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

JON G. EDENSWORD

Interviewed by: Raymond Ewing
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is October 30, 1995. This is an interview with Jon G. Edensword, being conducted for the Association of Diplomatic Studies. I am Raymond Ewing.

Jon, I'm glad to be doing this with you this morning. We are interested in your Foreign Service career. I see that you were born in the state of Washington and went to college in Illinois. How did you wind up in the Foreign Service and what were some of the steps between the time you graduated from college in 1956 and entered the Foreign Service in 1968? There is a lot we can talk about in that early period.

EDENSWORD: I had always been interested in the foreign service. Where I grew up - I grew up in a blue collar family and I was told by my mother that the only way that you could be in the Foreign Service was to have graduated from an eastern university and be a part of that eastern elite. So it was always something that was vaguely unavailable, but of interest.

After getting my university education I taught high school for five years in California. While I was there, I took the old Management Intern (Civil Service) Exam - this would have been in 1965. I was hired by NIH as a management intern and was recruited by Kenneth Thompson. He is now a retired FSO and was also a management intern at NIH. When I arrived in July of 1966 in the Washington, DC area, in Bethesda, he was just leaving for the Foreign Service and he really got me actively interested in it. I had not taken the exam and I talked to some people - a woman named Loudermilk who asked me if I would be interested in coming in as a staff officer. I didn't have any idea of what that meant, but I said, "Sure." I eventually came in that way in 1967 and joined the A-100 Course in August of 1967. I was a staff officer until 1975 when I converted to FSO status. They brought me in as a consular officer. After A-100, I was assigned to Fort-de-France, Martinique in February 1968. At that time, it was responsible for Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guinea.

Q: Let's back up for a minute. You say that you were a school teacher for five years, what were you teaching?

EDENSWORD: I was teaching World Geography, World History, California History, and Civics - freshmen and seniors.

Q: There certainly was a feeling in the public at large at least in the 1950s that unless you went to an eastern school, preferably an ivy league university, that you had no way of passing the Foreign Service Exam coming into the Foreign Service. I remember hearing that myself and I also went to college in California. To prove that wasn't necessarily the case - and when I came in, it certainly wasn't; but there was that feeling that it was very difficult. So you never actually took the examination. You came in as a staff officer...as a consular officer for the first eight years before you integrated?

EDENSWORD: Yes, I took an oral exam in Washington to come in as a staff officer and then I took another oral exam when I converted over in 1974. I think I was on home leave at the time.

Q: When you did your training at the Foreign Service Institute in the A-100 Course, there were officers who had taken the written exam and staff officers altogether?

EDENSWORD: Actually, there were four or five staff officers in that class. It is interesting: there was Jerry Pudschun, who is now a senior FSO in Mary Ryan's office in the CA [Consular Affairs], there was Janice Bay, an economic officer, and Diane Dillard (who was also a consular officer) who just retired and was a Deputy Assistant Director for Visa Affairs. So we all seemed to have done pretty well. I think there were five staff officers in that A-100 Class in August of 1967.

Q: Some of you were consular and some economic?

EDENSWORD: I not sure how the one economic officer ended up in the economic cone. I know she took the course. Most of the staff officers came in as administrative or consular. I'm not sure if she came in as an economics specialist.

Q: So you went for your first assignment to Martinique, which is a French speaking post. Did you already have French?

EDENSWORD: No, I did the old sixteen weeks of French and ended up with a 2+,2+ as I recall. I went off to Martinique and really started learning French. Martinique at that time, was a... four officers and an American secretary: there was a consul, whose name was Ernest Stanger - he had been DCM in Bujumbura. There were two vice-consuls and a branch PAO. At the time we had a USIS office in Fort-de-France and a reading room/library in Guadeloupe. There was a fair amount of travel to do in Guadeloupe and the Consul did not want to go to French Guinea. So I ended up going to French Guinea, which I thought was a lot of fun. In those days, our classified pouch was given to the Pan

Am pilot. The secretary and I (shortly after I got there one vice-consular position was cut, so it ended up with only one vice-consul) would put together the pouch. I would take it out in the morning and give it to the PanAm pilot. I never did understand what he did with it or why we did it that way, but we had done it that way when I arrived...and were still doing it when I left. When I first got there (it took weeks for my car to arrive - I had bought a Vespa scooter) and the consul wouldn't let me drive the official car, so I would drive the pouch back to the airport on my scooter. Our only means of getting classified was by telex, and we would get these long telexes with rows of five letter groups. When you would come in on a Monday morning, there would be yards of this stuff all over the floor. Once a month, one of us would go to American Embassy Barbados where we would pick up a pouch of classified material that came down through their communications facilities.

Q: That would be a one-hour flight or so?

EDENSWORD: Yes, usually - sometimes you would have to stop in Saint Lucia, and sometimes it was direct. That was always a nice trip: you would go over for two or three days. You would have a day of per diem for your trip, and then you would stay another day. There were some places you could stay quite inexpensively.

Q: And then you traveled to French Guinea how many times in the two years or so?

EDENSWORD: I only made it down there once. I was to go again and then something happened and I wasn't able to. But the time that I went, I spent quite a bit of time down there. At the time there were two American shrimp freezing plants down there, and there were American shrimp boats operating out of French Guinea. We were constantly getting these letters (that were months old by the time we got them) about some American shrimper getting arrested: in a bar, in a brawl, in a fight. The consul decided that we really needed to see what was going on down there. So I went down and made arrangements at both shrimp freezing plants to visit them and talk to the prison authorities and the police. I called on the prefet and the governor in Cayenne. I think it had been three or four years since an American official had been down there, so they were very pleased. Then I drove across the top of the country. There are no roads going inland, but you can go from east to west close to the coast. Stopped in Kourou, which is the French Space Center and did what I thought was a thorough report on the French space facility and later sent it to Washington. When I went on to my next assignment and stopped in Washington, I asked the French Desk officer if they read my magnum opus on the French Space Center. I was told that if they really wanted to know about the French Space Center, they'd contact the French science officer in Paris.

Q: Discouraging, isn't it?

EDENSWORD: And then I went on to St. Laurent de Maroni, where we had another American shrimp company and that was like an old west town. You drove in, and there was one bar with the hotel above it. Everybody was sitting out on the verandah when I drove up. I felt like the new man in town, but within twenty minutes I knew everybody

and within one hour I was in a small plane flying into the interior to look at an American placer gold mining operation.

Q: Did you call on the French colonial administrators/authorities there?

EDENSWORD: I did. They're not colonial because French Guinea is like Hawaii or Alaska to the U.S. - a state. It's an overseas department. I called on the prefet in Cayenne, and I called on his deputy, the sur prefet in St. Laurent, and made a call on the mayor. I talked to the police and looked at the prisons.

Q: Did they resent that an American government official was coming or did they appreciate the interest?

EDENSWORD: No, they were very interested, very happy to see somebody and I told them, "By all means, call, you know, and if necessary we'll pay the expenses, but if you've got an American in jail, we'd like to know other than by a letter or postcard the guy eventually writes." I also talked to the directors of the American shrimp plants there and asked them to let us know immediately. I made enough contacts that I felt that I could call the police at least. I made it very clear that if we didn't necessarily want them released, but we'd just like to know what their status was. In most cases, the arrests resulted from bar brawls, and they just held them a day or two until they sobered up and let them go.

Q: Did things improve somewhat after your visit?

EDENSWORD: Well, it's hard to tell, but at least we got calls and I talked to people. I think two or three years later, the shrimp plants shut down and the problem disappeared.

Q: Besides doing the pouch and traveling once a month or so to Barbados and this one trip to French Guinea, what other kind of work were you doing on a regular basis...primarily visas or?

EDENSWORD: I did all the consular work. We did non-immigrant, immigrant, passport, and citizen stuff. I did all the administrative work, and we were like an independent post. We had to do our own budget: I remember the first time I got one of these (in those days) pink airgrams telling us to do our next years budget; I literally could not understand it. It used terms that I was unfamiliar with. So I took the occasion on one of the trips to Barbados to spend a couple of hours with the administrative officer over there, and he explained it to me. I did the first real budget that Martinique had had in years. Their general way of doing things was to keep spending until the B&F [budget and fiscal] Foreign Service national said, "We don't seen to have any more money." Then the vice-consul would call the Desk, and the Desk would get hold of the post management officer, and they would put another couple of thousand in our account. Anyway, I tried to put together some kind of budget. I remember going in on the weekends and trying to figure out what sub-object classes were and trying to divide up our expenses by subobject class. I think I probably learned more about budgets in that process, and it stood me in

good stead later on in the Foreign Service.

Q: Martinique, of course, is in the Western Hemisphere - in the Caribbean, but at that time, it came under the European Bureau or the Latin American Bureau?

EDENSWORD: It came under the European Bureau when I went there, but I think a couple of years after I left it was transferred to the Latin American Bureau. But we did not report to Paris, we reported to Washington. We sent copies of our stuff to Paris, but we didn't have to get clearance from Paris or anything like that.

Q: Is Fort-de-France still open as a post?

EDENSWORD: No. It just closed as a post within the last couple of years.

Q: You felt it was helpful to have an American consular post in Martinique; covering not only Martinique, but Guadeloupe and French Guinea?

EDENSWORD: Well, you know, the people there thought it was a recognition of their importance. At the time, it was also fairly important (maybe "fairly important" is too strong a word) - it was considered something of a listening post for Cuba. One of the guys that I got to know there quite well was the French... (I'm trying to think of what - it wasn't the Secret Service) it was kind of like a combination of their FBI and CIA in that they did the counter-intelligence and whatever intelligence gathering they could do. He worked all the Caribbean. I started to learn to snorkel and scuba dive down there, and he was a scuba diver and we ran into each other somewhere, and we became pretty good friends. So he would tell me various things that were going on. One of the things that was happening down there: there were a lot of American college students who would fly in from Canada. About once a month, a small Cuban freighter would come in to Fort-de-France and it would unload cement and pick up pineapple plants (because in Cuba, apparently, they were expanding their pineapple plantations.) These were not the pineapples, but the small plants. They would export cement to Martinique. On almost every one of those trips, a dozen or so young Americans would be on that boat, either coming from or going to cut cane in Cuba. He was the first one who told me about this, so I went down and watched a couple of times. I never did collect any names, but clearly it was gringos of some sort - probably Americans getting on and off that boat every time it came in. Their passports were not stamped apparently - the French connived at it as did the Cubans. He told me about that. I think they were coming into Cuba probably through Mexico and other ways. At the time - in the sixties - it was considered part of the... (I don't want to say) hippie revolution, but the same element I think that eventually led to the anti-Vietnam War and the 1968 confrontations in Chicago...those same kinds of feelings about US foreign policy.

Q: Was Cuba active?

EDENSWORD: They had a representative there. There were only two career consuls in Martinique at the time: the US and the Venezuelan, but there was a Cuban representative.

He was not a consul - more like a commercial type, but we never had any official dealings with him that I knew. But he was there.

Q: It sounds like it was a good first post. You did a variety of things and you learned a lot. You certainly had an opportunity to learn your particular field, consular work, and you did all those different things there.

EDENSWORD: I also did all the labor reporting and commercial reporting because eventually there were only two officers. After I had been there about a year, they abolished the branch PAO position, so I picked up some of the USIA work also.

Q: From Martinique you went to Liberia?

EDENSWORD: I went to Liberia where I was a one officer consular section. I really liked that post: it was a one person section and I had a PIT (temporary) spouse who acted as secretary. It really was a lot of fun. I liked going into the interior and it was very difficult traveling in the interior, so the DCM was happy to let me go off every six months. I would disappear in the interior for three or four weeks. It was really fun going in there- -mostly Peace Corps volunteers and missionaries to stay with.

Q: Were there some mining or rubber or other American interests there?

EDENSWORD: Firestone was there. Uniroyal had a big plantation there. The Swedish had a big iron ore mine up near the Guinea boarder, and the Germans also had a couple of mines for iron ore. All of it was for iron ore: very rich iron ore at one time in Liberia. The Germans also had these pelletizing plants so they could ship it partially (not smelted, but) refined. It was an interesting time to be there: I got there when Tubman was still president. He died after one year, and Tolbert took over.

Q: That was a smooth transition?

EDENSWORD: It was a smooth transition. I somewhere have a 8mm film of the festivities (I guess you could call them that) after Tubman's death. One of the sort of vignettes of that is the tomb: Tubman's party was the True Whig Party and out behind that building of the True Whig Party, they decided to bury Tubman. They buried him in this enormous cement covered mound, and then somebody decided that they would have an eternal flame. So they built an eternal flame, and I went down to see it one day. What it was a small brass kind of base, and you could see a rubber tube running off behind it to a Butane gas can behind a bush.

Q: It burned eternally or at least until the can of gas was there?

EDENSWORD: Well, a couple of weeks later they mounted a permanent guard: the Liberian military wanted a permanent guard on it. The Liberian military had been greatly humiliated by their performance in the Congo in the sixties. They had been part of that UN force. So, we had a fairly large U.S. military mission in Liberia that was trying to

provide some training, and one day a big story appeared in the paper about a soldier who had desecrated the eternal flame. The chief of police was kind of a friend (that might be too strong a term),but a good contact. One day I was down there seeing him, and I asked him, "What's the story on this thing?" He looked at me and finally said, "Well, this soldier got drunk and pissed on the flame and put it out." That was the end of the flame. I think somebody relit it.

