior American officer in southeastern Turkey, unless the ambassador was present. On my staff, I had officers senior to me, including an AID officer, and an USIA officer.

I had been told by the assistant AID director that they had an officer who had been chief of an AID mission, but had fallen in love with a lady at post – the wife of another officer. That put him at odds with many other people serving with him, who would like to have seen him fired. AID wanted to keep him, as he was a valuable officer, but they wanted to send him out to be head of a smaller activity which happened to be at my post. He was four grades senior to me, would this be a problem; if so, they would not assign the officer.

I looked at him with the hubris of a young officer, and said “I know who will be boss, and if he knows that, there will be no problem.” So they sent him to Adana. We had no problems. I was happy to know him, and later did a good efficiency report.

We had about five AID officers at post who reported to this gentleman. Then in addition we had a separate USIA office, with an officer who didn’t realize he was working for Ankara, but also for me. He realized when it came time to do an efficiency report, and I had my secretary call his and ask for a copy of the USIA efficiency form. He was on the phone immediately asking why, and I said “I’m about to do your efficiency report.” He was in my office almost immediately. I was pleased with his work, and that clarified things for the following year.

*Q: I didn’t want to gloss over your arrival because in those days, arriving from the United States to a place like eastern Turkey was not a simple plane ride. And also you had a small son, I know when my kids were that age, they loved taking lots of different modes of transportation to get to some place. Do you want to tell us a little bit about the trip?*

DAVIS: That was a time when Foreign Service officers were considered somewhat elite. In recognition of which, they and military officers traveled first class. That was changed by President Kennedy. But in those days we did travel first class. My wife and I went to New York with our son, and took the *SS Independence* to Naples. From Naples the train to Rome, spent several days in Rome visiting the sites, then flew to Istanbul, took the Orient Express from Istanbul to Ankara, then flew to Adana where we were met by the vice consul.

As a matter of amusement, some years before when I had arrived at Haiti as consul, hot, humid, no air conditioning, I told our ambassador, Ambassador Drew, shortly after I arrived, that the consular people would go in short-sleeve shirts. At that time he looked at me very hard and said, “The hell you will.” We wore suits the remainder of the time.

Well in Adana we’re sitting in the open area having a cold drink, waiting for baggage to come off. The vice consul, Terry, Terence G. Grant, a very fine officer, went on to have a very nice career. He looked at me; it was hotter than hell, it was like east Texas or Louisiana, wonderful oranges and fruits and the mountains in the background with snow, but down on the plains near the Mediterranean, just hotter than hell. He looked at me and said, “I hope you agree, Tom, that as the Turkish officials do, we will go with short sleeves without coats and ties.”

I looked at him and I remembered Ambassador Drew, and I could not help myself. I stared at him as hard as I could and I said, “The hell we will.” We were stuck with going with suits and ties for the three years I was there.

*Q: Weren’t you able to change your mind?*

DAVIS: No, I refused to. When we were seen on the streets, we were known to be the

American representatives. I might say, the consulate had been there about two years before I arrived. Before then it had been at Iskenderun, Hatay, recently in the news owing to the earthquake.

Our presence contributed toward maintaining good relations between the United States and Turkey. During the three years I was there, we never had an American in jail. We had problems, but they never reached the point of jail time.

Part of that was public relations. In Turkey there are parades almost every month for one reason or another. The governor and senior staff, and the military leaders line up at the appropriate place, and review the parade. For the three years I was there, I was with them every time, courtesy of the governor.

The wife of the governor had a friend return from Italy, where she had been studying art, and the governor asked me if I could do something to help introduce the young artist. We had a night for the artist, and opened up the consulate's public rooms for her paintings. I had selected 100 Turks, who I thought would be appreciative of Western art and enjoy a martini. It was a great success. She sold over five paintings, which I understood was not bad. The governor and his wife were delighted with our cooperation.

Separately the governor hosted a regional governor's conference, and the 30 governors brought their wives. The governor turned to me and asked if we could do something helpful. My wife entertained the thirty wives with a reception/dinner at our home. I have pictures of her learning some dance steps from the women. Many of them could not speak English, but they all spoke her language, her welcoming language, her smile. It was a matter of being part of the community, of being welcomed by the leadership of the community.

In a more serious vein, there were crises between Greece and Turkey and Cyprus which could have led to war. At one time, Ball, the under secretary of State and Sisco, his assistant, who later became assistant secretary of State, were sitting with President Makarios at Nicosia, while Turkish planes were diving over the capital, simulating bombing runs. It was a delicate situation.

I was awakened one night by the vice consul. He'd just come back from Incirlik Air Base, where we received classified messages. He had an operation immediate telegram, from the defense attaché to Washington, including the White House, saying the Turks had gone on a twenty-four-hour status, during which they could invade Nicosia.

The Turkish army was/is divided into three armies. One of the three faces Greece. The Third faces Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the Med, between Turkey and Cyprus. and were in my consular district. The other army is in the center of Anatolia. If the Turks had gone onto a twenty-four hour period where they could invade, that presumably meant the Third Army in my consular district, which included two ports. I told the vice consul to get in the car and drive to the Euphrates River. The Third Army infantry divisions were situated east of the Euphrates River. As there's only one bridge one should see trucks with infantry lined

up for miles. En route back, drive by the sites where the artillery and tank regiments are located, and the port, and get back as quickly as you can.”

He got back before noon. There was no military activity on the highways. No military units were alerted. There was no port activity in Iskenderun, where the five transport ships were. I sent an operation-immediate off, providing the above information.

It cost me. I got a call the same day from the DCM telling me the ambassador was furious with me for getting involved. Again, they didn't know what to do with us, but I knew my responsibility. I didn't tell them this but I had contacts with the admiral whose units would have been used if there was an invasion. He had five merchant vessels that had been sent down from Istanbul to be used for troops. But the merchant vessels had not been reinforced to handle military cargo, such as lifting landing craft loaded with equipment and troops in and out of the sea. They were involved at the time in reinforcing them, but I knew they weren't ready. We were a Foreign Service post, but the Embassy didn't know how to use us.

*Q: They may not have had the military or intelligence background that you did.*

DAVIS: I never received dropped copies of intelligence messages; no reason I should. Did receive dropped copies from the defense attaché's office and that's why I got in this, It was a military message, but it sure as hell was a political message as well. The ambassador was a fine experienced officer, but we were not part of his thinking.

*Q: They do like to be in control, embassies do like to control the reporting.*

DAVIS: Let me put it this way. At a little earlier time but during this overall crisis, the ships in Iskenderun had in the eyes of the U.S. Air Force, disappeared from port. They were so concerned about it that Air Force Europe ordered a flight to find the ships. They did, and embarrassingly they found they had never left port. That was an embarrassment. I put my nose in it, indicating there was no reason to have this type of confusion, the ships were in my consular district, and we could have told them they were in port. It's just an hour and a half down the road.

On that occasion I was called up to the embassy. Ambassador Hare told me his view of this. He said, “Let the intelligence and military attachés do what they must. I know from my relationship with the prime minister, they're not going to do anything without telling me in advance. I was told in other words to butt out. “Go back to work and forget about it.”

*Q: I wanted to ask a little bit about the governors, the political situation. Were the governors appointed or elected?*

DAVIS: The governors in Turkey were civil service. They had worked their way up from having been administrators of one type or another, chiefs of police, et cetera, on up to deputy governor. Most of them were graduates of major universities.

*Q: So even this was a Kurdish area of Turkey —*

DAVIS: At that time the minority were spoken of as ‘Mountain Turks’ Entering a village or small town one would often see a sign stated “We are all Turks”

*Q: The people, okay, there was an ethnic Turkish majority in this part of Turkey, is that right?*

DAVIS: You’re getting into a very broad and interesting situation; let’s touch on it for a moment or two. As I mentioned earlier, as a consulate we were new. The foreign ministry did not want our people traveling into eastern Turkey. Eastern Turkey was an embarrassment to them as most of the people were Kurds, the Kurdish people occupy in large part eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, western Iran, and northern Syria, and have for hundreds of years. This means that each of the major minorities constitute in the eyes of those four countries a political threat, because they as a people would like to be one nation. So thinking only of Turkey, when I was there the population was about 30 million; the Kurdish population in eastern Turkey was about five million. Many of the young Kurdish men were moving out of eastern Turkey into the cities of western Turkey seeking jobs.

All young men were drafted for military service, so they were exposed to the larger country. Today, with a much larger population, you have a very significant Kurdish population. Significant for local voting, significant in the eyes of the Turks as a possible minority threat. That’s why we read about Turkey moving forces into northern Syria to combat Kurds there. They are fearful of the Kurds uniting. This is nothing new, it’s gone on for hundreds of years.

Now, the time I was there, the foreign ministry preferred that our diplomatic/consular people not travel in eastern Turkey. My predecessors were permitted to travel in the east only two weeks a year.

En route to post, when briefed in Ankara, I was told I should attempt to change the situation, and open up the east so we could see for ourselves what was going on.

My exequatur called for the consular district of Adana, but referred only to the province of Adana. I sent it back to the embassy, and asked them to return it to the foreign ministry to be corrected. The agreement for the consular district refers to eighteen provinces; I wanted them listed on the exequatur. The Foreign Ministry amended it without comment, which obviously included authorization to visit and travel. Another example of the Embassy not understanding the relationship of constituent posts.

Separately I paid a courtesy call on the equivalent of our regional FBI man, right after getting to Adana. We had a nice chat, coffee. People are happy when you call on them. I said, “You teach in the schools here that foreign diplomats are spies. Well, in a way we are, but we are overt, not clandestine. We try to understand where we are so we can

explain to our own government about the country to which we are accredited. Your consuls do the same thing in my country. So while I'm here, I'm going to attempt to learn all I can about your country. If I get out of line in your opinion, give me a telephone call. There's nothing I would want to know that would be important enough to create a problem between our countries."

He thanked me and said, "Go wherever you wish, unless there's a sign saying 'Keep Out.'" But, "please don't hire another person, as neither you nor I will be able to trust him." So, we felt free to go anywhere we wanted. The Turks have been a great nation for hundreds of years. It pays to be up front with them. For example, when once I called on the Admiral in the nearby port, he mentioned a military attach (American) had been intercepted climbing about the hill upon which their radar was positioned, noting that if the attach wanted information about the site, all he had to do was inquire, adding the equipment had come from NATO.

*Q: You mentioned that the governors felt they were colonial masters in a way. They weren't local people, these were people that Ankara had sent to work there as governors?*

DAVIS: As you traveled in the east, you found it's a mixed bag. Turks, some Kurds, especially amongst working people, and Arabs in the Hatay area, they have been there for hundreds of years. In Hatay, you get a lot of Arabic cuisine. Further east, you're going to get a lot of Turkish cuisine, et cetera. A very charming place, I enjoyed it very much. But as you're getting further east you will drive into a large village (today they may be towns, and there would be a bust of Atatürk, and under it a sign saying "How wonderful we are all Turks." Well, that's fine. But as you get into the community, the people would be Kurdish. The gendarmerie would be Turkish. The police might well be Turkish. The governor would certainly be Turkish. One I recall said he missed Istanbul so much, here in the country he "sometimes felt like a colonial administrator".

*Q: This part of the world a lot of the time this concern about separatism reflects itself in the schools and the languages that people are allowed to teach. Were people allowed to speak and communicate in Kurdish?*

DAVIS: Orally, yes, but not otherwise. Well you cannot stop the people from speaking Kurdish. But they were not permitted to produce a newspaper in that language at that time. Whether they are still forbidden, I don't know.

*Q: The PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) that launched guerrilla warfare for independence, I think this was later, in the '70s. So there wasn't any real armed struggle at the time you were there.*

DAVIS: There was no organized political Kurdish party; if so it was clandestine.

Going back to the subject of consulates and embassies —



*Q: I want to say my last posting was as consul general Guadalajara where I had four states in my consular district, four governors, and I thought that was quite enough! Eighteen is very impressive.*

DAVIS: Well we had to have a reason for traveling to satisfy the embassy's finance officer. As you would know, having had a consulate, you always have some indigenous people who worked in the United States and in their retirement, returned to their former home and received their Social Security annuity. Well, for the convenience of these people we had been delivering the annuity checks at the consulate. I stopped that for security reasons. To identify these people, we would go to their villages to deliver the checks. That, of course, gave us an official excuse to travel in the east, although we never needed an excuse, and were welcomed wherever we visited.

*Q: Every month?*

DAVIS: Every month.

*Q: Eighteen provinces every month wow. Delivering to people, going home to home?*

DAVIS: Sorry, not a monthly visit to every province. The SSA annuitants were located in a couple of the provinces.

When I got to Turkey in '63, the army was still running the government with the promise of elections in a year. Of course the question was, with the election, will the people support the army or they re-elect the government the army had overthrown? Big question.

That was about the only time the embassy turned to us and asked our participation in a political question. We received a telephone call from Bob Dillon; "with the election coming up; could you give us a feel for how things will go in your eighteen provinces?"

So we did. We wrote the embassy, estimating all eighteen provinces would vote against the government, and they did.

*Q: They voted which way?*

DAVIS: Against what the military had done. The military was being disavowed by the people. The Turkish base commander at Incirlik called the ministry of defense and said "I will not accept this." He was about to be visited by the new minister of defense who had been part of the previous government, that he had risen up against and set aside. And now as base commander at Incirlik, he is telling his people in Ankara that he will not accept the visit of this new minister of defense.

He was told "if you will not accept the minister of defense, we will then accept your resignation." So he resigned. We had been good friends; I stood up as godfather for the circumcision of his two little boys. You may know, the Arabs circumcise their little boys

when they're about twelve years old and it's a big affair, the whole family, friends, a reception, et cetera. So I was there for the snipping.

*Q: You arrived in August of 1963? So of course the tragedy hit in November when President Kennedy was shot in Dallas. What was the reaction in your part of Turkey?*

DAVIS: Interesting question. The president is to foreigners the face of our country. That face during the time of Kennedy was very popular throughout the world. It was a happy, young face – a beautiful wife, said beautiful things about young people and freedom, et cetera. Certainly in Turkey the young people were devastated.

