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

EDWARD FUGIT

Interviewed by: David Reuther
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INTERVIEW

Q: Okay, we are recording. This is a foreign affairs oral history program interview with Ed Fugit, colleague from A-100. Today is the 25 of January and this interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm David Ruther. Ed, welcome aboard.

FUGIT: Thank you. This could be interesting.

Q: Let me, as they say, start from the beginning. You and I are World War II babies.

FUGIT: Yes, that's right, right in the middle.

Q: Where were you born? Where did you grow up?

FUGIT: Born and grew up in the same place, which is in Bergen County, New Jersey, about ten miles outside of New York City. And the town was Rutherford. And for those that are football fans, that's where the New York Football Giants stadium is located. So, I lived my— actually, from 1943, when I was born until I got back from Vietnam in 1969, I lived in the same house in Rutherford. But the circumstances are rather unusual. The house was owned by my grandparents. And effectively, they raised me and my brother. My mother was also there. I mean, she raised us, as well. But she had almost no income, and there was no father. Not that he went away. He just wasn't there at all. This happened during the war. My brother is three years younger, probably the same father.

My grandparents are Irish Catholics. My mother's maiden name was Donohue, my grandparents were Donohue. Very Irish names. And they took my mother in with two kids, essentially. And they agreed to raise us in their house and my mother helped out with chores and helping her parents as they aged. She had jobs as a newspaper reporter. And so, the upbringing was rather different. And even when I got to be an adult and have a family, because I was never raised in a household where there was a father, I always sort of wondered what fathers did. Seriously. No role model. But I had plenty of guidance and my mother was around. My grandfather was a nice old man, but he didn't do much with me. The upbringing was, in that sense, rather unusual. Part of the deal, and my mother told us as we got older, is that we have to take care of her parents and help

manage the house. So, my brother and I did an extensive amount of housework, cooking, cleaning, laundry, especially yard work, whatever. From the time we were eight years old, probably until we sold the house in 1969.

The upbringing was different. My mother had never gone to college. She barely graduated from high school. She had polio as a child. So, she was twenty years old when she graduated from high school. And that's pertinent when I get on here in a second. But that's the beginning. Live in the same house, same town. You could see from where we lived in downtown New York. You can see the Empire State Building, the World Trade Center when it went up, that's all very visible from our town. I attended the same school from K–12 [kindergarten to twelfth grade], which is a small Catholic School, which in those days, almost every town in North Jersey had a similar Catholic school through high school. Today my school is still in existence. One of the few dinosaurs that have survived. I was taught by Dominican sisters all the time. Almost no way—maybe in high school, one or two lay teachers, but for the most part, they're all religious. I think I got a decent education, no worse than the public schools in town. This was very much a middle-class town. Not many wealthy people, but not many poor people, either. So, it was a usual upbringing to me. Go through school and play sports or whatever, very much encouraged to play sports.

My mother endeavored to make up for not having a father. She was very active in local sports. And she was an organizer and raised money to build a Little League field, and then a football field, and other things like that. There's never a father, wasn't going to be a father. What gets interesting is, as I got into high school, my mother kept on emphasizing to me that I had to go to college. I mean, probably like you, beat it into your head, "You're going to school." Now, this was a family where no one had gone to college. It wasn't like there was an oral history of how you go to school. I had three uncles who were the only semi-father figures around. All three served in World War II, came back. And maybe the only three brothers in the country who never took any advantage of the GI Bill. None of them, even after they came back from the war, got an education. This shows that the family didn't have that concept of going to college. But my mother kept on emphasizing, "Eddie get the good grades."

I went through high school as a basic B student, except in history, and I was extremely good at that. And that gets pertinent here in a moment. The other thing I did was, starting in sixth grade, I had a newspaper route. We delivered newspapers because we needed the money. I did that for years and I got paid a penny a paper for delivery. I also read these papers. I would sit down every day and read the entire local paper. And they had state news, national news, world news. I just absorbed it, didn't know the difference, just read these things. And for whatever reason, those kinds of facts stuck in my head. Which, I think, explained why I was so good at history, as well. Something—numbers, places, events, names, they all just stay with me. Not in English or anything else.

Q: Let me ask. So, by the time you're thirteen or so, you get the 1956 Hungarian revolt.

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: Would that have been something that—

FUGIT: It did. I remember, I can still visualize. There were—I remember listening to it, I was thirteen years old, "Oh my God, the Russians are coming in." And there were several special editions of Life magazine, where they had pictures, page after page of pictures, of the Russian tanks coming in. And that really affected me. By this point, I understood about Russia. I remember—this would have been when I was ten, maybe nine—Korean War's going on. And I had a globe by my bed, but my brother was three years younger, and he couldn't find Korea. I recall, "Now, look at the map here. See Korea? And Russia touches Korea? I bet Russia is involved." Now, I just said it was something that stuck with me. The other thing I did is an almanac, which, for anybody who's listening, an almanac is what Google is now. It was on paper. All the information you wanted was in there. And I would sit down and go through the international section of the almanac every year. I remember I did a chart on the members of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and how big their armies were. And I'm thirteen years old and it's just—these were numbers that meant something to me. I also did a chart with the Warsaw Pact and what their forces were. I had this background, and I did very, very well in history in high school. But as far as college went, there was no money in the family for college at all.

Q: Now, let me interrupt one more time. You were saying that the family was Irish Catholic?

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: So, how long out of Ireland or when did the family emigrate?

FUGIT: The great-grandfather came over right in the Potato Famine, 1849–1850. And he lived in Greenwich Village in New York City as many Irish did, for about forty years. He invented, I'm told, a fire hydrant, and he made a fortune. He was one of the wealthiest Irishmen. This was in 1888, 1890. So, my grandfather grew up in Greenwich Village and had seven or eight siblings. All of them died from one disease or another in childhood in New York City. So, his father, my great-grandfather, was quite wealthy and he purchased some land in a new town, Rutherford. I think my grandfather was born in 1889. So, they have this land in Rutherford and built a big home. He became one of the gentry, an achievement for an Irish Catholic in those days.

In about 1912 my grandfather married an Irish girl from Massachusetts, which in those days was expected. As Irish, you stayed within your class and religion. They also lived in Rutherford. My mother was born there in 1920- the third of five siblings. She had polio as a kid. She never read much at all. She encouraged me to read, but I can't remember her reading a book. When I got into high school, she continued to pressure me to go on to college but we both knew there was no money to pay for it. I knew about scholarships, vaguely, but I had no idea how they worked. My high school did not have a guidance counselor to speak of. I applied to Princeton, Notre Dame, and a bunch of other schools. I

actually got accepted to Princeton and Notre Dame and a couple other big schools. But there was no offer of a scholarship, and I had no idea how one applied for it, it didn't even cross my mind. Okay, I can't go to these places. So that was it. I was probably going to end up going to Rutgers in Newark, where I could commute. I couldn't afford to go live in Rutgers, New Brunswick. But I played football, and this is a rather important fact to this whole story.

From junior high school, and then high school, I was a regular player but an absolute journeyman. Never made any All-Star team anywhere. But I was big. I got rather big as a senior. And my coach knew somebody who knew somebody who was trying to recruit kids from New Jersey to go up and play at the University of Vermont, because they were trying to upgrade their program. I interviewed and took a recruiting trip up there. They offered me a full scholarship- room, board, tuition, books, fees. Everything covered, and quite obviously, you play football, that's part of the deal. I wasn't a great player, but I was big and strong. I could hit and take a hit. And also, I could stay in school- I wasn't going to flunk out.

Vermont sent me an acceptance letter and a class syllabus. This was in the middle of March 1961. My mom wanted to talk about this. She was all for it. And obviously, it was no expense to them. And she said, Okay, here's what you're going to do. And I was very much a mother's boy, I paid attention to what she said. I wasn't a troublemaker. And later, I thought, where did she learn all this? She said, okay, you're good at history. Not your other subjects. You're not an English major, but good at history. And what I think you should do is go to college to study history and international relations. I had never heard the word before. Then join the Foreign Service. What? I had no idea. I knew about diplomats. I didn't know it was called the Foreign Service. Where she heard about it, I don't know, maybe a friend of hers mentioned it. I mean, it's totally out of character for her to even be thinking about this.

She said, you're going to study history and International Relations at Vermont, join the Foreign Service and you will be a diplomat. And we'll work out all the classes you're going to take for four years that will focus on the world. We did a list by semester, all eight semesters of the courses I should take and the major and then the additional courses. And so that would have been forty courses to get your degree. I believe that I did thirty-six of them. When I went through college, I kept the list with me. And followed it. And it worked. Vermont is not the school where people go to study international relations, to be honest. I mean, people go there, either for business or agriculture. But not international relations. But nevertheless, I didn't know that at the time.

I took all these courses, had about four or five professors. One of them really pushed me, he didn't push me into the Foreign Service, but to engage with the real world- not the theory about the world. His name was Raoul Hilberg. And he was the first academic to write a systematic history of the Nazi extermination camps. People knew about it but he did the first large academic work in the mid 1950s. He looked at the world as a place of good and bad things, how things are happening, what they were doing, why they were doing them, who their allies were, etc, .

I took every course he offered. And it stayed with me through my life. This makes you think about what the world really is and how it works.. I followed the syllabus that my mother laid out. That's in March of '61. In February of '62, eleven months later, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She smoked two packs of Lucky Strikes no filter every day that I knew her. She doesn't tell me how bad it is, but she tells me she's sick, and they're going through chemo. She died in December of '62. Not even halfway through my second year of college, she passes away, which makes me technically an orphan at age 19. Although I'm still living with my grandparents, that was a big blow because she was sort of a rock I depended on. But she had sent me on this path of studying history, diplomacy and going into the Foreign Service. And that was in my mind that I was just going to do it. I go to college, get pretty good grades, play football, which eats up a lot of time and energy, especially in the fall months. But still, in my mind, I will go on to the Foreign Service.

Q: Let me ask you. What position did you play?

FUGIT: Okay. In those days, you had to play both offense and defense. It wasn't till 1968 that you went either one or the other. So I was a lineman, I was a tackle. I was one of the bigger guys in those days. I was an offensive tackle, defensive tackle. I was very slow. I was very awkward. But I could hit and take it. As in high school, I never made any All-Star team. I was a starter. But I was just a dependable person to put out there. I wasn't going to win the game or lose the game.

By my senior year, 1964-65, I knew I had to take the Foreign Service examination. I learned that the exam was being given at Middlebury College- about 100 miles south of the University of Vermont. Luckily for me, it was scheduled for the third Saturday in November. The football season ended the second Saturday, so I was able to take the test. I go down to Middlebury, no idea what I'm expecting from this exam at all. I had not heard about how difficult the test was or what the pass/fail line was, etc. Ignorance is bliss, I guess. I hadn't taken the GRE's yet, and as you remember, the exam is very similar to the GRE's.

In January of 1965. I got the letter saying I've passed the test with a seventy, which was the minimum. Meaning if you got to seventy or above, you then qualified to sit for the oral exam. I then applied to several graduate programs in International Relations or Foreign Service: University of Denver, Fletcher School, and Georgetown. Georgetown had just started its Master of Science in Foreign Service program in 1965. I applied and somehow got in. I also was accepted at Denver but rejected by Fletcher School. Georgetown was the right choice as most of the professors were practicing diplomats or intelligence officers, not theoreticians.

Q: Let me ask you at this point. In '62, yeah, the Cuban Missile Crisis.

FUGIT: Right. Yes.

Q: And you were in Vermont. Did that intrigue you? Or did your favorite professor talk about what that was all about?

FUGIT: Yes, he did. I mean, obviously, it was a big event. And, you know, the danger of going to war was there. And we had Kennedy's assassination. And that was, of course, that absorbed everyone. Also, I should— before I get into the Foreign Service too far, I should interject the army in this whole story. Because I went to a land grant college, federal law then required every male student who's a US citizen to take two years of ROTC. As it turned out, looking in retrospect, is time wasted, in terms of learning anything. It was nothing but drill. You march around the field, and you didn't learn much practical military instruction. It wasn't very worthwhile, but what it did teach you is the reality that there's a draft out there. And a lot of you guys are going to get drafted. So you have your choice. You can stay with ROTC and go in as a Lieutenant, be treated somewhat decently, or you can be drafted.

I reasoned that, since I must serve anyway, I will opt to be an officer. I stayed with Advanced ROTC for my junior and senior year. And those days, there was no such thing as ROTC scholarship, that comes later. But they did pay you a stipend of twenty-five dollars a month. And since I had no other source of income, I had to earn all my spending money myself at school, the twenty-five a month was a nice addition. I do my junior and senior year in ROTC. And then while in my junior year, a visiting Lieutenant Colonel does a presentation to all the ROTC cadets on the possibility of being an Army helicopter pilot.

At this point in mid 1963 or so, Army Aviation was tiny, but the concept was growing bigger with Vietnam looming in the future. And the Army was going to need a lot of pilots. The offer was if you opt for aviation your obligation will only increase from two years to three years and the pay and benefits are much better as a pilot. He asked for volunteers, and I put my hand up. I had never considered being a pilot until that moment, but it seemed like a good idea. As part of that commitment, they gave me forty hours of civilian fixed wing instruction at a commercial airport in Burlington.

I did learn how to fly as a civilian, there's no military involved. However, I didn't do very well as a pilot, it did not feel as natural to me as it did for most of my buddies. My problem was instrument flying and this will be a factor down the road when I get to Army flight school in a few years, I just wasn't spatially oriented. They put you in a hood and you can't see outside the plane, and you're just looking at the instruments and trying to fly. I did badly on that, and they failed me. I took my test to get my private pilot's license and didn't pass.

I graduated from Vermont in 1965 and went to graduate school at Georgetown, School of Foreign Service. My grandfather was able to provide the tuition for Georgetown, which I did not expect. That was a big deal for me because I had no way of paying for it. The instruction there was excellent. One of my best instructors was a Dr. Franklin, who also headed up the State Department’s historical division. He taught a two-semester graduate level course covering 1914 to 1945- both World Wars. This was an intense course on the

politics of the wars. And because he was the person who controlled the State Department archives, we had access to all the German and Japanese archives from both wars.

My great interest with him was the naval treaties in the 1920s, when major powers regulated the size of surface combatants, who had how many, the ratio, etc. And then you could go in and find out what the Japanese were thinking at the time. His course was just tremendous for me, helping me to understand the world and getting this idea of the history and what happened. And the other professors were excellent there as well.

About this time, I sat for the oral exam, which was step two of the competitive process to join the Foreign Service. It was in the State Department itself. And as you know, there's three people giving the oral. And I had no idea what I was up against in the oral.

They started off, as you recall, with a lot of current events, questions. There's a couple of easy ones to get you going. And then they step up to the big, conceptual questions. The big question for me, which I still recall 65 years later, was in the last year and a half, there have been five major international conferences. Where were they? Who were hosting them? Who were the major players and what was the US position? In those days I wasn't reading The Economist, but I consumed Newsweek, all the time and the New York Times, so I was able to answer it. I'm pretty, pretty good at those kinds of factoids. Then towards the end came the curveball. There was one woman on the board, she was the USIA [United States Information Agency] officer. She asked, "Can you tell me who your favorite American composers are? And how will you use them in a cultural exchange program?" I realized I didn't know the names of any American composers. There was no way I could skate around the question. I thought, okay, the best way is to answer quickly and admit that the arts are not a strong suit. But on cultural exchanges I suggested you could do things like bringing US Soccer teams or other sporting teams to enhance Cultural Exchange. That ended the interview and I learned months later I had passed and would be placed on a waiting list until I completed my military service. Four years later, when we join the Foreign Service, they gave you the readout from your oral. And in there, that lady wrote, this officer is a “diamond in the rough”. To this day my wife uses that against me all the time. In the end I passed the oral and written the first time through. I didn't realize that that was unusual.

I do my two and a half semesters. And then I realized I must take an oral exam. I had sort of assumed that was going to be in the third semester. It wasn’t. You do that on your own expense in the fourth semester. This meant I needed a job to carry me through and I found a short-term GS-2 position (General Schedule, the Federal Government’s civilian personnel rankings) in the Commerce Department. I was tasked with physically assembling patents, placing a ribbon and United States seal on them, and preparing them for publication. I did that for about four months as I was prepping for my oral exam. Then, unexpectedly, in February 1967 I get a letter from the Army saying, okay, young man, your time is up, we want you to report for active duty at Fort Benning, Georgia in March. I was not expecting that so soon and I had to expedite my oral exam, which I passed but I had the impression it was a close call and the fact that I was going onto active duty may have worked in my favor.

And then I go down to Fort Benning, which is the Infantry training school for the Army, which I had to complete before I could go to flight school. It was a two-month course that wasn't particularly difficult, but it should have been since 100 percent of my class was going to Vietnam. I completed the course in May 1967 and switched over to aviation training.

Army Flight School was divided into two four-month segments- basic flying at Ft Wolters, Texas, and advanced training at Ft Rucker, Alabama. Ft Wolters is about one hundred miles west of Fort Worth, Texas. It was a training base. And the Army put it there because you have thousands of kids learning how to fly hundreds of helicopters. You don't want that in a built-up area, they are going to crash. You have this open grazing land for forty, fifty, sixty miles, just Texas plains. And the farmers have rented out some of their land so that we could land on these and practice on them, etc.

I spent four months there. The big event there is I met the lady that I will eventually marry. She was a nursing student in Dallas, from the Chicago suburbs. When I finished up there in September 1967 with average grades, as instrument training isn't introduced until Ft Rucker, I proceeded on to Ft Rucker where you are trained to fly in a combat environment.

I went from Fort Walters, where I flew small two-seat helicopters to Ft Rucker where we began to fly the modern Huey (Army nomenclature for the Utility Helicopter- 1) that I was to use for a year in Vietnam. Ft Rucker is also a four-month program. The Army is gearing up because we then have eight thousand helicopters in Vietnam, which means you need sixteen thousand pilots. Ft Rucker was graduating well over a thousand pilots a month. That's unheard of. It's such a huge amount because they were rushing pilots through flight school.

I did fine with everything except instrument training. I mentioned when I was in Vermont, I didn't do very well with instruments. Well, I did even worse when I got down to Ft Rucker and failed instruments. They sent me back, I was dropped out of my class and put back four weeks to retake instrument training. I'm convinced that I got a gentleman's pass that in today's Army I would not have been given. I know because my youngest son was a very good Army helicopter pilot and he indicated that failing instruments is disqualifying. But in those days, which was February 1968- the TET offensive was in full swing in Vietnam. The army needed everybody they could get in Vietnam. Then in March 1968, like everybody else in my class, I deployed from there to Vietnam.

So I'm finishing up at flight school. And Tet is breaking loose in Vietnam. And we you know, we hear the news, Walter Cronkite, how bad everything is. And that was the moment where the tipping point in American public opinion was reached, where people said, Listen, the army has been lying to us. And public opinion was turning against the military. I have thirty days leave to see my grandfather and girlfriend, and we fly out. Historical point, our charter flight stopped along the way- Wake Island. Remember World

War Two? Wake Island is about as big as the room you're in, from side to side. I mean, you got a runway and you have maybe fifty yards of beach sand on either side of the runway. It's a tiny place. When the plane lands there, we get an hour break. And I wander off. And you see bunkers, Japanese bunkers, because they fortified it after they took it from us. It was historically rather interesting, just to see Wake Island. But anyway, then we go to Vietnam and we landed.

Q: Let me ask. Because some of the guys that I've interviewed talked about taking a ship up to Vietnam, you're talking about taking an airplane?

FUGIT: Yeah. Okay. Here's the difference. The people that were sent as a complete unit deployed by ship with their gear. For example, if I had gone from flight school to the Ninth Infantry Division in California, when they deployed, those guys deployed by troop ship, and the choppers went on small helicopter carriers, small aircraft carriers, because they were part of a unit and then they got to Vietnam. As a unit, and then the army split them up, but those are the guys that came by ship. The individual replacements flew over on civilian charters. I reported to Travis Air Force Base outside of Oakland. And that's where all the flights went to Vietnam, they just loaded you on, and off you went. I landed in Saigon without knowing where I was going to go. You land and you go to a Replacement Detachment where they keep you for two or three days and they assign you to a specific unit. And it's interesting. I had never been in the real army until then, I've been in training for a year. Training is not the real army. I mean, it's like going to school and you're wearing a uniform, you might salute somebody, but it's not the same thing. And the guys who would come from units before had prior experience, were much better off than guys like me who had no idea what I was getting into.

I am given my orders to report to the 240th Assault Helicopter Company, which is about thirty miles from Saigon. It is an actual combat unit which flies combat missions six out of seven days. At this point I am just another warm body. I'm replacing somebody who was killed or rotated back to the US. I arrived almost exactly a month from the end of the Tet offensive, mid-March 1986. I'm going in there, based on everything that I had read or seen in the US, to a collapsing military situation. I think- “Oh Christ, everything's going to hell, we're getting the stuffing beat out of us here”. I quickly discovered that morale is sky high. The opinion in the US is that the army had just been defeated. However, the army I was attached to thought they did very well during TET, killing hundreds of Viet Cong who tried to storm the base. And the morale was excellent. I replied that I hate to tell you, but it isn’t going that way in the States. And as we all found out, that was true, it wasn't. But at the time, the feeling in the active forces was they had done very well on this attack.

The unit I was assigned to is large, with forty-eight pilots including twelve commissioned officers and thirty-six Warrant Officers and twenty-eight helicopters. In the army 80 percent of the pilots are Warrant Officers, which is somewhere between a sergeant and an officer. And all they do for their entire career is fly and maintain the aircraft. They don't command anything. They are good at it. And the idea is, this is where the army will have the bulk of its pilots. But young lieutenants like myself just coming into the unit arte

going to be taught, and actually fly with the warrant officers. I quickly found out that the only thing that matters in that kind of a unit is your flying experience. How many hours do you have? Well, I have zero hours which means I start off being the co-pilot. I learn from a warrant officer who is nineteen or twenty years old with hundreds of combat hours. He's in charge of the aircraft, even though I outrank him. He tells me what to do in the air. I accept that because he knows what to do and I don't. The first day I arrived there, the next day, they took me up for a check ride and to familiarize me with the local area. On the third day, I did a combat operation. And it's a single ship extraction. The mission was to pick up a small team of six guys. I later found that we did a lot of this. This was a team we were trying to infiltrate behind the Viet Cong lines in order to find out how many enemies are around and where they are heading.

We had previously inserted this team four days ago and they had spent four days hiding, being very quiet and counting people going by seeing how many enemies are in the area, and then we go pick them up. Inserting a team is not too dangerous because we pick the time and place. Picking up a team, however, is more dangerous because they've been there for days and maybe the enemy has found out where they are. And the enemy's tactic is they don't want to kill those guys, they want to lure the helicopters in and kill us. I have no idea what our plan is, and the pilot doesn't tell me what we're doing. And that's part of the informal initiation. We hover around about a hundred feet off the ground, and I see the troops down there, but I have no idea how we are we going to get them up? The pilot starts lowering the helicopter vertically down through the jungle canopy. In flight school they never mentioned that a helicopter could do that and I had no idea. This was one of the chopper's capabilities.

As we come down, the crew chief and door gunner were guiding the pilot onto the landing zone. Another thing they never taught us in flight school is that the Huey had sufficient power to take off absolutely vertically. I assumed everything was a running takeoff. Well, yes, that's the preferred way, you tend to live longer if you do all of those. But it had the power in the engine to go up or down like an elevator, literally straight up, straight down. So we land. And when the troops run out of the woods, they jump on. I think we're going to get killed. And if the pilot was shot I don't know how I will get out of here. Well, he wasn't shot, nobody shot at us. He lifts it up, takes it vertically out of the landing zone and takes the troops back. That was my introduction to combat, and I realized that everything they taught me in flight school is correct only as far as it goes. But there is a lot more that you learn as on the job training.

In addition to flying, I had managerial functions as an officer. At first, I was a platoon leader. An aviation platoon consists of eight helicopters and ten pilots. And our company was expected to put up fifteen helicopters a day and fly combat missions. Which meant you would go out in the morning, and the previous night they tell you, who's flying that day. Next morning you're going to support a specific battalion, you pick them up at x location. First the command aircraft would fly out, maybe at six in the morning before sunup, everybody else would leave at sunrise. The other fourteen ships would meet up with the command ship at the battalion basecamp and you would spend the day taking the ground combat units to different locations. We could carry six soldiers per helicopter.

Meaning, in theory, we had ten lift ships, sixty troops at a time. We would pick them up, put them in a predetermined location. Then we'd go pick up another company and move them.

The theory was we wanted to get the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong to attack us. We wanted to force contact so you can wear them down, attrit them. We would put the troops in, leave them there for four or five hours. If they didn't find any enemy, we'd pick them up and move them to another location. Thus, you're hopscotching around all day. That's the way the war was fought in that part of Vietnam when I was there. It wasn't fought that way up in the north. Where it's hilly, it was a different war. Where I was it was flat, sugarcane and rice paddies. You could look for fifty miles, and you wouldn't see anything bigger than a telephone pole.

Q: Is that four corps or three corps?

FUGIT: Three corps, around Saigon.

Q: What army units were you working with? Pardon me? What army units were you working?

FUGIT: Basically, the Ninth Infantry Division was the main one we were working for. They were located just south of Saigon, in the Delta. And we also worked for the 25th Infantry Division, up in Cu Chi, north of Saigon. We also worked about a third of the time for Special Forces units called the SOG, Special Operations Group. And they were the guys that were doing the cross-border raids into Cambodia. We would deploy and support them for two weeks at a time with three ships and two gunships. We would live with the special forces troops at their little bases. Every few days they would get their mission orders. I'm convinced their instructions came from the CIA, not from the army. And the Special Forces troops didn't have much respect for the regular army. We would plan for the operation, insert them in single ship operations, which means six soldiers going it. These were all for reconnaissance missions, not attacks., then wait on the ground for two or three days for them to call to be picked up. And the rule was, we put them down at first light. Their worry was that the enemy would see them being inserted. And if that was the case we had to go back and get them out immediately, as six troopers would not last long in a firefight with the more numerous enemy.

When the troops landed, they would then hide. They would get in the bushes for about an hour and see if there was any evidence of enemy movement in the area. If they didn't suspect contact, they would call us and we would go back to our base. And we would just sit and wait for a couple of days. Sometimes it was only one day because the area we're operating in was the Ho Chi Minh trail and it was inside Cambodia. Needless to say, it was teeming with North Vietnamese because they were pouring down the trail. And where we were is where the trail split into many smaller junctures where supplies and men were then shipped clandestinely into Vietnam. The Special Forces mission was to count approximately how many enemy were coming down the trail. Occasionally, we would put in a bigger team, twelve soldiers whose job was to capture somebody for

intelligence exploitation. This is much more dangerous, because they would look for some guy who's wandering off from the unit, and grab them, duct tape them, get them out and we come in and pull them back and then they can interrogate the guy. Usually, it wasn't successful.

Every now and then operations went bad just by law of averages because of the difficulty of the area we're going in. On a day I was not flying but was elsewhere in the area, my unit got into a huge firefight. The ground unit was trapped, and we were told to fly in and rescue them. The enemy was waiting. They had sprung a trap on us and they were waiting for the helicopters to come. We had several ships shot down and several killed and wounded. Eventually, we got the guys out, but one of the men we lost was a good friend of mine. The commander on the ground, a Special Forces Sergeant, was given the Medal of Honor for the operation. And he was a one-man destruction squad, holding everything together, because people were panicking. And the enemy were all around them. Eventually we could pull them out

I do a year of this and become very good at regular flying. I was given two major awards. A Silver Star, which is the third highest award in the military for valor and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The two operations I completed to get those awards were with myself as the officer in charge, and we suffered no casualties in those. I also received a handful of “atta-a-boy” awards for basically doing my normal assignments.

I made some life-long friends there, particularly eight of us that still get together every two or three years. The truth is that in combat you do not fight for “God and Country” you fight to protect your buddies. Now we're all in our late 70s and there's a camaraderie that was there. And will stay there until everybody dies.

After I did a full year my tour was up so I shipped back to the States in late March, 1969. I was assigned to one of the few nice army bases that exists. There aren't many. It was Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia.

Q: We’ve been in Savannah.

FUGIT: It’s an old Air Force Base and Savannah is a nice, genteel place to live. After a couple of months my girlfriend, the lady I met in Dallas, and I decided to get married. As fate would have it the day before I fly out of Savannah for Chicago, where the wedding will be, I receive a letter from the State Department. It informs me that they have an opening for me in the A-100 Course (entry level training course) in mid-March, 1970. That date coincided perfectly with my date to leave the Army and I called and told them I accepted. I go to Chicago and get married and tell my bride and her dad that I have employment lined up! Nobody in the small wedding party, including my wife, had any idea of what the Foreign Service was or entailed. I'm not sure I did either at that point.