Q: You were in Monrovia for two years and things were still calm and normal when you left. Tolbert was eventually overthrown by Doe, but that was sometime later?

EDENSWORD: That was in what, the early eighties I think, wasn't it?

Q: About ten years or so later.

EDENSWORD: Liberia was a very pleasant place to live and a very safe place to live. My kids had started French schools in Martinique and there was a small French school in Monrovia run by French nuns and supported by the French Embassy. So they went to that school and liked it very much. I like Monrovia very, very much.

Q: There was an American School there, too?

EDENSWORD: A very big American School - a high school. There's an interesting vignette there, too. The guy who was the principal was the man who played Tom Sawyer in the original Hollywood version of *Tom Sawyer*.

Q: This was before he was the principal there or later?
EDENSWORD: This was when he was a kid. Tom something or other. No, that can't be right.

Q: Were you aware of the tensions between the Americo-Liberians and the tribals?

EDENSWORD: Yes, in fact the term the "Americo-Liberians" is a little bit misleading; because, in fact, a lot of the so-called "Americo-Liberians" actually came from Barbados. But there were a lot of Americo-Liberians who did come from the United States. There was apparently a fairly large exodus of former slaves from Barbados, and they were some of the big families also. Tubman had started a program that all the Americo-Liberians, particularly the people who were in leadership positions, had to go through some form of "the bush school," which was the puberty rites the children go through; girls and boys go through that. Some of them actually had the scarification. He tried to include more of the tribal element into the government; but, in fact, Liberia was run by the Americo-Liberians. The government was run by that group of people. I think there were a few exceptions: I think the number three man in the foreign ministry was guy named Ernest Eastman who I think was tribal. I last saw his name in connection with Charles Taylor, but I haven't seen anything about him lately. He was somehow advising Charles Taylor.

Q: As you say, the Americo-Liberians particularly, other than the ones whose families came from Barbados; those who came from the United States. In some cases, the entire family didn't go back to Liberia - some stayed in the United States, so there were always very strong connections, of course. Liberian have been coming to the United States for higher education for years. You issued the visas and was that ever a problem ever particularly? Was there pressure from the States to grant visas from members of congress or?

EDENSWORD: There wasn't a lot of pressure from the States, but there was a lot pressure in Liberia. It wasn't a huge number, but one of the big problems was that a lot of the people who were trying to go really had no money. When I got there, they had been using a form that was issued by the Liberian Ministry of the Treasury that indicated what income tax was paid of whoever was sponsoring the student. AID had been provided to this organization, the Liberian IRS, an American IRS official who was trying to modernize and work with them to collect taxes. I ran into him at a reception one day, and we began talking about these forms. I was telling him that, "Gee, a lot of these people come in, and they don't look like they have two dimes to rub together, but this is an official form and it looks really good and I've been down to talk to the officials and they say, 'Yes, indeed he has paid these taxes'." He said, "I'd like to see some of those." Well, I sent him some, he ran them down, and it turned out that they hadn't paid any taxes at all.

Q: Who was the ambassador at this period?

EDENSWORD: Samuel Westerfield, who died there, shortly after I left, of a heart attack.

Q: He was a career Foreign Service officer or a political appointee?

EDENSWORD: He had been at Harvard, I think, and he lateraled in or was brought in at a fairly high level, I think, by the Department some years before. Good ambassador though - he really had good access.

Q: Did you have a chance to travel elsewhere in the rest of west Africa or were you pretty much in...?

EDENSWORD: I did a little travel: I went to the Ivory Coast, I went to Lagos, I went to Ghana. That's about it.

Q: You flew or went by road?

EDENSWORD: Flew - the only road travel I did was within Liberia. That was difficult travel in those days and probably still. The road up to Tubman's farm which was about forty miles north of the capital was paved and beyond that it was red laterite. When it was raining, it was very slippery.

Q: Did you go in a Land Rover or a four-wheel drive vehicle?

EDENSWORD: They gave me an Embassy jeep, and I would usually pick up a Peace Corps volunteer who was going up country, and we would travel together. The first time I went up I took a driver, but I found that those drivers didn't drive as well as I did. So they let me drive myself. One time I was with a Peace Corps volunteer and we broke down. He was a mechanic, and I think we had an old screwdriver and a pair of pliers, and he fixed it. After that I always took a set of tools.

Q: Or else take a Peace Corps volunteer mechanic? Where did you stay - with the volunteers or the missionaries usually?

EDENSWORD: Yes. That was about the only place you could stay. You could stay with the tribal chiefs, and I tried that a couple of times. But it was very difficult because they would shut those houses up just as tight as a drum and you had two options: (I usually brought a sleeping bag along) you could cover yourself up and sweat or you could uncover and be eaten alive by the mosquitos. Those were the two options. After a couple of times of doing that, I usually stayed with the Peace Corps volunteers who had open windows with screens.

Q: The tribal chiefs would have guests houses that would not be used except when a guest would come through?

EDENSWORD: Sometimes, and one time I actually stayed in the chief's house. In fact, he is the one who later gave me (I didn't get a paramount chief's robe) a tribal chiefs robe.

Q: So, you are an honorary chief?

EDENSWORD: I am an honorary chief, I guess, but I didn't get the scarification though.

Q: Well, you were probably looked upon for other favors or assistance.

EDENSWORD: Well, I would always take a couple of cases of beer and about six or eight bottles of Johnny Walker Red. Then I would pass those out. One of the people I would see was the governor up in those distant provinces. He had been a fairly important official until Tubman got mad at him for something and sent him off. He was just dying up there. I would always go see him and always bring a bottle of whisky and tell him what was happening in the capital, carry letters back for him, and what-have-you. When Tubman died and Tolbert took over, he made this guy the head of their immigration service, which was my key contact in Monrovia. That worked out very well: I had good access to him.

Q: I am sure that was helpful to the Embassy...and after you left, too. Were there tensions at that time with neighboring countries or did Liberia get along pretty well with it immediate neighbors?

EDENSWORD: The tensions were with Guinea. The Portuguese had that funny little invasion right after I got there. There was a vice-consul up in Guinea in Conakry who I

used to talk to. Liberia always tried the peaceful route because they didn't have much of an army and they really didn't like confrontation. And so, they got along well enough, but a couple of times when I went up to the North, to the Swedish mine, which was right on the Guinea boarder (in fact, they could see very rich ore across the line and couldn't get at it.) The Guineans had a consul there in a little town just south of the mine and I actually went and called on him one time. This was in the days of Sekou Toure and he was very distant. One of the reasons I was up there was to check on the cholera problems, and I asked him about cholera in Guinea, and he told me that it was a capitalist lie. So I knew that I wasn't going to get much out of him.

Q: You kept your health?

EDENSWORD: I never got cholera, but I got a lot of other things.

Q: Did you get malaria?

EDENSWORD: No, but they treated me for malaria for awhile, thinking that was what I had, but it turned out to be something else.

Q: It's not an easy area of the world to serve in. There are a lot of very nice aspects to it (I certainly found,) and it sounds like you enjoyed your assignment there?

EDENSWORD: I liked the Liberians a lot. I don't know if they do this in Guinea, but the Liberian handshake is a very special handshake and it ends with a finger snap. When you come back to the United States after having done that for a couple of years, people wonder what you are doing to their hand because as you slide away after shaking hands, you try to grab their middle finger and people wonder what you are up to.

Q: So from Monrovia, Liberia, you went to Haiti, to Port-au-Prince. Did you do it by way of some training or did you go there directly?

EDENSWORD: No. I went directly - I mean after home leave. I did non-immigrant visas, immigrant visas, American citizen services. In those days, we dealt over a wooden counter, and I can still remember *ton-ton macoutes* with pistols on their belts and you were just talking to them across the counter. I asked at the time, "Isn't this strange" and nobody seemed to think it was strange. Now, of course, nobody would be allowed in an embassy with a loaded pistol. We were across from the Embassy on the Harry Truman Boulevard.

Q: What was the period that you were there, Jon?

EDENSWORD: I arrived there in 1972 and left in 1973. I was only there for one year. I think it was in early 1973 (I have forgotten the exact date), Clinton Knox was the Ambassador and he was kidnapped. It was the first real kidnaping of a Foreign Service officer that I was aware of. His residence was half way up the hill to Petionville, and it's on a small road that also goes to one of the most popular golf and tennis clubs. He had a

big American car and a driver, but we weren't trained for those things in those days. Some little car just pulled over and the driver got out to see what was going on and found himself looking at a pistol. So they took the driver and Ambassador Knox to his residence and said that they wanted to contact the head of the Leopards. The Leopards is a special unit in the Haitian military. Interestingly enough, the main Embassy contact with this general was the Consul General, Ward Christianson, who was head of the Consular Section.

Q: Who was your boss.

EDENSWORD: He was my boss. For reasons not clear to me, the Ambassador called up Ward and asked him to come up to the Residence.

Q: The Ambassador who was being held?

EDENSWORD: Being held at pistol point. Ward went up there and was also taken. They were not held for a very long time - I think it was less than forty-eight hours. There was a whole series of demands: there was some money, they were to free some political prisoners, and they were to be given an airplane out of there. Ward told me later that they kept him tied up and every time that they wanted to make a point, they would drag him out on the porch and hold a pistol to his head and say that they were going to kill him if their demands were not met. So it was a very difficult time for Ward. They sent one of the early teams down... On that team... I'm trying to think of the guy's name. He had been the ambassador to Amman. I think he was head of M [Management]. Anyway, they brought this team down and they were negotiating. I ended up at one point... we had an open line to the department op-center at the palace, and I was on that line. We had two phones, and one phone was the line that I was listening to: I was just keeping it open and they were negotiating in the next room. The Americans were in one room, and the Haitians were in a room next to it. At one point, we got cut off to the Op [Operations] Center, and I couldn't get dial tone on that phone again. So, I picked up the other phone, and I re-established contact with the Op Center. The Haitians came running out of the room and said that I had to hang up and get it back on the other phone, which I did, but it made me believe that it was the only one that they could listen to. So I passed the information on. They asked for a million or two million dollars and they eventually - Jean Claude Duvalier was able to raise seventy-five thousand. Many of the people they claimed were political prisoners they couldn't find: they were either dead or gone. I think they let a few go. The plane was brought in and they flew to Mexico with the seventy-five thousand. The Mexicans took the money away from them, but let them fly on to Chile. Then Ward and the ambassador were released. In those days, we didn't really understand what those hostages were going through. They brought Clint Knox back to Washington. After some thought, they told Ward, "Why don't you consult with the Immigration Service in Miami and sit on the beach for a few days and get yourself together." Ward aged visibly from that experience. They probably should have had someone holding his hand. He came back, and they offered him practically anything he wanted. I think he took Salzburg. They were re-opening Salzburg, and they made him Consul General then. This was also the period that we decided the best response to a

hostage taking situation was not to negotiate, but be firm and if you make concessions and pay ransom then it almost invites more similar acts. The U.S. did not pay the ransom; it was the Haitian government - Jean Claude. I guess what he did was to go to the banks. Now, the stories were that when the Mexicans sent the money back, they sent it to Jean Claude, and it wasn't his money, but he kept it. That's the story that made the rounds. It was the bank's money.

Q: The people that instigated this, were they a part of a known group that was against the government?

EDENSWORD: This was the time that Allende was still in Chile, I think. I think they were members of the Communist Party, but I may be wrong there. They were not unknown.

Q: They were Haitian?

EDENSWORD: They were Haitian. Yes.

Q: It sounds like quite an exciting and difficult period.

EDENSWORD: One of the things that came out of this was that the number two in the section had to leave unexpectedly and I asked if I could move into that job - it was two grades higher than my personal grade. So Ambassador Knox called me in one day and said, "Look, you can't have the job unless you're on the promotion list and I'll try to find out if you're on it." When he was in Washington after this kidnaping, because it took place right after that, he apparently did try to find out. When he came back, he said, "No, you're not on the promotion list." So, somebody was assigned and a week later the promotion list came out and I was on it. A week later, he called me in and said, "I am confounded and I am very unhappy and I am going to call Washington, if you would like, and ask that they give you a more senior job." Knox had his contacts because about three days later, somebody from personnel called me and asked me if I wanted to go to Jordan and be chief of the section. So, it was interesting because he thought he had dope on promotions, but it didn't prove to be good. But when he wanted to, he could move personnel. So, I got a very nice job in Jordan.

Q: Before we leave Haiti, you said that it was a rotational arrangement, you moved around visas, and what else did you do?

EDENSWORD: I did non-immigrant visas, immigrant visas (in those days, Western Hemisphere immigrant visas were special: the law was different for Western Hemisphere applicants than it was for the rest of the world,) and American citizen services.

Q: At that time, it was quite a large consular section, of course. It still is.

EDENSWORD: It wasn't as big as it was the second time I was there, but there were two or three junior officers, a deputy and a chief : so it was about five - five Americans and

probably eight or ten foreign service nationals.

Q: Besides this hostage taking incident, what was the general political situation in Haiti at the time?