I was returning from Incirlik where my wife had been bowling on the American women's bowling team at the air base, it was about 7:00 at night, we had the radio on playing music and it was interrupted by an announcement that the president had been shot. By the time we reached our home in Adana, members of the staff were coming to our place and we all sat around and listened to the radio, then heard the news that the president was dead.

The next morning we draped the flags, bought stationery bordered in black, and put a signature book out for people to express their sorrow. Five imam students, from the local imam school, came to sit with me for a half hour, to drink coffee and comfort me, and tell me how great men had been followed by assassins all through history. An old lady came in, she had pulled a small branch with an orange from her orange tree, as she walked out of her yard. She presented it to me, saying "As I came from my home I tore this from my tree as the president has been torn from us."

We had a parade of high school students., They came in hundreds, bearing the American and Turkish flags, with two photos, one of Ataturk, one of the president. Adana was going to name a park after Kennedy. But in southern Turkey, you're in the center of history. The Ceyhan River flows through the town, and to cross, one uses a bridge built by the Romans. Same bridge, where St. Paul crossed the same river en route to Damascus. Same river Alexander the Great crossed, just before he defeated the Persians on the Plains of Issus, and then founded Iskenderun, formerly Alexandretta. The Crusaders marched along the road en route to Jerusalem. Given all of this I suggested to the governor, "how nice instead of a park, to name the road from Adana to Incirlik base, the John F. Kennedy Highway."

Shriver, the president's brother-in-law, and head of the Peace Corps was visiting Ankara. He flew down and participated in the ceremonies.

What I'm describing tells you the consulate was a success regarding public relations. Indeed Americans were popular. and I took advantage to make courtesy calls on officials, including the admiral at the port of Iskenderun. As a veteran of World War II (Navy) we enjoyed each other's little stories. I looked through his window and could see a destroyer sitting there, and I made a gaffe, in saying it reminded me of World War II, as they

obviously were ships of that period, which he quickly confirmed, with the comment “that’s what he had been complaining about, they’re all so damn old!”

He also told me if he was called upon to invade Cyprus, he would have a hell of a time doing it, as the booms/cranes on merchant vessels had not been reinforced to handle military cargo. This is the kind of information that a consulate, apart from an embassy might learn. When I came to call, I might drop off a music record, or magazine from the American PX. and if driving by en route to visit Naval ships in the port of Mersin, he might stop by for coffee and a short visit.

*Q: Because a lot of the time you’re building these relationships so when you need them, they’re there.*

DAVIS: That’s right. For example, our defense attachés would come into the consular district and go about their business. I’d hear from the admiral that the assistant military attaché had been down and was arrested climbing the hillside behind Iskenderun to take pictures of the radars.

*Q: He was arrested for spying?*

DAVIS: He was taken into custody and kept for twenty-four hours. The admiral laughed and said, “It’s silly. It’s a NATO radar. NATO gave it to us!”

On another occasion Air Force personnel walked out on the NATO pier in the middle of the night, and were detained. When dealing with a close ally, such intrusions serve no purpose other than to irritate.

*Q: In 1964, there were some hostile attacks on the embassy and in Istanbul, I don’t know if the consulate was also attacked. What prompted this anger by the demonstrators?*

DAVIS: The president died in November of ‘63, and I described the outpouring of emotion and the support. The question always is, the support – is it of the United States, or the president? Is it a personal thing? What we saw as President Johnson came in was a different figure in the White House. I don’t intend to criticize him, but he was a different man, he was not the young man out of King Arthur’s round table, and his wife, a lovely lady, was not Jackie. The young people were unhappy with the sending of troops into Vietnam. which they saw as interference in the affairs of a third country, Vietnam.

*Q: So it was about Vietnam?*

DAVIS: Vietnam was a very unpopular thing amongst young people in Turkey, as well as in other countries.

It was also a time where it became popular to burn American flags in the United States and in foreign countries. I have a personal opinion, that things don’t happen automatically; they usually occur with approval of some element of the government. It’s

an expression of what is said to be the feelings of the people, and often is. Regarding the Cyprus problem, it was felt we were not giving enough support to Turkey. We try to stand between Turkey and Greece, and for that we are criticized by each.

We had several things coming to a head in '64 – the Cyprus problem, Vietnam situation, and the difference in personalities in the White House. This occasioned the burning of the flag at the American consulate general in Istanbul. The next day, some leadership appeared in Izmir at our consulate general and burned the flag.

I knew it was going to hit us the next day. I'm a veteran of World War II; I don't believe in burning flags. So I hurried myself to the governor's office. and said, "This happened, this happened, this happened. I don't want it happening here tomorrow. I don't want my flag burned."

He said, "Tom, everybody loves you here, everybody loves the consulate. Do you remember what happened when the president died?"

I said, "Yes I know, but also I know what's happened in Istanbul and Izmir, and I don't want it to happen here."

He said, "We've already given a permit for the parade to happen tomorrow, a protest parade from the train depot through town to my office. I 'll go out on the balcony and give a speech and tell them to go home, and they'll go home. It will be the same high school students."

The next day the parade formed in front of the railroad station and marched through town to the governor's office. But en route they passed by coffee houses and older men joined in. By the time they got to the governor's they had a real mob. When he said "go home peacefully", they started running through the streets heading for the consulate.

I had a man in the crowd, and he telephoned they were en route, and the question was, take the flag down or leave it up? Usually I left it up until the sun went down. It was about 5:30 by then, I knew the crowd would get there some time in the next thirty minutes. We hoped the sun would be down first, and decided to leave it up. We took it down as the sun dipped, just as the mob arrived. An assistant military attaché, in town, came to join us for the event, and as he looked out said, "Tom, I think you have a lot of unfriendlies there."

Just then a line of troops appeared, The mob stopped, and tried to go around, and another line of troops were right in front of them, and it went like that for two or three hours. The governor, with the local military commander, was sitting in his car, in front of the consulate, commanding the troops. The troops remained around the consulate until the next morning.

The Governor had come through. our good relations paid off well that day, and the flag was unharmed.

*Q: In 1965?*

DAVIS: I left in November '66. I had volunteered to stay an extra year. My wife and son and I were to leave on the morning flight for Ankara. We were living in a very nice apartment building next to the consulate. We were in the midst of our final packing; I could hear noise out on the street about 7:30 at night, I walked out on the balcony, and there were sixty or seventy people gathered in front of the consulate with what looked like pickets off of a white fence. They were throwing rocks and breaking the consulate's windows.

*Q: Do you know what the proximate cause was?*

DAVIS: Yes. I soon found out, I didn't know at the time. I waited till the crowd disappeared then went down to the consulate, members of the staff started arriving including my secretary, and it was time for us to find out what had happened, and let the embassy and the Department know. I spent the night instead of finishing my packing, going about and so forth.

I went first to a side office of the governor's. It was closed, but there were officials there and from one of them, I learned in private that it had been a put-up job. Subsequently, later in the evening, I went out to the Incirlik base and sat down with the Turkish base commander. He told me that those who wanted to have a demonstration had come out to the base and asked permission, which he refused. What had happened in town was a secondary thing since they couldn't demonstrate at the base.

Why had they come to the base, and why had they done this? Some of our Air Force personnel had earlier that day been in the red light district – yes they have such things in Muslim countries as well. For reasons I will not go into, they had gotten into a fight. Can't give you the details, I wasn't there. But this led informal leadership to want to have a demonstration, initially at the Incirlik military base, and when refused by the military, it ricocheted on to us.

I reported by telegram to the embassy and to the Department of State, and my wife and son and I were on the early morning flight out. At Ankara, between planes, I was on the telephone to the DCM. And that's the way we left Turkey.

*Q: My goodness. Did your successor come quickly?*

DAVIS: That was an interesting situation. Very odd thing. You run into some odd people in the Foreign Service. I never met the gentleman, didn't even know who he was at the time I left. He arrived two or three weeks later. I had packed our non-carry baggage in two trunks and had cleared them through customs and had them ready to be shipped on to us whenever we asked for them. Everything had been done, all the post had to do was send the trunks.

I spent several weeks in the States en route to Aden, but my trunks had not arrived. I sent a telegram; no answer. I sent two or three more telegrams over two or three weeks; no answer. I eventually sent a telegram to the administrative officer in Ankara, and immediately my trunks arrived.

I did not meet my former vice consul until some years later, when we both were in Greece. "What the hell happened to my trunks?"

Well the new principal officer refused to let anybody speak my name around him. Don't understand it; I had no ill feeling towards my predecessors, didn't know them. Why this guy had this feeling about me I don't understand, unless the good relations I've described left him feeling insecure. But he prevented any answer to my requests for the trunks, and my name was not to be spoken. Odd. I never met the man, and don't know his name.

*Q: You never got your stuff?*

DAVIS: I got my stuff but we'd been waiting at post two or three weeks before it finally came, it should have been there when we arrived. Crazy stuff.

Another thing. When I got to Washington en route to post, the demonstration was still the subject of discussion. I was invited to the assistant secretary's morning staff meeting. asked for my comments. The assistant secretary said he had asked for comments from Ankara. but the latter had denied my analysis of what had occurred.

I didn't like it at all, but there was nothing for me to do. I was en route to my next post.

A day or two after arriving at Aden, the Consul General was visited by /Saunders, of the NSC. We knew each other from my earlier service at the White House, and following dinner we walked outside for a few private words, during which Saunders noted that my telegram about the demonstration and its cause was appreciated, especially that I had not referred to the Air Force guys involved in the Red Light District fight as Black.

*Q: I wanted to ask something. Our founder of the oral history program was Charles Stuart Kennedy, and he came into the Foreign Service in 1955 I think, and he ran consulates including in the Balkans.*

DAVIS: He was my predecessor as consul general in Athens.

*Q: Oh, in Athens. Did you know him?*

DAVIS: I never met the gentleman.

*Q: He ended up writing after he retired in '85, a book of the history of the consular service.*

*Q: I think we're going to end the recording here. What was the next post?*

DAVIS: Southern Arabia — Aden.

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, I'm Robin Matthewman continuing our conversations with Tom Davis. Tom, we left you in Adana. What else would you like to share with us about that posting?*

DAVIS: The assignment to Adana was for two years. However, I was so intrigued by all the history, I let the department know I'd be willing to extend the assignment, if that was convenient for them. So, it was changed from two to two plus two years.

We were inspected by the Department of State, accompanied by the DCM, in the summer of '66. I had been there three years. We received a very good inspection report. The DCM commented we were operating as though the consulate was a small embassy. The inspector, however, felt that career wise I should move on, preferably to an embassy / political position. Made sense to me, and the DCM agreed. In due course I was informed I was being transferred to Tel Aviv. I was looking forward to it, and then without explanation it was canceled, and I received orders for Aden, South Arabia.

When I arrived in Washington, I asked personnel "What happened? Why am I not going to Israel, and why am I going to Aden?"

I was told Ambassador Barber at Tel Aviv was happy with the political staff he had; didn't know me, and preferred to retain a member of the political staff with whom he was satisfied, rather than take somebody new. So, the hell with the Inspector's recommendation, career development for me, and a break for my wife and small child Personnel bombed again!

Personnel added that my experience would be helpful in handling a problem at Aden. The principal officer was the target of complaints, from the chief of station, and Defense Attache. The principal officer was said to be more interested in political reporting, than the role of chief of mission. Having just completed a tour as principal officer, with other agencies at post, it was thought at Aden I would serve as deputy, letting the principal officer continue with the political work.

So we flew to Aden. We were checked into the Oriental Hotel, a very old, nondescript place, at the end of the Arabian Peninsula, next to the Indian Ocean. Hotter than hell.

First night, we were invited to the home of the chief of station. The military attaché was present as well, what they had wanted was happening, there would be somebody (namely, me) to be interested in what they were doing. I thanked them for their courtesy and well wishes, but said "I don't know what I'll be doing, until I talk with the Consul General, presumably tomorrow."

The Consul General and I sat down together the next morning and he clarified the situation very quickly with the comment that, "I understand you're here to be my deputy. I don't need a deputy, and your role will be as political officer.

So that's the way it was. The CG was Curt Jones. He had been at Aden for a year, during a very dangerous situation. The first day after my arrival, the major newspaper came out with the entire front page containing an announcement from the British commissioner of police saying, "Her Majesty's Government is no longer able to provide adequate personal protection. If you wish to go armed, you may do so. Bring your weapon to the nearest police station for registration."

*Q: This was for all foreign nationals?*

DAVIS: British and foreign nationals. There were two insurgencies going on, against the British government, and against each other. One was the – this is so much history, do you want me to go on?

*Q: Yes.*

DAVIS: All right. One was the National Liberation Front, NLF. It was an offshoot of the Palestinian problem, and supported by the Soviet Union. Very violent.

Second, was FLOSY, which was the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen. It represented the people of Aden, and was supported by Cairo, with Arab nationalism flowing from that area. The National Liberation Front's objective was the destruction of FLOSY, and FLOSY needed to destroy the other to survive. The British, were taken aback by what they saw as disloyalty amongst the people in Aden, who had received so much from the British government, education, etc., and now they were turning against the British government at a time when the latter was attempting to create a government to replace itself, as it moved to disengage from its colonies in East Africa, Aden, and the sheikdoms of South Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

The British government had hoped to bring together eighteen sheikdoms of South Arabia, join them with Aden, forming a Federation of South Arabia. FLOSY did not wish Aden to participate. The sheikdoms were up country, very primitive, whereas in Aden there were educated people, with schools, et cetera, the British had been there since 1837, they had been a crown colony for twenty years, young people with any money went off to England for education, but often came back with the spirit Arab Nationalism, as espoused by Cairo.

Each of the parties attempted to demonstrate for psychological reasons that it was because of their revolutionary effort that the British would eventually leave. All knew the British would be leaving within months. The British kept the exact timing secret, fearing they'd lose control if it was known when they were leaving. The National Liberation Front, working out of Sanaa, commenced an assassination program in 1965. On the



fifteenth day, every second week, they assassinated a European on the streets of Aden. Couple of bankers, getting in their car to go home, driver at the Shell gasoline station, newsman at the post office. A wife, or anyone, might be at the grocery store when a grenade was thrown in Balconies were fenced in with "chicken wire," to prevent a grenade being thrown in.