Q: Sorry?

FUGIT: —Anything in that we need to expand on? Because there's not a lot of meat, foreign affair stuff other than doing those special operations in Cambodia.

Q: No, I would have asked if you can have this when you edit it, you know, did you have any summer jobs through college and that sort of thing?

FUGIT: Yeah. For most of my years in college, I got a job working for the town of Rutherford. And what I did was collect garbage because during the summer, the full-time staff who manned the garbage trucks were on vacation, so they got about eight college kids to fill-in. And we were given trash routes, how to pick stuff up. We did sewage repair. This is an interesting job. Somebody had a blockage between their house in the street, the town's responsibility is to find out where it is. We would dig down and the college kids always did the digging. Once we got to the sewage pipe, a full timer would come down with a pickaxe and he would knock off a chunk of the sewage pipe. If the blockage was above us, between where we were and the owner's house, that was the owner's responsibility to repair. We just closed it all up and told the owner to repair it. On the other hand, if the blockage was below us the hole would then fill up with the backed-up sewage. But then that's our job to clean the hole out, so we would use the big roto rooters that are on our trucks and clean out the pipes. Usually, the cause was roots and trees that had broken into the water or sewage mains, and they had to be cut out. That was very hot work in the summer sun and heat.

That was dirty and hot work. Pay was pretty good for those days, it was government work. I did that for several summers. While I was in college, I had many different campus jobs, which the university made available to me because they realized I had no financial support at home. And the athletic scholarship does not allow you to be given cash. I had a series of jobs from being a short order cook in the snack bar and keeping statistics at basketball and baseball games. That provided me enough money for clothes and dating.

Q: And on April 20, you joined the Foreign Service with the 91st. Class. Right? How do you evaluate that instruction?

FUGIT: Ah, well, the basic course was more organizational, I think I recall, as opposed to factual, and they were explaining what all the acronyms meant, how the building was organized. And having just come from the army, albeit at a very low level. I'm used to big organizations, organization charts and acronyms. The A-100 was interesting and necessary. At the end of the course, they gave everyone their ongoing assignments. Frankly, I don't know how they decided who went where, in terms of assignments. We all took the language aptitude test, which assessed how well you grasped foreign languages. You obviously scored much better than I did. I was relegated to the romance language track. That is Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French portion of FSI [Foreign Service Institute]. And, as I later discovered, that was the right decision for me.

Q: Now, there's a lot of different people that come to this class from different places, but they all pass the written tests, and they all pass the oral. How did you see them? As a common group, or very distinct personalities?

FUGIT: Well, first, we're all on the same boat together. And as you just said, they've all passed the same exams, these are all smart people. Intelligence isn't a factor here. And there are different backgrounds from all over the country. The army was different, and you learned to deal with people at a very basic level. In in the A-100, you're dealing with people in a clean first world environment, people are dressed well, and the fact that they are educated is something they're proud of and they talk about. In the army, not so much, it tended to be a much tougher group. Shifting over from the culture of the army to the culture of the Foreign Service was hard, to that degree. Because I was so used to this rough and tumble organization, and then you get into an organization that prides itself on being sophisticated, if you will. So that was I think the biggest thing.

Q: Well, you were married at that time, so that your wife would have been exposed to some of the social entertaining aspects, right?

FUGIT: Like most of the wives, and officers, she was somewhat put off by the formality of the service. We joke about it to this day. She got very scared by the protocol lectures that wives of more senior officers were giving to them. And that you need to know spoons and fish knives, and all that kind of stuff. Well, she's a lady right out of nursing school, this is taking her completely off guard. We didn't have that china, we didn't have the utensils. And they didn't really say clearly to them or to us that you don't need all this etiquette now and will only need it a few tours later. Junior officers, as a rule, don't give dinner parties for eighteen people. But she was, and I was also can we handle this? Are we going to be able to be this sophisticated as they obviously want us to be? And that I think that was the biggest thing. We came out of the basic course, thinking that can we live up to these standards that they set?

Q: I heard somebody at the time say that. The wife came home and said, You have to quit.

FUGIT: Yeah, we had that conversation.

Q: But that speaks to something I think, very interesting at the time. Because most of those people, if I recall, were basically middle-class kids.

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: Not big town kids. Not fancy school, you know, the University of—

FUGIT: Yes. Right.

Q: —And so they didn't come from this environment of gentile wealth.

FUGIT: Right, exactly. It was something. We are all in the same boat, we just didn't know it. I think that was it. Everybody was just as scared. There was one Harvard guy in our class. And trying to think of his name. I served with him later in Belgium.

Q: Not Ed.

FUGIT: No. Not Ed.

Q: Cameron Hume?

FUGIT: Nope, no. And his wife, she wasn't an FSO then. But she joined later. And ten years later, he and I worked in the political section in Brussels together. I'm trying to get his picture here.

Q : George Chester.

FUGIT: Yeah, right. And his wife was, I think, Geraldine Chester. She was at that point, not just his wife, but she was also a Harvard person, but I don't think there were any others in the class. Was Cameron Hume?

Q: I don't know.

FUGIT: The first name like Cameron maybe.

Q: Anyway, I've got an old— A, B, C, D, E, F, G— Cameron was Princeton.

FUGIT: Oh, he was okay. It's another one then, yeah.

Q: But it was an interesting group of people at that time because I was one of those that passed the oral exam a couple years earlier, and you know, your eligibility is only good for one year.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: And so every year on that anniversary, I get a letter saying, we've extended your eligibility because Congress hasn't given us any money to hire anybody.

FUGIT: I remember that mid 60s, it was a real freeze.

Q: Right. And it lasted until '69. And then they said, Okay, we'll hire, but you must go to Vietnam under CORDS.

FUGIT: I remember. Yes. Yeah.

Q: And that was the 89th class or 90th. We were 91st. And I heard stories that whatever class that was that had to go to Vietnam, were very upset to find there is a class behind them. That did not have the same—

FUGIT: I think State Department was worried that they might have a revolt on their hands.

Q:So how are you feeling? We've been at this for an hour and a half.

FUGIT: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. The next you know, next time there's, I didn't write it in there. But while I was at FSI, waiting for Portuguese language training to start, I ended up working on a human catastrophe in Peru, on a task force in Washington, so I will add that in. It's sort of interesting. You'll learn a lot about the press. Anyway, okay, when you want to do another one then?

Q: Well, give me a couple of days rest. We could come back to this on Friday.

FUGIT: Okay, let's see. Yeah, the 30th. No, third, the 29th.

Q: That sounds about right.

FUGIT: Okay. I'll do that.

Q: Okay, there we go. Good afternoon. It is the 29th of January and we're returning to our conversation with Ed Fugit. Ed, we just got you through a 100.

FUGIT: Okay. Got us into A-100. And I received my first assignment, to Brasilia, Brazil via General Services Officer training.

Q: And you're so good at training situations, what did they do with you? They put you in another training situation that—

Q: What was that about? And how long did that last?

FUGIT: That took, I guess about a month and a half, there were a couple of formal courses. And for the most part they just gave me the regulations to read. They didn't know what to do with me as they had to kill three months until my Brazilian Portuguese training could start. (Note: State differentiates between Brazilian Portuguese and European Portuguese). I was a supernumerary in the American Republics Bureau (ARA). As I had never been in an Embassy the regulations were difficult for me to put in context. Then I got caught up in an emergency, which happened in May of 1970. that resulted from a major earthquake in Peru, in May of 70, that killed around 70,000 people, at least, and left 800,000 homeless. And it was in Chimbote, Peru. And the reason I got roped into it is I was assigned to the ARA Bureau. They really didn't know what to do with me. AID [Agency for International Development] immediately stood up a task force to respond to this huge disaster. And I was an excess body which ARA volunteered to the AID task force. There I answered phones and routed requests to professionals who knew how to respond. The disaster was genuine. What happened was the earthquake was so powerful that it split a glacier in the Andes. That unleashed a gigantic wall of mud and ice and water, came down the valley and covered a town or a city. And that's where almost all the

deaths were. In a way it's like Pompei. The people were just covered. And there was almost no rescue. I mean, there's nobody around. It was catastrophic.

Anyway, there were hundreds of thousands of people that were without food and housing and needed other assistance. That's what AID got into. My first impression, after about a week on duty, is that these guys are organized. AID had a blueprint for how to handle disasters, how to set up a control mechanism, get supplies in, et cetera. I was simply answering phones for that. But I had two incidents, answering the phones, that were sort of interesting for me. One of them I got a phone call, just at random. And this guy said he worked for a major pharmaceutical company, and that they had hundreds of boxes of pharmaceuticals that they could contribute to the relief down in Peru. I am new and naïve and think this is a great gesture. Then I brief my supervisor. She was an old hand at disaster assistance and her answer was one of those things that always sticks with you. She said, "You know what, I bet you anything, these are expired medicines. And the pharmaceutical companies, we get this all the time," she said they want to contribute these because they can then take a tax write off. She said we cannot distribute medicines that are expired. You must tell him that we can't use expired medicines. I would never have thought of that. Then the second one, perhaps two weeks into the emergency. At the time, this was the lead story in the Washington Post for about a week. Because it was so catastrophic. Journalists would call our task force to get a briefing and I would often handle the call. I gave him a sit-rep about what we know and what's going on and what the US government is doing by way of assistance. He said are there any good stories out of this? That hasn't been covered yet?

And I said yes, here is a good human-interest angle. You'll recall that I served three years as an Army helicopter pilot. The US Army had a helicopter company in the Panama Canal Zone which had been committed to this operation. They were the only organization that had rotary wing assets that could fly relief supplies into this valley, which was way up in the Andes. But to get in there, they had to fly helicopters at a higher altitude than they were ever designed to fly. Essentially, they were being flown beyond their safety envelope. And these Army pilots took it on, they were going up to 16,000 feet in order to get over the ridges, through the high passes and then go down into the valleys, which were maybe 11,000. But to get in you had to go up to 16,000. I told this journalist, "Here's an interesting story. You have these Army pilots there, all Vietnam veterans. And they're doing some heroic stuff. They're really sticking their necks out." Remember this was 1970, when the military was not particularly popular, and his answer was "I don't care about anything like. Do you have anything with more human interest, not military guys". And his attitude really struck me.

I worked on that task force for maybe a month or so and came away, as I said, with an impression that AID had its stuff together on disaster relief.

I finished the GSO training, which was almost meaningless. And I took a two-week course on how to be a Post Security Officer, PSO. In those days, you remember, RSOs [Regional Security Officers] were rare. They weren't like they are now; every post has an RSO. But in those days, most embassies used an American officer, usually an

administrative officer, and gave him the additional duty of post security. It turned out to be one of the most interesting things I ended up doing in Brasilia. Then I do Brazilian Portuguese language training for about six months. I'm basically a mediocre student in languages, I get it, but I'm not good at it. In addition, they gave my wife about eight weeks of training, which was a lot.

When I completed twenty-three weeks of language we were ready to travel to our first post, Brasilia. We departed in January of 1971. Our orders were to go initially to Rio de Janeiro because the embassy was still in Rio. Brasilia was known as the embassy office or embassy annex and the Ambassador split his time between the two places. However, the Brazilian government was insisting that all Embassies move to Brasilia- which was a brand-new city in the middle of the interior of the country. The new capital city was built from scratch, marvelous architecture, et cetera. Much better place to live, especially with young families than Rio. But most people, diplomats and Brazilians, did not want to go there. Rio was lively and happy and adventuresome, and Brasilia was a government town.

Q: —Let, let me ask, how did you physically get to Rio?

FUGIT: I flew on Pan Am [Pan American Airlines]. For most of those early years you either flew on Pan Am or Trans World Airlines, which were the only American airlines allowed to fly overseas. We flew down, as I had to do a one-week orientation in Rio. Because all the staff that ran the embassy was there, Brasilia was still an afterthought. The ambassador split his time between Brasilia and Rio. And some of the other people did as well, but mostly, the embassy staff and the Brazilian government for that matter wanted to stay in Rio. I do the one-week orientation there, and they put us in a very nice hotel, one block from Copacabana Beach. My wife had never been overseas before, and I hadn't been overseas much other than the trip to Vietnam. She was apprehensive. When we look back later, we laugh. I mean, in retrospect Rio was a very nice place compared to many other places in the developing world we would later visit. In addition to apprehension, she was pregnant at that time.

After a week there we then fly up on Saturday morning to Brasilia. And welcome to the real Foreign Service, nobody met us! My supervisor didn't come out. He was two weeks from retirement and had forgotten that I was coming in. He later said, "Oh, I thought you were coming in next week!" We were stuck at the airport and finally called up somebody because I didn't even know where to go. And finally got the duty officer and they sent a car out for us to get back. But that was our introduction to being in the real Foreign Service. And the officer I was reporting to, he was going to leave in two weeks and his career was over, he couldn't care less about what I did or didn't do. I got in, he said, "Here's your office and here's a bunch of things to do." And that was it. No instruction, no guidance, no supervision, he was just leaving.

I check-in and do the usual administrative things to keep the Embassy office running. Immediately they said, okay, your main job is going to be to prepare for a wave of officers and staff that must relocate from Rio to Brasilia. Now, the US Embassy in Brazil is huge, one of the biggest in the world. And about every American government agency

that existed, had an operation in Brazil. And they're all in Rio. It's like Thailand, in the Far East, and Nairobi in Kenya, places where the US government loves to congregate. But many of those people in Rio had to move within the next two years up to Brasilia. It was my primary job to find housing for them. They came from a myriad of US agencies, but there was a joint administrative budget, and we, the State Department, were responsible for getting housing for all these people. My initial job, then, was to figure out the housing market, and then start buying places, mostly apartments. To make it more difficult is that was the period,you remember, Uncle Sam was tightening down on foreign expenditures. As a result there was no desire on the part of the State Department to do this, but they had no choice. They had to get housing for all these people. Then I had a very large budget. And the goal was to get, I think, 36 or 40 apartments, which was easy to do, because in Brasilia, all the buildings were identical. And you had every two-bedroom apartment like every other two bedroom, every three bedroom was identical, et cetera. And the blocks that they live in were designed to be super-efficient, modern, you didn't have to drive everything you wanted. Butcher, food store, Doctor, dentist were all in the super blocks. The theory was that you could shop without a lot of transportation. My job was to go around the city, find suitable apartments and purchase them.

To do this took the better part of a year, a year and a quarter finding these, negotiating, closing, and purchasing furniture. We had the fiscal authority to do it and we were able to get everything. We always had a few questions. A couple of political officers did not want to be in apartments, they wanted houses, across the lake so they could perform their representational responsibilities. But these cost a lot more than apartments and there's a big argument over that. And then you have AID, which we didn't have to house, because AID had their own money. As in many countries, AID had counterpart funds, so they could buy their own housing, and their own furniture and appliances, et cetera. State had very limited money which led to squabbling between the other US government agencies that State was responsible for. This taught me a lesson, which is that everybody thinks they are being disadvantaged. So the apartments I purchased went into a central pool and then a multi-agency committee would decide who's going to get which unit.

At this point I was given a new project to do. which was to design a matrix which listed the dozens of US agencies in Brazil, and what are the perks that each different agency gets. For example, some agencies had their schooling paid for, others didn’t, some got free shuttles to the Embassy, others didn’t. There were dozens of these. This is pre-computer days, so I took a couple of big pieces of poster board, and I listed all the government agencies that were in the country down one side.Across the top, I listed what the different perks were. I realized there's no commonality other than they received housing as a generic item. But there were so many different permutations of what everybody got. I basically took it to the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] and said I can't make any sense of this. Everybody has their own rules. It was an interesting problem and one with no solution. The DCM quickly realized that, too, and we just continued with the ad hoc arrangements.

About five months into the job, because I'm the GSO [General Services Officer], the first word is G, General, anything that comes up to get done. And we had a fairly large cafeteria at the embassy, managed by a Brazilian who was caught embezzling and was fired. The DCM comes to me and says, Ed, you take over, you need to manage the cafeteria? "What?" You know, no training at all!?? The cafeteria had six employees, full time employees, all Brazilian, so I had people there who knew how to cook meals and serve et cetera. But they've been losing money and not doing well, and I was told I needed to get it back to a break-even basis. Money and inventory control were the big issues, so I enlisted my wife, who had just delivered son number one, to help me out on this. I realized I'm paying the staff for eight hours a day and they really were working just four or so over lunch. My first idea was what if we expanded our service to include breakfast? The cost is literally just the bacon and eggs, because I'm already paying their salaries. We did that and it was very popular. Then it occurred to me that the staff were already providing hors d'oeuvres and finger food for the ambassador's official entertainment, because he lived at the embassy at this point. Since they're doing this, they can easily do it every day and sell it to other Embassy staff who have official entertaining responsibilities. We started a program where anyone in the embassy who wanted could purchase all these foods. As a result, we were making money for breakfast and in the afternoon, at no additional cost except for the food and we began to balance the books. In addition, my wife took charge of ordering food and receiving it, thus eliminating the possible theft and she also handled the cash register. I had to do that for a year and a half until I left.

On balance I learned a lot about how an Embassy functions and how State Department interacts. It wasn't a consular officer job, which most junior officers do on a first tour. And then I've got my next posting—

Q: Let me ask you, what did the admin section look like? That is—

FUGIT: Not much!

Q: —you report to it on up and—

FUGIT: Yeah, I had—

Q: Foreign Service nationals, were—

FUGIT: Not many.

We had in terms of Americans, the guy who was my supervisor who retired two weeks after I got there, he was replaced by a more competent officer. And then shortly after that, the admin counselor from Rio moved up to Brasilia. He's a senior Foreign Service Officer much senior to any Admin Officer who's up in the embassy then in terms of administration, so began to get some leadership at that point. The employees we had were the usual maintenance crews, et cetera. And they had decent supervision. We had an American who was an expat living in Brazil who was completely fluent in Portuguese,

and he was hired on a contract. He wasn't a GS US government employee, but he did manage all the staff, motor pool staff, et cetera. And he was very good. And he took a lot of the pressure off us because he could handle breakdowns in cars, housing, and appliances. He knew how to fix them. He knew where to get the parts. We had a woman who did travel. All these people worked well, especially when the admin councilor moved up. And the big project we had at that point was building the ambassador's residence at a site several miles away. I had no role in that as it was overseen by an officer from the Foreign Buildings Office of State. The temporary Embassy building we used looked like a cheap motel. It was one story, and it was built in a large rectangle. One of the big things that I didn't know until I got there is security. I mentioned I took this Post Security Officer course during my training. When I got there, you may recall, in 1969, the guerrillas in Brazil kidnapped U.S. Ambassador Elbrick who was held hostage and then finally released. There was a serious security problem there but we were rather lackadaisical about it. We didn't have serious security of the sort that is now commonplace. We had a big fence wall around the compound. And we hired Wackenhut to provide guards. And like most rented guards around the world, they were semi-useless. I mean, they stood there and while they looked like they knew what they were doing, they didn't and you just had to assume that before they ran away, they'd scream and alert us that something was happening. That was all you could expect. In fact, we had a dinner one night. The visitor was then Secretary Connally, Secretary of Treasury, and I heard a gunshot go off. I rushed up front and one of our guards had been fooling around with his pistol and shot himself in a very bad place. [Laughter] So yeah, that was the quality of what we had. And one of my jobs was supervising marine security guards.

Q: Now let me ask, looking at security. Did you have an RSO?

FUGIT: No.

We had a guy in Rio that was a RSO and who came up every two or three months for a few days. But he didn't move up until close to the end of my tour.

Q: Yeah. Did you have a Marine detachment?

FUGIT: Yes. One of my jobs was supervising Marines. And I didn't know a lot of the rules about use of the Marines. In fact, two of the things I did with them in Brasília I could probably be charged with a violation of regulations. As I learned the Marines job is not to protect people, their job is to protect the Embassy building, and to secure the cryptos, et cetera. Well, our ambassador was out jogging, and we got a tip from the Brazilian police, that the guerillas were coming after him. This is prior to when people had phones and the police were trying to get ahold of the security detail, he had a three-man Brazilian police detail with him full time. He's stuck out somewhere in a deserted area of Brasilia. I knew I had to do something, so I told the Marines to take two of their guys, armed with shotguns, and to go find the Ambassador and escort him back to the Embassy. The Gunny sergeant started to protest, and I said we must get him. The gunny is good. He had been in Vietnam as all the Marines there were, all guys had been in Vietnam and he saw the danger. He took a couple guys and went out, hooked up with

the Brazilian security detachment and escorted the ambassador back. Later I was told by a supervisor "You can't do that. You can't send them outside the building. They have no extra territorial authority. If something had happened, they could be arrested." I I said Oh, dar. I had no idea. You know, to me when I took the training post security officer meant nothing. And it was actually an important part of what I did. And we caught a marine stealing and his supervisor came down from Panama took them back for a general court martial. They were stealing liquor.

Q: Now again, how many Americans were there? Ron Scarret was the admin counselor at the time.

FUGIT: At the—towards—halfway through. Yes. He was the senior guy that came up from Rio. And he was quite good. And he brought one or two other people with him as the embassy realized they couldn't manage Brasilia from Rio anymore. And they had to move to Brasilia. So he came up and he was very effective.

One job I got was very interesting, we had to move all the classified files from Rio to Brasilia. Safes and all. So, the RSO says, we're going to put all the safes in this big truck, lock it up, and you and I are going to follow the truck from Rio to Brasilia, which is 1400 miles. It's probably two nights on the road and we're going to have to sleep pulled up to the back of the truck in our vehicle, so no one can get in the truck, without alerting us. The RSO had a permit to carry a weapon. I didn't have one. So anyway, we just did one trip. But the crown jewels were in that truck.

It was just interesting, nothing, nothing transpired. But we're sitting out in the middle of nowhere with all the classified stuff from a big American embassy. So that was an experience.

As I get towards the end of my tour, State says okay, because I speak Portuguese, we're sending you to Portuguese Africa to Angola. There was only a little bit I could read about it because again, you didn't have Google in those days. Basically, you can look it up in the encyclopedia and that was about it. Our son is a year and a half old at this point.

We return to the States for Home Leave and consultations. And we go from Washington to Lisbon, because Angola is then a colony of Portugal and I have two days to talk to a few people in the embassy. They couldn't care less because Luanda is a consulate general and reports to Washington, not Lisbon. We sort of coordinated with the embassy, but they didn't control our budget, personnel, or policy. We didn't report to them. Then after we do a couple of days in Portugal, we fly down on TAP Portuguese Airlines into Luanda. At the beginning this was in, I guess, April of 1973. Not much was going on there

There was a low-level guerilla war between three different liberation groups in Angola and the Portuguese. There was also a war in Mozambique with one large group fighting the Portuguese. Then in Guinea Bissau there was another group also fighting the Portuguese. These were all totally separate from each other but they all drained Portuguese resources. As I got there and began to investigate it a bit, the Portuguese were

clearly losing in Guinea Bissau. They didn't have the manpower; it was a swamp and there was absolutely no fiscal benefit to Portugal to remain there. Mozambique was a standoff. The Portuguese could hang on and there were enough natural resources that it made sense to do so. Angola, where I was, was different. Angola was suddenly very wealthy. About eight years before that, oil companies had discovered massive oil fields off the Angolan coast. And Chevron Oil, Gulf— Gulf Oil at the time, had the major contract with French owned Total and other oil companies also represented. This was a very big oil field. And in fact, as I learned from talking to some of the scientists that were there, it was an extension of the huge oil field off Nigeria. And that oil field extended south from Nigeria, under Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, down to Angola, and then disappeared underground, in Angola. All these oil finds were at sea and the companies at that point were only cracking the surface on what they could do with deep water exploration, both finding the oil and then drilling it. I mean, they were clear that this is a huge and potentially profitable field. This meant there was a significant American business presence in Angola. And the rigs were manned by Americans, mostly from Louisiana and Texas. They would rotate staff every three months. And because they had a lot of Americans there was a small International School run by the oil companies. .

The Consulate General consisted of five American employees: a Consul General, Econ-Commercial Officer, a secretary and a communicator. I was the combination GSO, consular officer and political officer. And we had a very nice office right in the harbor, which was one of the bigger harbors in Africa.

By this point, I understood how to do the admin work. We had a driver for the Consul General, and about three locally hired Portuguese staff. After I spent about a month or two there, I realized that the consular and admin work was not a full-time job. There were a few Portuguese who needed visas and the occasional American in trouble and some bookkeeping work paying bills etc. But these were very small potatoes.

I'm trying to think what can I do? Since I wanted to be a political officer as my career cone, I wondered how I could do it in a back-water post. It was hard because there was no political life in Angola. The country was governed from Lisbon. The Governor General was appointed. The people who ran the government for about 8-10 million people were all bureaucrats appointed from Lisbon. There weren’t any local political parties in Angola and Portugal was a dictatorship. There wasn’t any political opposition except from the three liberation movements fighting against Portuguese rule and they were barred from operating openly in Angola. I'm thinking that oh boy, there's not much of a political side.

But there was this incipient guerilla war going on. As I checked our files on what we had about these groups, and some of my predecessors had paid a bit of attention to what was going on. But it wasn't important to anybody in the US government outside Angola. I knew by that point that the embassy in Lisbon did not care. They never queried us as to what was going on with the war. The defense attaché in Lisbon, which was a big operation, because Portugal is a NATO member cared about Portugal and NATO, but he did not care about these wars going on in Africa. And the same thing with the CIA station

chief in Lisbon. For the entire two years I was in Angola, I never once had a contact from anyone at the embassy in Lisbon as to what was going on.

I realized that no one paid much interest to the guerilla conflicts. I thought this is something I can understand. It was only three and a half years since I had left Vietnam. I understand small unit warfare, so I decided to make myself the US expert on this obscure guerilla war. I contacted the Portuguese military High Command in Luanda and developed a couple of contacts at the Lieutenant Colonel level. I informed them that I am planning to travel around and visit the different zones where the fighting is going on. And it's true that seemingly nobody else cared- at first. It turned out that the South African consulate had a person who cared a lot. And later, he and I became good friends, because we were snooping on the same stuff. Anyway, I went out to the contested areas in the interior where fighting was going on. One was up in the north, which was between Luanda and Zaire. And the group there was the FNLA [National Liberation Front of Angola], which was representative of the ethnic group north of Luanda.

They were also a wholly owned subsidiary of the dictator in Zaire, Mobutu Sesse Seku. I think our CIA station in Kinshasa had a passing interest in what they did. At that time, 1973, Angola was the fourth largest coffee producer in the world and all these fields were in the FNLA war zone. I got to know some of the coffee growers, mainly of German background, and they're great sources of information on what's going on in the countryside, what the local population is thinking.

My next area of interest is the east. This was totally different topographically from the north. It was flat and open from all the way from Luanda into Zambia and Luanda down to Namibia. There wasn't much in the way of hills or anything else. And the east was where the group known as UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] was operating. And there, I would travel, and I would see US missionaries. There were a lot of American missionaries, either American citizens or other national citizens that were paid for by American churches. And part of my job was to stay in touch with the Americans who lived out there- providing passport services, reports of birth and death etc.

I tried to visit everybody at least once a year in each of these different mission stations. I quickly learned that what I wanted to do was go see the Protestants in mid-morning and mid-afternoon and go see the Catholics for lunch and dinner because the Catholics will offer you liquor whereas the Protestant missionaries are tea totalers. I would take some bottles of scotch with me, and sit down with some Catholic priests and doctors or whatever, and have some drinks and dinner and really get a feeling what was going on, amongst the people of the countryside.

It was clear the Portuguese authorities didn't fully know the feelings of the black majority (97% of the population was black). And I think they didn't care. There was almost no government schooling for blacks outside the few towns and cities except that provided by missionaries. As a result, the missionaries knew more about what was going on than anyone else.

The third group was MPLA [Peoples' Movement for the Liberation of Angola]. And they were located close to Luanda. They did not have the military freedom of operation that UNITA did, in the east or the FNLA in the north. However, in reality, all three of these groups put together weren't worth much militarily. The group in the north funded by Mobutu every now and then would lob a few rockets at Portuguese positions but it wasn't an effective force. I'll just give you an example. I went out, and I asked the Portuguese command, could go out and see one of your infantry companies in the field. They said okay, so we drove out. This was a Portuguese airborne company, an elite unit, and they were set up in the hills. I go for lunch, the lunch is stretched on to dinner. And it was a very liquid lunch, something you never see in the US Army, a lot of booze was used. I'm sitting there and talking to the company commander who's a captain about my age. And he'd been there a while. I said, look, we're sitting here, and I know there are guerrillas up in those hills, but you don't have any foxholes. You don't have any protection, sandbags, or anything else. He said, that's true but "They're not going to bother us", and he added "isn't it true that every country gets the quality of enemy it deserves?" Whoa, okay. Very interesting. What he was saying was, "Hey, we're not very good, but they're worse."