EDENSWORD: Well, it was the beginning of the Jean Claude Duvalier period. His father had died in 1971 and Baby Doc took over. One of the things that happened while I was there: he had been left with Whitner Cambron who was the Minister of the Interior, the single most powerful minister, who was a good friend of Baby Doc's mother. They used to refer to Baby Doc as "Basket Head" since he had a large round head. Everybody thought that he was a little dim and would probably be run by his mother and the previous ministers, particularly Cambron. Shortly after I got there, his mother, who had maintained an apartment in Paris, was in Paris and Cambron was on one of his many trips to Miami. Jean Claude reorganized his cabinet. He fired Cambron. His mother came flying back. He created his own government. People at that point realized that he was a little smarter than they had given him credit for and tougher.

Q: And that he was going to be his own person?

EDENSWORD: Yes, his own person.

Q: Did you ever have any contact yourself directly with Jean Claude Duvalier?

EDENSWORD: At that time, I may have met him once just in a large reception, but not really. He was still single at that time, too.

Q: How old was he?

EDENSWORD: He was still in his late teens...like eighteen or nineteen. He was pretty young when his father died.

Q: Did his father die about a year before?

EDENSWORD: His father died in 1971, that's when he took over. I arrived in December of 1972: it was about a year. I was at the beginning and ten years later I was at the end of Baby Doc's rule. Interestingly enough, there were three junior officers at the post at the time who were also there ten years later when Baby Doc left: the number two at the station and the second political officer, Jerry Desintiana. When I came back ten years later, the political officer was the DCM; the guy who had been the Deputy at the station, was the Station Chief; and I was the head of the Consular Section.

Q: We are all so touched by the long term planning of the personal area - it actually works in career development. (End of tape)

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Jon, we were still talking about your first assignment to Haiti and I think you were first beginning to describe how the Embassy first became aware of the kidnaping of the Ambassador and his driver.

EDENSWORD: I not even sure how Jerry got the word originally. I think the Ambassador called the duty officer, who must have been Jerry. Jerry went into the Embassy and informed the DCM and they got other people there.

Q: From the Department, of course.

EDENSWORD: From the Department, yes. Jerry was sort of managing the initial hours of the thing. Everybody was kind of flying blind in those days: there weren't the standing instructions we have now. I think this was the first real kidnaping of an American diplomat. There may have been something before that.

Q: Do you recall whether it happened on a weekend or in the evening?

EDENSWORD: No, it was in the afternoon when he was going home from work.

Q: At the end of the day. You described how you managed to get your next assignment in Amman because the Ambassador's feeling that he had let you down by giving the second position in the Consular Section to somebody else because he thought that you weren't being promotion, but in fact, you were being promoted. Was this a direct transfer to Amman?
EDENSWORD: Yes, I had only been in Haiti one year. It was a direct transfer to Amman. I think we spent about a week in Washington on consultation. They told me that they'd taken the previous two consular officers out of Amman on stretchers and that they needed somebody who was going to be there a little longer.

Q: Was that because of the stress or too much work?

EDENSWORD: I don't know. This was in the days when we still had a lot of consular officers who were essentially failed political officers. In those days, that's how you became a consular officer: you tried to become a political officer and you couldn't make it and you ended up in the administrative or consular cone. Both of these men had heart problems. I know one of them had a heart attack. I don't remember their names. But the section had been sort of running itself for several months and they were looking for somebody. When Ambassador Knox called, I think he must have spoken highly of me and he also must have spoken sharply to whoever his contact was...his source on promotions.

Q: How large was the Consular Section in Amman? This was really your first supervisory responsibility - your forth post.

EDENSWORD: Well, I actually had quite a bit of supervisory responsibility at my first post because I had...

Q: And your second post too in Monrovia?

EDENSWORD: Yes, except there I just had a part-time secretary. But at Fort-de-France I had about four or five FSNs working directly for me in the administrative and the consular work. Eventually I sort of took over the administrative side of USIA while they kept scaling it back. We had that little reading room in Guadalupe and so on. But I suppose you could say...

Q: How large was the section in Amman?

EDENSWORD: We had a part time vice-consul, plus me and five Foreign Service nationals. All five were Palestinians: four women and Christian; and the man was a Moslem.

Q: You arrived there in August of 1973, and, as I recall, some big things happened within a few weeks if not months.

EDENSWORD: In October, the '73 War broke out with the Egyptian invasion across the Suez and that apparently was a surprise to everyone because, as I recall, the Ambassador, Station Chief, and the Military Attaché were all out of the country and had a lot of difficulty getting back. I think the Ambassador eventually flew to Tehran and then to Saudi. Then King Hussein sent his own plane down to Saudi Arabia to pick him up. That was how the Ambassador got back.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

EDENSWORD: Dean Brown. Jordan stayed out of that war. We all had to paint blue paint on our headlights. I think the biggest danger to Americans at the Embassy was that the taxis never slowed down with these blue headlights. You stepped off the curb at night and you were likely to get run over. Occasionally the Israeli phantom jets would come over in the morning and go through the sound barrier just to remind everybody who controlled the air space. But Jordan stayed out of that war. At the end of it, the Kissinger shuttle started which lead eventually to the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. I ended up like everybody in the Embassy, we began to view these Kissinger visits like they were normal procedures. We had one a month for it seemed like months. Sometimes Kissinger was bouncing back and forth between Damascus, Cairo, and Tel Aviv; and not get to Jordan before three or four o'clock in the morning. So they were trying times. One time, the Ambassador made me responsible for the administrative side of things. The administrative officer was in Washington for some reason and that was a pretty exciting time. On one of the trips, Kissinger had gone up the Nile to the Aswan and had their meetings there. So Hussein decided to have his meeting down in Aqaba. I remember that Kissinger was going to arrive the following morning and he and Hussein were going to fly down in Hussein's plane. So there were three or four cars that went down that night before. This was in the winter. Dean Brown had just left to take over an Undersecretary for Management job. Pierre Graham was the Chargé. There were three or

four cars of Jordanians and Americans. I remember Dick Undeland, the PAO, and his major contact there, the press man for the palace; and there must have been one other American. I was in that car and when we got to the pass just before you drop down into the Aqaba plain. They actually had the army out shoveling snow. This must have been in January of 1974. We got down there, and we had to set up all kinds of things. I think there was one telex and one hotel: it was very primitive in those days. Anyway, the visit came off very well. At the end of the visit, Kissinger got us all together. There must have been six or eight Americans down there and introduced us to the new Ambassador, Tom Pickering. He said, " I have asked Tom Pickering to take over" and at that time he was the Executive Secretary of the Department, traveling with Kissinger. I can't remember why this came out like this, but Pickering stayed with us. I am sure he did because when we drove back, we were invited to a "meshwe," which is a traditional Bedouin meal of lamb and rice out in the Bedouin tents of the local chief. He was the son of the man who went with Lawrence into Aqaba back in World War II. I think he was six or seven the time, and he would regale us with all kinds of stories about Lawrence and his father.

Q: Was the place where this event took place near Aqaba?

EDENSWORD: Near Aqaba, actually quite close to Quwayrah (in that area) out in the dessert - in these black goat hair tents set out in the dessert. His sons and the sons of other chieftains had horse races and camel races for us and various activities. We spent most of the day out there eating.

Q: Ambassador Pickering was with you?

EDENSWORD: Yes. I am trying to think of why he would have been with us, why he wasn't traveling with Kissinger, but I have forgotten why. I am sure he was there, because he wasn't yet the ambassador.

Q: When he did become the Ambassador, that was the first time he had served as an ambassador?

EDENSWORD: That was his first ambassadorship.

Q: Besides the Kissinger visits and the routine work of the consular section, were there some other things you were involved in Jordan?

EDENSWORD: I think probably the best thing that I did - the thing that I feel the best about - in fact, maybe one of the best things I think I might have done in the Foreign Service...there were a fair number of American women married to Jordanians - not hundreds, but probably somewhere between fifty and one hundred. The ones in Amman had some kind of organization, but there were others that lived out of the city, who were really isolated. Very often they were not well educated, had come over and met their husbands or their husbands when they were in the States going to school usually, got married probably in their teens, had several children, came back to Jordan thinking they would be a princess and found that they were essentially the slave to the mother-in-law,

and were never allowed to go back to the states. My head Foreign Service national, a woman named Miss Munah, started telling me about these women. The genesis of this was one who was married to a Jordanian who lived in Amman, and she came in one day and clearly had been beaten up. She looked seventy and she was in her late forties. Miss Munah told me that this happens regularly: she comes down here and usually spends some time with them and then she has to go back. She had really nothing back in the States: she had been in Jordan probably twenty, twenty-five years and had no family left, no skills. She was really stuck in this position. So, I started a program and I took Miss Munah with me (she was a very matronly, solid woman,) and we started visiting these women. I started with the American Women's Community in Jordan, and I met with them and got to know their president. Miss Munah put together a list and made the appointments. It was clear that I had to go with a woman like this because a man would not be allowed into these houses. We start visiting these people, in fact, Ambassador Pickering when he heard about it, said, "Why don't you take my car and driver?" It was this armored thing that must have weighed ten thousand pounds. Anyway, we started doing this all around the country: every week we would take a day and go somewhere. Some of the women had done very, very well: they had really established themselves. Others were completely dominated by their husbands. There was one case of a woman (Miss Munah showed me the file) who had written to the Consulate several times saying, "Is there any way you can help me visit my family in Texas? I haven't been there in twenty years and I would like to show my kids to my parents." We went to see this woman and we met the husband, who was very suspicious, and met his mother. They allowed us to meet with his wife with Miss Munah present and I met the kids, who were American citizens. Then on another trip we stopped and met them again. One of the really nice things was that after about three or four months (Miss Munah really played an important role here,) we convinced this man that his wife would come back if she could take a trip to Texas and brought the kids to see the grandparents who had never seen them. By God, she went and came back. It was pretty clear to her after she had been in the States for awhile (I think she stayed for a month or a month and a half) that her life was really in Jordan. She was kind of a celebrity when she came back, but there wasn't anything for her in the U.S. She didn't have the kind of skills that would allow her to find work. So she came back, and I would then stop and see her or she would come into the capital city from time to time and she would come into the Consulate. She had been able to get out. One of the results of all this was that the women up in the north part of the country organized an American women's group. That was a very satisfying thing.

Q: I think it is very difficult for particularly the wives in a number of countries (certainly where I have had experience) where there is love, there is maybe a good solid marriage, but they don't have any idea of the culture and all of the other relationships that they are going to have to deal with when they...

EDENSWORD: That's true.

Q: Sometimes it's hard to make a second decision. You're stuck with the one you made. I know in Jordan over the years there have been some child custody cases where American citizen children were taken back from the United States by their (in this case) Jordanian

father against the wishes of perhaps the American court and certainly the American mother. Did anything like that happen when you were there?

EDENSWORD: Muslim law normally gives the child to the mother until age seven. After age seven the child goes to the father. I spent a lot of time in cadi courts (their religious courts). That's a very interesting experience, too, because you cannot even appear to show the bottoms of your feet, the soles of your shoes, because that's an insult. You go into these places and there is a guy that sort of sits you down and you sit there very straight with your feet flat on the floor and then the judge comes in. I got to known these people, but there was a great deal of dignity and a great deal of honor that had to be paid to these people and, by God, you didn't move your feet! In fact, it took me a couple of years after that post, before I could actually put my feet on a coffee table again with somebody in the room. We had a couple of cases like that: the worst case that I can remember involved a Jordanian who immigrated to the States, had married in the States and they had a daughter who was about twelve. When she became twelve, they decided to send her to his brother (they were from a conservative Muslim family) in Amman right after school was out in June. Then the mother, the father, and, I think, the other child were then going to come in August when he had vacation time, pick up the daughter, visit with the other family, and then all return to the States. So, the twelve year old girl went and was living with her uncle and aunt when the father in the States died. The mother then came to get her child and they wouldn't allow it because she had not converted to Islam. They went to the cadi court and I was there. The religious courts (it goes by whatever religion your are: Christian - it was mostly Orthodox - , Muslim) are in charge of family matters. The court gave the child to the aunt and uncle. There was no way that we could get that girl out of Jordan. The mother was writing everybody she could think of and it was a very tense moment because Congress heard about it and was raising the dickens about U.S. aid to Jordan. Ambassador Pickering might have even talked to the King about it, but it was a very difficult case. Under Muslim law, it was the only thing to do - it was the only decision reachable. As far as I know, that girl never went back. I used to go and visit her. It was clear to me that they had one of their sons or nephews: they were grooming a marriage for him to immigrate with that girl.

Q: Because she was an American citizen?

EDENSWORD: She was an American citizen. I guess she had Jordanian citizenship but I'm not even sure of that because in all my dealing with the government on the case and with the courts I never acknowledged anything except the girl's American citizenship. I insisted on our rights to see her under those conditions.

Q: Besides the Americans married to Jordanians and, of course, the Embassy itself, were there very many other Americans in Jordan in this period, the early seventies?

EDENSWORD: There were some, not a lot. In 1975, when Beirut started to have serious problems, a lot of people moved/immigrated down to Jordan and Amman grew very, very rapidly after that period. Several Americans came down who had been living in Beirut, but there were never lots of Americans. I think Amman never had the appeal for people

living in the Middle East that, say, Beirut or Jerusalem or some of the other places did.