Our social life was nil as you can imagine. There were nightly curfews. We still went out from time to time as diplomats will; you can't say no to a good party. Our dress at that time which normally would have been black tie, remained black tie but without coat or tie. Black shoes, dinner trousers, dress shirt, and cummerbund.

*Q: What year did you arrive?*

DAVIS: We arrived in January of '67. The trouble had been going on for several years.

Curt Jones stayed there for about six months after my arrival. During that time the Middle East had the Arab-Israeli War, which resulted in evacuation of almost all American dependents for some months.

*Q: That was in June 1967.*

DAVIS: Yes We received orders to evacuate dependent's, as had other posts in the area. We elected not to do so, as we had been living under what I described and what more could happen?

It did change, though. Aden is composed of two metropolitan centers. One is Crater, and the other Steamer Point, the latter built after Aden was taken by the British ca 1837, and became the bunkering port, with ships from India and elsewhere stopping to fuel.

I had been in Aden two or three weeks, and received a letter from my elderly uncle. He had heard I was in Aden, and wrote "I want you to know you're not the first in the family to be in Aden. During World War One, I worked on ships carrying cavalry horses from India to France, and we stopped to bunker at Aden. Have a good time, but remember to climb the Rock" (that is, the mountain behind Steamer Point) "or you'll have to go back some day. So climb that mountain"

The entire place is desert, the mountain, known as the rock, is without trees or large shrubs, just a rock. The major hotel, of course, was called the Rock.

In June/July – I may be off a week or two, the NLF seized the town of Crater. Security was provided in the colony by either the Camerons or the Argyll regiments out of the UK. At the time it was the Argylls, commanded by Colonel Mitchell. On a mid-morning, a lorry carrying twenty-some British soldiers was returning from the beach. As they passed through the pass leading into Crater, they were machine-gunned by part of the British indigenous police establishment. which had seized Crater, captured a Saracen vehicle, killed the occupants, and set the Saracen on fire. Crater seemingly was lost

At that point we did notify the Department of State we had not previously evacuated the dependents, and might we now do so.

State came back and complained, but gave us permission to evacuate. I took our women and children from Aden over to Nairobi and saw them on airplanes to the United States. The Argylls and the Governor had released a statement that with Crater seized, and the British government intending to withdraw in a few months, there was no use trying to take Crater back, as it would involve the loss of life. So, we thought it safe for me to escort the dependents out.

It wasn't. The following morning I came out of the Stanley hotel in Nairobi, having put the women and children on aircraft for the United States, and the press headlines were proclaiming, "Argylls retake Crater." At sun-up with bagpipes playing the Argylls had marched into Crater and without firing a shot had recaptured the town. scaring the bejeezus out of everybody.

*Q: The Argylls were —*

DAVIS: The Argylls were a British Regiment which rotated into Aden for a six months period, alternating with the Cameron Regiment.

*Q: Who was Colonel Mitchell?*

DAVIS: Commanding officer of the Argyll Regiment.

Colonel Mitchell took a lot of criticism from parliament, which had a Labour government at the time. When the Argylls left Aden a few months later, replaced by the Camerons, the Regiment was disbanded and Colonel Mitchell sent into retirement. He successfully ran for parliament, and was elected. The Argylls remained disbanded until the trouble in Northern Ireland broke out.

Late one morning, a short time later, Consul General Curt Jones called me into his office, and confided he had received transfer orders from the Department, and intended to be on the afternoon flight out. He would leave at lunch-time, and go to the airport, and when I returned from lunch, I would return as charge of the post.

As I returned, I walked under our American flag. It was very faded from the desert sun and winds, and the building was not as clean as an American facility should be. I called the administrative officer and told him, "put a new flag up", "and have the offices cleaned."

I was chargé for five or six weeks. And, have a personal story I think you will enjoy. I and my wife, and others were invited by the governor and his wife for a luncheon. As we entered their home, with another couple, the governor's wife took the lady's and my hands, and said, "You blonds come over here and sit down", and my wife took the hand

of the lady's husband and said, "We brunettes will sit here." (laughter) Anyway, I sat next to this lady through the luncheon. She was a lovely young woman.

She and my wife became friends, and on occasion we would note in Ingrid's dinner/hospitality book that we had been for dinner and wished her well, et cetera. My wife and Ingrid remained friends through the years. Ingrid and her husband returned to England where he had taken his law degree, lived there for the next forty years. He then died, about three years later my wife passed away I notified Ingrid,, and got a nice note back from her. Six months later, I flew to Europe, telling my priest in parting, I might be returning with a wife. Ingrid met me at the train station, took me home; and a few days later I proposed to her. We married and had six idyllic years together, living in England, d before she passed away.

*Q: I'm sorry that she passed away so quickly thereafter. So going back to Yemen, you were there during the formation of two countries, right?*

DAVIS: No. I was there for the final days of Aden as a colony, and ten months of the new government.

I was Chargé twice. Each time for about six weeks. The first time was when Curt left and I was waiting for Bill Eagleton to arrive. The second time was the following year when Bill and his wife were on vacation. During the second time, the Arab Government was faced with an attempted military coup. The latter, had it been successful, would have meant a lot to us, as the Liberation Front was a dictatorship and very anti-American.

*Q: So Aden is in the south of Yemen, right?*

DAVIS: Think in terms of the Arabian Peninsula which projects down from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. On the west, the Red Sea separates Arabia from Africa, and on the east the Persian Gulf separates Arabian affairs from Iraq and Iran,. Thus, surrounded by the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. Where the Red Sea joins the Indian Ocean is where Yemen is. Before the British evacuated Aden, the entire coastal area along the Indian Ocean was occupied by Oman, to the east, and the sheikdoms of South Arabia, between Oman, and the Red Sea.

Aden, because of its harbor area and port, was as I mentioned earlier, taken by the British as a protectorate, under Indian affairs initially, then as a colony, much later on. Numerous sheikdoms existed between Aden and Oman. Of those, it was considered eighteen were worthy of being brought together and becoming the Federation of South Arabia, which if it had worked, would have included Aden and been a significant sized country. But it did not work for the reasons I discussed earlier.

*Q: Around this time, in November I think of '67, South Yemen became a country and then in the next year North Yemen became a country; is that correct?*

DAVIS: No. The first half is correct. Yemen has been a separate country for centuries, but subordinate to the Ottoman Empire for several hundred years before World War I.

*Q: This is what became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.*

With independence, Aden and the many sheikdoms became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen), and then a very few years later, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) joined the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) forming the existing Republic of Yemen. Yemen, you'll recall, was one of the three states within the United Arab Republic during the early '60s. Nasser brought about the union of Egypt, Syria, and Yemen, under what was known as the UAR (United Arab Republic). That fell apart after several years. Yemen had before then been a separate Arab state, and it remained one, but riven by insurgency.

*Q: So I got it reversed; the northern part of Yemen was the part that was guided by Cairo, and the southern part was the part that aligned with the Soviet Union.*

DAVIS: It's even more split. The northern part of Yemen was closest to Saudi Arabia and its conservative approach to Arab affairs. The southern part of Yemen was more influenced by Cairo, and was more modern as compared to the sheikdoms.

*Q: Right. And so, by '68 they were both independent countries, right?*

DAVIS: By '68 you had two independent countries. You had the republic of South Yemen, and you had the state of Yemen, and they decided to become one and peacefully joined together. A year or two later, they violently broke apart. They came together again, et cetera. But there's been wars in that area for a long time.

*Q: So as a political officer, off and on as Chargé, were you able to report on what was happening with all this fighting and maneuvering?*

DAVIS: To tell you the truth, a lot of reporting is what you get out of the newspapers. Curt had been there about a year and a half when I got there. Whatever was to be known about Aden, he knew; I'd just come out of southern Turkey, hadn't even talked to anybody who had been to Aden before I got there. I made contact with the British and others wherever I could. But I wasn't reporting anything of interest to the Department of State, I assure you of that.

Once I was Chargé, I had to pick up what I could. Curt was an Arabic speaking officer. replaced by Bill Eagleton, who also had done Arabic studies, Both were good officers, good people. Bill was delighted to have a deputy, and treated me as such from the day he arrived. For a laugh, when I went to the airport to meet Bill's plane, Leslie, a British protocol officer, was at the airport, and as we were waiting, he was talking with this blond guy. I stood two or three paces from him, waiting for Bill Eagleton. Didn't know if his plane had arrived. After about five minutes Leslie turned and said, "Oh I should introduce you to your new boss." So we shook hands, and had a laugh.

En route back to Aden, I asked Bill if he would like to swing by my house, and get a cold drink and then I'd take him to his apartment, which was above the consulate? I noted in the evening I would be offering a reception at my home, for the staff to meet him. We did stop at my place for a drink. There, I explained I was scheduled for an afternoon riding lesson, and casually asked if he would like to join me.

He looked at me and said, "What the hell, I'll go with you. I've got jeans in my suitcase." So, we started our relationship with a drink and a riding lesson. We were of the same age group, he was a year younger, son of a military officer, I had been a veteran of the Navy; he had not, because of age. I joined when I was seventeen, he would have been sixteen. But we were close enough.

After he settled in, as a morning routine we would draft a report to the Department, light up cigars, join each other and rewrite the two telegrams as one.

*Q: What did you think of that technique?*

DAVIS: For the two of us, it worked. He had no pretension. No question he was the boss, but he shared knowledge and work. I noted we would smoke cigars. One morning, he came into my office and said, "Tom, I'm out of cigars, give me one."

I said, "Sorry, this is my last cigar. I'll share it."

He said no thanks and went back to his office. He came back in ten minutes and said, "I'm going to the tobacconist to get a box of cigars, I'll get a box for you."

I said, "Bill you can't go; this is the fifteenth day, you don't go around doing things on the fifteenth day."

He says "oh shit." Went back to his office, and a half hour later came back and said, "I'm going."

I said "Don't be stupid."

He said, "No, I'm going to go get a box of cigars."

I said, "Okay I'll go with you, as I don't dare stay, and you go out and get killed. I got a pistol out of the drawer, put it in my fold-over briefcase, and we went, parked about 100 yards from the tobacconist and the two of us walked, he three or four steps ahead of me, I with my hand in my portfolio with the Colt .45. We each bought a box of Romeo y Julieta Cuban cigars, came back to the office, lit our cigars, and wrote the daily report.

We started work at seven in the morning and quit at two, and worked six days. It was not unusual for the two of us to go for a swim and then our respective ways for the evening et cetera. Remember, we were without wives, mine having been evacuated, and his waiting

in Ethiopia, pending the ok to come in. I had just dropped Bill off, and was starting down Maala Strip, about 8:00 at night, just getting dark. Someone shot into my car. He was aiming for the British driver on the right, and I was on the left, as it was an American car. The slug hit the iron structure around the door; it was deflected upwards and almost hit my head. The next day I dug it out, and sent it to State for NEA's trophy shelf. Of course no one acknowledged. Does that suggest no one was reading our communications? Probably.

*Q: That must have been a little scary!*

DAVIS: The assassination program thankfully ended when the British official presence ended.

We had been told by the British Governor there would be a carrier off-shore, with helicopters, and if things went to hell, they'd come in and get the British Embassy people. If we could get to the British embassy, they would take us out as well. With possible violence in mind, we were asked if we would move into what had been the governor's grounds for a few days, before and after independence, which would be some added security.

*Q: I have to stop here, I'm sorry.*

DAVIS: Let's begin next time with independence night in South Yemen. You will like it.

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, I'm continuing our conversations with Tom Davis. Tom, we were talking about Yemen, but I wanted to see if there were a few more things you wanted to mention on Turkey?*

DAVIS: Yes, I would. I began my comments on Turkey I believe by commenting on the travel limitations into eastern Turkey, and that while I was at the embassy being briefed I was told I should try to open up the east to our travel. In fact, we were not excluded from eastern Turkey. It apparently was a misunderstanding. Adana was a new post, and previously had been at Iskenderun, with one or two officers. I don't think the Embassy had ever raised the question. When I asked that the other provinces be added to my exequatur, the Foreign Ministry did so without discussion, and wherever I traveled, I always was welcome.

*Q: We call that low-hanging fruit, when you're given a job to do that is very easy to get done. Just ask and they say okay.*

DAVIS: I would add, I had the feeling nobody in Ankara knew anything about constituent posts, other than the administrative officers, and they did an excellent job of supporting us. Of course, they were interested in how efficiently we were spending allocated funds. From the substantive side, we never had a request for anything, nor

guidance. It tells you they weren't interested. I think the only question we ever got of substance was when an election was coming up, "could we estimate how the voting might go in our provinces"? Of the eighteen provinces, we called every one of them. Now, it wasn't that we were so smart, it was just that when you live in a country that is somewhat primitive, you get to know pretty much how the people feel about the Government.

*Q: Okay, so we're going to turn back to Aden. Last time we talked a lot about what led up to all the violence and shenanigans, international support for different factions, that led up to the independence of South Yemen. We stopped right at independence night. You might want to discuss your trip to Oman if that's relevant, but that's where we were last time when we stopped.*

DAVIS: Okay. I would like to throw in a little amusement about the South Yemen "Fourth of July" celebration. In anticipation of the British evacuating, and not knowing what that would mean for foreigners remaining, the governor asked if Bill Eagleton and I would move over to the official compound, spend a week or two there until we knew that things were normal and safe in town. As he left with his staff, he would leave the new embassy staff with a Chargé.

*Q: So this was basically converting from having Yemen as a colony to an independent country where the British would have an embassy.*

DAVIS: Yes, and he pointed out he would feel better if Bill and I would move into the compound for those days. The British would have an aircraft carrier sitting offshore, out of sight, able to come in with helicopters and take the British diplomatic staff out and that if we could get to them, they would take us. But they would not come looking for us. If we were in the compound already it would be so much easier. So we agreed to that.