I started traveling frequently into the interior, the war zones. Vietnam it wasn't. I was going out on all these trips, talking to missionaries and businessmen. I also developed two contacts in the DGS [General Directorate for Security], which was the Portuguese secret police. They were always interesting. They clearly were not quite sure what this American was doing going around these rural areas. I explained, truthfully, that I was interested in what's going on with the war. I covered the wars periodically with reports to the State Department. In those days such lengthy reports were sent in by what were called Airgrams- which went by slow diplomatic pouch to Washington. In my first year, 1973, total Portuguese casualties in Angola were maybe 50 killed- small by comparison with Vietnam or the war in nearby Rhodesia. An occasional bomb went off, blew something up. an ambush, but not much else Now in Mozambique, the Portuguese were taking heavier casualties and up to Guinea Bissau, they were really being hammered, but not Angola. In my first year I sent these reports back to State Department but never had much feedback as we had no serious national interests in the Portuguese colonies.

To my absolute surprise, on April 25, 1974, The Portuguese army in Lisbon and in the colonies, staged a coup and overthrew the Salazar regime. That was a game changer for Angola and all of Southern Africa. It was a coordinated coup conducted by the uniformed armed forces against the civilian administration and the security services. Obviously, you want to get them out of the way. I had no inkling this was coming and two of my military contacts were directly involved- my failure. My primary secret police contact immediately fled. I ran into the guy five years later, doing intel work for the South African military in South Africa. Basically, South Africans rescued him, they got all their assets out of the country.

The coup happens. My primary contact, at the military headquarters, had been in on it from the beginning, but he didn't tip me off. Okay. He doesn't know if he wants to tip me

off because he probably figured I would tell the embassy and they would tell the secret police and that wouldn't be good.

I try to see him on the morning of the coup but can't. Of course, it's civil and political pandemonium because the military are still in the process of arresting all the provincial officials and sending them back to Lisbon. The military junta in control of Lisbon announced, among other things, that Portugal was going to decolonize and pull out of its possessions. Most people don't realize that Portugal had about 10 possessions, all sorts of islands in the Atlantic and east Asia. The junta announces a one-to-two-year timetable for ceding control over these territories. They want to turn it over to some political entity in each country.

As a result, the State Department becomes much more interested in what's going on with these guerrilla groups in Angola. At this early point the three guerrilla groups were still weak and they didn't have many weapons or troops and almost no money. These weren't the Vietcong. The Consul General at the time of the coup was Ted Briggs and his father had been a career ambassador. And Ted later became an ambassador.

With the advent of a free press in Angola literally dozens of political parties sprang up. All were representing white Portuguese settlers- no black parties. They sought to represent the 400,000 Portuguese in Angola, this is one of the biggest concentrations of European colonists in Africa, more than in Rhodesia, for example. I paid a little attention to them at first but realized that they were too small, weak, and unfunded to make a difference.

More importantly we had little insight into the guerilla groups. As 1974 continued, I spent a lot more time out there trying to figure out what was going on with these movements. The Portuguese junta was desperate to negotiate with somebody and they had opened lines of communication with the three liberation groups inside Angola. The Portuguese didn't want any more fighting, they wanted to hand power over to somebody. Their plan was that they would organize a peace conference of the three liberation movements and themselves and work out a deal handing it over to a coalition government.

The three groups in Angola were of different ethnic backgrounds and did not trust each other. They all thought they should rule the country. I was trying to figure out more about the capabilities of these organizations. I had seen them from the Portuguese perspective, but I had not managed to talk to them as they had no offices in Luanda.

One day in 1974 the Portuguese said to me, "Look, we're sending a chopper out to see Savimbi, the head of UNITA, you want to go out?" I didn't ask Washington; I just went, and we flew out there and we circled. I'm very adept from my time in helicopters in Vietnam at judging military positions from the air and figuring out where the enemy is. I looked down and I don't see anything. When we landed there was a large military base camp. UNITA had done a very professional job of camouflaging their operation. Now, what does that mean? For these groups in Angola that was more than I had expected.

UNITA had gun positions; everything was set up the way a good military would organize itself. And I was rather impressed when I walked around and I got to just look at things, figure out what they're up to.

I talked to some of the officers, and they were intelligent. Almost all of them had been educated in missionary schools because they came from that part of the country where there was no government presence to speak of.

On another occasion I drove down to the second biggest city in Angola, which is now called Huambo. I knew this was the heart of UNITA support. As I'm driving, I see a whole bunch of young men and they're standing, waiting in line going into this building, so I stop and look at it, and the building was the local UNITA headquarters. These were young men signing up to fight. This was one of the indicators to me that Savimbi and UNITA had some real popular support. There were offices in Huambo from the other two groups but nothing was going on there.

By this point, about the end of 1974 I became convinced that what was developing in Angola was a three-sided ethnic conflict. There was an ethnic group in the north, in the east and then around Luanda. All of them were ethnic based. Judging on what I had heard about their political positions it was clear that none of them had any intention to compromise. They were all growing a military base to fight for control of Angola. This was often the norm in Africa. For example- in the Rhodesian Liberation War then underway in nearby Rhodesia- later Zimbabwe- the two forces that fought against the Rhodesians were two different ethnic groups and the opposition to white rule in South Africa centered around two ethically based organizations. Well, the same thing was unfolding in Angola.

Ted Briggs left Luanda early in 1975 and Washington sent in replacement as Consul General who is also not an African specialist but is a Portuguese speaker. After he arrives, we get along well at the beginning. The Portuguese junta in Lisbon seem not to trust their commander in Angola so they send in a replacement. The replacement was soon known as the 'Red Admiral', Rosa Coutinho, and he, as it turns out, was somewhat to the left, which is probably why the left-leaning junta sent him. Over time the new Consul General and the Admiral developed a very good working relationship- which is normal.

Over months the Admiral sells my boss the favored Portuguese position, which is that the three liberation movements are gradually cooperating and will agree on a coalition government before the Portuguese leave in November, 1975. The Portuguese position is: we're going to solve this, we're going to get all three of the groups to work together and it'll be a very peaceful turnover and it's not going to become a civil war. Unfortunately, this is wishful thinking on the part of the Portuguese.

As this develops in early 1975 the pol-econ officer and myself become the proponents for the opposite argument: this is going to be one hell of a civil war. We have witnessed a couple of firefights between the different groups on the outskirts of Luanda, because the

Portuguese invited all three of them to put military forces in the capital under the theory that these contingents can be merged into the core of an a-political national army.

We watched and almost got involved in a couple of battles around Luanda and we got some pictures afterwards of atrocities that one side did to the other. This was all his ethnic based. I soon realized that these people really hate each other. As time passed my boss was more and more taken with the idea that these were only skirmishes and that there would be a political solution at the end of the day.

The other officer at the CG, Bruce Porter, is the Economic-Commercial Officer, he and I were on the other side of the argument from the CG. Bruce, I guess today, you would describe him as a techno nerd. He loved fiddling with electronics, and he had sent away to the states and ordered a multi-frequency radio spectrum scanner. That was a device, with antennas, and you could dial in the frequencies and this device will constantly scan five or six frequencies and then give you 30 seconds of the transmissions on each one, and then skip to another one or stay on the one you are on. Bruce dialed in some of the unencrypted frequencies for the Portuguese security forces, the border patrol, the police, and the military. He would sit at home and listen to what the Portuguese were telling themselves, what different Portuguese units were reporting back to police headquarters or to army headquarters. As a result, we were hearing the Portuguese talking about what was going on militarily.

We knew the three liberation groups were fighting each other but so far, in early 1975, there was no external involvement that we knew of at this point. But then we heard the Portuguese discuss some Cubans landing up the coast, not in Luanda harbor, in the area controlled by the MPLA. (in the political shorthand of the Angolan war, the MPLA was the pro-Communist faction, whereas Savimbi and UNITA was pro-Chinese faction, and Roberta and the FNLA was the pro-American faction. Those are stretching the definitions, but that's what the few people that cared about this reported on.)

Q: Now wait a minute—

FUGIT: Yup?

Q: —listening to this radio scanner that means it's all in Portuguese.

FUGIT: Yes, we both spoke Portuguese so we could listen to what they were saying, and we had an idea that was beginning to go on. Yeah, go ahead.

Q: Were you making reports to Washington, on the basis of some of this scanner information?

FUGIT: No. At the beginning, we were just gathering information, what the hell is going on? How are these groups evolving? These were part of an analysis. Also, we would drive around, and we'd go to their camps, go to their military and look at their sizes. What kind of weapons did they have? How trained were they? And then we'd watch the flow of

the fighting between the groups in and around Luanda- including twice on the streets where we lived. and it would go up and down.

After each outbreak of fighting the Portuguese would establish a truce and assure us that all was well. And soon thereafter the fighting would flare up again. The Portuguese were adamant that they could come up with a negotiated solution, which would have been great if they did, perhaps saving hundreds of thousands of lives. However, Bruce and I were saying the political and military situation is deteriorating. The CG [Consul General] was reporting one thing and then Bruce and I were saying something different based on what we were seeing and hearing. And at the end of the day the big picture is really all that matters.

In April 1975, it was time for our annual performance evaluations. The CG wrote a terrible evaluation for me that basically criticized my analysis of the situation. It was the kind of a comment that would change a career. Under Foreign Service rules I can comment on any aspect of the evaluation and that comment is included on the CG's evaluation and is also available to the Promotion Board. I availed myself of that provision and succinctly explained the difference in views between the CG and myself. Basically I said there was going to be a bloody civil war, not a negotiated compromise...

The evaluation was submitted in April and the board meets in August. You will recall that April, 1975 was also the month that Saigon fell. Washington is totally consumed by the collapse of Vietnam, and they couldn't care much about what's going on in this African colony. That's in April. By August, 1975, Angola was a front page story in the US as the civil war was in progress and there was ample evidence of Soviet involvement in supporting one of the liberation groups- MPLA. And the promotion board awarded me a promotion rather than low-ranking me.

After April we continued to get more fragmentary information about the presence of Cubans, military troops, not yet in huge numbers, we were never quite sure how numerous they were. And I could never find them. They were way out in the bush, not close to Luanda. I was not about to travel inside what was then MPLA territory as this was then quickly becoming a proxy battle in the cold war.

MPLA was the pro-Communist movement and still is, they still run the country now. Savimbi, who was known because he had been co-opted by the Chinese back in the 1960s and given some training, was mislabeled as pro-Chinese. However, the Chinese didn't put any resources into Angola that I've ever determined. And Holden Roberto of the FNLA was becoming known as the American's dog in the fight, which I was not aware of at the time but was to learn of several months later.

By June 1975, I was told that I was being transferred back to Washington that summer and would be the State Department's desk officer for Angola and Mozambique. This was a scheduled transfer and most third assignments are back in State.

Q: Was this during a period where you bid on jobs or—

FUGIT: —no, not technically, but you sort of let people know you're interested in being a political officer, you want to stay with commercial affairs or whatever. So wasn't a formal process—

Q:—You had a mentor, somewhere who—

FUGIT: —No I didn't actually. Later on, I found one, but I didn't have one at this point.

Anyway this kerfuffle between us and the Consul General gets more and more pronounced.
It reaches a head in May when the street fighting reaches the neighborhood where Bruce Porter and I live. We ask the CG to evacuate our families, but he declines so Bruce and I buy tickets for our families and fly them back to the US at personal expense. (We later get reimbursed.) I also got a replacement in July 1975.

Bruce Porter continues in Luanda, he had another six months to go in Angola and he is still knocking heads with the Consul General. And we just saw everything from totally different viewpoints as to what was likely to play out in the country. This wasn't just a policy issue, this was a question of accurately reporting on what's going on. I did a lot of reporting.

I got more and more informed with what was going on. I'll tell you one situation that happened that will show how close the fighting was to us. . The CG office was located in the port, which was obviously at sea level, and ringing Luanda port is a ridge line, about six 800 feet high all around the port. Well, our house was up on the ridge line, it was about three miles from the consulate and my wife, and two tiny sons were there. Beyond our house, you keep on going out into the countryside where the bases for the three liberation movements military forces were located. One day in May, my wife calls me at the port, and I can hear what she's hearing around the house. she said, "Ed they're shooting all over the place here." And I stupidly said—"Go up to the roof, I want you to tell me which direction the fire appears to be coming. Where is it hitting?" In reality I'm using my wife as a forward observer and she's telling me "Okay, yes, it’s coming from over here and is landing at such and such." And I could tell from her description which base is shooting and against whom. That night was when we and the Porters decided that we're going to evacuate our families ourselves as the Consul General will not authorize departure.

Another event, about the same week, was the outbreak of house to house fighting in our neighborhood. One group would sneak out and attack the other. We're not talking about sustained combat, but nevertheless deadly combat. One of the houses they were attacking was adjacent to Porter's residence and he was in the house with his wife and three kids. My wife could see Bruce's house, and she could see the troops coming along the street with small arms and they were shooting up the whole neighborhood. My wife talks to Bruce, describes the assault and he takes his family into the central hallway. There they

are safe from small arms fire. The shooting continues for about half an hour, then ends. He and his family are safe.

Q: What did the Portuguese expats in Angola respond to the April—

FUGIT: That's great I should put that in. When the coup happened, there wasn't any real opposition to it and public opinion in Portugal and Angola supported the coup and the restoration of democracy. The settlers in Angola, about 400,00, were content to stay. They were living very well, much better than they could live in Portugal. You're you ever served in Europe?

Q: No.

FUGIT: Okay. Well, one of the things about Portugal in those days, it was known as the Albania of Western Europe. It was a poor country. 500 years ago, it was a maritime power over the whole world. Well, it slipped. And the settlers had no desire to go back to what was a poor backwater. After Portugal turned over the island of São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea Bissau and Portuguese settlers there fled, public opinion began to shift. Then in July, 1975, Mozambique was turned over and a truly Marxist government took power and the 200,00 settlers fled as quickly as they could, in a month or so. And of course, all the Portuguese in Angola were paying attention to it and that's when it went from everybody is staying to everybody is leaving. The fear that the same thing happening in Mozambique, was going to happen in Angola is what motivated people.

Washington developed a policy in the summer of 1975 of the US government paying to evacuate Portuguese back to Portugal from Angola. The theory was that these people were strongly anti-Communist and would help keep the socialist faction inside Portugal under control. And in fact, it appears to have worked. Frank Carlucci I think was the ambassador in Lisbon then. So that happened in the summer of 75. So basically, what went from being "we can work with whoever wins to this is going to hell and I am leaving".

However the Portuguese commander in Angola, Rosa Coutinho still believed in his compromise policy, as did our Consul General, So that was the battle lines through the summer 1975.

Q: So people were—Portuguese were leaving—

FUGIT: Yes.

Q:—Angola.

FUGIT: They started leaving in April. I mean, we began to hear the under-swellings of opinion in January, February and then as Mozambique got worse and worse. The feeling of what became an actual mass panic sets in and public opinion becomes we're getting out of here. So—

People just suddenly leaving and leaving the car and leaving their house and belongings.

Yes. They just leave and they couldn't sell it to anybody. They just left the house, packed whatever they owned, got on the plane and then needed an immense amount of help when they landed in Lisbon.

One interesting additional responsibility I had during the entire two-year tour was assisting the US Navy in its regular deployments of pairs of destroyers from the Atlantic Fleet to the Mid-East Force in Bahrain. At this time the Suez Canal was closed to US shipping. This had been going on since 1968. The Navy sent two destroyers from the Atlantic Fleet, around Africa up to the Middle East. They did a three-month deployment and then were replaced. They refueled in Luanda as we did not want to have military contacts with apartheid South Africa. So they come down to Recife in Brazil, come across the South Atlantic to Luanda, refuel there, then go around South Africa, would not go into a South African ports, refuel in Lourenco Marques, (now Maputo) then go from there, up to Dar es Salaam and then into the Persian Gulf. Our job at the Consulate General was to refuel and replenish the vessels. The Navy would send us their requirements and I would contract with local ship chandlers. Luanda was a huge port, and there are companies that do such work for all the commercial vessels passing through. In addition, the Portuguese Navy would always offer a reception for the Americans on the naval base in Luanda and then our ships would offer their own reception but the difference being that the Portuguese had liquor, and our ships were dry

Q: So when did Bruce leave?

FUGIT: He left when we closed the consulate around November 10 when Portugal took down its flag and left without ceding control to any of the three liberation groups. Bruce and the rest of the staff returned to Washington and Bruce was soon posted to Barbados.

Q: Yeah, you want to break off here? Or—

FUGIT: Yeah, that's good. Because the whole thing about what happens in Washington is another chapter [Laughter] I'm surprised you connected Mary Lee Garrison with this time.

Q: Yes!

FUGIT: Yeah. She was a good lady. I'd forgotten about her!

Q: I say you knew you must have known her?

FUGIT: Oh, she was a staff aid to the Assistant Secretary. when I was there.

Q: Right.

FUGIT: And she worked for Assistant Secretary Davis. As I recall we worked together very well. Whatever happened, did you interview her? Or where did you run across that?

Q: That's in an ADST interview from somebody else.

FUGIT: Oh, somebody else did.

Q: An interview of her.

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: Today is the third of February, we're returning to our conversation with Ed Fugit. Ed, you were in the field in Angola. And now you've come back to Washington. How did you get this job?

FUGIT: In the springtime of 1975 and I was scheduled for transfer back to Washington. Angola was already becoming a major issue in the African area, but not beyond Africa. The Africa Bure really wanted to get somebody with experience to run the Angolan desk, and I was the only available candidate at the right grade. The desk officer job is relatively junior, an entry-level job in the State Department. It was a job that for many years, no one really cared about. I mean the Portuguese African colonies were a backwater. Not important for U.S. national security. At this time, I was well known to the African Bureau and the Southern African office, and they offered me the desk job. I accepted because it was in the political cone, which was where I wanted to spend my career.

In April or May, I officially got the desk officer assignment and then, in late June, early July, I transitioned out of Angola, fly back to the States. And the situation was in great turmoil at that point in Angola and Mozambique. I should add that I was also at that point to be the desk officer for Mozambique. However, within about a week of my arrival in State, the African Bureau took responsibility for Mozambique away from me. The rationale I was told was that Angola was a full-time responsibility- which quickly turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy. At that time there were no major U.S. national interests in Mozambique. Angola, on the other hand, was just festering.

By the late summer of 1975, the Portuguese couldn't come up with their long-promised deal to turn over power to some entity or coalition. The civil war was getting super-power attention. It was going to be a mess. That is what caused the African Bureau to determine they needed one officer full time on Angola. The other thing they did very quickly was to shift Angola from the Office of Southern African Affairs (AF/S) to the office of Central African Affairs (AF/C). The difference is that AF/C was largely focused on Zaire, ruled by a very pro-America despot named Mobutu. Thus, putting Angola in the Central African office made political sense. I didn't fully understand this at the time, this all becomes obvious to me a month or two later.

I became the Angolan desk officer in mid-August 1975. At this point, I have no idea how to be a desk officer. They didn't teach us that in the A-100. State needed some sort of a

training program for people coming in as country desk officers. In my case you show up, you sit down at your desk, and you start doing the work. And since you have no idea of everything you're supposed to do, all sorts of problems ensue for a junior officer. I came back to State seven years later as the South African desk officer. And that was so much easier because I knew the game. In 1975 I did not understand the job. And I made a couple of real goofs at the beginning.

As I settled in, I don't know the extent of the fighting that was then going on between Kissinger and the Assistant Secretary of the African Bureau. I was to find that out about a month and a half later. State did not have a policy on the Angolan situation at this point, at least one that I understood. We were relying on the Portuguese, because it's still their country that they're leaving, and it is their responsibility to turn it over to somebody. But Portugal was tired of this game and was more determined to leave than to find a peaceful solution. No Portuguese soldier wanted to be the last one to be killed in Angola. By this time the Portuguese army had absolutely no intention of militarily intervening and preventing anything from happening. They were just basically packing up their gear and going home. But they still controlled the process. They were the titular governing power. As a result, they had an endless series of summits and meetings between themselves and the three liberation movements. And we watched those with great, great interest.

We got the readouts from the Portuguese as to what was going on in these meetings. And like all politicians, they're always hopeful that they can cut a deal. This was in August of '75. I did not know the ground rules. How do you deal with the press, for example? Well, I found out how not to deal with the press. I received all sorts of phone calls, Angola becoming a huge public issue. Journalists tasked to cover the Angolan story would regularly call or visit me to get briefed. It took me a few weeks and some public embarrassment to understand and use “off the record” briefings.

Q: Let me take a break here. Can you describe the office setup? Who is the deputy that you're dealing with?

FUGIT: I think it was Ed Marks.

Q: That’s what we got here. And who was the office director? You remember? Well, maybe we can look that up.

FUGIT: I'm sitting down here in a lowly desk officer job. I never saw the Assistant Secretary; I never even saw the deputy assistant. At this point I'm just dealing with the deputy office director. And I really don't have that much to do. And I'm not quite sure what our policy is. We're sending messages, getting a lot of input from Lisbon and Luanda as to what's happening on the ground out there. I do briefing memos and send them up to more senior individuals. But I have no idea that Secretary Kissinger is involved in any of this. And I didn't know that a plan had been approved for the US to provide military and financial assistance to two of the liberation groups- FNLA and UNITA. I think the Assistant Secretary knew but I don't know if anybody else below him did, it was very closely held.

I certainly had absolutely no idea, no inkling that at this point, we were beginning to reach out to the two liberation movements to provide them assistance through Zaire, and to a lesser degree through Zambia. My ignorance goes on for most of August into early September. And the situation is getting worse in the field. The Portuguese informed us that they are turning over control of the country to somebody on the 11th of November, we're not sure who it is yet.. The Portuguese are telling us they are hopeful they can get a deal. With the Portuguese Army now essentially unable to provide public security, anybody who's still there is at risk. That includes the growing staff at our Consulate General.

As a result we're starting to plan on pulling our staff out. But we don't act because we don't know if the Portuguese are going to pull a rabbit out of a hat and come up with an agreement. This is totally unprecedented in terms of African decolonization, where you've got a colonial power that's leaving and not turning over control to somebody. Every other colonial power turned over control to somebody, good or bad. Portugal can't.

In mid-September, one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries called me in and said we want you to go up and meet the Secretary and some of his senior staff. I go up to the seventh floor, where all the senior officials work, which, in a normal situation desk officers never see. Unfortunately, I don't have a clear recollection of exactly what was said. I was brought in, and some of the staff aides spoke with me. I didn't initially meet with Kissinger. The aides said we've been reading your reports and we want to read you in on what's going on.

I knew approximately what that meant but I didn't realize what it was going to entail. Then they brought in two people who read me the outlines of the program that had been approved for covert action in Angola. They just said they wanted me to be aware of it. At that point, they didn't ask me to do anything just to understand that this was underway and to know that almost nobody in the African Bureau was aware of it.

This course changed the whole game. Because up to this point, I had no idea what our policy was. And now they're telling me, Okay, basically, we the U.S. is interested in supporting two of these two groups, FNLA, and UNITA against the third group, MPLA. This is post-Vietnam and Watergate and the rules on covert operations are much more stringent and under Congressional oversight more than heretofore. The small group of folks that were privy to those briefings were aware that there was a covert plan underway for Angola.

There were a couple of aspects to it. I was told that a senior officer and myself were to be State's representatives to a committee to manage this operation, in conjunction with military reps and others. So the senior rep and I would go over monthly to coordinate the policy side of the operation. Where, politically, it was going, who was getting the money?

Q: Let me break in here. When you were at post and talking about the radio scanner, yeah. You were saying you could see Cubans come in and were associated with them. So,

the other two groups are of interest to us, because we want to stop the MPLA and the Cubans, right? I mean, the Cuban factor was a major factor.

FUGIT: Oh, absolutely. It was. I'll get into this in a minute because the— when I get this briefing, and again, none of this occurs to me instinctively at the moment, it occurs to me a month or two months later. And I'm sort of encapsulating what happens from early September until November. And it wasn't a eureka moment, it wasn't, it was a series of these. But I realized, okay, we're opposed to the MPLA because they have been traditionally supported by Moscow. Moscow gave them money and weapons. In 1974 they were not an effective guerrilla group against the Portuguese, because they had no territorial base in Angola. whereas the other two groups did. Now on the other hand, MPLA had a lot of popular support amongst the people in Luanda and the northeast. These were much more educated as the Portuguese ran schools in this region for the African people. The MPLA was known to the Portuguese as the mulatto party. Mulatto is a mixture of white and black, which was very common in southern Africa. They were concentrated around Luanda, and at the end of the day, that geographical quirk was what determined who won the civil war.

Regarding the Cubans, we didn't see them coming, we heard that they were coming and what they were doing, we had no good idea how many, where they came from, where they were being garrisoned. I mean, basically, it's a little bit of information we picked up on the scanner that they were there. And the Portuguese were telling themselves that the Cubans were coming around, then Cuba became a big issue in this whole story in a few moments.

When I first started in August, to me, this was an African problem, as it was to everybody in the African Bureau. It's another civil war in Africa, not uncommon. Even after I got read in early September to the covert program and when I started taking notes for Kissinger and talking to him. It didn't occur to me immediately what his thinking process was, and this is critical to everything that happens. He did not see it as an African problem. He saw it as a containment issue against the USSR.

The background to his thinking is critical. It became clear to me over the next six, seven weeks that this happened six months after the fall of Saigon. It happened a year after Nixon left office, the U.S. presidency is in disarray. The U.S. militarily and politically is probably its weakest point, post-World War Two. There was the Congress that had just been elected, was very much very liberal, and they weren't supportive of military actions or clandestine operations. That was to be proved out in about two months. But Kissinger saw this in terms of our relationship with Moscow and the U.S. containment policy. Because to him it wasn't just Angola. I was looking at it as just Angola. But no, it also was Ethiopia. There was a takeover there by pro-Moscow forces that threatened our bases there. Then you have Mozambique, which is now independent and taking a very pro-Moscow line.

These events were seen by Kissinger as part of an attempt by the Soviets, who sensed a weakness in Washington. He was convinced, and I began to agree, that's what their effort

was. Moscow was trying to leap over the barrier of US containment by undermining the US position wherever they could. Angola/Ethiopia/Mozambique were not important to Moscow any more than they were important to Kissinger, rather they were a pawn in the great power competition. And that was to play out. I realized this is more than just an African civil war. And this is an issue Kissinger wants to stop the Soviet Union from being able to use to break out of containment. So that affected how I addressed these issues because he wanted something done about it.

Soon we got instructions from Kissinger to try to marshal as many allies as we could in Africa. Now, on paper, many of these African governments were socialists and again, that meant nothing, but they had the aura that they were anti-imperialist, and nonaligned. But Kissinger understood that there were pragmatic leaders in many of these countries, and we could get some of their support. Of particular importance was the president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda. At this point in African history, most of your heads of state were revered leaders of the anti-colonial movement that pushed the British, French, Belgians and now the Portuguese out of Africa.

Kissinger was able to obtain support from Kaunda, to allow U.S. support to flow into Zambia and into Angola to support UNITA. He already had Mobutu on board in Zaire to support FNLA. We now had a springboard for action. And beginning in September, we're able to build up an operation where we can support UNITA and FNLA in the field. There's fighting going on around the country at this point. Basically smaller groups about fifty to a hundred as each group tries to define its area of control. We're not talking about thousands of troops for the most part, we're talking about small groups, poorly led, poorly armed. It was hard for us to figure out which group is ascendant or who's likely to end up on top and that's what Kissinger wanted to know. But based on the geography, I had drawn up a map of the ethnic composition of Angola. And most of the early fighting was on the perimeters of each group's ethic base.

By mid-late September South Africa introduced forces into Angola. It is obviously a big player in southern Africa, militarily, politically, economically. But we in the African Bureau basically did not want to deal with it then. And they were coming up from the south from Namibia, Southwest Africa. They had two columns of troops, I think about two or three thousand that were coming up at this point. They weren't fighting anybody because the area they were traversing was controlled by UNITA, now their ally.