Q: Even Cairo?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: You were there not too long after the September 1970 Black September so-called Incident involving the Palestinians with the Jordanians. You mentioned that there were several - I guess all the Foreign Service nationals employees in the Consular Section were Palestinians. Generally what was the state of the relationship between the Palestinians and the Jordanians as you experienced it?

EDENSWORD: Well, the Palestinians were Jordanians in the sense that they had Jordanian passports and that before the 1967 War the West Bank was part of Jordan. You could say the Bedouin, you call them the East Bankers (I guess what you might call the non-Palestinian Jordanians) I think relationships were pretty good, but I think that there was always the feeling that the Palestinians were not true... true to the king and the Bedouins are very loyal to the king although many of his closest advisors were Palestinian. Of course, the best educated were Palestinian. There were still sections of the city we were not allowed to live in as embassy employees. Most of the buildings still had marks from that war between the PLO and Hussein in 1970.

Q: What about Israel...Israel is obviously very close to Amman...this was a period of tension...you were there during the 1973 War. Did you ever go to Israel? What was your feeling toward Israel as part of the Embassy?

EDENSWORD: I think that someone like myself who isn't an Arabist - for the first time, I was shown the Arabic view of the Israeli-Arab War and problem. I think probably your sympathies change a little over there. Before I went I was very pro-Israel without really understanding the Arab position. After I had been there for awhile, I had a more balanced view, if that is possible. Once a month, we had a vehicle that went over to Jerusalem and sometimes on into Tel Aviv that picked up pouches and swapped films and you could sign up for that. I was on that run many times. There were usually two and we had two sets of plates. We would drive down to the bridge which was a military bailey bridge which was put up when the Allenby was blown up in 1967. You could see the Allenby downstream from the bailey bridge is sitting in the water. At the bridge we changed and put on the Israeli diplomatic tags and that would get us through the other side without too much problem. Coming back, we would reverse the process.

Q: Did you usually stay overnight?

EDENSWORD: Yes. We would usually spend one or two nights in Jerusalem. Sometimes I would drive down and see one of my colleagues in Tel Aviv. At the time, we had in Jerusalem (I guess we still have...there used to be two consulates there - since 1967 it was all part of the same consulate.

Q: Was it actually two consulates or one consulate in two buildings?

EDENSWORD: Well, before 1967, you had the Arab side of Jerusalem, so there was a consulate there and I think there was a separate one. I'm not sure of this, but when I was there (it was after 1967) they were part of the same consulate. The Consular Section was in the Arab side.

Q: Near the Damascus gate?

EDENSWORD: Yes. Jerusalem itself was certainly a lot of fun. I mean, seeing that old city: in fact, one Christmas we went over and stayed in the Episcopal hospice.

Q: St. Georges, I think?

EDENSWORD: The St. George Hotel is that beautiful one in Beirut. It may be. There wasn't any heat in there I remember, but you were right in the old walled city. It was really kind of nice.

Q: You were able to take your family though?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: When you did that, you went the same way? Changing your license plates when you crossed the Jordan?

EDENSWORD: How did we go? I can't remember how in the heck we got over there. I don't think we drove our own car. I'm not sure...I can't remember how we got there.

Q: You probably wouldn't have flown?

EDENSWORD: No, you can't fly. You'd have to fly to Cyprus or something. One of my jobs there was actually arranging bridge crossings and that took a lot of finagling. If you started in Israel, you could not go back to Israel. If you started in Jordan you could make it a round trip. Both sides were very careful about what stamps they put in the passports.

Q: Did you have to have other documents before you started the trip?

EDENSWORD: Americans...embassy people did it through my office and I dealt with the military commander, who controlled the bridge. Emergencies, I could call him up and get permission (it usually took something like three to five working days to get the permission.) For regular Americans, they had a way of doing it, but it often ended up in my office because it was very complicated. They often had delays. I remember once, a guy from Iceland - he was just delayed and he had money in Jerusalem waiting for him. He had been to the (do the Swedes have any Embassy there - I think they do) Swedish Embassy and they had thrown him out. I think I leant him fifty dollars to get him through after he told me his story and he mailed it back to me. I always wanted to go to Iceland:

he owned a music store in Reykjavik. I never got to Iceland to see him. Anyway, so I used to deal with that problem and it was always a problem. The Jordanians were very sensitive. If you had an Israeli stamp in your passport, you couldn't get in. We were issued two passports: one for use in Israel and one for use everywhere else.

Q: So, you were in Amman about three years?

EDENSWORD: Three Years.

Q: It was the longest assignment you had had up until then?

EDENSWORD: I was on home leave when President Nixon came through in 1974 when after the signing of the...but the people told me it was quite a show and he was attempting to use this success to help his cause back home. He came in June and two months later he was out. He left, resigned in August.

Q: Of 1974? So you were on...Okay?

EDENSWORD: I was on home leave when he was there in June for the signing of the Peace Agreement between Israel and Egypt. One of the interesting that I was told by...

Q: This was not the Camp David, but the earlier one?

EDENSWORD: Yes. As a result of the Kissinger shuttle. Apparently, when he got of the plane in Amman, he was interested in one thing only: that was press coverage back home. The best color for the face is orange and they said that when he got off the plane (I always wished I had seen this) that his face was so orange when he got off the plane that Hussein actually staggered back a step or two when he saw him - he saw this orange face get off the plane.

Q: Who is this person? Did you get to travel around Jordan quite a bit? Did you get to Petra?

EDENSWORD: I went to Petra. I used to go to Aqaba quite a lot. I had a very good friend down there: an Irish friend who worked for the king as a diver and he is still a very close friend. We used to go diving down there a lot. Petra is interesting. This friend of mine had a jeep and so we would go out into Wadi Rum a fair amount, which was just beautiful. Got to Syria - in those days when I first got there you couldn't go to Syria, you'd go to Beirut. When I left, you couldn't go to Beirut, but you could go the Syria. We started going to Syria - it took about three..three and a half hours...

Q: Damascus?

EDENSWORD: Aleppo - you could really spend a nice day up there just in rug shops, not even buying a rug, just looking at them. We all brought rugs of various kinds.

Q: So when you finished in Jordan, in Amman, where did you go next?

EDENSWORD: I went to Harvard for a year. They called me up and asked me if I would like university training. So I thought that was a terrific idea. Most consular officers had been going to Syracuse.

Q: The Maxwell School.

EDENSWORD: The Maxwell School. Dick (he is now consul general in Athens - I can't think of his last name) he and I were the two consular choices and he went to Syracuse and I ended up going to Harvard. I think most consular officers after that went to Harvard. The advantage of that was that you could get an MA in one year which you couldn't do at the Maxwell School.

Q: What sort of courses did you take for the MPA? I went there for economic training, so obviously I probably did different courses than you did.

EDENSWORD: There were six or eight economic officers there with me. You were allowed to take courses, as you know, at Harvard, or at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], or at BU [Boston University], or a number of other places (Radcliffe). Plus you could take courses at the Law School and the Business School. Most of the courses I took were in the Kennedy School, but I did take one business school course. The exam in that course was the hardest exam I ever took in my life. We had a lot of double entry bookkeeping right in the middle of the course. I took a couple law school courses and, as you know, it's mostly case studies. The assignment, I think it's still true, personnel when they assign you a university, long-term training they also made your follow-on assignment which was for me principle officer in Nice. So I went to Nice in 1977.

Q: And you were a consul general?

EDENSWORD: It was a consulate, so I was consul.

Q: Tell me about that post - that sounds like a very nice post.
EDENSWORD: It was a nice post. There was a very nice residence in Villefranche-sur-Mer which used be the home of the sixth fleet until 1966 when the French pulled out of the military side of NATO. So there were many good and strong feelings about Americans.

Q: Positive feelings?

EDENSWORD: Positive feelings - very positive. I was accredited to Monaco: I was the official representative to Rainier and Princess Grace. Corsica was also a part of my territory, and of the places I had responsibility for, Corsica was maybe the most interesting.

Q: How big a staff did you have?

EDENSWORD: I had one vice-consul and five or six FSNs. It was an old villa in downtown Nice near the old British Anglican church, about three blocks from the water. With a lot of grass around it, it was a lovely old building. The top floor, the floor that we didn't really use, had been the communications center for the Sixth Fleet back in the old days. There were still some wires hanging out of the walls up there. There was a branch of the American Legion there, and I let them use one of those upstairs offices.

Q: It was a building just devoted to the American Consulate?

EDENSWORD: It was very nice. I had a vice-consul and I also had the USO representative, a French woman, who I also gave office space too. She would have to look after, you know, they would have problems: sailors would have to back to the States. She sort of moved up and down all over the southern coast of France, looking after these special problems. We had ship visits regularly: they liked Villefranche because the mayor was very pro-Sixth Fleet as was the mayor of Cannes. While I was there, I convinced Prince Rainier to invite the Sixth Fleet commander and his flagship to the Monaco Grand Prix and that turned out to be very nice. You can't anchor in Monaco. You have to anchor offshore. I remember that Lawrence Tisch had opened up a new hotel there just before I got there and introduced Las Vegas style gambling. He had me over for dinner when he found out about this and the flagship was there. He said that he wanted to do something for the admiral and so I said fine. He said, "Well, this is really terrific," as he sat looking out the window, seeing this American Navy cruiser anchored off Monaco. One of the things Admiral James Watkins (who was the 6th Fleet commander and later became the Chief of Naval Operations and eventually became the Secretary of Energy) offered to give Rainier and Prince Albert a briefing on Mediterranean sea power including Soviet sea power, U.S., stuff like that. He said, "It would be an unclassified briefing, but I'll answer pretty much any questions that he had." When the briefing started, there was another guy there and Watkins took me aside and said, "Who the hell is this?" I said, "I don't know." Watkins was clearly irritated. It was a cousin of Princess Grace named John Lehman, who it turned out had worked in the NSC [National Security Council].

Q: An American?

EDENSWORD: An American. I'm trying to think of this guy's name. Watkins was clearly annoyed and made his annoyance show to this American. This American later became Secretary of the Navy when Watkins was the Vice-CNO under Reagan.

Q: That's a good story.

EDENSWORD: Yes, it's a great story. Anyway, we did all these wonderful things. I went into Monaco and Watkins sent in a helicopter for my wife and me and Princess Grace and Albert and Caroline (I don't think Stephanie was there) and Prince Rainier. They flew us out and we stood on the deck and they flew planes off and on. Then we steamed into Monaco - you know, he brought his fleet in and one of his aircraft carriers in, and we steamed into Monaco and he had a lunch for us. It was really, really nicely done. Then we

all went up to watch the Grand Prix and then there, of course, is...it's a big affair and they have a dinner later on and a dance. There is always a number of movie stars there: Cary Grant was almost always there and Paul Newman was another one because he likes to race. I remember my wife coming up and saying, "You've got to do something. Paul Newman is in a big argument with Admiral Watkins." So I went over there and Paul Newman is not very tall and Watkins is tall and was really, really mad. Princess Grace was also moving onto the scene at this point. Watkins later on told me what they were arguing about. He said, "It's the stupidest thing, Newman doesn't know a damn thing. Newman was accusing the Pentagon of managing news. He has no idea of how the Pentagon works. If we could manage news, we would do it. We can't possibly manage news!"

Q: They couldn't do it if they wanted.

EDENSWORD: We couldn't possibly do that. Anyway, Princess Grace grabbed Admiral Watkins and made him dance with her. I was left with Newman and I must say that I found myself tongue tied. I thought to myself, "Now, how do I deal with this guy: is this Hud or is this Harper or is this Minnesota Fats?" So, it didn't turn out so well. I found myself confused and I probably should have explained that to him. I am sure he would have laughed: he looked like he had a good sense of humor, but anyway we said a few sort of polite things and then he went off, muttering about the Pentagon and managing news.

Q: We are probably coming about to the end of this, so maybe I am going to mention a couple of things for the tape and also to remind us of next time: we want to talk about Corsica and some of the other aspects of your consular work and responsibilities in that period along with, we'll call it, the Riviera and then go on to your other assignments. So maybe we'll stop at this point. I think the tape is just about running out. Okay.

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It's October 30, 1995.

Q: Jon, we were talking last time about your stint as principle officer in Nice from 1977 - 1979. We had talked about some of your various responsibilities as far as Monaco was concerned and you had mention earlier that one of the interesting aspects of your assignment was visiting Corsica, which was part of your consular responsibilities. Corsica is not an area that I know much about, and I don't know exactly what American interests are there. Tell me about your visits to Corsica, what you did there, and its significance for the United States?