At the compound there was a roundabout and a sentry. The governor and his party had departed from the airport, the last of the British official presence, at about 3:00 in the afternoon. About 5:00, Bill Eagleton and I were wondering what the immediate future would be for us. We were aware our friend Ronnie Burrows who was about to be Chargé was wondering the same thing. We queried each other with, "Why don't we take a bottle of gin and vermouth, find Ronnie, and keep him company while we wait for their Fourth of July?"

We found Ronnie, he was happy to see us. We spent the evening until 9:00 in his living room having martinis. I forget who, probably Bill, said "Let's go into town to the Rock Hotel" Downtown, we parked, got in the elevator to go up to the restaurant. The elevator operator was wearing a Mao pin and had other Chinese paraphernalia. The Chinese had an embassy in Sanaa, Yemen, and knowing the British would be gone, had arrived, to be present for Independence Day.

*Q: Independence?.*

DAVIS: The Chinese had passed out Mao paraphernalia coming into the hotel. The elevator operator was very taken by it. Bill said “When we come down later in the evening, I expect you to have some Chinese stuff for us.”

We went up, had dinner and drinks, and about midnight we left. Their Fourth of July had arrived, so time to go home and go to bed. Well as we started to get on the elevator, the hotel manager, having heard what had happened when we entered the hotel, was there with paraphernalia from the Chinese, collected for us.

So, as we exited the elevator, carrying Mao books and little Chinese flags. who was waiting to get on the elevator, but the Chinese delegation. They looked at us, and we could only be British or American, They had no sense of humor. Bill did the talking and said, “Oh, we’re all Maoists here, didn’t you know?” We went by them and out to the sidewalk, and who was stepping up onto the sidewalk but two guys who could only be Russian. They indeed were from Pravda and Izvestia. They saw the paraphernalia we were carrying and of course knew we either were British or American, and Russians do have a sense of humor. We all stood about laughing, as we tried to give them the Mao paraphernalia. They wouldn’t touch it.

Anyway, that was the last day of the colony. As we left, it was the first day of the new state of South Yemen. When we drove back to the compound, the British sentries were gone. Now, the Arab soldiers, who had been guerrilla fighters, were in their place.

The next morning, as I left the compound to go to the Embassy, the sentry stopped me, and said “They told me you all had left.” Then he laughed, reached in, slapped me on the shoulder, and waved me on.

My servant, Ali, was in the car with me, en route to market. He was furious.

*Q: Who was Ali furious at?*

DAVIS: The sentry; as he said “this is no way to treat a “saab,” (a European of some standing). I told Ali, “Things are new now, we have to get used to this.”

Ali said, “No that’s wrong. These people are “jungali” (that means barbarians). He says, “Next time he does that, there may be a knife in his hand.”

I said, “We just have to go with the flow.” I dropped him off, and drove on to the office. Later, at lunchtime Ali was standing around on one foot then the other. I knew he wanted to say something, but he was afraid to. So I said, “Ali, what’s the matter, what’s happening?”

He said, “I hope you won’t be angry at me but when I came back from marketing I could not stop thinking of this soldier reaching in and touching you. So I went to the president’s” (their White House, the new one) “and I asked to see the head of the guard. I



spoke to him and explained what had happened and I told him this was no way to treat a saab. He agreed it wasn't, and promised it will not happen again."

It did not. From then on, when I exited I got the proper treatment from a sentry saying hello or goodbye. But this was Ali, a Yemeni, fine man, saved my life two or three times, but that's another story. Before becoming my cook and houseboy he had at various times been such things as a sailor, working away from his home in Yemen to earn money to care for his wife and children. Every Saturday he would buy a hundred pound bag of flour or rice and send it by taxi to the village for her. Good man.

Anyway, so we now were faced with a new government, and the new government meant there were new people, who were ministers of government. Bill Eagleton, no longer the consul general, but Charge, had to pay his respects to the new ministers, beginning with the head of state.

*Q: What was the name of the country?*

DAVIS: The Republic of Southern Yemen. At that point, it had no relationship to Yemen. Separate states.

Bill and I, at a specified time and appointment, went to pay our respects to the ministers, beginning with the chief of state. Went quite well, the latter seemed to be a reasonable man. Regarding the others, the only one I'll speak of, was the gentleman who was now the minister of culture. He had headed up the assassination program, out of Sanaa for the previous year or so, assassinating people thought to be British. I'm not intrinsically a hater of anybody, but it was a different thing to meet somebody who you knew was head of the assassination program, a homosexual, passive and aggressive, and in addition had tuberculosis. After shaking his hand and wishing him well in his new post, we left.

I think I mentioned that when I was Chargé, after Curt Jones had returned to the States, one of the first things I had done was write to the bureau and point out that it didn't look like we would be there very long and a construction project they planned should perhaps be postponed. I was told, don't even think of it, and they proceeded to make the changes planned.

The new government knew, but couldn't believe, we would not be giving them financial assistance. We had been in a contest in Yemen with the Soviet Union, as to who would do the most for Yemen. That had not worked very well, where we would build a road, they might pave it, or they'd build an airstrip, and we pave it, or something or other, neither of us got credit, they were just milking us.

The new government realized it was true we would not be helping them, and they soon cut us off from much of a relationship. We were not permitted to make calls on the ministers, or others, without calling protocol to make an appointment.

*Q: Can you remind me what the reason was that we were not going to help a new developing country in any way?*

DAVIS: Our reasoning?

*Q: Right, the reason for the policy.*

DAVIS: We were told a study entitled *U.S. Strategic Interest in the Horn of Africa* had been done, in connection with withdrawal of the British from colonies in East Africa, planned withdrawal from Aden, and the Persian Gulf. Although the U.S. had been asked by Great Britain to financially step in behind them, the study concluded our strategic interest did not warrant such expenditure, notwithstanding Aden would be left the first new nation following WWII not to be assisted.

I understood the policy would be applied to new nations being created in the Persian Gulf, the former Trucial States, Kuwait became an independent country in 1971 and the others, UAE, QATAR, etc. about the same time.

*Q: So when the British left, they weren't going to be helping them.*

DAVIS: That was my understanding. The Republic of South Yemen broke relations with us in October '69, within a year of the country's independence. Earlier, from independence through May 1968 a tight relationship existed, in the sense they held off from us, and from the Russians, then gave up on us in May 1968, turning to the Russians, the latter getting use of the military airfield.

Some months went by, and I again was chargé, during which time I had lunch with the governor and his wife, and met a lovely lady, who years later would become my(second) wife.

*Q: Your wife was back at this point.*

DAVIS: Yes, my wife got back about February of '68.

*Q: And that was the first time there had been an evacuation where she had had to leave a post, right?*

DAVIS: Yes. Last time I described the town of Crater being seized by the insurgents, and being rescued so to speak by the Argyll Regiment. While that was happening, the British took the opportunity to evacuate their dependents. When they did that, we evacuated ours.

*Q: How long were your wives evacuated?*

DAVIS: I don't believe the British dependents returned, given Great Britain would be giving up the colony within several months. U.S. dependents were permitted to return after several months. My wife decided to remain in the States until the school semester was over. She and our son returned at the end of January.

Several months later, Bill Eagleton and his wife, Kaye, were on vacation. During which time there was an attempted coup at the military base. The time difference between Aden and Washington is ten hours, and learning of the trouble at the base I sent a telegram alerting the Department. but did not rush to offer an estimate as to what would happen;. Without my knowledge, CAS responded to an inquiry from Washington, estimating success for the rebellion.

In the meantime, I had drafted a lengthy telegram to the Department, estimating failure of the attempted coup. and called a country team meeting to seek input, propose changes, etc. My CIA colleague had to inform us of his own estimate that the insurgents would succeed.

I felt for him, as he was in close contact with MI6. and probably was leaning heavily on their guy for information Anyway, it was an embarrassing situation, leaving him having to take a footnote to my message, which proved to have been the correct estimate.

*Q: Did the coup succeed or fail?*

DAVIS: The coup failed. If it had succeeded, it might have forestalled much of the misery we have seen in past years, that is assuming we subsequently had played a positive role in a nation-building way.

Anyway, at the post, we entered into a time where we had little to do given lack of friendly relations. We understood, but it did limit what we could do. Our contacts basically were with diplomatic colleagues, indigenous nonofficial personnel, et cetera. I left shortly thereafter and Bill, with staff, was asked to leave some months later.

*Q: You were in Aden the whole time but when the country reunited did the capital stay in Aden or did it go to Sanaa?*

DAVIS: When you say "reunited" you refer to the colonial period, which extended from the 1830s through 1968. My tour ended several years before South Yemen and Sana were united. But Sanaa was and remains the capital. Aden was only a fishing village before the British took it over in the 1830s.

I meant to mention Oman. Although we maintained friendly relations with the Sultan, we did not have diplomatic relations. Sometime before my service at Aden, the Sultan had moved from Muscat to Salalah, in the western province of Dhofar. I, or whoever was in my position, would from time to time get a ride on a British military aircraft, and go to Salalah to call on the Sultan, just to confirm our friendly interest.

Why he was in Salalah, instead of in Muscat was interesting. In short, he told me “Mr. Davis, I’m here because I have no money. As Sultan, I have a responsibility to receive my people, and to help them financially. I have no money to do that, so I spend my time here in Salalah, as visitors cannot come to me unless I give permission.”

He could sit and tell how many children were in school, that they had opened a new high school some place, et cetera. He spent his summers in London. His son who would become Sultan in due course, was at the palace waiting to be anointed as Sultan at the discretion and convenience of his father. It was said he was learning the Koran. Whatever he was doing, he was not part of the political picture at that time

The Sultan had two regiments, one commanded by seconded British officers and one commanded by seconded Pakistani officers.

During my time, there was a rebellion going on in Dhofar, up-country from Salalah. I had the pleasure of being dinner guest of the Colonel of the British regiment. It happened during my first visit. When at Sallala, I’d stay at the British mess at the small Air Base. It was and probably still is a refueling base for British aircraft transiting into the Indian Ocean area. A hundred men, five officers. They were always very gracious in putting me up. But it meant that during the day, while I was waiting for the Sultan to receive me, I was about the only person in the mess other than the waiters.

One such afternoon, a Land Rover pulled up outside and in walked a British Army colonel, a major with him. Since I was the only one there, I entertained them at the little bar. I’m behind the bar, the American consul from Aden, and sitting on the other side is the British colonel commanding the Sultan’s regiment and what have you. The Colonel had trained at various times with American special forces, and was very sympathetic to the American military situation, saying “if the damned politicians would get out of the way, the American military would clean up that mess!”

To the military, although you may be a Foreign Service officer, you’re a politician. So, I listened while we’re having our drinks, with the Colonel popping off. Very nice guy by the way. When he stopped for a moment, I said “If I may say, sir, in the United States and I believe in the UK, the role of the military is to do what they’re damn well told.”

He looked at me and I thought he was going to hit me. Instead he slapped the bar very hard and said, “God damn right!”

That evening, the Colonel, and the major who was his intelligence officer, came round in the Land Rover and drove me out to the desert encampment of the regiment. I had the honor to enjoy dinner with them, and drink a toast to the queen. When the Regiment moves, it takes its regimental silver with it. When we arrived at the encampment, we walked between tents to a large one that was the officers’ mess, and as we walked in off the sand, we were on Persian carpets. The table setting was like something out of London, with the Regiment’s silver on display behind the bar.

Shortly after we arrived, other officers did as well, and the officers' mess was assembled for dinner. Though it was hotter than hell, the officers were dressed like they were at their club in London. We drank a toast to the queen. Having spent a fair amount of time off and on with American military people, including my brother who retired as an Air Force Lt colonel, they're not above saying a few naughty words, telling a joke, et cetera. But you might have thought you were at a fine club in London. No off words, all spoke as gentlemen, it was very impressive. When the Regiment moves, everything goes with it, they're still at home wherever they are.

The next time I was there I met two RAF (Royal Air Force) officers seconded to the Sultan's air force, before the evening was over I was told by one, "I'm going up in the morning; would you care to come with me?"

What the hell,

He said, "Be out on the tarmac at 8:00 in the morning, and we'll go up."

At eight. I was out on the tarmac. There was a two-seater fighter-bomber, and the captain. But he's not flying today, his buddy is. Sorry about that. That was a trick to get me up, But in the Foreign Service you've got to hold up your side. Anyway they took me up and we flew ahead of a convoy that was going upcountry in connection with the insurgency. No untoward incident.

*Q: These countries were places where, once you got out of the city people were wearing flowing robes and a very tribal society, is that right?*

DAVIS: Indeed it is a very tribal society. In Aden, however, many wore western dress, and many wore Arab garb. Arriving in Aden, I was puzzled seeing people selling what could have been large rattan bird cages, but the rattan was placed too far apart to serve that purpose. It was only later, my wife was able to explain the purpose of the cage, and that came to her from Arab women. As explained, the women use the affair to protect their robes from fire when perfuming themselves with incense. The burner is placed within the cage-like affair, which the user stands over with her robes safely catching incense smoke, to perfume the body.

A couple of weeks before we were due to leave Aden, the embassy had the annual Foreign Service inspection. out of Washington. They were very impressed with the situation under which we were living and working, and very complimentary. At the good-bye interview, the senior inspector told me "I am never to do this, but I can't help it, I have to tell you, you're on the promotion list."

About a week later the promotion list came out, and I was not on the list. I got a telephone call from the gentleman to apologize. He said what had happened was the budget. They were trying to get a promotion list of 10 percent, and they just couldn't squeeze it enough.

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, continuing the conversation with Tom Davis. Tom, I believe we are in the year 1968, '69, and you have just left Aden which was a very exciting tour, I think, and you went back to Washington. Why don't we get started there, 1969?*

DAVIS: I might begin with a happy note relative to the Foreign Service. No matter how bad a post has been, and mine certainly were not, you always had the enjoyment of returning home, often first-class transportation, always stopping off if you were in Europe or the Middle East, in London, visit the theater, see friends, et cetera, and that trip was no exception. We met at Ivy's Restaurant, after theater with friends from the Foreign Office and from Aden. The next day we boarded the ship and sailed for New York.