Roberto and FNLA started moving troops into Angola in numbers from Zaire. The situation was pointing to several major battles before the November 10 Independence Day. The big event that turned the tables on everything was a battle in early November. The battle between the MPLA and the Cubans coming north from Luanda and Holden Roberto and his troops coming south from Zaire. Everyone understood this was the consequential battle of the war. The winner could then claim to move into Luanda and take over on November 10.

By this point, the Cuban forces were getting much more numerous and bringing in heavier weapons, particularly 122MM rockets and light armored cars. The rockets were

known as Stalin Organs and had been a mainstay of Soviet and proxy forces since WWII. They become the critical weapon in the whole story. Roberto had support from the Zairian army, including two North Korean artillery pieces, huge artillery pieces in excess of 175 MM. The biggest we had in the U.S. Army at the time was 175 MM. These were slightly bigger, but they were North Korean, and they required a significant level of sophistication and training. As we later were to find out that the FNLA or the Zairians did not possess such skills. While the FNLA artillery had a much greater range than the Stalin Organs and could easily have won the battle, if you can't actually fire the guns, they aren't much good. The FNLA overloaded powder in their guns and when they fired the first round it exploded in the barrel, killing many and completely demoralizing the FNLA forces. They promptly retreated and the MPLA bombarded them with their lighter but functioning Stalin Organs. Game Over! As an aside I had personal experience of being bombarded by Stalin Organs while in Vietnam, but they aren't too accurate.

Q: Vietnam is more like a—

FUGIT: So that was the end of the battle and basically the end of the FNLA as a political and military factor. The Stalin Organs created a panic amongst the FNLA troops. They headed north out of the fighting area. As a result, the MPLA won the battle. And in fact, that was ultimately the battle they won the war, although years of fighting remained.

In the next week, the Portuguese were turning over power. They didn't turn them over to the MPLA, rather the MPLA took it. As a result, the US needed to make a decision. Are we going to keep our staff in Luanda or not? Kissinger was not prepared to accept an MPLA/Soviet victory. and did not want to leave our people in a risky situation in Luanda, and they were then pulled out as best we could. There were some planes still flying in there.

Q: Who was left in the Angola mission at this time?

FUGIT: At that time, there were eight or nine US personnel and we got them out by air. The Portuguese had two naval ships in the harbor, they took the flag down, got on the ships and literally just sailed away. MPLA then put their flag up, said we run the country. Now, at this point, UNITA had not been involved in the fighting in the north and never cooperated with FNLA. And as I would find out, this was normal amongst African liberation movements, who did not work with one another.

UNITA was still a factor in the center and south, they hadn't been affected at all by the victory up in the north. In reality they control a lot of the country. But the MPLA, because they predominated in the area around the capital, was able to establish itself as the government. But UNITA at this point was then getting more help from the South Africans in terms of advice and military support. The South Africans then engaged— this would be after independence— like mid to late November, on the ground against the MPLA/Cubans south of Luanda. However, the combined South African/UNITA force did not do very well. Part of the reason was the South Africans had not prepared for a war. The last war they fought was in the desert in North Africa against Rommel, about

thirty years before. Their artillery, such as it was, for example, was short range, desert artillery from WWII and it didn't work well. Again, the Cuban missiles could outrange them. Now the South African retreated but neither they nor UNITA panicked and conducted an orderly retreat. But they also could not close with the Cubans.

So basically, the MPLA won in the north, and had a constructive stalemate in the south. That was the situation we're looking at in Washington. What do we do, we still have this money. Some people still wanted to support FNLA. But I think they just weren't any good. Numerically and geographically, they weren't very large. UNITA had a large area of control, maybe half or two thirds of the countryside. And so we started giving them more support. But they did not have the wherewithal in numbers or equipment to take Luanda, which was predominantly of a different ethnic mix. UNITA, with South African support. tried several times over the next couple of years, they conducted major offenses. But they would get about one hundred miles from Luanda, which was the northern extent of their ethnic advantage, and their drives would stop. They had no support north of those lines, and they were cut off. So basically, the fighting over the next several years was based on territorial control of an ethnic group. And FNLA gradually just faded out of existence.

In late 1975 we continued to support UNITA. The FNLA had wanted to hire mercenaries, because it was a tried and true recipe in Africa for these kinds of wars, that you could get in a couple of dozen mercenaries who had some mobility, and they could have a major impact on the fight. It was approved but the condition was there were to be no Americans. Well, the FNLA did just that, hiring three Americans and at least a dozen Brits or Irish or Australians or whatever. They joined the FNLA in the north, but they were captured by the MPLA in February. And basically, none of them even put up a fight. They were just deployed, and the FNLA couldn't protect them, and they were captured. This became a bigger issue in 1976.

So that was the battle that was going on politically. Working with Kissinger, we were still trying to get support, to get Western governments to help. But really, though, there wasn't much that others wanted to do. Then the wheels fell off in December 1975. As far as I could tell him, this happens in Washington. It was an issue within the Senate Democratic Caucus. The newspapers began to report about the covert operation that we were doing. I would not comment on it, although the press called me incessantly. The Democrats see this as an opportunity to hobble Kissinger. They also don't want another covert war going on. The fighting inside the Democratic Party, who was going to be very anti-CIA, was intense. Anyway, they decided that they would ask for a vote inside the Senate to end the covert assistance program. And it sailed through rather quickly. And when it did, we were essentially out of business in terms of supporting the liberation groups. Kissinger's position, ever since September, had been, you need to have facts on the table. That was his words, facts on the table meant tangible support to these groups. Without that they weren't going to be able to survive. So suddenly, the facts on the table were removed. The Democrats said no to covert assistance. They had the votes, and it was closed.

We thought we had to wind up the operation. Apparently, there's a gentleman's rule in these kinds of situations. That if you drop a group that you've been supporting, you give them “blood money”. They can then wrap up their operation and go into splendid exile somewhere. There was a payment to UNITA, thinking they would go quietly into the night. They didn’t. They took the money and used it to continue their struggle. And the war continues, without direct U.S. support from December onward. Politically, we supported UNITA, we indicated we do not want the MPLA in power or to recognize them as the government of Angola. And we still had quiet support from several African leaders, who did not like the idea of a Marxist government in Mozambique on one side and Angola the other. That gets us to late December. I'm thinking, we've lost, we don't have the facts on the table that Kissinger wanted. I did not think that UNITA was going to stay in the fight. And it only became obvious to us over January, February, March that they were in fact still in the game.

Then we get into January, Kissinger going to Moscow, and this is very unusual. I had been working closely with him for five months. I was note taker at most of the senior meetings. He would give us instructions on what to do. I would write up cables. I would take them up to his staff aides. Kissinger would tell his aides what he wanted, they would instruct me and I would carry them out.

As an aside there is an interesting story.

I was instructed to go to Kissinger’s office for his meeting with the West German Ambassador. As I entered the two were speaking in German, They shifted to English for my benefit. Kissinger asks me to explain how the FNLA lost the big battle with the MPLA/Cubans. I mentioned to the Ambassador how the Cubans employed this rocket weapon called the “Stalin Organ”. And the Ambassador said “Please stop. I fought on the Eastern Front and World War Two, I know what a Stalin Organ is.” It's just sort of rather interesting.

In January I'm thinking we're closing up shop, but we're not actually. Kissinger is going to Moscow in February, and I think it was twice a year that he had meetings with Gromyko. These were three or four day meetings, they covered the entire world. U.S.-Soviet relations, regional situations, etc. I was told Kissinger wanted me to attend. I've never been to Moscow before, certainly never been any place as cold as that. After arrival I was told to only attend the fourth day of the talks, when Kissinger wanted to bring up Angola. The sessions were being held at the ambassador's residence,
I arrive but have no idea how such meetings work. It's totally out of my league. I walk in, and there's about, let's say, twenty, twenty-five people milling around and I join them.

I go to sit at the end of the table, as I am clearly the most junior person there. But Kissinger motions for me to sit next to him. I don't know what the protocol is or anything else. He tells me ‘Mr. Fugit? When the Foreign Secretary talks about Angola, I want you to interrupt, and you describe what the Cubans and Russian money has done in Angola because they want to deny it. And that had been the case all along Russia said no, we never did anything. Well, that wasn't true”. It was clear Kissinger wanted to hammer

home the point that the Soviet's exceeded the normal rules on supporting third world conflicts. Kissinger said to Gromyko. Mr. Secretary, I want to talk about Angola. Gromyko says no, he will not discuss it and stares at Kissinger, offering no further elaboration. Kissinger twice tried to raise Angola and Gromyko said no.

There I am ready for my big chance next to Kissinger. And I don't get to say a word because the subject was not brought up. I was prepared to cite all the instances of Cuban military intervention and Soviet support for MPLA.

We return to Washington to pick up the pieces. of the now failed Angolan policy. But Kissinger was not going to recognize the MPLA. And we continued, we did not recognize anybody else, we didn't recognize UNITA either. We accepted that Angola was independent, but not the government who was running the country.

As we went on in 1976 we're fighting a rearguard action. We didn't have any means to really influence the outcome. Surprisingly, Savimbe and his UNITA were doing much better than we suspected but he was doing it partly with help from the South Africans. The South Africans were forced to pull back their forces from Angola. But they can easily provide support to UNITA coming from Zambia or Southwest Africa. As far as I know, we were not complicit in asking South Africa to do it. This was very much in South Africa's interest. They did not want a second antagonistic neighbor. They already had Mozambique, and they did not want one in Angola from which the guerilla movement in Namibia SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) could use as a base to attack South Africa in Namibia.

The American mercenaries captured in northern Angola became my primary focus for most of 1976. These mercenaries were recruited in Europe and flown to Zaire and quickly pushed to the front lines. They didn't have the kind of mercenary commander that one needed to make a difference. These were just trigger pullers and trigger pullers without leadership are worthless. And that's what they were. I did not know there were Americans with FNLA. Once they were captured it became a huge news story around the world. They were all soon charged in Luanda with mercenary activity and capital offenses.

There was a trial in Luanda, in June 1976. Now, because there were Americans involved, and we, as a government, never provide legal representation for non-official Americans abroad, no matter what the charge, they were on their own for legal defense. The Angolan government provided them with defense attorneys. But the trial was cut and dried. It lasted, I think, four or five days. And everybody, Americans, and Brits, was convicted of one thing or another. An American named Daniel Gearhart was selected from the three Americans prisoners, sort of at random, and was sentenced to death. I believe the MPLA felt they needed to execute some of the mercenaries, and they chose two or three of the Brits, and one American. Gearhart was no more guilty than the other two who were given prison sentences. We tried to mount a political and public relations campaign to seek clemency, which I was in charge of. I stayed in touch with his wife, and I would tell her what we knew. Because basically what I was getting at the time, for the most part was

what's in the newspapers. We had no embassy there, no consulate there, no way of representing him.

We mounted a public relations campaign trying to get heads of state in the UN and others to plead for clemency. Give them a long sentence, don't execute them. The government in Luanda played that for all it was worth, but it was clear that they were going to go ahead, they would execute somebody. And I think maybe a week or two after the trial was over, they executed just one American and I think three Brits. We arranged to have his remains shipped back to the U.S. and give it to the family. And the other two stayed in jail until 1982, then released. His death was a rather sad ending for me, because I was in regular contact with his wife and he had two kids or three kids, they were very young. He should never have gone over there. He had no idea where he was going, what he's getting into.

Anyway, we continue the effort to support UNITA politically. And Kissinger went on to other things in terms of Africa. Up until that point, Kissinger had not paid much attention to Africa. But then for the last nine months of the Ford administration, he became involved in the effort to get the Rhodesians to negotiate a power sharing arrangement with the two liberation movements that were fighting in Rhodesia. On this the Brits had the lead. But Kissinger was very much involved in this.

AS we went on through 1976, other than the execution of Gearhart, I was not too busy.We had closed the consulates general, there was nothing else going on. We gave up our lease on the property in Luanda. This period from September 1975, through February of 1976, was by far the most difficult in my Foreign Service career and in my family life. I was working fourteen hours every day, at least six and often seven days a week. It got so bad that I was temporarily given a coveted parking pass in the basement of State, which was a godsend. However, my wife and two little kids (4 and 1) were surviving out in Gaithersburg with no car. We both regard this time as the most difficult in 50 plus years of marriage

My work routine was intense and time demanding. The process would take me all day to come up with these numerous instruction cables, papers and get the needed clearances. Then I took it up to Kissinger's guys who would say yes, but you've got this, this and this wrong- anywhere from policy to format to typos These were the days before you had computers, so you had to retype the whole document. Often, I was in the office until late at night, most nights getting these instructions out to the field. Many nights I didn’t go home but instead slept in my office. The rhythm of the work was extremely difficult and I felt guilty at the pressure my wife and kids faced as well. It was a terrible winter. And, you know, I wouldn't want to wish that on anybody. It was a challenging, draining and interesting job. Boy. It was rough.

Q: Let me go back a little bit. You said you worked with Frank Wisner. What was his position at the time?

FUGIT: I can't remember? No, I don't remember what it was. He may have been working on the seventh floor around Kissinger and doing something that I can't recall. I know he

was very respected at the CIA since his father had been an early leader in that organization. Working with him was a blessing as he knew so much more than I about how to work inside the system. He knew what he was doing, and I didn't. And I was in these meetings, and I didn't know what to say or how to say it. But he was a much stronger personality than I was. And he was, as I said, well known. He was senior to me and he was key in much of what happened probably in ways that I'll never understand. He's very effective at what he does. Later on, he was Ambassador in India for four years when I was in Pakistan. And I mean, he was good. He was professional at what he did. Also, he was extremely well connected in Washington, because of his father and mother.

Q: Well, we've taken this tour through 1976.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: In June of 1976. The Soweto Riots start breaking out, I presume, that totally dominates the African Bureau focus.

FUGIT: Yes. Right. And we were, at that point, our policy towards South Africa had not developed as fully as it did in a year or two. We considered them a pariah. We did not have military contacts with them. We still kept our embassy and three consulates in South Africa because they want to keep contact with the black, colored and Indian populations. And we want to be aware of what public opinion was inside South Africa at the time. And I ended up going there, to get to that in a little bit. But yes, Soweto, the riots happened. That's a big thing. It gets world attention. Kissinger was caught off guard initially with it and did not realize its significance, again, he's not an Africanist. And I don't think he recognized the degree to which apartheid South Africa was held in disdain by almost everybody. However he was willing to , at least acknowledge their operations in Angola, I don't believe he encouraged it. In the sense of telling him to do this or do that, but he certainly didn't discourage it. South Africans were there and they played a role. They didn't play enough of a role to bring about victory for UNITA at any point down the road, we'll get into it here.

By the early 1980s, the South Africans were still supporting Savimbi. However UNITA just couldn't finish the job of getting forces into Luanda. due to Cuban military support and the limitations of their ethnic area of control that did not include the capital. South Africa wanted to keep things in turmoil in Angola, because that reduced the MPLA's ability to use Angola as a springboard against South Africa. And as it turns out, over the years, the ANC (African National Congress), which was the leading black liberation movement in South Africa, was then based in Angola starting probably '76, '77, '78. But from Angola to South Africa it's a good 800 miles of desert. As a result, the ANC during this period, never amounted militarily to a threat to the South African government. It did amount to a political threat. And it was very successful in marshaling world support for condemnation of South Africa.

Q : Speaking of laying the ground. There was an American presidential election in November, and the Republicans lost, the Democrats won. Normally at this time at the

State Department. You sit down and prepare transition papers for the new people coming in. How did that work out for AFC?

FUGIT: Okay, it was interesting, especially where Wisner was involved. I can't remember his position. But when control switched, so did Wisner. He had long standing ties to the Democrats- as well as Republicans. As for myself I just remember doing one position paper about Angola. I'm not sure the group coming in really cared. These kinds of papers being written by the outgoing administration are probably considered suspect anyway.

At this point, as you get into later 1976 I get a phone call from the Consul General in Durban, South Africa, who's an officer that I had known five years previously? He offered me a job as his deputy. By this point, I knew Africa was where I was going to be cutting my teeth as a political officer. So that sounded like a good thing to do. And it will get me and my family out of Washington right now. And the AF Bureau was wanting to let me go. There wasn't anything more to do on Angola. In any case, it was pretty much finished in terms of US policy. So I leave, actually wheels up on Inauguration Day, January 20. And South Africa will not be anywhere near as convoluted or interesting as the Angolan situation was.

Q: Now do you want to stop here and pick up on Durban?

FUGIT: I mean, that's a good idea as it's totally a separate thing. You're getting into apartheid.

The CG in Durban was small, just a Principal Officer, a pol/economic officer (me), a consular officer, a USIS officer and a secretary/communicator. Our consular district included the South African province of Natal. Natal was the home of most of the English-speaking white South Africans as well as the homeland of the Zulu tribe, which was the largest single tribe in South Africa.

Politically the CG himself death with white politics, which no longer mattered as much as it had before since the Afrikaans speaking whites controlled all the levers of central power- English speakers were almost irrelevant.

I was assigned to monitor and understand the Zulus, who were a growing political force. My boss retained contact with the powerful Zulu leader Gatsha Buthelezi. while I dealt with all other Zulu leaders and politically active blacks in Natal. It was an excellent division of labor that I benefited from.

Being a white in South Africa was superficially enjoyable- good standard of living, servants, great climate. But the reality for my wife and I was quite different as we quickly became aware of the brutal realities of apartheid. The non-white population, that included blacks, Indians and ” coloreds” was systematically oppressed. And since I worked closely with blacks, I quickly felt the oppression they experienced.

One example- of hundreds- happened soon after we settled in. Our nanny, a Zulu, was taking our five-year-old to a lovely park. But she was afraid to sit on any benches as, until a few months ago, they bore signs "Whites Only". She now could legally sit there but was deathly afraid to do so. Also there was an 8PM curfew for blacks to be inside or out of the white areas, under pain of arrest.

Based on standing Embassy instructions we were charged with hosting and attending as many inter-racial social and political events as possible. We could host integrated events in our homes but could not hold them in public places, like hotels or restaurants, though within a year this rule was relaxed to allow events in 5-star hotels. The stupidity of it.

Working closely with our USIS officer we became very familiar with Zulu culture and politics. We traveled frequently up to Ulundi, the capital of the Zulu homeland of KwaZulu. We cultivated the senior Zulu leaders and up and comers and were able to send several on USIS-sponsored trips to the US. In fact he and I sought to learn some Zulu and hired a politically active Zulu lady to teach us. This was a nice idea but Zulu is a difficult language and basically we just learned some polite phrases.

One of our policy focuses was to keep urging the Zulus not to accept nominal "independence" from South Africa as two other black homelands had done. This idea of splitting off the various black tribes into independent states would eventually leave the whites as a majority in a rump South Africa. As the Zulus were the largest black tribe, it would be a significant victory if they accepted the offer. In reality the Zulu leadership was dead set against it, as they figured they would fare better as the largest bloc in a truly multi-racial South Africa.

By 1977 you were seeing indications of small-scale military incursions into South Africa from Mozambique. Since I had experience with such tactics I made it a point to understand the evolving situation in the northern part of Natal, on its border with Mozambique. Since there were several American sponsored missions/schools in this rural area I made it a point to regularly call on them and they were an excellent source of basic information on the attitudes of the black population.

On my first trip up north I called on the head of the South African Army's regional headquarters, since I knew they would be very inquisitive as to what I was up to. As I left his office I ran into a South African major and we realized we knew each other. He had been my primary contact in the Portuguese Secret Police in the northern region of Angola three years previously. He disappeared the morning of the Portuguese coup in April 1974. In fact, he and his family, and many other police assets, had been spirited out of Angola by the South Africans.

We met for a long dinner with much cognac. He filled me in on what happened to him and the offer the South Africans had made him to join their forces as a translator and recruiter of agents from within Mozambique. It was very, very informative for me. Since he had known what I did in Angola he assumed I was up to the same things now. We

stayed in touch during the remainder of my tour in Natal- and I am sure he and the security service were monitoring my contacts and travels.

There were two intelligence related events that I was involved in during my tour in Durban. First was the attempt by the Rhodesian government to ship in through Durban port 10 illegally purchased old US Army Huey helicopters. We were alerted that they were coming and had a ship's name. I located the ship, but the cargo was all covered in tarps. Then during a wind storm the tarps were disturbed and I was able to get some photos of the choppers. The next morning, they were gone and showed up in Rhodesia in a few days.

We also closely monitored the South African naval base in Durban, which I could clearly see from our 28th floor office overlooking the port. We were able to photograph two sensitive weapons systems deployed there and reported them to Washington.

Our main focus during those years was to push the white government to liberalize relations with the non-white groups. Because of the 1976 Soweto riots and the 1977 murder of ANC leader Steve Biko by the South African police, the regime was under increasing international pressure to move towards majority rule. They resented the trade and sports restrictions so they began some small steps to appear responsive to the pressure.

The policy of the US Embassy was to push the government to do more but to also verify that they were living up to their promises. I was the "tester" in Duran as my job was following black politics. There were dozens of these gestures by the government but here are two that will show the nature of what I was doing.

First, the government said that whites and blacks could meet socially in hotel restaurants. To do this, diplomats needed permission of the Foreign Ministry and the hotel needed police approval. There was a black activist I was wanting to meet who lived in rural KwaZulu. Both the hotel owner and I applied for and a week later received permission to meet at breakfast. But the hotel owner said his permission required the stipulation that we could not dance! True story.

The somewhat happy outcome was not only that we "integrated" this hotel but that the black kitchen and wait staff were flabbergasted to see a black eating in the hotel. But within months such meetings were commonplace, though they had no impact of the real apartheid problem.

The other event was to test a rule change that allowed Indian doctors to practice in formerly all-white hospitals. As it turned out my 4-year-old had tonsillitis and I arranged with a politically active Indian doctor who we knew well to do the surgery in the white hospital. But the hospital administration wasn't too keen on this so when we dropped the boy off at 6:30 he was placed last in line and wasn't operated on until late afternoon. We made our point but my little son did not like the long wait.

These were marginal victories and my wife and I became discouraged at the slow pace and disheartened at the impact of apartheid on the entire society. We could well have extended our tour a year but we both decided it was time to leave in early 1979.

Q: Today is 19 of February. We're returning to our conversation with Ed Fugit. Ed, you were just telling us how you got the next tour to Brussels after—

FUGIT: Durbin.

Q: —Durbin, South Africa.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: How did that come up?

FUGIT: My tour was coming to an end. First, Washington said, "Okay, we're assigning you to Tehran. And with Farsi language training." Well, that was a really bad idea. I have trouble with Romance languages. I would still be in FSI [Foreign Service Institute] trying to learn Farsi, now, forty years later. So, then things went bad in Tehran, and they dropped it. And then the AF Bureau [Bureau of African Affairs] came in and said, "Look, would you like the job as the Africa watcher in Brussels?" And I thought that was great. I think everybody deserves one European tour. When you join the foreign service, it should give you a little chit, you put your personnel file, and you can play it at any point in your career to get a European assignment. Just because that's the way most people visualize the Foreign Service, is the cocktail party circuit in Europe. So, anyway, I got the boss's assignment and concluded six months of French language training back at FSI. I take my wife, two little kids, and go back to Washington. The usual drill, find some temporary housing for six months, et cetera, and then go out to Belgium in the summer of '79. I think August, early September.

Q: Now, let me ask you this. What was your expectation, before you arrived at post, as to what the duties were?

FUGIT: By this point, I was enough of an African hand. I knew that Belgium had their own game in Africa. And that we've had Africa watchers in London, Paris, and Brussels for decades. That was the norm. London and Paris, everybody understood they were big former colonial powers. Belgium was a smaller colonial power, but the country that it dominated was probably our biggest linchpin in Africa, Zaire, and Mobutu. So, there was certainly a need for somebody to stay in touch with the Belgians on this and not a European type. You needed somebody who understood Africa. So, that part of it, I was expecting. At this point in my career, I had never served in a big embassy as a political officer. I've been in Angola, which was a consul general, and in Durban, which was also the Consul General. Not independent embassies, where you do diplomatic stuff, deal with the foreign ministry. That was all new to me. And that's what I'd have to handle when I got to Brussels.

Belgium, as a posting, is very interesting. It's different from almost any other European country, in that you have three very big embassies with very powerful ambassadors in the city of Brussels. You obviously have the ambassador to the king, as we used to say. Then you had the embassy to NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], which was extremely large and very active. And then you had the embassy to the European Union, which was smaller, because we weren't a member, but we've had an immense amount of bilateral business with the Europeans. Rules that they were making, we wanted to weigh in on them. So, you had these three embassies and the people assigned as ambassadors were all heavy hitters. Obviously, the ambassadorship to Belgium was a political plum. And I think almost every ambassador since World War II has been a financial contributor to the president. The ambassador to NATO; sometimes it was political, but sometimes it was a very senior academic or national security apparatchik but very well connected, very powerful. And to a lesser degree, that applied to the EU [European Union] because that was a business-oriented embassy. So, you have these three powerful ambassadors or three big embassies. And to manage it, State [Department of State], in its wisdom—I think they got it right—had a joint administrative section. There weren't three admins; there was one admin. And the admin section for Brussels was as big as most embassies in Europe. I mean, you had to take care of three ambassadors, three residences, three DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] residences. I mean, it wasn't a logistics problem, but State had done very well in this regard. So, it was a big presence.

Going to the embassy, to Belgium, I had to learn the terms of the pecking order in town. NATO really didn't care what Belgium was doing, except in NATO. So, my work in Africa was of interest to me but nobody else in town. Fine. The EU folks, their basic fight was with the bureaucrats in the European Union. Think Brexit thirty years later. The same kind of problems, all these rules are being made by the EU to affect X, Y, and Z, and we wanted to make sure that American companies weren't disadvantaged by it. So, that was what they were up to, and they didn't care what Belgium was doing.

When I got to the embassy, it was a very senior staff. The ambassadors that I had while I was in Brussels were all political appointees and they were extremely well connected. The first ambassador, who was there from 1977 to 1980, was Anne Cox Chambers. Her family owned Cox Broadcasting, which, among other things, owned the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Jimmy Carter, obviously, had been governor of Georgia before he ran for president. And one of the people that got him over the hurdle was the support of Ann Cox Chambers and the newspaper. So, it was as a political supporter of the president, which is how she got the job. She was extremely wealthy. I remember the time I saw a story: she was the second or third wealthiest woman in America. So, when she gets to Brussels—when I got there, she was three years into her job.

And basically, she told the DCM, "You run the place. Keep me informed of everything." I was later to find out this was the norm amongst most political ambassadors. There's a lot of the day-to-day stuff they couldn't care less about. They wanted to be fully informed, make sure they're aware before anything blew up in their face. Because she was in Belgium, we got an endless stream of VIP visitors. It's funny, but visitors never wanted to go to Ouagadougou. They did want to come to Brussels, and I'm sure they went to

Bangkok, too. But they would come to Brussels and usually it was for NATO reasons or EU reasons. But if you're there, if you're a senior official of the U.S. government, you know, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or business related, you would want to make a courtesy call on the Belgian government because it's their country. So, we got in a lot of these visits.

As it turns out, there was almost an endless stream of people coming through so the ambassador to Belgium was given a very large entertainment allowance. Again, because of the people that had to be entertained from Washington, her position and the ambassador that followed her, Charlie Price, was, 'I don't need the money.' So, she gave the DCM a significant representational allowance. And the DCM parceled it out in the embassy, which meant, obviously, including the political section. So, unlike a lot of embassies where a junior officer got no money or a pittance, we were given, not carte blanche but certainly a generous allowance. So if I had to take somebody to lunch, I didn't have to go in and beg 'Mother May I' from the political counselor or the DCM. We knew that there was money available, which made life a little bit easier. Because entertaining in Brussels wasn't cheap.

Q: And of course, contact work is the essence of diplomacy.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: Lunch with somebody—

FUGIT: Staying in touch with people is critically important. So, we were given good funding to do it. And I'll tell a story about that in a second, it's rather interesting.

The embassy was divided—the political section basically had two jobs. One was Belgian military relations with NATO. And we had a pol/mil [political/military] officer who handled that, and she worked very closely with the defense attaché. And this was a never-ending series of critical issues. NATO was the linchpin of U.S. foreign policy for most of the post-war period. And not many people give State Department the credit that we deserve, and to a lesser degree, the British Foreign Office in holding NATO together as an entity. It was a constant, I wouldn't say fight, but it was a constant struggle that our embassy had with the Belgian government on the myriad of issues that NATO had to vote on. The political headquarters of NATO was in Brussels. The military headquarters was sixty miles away at Mons. We didn't particularly care about the military headquarters. That was really a tactical, strategic decision place for how forces are structured. What the U.S. government cared about was how the political side of NATO was structured and how it carried out what we wanted it to do, which we didn't always get our way. And the fights in NATO—there were fifteen nations that were in NATO at the time. The French were partial members. So, we would go in—the pol/mil officer—constantly to the Ministry of Defense. Not the foreign ministry; foreign ministry had no role in Belgium's NATO policy. It was the defense ministry and the prime minister. So, this was what the political counselor worked on, the pol/mil officer, and the DCM, was these constant issues.