EDENSWORD: Okay. Previous to my arrival, I think most of the emphasis at the post had been upon the relationship with Monaco. I continued that, but for me personally, Corsica was the most interesting of the areas I was responsible for, and I spent a lot of time there. I used to go there almost every other month. They had a car ferry from Nice in those days: you could take it overnight. I even did that a couple of times because it was

kind of an interesting thing to do. Corsica is divided into two departments: the North - the center is Bastia and the South - the center is Ajaccio, which is where Napoleon was born. Just before I got there, the French had sent two regiments of Foreign Legion to the Kolwezi province in Zaire to put down an uprising of Katanga rebels. My predecessor had had some contact with those Foreign Legion units which were stationed in Corsica: there was a combat engineer unit and a paratrooper unit. So I made it a point to go call on these units. One of the interesting things: when I made my first call on the combat engineer unit which was sort of in the center of Corsica, the young man, the foreign legionnaire, who was guarding the post was clearly German and spoke almost no French and it took me awhile to talk my way by him. Also going on in Corsica at the time was this Corsitud movement (their autonomy/independence movement). There were a lot of terrorist activities: bombings, threats, and I know they had closed at least one Club Med on Corsica because of bombings and threats of bombings. I did a series of reports on it which apparently had been the first reporting done on Corsica in any systematic manner and one of the few kudos I ever got on my reporting was the reporting on Corsica.

Q: That kudos came from the department?

EDENSWORD: No. It came from the Embassy in Paris. I managed to convince the ambassador and his wife, Art and Donna Hartman, to come down to Corsica. It was the first time an American ambassador had been there in anyone's memories and the Corsicans turned out in fine style. We spent a week the four of us: my wife, Art and Donna Hartman driving around various parts of Corsica. When he left, he left from Ajaccio and the prefet came out and gave Art and Donna a tree (some kind of Corsican pine) which then had to be gotten on the plane. Well, it was an Air France flight, and the prefet arranged all that and they gave the tree a seat on the plane. She later planted it in the garden at the Residence in Paris. Corsica is a gorgeous country and I got to know some of the local politicians there - one of them a deputy with the U.D.R. (Giscard who was the president of France at the time - it was his party) and I eventually sent him to the States on an I.V. grant. He and his wife had a lovely place on the beach, on the coast about fifteen minutes from Ajaccio which he represented in the French Parliament. I was invited out there and spent a weekend with him. His wife, who was also Corsican, told me a very interesting anecdote of Corsican history. Traditionally Corsica had been the prey of a variety of invaders: there were the Genoese, the Moors from Africa, other Italians, Spanish, French had all conquered Corsica at one time or another. The Corsicans sort of retreated to the mountains and the valuable property was all in the mountains. That was the property the boys would inherit from their parents. The mountains also had the chestnut trees from which they made a kind of flour and from which they also fed their pigs. Corsican pork and Corsican sausage are some of the best I have ever eaten. As a result of this, generations (hundreds of years maybe), the daughters all received property that was considered less valuable which ended up being on the coast. Of course, now in the twentieth century everything is reversed and this beach property is now the most valuable. In fact, the land that they had built their house on the wife had inherited from her mother. Some of the Corsican women now either own or are leasing land to large hotels. So history eventually balances the scales.

Q: Were there any... many Americans either living in Corsica or working there? Or visiting there as tourists?

EDENSWORD: There were very few Americans that I saw - some tourists. Many, many Germans: there was one town in the north on the west side - the northwest corner, Calvi which had a population of about three or four thousand during the year. In the summer, the Germans would come down there and there would be somewhere between forty and fifty thousand Germans down there. They only had two bakeries in the town, and they would literally run out of bread by ten o'clock in the morning. The other significance of Calvi was that the mayor (who I got to know quite well) was convinced Columbus was born in Calvi, and had actually created a museum in the house where Columbus was supposedly born. The Corsicans, particularly the Calvi people, believe that Columbus was born in Corsica. At the time he was born, apparently Corsica, at least that part of it, was a part of Genoa's empire. At least there is some historical basis for it. Anyway, the house, where he was supposedly born, is now a museum and they've got a few artifacts there. Corsica is very rugged and very independent. Most Corsicans dislike the fact that the Foreign Legion is based there: consider them almost like conquerors. The Foreign Legion in the old days could not be based in the metropole, but I guess now a few units are in and around Marseilles. So there was always resentment, but they like Americans a lot. I always found it a very friendly place. In fact, I had to be very careful because in this one bar in Bastia where I got to know the bartender quite well, he introduced me to some people who I later found out were active in the autonomy movement. I had to be very careful that the French didn't think that I was negotiating or dealing with outlaws. So I met them once and then I talked to somebody at the Embassy and they suggested that I stay away.

Q: I am thinking of Sicily in Italy which is the center of (historically) a fair amount of Mafia activity. One thinks perhaps of Corsica in international criminal terms or is that erroneous?

EDENSWORD: I was never able to confirm it, but supposedly the Corsican Mafia is even tougher than the Sicilian. A lot of Corsicans are in the custom service: they are all over the place. Many Corsicans are very pro-French. One of his closest advisors to the French President when I was there was Corsican. So there is a kind of love-hate relationship going on there and I don't know how that movement is functioning now, whether it's got much support, but there is this sense of "Corsitud" - that there is this sense of uniqueness about Corsica. They do have their own language which is unintelligible to anybody that doesn't speak it. It seems to be closer to Italian than to French.

Q: Corsica is not too densely populated is it... with the rugged terrain?

EDENSWORD: No. There are parts of it that are empty.

Q: Historically it exported people to some extent to the mainland or Metropole France, but also to the United States and elsewhere?

EDENSWORD: I am trying to think... I used to know... there used to be one or two large Corsican communities in the States, and I've forgotten where they are. California for some reason sticks in my mind, but I wouldn't swear to that. But it isn't anything like you would find in Latin America or some other places...or like Italy.

Q: In Sardinia, just south of Corsica, the US Navy has a presence and, I believe (I don't know if it did in the seventies, but) there is a submarine tent or base there. Does the US Navy ever make port visits in Corsica?

EDENSWORD: I did arrange a couple. Before that, there hadn't been much. I had one in Ajaccio and I had one somewhere else - it's a little town in the south. One of the most flamboyant, I guess, Corsican deputies was from that area, Porto-Vecchio, and I had a port visit there once too. The Sixth Fleet.

Q: You mentioned that Ambassador and Mrs. Hartman had paid a visit to Corsica and you also got commended for some of the reporting you had done on Corsica from the Embassy in Paris. You mentioned that they discouraged you from meeting with the autonomy participants and so on. What was generally your relationship with the Embassy, not so much just relating to Corsica, but to your consular as well? How often did you go visit Paris to meet with the people at the Embassy? Generally, who supervised you there? What was your relationship?

EDENSWORD: The supervisor of all the consuls was the Consul General, who at the time was Bill Morgan. They would bring us up as a group for the I.V. meetings and we would all be part of the team that voted on the I.V. grantees which I thought was an excellent idea. That was the annual meeting. The Embassy provided each of the principle officers with a vehicle and that vehicle was registered to the Embassy so it actually carried a CD plate. They were Ford Torinos which you could not get fixed anywhere but in the Embassy where they had a lot of spare parts. So, about every couple of months I would drive that car up to Paris and just have them service it. That worked out well too and then I was able to look around and see my contacts. I had close contact, of course, with the admin, the consular, and the political sections. I had no USIA employee and was serviced out of Marseilles. So I would deal with Marseilles usually with USIA, and they would send down one of their FSNs from time to time to help me out with special programs and things. The economic section, I had less to do with - occasionally one of the things you did in Nice (and I assume the principle officer in Marseilles now does this since Nice is closed) is that Monaco is represented on a number of international organizations (not the UN) but other kinds of international organizations.

Q: It's actually a member.

EDENSWORD: Yes. You'd get organizations I'd never heard of before. You would often get cables from the Department to do a demarche on a particular issue that Monaco would be voting on. I would always coordinate that also with the Embassy because they would also be doing one in Paris. During DeGaulle's period he had forced Prince Rainier

to agree to a number of conditions: one of which was that there was always a senior member of the French Foreign Service who was appointed (kind of like) their foreign minister or their prime minister. The French government would send three names and Prince Rainier could not pick any of them and ask for another three. That person was essentially coordinating foreign affairs information, so I usually had to clear with him, too.

Q: So when your received instructions from the Department to make a demarche on an issue related to an international organization that Monaco was a member of, you would send a diplomatic note or a note over or would actually go and have a personal conversation with this representative?

EDENSWORD: Well, I would do two things: I would send a note, but I would also get an appointment with Rainier usually. Afterward, I would call on the French representative. Sometimes he would have that man there, but usually not.

Q: These were relatively significant or important issues, on routine things you probably wouldn't do that?
EDENSWORD: No, you're right. We didn't really have that many routine things, but there were a few. Many of them had to do with oceanographic and environmental issue.

Q: Which Monaco is very active in the Mediterranean and there is a center there, I think?
EDENSWORD: Yes, there is.

Q. *A lot of these demarches you would be instructed to make would be worldwide or going to a number of different countries or members of the organization, not just to Monaco? I suppose once in a while there would be something that would...*

EDENSWORD: There would be a few things. Actually one of the things I was trying to do and that Rainier was more than willing to do was to bring in one of our nuclear powered vessels which the French would not allow into French waters.

Q: U.S. Navy?

EDENSWORD: U.S. Navy. I raised it with Prince Rainier one time just in passing and I could see he was interested. So when I was in Paris the next time, I met with the Political Counselor and I said, "Look, he may be interested. Should I pursue this?" This was an issue that we were always fighting with the French over. He called the DCM and they chatted about it for awhile and then the three of us met for. Finally, the upshot was, "Yes, let's see what he'll do because we would like to stick it in the French eye essentially." Rainier was more than willing to do it. My belief was that it would show a certain independence from French control. This was in 1979 and I was working out some of the details with him when the Three Mile Island nuclear plant disaster occurred and the whole thing was finished.

Q: Chernobyl probably would have done the same thing, I think. That's too bad. You mentioned that the post in Nice is closed now. I'm not exactly sure when it was closed, but what is your overall feeling about the role that you played there? That that post played: do you regret the decision to close the post or do you think it really didn't matter much?

EDENSWORD: Yes, I think it's too bad. I am sure that they can cover these things that need to be covered from Marseilles and there were only two or three career consuls in Nice: there was me, there was the Moroccan (he was a very active and bright guy) and the Italians had a career. The Italians and the French also had career people in Monaco: they were the only countries that did. The thing about southern France, particularly that area from the Italian boarder to maybe halfway to Marseilles, is that it is very pro-American and there is a big American cemetery down there. The American landing in the southern part of France during World War II took place not far from Nice. The commemoration ceremony was one of the things that I always went to every year in the fall. The landing was coordinated out of Corsica because we had occupied Corsica and actually based some aircraft and, I think, naval vessels there.

Q: Conducted from Corsica.

What is the history of the Consulate in Nice? When was it established?

EDENSWORD: I have forgotten.

Q: A long time ago?

EDENSWORD: It's been there a long time. Yes.

Q: Nineteenth century probably?

EDENSWORD: I would guess...yes, but that has all slipped away from me. We had a lovely old villa that was the office there. I think I mentioned that before. In fact, we closed it and tried to sell the building and Jacques Medicin, who was the mayor, was able to prevent the U.S. government from selling it because he and others were afraid that somebody would buy it, tear down the villa, and build another multi-storied apartment building. The city decided to build a small park across the street from it. The grounds around the Consulate building were pretty good sized pretty close to an acre. There was a lot of grass around, so it was a nice green area and then with this little park across the street: it was a relief from high-rise apartments

Q: All along the coast.

EDENSWORD: All along in the cities, these multi-storied buildings because they could make a lot of money out of them. He actually prevented the U.S. government from selling that building for several years. Then we re-opened the Consulate, but in rented office space. I think they had finally sold it. I think a couple of years later in the late eighties,

they closed it again.

Q: But the post was closed for a period and re-opened again...under pressure from the people in Nice?

EDENSWORD: I don't know. Now Princess Grace died in 1981. She had been very active because when I was there, they made the first effort to close it. The ambassador called me in and told me, "You will make no efforts to organize resistance." At one of the dinners or lunches that I had over at the palace, Princess Grace got me aside and said, "What should I be doing?" I said, "Well," I told her what my instructions were, but I said, "If I were you, I would go to Washington. I think the door will be open." And she did. I don't know if she carried the day, but she certainly carried a lot of weight in Congress. At the time, by the way, and it was not known to most people, she, Prince Albert, and Caroline had given up their American citizenship. Had I said that before?
Q: No, that's interesting. They did that with you?

EDENSWORD: No, they did it with my predecessor who was very close to Rainier and Grace.

Q: Who was your predecessor?

EDENSWORD: He later became the DCM in the Vatican....Peter Murphy. Peter was very close to them. They had come in and he had...when I was going through some of the stuff after I got there, I came across this envelope that said, "Don't open under pain of death" or something like that. Anyway I opened it and in there were all these documents. Of course, they had been sent to Washington, but they had come in and renounced. She did that for Albert, primarily for succession reasons.

Q: To make it clear..

EDENSWORD: To make it clear that he is Monegasque and there shouldn't be any cloud on his right to succeed his father. Stephanie, the youngest, had not renounced at the time, so I don't know if she ever renounced or not, but the two oldest and Princess Grace have. So when she died, she was not an American citizen.

Q. *You were not as close to that family as your predecessor had been, but you still had quite a lot of contact with them?*

EDENSWORD: Yes, they considered the Consul in Nice sort of their ambassador to Monaco.

Q: How far is Nice from Monaco? Half-hour drive?

EDENSWORD: Yes, unless there is traffic.

Q: And Nice to Marseilles? How far is that?