*Q: Even in 1969 you were still taking ships? This was yourself, or your wife?*

DAVIS: My wife Adele, and our small son Richard; he had gone overseas with us when he was four and lived with us in Turkey and in Aden. I guess he was eight or nine, we were returning home where he for the first time would be spending time in his own country.

*Q: What was the position you went back to?*

DAVIS: It was a nothing position. I think I described returning from Haiti five years earlier, and having a position I thought was not very much - liaison to G2 at the Pentagon. Although no thanks to personnel, it developed after a few months into other interesting jobs. But returning this time from the Middle East, I found myself in a political-military job; in an annex building on K Street, handling applications from companies that sell military equipment abroad. That's divided into two parts. One, the direct application for an export license for equipment, and the second is policy judgment as to whether that type of equipment should be sold to that country. About five Foreign Service officers were assigned, one to each of the major regions, to consider such questions. I had the job regarding the Far East.

I was quite disappointed. Coming out of Aden, I thought I had done rather well. In the Foreign Service as you know, there are two or three things to get you ahead. One is a decent job in which you can compete, and show how well you perform. If you don't have a decent job, the other part is pretty tough to do. This job was one where I would not have any opportunity to do very much, other than a routine eight-to-five. But, within several months of my return, I was promoted, and that's always a happy time. Right after you're promoted, it's as though you walk on water. The day before, no one gives a damn about you, but once you've been promoted, at least for the first few months, you're pretty special.

I was pulled off the job after a few months to sit on the promotion panels for officers a grade lower than my own. I enjoyed doing the work, it was interesting. Interesting stories about so many officers in the eyes of their superiors doing the efficiency reports.

While I was involved in that work, I became aware the office that supervised the panels had lost its deputy director. I went to see Redding, who was the office director, and applied for the position. He gave me the job.

*Q: Sorry for interrupting. You were saying that sadly, there are selection outs, it's an up or out system like the military.*

DAVIS: The same personnel office that handled the promotion panels also had the duty of informing officers when it was time for them to leave the service. As you know, as in the military, it's up or out, and you can fail to be promoted through no serious problem with your performance. If the budget doesn't authorize a requested number of promotions, the Department is limited to the lower number. You might have been, say out of 100, the 91 or 92 officer in the eyes of the panels but you don't get promoted because the budget cuts it off two or three officers above you. So you could go through this with bad luck or bad assignments where you didn't have a chance to compete.

I can recall playing golf, near a large military base, shortly after my own retirement, and looking around at other players realized that some of them may have been regimental commanders, squadron commanders, or running ships a month before. Qualified to do all these things for our government, or as a FSO, head of the political section, economic officer, consul general but didn't get promoted within a certain period of time, and therefore has to step aside, owing to the personnel Christmas tree. It's just the way it works.

*Q: Were there any important policy issues in that part of the promotion panels and the selection out part of the human resources sections, issues on diversity or on selecting out or the low budget?*

DAVIS: When I came in, in the early '50s, there were almost no women FSO's. There were a number at the staff officer level, which did not compete with F. S.O's, they handled things that might be considered a specialty, such as consular matters, administration, And, in the Department, the officers were Civil Service, rather than Foreign Service. In the late 50s, the Foreign Service was integrated, and staff officers and Department officers integrated into the Foreign Service. The Service went from about 1500 to 3400 overnight, The newly integrated Foreign Service Staff officers and the Department's Civil Service officers facing "up or out" for the first time. Within several years we lost a number of needed specialists. About the same time the desire to bring in women and minorities conflicted with existing entry examinations. Something had to give, to satisfy the push. I'll let you guess who and what had to give. Enough said.

In the beginning of the '70s, that had in large part been worked out, but not completely, as we moved into cones, which do not complete across, as Foreign Service officers I

recall a time before we opened up our posts in the Persian Gulf, we found ourselves temporarily with a surplus of Arabic-speaking officers. We were not promoting them because a cone had a limited number of people. But, as officers, these young men may have had better potential than others of the same grade, but in different cones.

But, back to the job working with promotion panels. My secretary walked in, and said the deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs would like me to come by.

I had met Ambassador Rockwell, he was the senior deputy assistant secretary in the bureau of Near East/South Asia, and when I returned from Turkey en route to Aden he had sat in on my debriefing. I knew who he was, a well-thought of senior officer, but I had no personal relationship with him.

When I met with him, he said, “you made a name for yourself in Aden.”

“Thank you very much, but I didn’t know that.”

He laughed and said, “Our office director for Cyprus Affairs has decided to retire. Would you like the job?”

Well, office director was a senior position, and I was a new 03. Obviously I would love to take the job, I said “thank you very much I would love to do so, but it would be awkward as I’m in a new job.”

He said, “Don’t worry about that, we’ll take care of that if we decide to proceed.”

As I left, I was approached from a nearby office, by the personnel officer for that area. He abruptly told me personnel had nothing to do with the selection of me for the job.

When I left Turkey, I left early because the inspectors you’ll recall thought I should move on to a political section at a larger post, and I was named to go to Israel. And that was suddenly changed. When I asked why, I was told Ambassador Barber decided to keep the guy he had rather than take a new man. Well, that was a decision by one man, an ambassador, and he had the power to do that, and as a result I didn’t get the position that personnel had thought would be right for me.

So here again, personnel obviously had somebody in mind for a job, and the Bureau of Near East Affairs grabbed me. No complaints, I’m delighted to have the job, but it’s part of personnel problems that I’m sure the department still struggles with.

*Q: I wanted to ask about the Cyprus office, it was a whole office just for that one country? These days, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and maybe one or two other countries are all part of one office, but it sounds like Cyprus was a stand-alone office with an 01 director, so I’m wondering why Cyprus was important in 1969?*



DAVIS. It was the organization of the geographic bureaus at the time. NEA was the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs, and included Egypt but not the other countries of North Africa, all under an Assistant Secretary of State, in my time, Joseph Sisco, assisted by three deputies. The office directors, or country directors as they also were called, worked directly under one of the deputies, but also with the Assistant Secretary. The latter might be a political appointee, or a career officer, as the case might be. My boss initially was Deputy Assistant Secretary Rockwell, and later Roger Davies, the latter in due course would be Ambassador to Cyprus, where he and his secretary were assassinated.

An office suite physically housed one or two office directors and staff. Our Greek colleagues had an entire suite, as did the office of Iranian affairs, whereas Turkey and Cyprus shared a suite. We were on the Fifth Floor, whereas the Assistant Secretary, and his Deputies were on the Sixth Floor.

As office director I was responsible for U. S affairs with Cyprus. When the minister of foreign affairs visited Washington I was his official host, inviting him to my home for dinner, together with my boss, Davies and his wife.

When the President of Cyprus visited Washington I was the one to meet and greet, and accompany to the White House, for the evening, and his appointment with the President, and visiting Kennedy' grave and accompanying to the airport.

*Q: My sense of history might be off a little bit but Cyprus, the Greeks went into Cyprus and the Turks fought back in the '70s, right, a few years after? So was Cyprus considered a hotspot a few years before?*

DAVIS: Before I respond to that question I'd like to address a little history as it relates to so much of the Cyprus problem. The Ottoman Empire lasted about 400 years. it included the Balkans, the Arab world, Turkey, Iran, Cyprus, North Africa, Yemen, et cetera. It started to fall apart many years before it finally did. In the Cyprus Convention, ca 1878, Great Britain purchased Cyprus from Turkey. under certain conditions reserved to Turkey So beginning in say 1878 (forgive me if I'm a year or two off), Cyprus became for all practical purposes a protectorate of Great Britain. becoming a colony ca 1925.

Greece became independent of the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s. Greece and Cyprus, while historically separate entities, have always felt very close given their Orthodox faith, ethnic background, and language Cyprus continues to be about 80 percent Greek speakers, and twenty percent Turkish. The latter were left over from the time it was a part of the Ottoman Empire. Part of the convention was to ensure the Turks remained relatively independent, no matter who had the control of Cyprus, with Turkey guaranteeing their safety and independence.

The Greek Cypriots – Great Britain gave Cyprus independence in 1960. At that time the constitutional order was set up to maintain the relative independence of the Turkish Cypriots . A very unusual situation – you have a new country but it doesn't get it entirely,

but must share with an independent minority. Violence against the Turkish minority broke out in 1963, I then was consul at Adana. Earlier, before independence was granted, there had been an attempt led by Grivas (a Greek army officer) to force union with Greece. This had been defeated by the British at the time, but continued to fester.

In '63, the violence in Cyprus threatened a Turkish intervention, exercising its right under the convention, which had set the terms for independence. Intervention would have threatened war with Greece. And as Greece and Turkey constitute the southern flank of NATO, it behooved the United States to prevent war and thereby protect the southern flank of NATO. This required keeping the peace in Cyprus.

Peace was maintained, but not without considerable threat and fear of war, with Under Secretary of State Ball considerably involved. visiting Makarios in Nicosia, accompanied by his assistant, Joseph Sisco. The latter, by the time I was office director for Cyprus, was assistant secretary of State for Near East/South Asian affairs and my boss.

Ball and Sisco, interceding with Makarios, failed to change his approach and accept the imposed constitution. The Crisis had arisen because he had attempted to unilaterally change it Months would go by, but it would continue to be a very difficult and dangerous situation.

As Office Director, my secretary, the first morning, informed me that Deputy Assistant Secretary Rockwell wished to see me in his office right away. He had a guest with him, his peer from CIA. Rockwell told me the CIA had information, which it believed to be true, that there was a plot to assassinate President Makarios. The question for me was what should be done with that information? Should we notify Makarios, so he might take steps to protect himself, or should we keep out of it and let whatever might be happen? That was my first decision as office director.

Interesting question. It raises two things in a Foreign Service officer's mind. What's in the best interest of the United States? Separately, what is required of you as a human being, and an individual of personal religion and philosophy? Happily, the answer to each of these questions was easy to reach. We informed President Makarios.

He was appreciative, and successfully addressed the threat.

President Makarios had a very pleasant dry sense of humor, and a few weeks later when another plot came about, without our awareness, Makarios, meeting with our Ambassador inquired. "why did you not let me know this time"

A couple of weeks after taking the job of Office Director, I was able to visit the Foreign Office in London, and our Embassies at Athens, Nicosia, and Ankara to meet the personalities concerned with Cyprus affairs. I recall two events in Turkey. The first occurred while I was awaiting an on going flight from Adana to Ankara , the second when I arrived at the Ankara airport. At Adana, we were on the ground for perhaps a half hour, in a waiting room, and who should walk up and give me a big hug, but the Turkish

correspondent from Cumhuriyet, the major Istanbul daily; a guy I'd known when Consul at Adana several years earlier.

The second event occurred as I deplaned the same evening upon arrival at Ankara. As I walked toward the terminal, I spied across the tarmac my old friend, Mukadar Oztekin, formerly the Governor at Adana, since elected to the Turkish Senate. Together with my former interpreter and travel companion, Abdullah Kasapchi, we had a very pleasant evening. In the Foreign Service one leaves many friends not to be forgotten.

I had several occasions while Office Director that are memorable. I had a lot of them that are routine. Unless you have questions I will skip the routine and go to those that are more memorable.

*Q: I just want to jump in here. Makarios was an archbishop, and also the president. He was the first president after independence in 1960, is that correct?*

DAVIS: Makarios was the first president of Cyprus. The Ottomans ruled the peoples under them through their respective religious leaders. So, in a given country, if there was trouble, the sultan's representative would call in the head of the respective faith and look to him to correct the problem. So historically the head of the church in each community had political power. During the immediate years before independence was granted by Great Britain, there was insurgency in Cyprus. It was suspected that Makarios was involved. because of the historical situation.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations occurred in the early 1970s, with heads of state in New York. At the conclusion there were about twenty-six h still in New York. Nixon was president at the time, and Kissinger was National Security Council director. Nixon wanted to invite the remaining heads of state to the White House for dinner. I assume it's correct that Kissinger said, "Mr. President, some of these people hate each others' guts, how will we prevent a free-for-all at the dinner table?"

The president was described as laughing and saying, "Hell, we've got an office director in the State Department responsible for each one of these countries. Let's invite the State guys to act as aides de camp to the respective presidents."

Under these terms, I hosted Makarios in Washington. His ambassador flew down with Archbishop Makarios, and they stayed at the Mayflower Hotel. Speaking of the president's dry sense of humor, we were walking down the hotel corridor, and the Cypriot ambassador, a man in his seventies, had a beautiful suit on, obviously bespoke, as I recall it was dark gray with a light stripe, and looked very nice. The Archbishop was in his robes which he traditionally wore. We're chatting casually and. Makarios looks over at his ambassador (I understood they were old friends) and said, "That's a beautiful suit you're wearing."

You can imagine how the ambassador straightened up, obviously pleased. And the archbishop looked again and said, "But you'd look better in black."

I took him downstairs and put him in the White House limousine. Knowing a little about him, I inquired if during the evening he would be drinking and would he have his usual after dinner cigar. He indicated he would neither drink, nor smoke.

We were met at the White House sentry by President Nixon with Mrs. Nixon. I previously had the honor of being a guest at receptions during the Kennedy years, when I was on the staff, but nevertheless it was very nice to step in and introduce Makarios to the president and the president's wife, and to stay with him during the evening. My first chief of mission, Charles Yost, who had been minister of legation in Laos, had for some time been ambassador to the United Nations. He was there with his wife, Mrs. Yost. It was very nice, they each spoke with Mrs. Yost and inquired of my wife.

I knew I would introduce Makarios to the president of Panama, as the latter was the son of a Greek father and mother, and still talked of being Greek and speaking Greek. I introduced the two, and stood aside while they chatted in Greek, and then I interposed to guide him away. As we did so, his sense of humor prevailed, and looking at me, Makarios said "Too many Greeks here tonight."

At the end of the evening, I took him back to the Mayflower knowing he had an enjoyable evening.

I had arranged a personal appointment between President Makarios and President Nixon for the following day, but it was a private meeting between the two presidents, although Kissinger may have sat in on it. Earlier in the day, Makarios, his Foreign Minister, Ambassador, and I had visited the Kennedy grave. Later in the day I accompanied Makarios, his foreign minister and ambassador to the airport, had a nice chat en route, and put them on the airplane. It was a busy two or three days.