I remember, just to give an example, what it was they were fighting over was in 1981, I guess it was, and I had no role in it. But I read all the traffic every day. It was interesting. The issue was chemical weapons. It began in 1979 and 1980 and the Russians were significantly upgrading their chem weapons capability for the Soviet forces that were then stationed in Eastern Europe. And this was a change because from World War II up till then, chemical weapons had existed, but no one worried particularly about them because nobody used them. The Russians hadn't prepared for it. We hadn't prepared for it. Okay, now the Russians were equipping their forces with chem weapons. So, obviously, NATO has to prepare for it. This is not cheap. You have to come up with a chem weapon kit that you give every soldier: gas mask and other equipment. You have to take your tanks and retrofit the air intakes on the tanks with scrubbers. All sorts of these things. Now, this was the kind of thing that was decided on the political side of NATO. That NATO would increase the protection of its forces against chemical weapons. And when the decision was made then, it was up to each member government of NATO that had troops in Western Europe. And there were seven of them that would do this for their forces.

Now, the problem is it costs a lot of money. And Belgium was always complaining about the cost of NATO. Well, the cost of the chem weapons was significant. And this was a debate that went on, I think, for over a year inside NATO. That, "Yes, we have a problem." They vote on it. Then, "How do we address the problem?" So, of course, we, the United States, have ideas and we share them with NATO. And the Belgians said, "Yeah, it's great, but we can't afford it. We cannot do it." And so, we went into a full-court press for several months on the Belgian government, because the decision here is the defense minister and the prime minister and the budget of Belgium. And they said they can't do it. They had a lot of opposition in parliament. And basically, they said, "Okay, if we do the chem weapons kits, we're going to have to ground one or two of our F-16 squadrons to pay for it. It's gonna have to come up with some other piece of the defense budget to pay for this." So that was the kind of problem that Washington had, how do you prioritize this? The Belgians aren't going to give you both. This was an example; this went on all the time at various levels of equipment.

The cost of paying for prepositioning U.S. military equipment in Belgium and Europe was also an issue. Up until 1979 and 1980, we had troops there, and they had their tanks. But the second echelon, the rest of the U.S. Army, is in the United States. So, to get it over, especially if you must ship the tanks by sea and the armored vehicles, takes weeks and weeks. So, the idea became NATO was going to pay for—NATO, as an institution, was going to tax itself to pay for the preposition of American combat equipment in Europe. Again, we have to go to the Belgian government and all the other governments and cajole them into paying a very significant cost for about an eight- or ten-year program to build igloos or warehouses all over Europe, where we can preposition these tanks in cocoons. We would pay for the equipment, but NATO had to provide the infrastructure. These are just two examples of what was a constant back and forth with the government. I had no role in any of this, but I was reading it and I got to appreciate

the success that we had—our diplomats that are at NATO—coming up with solutions to these kinds of problems.

So, that was the NATO side. My side of it, Belgium, in terms of foreign policy, had a purely reactive one. It hid behind either NATO or the EU on most foreign policy issues except for Africa. And when you think about it—the rationale behind this—Belgium's a country of ten million people. It's a wealthy country, but it never had a colonial empire. It had the Congo, though Belgium didn't colonize it. The King of Belgium, in the 1890s, colonized the Congo and plundered the place. And then, so the Belgian government—when they found out how bad it was, like 1905, I think—took over the administration of the Belgian Congo until 1960 and independence. So, that was a major Belgian national interest, because two or three of the biggest companies in Belgium were mining companies. All their business came from Zaire, from the Belgian Congo. So, they had— the Belgian government—a reason to have their own policy and look after their own interests in Central Africa.

Anything else in the world—all the items that came up at the UN, et cetera, we would lobby the Belgian Foreign Ministry on the issues. As you know, every month, there's two or three issues that pop up at the UN, requiring votes. We would lobby the Belgians, and they would look at us very nicely and thank us. But we knew ultimately their position was going to be the EU position. And they would argue this inside with the European allies, as to what the position would be on a given human rights situation. Finally they would agree, and they would all vote as a bloc. They would listen to us; very often, it was the same position as ours. But they would come to that based on a European consensus, not something from the United States.

Africa was different. Central and southern Africa was different. The Belgian national interests were largely economic interest, human interest. I mean, tens of thousands of Belgians had grown up in the Congo, had families that were there. And because they were the former colonial power, the unwritten understanding in Africa is when one of your former colonies goes off the rails, you, as the mother country, must send troops in to re-establish some order before genocide takes over. This happened all the time, especially with the French. There were a constant series of uprisings and various in the French colonies in West Africa. Less so with the British, but there were still some.

And then you've got the Congo. And the Congo was a bloody mess. The Belgians, when independence was granted in 1960, did it, I think, with six months' notice. The Belgian government got tired of the place, said, "Okay, you're going to get independence in July." As I recall there were twelve people in the entire country that had college degrees. There was no governmental basis for running the place. They had no one who had ever been a minister of anything. This is long before I got there, but I think we can all remember the Katanga uprisings, the mercenaries, the fighting that went on. And the Belgians were heavily involved in this, backing one side or the other that would support their economic interests. And this continued up through when I got to Brussels in 1979. The Belgians would coordinate with us. They would sometimes agree and sometimes disagree with what our policy was. The person that ended up running the Congo was Joseph Mobutu.

And it was '60 or '61 when he took over. He had been a sergeant in the Congolese police or military—they didn't really have a military. Anyway, no training whatsoever, but he was the most determined of the various contenders and was able to put together—with the help of some mercenaries—forces that took over the country. And we, then, in our wisdom, adopted him as our guy. Also, our interest was Mobutu's interest and vice versa. And this went on for decades. Now, the Belgians also adopted Mobutu.

Mobutu took over and there was an endless series of crises. Many revolts throughout the Congo. And the Belgians would send troops down there to quiet things down, then they leave. The UN came in. One of the UN forces- Italian soldiers- was decimated in Elizabethville [Lubumbashi]. It was a real mess.

So, there was a lot for me to do when I got there. Primarily coordinating with the Belgians on security policy, on economics, on human rights.

By this point, 1979-80 the Belgians realized that Mobutu was a problem. We did as well. What are we going to do about it? So that was my main function, Central Africa, which included Rwanda and Burundi. These were former German colonies that Belgium was given after World War I and managed until the 1960s. At this point, Rwanda had not taken on the importance it has today. It was sort of an afterthought because it didn't have economic wealth like Zaire did.

Besides Africa, then, I would deal with the foreign ministry on everything else that came up. It was understood at the embassy: if instructions came in—and Washington was always, as you know, giving you instructions to do this or that—and they always want the ambassador to deliver it. Well, she had no intention of delivering most of this and the DCM didn't, either. So basically, it flowed to me. And I established a series of contacts.

Well, the Belgian foreign ministry is not huge, but it's significant and very professional. And I was on a good personal basis with the heads of the Latin American division, Near East, et cetera; all different divisions in the Belgian ministry, because I was constantly bringing them policy positions, "Here, we'd like you to do this or that." And so, this is along the lines of delivering the mail. There wasn't any negotiation, not like there was on Central Africa.

One of the issues that popped up about six months after I got there: we broke diplomatic relations with Libya. Gaddafi had done something egregious—I forget what it was at the time—so we pulled out our embassy in Libya, and we asked Belgium to become our protecting power in Libya. And this is a concept under international law, where the other government, the third government, represents us with Libya. So, if we wanted to speak to the Libyan government, Washington would send instructions to me, I would take it to the foreign ministry on paper, saying, "Okay, appreciate it if you'd pass this on to the Libyan foreign ministry." And they would do that and when they got an answer back, they'd call me. I'd come to the foreign ministry; they give me the reply. Again, I'm just delivering the mail. What was interesting—especially when Reagan came in—the nastiness that some of these messages contained. At the beginning, the first couple of messages were the

normal, "The government of the United States has the pleasure of blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Six or eight months later, they were more like ultimatums. "You will do this, or we're going to take action." Because whatever the Libyans were up to, it was threatening to American servicemen in Europe. So, anyway, my job was just delivering the mail on this. But it was interesting being in the middle of the loop on these documents and watching what we're saying to the Libyan via the Belgians and vice versa.

Q: Let me break in at this time. Could you give us a sense of who was in the political section and how it was organized?

FUGIT: Okay. Yeah. There were four of us: political counselor, pol/mil officer, myself and a labor guy. When I was first there, Francis DeTar was Counselor, followed by John Heimann. Both really knew what they were doing. They were the epitome of EUR [European and Eurasian Affairs] political officers. They were perfectly good at the cocktail party circuit, making contacts with politicians, et cetera. Both of them were excellent.

I guess this is as good a point as any to put this in a very unusual set of circumstances. The second political counselor we had was John Heiman. And John was as close to a Belgian expert as we had in the U.S. government. He spoke both Flemish and French, had served a tour previously in Antwerp—the consulate general in Antwerp—had served a tour in the Congo and in Indonesia, because it was Dutch. So, he was extremely well plugged in.

About halfway through my tour, John's wife Judy Heimann—a tandem couple—was an econ officer in the U.S. mission to the European Union, which was around the corner. Well, her tour was up, and he had another year or two to go. So, they're trying to figure out some way to keep them together in Brussels and keep her employed. And this was right after the rule started coming out on nepotism. And the problem was that the place she could work would have been with us in the political section. But her husband is the political counselor. So, the DCM comes to me and says, "Look, Ed. What we'd like to do is bring Judy over here, have her work for you in the political section." I said, "Well, what about her husband?" He said, "She will report to you and be reviewed by the DCM. She will not report to her husband. You will be her first level supervisor. And I, the DCM, will be the second level." Okay, they cleared it with Washington, and she came over. And she came over right at the time when Belgium was taking over its six-month period as president of the EU, which I'll mention later.

But anyway, so that was the way Washington decided—okay, everybody decided we would make this work. And as far as I can tell, it worked very well. I had a good relationship with the political counselor. And he never interceded on behalf of his wife. I would assign her work. She was an excellent, excellent officer. It wasn't like, "Oh, god, what can I give her to do?" I mean, she knew the EU, she knew Belgium backwards and forwards. She was a great asset.

The other thing I did on Africa, when I got there. First of all, developing relations with the African people in the foreign ministry. There were three of them. But my focus was who are the opposition leaders to Mobutu that are in Belgium? That's one of the reasons I was there. . But the opposition to Mobutu, the individuals that were opposed to him, operated out of Belgium, mostly out of Brussels. This was the norm in Africa. If you were a French colony, and you disagreed with the dictator of the day, you would set up shop in France and operate there, trying to get support. Same thing with the British.

So, there was a cadre of these guys. I didn't know who they were; I heard one or two names. So, I talked to my foreign ministry contacts "Who are the top ten or fifteen of these guys?" They gave me some names and I started watching the newspapers, because Belgium had probably six or seven daily newspapers: three in Dutch and three in French. And so, I was reading the French language papers. And that was where the opposition to Mobutu tended to speak. So, I developed files as soon as I saw somebody making a statement. Their political parties all had grandiose names. And I quickly discovered, yeah, they had grandiose names, they gave press conferences; but most had zero political support among the Zairian community in Belgium or Europe. There wasn't any great outpouring of support for any of these guys in Belgium amongst the Zairean exile community or amongst Belgian companies that were operating there because they all realized, looking at them, that they were more feckless than anything else.

The best known of these people was Étienne Tshisekedi. He was the darling of the Western media who wrote about Africa. The opinion of the media was that if Mobutu fell, Tshisekedi was going to take his place. And visitors will come to Brussels, they go to see Tshisekedi. Okay, so I figured, well, I've got to meet this guy. So, I went to the DCM and I got permission to take him to lunch at a three-star Michelin restaurant in the Grand Platz in Brussels. This was a very expensive undertaking. So, we went to lunch, met at 12:00, and finished at 3:30. We consumed a lot of alcohol. And so, I was talking to him, and it was a very valuable conversation in terms of understanding his point of view about Zaire, his views on different opposition leaders, and his relations with the Belgian government. So I learned quite a bit. He mentioned a lot of things that were of pertinence to what I was doing. Towards the end, I said to him, "Please, tell me, if you take over from Mobutu, how will you be different?" And his answer was one of those things that snaps my head back. He said, in French, "Oh monsieur, if I take over, I will steal less." And I said to myself, "My god, maybe this is an honest man."

So anyway, this is 1982. Mobutu survives for another fifteen years. And then, in the mid-'90s, he starts to collapse. He was sick, he was dying. And like most dictators, he never arranged for a succession plan. His death brings on political chaos. Again, I was long past working on Zaire or Africa at this point, but I always remember Tshisekedi and his name is mentioned in the international press opining that he's going to take over. Well, Tshisekedi never had any real support anywhere, particularly military support. And what happened was, the guy who did take over from Mobutu in '95 or something, whatever it was, was a guy named Kabila [Laurent-Désiré Kabila], who had never left Zaire. He lives in the jungles for twenty years, running a ragtag group of fighters. Very brutal, brutal people. But he hadn’t been one of this group of cocktail party dilettantes that I was

tracing in Brussels. And he wasn't Tshisekedi. Tshisekedi never got elected. Fast forward another fifteen years: The President of Zaire today is named Tshisekedi. He's the son of the person that I had lunch with 25 years previously. And he was able, from the mid-'90s on, to come back to Zaire and to establish a following. So, he had some popular support and some people with guns. So, in the internecine fighting and sort of elections that they have in Zaire, he ends up taking over. His daddy had died about five years before that, didn't get to see it. So Tshisekedi becomes the president but not the Tshisekedi we all, as knowledgeable observers of the Congo, had assumed was going to win and he never could.

Anyway, it was an interesting sight. And that sort of describes what we did with the job there, trying to keep contact with the Belgians. And the Belgians had their own—they were paying these guys off, as I later found out. Mobutu was paying them off, and the Belgians were paying them off. Just in the case any of these guys got to a position of power, they would have a hook into them. Because that was their interest. So, as I said, in the case of Zaire, Belgium played like a major power. Belgium wasn't little, tiny Belgium that hides behind everybody's skirts; they had their own policies, and they carried them out.

One issue that I got involved in would not directly have to do with Africa, has to do with Russia and nuclear weapons. In 1979, this is an awfully long story, I'm gonna try and truncate this—in '79, the Russians announced that they were going to deploy a new weapons system-SS-20 Intermediate Range missiles. They were going to base them in Poland and the Czech Republic—Czechoslovakia. And these only had a range as far as London or Paris. This was 1979. And this was part and parcel of what the Russians started doing in 1975 with the fall of Saigon. And they saw the chance—I think I mentioned it earlier—to undermine the United States. So, the intervention in Angola, intervention in Ethiopia, more support for the Cubans, et cetera. And then, moving into Afghanistan, and then these missiles.

Now the purpose of these missiles was not military, per se. It was political. And it was to scare NATO. Because they're putting these missiles in, that couldn't reach the United States. So, if they were used, it was not a threat to us. And the Russians were then arguing, "You Europeans can't trust the Americans anymore to protect you." With these missiles, they're not at risk. They're not going to die for Antwerp. So, the pressure on NATO—Jimmy Carter was still president. So, NATO, at the annual summit: "What are we going to do about these weapons?" Now, it was going to take several years for the Russians to build and deploy these missiles. So, NATO decides, "Okay, we are going to deploy the same type of missiles." And at the NATO summit, the United States had to get four countries to agree to take these missiles because no one country wanted to be the only one that was buckling under American pressure. So, you got the Brits, the Dutch, and the Italians said yes immediately. The Belgians said, "Yes. Sort of. Maybe. Later." But we had four that we could move forward. We didn't have these weapons, we had to design them from scratch. Now, it's technology we understood, but still, we had to build a new missile, new kinds of warheads. So, it was going to take five, six, seven years for these to be deployable.

The issue quickly became—because each nation in NATO has their own procedures for agreeing to deals that are made at NATO. So the British, Dutch and Italians, their prime ministers and their cabinets agreed to the protocols. They were locked in 100 percent. The Belgians, there was a lot of opposition in Belgium—public opinion—against doing this. There's always been a strong left-wing in Belgium. And they were agitating strongly against the missiles. So, the Belgians had agreed to do it but not formally with cabinet or parliamentary approval. The Russians were organizing constant demonstrations in Brussels and the other major cities in Belgium. So, one of the things that I did was, I would go out and go down where the demonstration parades were being held and watch them. I'm sitting in a coffee shop, having a nice cup of coffee and watching, you know, thousands of people go by. And my point was, my purpose was, who are these people? Are they being bussed in? Or are they locals or whatever? And they appeared to me to be just everyday people, as far as I can tell. A lot of moms and pops with kids and strollers. This is always on a Saturday morning. So, they were getting a good turnout. There was a degree of public opinion that was opposed to Belgium being the siting of these weapons. So that just compounded our issue of getting Belgium to say yes, because if I'm watching this, obviously, the Prime Minister and the cabinet is watching it, and what are they going to do?

So, this was probably the major issue between the United States and the Soviet Union in the early 1980s. The secretary of defense at the time was Caspar Weinberger. I know if you recall, he was a force on his own. Extremely strong willed. He knew what he wanted to get done. He worked for Reagan, but Reagan gave him carte blanche to do whatever he needed to do. So, he was annoyed that we did not have Belgian approval. Because without that, if you only have three, there is always a chance that somebody—the Dutch or whatever—would also drop out. So, you had to try and get the Belgians on board. And he wanted to give a speech— it was 1981 or 1982—blasting the Belgians for not coming forward and saying, "Yes, we're going to take the weapons." So, our ambassador at the time, Charlie Price, was a close personal friend of the president as had been Anne Cox Chambers with Carter. He was one of this group of people who, every Christmas, would meet with Reagan at his ranch. He was on a first name basis with the President. So, he did what no other ambassador could do, and personally he called the president and said, "Look, basically, you got to tell Caspar to back off. We will get you what you want. I'm assured of that by the government. But you're not going to get it now. Play the game." So, as I understand it, Reagan muzzles Caspar Weinberger, the speech is not given. Had he given the speech, it would have forced a rupture with the Belgian government on this issue. They were not ready to commit political suicide right then. They had three more years, four years to wait until the missiles were ready to deploy. They didn't have to do it now. Anyway, that's just an example of a political ambassador—he was following this whole thing very closely. He let us do most of the work on it. He would see the prime minister on occasions. And he did such a good job that Reagan moved him to London, as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's later on.

Anyway, that was an example. The other part of this example—it's not something I did, it's something that John Hyman did, who was the political counselor—was to try and get

quiet political support inside Belgium for the deployment of the missiles. Now, as I said, John was probably the most knowledgeable FSO [foreign service officer] on Belgium that we had anywhere. Spoke both of the languages, he understood the politics. Belgium, by the way at that time, had seventeen parties in parliament. It was a hodgepodge, and the parties were divided by region and language. So, you had two socialist parties, a Dutch speaking and a French speaking, you had two Christian Democrats, two greens, you name it, everything had two of. And you think, "Okay, well, both socialist parties would work together." No, they didn't. Ever. The French Socialist Party had their own set of agendas and really didn't want to deal with the Flemish speaking Socialist Party. That was true. So, you have seventeen different small parties. I mean, I think the biggest party in the Belgian parliament had 20 percent of the seats. So, every government was a huge coalition to put together.

John knew all this; he knew all these politicians on both sides of the linguistic divide and came up with an idea that, look, we have to build a base for these rockets. There were then no American military bases in Belgium. So, we're going to have to build a base and the Air Force had already decided that these missiles should go in the Ardennes, because that was hilly, much easier to protect against a Russian air attack. So, they were going to go and that meant in the French speaking part of Belgium. The base was going to cost hundreds of millions to build. We don't do cheap bases. So, John goes to one of the politicians heading the Socialist Party and basically says, "Look, if you can work with us on this, you're going to get a lot of jobs in your area." And that Southern part, the French speaking part of Belgium, is more like Appalachia now. It was a poor area. Up to World War II, was quite wealthy. But with the collapse of coal, anyway, it wasn't. These jobs were very tantalizing. At the end of the day, that turned the support. This guy was able to support the missile deployment because he was getting jobs for it. But John worked this out basically on what he knew were these different people. And that's an example of what a really good foreign service officer can do. You know the local scene; you have to understand the country. And then, who are the players on this particular issue? And what can you convince them of? How can you sell it to them? Doesn't always work, but John was excellent at that.

Oh, then, just to carry this one out, the end of the story on these missiles. So, it worked out, the Belgians lived up to their promise. Four years later, they voted to put the missiles in, and they started construction. By this point, the Soviet Union had gone through three old men that died as prime ministers in the early '80s. And Gorbachev had just taken over. So, Reagan meets with Gorbachev—first time or second time, I forget which—and there, they made a decision because once we put the missiles in, it negated any value the Russian missiles would have, because then it was a standoff. So, the decision was made between Gorbachev and Reagan to dismantle the Russian missiles and not to construct our missiles. So, we never deployed the—it was INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces]. And there was a treaty we negotiated with the Russians, '86 or 1987, banning intermediate range nuclear weapons. So, the diplomacy that we spent more than half a decade putting together ends up being successful. And for a lot of reasons, domestic internal Russian politics was very high among them. They didn't need to spend this money anymore, so they were going to pull out of it.

Q: On the Russian side of things, the invasion of Afghanistan in December of '79. How did that affect your work?

FUGIT: Yeah, that was, obviously, it was a big deal. I mean, that also corresponded to the takeover in Tehran.

Q: Yes.

FUGIT: That was chaos in that part of the world. Interesting story on the failure of the rescue mission—in 1981? Sorry, in '80—to rescue the hostages in Tehran. We didn't know what was going on. And I used to get into the embassy quite early, I'd probably get in there earlier in the morning than most. So, I got in, I got a phone call from the DCM to come up immediately to his office. He said, "Okay." He put the cable in front of me. It was a cable from Washington—NIGHT ACTION—the kind of cable that communicators get out of bed to decrypt. So, they had this and instructions—every embassy in the world—to go in immediately at the foreign minister level and explain to them what had just happened, which was a disaster in the desert. A bunch of people were killed, our rescue attempt failed, we were pulling the people out, et cetera.

Q: This is Desert One of April 24, 1980.

FUGIT: Right. That's right. Yes, that's right. So, on paper, it said the ambassador should immediately go in. Well, A) the ambassador wasn't going to go in first nor was the DCM. I had contacts at the foreign ministry, and I knew who the chef de cabinet was—the head of the staff of the foreign minister. I knew he would be in. The foreign minister wasn't—it was still 7:15 in the morning. This is Belgium. I mean, they don't come in that early. But I knew the chef de cabinet was in; he was a worker. So, the DCM basically gives it to me, "You take it over."—because nobody wanted it, this is bad duty—"You got to go in." So, I immediately call up and say, "Look, this is important." He said, "Okay, guys, come on over." So, I get there about 7:30, 7:40 in the morning. Go in. I show it to him, his face drops. He said, "Fine. I'll get this to the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister immediately." Nothing that Belgium could do on it, just a question of informing them. But I was the designee to do the informing, because nobody else wanted to take that kind of—if it had been successful, probably the ambassador would have taken it in. But anyway, that's the way it worked. A lot of the stuff was pro forma, but it was important that these things happened.

Q: Let me ask you, in the performance of your duties, did you coordinate with other diplomatic missions in town?

FUGIT: No, in fact, I didn't, because my African—to a less, somewhat, maybe, a couple of French diplomats, but not as much. Really, it was Zaire that mattered. And no one else, other than the French, had much of an interest in Zaire. So no, there wasn't a lot of coordination. Also, I was not on the diplomatic circuit. This is Belgium, where you had

over a hundred embassies. So, I was the first secretary. And there were no second and third secretaries, which is interesting. But I didn't go on the diplomatic circuit at all.

Anyway, this whole thing with the Russians was just watching what they were up to and getting public opinion on their side, and they did a good job of it. And basically, again, it's the ability of the foreign service to understand this, what they're up to, and then lobbying the Belgian government in the right places at the right time, knowing what buttons to push. And I was more of an observer. I was watching John Heimann do most of this. And otherwise, I just kept carrying things out. There were no major crises in Zaire the four years I was there, just a constant stream of human rights abuses, people being arrested, people being shot one place or another.

Q: Now, that's your diplomatic duties. You're in central Europe, did you have some private time to travel around and visit places?

FUGIT: Yeah, we did. We took great advantage of being where we were. As it turns out, basically, it was a five day a week job. It wasn't kind of—with one or two exceptions; you had to come in on weekends. And you're right in the center of Europe. So, we were an hour and a half from the Hague and Amsterdam. Three hours by road to Paris. A little bit longer to London, because you take the ferry but not far. Germany was close by. And I had two kids and then, number three was born right after we got to Belgium. So, I had three little kids, did a lot of traveling down to Germany, Austria. Took as much advantage as we could and it was a four year assignment.

Now, a lot of people don't like four-year assignments. They want to break them sooner, because it's better for your career. You know, you do two years, fine, you can't do much more than that, and go somewhere else. I was in Central Europe, so okay, I'll stay for the full four years. And it was a good assignment. The weather sucked. Belgium is like Britain; it rains, rains constantly. So having three little boys at home was a problem because getting them out and playing was iffy. We were also very close to the Ardennes, the Bastogne. And I used to take the kids up there frequently, just driving through the Ardennes, which is a very, very beautiful part of the world. Especially when it snows out. And you go, not so much skiing, but tobogganing, et cetera. So, in that regard, it was really a good assignment.

I learned a lot about Africa, not just Zaire, but because Belgium had interests in other things. I was getting info from London and Paris on what those governments were doing on the crisis. For example, right when I got there, Rhodesia finally collapsed. And Ian Smith gave up control of the country to Robert Mugabe. So, there was a lot of back and forth on that, before that happened and when it happened. And then that shifted the focus, for all of us, to South Africa, which was obviously the next white Domino that had to fall, which actually will be the next subject that we address here. But it was a very good assignment personally, professionally growing, seeing how the game's played. Seeing how the game is played in a major embassy level is totally different than at a consulate general where you don't get involved in foreign ministry stuff. You're making contacts

and et cetera, but you're not dealing with policy issues that you have to convince government X or Y to adopt or to oppose.

Q: One of the issues that probably came to your attention was in September. Iraq invaded Iran.

FUGIT: Right. Yep.

Q: How did you respond to that? Outside of Africa, but...

FUGIT: No, actually, the Belgians really had no exposure on that one. I followed it closely just because you're a political officer and you follow politics. And so, we didn't get into that at all. Tehran, we didn't really get into either. Libya, we did, because Belgium became our protecting power. And it was interesting for me, again, seeing the back and forth. I had never been in the Middle East, which is, politically, operates differently than say, Europe or Africa, and the nature of the regimes that you're dealing with there. I think that about covers the main points. I'm trying to see what here; we might have other stuff.

Q: Let me ask one other thing. You remember that your four years cover both the Carter administration and then the Reagan administration. How did the embassy adjust to a new administration?

FUGIT: Yeah, that's a good point. When Anne Cox Chambers left, she left right after Carter was defeated. She could have stayed till January; she didn't. As I recall, she just said, "Okay. No more I can do here and I'm not going to continue in the job." So, she's leaving. So, then we had to wait and see who the ambassador was, because just like we're seeing in Washington now, naming these ambassadors is not a top priority for the incoming president. It's a priority, but it's—so it's March, April or so before you get these names. And then they have to be vetted and go before Congress. And these ambassadors in Western Europe, with one or two exceptions, are almost always political appointees and they almost always contribute significant amounts of money to the president. In those days, my recollection—because this was in the newspaper, it was common knowledge how much so-and-so gave to this-and-that campaign. And I know Brussels and Copenhagen, Oslo, a quarter of a million dollars was sort of what the norm was that you would give to the President in order to get a nomination to one of those places. Court of St. James's, that was different. You're going to go into London, you're talking about half a million or more. And that's, on one election, you will have already contributed to Reagan's when he was running for governor of California. It's not just you just started when he was running for president. So, the question of who we got for ambassador, they're all going to be, in many ways, the same. And what you hope to get and what we had in Belgium was very intelligent, clued-in people. They knew what they wanted to do. And they knew what they didn't want to bother with. And that was the day-to-day minutia of running foreign affairs. And they left that to the DCM. And that, as I understood, was the norm in Europe and Western Europe. These ambassadors did not get down in the weeds nor did they really need to. And they understood that the man you assign or

woman you assign to be the DCM in Western Europe is really going to run the show, but it has to be tactful in what they're doing if they're going to run the show. And it usually worked. Every now and then, you get a DCM who got too big for his britches, forget that, in fact, he's not in charge. And when that happened, the ambassador had the clout to have this kind of person removed.