EDENSWORD: That's probably three or four hours. I lived between Nice and Monaco in a little town called "Villefranche-sur-Mer.

Q: Was that a house that the...

EDENSWORD: It was a house that the Embassy rented as the official Residence...lovely place, overlooked the little bay and Cap Ferrat. Actually it looked over the area that used to be where the Sixth Fleet flagship tied up because Villefranche was where the Sixth Fleet was based until 1966.

Q: Its headquarters before it..

EDENSWORD: It's now in Gaeta, Italy

Q: DeGaulle took France...

EDENSWORD: Out of the military side of NATO. Yes.

Q: The headquarters of NATO moved out of Paris to Brussels and so on.

EDENSWORD: One of the interesting things: because of the Sixth Fleet, I got to know most of the military people in the area quite well, particularly the Navy, and in Corsica there was a naval air squadron there. Everyone of those aviators (I am sure they are all long retired now) everyone of them had been trained in the United States...the French naval aviators had been trained at Pensacola or someplace inland... in Alabama or Oklahoma or someplace like that...some kind of naval air station where they...and every one of them had this wonderful souvenir of their life in the United States, so the American Consul was always welcomed over there.

Q: I don't think we have talked about the staff of the Consulate, you had one other American officer or more?

EDENSWORD: American Vice-consul and I had a secretary who was quite an extraordinary woman: she's French, but she had married an American and lived in Texas for about ten years. She actually took shorthand in English: she was a marvelous secretary. In addition, there were eight FSNs including a guard and a driver and two Americans. The USO had an office there that I gave them. The DEA had an office there, in fact, the DEA had a scrambler phone which I could use when I needed to talk to the Embassy.

Q: So DEA had two Americans..?

EDENSWORD: One.

Q: Just one.

EDENSWORD: Yes. Two years ago I read in the paper where the guy who was the DEA agent there was put in jail for reselling cocaine that he had seized in New Jersey.

Q: He was there with you at the same time or? The Vice-consul did pretty much all the consular work?

EDENSWORD: A lot of it, yes, a lot of it.

Q: And you did some and a lot of representation?

EDENSWORD: A lot of representation. The Vice-consul I had at the time was very unsure of herself. She refused to do any political reporting - she just wouldn't do it. But she was good: for some reason, we would get a lot of weird extradition cases in Monaco. If you drove around Monaco kind of aimlessly for awhile and didn't have an official plate of some kind, you would be stopped by a very polite policeman and offered a personal escort out of the principality. So, they were always picking up people who normally wouldn't get picked up and they'd find out that they were wanted for something or other.

Q: The extradition would be called down? But, otherwise, pretty much normal, routine sort of consular work: protection of American citizens and interests?

EDENSWORD: A lot of retired Americans down there..a lot. In fact, one of them eventually became the consular agent for awhile. We had a very good FSN - commercial FSN - she was terrific and she had a lot of good contacts. We had an very active, little commercial program there because of her.

Q: That's really a...(I've never served exactly in that kind of situation, but have observed some) really amazing what can be done in terms of holding the flag, interpreting the United States, and American positions by relatively a handful of people...by relatively small cost.

EDENSWORD: Yes. I don't know what the total cost of keeping that place open was, but if you exclude the American salaries, it couldn't have been all that much. We owned the building.

Q: We didn't own the residence - that was leased?

EDENSWORD: No, that was leased. One of the interesting things that happened to me is that I got a call from the administrative officer one day and he said, "Look, would you run down to Cannes and take a look at a couple of buildings." I said, "What's up?" He said, "Well, one of the Rockefellers is trying to do a deal with IRS and they will give the U.S. government these buildings under some kind of a tax break." I said, "Where are they?" Well, anyway, he described where they were. So, I went and looked at them. They weren't buildings, they were villas: one of them was in "Supercannes," which is behind Cannes, the mountain where a lot of quite wealthy people have homes. My instructions

were not to bother anybody living in them because they were both rented out or somebody was in one of them at least. But they were magnificent places - they were enormous. One of them, I got in and was able to look around and see. The other one, I just sort of drove around and could see about two-thirds of it and could look through the gates and could look at it from the road above and that sort of thing. And so, I spent an afternoon doing that and I called the guy back. He said, "God, I think we going to tell them to drop them." And I said, "Wait a minute! Wait! Wait! Wait!" I tried to suggest something. I didn't think that either was appropriate for the official residence: they were just too big and it would have required teams of gardeners and what-have-you. But you know, they could have used it as a kind of... I said, "Can't you use it for some kind of conference center or something." "Well, I don't know..." Anyway, I think the whole thing...

Q: Use it for a French language school.

EDENSWORD: Yes, right.

Q: Where was that? When the Foreign Service Institute...

EDENSWORD: That was in Nice - years ago. That building is gone. What they did was when they sold it, they did exactly what they wanted to do with the consulate building: tore it down and built a...

Q: High-rise.

EDENSWORD: Big high-rise, luxury apartments because it was only like two blocks off the water.

Q: Do you know what ever happened to the Rockefeller properties in Cannes?

EDENSWORD: No. I never heard again.

Q: How far is Cannes from Nice?

EDENSWORD: Oh, another thirty to forty minutes drive.

Q: Cannes was within the consular district that you had?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: So you went to the film festival?

EDENSWORD: Got to be one of the big players in the Film Festival. That was always fun. One year, I brought the Sixth Fleet. Peter Murphy, my predecessor, had had some kind of falling out with the Sixth Fleet Commander and I never did quite understand what is was, but he, the Sixth Fleet Commander Admiral Harry Train, had the impression that

Cannes only wanted him there at certain times of the year and didn't want sailors when other tourists might be there.

Q: He wanted to go there.
EDENSWORD: Well, when there were a lot of other activities going on, and the sailors...and I never quite knew what the upshot of it was. But when I got there, one of my first calls was on the mayor of Cannes who said, "Look, you've got to get the Sixth Fleet back." Because Harry Train had said "Scrub the Riviera!" When one of those aircraft carriers come in, I think it was a hundred or two hundred thousand dollars the first day they'd dump in the local economy. So, I set up a meeting with Admiral Train and he was quite a crusty guy. The Naval attaché in Paris said, "Oh, you've got to be careful dealing with Admiral Train." I drove down to Toulon where he had his flagship in for some repairs at the French base there to see him. Toulon is actually in Marseilles's district. I had no idea of how I was going to approach him and I walked into his office aboard ship and I could see his bedroom in back. He had this famous (which I found out later was famous) fur bedspread on his bed in his cabin.

Q: This is on the ship?

EDENSWORD: Yes, this is on the ship. So, he welcomed me and I sat down and I still didn't know what I was going to say and I finally blurted out, "I understand that you are pissed off at us here." That was the perfect thing to say for Admiral Train because he said, "You're goddamned right!" And after that, we got along great. Anyway, the mayor...I was carrying a personal invitation of the mayor to bring his flagship in during the Cannes Film Festival. So, Admiral Train was the honored guest of the city and sort of the center of attention for that Film Festival. It was really, really a lot of fun.

Q: And the visit went well?

EDENSWORD: It went great, I mean they really wined and dined the sailors. They made something like fifty or sixty seats available every night, which the sailors got to draw lots for. Admiral Train and I were seated next to the director and the star of that movie which premiered in Cannes about the American who was picked up in Turkey for smuggling drugs.

Q: Midnight Express.

EDENSWORD: *Midnight Express*. Of course, the American Consul in *Midnight Express* comes out as the typical wimp, but it was a great movie. Afterwards, the spotlights went on these two people: the director and the actor who played the lead role. Then the mayor got up and introduced Admiral Train and me and our wives. When we came out of the thing, I had never been...I can understand a little bit what movie stars go through because suddenly we were the interest of the day and it seemed like a thousand flash bulbs were going off and the press was trying to get to us as we got to the car. Anyway, it was a lot of fun. I guess that was sort of one of the special parts of being principle officer in Nice. You dealt with things that normally you would never...

Q: You were a celebrity.

EDENSWORD: You were kind of a small time celebrity, yes.

Q: You were only in Nice for two years it looks like, but you had a lot of interesting experiences.

EDENSWORD: I did. I had to leave early. I had some personal problems and I had to get back to the States and it grieved me a lot, but it was one of those decisions that I had to take.

Q: Is there anything else you would want to say about your experience in Nice - of those two years?

EDENSWORD: No, I've...
Q: We've pretty well covered it?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: You came back to Washington and it looks like you came into the Inspection Corps for a few years.

EDENSWORD: Yes. I did for four years

Q: Four years?

EDENSWORD: Four or three?

Q: It looks like three on your record.

EDENSWORD: Yes. 1979-1982.

Q: You were part of various inspection teams traveling around the world and anything special about that experience, would you say that we should talk about?

EDENSWORD: Well, it's one of those things where the teacher always ends up learning a lot more than the student. I must say that going around and seeing how various consular officers had solved problems or not solved them as the case may be was really enlightening. I learned a lot about how to manage consular sections by seeing how other people had done things. I think in many ways it was one of my best assignments... those three years. It was really a lot of fun and I really enjoyed it.

Q: Were you almost entirely on the road so to speak?

EDENSWORD: Almost entirely.

Q: You didn't do any inspections in Washington?

EDENSWORD: I did a couple. They had something that they were doing for awhile that tested out something called a... almost like an "inventory inspection" where a small team of three people went into a bureau and kind of did like a week or two week fast look to see if there were any serious problems that needed to be looked at and sort of laid out what ought to be done in the normal inspection. I think they only did that two or three times and then abandoned the idea.

Q: You'd look at the previous inspectors' report and kind of went around...

EDENSWORD: Quickly - interviewed a few people, looked at a few records, and tried to come up with something.

Q: Partly to see how much compliance there had been with the previous recommendations I suppose?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: I am sure you went to large embassies and small posts and everything in between?

EDENSWORD: Yes..

Q: You were mainly looking at the consular side of the inspections?

EDENSWORD: Yes. But we always had other responsibilities: I often was responsible (not for inspecting) USIA, but for at least going and talking to them and finding out how their support was and how relations were... communications and all that sort of thing. You would always have to do a paragraph or two on the support other agencies were getting.

Q: I don't know what the interval between inspections in that period was. I'm not even sure what it is now. Do you remember...?

EDENSWORD: Like about - somewhere between three and five years. Five was maximum and three (I think) was the minimum.

Q: What do you think is kind of the ideal?

EDENSWORD: I think that is pretty good - three to four years.

Q: You certainly don't want to do it too often, on the other hand, if you let too long a period go by. Then if there are problems, they just become worse.

EDENSWORD: Become worse, yes. Somewhere in that is probably a good number.

Q: I sort of found in my experience it seemed like every time that I got to a post, it was time for an inspection. My own experience is that I would always prefer to have the inspection sooner rather than later because then I could sort of say, "Well, I tried to solve these problems too and it is helpful what you're telling me."

EDENSWORD: Turned it around...

Q: But if you waited until very near end of your tour and they found things, then first you... you didn't have time to do anything about them, and secondly, there was nobody you could blame except yourself.
EDENSWORD: I think there is a lot of truth to that.

Q: After inspection, it looks like you went to National Defense University. Was that to the War College?

EDENSWORD: I went to ICAF.

Q: Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

EDENSWORD: Yes. I'm sorry.

Q: You were a regular student there?

EDENSWORD: I was a regular student there, and that was a lot of fun too. That was really great. They give you tons of material to read, but you had plenty of time to do it. You sort of had to get out and do exercise, so they reserved the tennis courts for NDU people from twelve to two or something, so I played tennis (in good weather almost everyday.)

Q: There were places to change and shower, I suppose?

EDENSWORD: Change and shower. They had lots of sports, but it was really a period that you could read and do a little writing and contemplation. There were some great trips. The Industrial College of the Armed Forces looks at management: resource management, emergency management, and that sort of thing. In resource management, we were divided up into teams and the team that I was in was looking at coal and oil as a resource. How to manage it both in times of war and times of peace and that sort of thing. So we had an interesting trip to Texas and Mexico. Then we were supposed to go to the UK and France. I guess in those days they had plenty of money for travel - maybe they still do. My team went to the UK and France, but they also for the first time I think ever the Soviet Union agreed to an NDU trip, so there was about eight students (four from ICAF and four from the War College) along with the Air Force Lieutenant General, who was the president of NDU, and there was a professor there who was an Air Force Colonel, I think, who may have been born in the Soviet Union. But, anyway, was a Russian linguist and a Russian historian: he sort of lead the group. So there were eight students and four

or five faculty. We went to the Soviet Union and it was a very interesting trip. We met with some interesting people: we went to Baku and we went to Stalingrad. Volgograd had been renamed by then - Moscow, Leningrad. We were shown (probably very limited) - we were shown the oil fields in the Caspian and taken through a bit of the oil industry down there.

Q: Those oil fields are still or again very much on the front page of the national press and Azerbaidzhan.

EDENSWORD: Yes, with Chevron and Mobil, I think.

Q: So this must have been in the spring of 1983 that you made that trip?

EDENSWORD: Yes. It was.

Q: So you didn't go to England and France, but instead went on this trip to the Soviet Union. That must have been quite a... You were selected to do- (end of tape)

We were talking about your time, Jon, at ICAF and particularly about the trip that you made in the spring of 1983 to the Soviet Union to Moscow, Volgograd (the old Stalingrad), and Baku. Why don't you talk about that a little more - that trip - that experience?