*Q: I just wanted to jump in for the transcript and say the president of Panama's name I think was Demetrio Lakas.*

DAVIS: Thank you.

We became aware that the Greek military junta and the Turkish military were plotting to overthrow the Cypriot Government, removing Makarios. Our own interest was to do whatever was necessary to forestall any threat to the Southern Flank of NATO.

The initial reaction to the plot was to let it happen. This in my opinion was the worst thing we could do. 1) there was no reason to trust a plot between two otherwise long standing opponents: Greek and Turkey. 2) if we did nothing and thus permitted it to go forward, failure would be seen by Greece and Turkey as evidence the other could not be trusted. Unfortunately, our Assistant Secretary, Joseph Sisco was one of those willing to let it go forward.

Inviting my colleagues, from the Turkish, Greek, and Intelligence desks to join me, I set up an appointment with the Assistant Secretary to argue the issue, which we did, accompanied by Deputy Assistant Secretary Roger Davies. Happily, the boss, Joe Sisco, after lengthy discussion accepted our combined point of view, and agreed our ambassadors would be instructed to convey to the respective Governments our negative reaction. and to end the plotting.

Three years later, when it again came up, it was not shot down. It went ahead, failed in its objective, following which the Turks invaded Cyprus, and are still there. Side effects included lessening of Turkish/American cooperation, Cyprus using its own membership in the EU to deny Turkey's admission, and the assassination of our Ambassador, Roger Davies, and his secretary Fifty years later the several countries are still paying for that misadventure .

But, back to my time as Office Director for Cypriot Affairs, Time passed, and I received a call from Personnel, inquiring if I would be interested in an assignment to the National War College. I made a mistake, a grievous one, and said yes. Eventually I wanted to attend the ten month War College, but to leave the assignment as office director was stupidity on my part. Obviously Personnel was not acting as my mentor, but rather interested in filling a slot.

I almost was saved, in spite of my stupidity. It was early Saturday morning. I was to be at the College on Monday. I received a call from Deputy Assistant Roger Davies to come to the office, which I did. I learned our Ambassador at Sanaa, Yemen had suffered a heart attack, and Bill Crawford, our DCM in Nicosia (an Arabic speaker) had been alerted to fly to Sanaa to replace him. Bill, for family reasons was hesitating, but had promised to talk to his wife, and call back within hours. He did, rejecting the Sanaa offer, and remaining at Nicosia as DCM.

As office director for Cyprus, I left feeling pretty good. We had kept the peace, we had stopped a planned coup. . My thought at the time was that if anything went wrong, with a planned coup, neither Greece nor Turkey would trust the good faith of the other. They would immediately feel they had been betrayed. I was correct as history shows.

If the southern flank of NATO was threatened over Cyprus, our plans for the eastern Mediterranean would have been in jeopardy Therefore, don't let anything happen regarding Cyprus. I like the Cypriot people, I liked Makarios, but that was not the reason to forestall a coup. The reason was a very selfish one for the United States; to keep the peace. There was no solution at that time to the Cyprus problem. But it was possible to keep the peace, and in keeping the peace to achieve our most important objective. I knew we had achieved that, and left the office for the War College feeling pretty good about it.

When I reported to the War College, it was to a class of ca.130, five civilians, the rest Army, Air Force, Marine colonels or Navy captains. I would be spending my next ten months with these people. That morning we were divided into groups of ten, and each group was assigned to a classroom, which would be our home room, so to speak. I sat

down with my group of ten, waiting to be called for our first lecture. Not knowing anybody, I wondered what was coming up. Somebody said, “What if they ask this” and some Air Force colonel laughed and said “I’d just say, ‘nuke the bastards.’”

I thought to myself, “Where the hell am I?”

*Q: Culture shock!*

DAVIS: By the time the year was over, the military students were speaking like Foreign Service officers, and the civilian officers were saying “Nuke the bastards” It wasn’t quite that bad, in general it was a good year.

The NWC was located at Fort McNair in Washington, DC, overlooking the Potomac. It in essence followed in the footsteps of the British Imperial War College. It was created some time after World War II, in conjunction with the uniting of so many other military activities; as you probably know there is a Naval War College, an Army War College, and an Air Force college. The National War College brings together about 130 officers from the several services. As a nice gesture the college includes five or six civilian officers, and of those you might think of two or three Foreign Service officers, a CIA officer, somebody from the disarmament agency so you have somewhat of a civilian contribution to the many discussions that go on amongst the military officers.

The military personnel, colonels or Navy captains, had run regiments, ships, et cetera, all thought of as possible senior leaders. One morning a lecturer, a very senior officer addressing us said, “I look out at what I’m told are future leaders of the military, but I would also suggest that I’m looking at a lot of future retired officers who didn’t make it”. There was a lot of truth to that, it’s impossible to look ahead and say who will make it, but you take a certain number and give them the opportunity to broaden their background. One Naval classmate made it all the way to the top of CIA.

After the ten months, I returned to State expecting to have a political assignment. Instead NEA offered me a position as deputy executive director of the bureau.

*Q: Turning to your new work, that’s a big job, right?*

DAVIS: The Executive Director is a very significant position, of course, and that was Ray Hunt, an outstanding administrator and Foreign Service officer, whom I knew from earlier assignments abroad and within the Department. My reaction to the offer was, “Ray, I don’t know a thing about administration; what in the world would you want me for?”

His response was, “Tom, I know that, but I can handle administration. What I’m thinking about is, we’re opening new posts in the Persian Gulf, et cetera, while we continue to service thirty-some Foreign Service posts in the region, plus the offices in NEA. It would be nice to have as my deputy somebody from the substantive side of the house who could judge what we’re doing and how well we’re doing it, one I could talk to informally on

these subjects as we prepare a budget for the year, for example. Each post wants more money; they can't each have more. I would find it useful to have a deputy, if you would take it. I responded I would be delighted to accept.

Cones were something new for us, and I don't think either of us was thinking how assignment out of cone (political, in my case) would affect promotion. Without cones, Foreign Service officers are generalists, which I was. Serving abroad, I had headed up an embassy's consular section, served as principal office at a constituent post, been political officer, deputy and Charge at Aden, In Washington I had served as office director on a regional desk, as assistant to a Cabinet Secretary (Attorney General), assistant to a four star general, to the Director of Intelligence, and now I had just completed the National War College. Perhaps an assignment as Dep. Ex. Dir of a regional bureau would lead to a DCM position, and if not to an assignment abroad as a senior political officer.

It was delightful working with Ray. He had good post management officers, and an excellent budget guy. Couldn't do anything wrong, with Ray Hunt running it. Very educational for me. During the first year Ray suggested I take time away, visiting a selection of the 30 some posts. I did, spending some time in Ankara, Kuwait, Qatar, U.A.E., Oman, New Delhi, Calcutta, Bangladesh, and Bangkok. The thought of the travel was to meet with Chiefs of Missions and the respective administrative officers, and be a face on Washington with whom they looked for administrative support. Interestingly, few posts had needs they felt were not being filled through normal correspondence. This left us feeling we probably were doing a good job supporting.

After eighteen months, Ray was moved up to the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Administration. I was asked if I'd do the EX job for the next six months, until NEA could bring an administrative officer from Japan, well known to the bureau, which would like to have him. What could I do? I agreed, and did it well, receiving a good efficiency report. The thought was that as the new Administrative Officer arrived, and I was free, the Bureau would take care of me. Hm! Almost worked.

In addition to the challenge and pleasure of running the Executive Office for six months, other things were happening within State, some good, some not so good for me.

1) Secretary of State Kissinger returned from a meeting of senior Foreign Service officers in Mexico City, where in his judgment too many senior officers had a narrow approach, from having been too long assigned at a given post or region. In returning to State he decreed officers would not be assigned within their area, if they'd been there five years or longer.

2) As the six months passed, my boss, Roger Davies, was appointed ambassador to Cyprus. He and I had worked well together, and he asked me to go to Nicosia with him as DCM. I was delighted. Personnel was not. My transfer to Cyprus would violate the new Kissinger rule. I lunched with the Under Secretary for Administration, which yielded an offer to speak with the Director General on my behalf, but the effort failed., As the

Director General responded “ It’s an unpleasant job to carry out, but one has to do it. With any exceptions, how can I say no to the next guy? Sorry.”

Obviously, I was very unhappy. That decision would tank my career as a Foreign Service Officer.

3) this was occurring at the end of the fiscal year, which coincided with a significant organization change, relating to NEA, the Bureau of European Affairs, and African Affairs. NEA would give up the Greek, Turkish and Cyprus desks to European Affairs, and pick up from African Affairs the countries across North Africa, with exception of Egypt.

4) Joe Sisco, having been Assistant Secretary of State for some years, and at least in a way familiar with the picture, left the NEA Bureau, being promoted to Deputy Under Secretary of State.

and 5) as all of the above was occurring, we became aware that the Greeks and the Turks again were in a plot to overthrow the Cypriot Government. The object said to be elimination of the ongoing potential threat to Greco/Turkish relations, and the related threat to the Southern Flank of Nato, as described in an earlier interview, which had lead at that time to the Officer Directors (Turkish Desk, Greek and Cypriot desks) interceding with Joe Sisco, Assistant Secretary, to use U.S. influence with the plotters to cease with the plotting.

This time there was no one to argue the case, as we had done three years earlier. The attempted coup failed, Makarios went into temporary hiding, the Turks blamed the Greeks for the failure, and invaded Cyprus, remaining there to this day. As this was occurring, newly appointed Ambassador Davies arrived a post, and within a short time was assassinated, together with his secretary, shot while at his desk, by a sniper.

Relating to myself, as the DCM position for me fell through, Barbara Watson, head of the Consular Bureau, told me she had a vacancy as consul general in Athens, and asked if I would like the job? Consul General, hm,

I said “Let me talk to my wife.” In doing the latter I explained I’d be transferred to the consular cone, an unhappy event for consular officers, as I’m not one of them. So, I would have to plan on retiring at the conclusion of the four year assignment.

With my wife’s concurrence I accepted Mrs Watson’s offer, and shortly thereafter we were in Athens.

*Q: We’ll stop the recording here and pick up next time.*

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, continuing our conversation with Tom Davis. Tom, last time we talked about your position in the bureau of Near East and South Asia, concluding with you accepting the assignment as Consul General at Athens.*

Yes, for reasons discussed last session, I was not allowed an assignment as DCM at Nicosia. I, therefore, was grateful for the offer from Barbara Watson, director of the Consular Affairs bureau, to go to Athens as consul general. From earlier assignments, I had experience with consular matters, and felt I could do a good job. I discussed the opportunity with my wife. As accepting, I would not be competitive for promotion as a political officer, and could expect to retire following completion of the four year assignment. In the meantime, Athens would be a very nice living environment for my wife and our son.

*Q: How old was he when you got there?*

DAVIS: We left Washington when he was fifteen. He spent three years in Greece at a private English school, then qualified for, and went off to Stanford.

*Q: Before we move on I do want to talk about your tour in Greece, but I wanted to see if you could go back to talk about the ambassador who was assassinated in his office in Cyprus. Can you give more detail on who assassinated the ambassador and why?*

DAVIS: As to who, it's a long story. You won't have time for it, and my memory is inadequate to go back and pull up the information. Let me say that Cyprus went through a period of insurgency before it gained its independence from Great Britain. That period of insurgency involved leadership from Greece, through a Colonel Grivas— never publicly admitted to my knowledge, but true. Independence came through an agreement between Great Britain and Turkey, with special consideration for the Cypriot Turks written into the constitution, which then was imposed on the majority (Greek Cypriots).

Following violence on the island, there was a threat of war between Greece and Turkey throughout the '60s. The United States played the role of big brother, meeting and arguing with the three countries. The threat of war reached a point during the mid-sixties, that our Embassy in Ankara (military attaches) sent an immediate message warning Washington that the Turks were prepared to launch an invasion within twenty-four hours. I received a copy in the very early hours, and got in trouble with the Embassy when I sent a follow up Immediate to Washington, advising there was no activity on the part of the Army or the Navy in my area to confirm such readiness.

I mentioned earlier that the first decision I made on the Cyprus desk was whether or not to inform Makarios that CIA had information regarding a plot to assassinate him. That threat was forestalled at that time. Greek Cypriots constitute the majority of the population of Cyprus, about 80 percent, The Greek plotting heated up during the time of the military junta in Greece. For Greece and Turkey, it would be madness to fight each other, but for internal political reasons, they might be forced into war. So from the view of military planners, you might say, it seemed to be necessary to solve the problem.

The problem was Makarios. and the Greek Cypriots. The plot was (I don't know the details, it's too long ago) that Greece and Turkey with Greece taking the lead would change the government in Cyprus. The attempt failed, Makarios initially fleeing, I believe to the British base at Akrotiri. Makarios returned when things quieted down. He lived for another three or four years before he died of natural causes. The junta in Greece failed, following the plot, which had provoked the Turkish invasion. Democracy was restored to Greece. But, the immediate result of the failed coup was occupation of about a third of Cyprus by Turkey, And of course continued animosity between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus.

*Q: Right, because people in Greece felt they had been humiliated?*

Davis You won't find a Greek who does not support Cyprus. So if the junta had been successful, cheers. But they screwed up. They screwed up and as a result you have a Turkish occupation of 30 percent of Cyprus with no end in sight.

*Q: Kind of like what happened in the Falklands where the junta in Argentina brought the country to a defeat that was totally unneeded and they fell thereafter. Was there resentment against the United States, is that why the ambassador was attacked?*

DAVIS: Yes. But it all requires so much background, that we can't get into circumstances. Put it this way. The failed plot, followed by the Turkish invasion left everyone very unhappy. Regarding the assassination of Ambassador Roger Davies, if I had to guess – the shooter would have been from the Greek side of the failed plot. It might also have been from the Greek Cypriot side, given the US knew what was happening and didn't stop it.

*Q: Right, and now we've lived with it so many decades later as you pointed out. Takes a little bit of being able to see the future.*

DAVIS: I went out to Greece at the same time this was happening.