Q: I mean, look at the policy side of this, though. A new ambassador is coming in, kind of the standard thing is to do a member to the new guy, "Here's where we are on such and such an issue." Was that a process that political section went through?

FUGIT: Oh, yeah. We would do position papers and I would explain to him, in my case, "Okay. Here's why we're doing Africa. Here's why it matters." His thought, I remember it came up, "Why do I have this guy doing Africa here? Can I switch him off?" In fact, John Heimann wanted me to pick up more internal political affairs. Okay, that's fine. But I explained to him, "We need to follow Africa. These are the reasons. This is what we're getting out of it. Here's how it affects U.S. national interest." And basically, he didn't want to fight it. He would basically go to the DCM, said, "Look, we need this, don't need this." You didn't see much change when the new ambassador came in. And the new one also, as Anne Cox Chambers did, also turned over his representation allowance to the DCM. That made our life, again, easier to do.

Q: Now, in time, was there a different atmosphere coming out of Washington?

FUGIT: Somewhat. You had Reagan replacing Carter. And Reagan was distrusted by the Europeans when he came in. He was considered to be somewhat of a cowboy. And his secretary of defense, who mattered very much to Europeans, because the strength of NATO was the underpinning of Western European security. And the secretary of defense had a large day-to-day voice in what NATO did. So, you had Casper coming in, and Casper was an unguided missile, and that upset the Europeans. And then, at the beginning, you remember, we had Al Haig as Secretary of State. And that was a failure. So, there was disquiet, but the Belgians never expressed it to us, to the embassy, but you'd read it in the newspapers. As I said, they had at least six dailies, three Dutch and three French language. And so, politicians can easily opine in there about their concern about Washington and et cetera. Reagan eventually won people's support. He wasn't warm and fuzzy to the Europeans. But he also understood the need to stand up to the Russians. And he knew that the hand that he had taken over in 1980, was weaker than it should be.

Q: Now, along those lines, did Reagan's assassination impact on...?

FUGIT: Well, the great concern of instability in the United States was worrisome. But that passed quickly, it didn't continue for a long period of time. He was going to recover. And you had a competent person as vice president. So that was okay over time. That didn't explode in anybody's face. It could have, but it didn't.

Q: Now, you were saying earlier that you get a lot of congressional visitors and whatnot. Did you get sucked into those things? Or did the admin section—

FUGIT: Well, the admin section would set it up. They had an SOP [standard operating procedure]. And they always booked plenty of rooms depending on how big the delegation was. In most cases six, eight, ten people would come over for the conference. And the general rule was—this was true throughout Europe—the junior person on the delegation, congressmen or senators, would attend all the meetings. The senior people would attend the ones they felt like attending and they would go off shopping or drinking or whatever. And this was just a standard procedure. And everyone accepted it. And the senior people would definitely—even though they were there to see the NATO or the EU—they realized they were in Belgium, and the protocol required somebody senior in their group to make a courtesy call on someone in the foreign ministry or the prime minister's office, depending on their rank. So, they would do it.

We had one congressional delegation—really bad news. The wife of the senior delegate wanted to go out shopping. And my wife volunteered to take her around. And this was normal. They wanted somebody to show them around the town. Well, she was interested in, among other things, antique shopping. Well, we had done antique shopping, but we had done antique shopping on an FSO salary. This person had a lot of money. The shops my wife was used to going to were more like glorified secondhand shops and she wanted the high-end, five, ten thousand dollar a piece shops. My wife had no idea where they were. So anyway, we took her to lunch, and she was just nasty. She was ticked off; she couldn't get to see what she wanted. I just had no idea what shops you had to go to. Anyway, just an example. And we've all had those problems with codels [congressional delegations]. Some are good, and some are pompous. Human nature.

Q: Now another event at this time was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Did that—?

FUGIT: Yeah, the Belgians had very little interest in that part of the world. So we would brief them on it, but they would not do anything about it. The only areas that really got them upset were NATO security and Africa. Everything else was—they would duck it. And they had, by the way, they had a very competent foreign service themselves. Small. They weren't big, but they were good. And they had to be good. I mean, their Embassy in Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, was very important. Three or four embassies in Africa were well-staffed. The rest of the place, not so much. They just had no interest. You know, they may have had two embassies in Latin America, probably had one in Rio, maybe one in Lima or something? I don't know. But it's just, there's no Belgian interest there to warrant the costs. They just didn't staff it.

Q: Let me go back to something you mentioned earlier. Belgium was our protecting power in Libya.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: What was the nature of the back and forth on that? Because the Libyans, I suppose, would not be friendly to the Belgians on this or that issue. How did the atmospherics of that situation—

FUGIT: Right. Okay. International law, the way it's set up, states accept the reality of protecting powers. And there's a certain—I don't know if it's a written protocol, but the Belgians looked after our property in Libya. We closed the embassy. I think they maintained the embassy building. They kept a staff, which we paid for. They would send us a bill every quarter and what they had expended on our behalf: keeping the embassy electricity on, cleaning it out, wherever else they had to do on our behalf. I don't remember when we returned to Libya. It was a long time. At the beginning, it was, as I said, rather nasty exchanges, and it had to do with Libyan security activities. This was before Lockerbie. Lockerbie was '88, I think. The Belgians just went back and forth. They did it, and they charged us for it, and it worked out okay.

Q: So, they were in charge of the physical protection and—

FUGIT: Right, yeah. And for example, if some American got arrested in Libya, they would send a consular officer—as we would—to see the person and provide them whatever assistance we wanted to provide to the person. I can't remember if there was anybody ever arrested there. Must have been, because we had oil workers. But maybe they weren't American. Maybe we pulled Americans out of the oil fields. I don't know.

Q: Well, it sounds like we've covered Brussels. You want to break off, because the next is South Africa. That's—

FUGIT: Right. There's a lot there.

Q: And I would like to leave that to a full session.

Q: Good morning. It is the 23 of February, 2021. We're returning to our conversation with Ed Fugit. Ed, as we just finished, you were in Brussels. A nice European assignment. And you come back to Africa. How did you get the African assignment?

FUGIT: Well, by this point, I'd been working on Africa for ten straight years, from 1973 to 1983. And so, I became an Africa hand like you're a Far Eastern hand. Anyway, the African Bureau got in touch with me in the spring of '83 and said, "Look, this South Africa desk job is opening up." Well, it was perfect. It was the right grade for me, it was a subject I was familiar with, interested in, and it was also time for me to go back to Washington. I'd been overseas for six years straight at this point. So, we go back and I check-in in August, I guess, of 1983, as the desk officer. And before I got there, South Africa and apartheid were beginning to boil. They had to be seen together because they weren't separate issues. And it was a contentious domestic issue for years in the US, but it never boiled over like it did starting in 1983.

And so, as I was getting ready for this session, I'm starting to think about, okay, how did all this come together? And it's rather interesting, from my point of view, as to how I saw this situation when I came back. Eight years ago, when I came back to take over the Angolan desk, I knew nothing about Washington, no idea how the game was played, how

you dealt with Congress, how you dealt with the seventh floor. I was a complete novice, while now, on South Africa, eight years later, I knew how the game was played. I'd done the desk job. I'd done overseas work. I understood what I was getting into. And I realized that what I was getting into is a very contentious domestic political issue but I did not know, summer of 1983, how contentious it was going to become in a year or two.

This issue was simmering, let's say, and then it started to really boil. And there were three aspects to our policy that I got into, sort of. The first, the short term one, which I was most involved in, is dealing with the United States response to disinvestment in South Africa. The U.S. government was totally opposed to apartheid, et cetera, et cetera. But we weren't ready to pull our investments out of South Africa. And there was a lot of pressure developing in the United States to do so. I was the liaison between the State Department, and the various groups—the American Chamber of Commerce and others—that were opposed to disinvestment. So, that becomes a whole aspect of foreign policy. And that's what I did for much of the next two years, was this question of fighting against disinvestment. The second aspect to the policy was the one that Chet Crocker, who was the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Chet was a political appointee, professor at Georgetown, extremely smart, knowledgeable about Africa. And what he wanted to do was try and get the Cubans out of Angola, and therefore, not a threat to South Africa, while at the same time getting the South Africans out of Namibia—Southwest Africa. So, this was his baby. This didn't come down to the desk. He had a group of people that worked with him. And he saw this as a global issue, much like Kissinger did in 1975 with Angola. This was an issue involving the Soviet Union. This wasn't particularly or only an African issue.

Q: Can I ask? Who was this other group that was with Crocker dealing with the Cubans in Namibia?

FUGIT: Right. Okay, basically, it was a staff assistant, there was a desk officer for Namibia who was Mike Ranneberger. And Crocker had a small coterie of people that worked with him on it. And he was given carte blanche by the White House and by the seventh floor, to carry out this policy. And this was interesting. You and I have seen Washington and assistant secretaries are kept on a short leash by the seventh floor. They want them to do whatever the policy is. And if you don't like it, they'll get somebody else. Crocker was given his head to do this as he wanted. He would brief the secretary, keep the White House informed. But this was Crocker's policy. And it was a slow slog to get it done. Because he had to convince the South Africans to get on board, and then negotiate with Europeans, and then eventually with the Angolans and then the Cubans. This went on for seven years. And what we're talking about here is the act one and two of a six-act play, if you will. But this also politically, you understand, this helped the administration in its arguments with Congress on apartheid. Crocker could argue to the conservatives—to Jesse Helms and the others—that we were trying to get the Cubans out of Africa, get the Soviets out of this. This was a grand issue. It wasn't an African issue. And he could argue that. He could also argue to the left that what we're trying to do is to get South Africa out of Southwest Africa. Get them to give it independence.

The background to this, real quick, is in 1890, Imperial Germany seized a bunch of worthless colonies in Africa, for the most part. The biggest one was Southwest Africa. And it was a German territory until 1915. World War I breaks out in 1914. In 1915, the South Africans raise an army, they invaded—the Germans had a tiny garrison, and South Africa took over this area. It's huge; you look at a map. And it has almost no population. I mean, to this day, it barely has a million people. It's a huge, huge desert. So, it was a League of Nations protectorate starting in 1918 and South Africa was the protecting power. So, they had complete control. UN [United Nations] comes in in 1945, it flips over, it becomes a UN trust territory. South Africa automatically continues to run the place, and no one really cared. Then you get to the 1980s and you've got a Marxist regime, in our view, in Angola, with a Cuban army there. And they were wanting to support the ANC, which is the African National Congress, which is the leading anti-apartheid group in South Africa—not in South Africa because they weren't, but they were external—that were fighting against the white government. So, the Cubans were the muscle that were going to try and get the ANC into a position where it could intervene militarily in South Africa.

So, that's the game that's going on with Namibia. And the Cubans are playing this at the behest of the Soviets. And in the early 1980s, what happened was, well, in 1975, you remember, we had the South Africans invade Angola. Came into Angola, supported Savimbi [Jonas Savimbi]. Well, the South African army that came in in 1975 was terrible. This was a World War II style force, not well trained, almost no modern equipment, et cetera. And they didn't do well against the Cubans. So, they learned a lesson from that. And in the intervening eight years, the South African Defence Forces and their intelligence operations were greatly augmented. So, by the early 1980s, they had a significant military force, and they were licking their chops to get back at the Cubans. So, for a period of seven or eight years, there was constant border warfare from Southwest Africa into Angola and vice versa. South Africans against the Cubans. This wasn't guerrilla warfare. This was basic modern tanks, aircraft, maneuver, et cetera. So, this battle is going on while Chet's trying to get a negotiation going in South Africa, with South Africa.

So that's part two. Part one was fighting against the disinvestment. Part two is Namibia. Part three, which was in the back of everybody's mind, including mine: How does this end? What is our policy going to be towards South Africa as you go forward? Now, the State Department is not really good at long-term planning. I mean, we're putting out the fire of the day, whatever the problem is. But I began to start thinking, as I took over on the desk, how does this whole thing play out? What's our interest here? And it took me—while I'm doing this job, I'm becoming more and more—my mind's getting around this issue, "What? What's going to play out?" So, you got these three different things. Chet Crocker was also thinking the same thing. And his idea was, if we settle Namibia and the Cuban issue, you then have a peaceful situation. And maybe the government in South Africa is willing to consider allowing majority rule. And that was in Chet's mind but it wasn't anything you were going to bring up in the short term. Okay. So, I take over on the desk, and I get a feel for the political dynamic inside Washington. And my desk

officer job was 90 percent domestic in these two years. I became the spokesman for the anti-disinvestment movement.

And the background to this real quick, is that there were 125 significant American companies operating in South Africa. I mean, General Motors, Ford, the big car companies, a bunch of others, and they were making good money, and they didn't particularly want to leave, want to be forced out and lose their investment. So, the American Chamber of Commerce tries to come up, how are we going to protect these U.S. firms from being forced out? And you could see, gradually, there was a movement developing in the United States and within the various states—this is what's interesting. It's not just a national movement going after apartheid. They realized that with a republican president, you weren't going to get legislation passed at that point. In fact, they did three years later, but you won't get legislation passed. But why don't we go to the states? We, meaning the anti-apartheid movement. So, different states would then pass laws requiring the states to disinvest their pension funds from firms that were doing business in South Africa. So, that was what the movement was about. And it was developing. I'll get back to this in a minute. The opposition to this was led by a black clergyman named Leon Sullivan. Sullivan was on the Board of Directors of General Motors starting in the mid-1970s. And he was brought on in order to give General Motors more of a conscientious view of what's going on with their diversity programs, et cetera. And he didn't take the job with General Motors thinking about South Africa. He was thinking about racial justice inside General Motors and, more broadly, inside the United States. So, he hooked up with this chamber of commerce. And Sullivan came up with an idea called the Sullivan Principles. And that was the basis that we, State Department and White House, were arguing our policy. And the Sullivan Principles—there were ten of them, I believe—but basically, they were common sense things that U.S. companies that were operating in South Africa had to do: equal pay for equal work, promotions. It's a long list and it was agreed to by U.S. companies operating in South Africa. That was their protection, say, look, we're trying to do good things. We're trying to get the government of South Africa to evolve. So, my job then was advancing this, arguing this in the United States over the next two years.

And what I did— and again, this is very unusual—I went to, I think, five different states and lobbied in those states against this investment movement. I'm trying to remember all of them: New Jersey, Iowa, Colorado, Texas, I forget one or two others. And I would go there for four or five days. And like New Jersey, I went up and I met with the republicans in the New Jersey State Legislature, went right into the capitol building there in Trenton. Met with these guys. I gave them some talking points, "Here's what this investment's about. Here's what you could argue, what the Sullivan Principles. Because these guys, these are domestic politicians. I mean, their issues are things like highways and schools. They don't get into foreign affairs, and suddenly, it's being thrust at them because in New Jersey, the disinvestment people were trying to get New Jersey to back out. So, I would go up and I spent a whole day writing their talking points for them. And I went out to, you know, other places. Did quite a bit of this. I briefed journalists. They would call up and say "What's going on with this or that?" as far as South Africa is concerned.

I wasn't involved with foreign relations with South Africa as most desk officers are. To the degree that we dealt with South Africa, that was Chet Crocker's baby, working on the Namibian/Cuba issue. South Africa was becoming increasingly a pariah in the United States. It was clear to me, right from the beginning, that arguing the points we were arguing is like trying to sell cancer. There was nobody buying it. I made it very clear that I'm not out there defending the apartheid regime. I'm saying let the American companies operate there and do good and try to change some things inside South Africa. And my argument is a justifiable one at the time. These companies were a factor for good. If they left, they weren't going to be replaced. So, thousands and thousands of blacks would be without jobs. And the pressure that these companies were bringing inside South Africa was significant. It was not enough in the short term to bring down the apartheid regime, but it would be later and it's interesting; if you go fast forward six or seven years, this thing worked. Not so much what we were doing, but the combination of the disinvestment people eventually played out with what South Africa was doing. I'll get to that later when we look at the down the road issues.

So, I worked with Leon Sullivan. We had a major conference at Blair House, where we brought in heads of the American firms, the main firms operating in South Africa, maybe a dozen of them. And they met with Reverend Sullivan. And they met with people from the State Department and talked about what we were doing. So, it was a big deal. And what we were trying to get across, again, is this question of "Don't throw the Americans out, let them do good." So, we had these various meetings. I went out and talked to people. But it's an uphill struggle. And then, as I said, the momentum, the anti-apartheid momentum, began to pick up. And the domestic politics of it was that Reagan was an extremely strong president. And the democrats sensed that this was his Achilles' heel in foreign policy. The question of his apparently supporting South Africa. He was much more understanding, if you will, as to what South Africans were doing. State Department wasn't. We could state publicly our disagreements with apartheid. White House sort of mumbled quietly, didn't say much. But the left—particularly the Black Caucus at this point, but others—began to see the weakness in the president's position, that public opinion was shifting against them and opinion in Congress was shifting against them. This is important. I dealt a lot with people on the hill, explaining this, getting their views. And what you had, which we don't have in Congress now, is the ability for people of one side or the other to support the other party. And eventually, two years down the road, it was republicans that supported the anti-apartheid movement to the degree that they overrode Reagan's veto. This is 1986, this is three years down the road. But Richard Lugar, and people like that, Republican, said, "We're not doing this. We have to do more against what's going on in South Africa." But this, as I said, it's three years out. So, we're fighting the good fight now, but I'm realizing that this is a losing battle. It's not something we're going to succeed in.

Q: Could we look a little bit about the role of Jesse Helms?

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: And the congressional pressure.

FUGIT: Right. Well, Jesse and the conservatives wanted an end to our sanctions on South Africa. We had, over the previous 20 years, been slowly putting on more sanctions: weapons sales, travel, a bunch of things. And he wanted those removed. Not only—he supported this anti-disinvestment movement, but he went beyond that. And Jesse was a thorn in the side of us and he totally disliked the State Department. We were—I know from his staffers—we were perceived as sellouts. We wouldn't support the good South Africans. He was great buddies with—who was the prime minister? —P.W. Botha in South Africa. He would travel down there; they'd treat him like royalty. So, he was—and there were others like him in the House as well as the Senate. But gradually, they lost support on this issue. So over '83 to '86, those three years, congressional opinion shifted as did public opinion. And I think, actually, it was public opinion shifts, and then Congress followed public opinion.

One of the things that happened during this period, very interesting aside. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. Now, the Anglicans—which we call Episcopalians in the United States—the Anglicans are the second biggest denomination in South Africa. They're the main church for the English-speaking whites. The Afrikaans-speaking whites are members of the Dutch Reformed Church. So, anyway, Desmond Tutu was elected as Archbishop of Cape Town in the mid 1980s. What that gave him—and this is critical to understand of everything that follows—is because he was the archbishop, the government couldn't arrest him. They could, but it'd be an absolute disaster in the world. I mean, sanctions would come down from everybody. So basically, Tutu had the freedom to say what he wanted to say. And he was opposed to all versions of apartheid. He did not claim to be a member of the ANC, the African National Congress. He was, in fact, a supporter of their positions. So, he gradually, during the early '80s—'83, '84—became more and more of the spokesman because Mandela [Nelson Mandela] is still in prison. The leadership of the African National Congress is up in Angola someplace. They're not very good at getting their point of view out. Tutu becomes the spokesman for anti-apartheid—for the ANC in particular. And the left inside South Africa realizes, "This guy is a godsend for us. We can get our message across and the government can't touch him." So, he becomes the darling of anti-apartheid movements in the world. And in '84 he won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Q: October 16, '84.

FUGIT: Okay. So, he gets the Nobel Peace Prize, okay. He comes to the United States with some frequency because the anti-apartheid movement realizes that the center of gravity for overthrowing the South Africans eventually is Washington. When Washington pulls its support completely and disinvests or whatever, you're going to see a collapse in Pretoria. So, they send Tutu to the United States on a couple of occasions. But then he gets the Nobel Peace Prize, comes to the United States. The pressure is increasing; as I said, public opinion is shifting. Congressional republicans are shifting. And the demand is that Reagan must meet with Desmond Tutu because he just won the Nobel Peace Prize, et cetera. Well, what we have here is neither man wanted to meet with the other. Tutu despised Reagan. Reagan—I guess, I don't know firsthand—but he wasn't a fan of Tutus.

Every position Tutu took was different from what Reagan took. But the pressure was that the President had to meet him.

So, Chet Crocker and I travel up to New York. Tutu was staying with the Episcopalian Archbishop of New York, which is his, you know, his co-religious. And so, we went through the Archbishop in New York, saying, "Listen, we'd like to meet with him." Well, it took a couple of days, as I recall, to get an answer back. Tutu did not want to do this. The Episcopalian Archbishop saw the benefit in doing it from a U.S. tactical point of view in the anti-apartheid movement. So, then Tutu agrees to meet with us. So, Chet and I go up there and we go in and basically Chet does the talking. It's a rather stilted exchange, as I recall, but basically Tutu agrees to meet with Reagan in the next week or two, whatever it was, and then it's our job to go back to Washington and set it up.

Now, we'd already been given the go-ahead. If Tutu says yes and he doesn't make any preconditions—because the worry is Tutu would say, "I'll meet with the President if he agrees to surrender first." That kind of thing. So, the agreement was, they're just going to meet. So, I went back, and we set up a meeting at the White House. Two weeks from then, whatever it is. Tutu comes down to Washington. I meet him and escort him and somebody from the Episcopalian diocese in Washington to the White House.

Q: Wow.

FUGIT: I don't get into the meeting. Chet goes through.

Q: This is on December 7.

FUGIT: Right. Okay. So, I took him into the White House. I'm the control officer. I sit outside the room. I would have paid anything to be in there. Because you don't often have a situation where both people in a meeting loathe the other person. Or maybe you do, I don't know, but anyway, this was not a productive meeting. The purpose of it was the atmospherics. It helped Reagan marginally, but it helped Tutu even more. And the anti-apartheid group, you know, could say, you know, he spoke up to Reagan, et cetera.

So, this is two years into my being on the desk and the policy is a mess. Then what happens is somebody in the anti-apartheid movement in the US stumbles on the idea of having a sit-in at the South African Embassy in Washington. And a group of black politicians from the Congressional Black Caucus set up a meeting. They wanted to call on the South African ambassador. So, they go in, call on him, and then they will not leave South Africa's embassy. They're inside the mission and they're staging a sit-in. Well, of course this blows up. The people who did it didn't realize, I think, what the repercussions were. It became a cause célèbre amongst the growing anti-apartheid movement. And we were faced—we, the State Department—are now faced with several touchy issues. The South Africans, this is their territory, it's inside their embassy. We don't have the right to send in police unless they tell us to do so. The South Africans don't want to physically pick up these people and throw them out the door. Terrible optics. There isn't a good answer.

I remember meeting with Frank Wisner, and he said, "Well, Ed? What are we going to do? Never had this one before." I said, "You know, the longer we wait, the more this is going to get bad. So maybe we say well, if the South Africans want, we can send in police to move people, but it has to have the permission of their government." Well, as it turns out, after a day or so. Anyway, they left the building, and they began the sit-in outside. And this grew and grew. And everybody who was anybody in the left on the anti-apartheid movement had to be there. And they desperately wanted to be arrested. This was the badge of honor. And quite a few were arrested and promptly released.

The D.C. [Washington D.C.] police decided there was nothing that—because the South Africans would not press charges. There was no reason to charge them with a crime. And also, the police realized, this is the District of Columbia. Any jury in the district is going to be 90 percent black and they're going to get off. There's no way you're going to convict anybody. We didn't want a trial or conviction, we just wanted this to end. Well, the anti-apartheid groups realized, okay, this has become a big deal. So, this goes on for quite some time. And different people protest outside the South African embassy or sit-in outside or whatever. And this is just one of the symptoms of this growing anti-apartheid movement in the United States. And this is playing back in Congress. Republicans are seeing this. And even Jesse Helms, I mean, he has to realize that this thing is going the wrong way.

I should have put this in a little bit earlier. When this broke, right after I got there in '83, '84, it began to bubble up. The White House asked the State Department to send over a briefing paper on apartheid for the president to read. So, the OP-Center [Operations Center] calls me and says, "Can we meet this request?" I said, "Fine. Do you want four, five pages?" The Ops Center said, "No. One page." I said, "This has been going on since 1620. To explain the whole background of apartheid, I can either do one sentence that says its bad, or do you want me to explain it?" "No, you got one page, do your best." Okay. They basically said Reagan is not going to read it if it's longer than a page. So, it was hard to get the main points in there as to what it was. Anyway, so we send the one pager. That's just an example because the White House really couldn't have cared less about South Africa until this blows up. And they get Jesse Helms on their neck and the conservative republicans and then they got the left, who Reagan didn't like anyway. So, that game is all playing out on two levels above me. And I'm still going on carrying out what's left of our policy, which is trying to keep U.S. firms from disinvesting. And in the short term, I had some success. In the long term, it was a losing battle, and I knew it was a losing battle.

While this is going on, Chet's working on this whole question of Namibia and Angola and that's going to take six or seven years. The Cubans had not yet been defeated, the South Africans are just feeling their military oats, and the South Africans are deciding on, 'We're going to have a very militant or military focus against the ANC.' So, they begin to carry out raids in Angola, in Mozambique, and Zimbabwe against ANC cadres. The ANC as a military force was not very good. I'd seen the three liberation movements in Angola. They weren't that good, but at least they were in the field and fighting. In Rhodesia, you

had the two liberation movements who were fighting fairly well. But in Namibia, you had SWAPO [South-West Africa People's Organization], which really didn't amount to much in a military sense. And then you had the ANC, who had a lot of guns, but nobody that could really get into South Africa. So, the South Africans wanted to bring the fight to the Cubans and to the ANC and Angola. So, this war goes on and for there to be a solution, there must be some evolving of the military situation; one side or the other must think they're not going to win. Or it's not worth the cost they're paying for it. Which is actually what ends up happening five years, six years in the future, when Moscow collapses and there's no money to support the Cubans. And this gives you just what we're trying to carry out, which is to get the Cubans and Soviets out of Angola militarily.

But this is five years into the future. For now I'm going around the country giving these speeches, not having any effect and not expecting to have any. And our relations with South Africa were, every time they do something stupid, we impose some other kind of administrative economic sanctions. It's worth pointing out that in the case of South Africa, this is unique—not unique, but this doesn't happen that often—sanctions worked. Most times, Iran and North Korea and others, sanctions bite, but they don't cause the government to change their position. And what happened with South Africa: one of the big sanctions was on sports. South African whites are rugby crazy and cricket crazy and both the International Rugby and Cricket Unions cut South Africa off so they could not compete internationally. To the white South African, that was a big deal and was only going to get worse. Also, the economic sanctions were cutting. A lot of companies are pulling out. South Africa's foreign exchange was devalued. The pressure of the sanctions—from Europe, from the United States—was getting worse and worse. It wasn't shutting the country down. But that would come later.

It was clear that the sanctions itself were going to escalate over the years. And fast forward to 1989, 1990. They were very severe at that point. And when the new government comes in in South Africa; new prime minister, he realizes that they need to cut a deal. I'm going to jump forward a second here, because the third year of this—we don't talk about much—is being in the National War College. Remember, I told you when I started, '83, I said, you know, "What? How is this all going to play out?" But when you're a desk officer, you're putting out fires every day. You're not doing the thumb-sucking papers that you do if you're in a RAND Corporation, whatever. So, when I get to the National War College, you have to do a thesis there. And I said, "Okay, why don't I do it on how South Africa is going to play out?" So, I wrote about an unclassified twenty-page paper, maybe even longer. And the idea was, I'm going to look at what has happened elsewhere in Africa, how the South Africans see the situation, and what the likely outcome is going to be. So, I wrote this in 1986. And my argument is, the current government (1986) in South Africa is not going to change anything. That's an old man that's running the party and the country. He's set in his ways and he's going to die soon. Okay. The next prime minister—who will also be from the same party, going to be an Afrikaner—is going to realize that they're playing a losing hand, they don't have good cards. So, I then compare what happened in French Algeria, what happened in the

Portuguese colonies, what happened with Rhodesia, and analyze the evolution of each of these situations.