EDENSWORD: We were not the official guests of the Soviet government or of the Soviet military, so we were in a sense guests of the Embassy, but once we were there, we were taken, of course, around by the Soviets. They provided our transportation, guides, and what have you. When we came into the country, a couple of my colleagues were searched extensively: we were divided up into pairs. My buddy was a Marine colonel, a pilot, so we always had to go together. As I think I mentioned earlier, we were expected to do papers on these resource issues that we were developing and I was working on one on the Soviet Union and its oil resources. A number of the people were actually writing some of their stuff on that trip and when we went out, we took the train from Leningrad to Helsinki. As we approached the boarder the Soviet customs people or immigration people came through and they seized everybody's notes. They took away - these guys...one guy had actually sort of finished his paper (these were long papers - twenty, twenty-five pages,) so they had to recreate the whole thing from memory when they got back.

Q: Without notes.

EDENSWORD: Without notes.

Q: How long were you in the Soviet Union?

EDENSWORD: Two weeks. Yes, two weeks. It was difficult not speaking the language and going everywhere together. We would get calls in the middle of the night with these

sort of broken English, "Oh, I saw you in the restaurant. I would like to practice my English with you. You are so handsome." At three o'clock in the morning. Finally someone complained to the Intourist guide and the calls stopped. We went to a couple of marvelous meals in Moscow. I guess we paid in rubles, but not anybody could go into those restaurants. It had to be done through Intourist, but the food was magnificent. I thoroughly enjoyed that year of training: I think it's one of the best years I have ever had.
Q: And you had an opportunity to do things that you hadn't done before...places - you hadn't been to Moscow before on an inspection?

EDENSWORD: I hadn't been to the Soviet Union. No.

Q: When you finished that year at the National Defense University, it looks like you were assigned back to Haiti again. You had been there before. What did you do that time? It looks like you were there about three years. What was your job there?

EDENSWORD: Well, I had gotten remarried back in December of 1981, six months before I went to the War College and my wife was a USIS employee, a librarian. So, when I got out of the War College in the cycle of bidding, we began looking for a tandem assignment overseas because I had been in the States at that time for four years. We were ready to go overseas in any case. We could not find a place where both of us could get jobs. Lou Goelz, who was at that time the Deputy Assistant of Consular Affairs for Visa Services, called me up one day and said, "Would you go to Haiti?" I told him: I said, "I would go but I didn't know if there's a job for my wife." We started looking around: it turns out that the cultural affairs position there was open. My wife was not a FSO, but a specialist, but she bid on the job. At the same time this "Kiddiegate" thing was going on, where, I think, a nephew of Weinberger and a nephew or a niece of Al Haig's had gotten jobs in the government or the Foreign Service. This had hit the papers at that time. Well, when my wife bid on the CAO job in Haiti, she was called back in a couple of days by her career counselor in USIA and told that the number two man at USIA had a candidate and she was a political appointee and that the job wasn't open. So we sort of began looking around: we were in the Department and had gone to the Credit Union. We walked out of the Credit Union and were looking at that bulletin board for a car or something and here is this man - the number two man in USIA and my wife speaks to him and explains our problem. He said, "Well, gee, that's really too bad." The next day in the paper, it came out that a non-career person, who the paper described as a "deli-queen" because I think she was a member of his church and worked as a cashier in a New York deli (he was from New York.) He had gotten her assigned as CAO to Haiti. Well, this hit the papers and Wick, who was the head of USIA, was out in the Far East and called this man and said, "What in the Hell is going on - I want this thing resolved." It was at this point that we ran into him outside of the Credit Union. He said that it would be resolved and she should come see him the following day.

Q: That your wife should come?

EDENSWORD: Yes. She went up to see him and found out that overnight Wick had fired him.

Q: So he wasn't there anymore?

EDENSWORD: He wasn't there anymore. He was later picked up by Schultz and given a job up on the sixth or seventh floor in the Department for a year or two, I think, before he sort of faded into the sunset. Anyway, the upshot of all this is that the "deli-queen" didn't get the job and my wife did.

Q: And you didn't have to go through all this competition for the consular section job?

EDENSWORD: No, they couldn't get anybody to bid on the job and I was very happy to go back to Haiti. We had a marvelous three years there: we really enjoyed it. We had a first-rate ambassador - we got along with him fine anyway - Clay McManaway. USIA and the Consular Section were in the same building about a mile and a half - two miles from the Embassy, so it was very convenient for us. We had a house that we really liked: an old fashioned house that we picked out that nobody wanted and we just loved. We had a very nice tour there and it was an exciting time. In February 1986, Baby Doc fled Haiti for France, so we were there during the fall of the Duvaliers.
Q: Let's talk first a little about the Consular Section. You had been the Consular Section there before: how different was that from your previous assignment which was in the early seventies?

EDENSWORD: Well, it was about twice as big and it was in a different building. We had in the meantime picked up the entire monitoring of the Haitian returnees. We got there in 1983. A couple of years earlier, the U.S. government signed an agreement with Haiti that allowed the U.S. Coast Guard to board any Haitian vessel and search it for illegal aliens or boat people and to return them to Haiti under the assurances that they would not be persecuted. They were met at the dock by Red Cross and given some cash and, I think, a bus ticket or something back to their home. At least two of my junior officers had been given the Creole course before they went to Haiti and all of them had to take Creole when they were there. One of my junior officers' extra responsibility was to visit these people to ensure that they were not being persecuted. Sort of a dress rehearsal, but this experience came in very handy. Now in Cuba, we're essentially doing the same thing with Cubans.

Q: So it's to monitor, in effect, their civil rights...human rights to make sure that they aren't being persecuted, and aren't being intimidated?

EDENSWORD: Essentially the Haitian government didn't have anything against them. Sometimes they would be picked on (we found out) by the local *chef de section* which is the lowest level of government authority. But generally speaking, they were left alone.

Q: Did they tend to be concentrated in certain villages - communities?

EDENSWORD: Sometimes, but they came from all over. For the most part they were young men, but you often found women and children, too...but mostly they were men.

Q: Otherwise, the Consular Section issued visas, looked out for American citizens. There must have been a lot of American citizens in Haiti in those days or at least people who had American passports?

EDENSWORD: Yes. One of the problems we had is that the Haitians would go to the States and sometimes there were children born in the States. Anyway, they would often send their children back to Haiti to be raised by grandparents or aunts and uncles. Somebody would come in with a birth certificate from New York and a one year-old kid and saying, "Issue this person a passport." We had been doing that and when I got there it seem to me a flagrant way of getting kids up to the States. We found out later that that in fact was happening, so we began to try to put into place some procedures to ensure that there was some evidence that a kid had traveled. The big problem was identification: there was certainly a kid who was born in the States - it just wasn't sure to us that it was this particular kid.

Q: That particular kid who was born in the United States might still be there. They had the birth certificate.

EDENSWORD: So that was a problem. There was a lot of fraud in Haiti...a lot of fraud. The pressures to get out are tremendous and Haiti itself I found to be a very attractive place: a lot of art, a lot of optimism in the face of incredible obstacles to just making a living. I think somebody from AID once told me that the average Haitian spent something like four hours a day just looking for water...drinking water, water to bath in or whatever. So life is not easy.

Q: You had a number of junior officers (first tour officers) assigned to Haiti: did you have a rotation scheme within the consular section so they would have an opportunity to do different things or do they pretty much do the same thing for two years?

EDENSWORD: No, we tried to rotate them out of the NIV Unit. I think they spent somewhere between nine and twelve months in the NIV unit and then (it wasn't as big a unit as we had in Mexico so there wasn't as many options, but) we could give them these trips to monitor returnees and we could move them to the Passport/Citizenship Section and the Immigrant Visa Section. We would send them over to work with the political officer from time to time and they would do political reporting wherever they were and they would go out do these trips. One of the fun things that happened is the...when Baby Doc left (it was February 7th as I recall) they flew a C-141 in from someplace in Florida, I think. The crew said, "Okay, we've got to have Creole speaker on board." Of course, most of the Haitians getting on board spoke pretty good English, in fact, Michelle Duvalier, Baby Doc's wife, had lived in the States for a number of years and at one time had a green card. So I sent one of my junior officers and she had a great time. They flew them into France. When they got on the plane, there was about twenty-seven people: there was the family and a lot of hangers-on and some military officers. I think the crew picked something like twenty-five weapons off of these people before they boarded the plane. Barbara, the junior officer, who went there with them, told me that when they

arrived the French searched them again and found half dozen weapons that had been missed in the first search. She had a nice week in Paris and everybody had given her a list of cheeses and wines to bring back, so she had that.

Q: Were you otherwise involved in the end of the Duvalier Administration or Regime in Haiti? This was in early 1986, correct?

EDENSWORD: It was February of 1986 when he left. In fact, after we got back to the U.S., there was about a dozen of us who used to get together on February 6th to sort of have breakfast or dinner together. Just before Baby Doc left, there were many riots and demonstrations and there was a period of two or three days when the ambassador, the military attaché, the DCM, me, and one or two others were in the embassy. We had closed the Consular Section and USIA. The Ambassador was trying to set up a follow-on government and was working with Namphy, the head of the military. The DCM and the Military Attaché were the ones trying to move Jean Claude and his family from the palace out to the airport. I was pretty much in charge of setting up the evacuation of Americans. They had two officers from a Delta Force kind of unit and out of sight (but just over the horizon) was a small helicopter carrier with helicopters and it must have been a company or two these Delta Force types. They were going to secure the Ambassador's residence and a small industrial park between the Embassy and the airport. They were going to secure that or part of that as centers where Americans and others could go while they waited for a convoy to the airport if we had to arrange an evacuation. So, I was doing that. The military had brought in a "tact-sat"(a tactical satellite communication system) in, so we had good communication with Washington. I remember I was really smelly by that time and my wife brought me some fresh clothes. There was a small bathroom in the Ambassador's suite and a couple of people had taken showers, but I hadn't bothered (I don't know why.) I sent Vince Battle and somebody else over to the Consular Section to start destroying records. About three days before Jean Claude left, I got nervous about the North and decided to send one of my junior officers, a driver, and a vehicle up to Cap-Haitian. Sure enough, as soon as the crunch came, Gonaives (which is about half-way between) was one of the hot spots and they cut the road there and you couldn't get back and forth for about three or four days. We had a lot of people who wanted out: there were a lot of missionaries in the North. This junior officer was able...he was really operating on a high level - he was dealing with the governor and the head of the military there. I was dealing with the new government to try to get planes in to get these missionaries out. (They wanted out!) It was one of those very fortunate things that worked out very, very well: we had a person in place and it looked like we knew what was going on and anticipated well and it really worked out nicely. With that junior officer there, we were able to smoothly move out two or three plane loads of very nervous missionaries from the North.

Q: The Americans were nervous because they weren't sure what was going to happen after Duvalier left or because...who was cutting the road and causing trouble?

EDENSWORD: Groups of Protestants and anti-Duvalierists and sometimes they were not particularly well organized. There had been a couple of shootings at cars that stopped.

They would often set up a barricade of burning tires and request money. It was little more than extortion.

Q: Were these people (to the extent that they had a clear motive) who were blaming the United States for pushing Duvalier out or were they...?

EDENSWORD: No. This was just a breakdown of law and order.

Q: Anarchy.

EDENSWORD: Partial, yes. It never turned out very bad, but the *ton-tons* were running and hiding. I remember the day before Duvalier left, things were very tense in the capital. One of the things the Ambassador and the Station Chief were working on was the problem that in the basement of the palace were three hundred *ton-tons* armed with automatic weapons and the fear was that they would resist and try to prevent Jean Claude from leaving. And might even get in a shoot-out with the military with whom the Ambassador was working to put together a transition government. The story that I heard because I was a good friend of the Station Chief's (he and I and the Ambassador and our families we used to play tennis together every Sunday - the three couples) - I never sat him down and said, "Is this in fact true?" But the story I heard was that he did a deal with this Madam Max Adolph, who was the head of the *ton-tons* (a really wicked woman - evil), that they would smuggle her out - and I am told that they smuggled her out in the disguise of a nun - to Jamaica if she would get the *ton-tons* to stand down - give up their weapons. That eventually came to pass. I know she did get out, but I don't know the details. The Ambassador was working with Namphy to put together the government and I was trying to set up the evacuation. I remember the morning before Duvalier left, I told the Ambassador that I was going to walk down two blocks to the German Embassy. They had an office in an office building a couple of blocks away. I had to go around a body that had been killed by the *ton-tons* the night before. Out in the street in front of the Embassy were remains of blockades set up by demonstrators. I walked to the German Embassy... I hadn't even called, I just walked down to tell them that I was including them in my plans and to get an idea of how many people might be involved. When I arrived, the German ambassador said, "Come on in here, I'm on the phone to Bonn and they're very nervous: would you get on the phone and tell them that you'll take our people out." I said, "I don't speak any German" and he said, "That doesn't make any difference, they speak fine English." So I said, "Yes, we'll take all the Germans and their families - there is room in our planes" and I was crossing my fingers.

Q: So you could deliver on that one?