*Q: So the junta was still in place when you arrived?*

DAVIS: It had fallen the week before.

The airport was closed. We were considering in Washington how I would get in, thinking I would fly into Belgrade and come in overland. But all at once the junta fell, the airport was opened. We changed ambassador, DCM, and consul general, all within a matter of two or three weeks. I'm not suggesting that had to do with what occurred in Cyprus;

*Q: That was just the timing of our processes. Who was the ambassador during your time there?*

DAVIS: There were three. an ambassador there when I arrived, leaving a couple of weeks later., I believe he was a political appointee.

*Q: That would have been Henry Tasca, right?*

DAVIS: That's it, yes. Seemed to be a nice gentleman, but I did not know him.

He was replaced by Jack Kubisch.r. Very much aware he was Ambassador. He was replaced two or three months before I left, by McCloskey. McCloskey had an entirely different personality. A little bit going back in history, he and I had both been vice consuls at the same time in Hong Kong. We hadn't worked together since that time years before. I have no complaint against any of them, other than the normal complaint of anybody who works in consular affairs.

*Q: What is that?*

DAVIS: Typically ambassadors know nothing about consular work, have never done it, or if professionals, have not done it since their first assignment, want nothing to do with it except "Don't get me in trouble!"

*Q: Right, that's what they're taught.*

DAVIS: "Don't get me in trouble, keep everything away from me about this stuff." I mentioned in one of our first interviews that I participated in a Presidential Special Study Group of 1960. It was assigned the task of reviewing U.S. efforts and procedures regarding intelligence collection. In concluding its work, it offered 117 recommendations, almost all of which were approved by the President. One was the establishment of the Defense Intelligence Agency. But, for the purpose of what we are discussing, "You're in charge of the activity, just don't get me in trouble," ambassadors too often see their responsibility as that of a glorified political officer, rather than a Chief of Mission.

Sharing this perception, President Kennedy followed the described Study Group's; recommendations, with a personal letter to each ambassador, reminding that the role of Chief of Mission requires each to take full responsibility for all American activities at the assigned post.

I would like to bring up several things of interest during my time in Greece. I already mentioned that democracy had just been restored. Karamanlis was the new prime minister. His job was to restore democracy in the country. He needed numerous qualified people in his government, including a minister of finance ,for a six month period. His choice was a naturalized American citizen. I read in the newspaper that Dr. Fotias had accepted the appointment. He was elderly and retired, but had been head of the economics/finance department at American University.

*Q: You knew he was going to come to you?*

DAVIS: I wondered. I waited a week; he did not. I went to my ambassador and told him what I needed to do, and I made an appointment and went to see him. When I entered his office, he greeted me nicely and said, "I know why you're here. Do whatever you must; I felt under the circumstances I had it in the interest of democracy to respond to the new prime minister and take this position."

I told him, "I admire you and what you're doing, and my ambassador does as well. At the end of six months, when you are no longer an official, come see me and bring your passport."

We became friends. At the end of six months he came in and I took his passport. I told him "I'll write to the Department of State and tell them what you've done, send your passport in, and they will decide whether or not to remove your citizenship. I will do my best to see there is a good outcome."

With the ambassador's approval I wrote to the Department of State and submitted the passport and the information that he had taken steps that might lead to his citizenship removal, but I hoped not, that he had done this in the interest of democracy and therefore had performed in the interest of the United States as well, and that it would be gracious on our part to overlook this and return his passport to him. That was done.

*Q: Oh very good.*

DAVIS: I was very happy about that. He was also of course. That cemented our friendship you can be sure.

*Q: A decade later, I remember that Meir Kahane who was New York-born and moved to Israel in 1971 and was elected to the Israeli parliament and he lost his American citizenship for this reason. He contested it and he had won in October of 1985, so I don't know if you consider it a similar case.*

DAVIS: Similar in essence. When a person places himself in jeopardy or takes certain steps, and running for election in a foreign government certainly would put him in jeopardy. But, the United States government reserves to itself the final decision.

*Q: I guess the point I was making is that my sense as an observer was that the State Department became less militant on this issue of not allowing dual citizens to hold office, after the Kahane case.*

DAVIS: There's a board within the U.S. government that considers such cases. It has authority to do what it wants. So, beware if you are without a recommendation on your behalf. But, like anything else, there's usually an exception some place.

*Q: In your case it was the recommendation of the consul general.*

DAVIS: It is quite proper to consider the circumstances. In my case I was so delighted that thoughtful people in Washington made the right judgment.

*Q: That's right, a very interesting case, thank you for talking about it.*

DAVIS: I'll give you another example, not relating to citizenship but to the tax code. As you know, if you earn money abroad, you owe taxes on it. An American citizen, former OSS in World War II, Greek-American, decided after the Greek civil war to open a box factory, and became quite wealthy making boxes.

Charles was in his seventies, still active, and he owed lots of money to the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). He owed it because the Greek government would not permit him to convert Greek money to American money. Every year he would submit a tax return, explain he couldn't pay, every year they would add interest to it. He was in the embassy one day, getting his passport renewed or something. Since we were friends he stopped by my office to say hello, and I gave him a cup of coffee. When he got up to leave, I said, "Charles, what else can I do for you?", not expecting him to say anything, except thank you.

He looked at me, laughed, and said "You can figure out some way I can pay my taxes." I didn't know the story until then. He explained it to me.

My reaction was "This seems impossible. We have a finance officer upstairs who buys Greek money every week to pay labor costs, rents, leases and other expenses of the embassy.

I took Charles upstairs to our finance officer. who said, "I don't see why not; I need so and so much every week." Anyway he took money from Charles, must have been \$70,000 or \$80,000, wrote out a check to the IRS in his name for the money, sent it off to IRS. The U.S. government was furious - came back, said this is against regulation so and so. So the embassy continued to spend U.S. money to buy Greek money and Charles continued to not pay his taxes.

*Q: Even that check was not accepted?*

DAVIS: They had to take that, but he owed much much more. That was what he owed that year. So it was a lot of money involved and obviously it wasn't just Charles, it was any American living abroad in a country that does not permit conversion of their money.

*Q: There was a lot of terrorism and anti-American sentiment in Greece in the '70s, is that right?*

DAVIS: There remained some anti-American feeling. That was not serious in itself, but we did not have the relations we would have hoped for. Separately, although Greece won its civil war, many in Greece remained leftists. Of that group, a few were affiliated with

terrorist groups. As you'll recall, terrorist programs were going on in Lebanon, et cetera, and we suffered an assassination while I was in Greece.

Dick Welch and I, with wives, were at the Ambassador's affair, a few evenings before Christmas. About 9:30, Dick and I were having a last drink and saying good night. He left in his car with his wife, I in my car with my wife. We lived a couple of blocks apart. As his chauffeur drove up to their home, two men stepped out, and shot Dick.

My wife and I got to our home about the time that was happening. A few minutes later I received a telephone call from the DCM that Dick had been shot and to go to the hospital, which I did; he was already dead. His body was returned to the States and his name put on the plaque. Very sad, he was a very nice person.

The general assassination program started when I was in Washington, working with Ray Hunt, the first occurred at Khartoum. You may remember. Five terrorists seized a gathering at a diplomat's home, including the American ambassador, and his deputy, who were murdered. The assassins then surrendered to the Sudanese government, and after a day or two were released, and returned to Cairo, from where they had come.

Ray Hunt and I went to the airport with other Department of State people to receive the bodies.

*Q: So this assassination in Greece was not done by a Greek movement? It was Palestinian?*

DAVIS: I assume it was Greek. but I don't know.

*Q: Okay because it was a very active group.*

DAVIS: As far as I know they were never arrested.

About that same time, assassinations were going on in Beirut. A colleague from Aden, was killed in the American Embassy in Beirut when it was blown up.

*Q: Why don't you go back to Dick Welch? I just looked it up and it says he was assassinated by the revolutionary organization on 17 November. I think that's what people assumed at the time. 17 November, or November-17, depending on how you translate it. So they were the ones that committed a series of assassinations against Americans and British from the '70s through the '90s I believe. That's who history believes killed him.*

*Q: Did you want to continue with what had happened before.*

DAVIS: Regarding the assassination, we had all been instructed, either in Washington or at post, about taking security measures for personal security, such as driving a different

route each day to the embassy — but of course, that doesn't work. You always have to leave from and return home.

*Q: Right and that's the most common place to be attacked.*

DAVIS: And you always end up in the other direction at the embassy. So it really makes no difference how you drive.

That assassination was the first that involved Americans in Greece.

*Q: That's what I wanted to ask. Until that time did you and your wife go out and about easily and enjoy Athens.*

DAVIS: Indeed. We traveled throughout Greece, never had a fear. For a period of time after Dick was assassinated, I carried my .45, not ostentatiously, not that it would have done any good, but it gave me psychological security.

On the other hand the .45 has a Foreign Service story to it. It belonged originally to the Marine Corps, when the Corps occupied Haiti, and it was issued to a young gendarme, who subsequently became commanding officer of the Haitian air force. In due course, he and I became friends, and he kindly flew me about Haiti, so I could see the place from the air. It was a wonderful experience. He was married to a lovely Haitian woman who ran a ladies' shop.

He, in addition to other senior officers, ran afoul of Papa Doc, and lost his job as commanding officer of the air force. Subsequently he came to me and asked if it would be possible to get visas? The usual question. A couple of weeks later, he came into the embassy to see me, and said when he was dismissed, he turned in his issued pistol, a .38 revolver, but had not given them his .45 which he had carried since the occupation of Haiti. He knew if they found it in his home, it would be cause to arrest him, and would I like to have it as a souvenir? I took it. and years later, carried it in Aden.

Back to Greece. My wife, and son, and I traveled throughout Greece, by car. On one occasion, we traveled from Le Havre across Europe, through Germany, Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece. Crossing the river Evros, between Greece and Turkey, in our new Mustang my son, then five/six years old, very familiar with Turkish military uniforms, saw the Turkish soldier posted in the middle of the Evros bridge. He rolled down his window, put his blond head out the window, and yelled in Turkish to the soldier. The latter lost his composure and waved, as I honked the horn, and we drove from Greece into Turkey.

*Q: I think we're going to have to end for today and resume, in our next session we can finish Greece and move to Kingston.*

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*Q: Good afternoon, it is May 24th, 2023, continuing our conversation with Tom Davis. Tom, before we go on, you were working in the executive director office in the Near East bureau in the Department of State, I wanted to see if there was anything you wanted to add.*

When Ray Hunt left the bureau to become Assistant Secretary of State for Administration I was asked to head up NEA/EX for six months, It would include the budgeting period. When you first get the budget, you know it has to last, so you begin the fiscal year very conservatively. As the year progresses you begin to release funds to the posts. By the time you get to the last quarter of the year, you still must have sufficient funds to last until the conclusion of the fiscal year, and for emergencies should they arise. If you're lucky, you get through the end of the year, you fund everybody's needs and even some of their wants, and if possible you finish almost broke. Then you ask for a greater budget as the new year begins, and justify it by showing how you spent wisely everything they had provided the previous year. To achieve that was a great satisfaction for me.

*Q: What year was this that you arrived?*

DAVIS: We arrived in Athens in July/August 1973, and stayed four years, leaving in '78. We arrived with wife, fifteen-year-old son, Collie, like you see on TV, and our cat. We were put up temporarily at an apartment/hotel across the street from the embassy. The next morning I walked across to enter the consular entrance, and had to weave my way through a crowd. There must have been thirty people trying to get in. The Embassy had just opened for the day, and they were waiting for visa interviews.

*Q: Henry Tasca was ambassador from '69 to '74, nice long run. Then it was Jack Kubisch, '74 to '77, then Robert McCloskey.*

DAVIS: Yes. Each was different, but each had the same lack of interest in consular matters, as long as our work did not in any way interfere.

We had about thirty-five indigenous women employees, and five or six men, Of the Greek staff. Alex Angelides was an outstanding person and employee. Of the officers, there were five, plus myself; all but one on first-tour.

One officer interviewed non-immigrants, three officers interviewed prospective immigrants, and one officer handled nationality, and general consular affairs.

In addition we had a Social Security Officer from Baltimore, and an Immigration officer from Washington.

*Q: Did you also have in addition to the consular section Athens, did you have consular sections in the consulates?*

DAVIS: Not really. Regarding the principal officer, I was told by his vice consul, in private, that the father was a Greek American ship owner, and the son was marking time



until a suitable senior position could be found within the Department. That was achieved, and the officer moved back to the Department, assuming a position as deputy assistant secretary. Works nicely, especially if the officer also is able. This gentleman rather quickly was promoted to senior level, and served very successfully in ambassadorial roles for a number of years.

*Q: Did they handle visas or American —*

DAVIS: No. Athens handled all visa work.

*Q: Moving to happier things, in your travels did you have special places you family liked to visit or see? Greece has such a history.*

DAVIS: We never lacked for places to visit, and enjoyed many weekends outside of Athens, often with Greek friends.

*Q: Tom, would you relate the time the Mayor of Athens was denied a visa?*

DAVIS: The mayor of Athens had a reputation for being a leftist, perhaps a Communist.

*Q: In the visa rules, being a Communist used to be an ineligibility, right?*

DAVIS: I'm trying to think of it now. The old Immigration Act specifically declares that Communists are ineligible for entry to the United States. In Haiti, whenever there'd be a change in government, everybody in the opposition would be declared by the new government to be Communists. So you have to keep such things in perspective.

*Q: Right. And also if you have an ineligibility there is a process to ask for a waiver.*

DAVIS: There's always a process. But the best process is common sense. So when I found out the mayor had been refused a visa, I offered an apology by telephone and asked if he would send his passport down, and it would be my pleasure to give him a visa.

Having done that, I went up and told the ambassador what I had done. He would not have expected anything else. This is one of the reasons we conduct immigrant matters overseas through the Foreign Service, and not through the immigration service. But that's another story.