And the South African government, for all its problems, is a well-organized Western type of government. They would be doing this same kind of analysis to their future. The prime minister doesn't want to preside over the destruction of the Afrikaner nation, which is what he cares about. He wants to try and figure out how they can get out of this morass that they were in. They'd already closed off all these doors that, if they had shown a smarter policy in the 1930s and '50s and '60s, there would be ways out of it. They've antagonized all the black groups; they're not going to get enough support from anybody else inside the country to have a majority. So, their only option is going to be to negotiate. And the sooner the better, because they saw what happened with Rhodesia, when Ian Smith refused to negotiate. And the British had offered him a great deal in 1975. He rejected it. By '79, they're on their heels, they can't fight this war anymore, they have to give up. The Portuguese, you know, were going to fight the war until the army says we're not going to fight it anymore. They're out of it. So, it's better to negotiate. The sooner you negotiate, the better; you have more power and leverage. The longer you wait, the more your power is reduced because of these sanctions. So, I analyzed, also, the ability of the South Africans to fight this out. They could have easily strung this out for another decade in military terms. They had military superiority in the short term, in the narrow sense. They didn't have political superiority. They didn't have numerical superiority, in terms of the balance of military forces. So, yes, they could have gone down in a blaze of apartheid glory. And that's what would have happened. Maybe it would have taken ten or twelve years or worked out a deal. Now, they had Nelson Mandela to deal with. Mandela had been in prison for about twenty-five or thirty years at this point. But he was never really mistreated, in the sense that is the norm in Africa.

They had kept lines open to Mandela. He was in a prison in the harbor in Cape Town, which, in terms of climatic conditions, is pretty hard. You get weather that goes through there. But he was given access to books. He was treated relatively well, unlike how they treated other people like Steve Biko and others who they beat to death. So, I think they knew that in Mandela, they maybe had someone they could negotiate with. And that was my supposition in this paper. They're going to realize that they are going to have to release him and work with him as the head of the ANC.

Anyway, I'm writing this paper in '86. And it turns out that's pretty much how it played out. It happened maybe sooner than I expected. But the Prime Minister dies. New guy, DeKlerk, comes in and talks to Mandela, lets him out and everything follows from that. We remove sanctions, et cetera. But sanctions were the biggest lever on the South Africans to capitulate. It wasn't military. ANC was completely feckless in terms of military capability. So, that wasn't what brought them down. But it was the sanctions and their own people. The white population did not want to be pariahs in the world. They saw themselves as part of Western civilization and they were rejected by everybody in the West, except Jesse Helms. So anyway, I do that paper and that carries out in my own mind, where this thing is going to go for what it's worth.

Q: Let's back up a little bit. You come to the desk in the summer of '83. Who else is on the desk and sort of, what's your chain of command? Who's giving you orders?

FUGIT: Well, on the desk was just myself. There wasn't an assistant desk officer. And I reported—

Q: That's the Southern Africa desk, so there must have been a director.

FUGIT: Oh, there was, no—I was just a desk officer. Then you had desk officers for Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Southwest Africa. I mean, there were other guys and then there was a deputy director—

Q: Dan Simpson.

FUGIT: —Dan Simpson, right. And I think David Passage was around part of that time. Let me see who these are here. So basically, as the office was divided, I had the South African account, which was the biggest, obviously, in this office. But there was a lot of stuff going on with Namibia, and maybe with Mozambique, also.

Q: Zimbabwe.

FUGIT: Pardon me?

Q: South Rhodesia was still—

FUGIT: Well, that would have been solved already. That was solved in 1980—1979, rather. Basically, Ian Smith surrendered. And you had elections. Mugabe is elected Prime Minister, sanctions on Rhodesia are removed, you have a majority government in what's now Zimbabwe. Used to be Rhodesia. So that's 1980. So, by '83, that was an accepted situation. What happened was—and I'll get into this, as I end up in Zimbabwe later—Mugabe in Zimbabwe becomes the darling of the anti-apartheid movement. He's the frontline president. He led a successful military force that eventually brought down the Smith regime. So, that country, Zimbabwe, had a much greater role on the world stage during the 1980s than it will ever have afterwards. I'll get into that next subject.

Q: Well, the interesting thing is, the desk generally always reports to a deputy assistant secretary. So, who is—

FUGIT: The office reports to a deputy assistant secretary. The office itself.

Q: Who was that deputy assistant secretary in charge of South Africa?

FUGIT: Might have been Lannon Walker? I'm not sure. Let me—

Q: It was Lannon, Bishop, or Lyman.

FUGIT: Basically, because this was South Africa, it was Crocker. I would talk to Walker or Bishop on different issues. Had good communications with the sixth floor. But the big South African issues, they went in to Chet Crocker because that was, you know, the biggest issue in the African bureau right now was South Africa for him. But it was good communication. I did not have the access to the secretary of state like I did in Angola eight years previously. That was an unusual circumstance and almost never happens. And it wasn't going to happen again. In fact, I don't remember ever George Shultz getting involved in these things. I'm sure he did, but I think Crocker—anything with South Africa on it, he handled it. He kept the secretary apprised of it and the White House. But he got to carry it out. It was really his baby. And that's something you don't often see, where the seventh floor will give an assistant secretary his head completely: "Okay, I know what your policy is, what you're trying to do, you carry it out. And let me know where they can weigh in, as they do from time to time." But yeah.

Q: Now, you're on the desk for a year and then you're promoted.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: New South Africa desk officer to deputy director of the whole office.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: In 1984 in Crocker's interview, he said that the '84, '85 period blew up in our face.

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: And what is he referring to and how did it impact you?

FUGIT: Well, what he was referring to is the sit-ins at the South African embassy, the meeting with Desmond Tutu, the explosion of the anti-apartheid movement in the United States, realizing that they have stumbled on a lever to use against the president. And there really wasn't much that the State Department was going to be able to do. This was domestic politics. And it was playing out for domestic reasons, having nothing to do with foreign affairs. So yeah, '84, '85, it really blew up. And in '86, it got worse. And that's when Congress passed the Anti-Apartheid Act. And Reagan vetoed it. I'm gone; this is past my timeframe by a year. But Reagan vetoed it, and the House and Senate overrode his veto. So, the Anti-Apartheid Act had passed with an override, which is very unusual.

Q: Now, when you were deputy director in the office, did you continue liaison with the Congress and business people?

FUGIT: I did. Because I was plugged into all these people. You met with them, I knew these guys, and, you know, that was part of my job anyway. So, the position I went into, up until then, there was one director and one deputy. So, they added another deputy. And that's the position I was promoted into. And basically, I was doing anything related to South Africa. Well, I did some Namibia stuff but essentially, that was Chet Crocker's

baby. He took me along on two of his overseas trips. We're talking to Europeans, talking to South Africans, et cetera. But essentially, I was doing the same thing, just with a more grandiose title for what it's worth.

Q: Now, these Namibia things that you were doing with Crocker. Were you writing special papers with him or being his note taker?

FUGIT: No, he had a staff that would—he had about three or four officers that always traveled with him. And a note taker and executive assistant, et cetera. I just went along, I wanted to watch what was going on. I'm not sure why I went on the trip because again, it wasn't— this was really his baby, it wasn't my baby. But it was of interest to me how this was playing out and how the South Africans were responding to it. And they were buying into this, gradually. At the beginning, they really didn't. But I think they realized that Crocker's approach was about the only one that was going to get them out of a ground war with the Cubans. They were willing to fight some battles. They didn't want a ten or fifteen-year war with the Cubans. How can that be solved? And they also realized that—they, the South Africans—said, "we don't need Namibia. If we can sell Namibia for the price of getting the Cubans out of Angola, we'll sell it." So, that was the essence of Crocker's plan to get the South Africans to agree and you could then tell the Angolans and tell the ANC, "Look, they will leave if you get the Cubans out of here." So, that was what he was arguing. He had support for that in the White House and in Congress; on that aspect of it, because it was anti-Soviet.

Q: So, you're saying he traveled to South Africa, and you were one of his staffers on that travel?

FUGIT: Oh, it was actually Western Europe. He went to South Africa, but I didn't go with him on those. I remember we went to London, and we went to Rome. The Brits were major allies in this whole thing. Maggie Thatcher didn't like Desmond Tutu any more than Reagan did, put it that way. The British government wanted a voice because there were so many; there were probably two million Brits in South Africa. And they did not want them caught up in a civil war. They wanted a peaceful resolution. But their idea of that was along the terms of what the white government wanted. And they, the Brits, were put under the same kind of pressure that we were, from the anti-apartheid movement in Britain. And Thatcher, the Iron Lady, was going to stand up to them. So, there was a separate fight going on in Britain over this while we were having our battles. And at the end of the day, the outcome was the same. I mean, Britain ended up imposing sanctions. Financial in particular, because they had more financial interests there than we did.

Q: Now, one of the things that complicated this situation was the security situation inside of South Africa began to deteriorate. What they call the Township Revolts—

FUGIT: Right.

Q: —and whatnot. So, that means the missions, the embassy and consulate generals like Durban are reporting on these to you in Washington.

FUGIT: Yeah. And we understood what was going on. These were semi-spontaneous. Often, they developed from the police overplaying their hand in a certain place. Sometimes, they were fomented by the ANC, who had infiltrated some people and were able to get demonstrations, because it was in the interest of the ANC to have constant demonstrations to force the police to use their heavy-handed tactics. And that would result in more sanctions against the regime. So, that's the background music to what's going on. And every time the South Africans would act badly, which was frequently, we had no recourse but to publicly condemn what they were doing. But we would never go as far as the anti-apartheid movement wanted us to go, which was to pull U.S. businesses out of South Africa.

So, that battle continues. But we're slowly losing that war. It's very clear that public opinion is shifting. Leon Sullivan's principles were very good, and they had some impact. But they weren't going to change the overall situation in minority-ruled South Africa. It would take much broader application of sanctions coming down— which it did come down—to change things.

Q: Now, there must have been some sort of political shifts inside of South Africa, because I believe that Botha offered Nelson Mandela a Get Out of Jail Free.

FUGIT: Yeah. And he declined it.

Q: And Mandela declined.

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: It was said that the Afrikaner leadership was trying to look for ways to relieve the pressure.

FUGIT: Oh, absolutely. And as I said, obviously, their route at the Get Out of Jail card was Mandela. And they had to be able to use him. And I suspect the first offer in '86 probably had too many conditions on it. They had wanted him to come out and argue against violence, against demonstrations, and work with the government on a slow process of majority rule. And Mandela wasn't buying that, he was probably too old, you know, "I got to get something more than that." So, he wouldn't sign into it. And then that prime minister, P.W. Botha dies, then de Klerk [F. W. de Klerk] comes in in '88, '89. And that's where the change begins to occur.

Q: Again, in the timeframe that you were there, the South Africans sometimes don't do something in their best interest. On June 14, '85, South Africa raided Botswana.

FUGIT: Yep.

Q: And apparently, the United States decided to pull its ambassador to South Africa at that time. How did that decision unfold?

FUGIT: That was almost the same week I was leaving the desk. And I think the raid was egregious. And Botswana is a very peaceful country. There may have been some ANC operating there; that was not a major ANC post. And I think the feeling was, we just can't let them do it. And they had done other attacks like that. In Maputo and Mozambique, up into Zimbabwe, and certainly into Angola. And, as I said, their military and their intelligence services were much more robust than they'd been eight years previously, ten years previously. They had the capability of doing it, but it didn't do them any political good. It buys you a little bit of time, and it gets everybody ticked off at you. And the ANC can easily replace those guys. They're martyrs to the cause, if you will. So, there were several of these, and we would try and come up with solutions. In fact, our ambassador in South Africa was probably more friendly to the Afrikaners than I think we would have liked. I mean, he understood what our policy was, he supported the policy. But it was, you know, he had "clientitis," I guess, is the right word. When you're in a place and you begin to take on the views of the government you're assigned to.

Q: Well, this has been an interesting assignment. You're coming in from Brussels, very typical European diplomatic exchanges with local embassies and whatnot, and you land in one of the hottest issues on the desk. You find yourself working with Congress, talking to the public, doesn't sound very foreign service-y at all. But let me let you summarize the thought. Is this what foreign policymaking is like?

FUGIT: In most cases, it's not. I mean, you see what happens in other places around the world. But this was a domestic issue in the US, not really a foreign policy one. The people that were attacking weren't attacking foreign policy, per se. They wanted to support the anti-apartheid movement, and they saw a chance to undercut a president they didn't like. So, this was a domestic fight. And I was in it because I'm trying to sell this one aspect of it—disinvestment. We did not make any attempt to defend apartheid. You can't. You can't do it. And basically, when questioned about it, indicate we've got these sanctions in place, et cetera. So, it was definitely not a typical assignment. I was thinking about that. Normally, when you're on a desk, you deal with other embassies. You deal—your embassies in the field. We had some of that; instructions going out to the embassy, et cetera. But really, what we were doing was domestically focused. The demonstrations, the sit-ins, what do we say about it? Does Chet Crocker meet with these people? I think he did, but I'm not sure. But it definitely is not your typical desk job. And my first job on Angola wasn't a typical one either, as it turns out. I mean, the other fellows I knew that were working on countries... like the Zimbabwe desk office. He had a real government to take care of in the field, he had an embassy. We had a policy towards Zimbabwe. It was foreign affairs. It wasn't fought out in Congress. Now, Rhodesia had been an issue in '78 and '79 in Congress. It was no longer an issue in '81, '84, '85. It had been settled. And you're dealing with the foreign policy side of it. Same thing with Mozambique.

One of the things that was going on, I should just point out, is South Africa was fooling around with nuclear weapons at this time. In fact, right after I took over on the desk, the State Department said "Okay, we're sending you to a three-week course that's put on by

the Department of Energy. And it will teach you about the nuclear weapons cycle. What you need to know. What to look for." So, one week was at the DOE [Department of Energy] headquarters in Washington. They're a group of about twenty of us. The other week was at Los Alamos. And the other week was at Oak Ridge, Tennessee; there was a big nuclear operation. And the purpose of it: State wanted me to go because we knew the South Africans were up to something with nuclear weapons. And they wanted me in particular to be alert to, 'What are the signs? What kind of things will they need to be buying, legally or illegally, to make nuclear weapons? Where would they get them from? What are the sources? How do we detect that they're doing it?'

So anyway, I did that. And our information was limited. But pretty much the conclusion was, yeah, they're trying to design a bomb. So, then the thought goes, "Okay, is it with the Israelis?" Because the technology to make a weapon is, as I discovered, there's an easy way to do it and there's the hard way. And the easy way, once you enrich the uranium is—it's the first bomb that we dropped on Japan. The second bomb was the hard one. So, they explained it to me that, you know, if you're doing it quick and dirty, and all you want is a bomb, not the most effective bomb, just put a bunch of U-235 [Uranium-235] at either ends of a tube, essentially, and then fire this one into that one and you have a nuclear reaction. You don't even have to test it. The first bomb we dropped on Japan had never been tested; we knew it was going to work. The second bomb we dropped three days later was a totally different design. And it's a spherical design and it explodes by hundreds of electrodes on the surface of the device that have to be ignited within a micromillimeter of a second. It has to be instantaneous to compress the ball of uranium, and then it blows up and gives you a much greater yield than the other bomb.

So, long story short, I go through three weeks of training on what I'm looking at. And, you know, basically, we could never prove anything. We may have had more intelligence than was being given to me, also. I think if the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] or others were snooping around on this, they would have found out some more. But there was then a test called the Vela incident, which happened in 1979—and this has been reported on in the press—over the extreme south Atlantic, from South Africa down to Antarctic, and one of our satellites was up there. And we don't normally scan that part of the world. And there was a bright flash. We know that for sure. What it was we don't know. The assumption is that it was a test of a nuclear device. By the South Africans, with or without the Israelis, we don't know.

There was a task force set up in the Department of Defense to look into this in '79. There's no conclusive proof as to what it was. But that, what we were hearing later about the uranium being enriched, was almost certainly correct. In 1990, I'm off in Pakistan, but I remember reading some of our intel stuff. And the South Africans were getting rid of their plutonium. They were destroying it. And this was right after they released Mandela. And I'm thinking, you know, they know that they're going to give up control. They don't need this bomb.

By the way, there was never any reason to build the damn thing. That's another—but they don't need this weapon. And they definitely don't want to turn it over to a government

that they can't trust. So anyway, they destroyed the centrifuges and somehow, they got rid of the plutonium. So, it was never publicly announced but it was privately acknowledged. I remember seeing it in the open press about what they did. Because I said, what were they going to use the weapon for? You're going to drop a nuclear weapon on a squad of twelve terrorists coming through the bush? No. Are you going to destroy Maputo? No. I mean, there wasn't any logical weapons purpose for the nuclear device, probably because they could do it, I guess. But that was going on. Nothing came of that but my awareness of it, I guess.

Q: Anyway, after your desk job, which sounds pretty intensive, did you ever get the chance to go home from time to time?

FUGIT: Yeah, it was not as bad as the Angolan desk.

Q: Anyway, the next thing that's in your career path, is you get assigned to the National War College.

FUGIT: Right.

Q: How did that opportunity come forward?

FUGIT: It just came down. State gets to send, I think, twelve or thirteen FSOs [Foreign Service Officers] a year to the National War College, which is in Washington. And the deputy commandant was, and still is, a State Department ambassador. So, the commandant of the War College is a two- or three-star general, and then the deputy is a State Department officer. In fact, when I was there in '85 to '86, it was—

Q: Jay Moffat.

FUGIT: Nope. The guy who had been the chargé in Tehran when they were taken hostage.

Q: Bruce Laingen.

FUGIT: Yeah. So, that assignment is a tremendous year of trainings. The NWC has about 120 military officers, and 20 State, and a couple of people from DOE and CIA, et cetera. And it has nothing to do with war, despite the name. You don't sit there and move little tanks around on a table, none of that stuff. It's national security policy and, first of all, how the US government is set up to handle national security. Because the military guys that are there, unlike the State Department folks who've been working on policy for years, the military are universally not policy oriented—their previous job is, they were destroyer commanders, wing commanders, or battalion commanders in the army. They're all forty to forty-three years old. And their life up till then has been operational military tactics. They didn't know what the NSC [National Security Council] was. And the purpose of the program, a lot of it is, each service sends their best people to the War College.

More than half of them have gone to become general officers. And my best friend at the War College—a guy named Pete Pace—later is Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So, the training you get is looking at the government. So, some of this, us foreign service guys are already familiar with how Washington works. And then you get into questions of budgeting; how the national security budget or defense budget is constructed, which we didn't need to know. But then, how different agencies of the government work together to formulate policy, which is interesting. And obviously, we know how the State Department does it. These guys did not know how the Defense Department did it. So, it's cross pollinating.

We get there, see what their view of the world is, they understand ours. And it used to be, when I was there, there were no grades. Which, for the military, is unheard of. They grade everything. And, for example, the Naval War College up in Newport was graded. And these people fought tooth and nail up there. It was well known that the higher your grade, the more your chances for promotion, and you were competing against the other really smart people in the Navy. So, we didn't have that, thank goodness. You didn't have to do it. You could read what you wanted to read, focus on different things. A lot of training was Sun Tzu and Clausewitz. Which is as pertinent to foreign policy as it is to military strategy. It was a very good year for me and for my family.

Q: Now, what was the staff like? I mean, were you in regular classes or were there guest lecturers?

FUGIT: There were lectures all the time; they had a huge auditorium. And it was an amphitheater kind of arrangement. And the rules were that it was non-attribution for everybody who spoke. And you could ask any questions you wanted. There was nothing off-limits. One person who always spoke to the War College is Newt Gingrich. And he had been doing that for years, he continued to do it. He saw the value, he said, "Look. These are the guys that are going to be running the government ten, twelve, fifteen years." So, he went out there and other people like that—very senior people. They had the directors of National Security Council going back twenty years. Each of them came and would spend an hour or two—separately, not on a panel, but just, they would speak. We had X subjects on Russia and China, like a week on each one. And the CIA would send their Russian expert or the Chinese expert over. And they would tell us what they were seeing and then taking questions. And this was a guy on our level. He wasn't, you know, a senior one. He was the senior analyst for the USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics]. And what we did—it's interesting and I always look back on it. This is 1986. The people talking about Russia—nobody saw the collapse coming three years later. Completely unforeseen. I mean, we ascribed more power to the Soviets than they had. But at that point, we believed, you know, this is what we were seeing. So, it was very interesting. Africa almost never came up; there was a couple of hours on that.

Also you get to do a two-week trip overseas. So, I got on the group to going to China. And so, we were guests of the Chinese army for two weeks. And we started up in the north, in Harbin, and went all over the country. Obviously, Beijing, Shanghai, et cetera,

into the interior. They did not take us to Tibet. So, that was a real eye opener because I had never been in the Chinese orbit at all. And you go around the country, and you would see what's going on. And the Chinese would brief us, and they had an embassy guide from the attaché office from the embassy who was with us. And that was fun. This was China in 1986. It was just ten years after Mao died, and China is finally trying to come out of the dark ages. It's nowhere near like the China of today. The stuff you see now in China, we didn't see that. I'm sure you were there during those periods. Anyway, that was a good experience for me just to expose myself to something else, a different area of the world. And while I'm at the War College, I start working on my next assignment.

Q: Now, you were telling us earlier about this paper that you wrote.

FUGIT: Oh, yeah.

Q: Was each student allowed to pick his topic or?

FUGIT: Yeah, you could pick your own topic. You'd submit it. You had an advisor, and he would say, "Yeah, this is good." And they said, "Fine." It was different from what other guys were writing on. They were trying to analyze an existing problem. I was trying to extrapolate and look forward in a foreign policy issue. But I had a lot, you know, they have an excellent library there. You can look things up. It was good. And I submit a draft, then they look at it, then you submit a final one. And the documents—none of them are classified, the stuff you write. So, it's open source. Wasn't quite sure why that was, but it is.

In terms of a family thing, everyone agrees that the War College is probably the best year of your professional life. You're not in the pressure cooker. If you're a battalion commander or a submarine commander, you're on 24/7, just like if you're in an embassy. So, that was a chance for them to decompress and for us. They spent a lot of time explaining personalities. Myers-Briggs?

Q: Oh, yes.

FUGIT: And so, we spent two or three days doing Myers-Briggs. They thought it that important.

Q: Now in the selection of the State Department assignees, I assume you're the Africa guy. I see that Rust Deming was there—he's the Asia guy. Is that sort of how it worked out?

FUGIT: It may have been. I don't know, I've no idea what the criteria were.

Q: Rust must have gone with you to China?

FUGIT: Who?

Q: Rust Deming.

FUGIT: Yup, yeah. We all had different backgrounds. And there was nobody there—any other African hands.

Q: So, to that end, were classmates asking you Africa questions?

FUGIT: Some did, but basically, they didn't care much. It's not a big issue. I shouldn't—no, that's not true. South Africa was still bubbling. In September of '86, which was my second month at the War College, is when Congress overrode Reagan's veto on South African legislation. That was a big deal. I mean, in Washington. Presidents don't get overridden very often. Had a lot of questions about that.

FUGIT: Okay.

Q: Today is the 2 of March. We're returning to our conversation with Ed Fugit. Ed, it's the Reagan administration. You've just had this very stimulating assignment at the National War College, where you've done research, taking trips and whatnot. And now you're about to walk into a very different job in Harare, Zimbabwe. How did this opportunity come up?

FUGIT: Well, I've been working on Southern Africa from 1973 until 1985. Probably a longer period than any other FSO [foreign service officer]—straight, just doing Southern Africa. The DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] job was opening up in Zimbabwe, and I put my name into the front office and, after a lot of back and forth, ended up getting it. And I knew it was going to be an interesting job. I knew Mugabe [Robert Mugabe] was a problem for us. He didn't like us particularly, and the administration didn't particularly like him. But I never realized what I was walking into until I walked into it.

Q: Now, let me ask. Normally, the ambassador picks his DCM. Was Ambassador Miller involved in your selection?

FUGIT: Yeah. He was leaving. He'd been ambassador for a couple of years. He was a political appointee. He was a good friend of Chet Crocker's. And he was, by all accounts, an excellent ambassador. And he had a voice in choosing me and he knew my reputation. And I had met him several times working on Southern Africa. But he left before I arrived.

Q: Yeah, he left on April 17. And you're not going to come in for a couple more months.

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: So, whoever was a DCM at that time suddenly became chargé.

FUGIT: Right. And the DCM was Gib Lanpher [Edward Gibson Lanpher], who, in terms of Rhodesia slash Zimbabwe, was the source of all knowledge. He had been our guy in London in 1978-79, during the negotiations to turn over Zimbabwe to majority rule and

get rid of Ian Smith's government. There was a lengthy, lengthy negotiation that took place at Lancaster House in London. And Gib was our day-to-day rep there. Along with Jeff Davidow, who helped a lot. So anyway, Gib knew Zimbabwe. He'd been DCM for, I think, three or four years. And he was leaving to go back to be the director of AF/S [Southern African Affairs], which is a logical move.

I was going to fly out on July 4 from Washington. And the backstory on this is somewhat interesting. I was flying out on July 4, because Gib wanted to host the embassy's July 4 reception himself and not have two chargé standing there. So, I was to come after the reception. That's fine. It's his call. About a week before I left, I got a call from Chet Crocker, who was the Assistant Secretary, and he asked me for a favor. And his daughter was, I think, about sixteen years old, and wanted to fly out to Zimbabwe. Chet Crocker's wife was born in Rhodesia. Her parents still live in Bulawayo, which is a second city in Zimbabwe. And Chet wanted to send the daughter out for summer break with her grandparents. And since I was flying out, would I take her under my wing? I said, "Okay, sure." So, he brings her to Dulles airport on the morning of July 4. And he brings me the news of what just happened in Harare. I hadn't heard it. And all hell broke loose. And what had happened was that former President Carter was on a visit to Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, and he was going to attend our official Independence Day celebration

Carter was much more pro-Zimbabwe than the Reagan administration that followed him, needless to say. And that's why what happened on this day is so extraordinary. As you know there is a strict protocol that governs these events. And there's a protocol that takes place where a representative of the host government raises a toast to the United States, and then the American ambassador slash chargé raises a toast to the host government, blah, blah. You know, it's strictly pro forma. Well, it wasn't. What happened was the foreign minister of Zimbabwe was a dim bulb, to be polite about it. Also, usually drunk. And he got there, and this was a noon time reception at the biggest hotel in Harare. And everybody was there because it's the United States. And also, because President Carter was there. So, it was very well attended. And it came time for the Zimbabwe—well, it was the foreign minister in this case—to give his remarks. And he led off with a vicious tirade against the United States, against American policy, against the president, against every—and it wasn't one or two minutes, which is normally what these things take. Apparently, it was five to ten minutes. And it was vicious. And it was so bad that President Carter turned to Gib and said, "Let's get out of here." So, Carter leaves. Carter and Gib leave our own reception. He left because of the language that was being used against the United States, and Carter just wasn't going to put up with it. And most of the Western ambassadors who were there left along with him. So, complete collapse.

Naturally this was an event that was covered by the press. And because Carter was there, it obviously got huge coverage in the United States. And it was really bad. A lot of pressure on the administration to do something about it from the Jesse Helmses of the world.

So, Chet Crocker told me all this at the airport in Washington. So, then I fly—takes two

days because you have to overnight in London, to get down to Zimbabwe. So, I go in there, Gib meets me, and we had scheduled, I think for about a five-day handover. That's fine. And then he describes to me what happened at the reception. By this point, President Carter had already left Zimbabwe. He tells me what happened at the reception and what guidance he had gotten from State in the intervening two days. So, I had been out of touch and had no idea what's happening.

What he told me would, as it turns out, basically affect the rest of my four years in Zimbabwe. George Shultz was the Secretary of State. George was, as you probably know, an extremely calm, focused individual. Apparently, he became very animated on this and felt the need to respond forcefully. So, what we are going to do is, let's cut off foreign aid. Zimbabwe was either number three or four in the world in foreign aid after Israel and Egypt, maybe somebody else and then Zim. We were giving them a lot of money and it was being put to good use. So, he wanted— Shultz—probably at the behest of the president, but even on his own. He wanted to cut off foreign assistance. But he said, "Okay, let's give Mugabe some time to see if he will back down and publicly castigate the foreign minister for what he said."