EDENSWORD: So I could deliver on that one.

Q: Was there a general evacuation?

EDENSWORD: No. The problem was that we didn't know if Jean Claude was going to leave or not. If he didn't leave, we were afraid there was going to be a real shoot-out. The

plane flew in at midnight of February 6th - 7th (midnight) and was on the ground for, I think, four or five hours. Steve Dawkins, the DCM, and the Military Attaché had gone to the palace to try to get them to move to the airport and it took them four hours. Apparently, they were drinking champagne and having a party.

Q: Dramatic and traumatic experience for them.

EDENSWORD: Yes. It was an exciting time to be there. It was interesting: the Haitians, of course, once he left went through a kind of euphoria.

Q: Things calmed down though?

EDENSWORD: Things calmed down and things were fine. There was a government run by Namphy. Namphy was not an Idi Amin character, but he was like the sergeant that had made it to the top. He had a serious stammer - he did not like to give speeches - he was not a glad hander. He refused to live in the palace: he had a little house about five, ten miles out of town that he maintained and that's where he lived. He trusted Clay McManaway - it's my feeling. I always felt that (not to take away from the man who replaced Clay, but that) Clay had a very good relationship with Namphy. I always felt that if Clay had stayed another year, he could have gotten Namphy to see the importance of ensuring the 1987 elections went through. You know, they shot up a bunch of polling places and the whole thing collapsed. I always thought that Clay could have ensured that election...simply because of his good influence with Namphy. I mean, he got Namphy to go down to a southern city and give a major speech. He just practically had to take him down there kicking and screaming.

Q: Ambassador McManaway left Haiti about the same time you did in the summer of 1986? So, about four or five months after the departure of Duvalier?

EDENSWORD: The whole team left: the DCM and I left: there was a whole turnover of staff.

Q: Brunson McKinley was there?

EDENSWORD: Brunson McKinley, yes.

Q: He was the Ambassador. I guess I should ask you if you have any recollections of Father Aristide in that period?

EDENSWORD: No.

Q: You don't remember him at all?

EDENSWORD: No. I think Rachel went to a couple of Creole masses and one of them was his.

Q: Rachel is your wife?

EDENSWORD: My wife. She had a lot of really good contacts in the cultural and artistic community there as CAO and one of her contacts had taken her to one of Aristide's masses.

Q: So he was known at least in the Creole community?

EDENSWORD: But he was still a priest then.

Q: Not a political figure?

EDENSWORD: He was known for his liberation theology views, but he was still in the Church and had not run for office or gotten involved in that way in politics.

Q: Later on, the military...the elections in 1987 didn't really take place as you said. And it became a major problem for the United States and for the people of Haiti. But yet, we were, in a sense, the creator...we encouraged the military to take responsibility and to take charge. Did we see that, at least in the time that you were there, as a very much transitional arrangement that wouldn't be very long lasting or how did we kind of look to the future?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: It must have been a relief to get rid of Duvalier and...?

EDENSWORD: The main step was to get rid of Duvalier and set up some sort kind of transition government, so the country didn't fall into a real chaotic state. The elections of 1987 were to be the end of that transitional government and they never took place. That led to the eventual... Well, then Aristide was elected, when...in 1990? And then the military took over about a year later, didn't they?

Q: Yes, but they had been there, of course, before, but they took over from him.

EDENSWORD: One of the things that I...I'm not involved actively now or even marginally with Haiti. We still have some very close friends there and will probably go back there. A good friend of ours is going down as PAO next year and so, for sure, we'll be down there. In fact, she was the junior officer who worked for my wife when we were there.

Q: I remember meeting her at your birthday party.

EDENSWORD: Right - exactly.

Q: But I forget her name.

EDENSWORD: Meg Gilroy. It's interesting to speculate on what is going to happen. According to the constitution, Aristide cannot run again this time. That doesn't preclude him for running the next time as I understand it. It is interesting to speculate on the role of Aristide historically and it seems to me and I look back at one of the cases that we read when I was at Harvard. A guy had come into a company and in order to destroy the old culture, he had literally destroyed a lot of the institutions. It took him about one year, but then he had to leave because he had to be the real SOB. He had to bring somebody else in who could then put the company back together again. First, you had to destroy the old culture in order to start over. I wonder if in some ways Aristide is not doing that because he seems to have destroyed the military. He has essentially gotten rid of it. And if we can in fact create a police force that is not beholden to the military and does have some sense of responsibility and service; it would certainly be an incredible step forward: getting rid of the one threat and creating some kind of order. The big challenge, of course, is going to be getting Haiti back on its feet economically.

Q: In the period you were there, you mentioned the poverty and the difficulty for the average Haitian just simply to exist - to get water and so on. I know that there was a fair amount of American investment at a particular period: making baseballs and assembling things and so on. Had that started in the period when you were there?

EDENSWORD: It was starting in the early seventies. I think it kind of started with Baby Doc...I don't think it was going under Papa Doc. At one time, I think most of the baseballs except those used in major league games...

Q: I think even some of them.

EDENSWORD: Oh, really. Anyway, most baseballs as a whole are made in Haiti. Also a lot of other sporting goods: Rawlings and Wilson had big factories down there. One of the buildings that State Department Security was looking at for an Embassy was a structure that had been built to process these coupons, you know, that you get in the newspaper. You get twenty cents off a box of corn flakes and you give that to the cashier at the grocery store. Those coupons are...were bundled up and sent to Haiti for sorting. There was a large building - that all fell apart, I guess, in 1986. I don't know if that's ever come back, but I know at one time that building was for sale and the US government was thinking about using it. So, they had a lot of that kind of industry there. They had a small industrial park near the airport: they had a variety of assembly operations in it. Most of those left, closed down and I don't know if they are coming back or not.

Q: They were certainly good sources of employment for those who were able to work in them. The wages were low certainly by United States standards.

EDENSWORD: They were pretty low, yes. They were pretty low.

Q: And involved very much unskilled labor?

EDENSWORD: Although I think that was changing a little bit. Somebody told me that if

you could get the Haitians trained they were as good a worker as you could find anywhere, but often they had to work with people who had no formal education or very little.

Q: Haiti is a country where American non-governmental organizations - private, voluntary organizations have been very active. You mentioned the missionaries. Did you have a lot of contact with them when you were there or any sort of sense of their role...importance?

EDENSWORD: One year, my youngest daughter came down and spent the summer with us and got a summer job with AID. Her job was to go around and report on how the money was being used, for a lot of these NGOs that got money from AID. Because you're right AID is very big in Haiti - it is one of our largest missions or it used to be. I don't know, but it's probably building up again. So, I took the occasion and I'd go with her and we would go together. I 'd just go out and look for Americans or whatever and she'd go and do her report. They are everywhere: CARE has been in Haiti for a long time and have a big operation. It's called HACHO - Haitian American...something and they are all over Haiti. I'm sure they're back. Many of the churches: Catholic and many large Protestant churches (Lutherans and others - Episcopal) have operations there.

Q: How about Peace Corps?

EDENSWORD: That's right. Peace Corps started up and they pulled them all out, I guess, shortly after Aristide was forced out. But it wouldn't surprise me if they go back in, if they haven't already.

Q: They were there when you were there - Peace Corps?

EDENSWORD: They were just getting started, yes. They hadn't been there before.

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about in connection with your assignment to Haiti - the second assignment?

EDENSWORD: Probably, but I can't think of it.

Q: We've covered most of it. Well, in the summer of 1986 you came back to the Bureau of Personnel to be in charge of the Career Development or Counseling for Consular Officers and you did that for two years.

EDENSWORD: Two years...one year working for you.

Q: Tell me about your sort of general impression of that experience - not so much working for me, but doing that work. You hadn't done personnel work before as I hadn't either.
EDENSWORD: Yes. That was one of the most fun jobs I have ever had. I used to look forward to those Friday panels with a great deal of delight and anticipation. I guess it's

part of my personality: I just like the give and take that went on there and the preparation and the deal making and the whole thing. It seemed to me a system that worked. It probably wasn't the best system and I am sure it has changed now and it is going to change more. But for me, it was a delightful period - I really enjoyed that.

Q: It is always very difficult as I recall from my experience there to balance the needs of the Department of State and the Foreign Service: to have the best person doing the job, at the right time, and well prepared, and so on with the other objective: to be liked by our individual employees, to make sure that they have some say in what happens to them, taking into account family and other considerations. There were some tough tradeoffs to achieve those sometimes inconsistent objectives.

EDENSWORD: Well, you're right and I think in that sense the old system (and I understand that it has changed now), but where you had the career counselor who looked out for the interests of the employee and you had the bureau representatives who looked out for interest of the Department and the Bureau supposedly was a...I guess it's the same term that's used to describe our legal system - not confrontational, but...

Q: Checks and balances?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: Separation of power?

EDENSWORD: And it worked well. I think every Foreign Service officer has a sense of responsibility to the greater good of the service, and that is always in the back of your mind; but in the heat of the battle and in the day-to-day activities, you're really out there with the interest of your charges foremost and screw the bureaus. But it never worked out like that because there are all these other interests that were coming in on it. I guess one of the nice things about system was the award we gave every Friday to the person that was the most outrageous and I've even forgotten the name of it.

Q: It was called the "Dunnhowser Award" and, as I recall, you won it a few times.

EDENSWORD: The Dunnhowser Award - it really was a way of letting off that steam because emotions could run high in there on key votes and it was an excellent way of just sort of resolving that issue and everybody went away.

Q: I can recall real tension in the room at times and very deep and fervent expression of conflicting views, but, as you say, we walked out of there and were able to work together the rest of the week and the following week. The Dunnhowser Award helped to smooth the waters and the feathers.

EDENSWORD: And prick those inflated egos.

Q: From there, Jon, you went to Mexico City which I think was your last assignment or

last overseas assignment in the service and then you did the Board of Examiners before you retired. In Mexico City, your job was what?

EDENSWORD: I was Chief of the Consular Section and they have kind of a strange set-up in Mexico City. There's a Consul General (that was my job) then there is a Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs. We had offices next door to each other. The Minister Counselor was responsible for the supervising the six or seven consulates at that time, plus me.

Q: Six or seven consulates outside Mexico City?
EDENSWORD: Outside Mexico City, yes...principle officers. Some of them are the biggest consulates that we've gotten in the country: Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez, Monterrey, and (in the old days - when I first got there) Guadalajara which is, of course, now just a small consulate. I guess is still a Consulate General (but I'm not even sure of that,) but it's only a fraction of its former size. I see that they're going to close two of the consulates in Mexico this year: Matamoros and Hermosillo.

Q: With this separation between the Minister Counselor and you as Consul General, that meant that you didn't have responsibilities outside of Mexico City or did you?

EDENSWORD: Outside of Mexico City's District.

Q: Outside of the consular district?

EDENSWORD: Except in the sense that I was the deputy to the Minister Counselor, so if he or she were not there or there wasn't one, I took over those responsibilities and I did that on a few occasions. It was Norm Singer when I first got there and then he left and was replaced by Pat Langford. There was a gap and there were times when Pat was on home leave or whatever.

Q: You'd fill in?

EDENSWORD: I would fill in. So it worked out very well in the sense that we always knew what the other was doing because we were next to each other and we often worked together putting out cables and...

Q: But the other position would not be very involved with the day-to-day activity of the Consular Section in Mexico City. That was your responsibility.

EDENSWORD: No, no - not at all. The Minister Counselor essentially had two employees: she had a junior officer who came out of my ranks and she had an American secretary who we shared for the classified stuff. But I had my own FSN secretary.

Q: The junior officer who worked for the Minister Counselor would do what? Help her with the...?

EDENSWORD: Sort of like a staff aid and there were a lot of responsibilities that she had just for maintaining communications and making sure that everybody was doing the same thing about the visas and...

Q: Had guidance from her?

EDENSWORD: Guidance...She was ultimately responsible for a lot of the boarder issues and the immigration thing which was a major bi-national concern. There are annual meetings (very high level meetings) - one year there in Mexico, the next year here in Washington and they always include the Secretaries of State, Commerce, (sometimes, maybe always) Treasury, Head of INS, the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, and the Attorney General. Those are the Binational Commission Meetings. The Minister Counselor and I had responsibility for (particularly if it were being held in Mexico) a lot of the management of that program and briefing papers for Washington.

Q: I know from those who have served in the Embassy in Ottawa that one of the challenges for the Embassy there is always to keep abreast of what's going on: there is such intimate contact with our northern neighbor Canada and a lot of direct communication between government agencies and their counterparts in Ottawa. Does the same sort of thing happen with Mexico or because of the language difference make it easier to be in the center of what's going on between Mexico and the United States?

EDENSWORD: Yes. I think it is easier. Juarez and El Paso had a very close relationship and the two Laredos and Matamoros and Brownsville, but that was a very localized thing. They dealt with a lot of local issues that they would...Nuevo Laredo and Ciudad Juarez - our consulates there often had to deal with problems of the movement of goods back and forth and that sort of thing. But...yes, much less of that. I think Tijuana and San Diego are really not sister cities: there's not that closeness that you get in Texas the cross boarder...although that may be changing. No, I think that isn't the kind of problem that exists in Canada. In Monterrey, because of the presence of- (end of tape)

End of interview