*Q: That's right because we're always balancing everything and our relationship with the city of Athens is important and there is no sense, there is nothing in that situation that would have been helpful to us.*

*It's an ineligibility that didn't really make much sense in the 1970s and certainly after because it didn't mean there was any danger to the United States for him to visit New York.*

DAVIS: Haiti was the only place where I took personal responsibility for non-immigrant visas, and then only if they were diplomatic. We had an application from the papal nuncio in Port-au-Prince. This was before we recognized the Vatican; so we could not issue a diplomatic visa.

When the papal nuncio came in for a visa, he said, "I realize since I'm not a Communist, nor the ambassador of the Soviet Union, you're not permitted to give me a diplomatic visa. But give me what you can."

I said, "You're right, I cannot give you a diplomatic visa, but I'll give you something better." I wrote out a short letter addressed to the immigration officers in New York, introducing him as the papal nuncio, personal representative of the pope, and as a friend of the American embassy in Port-au-Prince, noting we would appreciate any courtesies extended to him. I'm sure, there was no problem.

*Q: Absolutely. Is there anything else on your tour in Greece you would like to mention? If not we will pick up with your last posting in Kingston.*

DAVIS: I was leaving Athens after four years as consul general. I had told my wife we would be retiring after the assignment, for the reasons I mentioned earlier. Toward the end of our tour, we were visited by Barbara Watson, head of the consular bureau, and while taking her to the airport, I told her I planned to retire from Athens.

She looked at me, "unless something interesting comes up." Well, a week or two later, an offer came from personnel offering me Jamaica as consul general. That was interesting, but it posed a serious family problem, in that owing to rabies requirements, we would not be able to take our dog or cat. so I had to find a home for them, until such time as I would retire. We left Greece in a sad state of mind without our Collie.

*Q: Very good. We'll end the recording right here.*

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*Q: It is May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and we are continuing our conversation with Tom Davis. Tom, we are now in your last posting; 1978, you arrived in Kingston, Jamaica. What position did you hold there?*

DAVIS: I was Consul General there, and to Grand Cayman.

*Q: Was it a big section? Was it a visa mill at that point?*

DAVIS: Indeed it was, to both questions. Absolutely a visa mill. I'd like to describe my arrival, and welcome. I previously served as you know in Greece, and had been assigned there four years earlier, with the personal intention of retiring at the end of the assignment. But toward the end Barbara Watson, head of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, was visiting, and en route to the airport, I mentioned that unless something interesting came up, I planned to retire when I left Athens.

Two, three weeks later I was offered the job in Kingston. I discussed it with my wife and said, “if you’re willing, let’s do it, and we’ll retire from Jamaica.” She was okay with it, she was always game.

*Q: How old was your son by now?*

DAVIS: Our son was a student at Stanford. He had been with us for three years in Greece, going to a British-run private school, had done very well, and applied to Stanford. He was accepted, for which we were very pleased.

So, my wife and I went to Jamaica, stopping at Washington en route, and then consulting with Immigration, while passing through Miami. Without details, I was told in Washington that three consular officers were under investigation for corruption.

Arriving in Jamaica, I was invited the first day to have lunch with the Ambassador. That was unusual. Never happened to me before, and Kingston was my seventh Foreign Service assignment.

But, I had lunch at an Indian restaurant. As we sat down, the Ambassador told me enthusiastically he was pleased I had arrived. and wanted me to get the consular section into shape. Then he told me the consular officers had conspired against him.

*Q: Oh my goodness.*

DAVIS: Yes, indeed. I obviously was noncommittal, thanking the Ambassador for welcoming me, and said I’d do my best. But I was taken aback; having never before run into a similar situation. To think junior officers had/were conspiring against the chief of mission.

*Q: Did he say what they were conspiring about?*

DAVIS: He did not go into details, and I did not want to pursue it. I thought I was talking to somebody who might have a problem.

*Q: I looked it up, it’s Frederick Irving; he served —*

DAVIS: About a year and a half I think.

*Q: Yes, from July 18, 1977 to November 22, 1978.*

DAVIS: The Consular Section was in a separate building, about a block from the Chancery. Each morning we had a staff meeting in his office. As I look back, it was a rather small post, other than the consular section – Ambassador, DCM, a political officer or 2, an economic officer, the Administrative staff, and a security officer.

Upon arrival, we were met at the airport, my wife, son and I, by the outgoing consul general. I'm sure from what I subsequently saw at post, he'd done a good job.

We were driven from the airport in a semi-armored car. and advised amongst other things,, not to stop at red lights, for fear of hijacking. Shades of Aden!

The staff itself included fifteen consular officers. Of these, five were assigned to interview non-immigrants. each interviewing about 100 applicants a day. They each were at their first Foreign Service post. It was in my opinion quite a thing to have junior officers so assigned. If I attempted to speak favorably about the section, the ambassador would interrupt, and tell me he didn't want to hear anything good about the section.

That would have been bad enough, but I soon found that the ambassador, the DCM, and the political officer would get involved recommending visa approval.

*Q: The ambassador would do that? Who would make the recommendations?*

DAVIS: The ambassador would put his comment in a note —

*Q: The ambassador was weighing in on non-immigrant visas?*

DAVIS: Yes. I had to stop such messages going to the interviewing officers, reminding them that we were dealing with statutory responsibilities. We were not handling visas as a means of influencing or expressing appreciation.

That did not go over very well. I was told in staff meeting by the political officer, “well how do you expect us to do a decent political job”

I replied, “I've been a political officer myself, and I can't imagine ever asking anybody to approve a visa or anything else.” I don't mind an introduction of somebody, saying I know this person and it's my opinion, but it's your job of course, something of that nature. In the four years I was in Greece, no senior officer, nor ambassador raised a case with me.

This went on for several weeks. Then knowing I would retire from post anyway, I made an appointment with the ambassador, went to see him by myself, and told him, “We have problems. You obviously do not have confidence in me, or in the consular section, and to tell you the truth, I do not have confidence in you. If this interference continues, I will retire earlier than planned, and explain to the Department why.

We then had a nice conversation, and agreed to start anew.

We did continue with a much better relationship; never having had a close one, but at least it was reasonable. About two months later he retired. to take a job we were told as personnel director at Harvard.

Enough. My wife and I enjoyed our year and a half in Jamaica and met some nice people. The Department opened an honorary consulate in Montego Bay, which gave me an excuse to go there to supervise the post, et cetera.

*Q: Was it an honorary consul or like a consular agent that would do some American citizen services for you?*

DAVIS: The honorary consul at Montego Bay handled notarials and received visa and other applications, sending them to us. He was a businessman, had a small hotel, nice gentleman, and good with public relations.

I took occasion to travel about the island, to stop and call upon local dignitaries in the larger towns, joined the Rotary Club, called a couple of times on the Governor General, with my wife; all in the interest of public relations, and expanded our consular services to Grand Cayman, and to Guantanamo, sending an officer to each, more or less on monthly basis. My wife and I made “get acquainted calls” on the Grand Cayman Governor.

*Q: Was there a big immigrant visa section?*

DAVIS: We had several officers so engaged. I already noted we had five officers interviewing nonimmigrants, handling 100 applicants each. If you take a ten minute break in the morning, and again in the afternoon, it works out to be about an applicant every three or four minutes. I appreciated their work very much, and we knew as they were approving an application –that statistically 10 percent would not return at the end of the visit.

When I arrive at post, the visa waiting line would begin to form as early as 3 a.m. Trying to do something about that, I thought we would offer visa service, without interview, to those Jamaicans who had traveled to the States and returned, as shown by passport and records. And, if an intending applicant had an ongoing job, such as career policeman, soldier, long time employee, we permitted passport and application to be dropped off at the applicant’s convenience, and picked up the following day.

*Q: At that time was there somebody responsible for looking at cases to see if they involved massive or systematic fraud?*

DAVIS: Not specifically. I visited the Immigration Service at Miami en route to post, and heard nothing on that subject. At post, we were refusing approximately fifty percent of the NIV applicants, but statistically knew about ten percent would attempt to remain in the States.

Separately, I told you I’d been informed in the Department that three of the fifteen officers were under investigation. Whatever happened to that, I don’t know. None of the officers left the post for other than onward assignments.

Of the indigenous personnel, we had about twenty young ladies. They were the same age as the young officers. Most of the latter were bachelors. They typically addressed the ladies by first names. but thought they themselves should be addressed as Mr. Several of the officers came to me, and asked if I would support their desire to be so addressed. I talked to the leaders of the young ladies, and they explained their side of the issue, which seemed reasonable.

These were all well educated, nice, young people, all of them, the men and the women. It was a simple thing. I told the officers if you wished to be called Mister ,then give the ladies the same courtesy. If you don't mind being called by your first name, let them know. That's up to you. Personally I feel there's nothing wrong regarding a vice consul being called Mister, by the indigenous staff, but there's no reason they should not offer the same courtesy.

*Q: Did that work out?*

DAVIS: It worked out. I had only one thing within the section itself that did not work out, unfortunately. Jamaica had currency control, and you could not convert one to the other except under the official regulations, et cetera. I found out that one of the rather long-time ladies was bypassing the regulations through using consular correspondence.

*Q: Why did you just stay for a year?*

DAVIS: I was at Kingston for 18 months, leaving as my time in the Foreign Service was running out. So I elected to step out at my own convenience. I had years before met a Foreign Service officer, in Haiti "in the Foreign Service we have so many good times, don't stay so long that you leave unhappy. Leave while you still feel good about it."

He was right.

*Q: When you left, did you start a second career?*

DAVIS: No, not initially. I had psyched myself up with the idea that as a Foreign Service officer, I had enough breadth in me that I didn't need to look at the Foreign Service as the be all. I could step aside and do something else. There was no hurry. I looked at my retirement income, which was \$2,500 a month. I had bought a house in California, and the interest rate was 14 percent. (Laughter) So I was paying out about \$1500 a month in interest, with an income of \$2500. I thought well I have to do something.

My wife said, "You've never had any trouble studying, why don't you take the real estate exams?" I thought that might be fun, so I did, and I got an offer from Coldwell Banker, one of the larger real estate firms.

I was with them for about six months, and one morning I was in the office and thought it's nice to have an office to come to; I was not making a lot of money, but if I had been, I still would not have been happy. So I got up right then, walked into the manager's

office, and told him, and he said “Congratulations, good for you. Too many people can’t make that judgment.”

So I left. Then I started volunteering. There was a Catholic relief organization in San Diego, so I started going there a couple of times a week, giving a little time. Then I found they really did not need me. I went out to the judge advocate’s office at Camp Pendleton, which was nearby, and volunteered. Did that for about six months.

I ran into an interesting situation. Two officers in the judge advocate’s office had decided to leave the Marine Corps, and open a law office, and asked if I’d come with them. We reached a compromise, and I agreed to give them a half-day each day, and did it for four years. At the end of the time, I thought that’s enough of the routine, et cetera. It was a small office and I did anything that smelled of government work.

*Q: And you weren’t a lawyer, did you have a law degree?*

I had had a year each of international law, constitutional law, and commercial law. Picking up a working knowledge regarding divorce, probate and estates was not difficult, with law books readily available.

*Q: I guess that is what people do now, I know quite a few former ambassadors who work at law firms and I guess that’s what they do, they go as consultants.*

DAVIS: Whatever you find interesting. At that time I was able to ask \$275 to get my attention, for up to three hours effort on behalf of a client.

*Q: You did that for four years and then decided to retire for good?*

DAVIS: Yes. I had retired without Social Security, and one needs Social Security to gain Medicare. So through adding four years to previous Social Security coverage I qualified for the latter, and for Medicare.

Several years later, and living close to the Camp Pendleton Marine Base, I received a telephone call from a representative of the Division Headquarters, and asked if I might be available for a few days to assist in a training exercise, which normally would have been supported by an officer from the Department. I responded favorably. It turned out that the Division organized a MEU (Marine Expeditionary Unit), several times a year. As part of the training program a week would be spent preparing the officers of the MEU to work with a Foreign Service post. The Department attempted to provide an Ambassador to participate, but on this occasion was unable to send someone. Thus, as a retired FSO would I play the role of Ambassador, providing the trainees the benefit of my experience. Of course I was happy to be called on. Subsequently, I was called again when the Department was unavailable to send someone.

*Q: And later you moved to Europe for a while?*

DAVIS: My wife of 66 years passed away, leaving me the option of sitting in a rocking chair and watching the children go by to and from school, or getting up and doing something. So *cherchez la femme* (seek a woman). I was going to Greece to see friends, and en route back from Greece stopped off in Heathrow, took the train up into middle England and was met by a lovely lady, I had known forty-some years before, in South Arabia. We found we wanted to be together. We married, and had an idyllic six years together before she died.

*Q: It must have been heartbreaking but lovely, too. I think we're toward the end of our interview. I know that you had some thoughts you wanted to share, reflections on the Foreign Service. I always like to give people a chance to talk about reflections on their career, on the State Department, on advice for new officers, anything you would like to talk about.*

DAVIS: Thank you very much for the opportunity. I won't say much about the Foreign Service in detail or personnel because I've been out of the Foreign Service for so long, I don't know to what extent anything I would say would be pertinent today.

But, looking back, I served at seven foreign posts, consular affairs at an embassy, principal officer, political officer at an embassy, chargé d'affaires, and consul general at two posts. I've served as a bureau executive director, as an office director for a country, at the White House, as special assistant to the Attorney General, special assistant to a four star general, staff assistant in the bureau of intelligence, a graduate of the National War College; these experiences were available only because I was a Foreign Service officer.

*Q: I appreciate that. Are there any other reflections you wanted to share?*

DAVIS: I would just say, anybody reading or listening to this, if you are a Foreign Service person, be happy you are. If you're not, try to be a little bit envious because the Foreign Service is a great place within which to live and serve and give, as Kennedy would have said, a bit to your country.

*Q: Tom, thank you so much, it has been a great honor for me to be able to speak to you, to learn what it was like in a very different time and place, and the extraordinary risks, dangers, and challenges you faced with great sensitivity, humor, creativity and innovation. This oral history is very much appreciated.*

DAVIS: I'd like to add one thing. That is, wherever I was, my wife was there as well. I would not have been in the Foreign Service without Adele's support, a wonderful woman

*Q: I'm so sorry I didn't get a chance to meet her because she sounds like an extraordinary woman.*

*End of interview*