So Gib was told to get this word into the government. That, you know, nothing's going to happen for a couple of days. We don't have a lot of time. And you, Mr. Mugabe, have to do something. Long story short, there was quite a bit of back and forth on this. And the problem is that since Gib wasn't an ambassador and I wasn't an ambassador, we didn't have the clout to drop this message with the prime minister. What we did, we told a lot of people, including through their intelligence organization, what the word was coming out of Washington. You, Mugabe, has to do something to solve this. So Gib leaves and I'm sitting there and waiting. And nothing happens.

Mugabe will not issue a public apology. And the reason is—which we'll get to in a moment—is part two of this whole thing. Two months in the future, in early September, Mugabe is hosting the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Harare, and he has been elected to be the head of the Non-Aligned Movement for the next three or four years, whatever it is. So, there's no way that he can appear to be backing down to pressure from the United States, however justified. So, he's caught. Net result of all that back and forth is that Shultz makes the decision that we're going to cut off foreign aid. We're not going to remove the foreign aid that's already in the pipeline. And that was hundreds of millions of dollars in the pipeline. But the next tranche for 1986, 1987, or whatever it was, was zeroed out and future years is zeroed out. This cost Zimbabwe hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five years.

It also cut us off from our main lever of trying to encourage progress by the government. Because we have a very large aid program. And it was involved in building schools, a lot of construction, a lot of help with the farmers. It was a well thought out, modern aid program. It was not your typical third world program where the money goes right into the pockets of somebody. There was no money, it was all contracts that we issued. So, what was in the pipeline was allowed to continue, nothing new would come forward. So, I'm instructed to go in. First thing, my first official act with the Zimbabwe government was to

go in and to tell them, "We're cutting off the aid supply. You're not getting any more money." So, that was a bad beginning and it never got much better for the four years I was there.

We ended up having a contentious but sort of workable relationship in my time there. We didn't deal much with Mugabe; I'll get to that later. And the foreign minister, as I said, was a dim bulb. So basically, the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the man we did all our business with. He was competent. He knew what we were trying to do, he knew it wasn't going to work because Mugabe wasn't interested in making it work. So, that's the end of my introduction. I'm coming in, and you're just in the middle of—there probably is a more elegant term for it—a shit storm.

Q: There is a DCM course that FSI [Foreign Service Institute] puts together. Did you have the opportunity to take that?

FUGIT: Yes, I did. And, you know, it's interesting, I'll get to that in a second. Because it was a good course. They tried to make you think through issues, what you would do, et cetera. And of course, there's three things that happened in my first four months on the job, none of which they predicted at the DCM course. But basically, you know, everybody has them. You're faced with situations there's no rulebook on. What do you do with them? With this situation? You know, we're coming this close to breaking relations with Zimbabwe. I suspect it might even have been considered in Washington. But they couldn't because, also, Washington's position on this. George Shultz is—at the time this happened, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act was working its way through Congress, the summer of '86. And this was the act that Reagan had opposed. And he was subsequently going to veto it. And then in September, the veto would be overridden by Congress. So, you know, that's the political climate in Washington, which directly had nothing to do with Zimbabwe. It was mainly policy towards South Africa. But Mugabe was the darling of the Anti-Apartheid movement. He was the frontline president. He had fought a war against a white racist regime. And he was the holy saint of the Anti-Apartheid world. So, the administration didn't have much leeway. And interestingly, the democrats did not object to it. And the reason was that if only the chargé had been there and walked out this would never have reached the level of it did. It reached it because former President Carter was there. And Carter's a democrat, and he's a liberal Democrat, and he walked out. So, it was very hard for the democrats in Congress to force the administration to give more aid to a country that had just insulted the United States. So, they basically backed off on that and they went ahead to score their political points on passing the Anti-Apartheid Act, which they did.

Okay, so I take over and begin to try to understand. It's a fairly big mission by African standards. Couple of political officers, econ. It was an economy that actually was—I don't want to say a first world economy. But it was much more advanced than almost anybody else in Africa. So, we had an econ, political, we had a good intelligence relationship, a good military relationship and an active and well led AID office. So, the problem was basically Mugabe, and Mugabe saw himself as the leader of the Non-Aligned, which is what he was going to become in a few weeks. So, I go through the summer sort of

figuring out who's who in the country. Gib Lanpher and others had extensive contacts and I just re-established those. All the stuff they tell you to do in the DCM course, but with no Ambassador looking over your shoulder. And I knew at the time it was going to take maybe a year before the ambassador got here. This wasn't a couple of months chargé-ship.

Q: Now, why are you assuming that?

FUGIT: Because I'd been told by AF [Bureau of African Affairs] that the guy they wanted was going to take a while just because he had business things to wrap up and everything else. The fellow who was going to come out as ambassador—and this was an excellent choice—was a guy named James Rawlings, So, anyway, he didn't come out until, I think, the end of the year or later. But anyway, what happened with him—

Q: He comes in November.

FUGIT: November, okay. He had contributed money to President Reagan's campaigns. And now, Reagan is already five years into his eight-year term. And Rawlings wants to go out as an ambassador, but he only wants Zimbabwe.

Here's the background; it's why this was a great choice that State Department wanted to screw up. Rawlings had been the president of Union Carbide Africa. Union Carbide is a huge mining company with interest all over the world. And one of their biggest mining operations was in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Which is why Rhodesia, in fact, was settled by so many whites, as there was a very strong mining basis for an economy. And Carbide was the biggest single employer in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

However, in 1965, when Ian Smith broke away from Britain, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, American companies were faced with a dilemma, especially Union Carbide. And they did not want to do business with an illegal regime. So, they continued to own the mines. But whoever was the head of Union Carbide Africa no longer was involved in the running of the mines. The profits stayed in Rhodesia. The management was done by Rhodesians. But ownership remained with Union Carbide. No one appropriated the ownership.

So, for the period from 1976 until '86, I think it was, Rawlings was the president of Union Carbide Zimbabwe. But he never went into the country; he stayed overseas in the United States. But as the owner of the company, he would meet overseas. He would meet in London or Germany or elsewhere, with representatives from Union Carbide Zimbabwe. And he talked to them about what was going on and stayed in close touch. And he also made it a point in those years of meeting with the leaders of the two liberation movements in Zimbabwe, ZANU [Zimbabwe African National Union] and ZAPU [Zimbabwe African People's Union]. He knew Mugabe, he knew Nkomo, he knew their top lieutenants. He was better plugged than we were, as it turns out.

So, he wanted to be ambassador to Zimbabwe. He made great sense. So, he sends his package into the White House. And the White House says, "You know what? How would you like to be ambassador in Morocco?" And he said, "Look, I don't speak French. I have no interest in Morocco. I know Zimbabwe." And this fight went on apparently for a couple of months. Because the White House really wanted him to go someplace big, Morocco. The White House didn't care about Zimbabwe. He did. He knew the country. Eventually, he wins the argument and State agrees to assign him as ambassador and he has to wind up his other business in the United States. And then he comes out. And I'll get to him, you know, what he did later. But that's the background.

So, I know he's going to come, and we stay in touch. Before I went out, he took me to dinner at a fine restaurant in Washington I would never think of going to. We had a great dinner, and we became very, very good friends. And he said, "Look, Ed. You're going to run the place." He had taken the ambassador's course already. He knew what they were telling ambassadors. He said, "Look, you're going to run the place. I know what's going on and I know the top people. So, keep me informed and when I need to get involved and go to see Mugabe or the finance ministry, wherever, I can do that. I know them. But I'm not going to do day-to-day stuff, you handle it." Okay, that was fine. So, I go out and I know he's on my side when he gets there. Okay, so the next event that happens two months after this July 4 debacle is Mugabe hosts the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Harare.

Q: Right, it's the eighth Non-Alignment—

FUGIT: Right.

Q: —in the first week in September.

FUGIT: Yeah. And Mugabe invites Mrs. Martin Luther King and her family to be his guests at this event. Okay. So, Washington tips me off, "She's coming out." And Mugabe had reserved suites for her in the big hotel downtown. I made a decision that she's coming out, I've got an ambassador's residence that's empty. We own it. We have a staff that we're paying for and they're doing nothing. We have a car; we have a driver. Given her image in the United States, I contact—I think the desk does it for me—contacts them. I say, "Look, the embassy would like to host you and put you up at the ambassador's residence and take you around and you can do all your stuff." And surprisingly, she says yes. So, when she arrives, I meet her at the airport along with a representative of President Mugabe, get her through customs and everything. And then we take her to the ambassador's residence. Now, she is exhausted. She's an older woman at this point and she's just flown—two-day flight, London and then down to Zimbabwe. She's tired and her family is too. So, we put them up and they have a day or two to get acclimatized to the time zones.

And the first event for the summit—okay, here's how it worked, to understand. We, the diplomatic corps in Zimbabwe, are not invited to the Non-Aligned working meetings. But we are invited to the diplomatic reception; the first night, where all the heads of state of

the Non-Aligned countries get together and they have a big lengthy cocktail party. And we're also invited to some of the entertainment that's going to be offered the second or third night. So, we arranged that I'm going to pick up Mrs. King and we're going to drive to the president's residence in Harare, which is a lovely colonial-style building built by the British, et cetera. And when I get there, Mugabe's senior aide will meet me, take Mrs. King—not her kids, she was the only one invited—take Mrs. King to Mugabe and Mugabe will escort her around for the evening. Then, when she's ready to leave, they'll come and get me, I'll take her back.

Okay. And that's fine. So, I am invited to this reception, as are the other ambassadors. All ambassadors in Harare. So, we get to this reception, and it's beautifully done. And what happens—this is all anecdotal. It's just my personal point of view. But every third world despot you ever heard of was there. A lot of them, I never heard of. For example, the three that I had, Gaddafi, Yasser Arafat, Fidel Castro. I'm sure there are others, but those are the three that I bumped into in the evening. And they're all there without their aides. This is interesting. There might have been bodyguards off in the trees on the side because I don't imagine most of these guys are used to going anywhere without bodyguards, but they weren't allowed in the reception. The only weapon I saw while I was there was the white pistol that Yasser Arafat always wore on his hip. If you ever see pictures of him in the UN [United Nations] General Assembly, he has the pistol on. It's his trademark, I guess.

Anyway, you have all these, you know, powers there and they're going around the reception greeting everybody. And these guys are all used to being top dog in their own country. Well, now they're in Zimbabwe. They're not the top dog, Mugabe is. Mugabe is reveling in this, that he is now going to be the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, et cetera.

There were no speeches. But first of all, Gaddafi—I'll tell his story. Gaddafi, when he came, this was right after we had launched an attack on him in Libya, earlier in '86. I remember when he blew up a disco in Berlin.

Q: The bar in Berlin?

FUGIT: Yeah, not Lockerbie. Lockerbie was a year or two later, I think.

Q: Yeah.

FUGIT: Anyway, okay. So, he was scared of us. And he flew into Zimbabwe with two jets. And he lands and then he does his stuff. And, you know, he goes to the reception. I saw him, but I obviously wasn't going to talk to him. But when he left—and this is the interesting part of the story. He leaves the summit a day early. And I'm not sure why, I'm sure something was odd. But anyway, he goes to the airport, and he's worried that we are going to try and shoot down his planes. So, when he gets there, they pull his two jets up nose to nose. He climbs on and then there's a fifteen- or twenty-minute minute that goes

on. Somebody, either he or a double, goes out on one plane into the other. Then a few minutes later, goes out on the second one and the first one, back and forth.

The purpose of which was that we would not know for sure which plane had Gaddafi, making it harder for us to shoot him down. There was no way we're going to shoot his plane, nor did we think of doing it but that's what he was worried about. So, he does this and we're watching this, apparently. The guys in our embassy who were tasked with such things had their eyes on the plane. But anyway, he flies out. Okay, so that's Gaddafi.

Arafat was strutting around, and I got close to him on two occasions. And I'm sure you've seen pictures of Arafat. In person, he's one of the ugliest people I've ever seen. His face is heavily pockmarked.. Not very big either. So, he's going around.

The other guy was Fidel Castro. Fidel's still in his heyday now in '86. This isn't the elderly Fidel we remember, but he was young and vibrant. And he was working the room like a good politician. So, I was standing with a group of Western ambassadors. And he comes walking over to our group. So, the group opens up away from me and he comes in. I think, "Okay, what do I do? So, as soon as he gets to our group, I turn and walk away. So anyway, that was the event. No one noticed it was just me slipping away.

The other person I ran into, sort of funny, my wife and I are talking, and we see this gentleman standing there. And he had on very unusual clothing. I couldn't place—he definitely wasn't African. So, my wife and I go up to him. He's standing all by himself. Now remember, these are all heads of state or government. They're not used to being by themselves, they're used to having an entourage around. He was standing there; nobody was even talking to him. So, I walk up to him, my wife and I, say "Hi, I'm Ed Fugit." And he said, "I'm the King of Nepal." So, I'm thinking, "Oh my goodness." Okay. So, in my head, I'm flashing through, what do I talk to the King of Nepal about? What subject? So, I asked him how he likes Zimbabwe and everything else. Yeah. So, we talked for about five or ten minutes, that was it. And then I left, and he was just standing there. Because he's not at the top rank of Non-Aligned leaders. And nobody thought it worthwhile even chatting them up.

So, anyway. You had the head of Pakistan there, the President of India, which are bitter enemies, don't usually talk to each other. I mean, it was an interesting get together. So, nothing happened there. There were no anti-American events at this event. So, I take Mrs. King home. And the next day, she goes with Mugabe to the plenary meetings of the Non-Aligned movement. That evening, there's a entertainment event at the biggest theatre in Harare. And she's invited and my wife and I escort her there. For some reason at this point, Mugabe left her with us.

So, we're sitting, we have very nice seats. And I had a hunch that there was going to be some very visible anti-American performances put on. So, I told Mrs. King, I said, "Look, I may have to leave you for a few minutes. I'm just going to walk out; I'll stand in the hallway behind you. And I'll be there, so don't worry." And I know she wouldn't get up to leave. So, I'm getting in, I watch, and then the second act, and I'm looking down,

and I see a donkey with the American flag on it. The donkey was two people, but they were dressed up like a donkey. And there was another one with the union jack on it. I said, "Okay, this is going to be bad."

So, I leave her, and my wife and I go stand in the hallway, fifteen minutes until that act is over. And then I go back and sit with her. And no one was watching us at the time. No, the press didn't pick up that the American walked out, which is fine. I didn't want to be photographed there in front of this. I also didn't want any more nastiness between ourselves and Zimbabwe. So anyway, that's the Non-Aligned summit. We obviously had no role in anything. When it was over, I did a report on it. I mean, I could have written the report before it started. It was typical anti-American, ant-Israeli, ant-British, that kind of vitriol that the Non-Aligned Movement just loved in those years. And Mugabe comes out of it as the leader of the NAM, and he did quite a bit in the next three or four years, as the head of the Non-Aligned Movement. He was constantly putting out press statements, intervening in issues, coming down against the United States or against the British. And we basically ignored it. We're not going to change what the Non-Aligned is saying, they get their own axes to grind. So, that's through September. So, I got that event, which was also obviously on the front page in the New York Times.

The third event was mid-October. The president of Mozambique, Samora Machel, was killed in an airplane crash on the 19 of October. And he was flying around Southern Africa in his airplane, which is a Russian plane, I believe. Anyway, it had an engine malfunction, and it crashed in the mountains. So, the first word that gets out about it is people say, "Oh, the Americans had to do it. The Americans did it." Okay, geez. Anyway, the next day we get word. The police notified us that there were hundreds of demonstrators coming our way from the University of Zimbabwe. Okay.

Well, if you go back to April of '86, these demonstrators had also come to the embassy. I wasn't there, then, what they were protesting. Something. And they besieged the embassy. The police left. So, there were several hundred people. The embassy had a high wall, but you can climb over that with a stepladder. And they did. They climbed over it and went into the compound. And our flagpole was on the front lawn of the building, not up on the roof. So, they were able to get to the flag, they tore the flag down, they burned the flag. Press was there, pictures of this are in the United States, et cetera. And it was a one-day story at the time because they didn't attack the embassy building. Other than climbing over, burning a flag, they didn't have any weapons or whatever.

Okay, so then we get here to October, and I see this mob is coming down the street. So, the police show up. That's good. So, I go down in the street, and I'm talking with a police captain who's in charge of—they had about five or six squad cars there. And suddenly, he gets something over his radio. And he says, "Mr. Fugit, I have to leave." And he won't speak to me. He gets in his car. All the police drive away. I'm looking down the street about, oh, four blocks away. And here's this mob coming towards us.

Now I'm thinking, okay, I just went through the DCM course where they taught you how to handle crises like this and the embassy under attack, et cetera. But everything they

taught you at FSI presupposed that the government of the host country was going to protect you, and you had to coordinate with them, et cetera. Suddenly, we don't have protection. So, oh boy. And again, I'm trying to think of what they told you to do. So, I take my political officer, who was very good. I say, "Okay, get in the car. You drive down to the foreign ministry, you camp out there until they reverse this, and they get somebody." I went to my Econ officer—I remember this from the DCM thing. I said, "When you have a major demonstration, pick up the phone, call the operation center, and don't hang up. Continue until the demonstration is over, constantly feeding the Ops Center with first person reports of what's going on." So, I get my Econ guy. He's on the phone with the Ops Center. The other Pol guy is at the foreign ministry. State tells AF/S to summon the Zimbabwe Ambassador in any way, to start pounding the table, "So, you've got to do something. Get your government to put some police out there." Okay, but none of that's going to happen in the period it takes for the mob to walk four blocks.

So, we got to the embassy. We have the typical contingent of six or seven marine security guards. And they're armed with shotguns. We get inside the building. But what are we going to do? There aren't any rules on how you handle close-in defense of an embassy when it gets overrun. This was 1986. Eight years before that, you may remember the embassy in Islamabad was overrun. And the mob tried to burn the building down from inside. And everybody in the embassy in Islamabad was hiding in the safe rooms and they were literally being roasted. And we ended up, I think one or two people died of that. But usually, you don't have a situation where the host government abandons you.

Okay, so what are we going to do for defense? I've got the Marines. It's a couple of hundred people. It's not 5,000 people. It's a couple of hundred. And they didn't have any obvious weapons. There were no visible weapons or Molotov cocktails. They were throwing rocks at us. In fact, I still have a rock somewhere that came through the window, landed on my foot. So, we set it up. And since there's no—how do you do this, I don't know. I took two Marines, put them up on the roof. Because the roof of the embassy was flat and there was about a three-foot-high brick wall ledge on the front of it. So, I had two of the marine guards up there. Then the other guys were one to the room to my right, one to my left. Because the room I was in looked right out on the street. And I gave them orders, I said, "Look, you do not put a round in the chamber until I tell you to. And you do not pull the trigger until I tell you to. You're under my control." I made it very clear. "Here's what's going to be. It's my decision, not your decision."

Because you got these young Marines, and no one's ever been in combat. These guys—this is long after Vietnam—they're not used to this. And you know, they're concerned because there's no police protecting us. So, we get there, the mob comes in front. I figured, okay, they'll climb over, pull the flag down again, maybe. And I said, "Okay, I'm not going to shoot at them. Only when they break into the building. If they break in and everyone funnels into the stairwell coming up to us."

By the way, everybody else is up on the roof, burning whatever stuff they had. And we'd already been at a low level, we don't keep a lot of stuff. Because what happened in April, when the embassy was almost breached and could have been overrun. So, they're up on

the roof. Everybody's burning what we have to burn. But if they get in the building, at what point do you use protective fire? Because if you do, the danger is that the mob is going to turn on you and basically kill everybody. There is no good answer as to what you do in those circumstances. If they're coming into the building. So anyway, we're prepared for it. They throw a bunch of rocks and the one comes through the window, and then I hear to my left, the room directly my left, I hear the marine chambering a round because it's a shotgun. It's a big click click to load a round. I said, "Oh, shit. We're not shooting guys." So, I go in, I give him the riot act in ten seconds: "Get that round out of there, stand down. We're not at that point yet." Okay, so that's as far as it went. After about maybe twenty-five, thirty minutes, the mob sort of vented their anger and they left. And they didn't tear the flag down in this case. So, they go back and then a half hour later, the police come. Sheepishly coming back. And, okay, I protest it, but what difference would that make? Obviously, this was a decision that went right up to Mugabe. "We're not going to protect them, let them stew." So, that's the first four months on the job. Relations with Zimbabwe weren't good. And that didn't help whatsoever.

Q: Well, for a minute, could we go back and kind of go over your staffing and your appreciation with aid and USAID [The United States Agency for International Development] might have been doing?

FUGIT: AID, as you said, we had a very big AID mission. What basically the policy was, it's not like Israel or Egypt, where you give people money. In Zimbabwe we're going to build a school, we're going to build a hospital, we're going to provide scholarships to kids. We are not giving the money to Mugabe. So, to do a project like that requires more—it's labor intensive, for AID. So, they had a lot of people and they're running these projects. For everything I was able to determine, they did a really good job. As far as what we did. For example, they built a very large agricultural training college. It costs a lot of money, textbooks. And the contract was, we would do this. The Zimbabwe government would then staff the school with teachers. They never did. At least by the time I was there, the school was finished and never got used. Maybe later in the future, they did it. So, you're always at the mercy of the host government in carrying out these projects. We did a lot of projects with family planning, which was a huge deal. And I'll get to that a little bit later in relation to AIDS. That we were on the ground floor sort of figuring out what's going on.

AID did an excellent job. They had a lot of people, projects all over the country. And they continued because the money was still in the pipeline. So, this went on for years. The embassy staff, also, had very good officers, partly because Zimbabwe was an important country. It was right on the front line with South Africa. And we desperately wanted to have good relations with Mugabe. Well, it wasn't going to happen. But okay, you want it, you work for it. We had very good people that were working on the issues inside Zimbabwe. And in terms of local contacts, the political section, Econ guys, all had very, very good contacts. I was very impressed when I got there. And one of our big contact points was the Agency [Central Intelligence Agency]. And an interesting—Mugabe, when he took over in 1979, appointed one of his top young lieutenants to run the Central Intelligence Organization, the CIO, which was Ian Smith's secret police, CIA, et cetera.

And so, he appoints this guy. Now, the guy he appointed— remember, this is 1979. This is forty years ago, almost fifty, forty— he is now the president of Zimbabwe. All these years later, he was a power in 1979 because he ran the intel service. But Mugabe did not trust his own people. So, the two guys under the black head of CIO, were white. They were Ian Smith's top spooks. He kept them on board—he, Mugabe—kept them on board. And they were, as far as I can tell, completely loyal to Mugabe. They did what Mugabe wanted. They were also helpful to us on a lot of issues, if it fit into Mugabe's interest to do so. So, we had really good relationships there. We had good relationships with the military. The defense attaché was an African Foreign Affairs Officer. He really knew what he was doing. And the British had their biggest military mission in the world in Zimbabwe. They had a couple hundred officers, enlisted people there, training the Zimbabwe army. So, our guy, our attaché, was plugged into them, and had tremendous access inside the Zimbabwe army. Which, like most third world countries, the army is critically important. And over the next thirty years, long after I left, the army was constantly involved in politics, supporting and finally overthrowing Mugabe.

So anyway, our guys, they were all plugged in, it was an excellent staff. And Washington, when Gib Lanford was on the desk, we had good support. But there wasn't much to do. I mean, because of the animosity that Mugabe felt towards us, which I'll get into in a bit. He's not open to most things. He was open to some things later on, which we'll talk about with RENAMO [Mozambican National Resistance].

The new ambassador gets there at the end of 1986 and presents his credentials. And he already knew—unlike most ambassadors coming into the country—he already knew all the top people in Zimbabwe. And the ones he didn't know, give him a bio, "Oh, this guy, this guy there." He knew who was connected where. That didn't mean he could do much with it. Because Mugabe wasn't amenable to doing much. He presents his credentials, the formal ceremony didn't amount to much. And then later, he wanted to meet with Mugabe. In the 1970s, when Mugabe was the leader of the guerrilla fighters, Rawlings had met with Mugabe several times. So, it wasn't the first time he was going to go in there.

Rawlings called on him and I went with him. So, the three of us—Mugabe, the ambassador, and I—had a very good session. Mugabe is an extremely intelligent individual. We knew his background. He had become a Marxist while he was in exile. So, we sit down—the ambassador—and we had a very good conversation. And Mugabe describes what he is doing with Zimbabwe at this time. And he had played a good hand very, very well at the beginning. The apocryphal story that went around is that in 1979, when Mugabe was flying into Harare to take over as prime minister, his last meeting before he went in was with Samora Machel in Mozambique, in Maputo. And Samora had been an ally of Mugabe's during the war. And Samora is reputed to have told Mugabe. I don't know if this came from a British source, let's say, but he's reputed to have told Mugabe, "Do not do to your country what I just did to mine." Because Machel realized by 1979 that his Marxist policies in Mozambique had scared away everybody. And the country was destitute. And it's a country that didn't need to be destitute, but everybody who had money was afraid to go in there because it was going to be taken.

Mugabe comes in, and he follows that advice. Whether it was because Machel told him, I don't know. But his policies in the beginning decade were sensible policies. He didn't adopt crazy Marxist rules. You had a huge, mostly white, agricultural community in Zimbabwe. And Zimbabwe, unlike almost every other country in Africa, not only could feed itself, it could feed all its neighbors. The farmland—again, this is the problem, it was in white hands and Mugabe had to figure out how to get it into black hands. That was one of the issues that he was handling or working with. How does he move forward? Because he's got these white farmers that are obviously very successful and keeping the country going and providing food. But those aren't the guys that supported him in the war. The war veterans wanted the land. And Mugabe said to us, "If I could, I would bring communism to Zimbabwe now." This was an intelligent man with his consciousness of what he wanted to do, he said, "But I can't now."

He had too many people arguing. Okay, let the status quo continue. It's working, let the blacks—get them education, how to work a farm, et cetera. So, that's what they were doing. So, Mugabe was curbing his inner instincts to be a Marxist. But in the meantime, the mines were working. The farms were successful. Roads were repaired. The water was drinkable. There's not many capital cities in Africa, where you can drink the water. Mugabe had inherited a functioning first world system. And they kept it that way for just over a decade. They had the people, the wherewithal, the expertise to keep everything working. But he was telling us, "Yes, that's working. I understand that." But he also was saying, "I've got these guys who fought for me, they want a piece of the action."

As it turns out, about four or five years after we talked to him things changed. By 1992 or so, Mugabe went off the deep end and started throwing white farmers off the land and basically destroying the infrastructure that he had. But he had not done it yet when I was there. So, Mugabe is telling us, "Here's what I'm thinking." It's very honest and straightforward. And he was, as I said, a smart man. And later on down the road, he was to do what his heart told him, which is seize all the assets in the country and basically turn them over to the veterans who fought for him.

So, our policy then, we tried to work with Mugabe on Southern African issues, et cetera. He was very much a frontline state. The South Africans would stage raids up into Zimbabwe. And they weren't always successful. They had a lot of situations where they got people captured. The raids didn't work. They didn't have diplomatic relations, but they had a 'trade representative,' who was, in all but name, an ambassador. So, he had a tough job. I mean, the government wouldn't deal with him directly, but they dealt with it. Because all of Zimbabwe's trade, almost all of it, had to go through South Africa. All the oil coming in had to come through South Africa. So, you couldn't avoid it. You had to have that relationship. And they did.

During this time, the main political thing in the region was trying to get the South Africans to accept majority rule. And there was definitely indications that changes were underway in the leadership in South Africa. But it didn't manifest until Mandela was released, which was late 1989, early 1990, I forget. And they finally made him an offer or deal. He said, "Okay, I can work with this." So, he gets released and his first foreign trip,

like three weeks after he was released, was to come to Zimbabwe and to see Mugabe because Mugabe is the patron saint of the Anti-Apartheid movement, Zimbabwe is in the forefront, et cetera.

Mandela, who's not used to, at this point, the diplomatic niceties of receptions, flies up, and Mugabe treats him as a head of state. So, the diplomatic corps is convened to the airport. We stand there, Mandela lands, he walks down the line, shakes everybody's hand. Okay. He has a couple of days of meetings with Mugabe. My understanding was they didn't go well. The last night, they had a state dinner for Mandela in the hotel downtown. I'm a guest at this. Mugabe and Mandela are sitting next to each other on the head table. And I'm watching the body language. An hour and a half, two-hour event, bunch of speeches. Mandela and Mugabe never once spoke to each other. There was no back and forth. They both just stared out or had their meals or talked and ate or something. So, I'm saying, okay, because basically what this was—no one knew it at that time, this is my view for what it's worth— is the passing of the baton. Because Zimbabwe was a small fry in this whole Anti-Apartheid. It was the leader but was the leader because South Africa wasn't yet free. Once South Africa had majority rule, Zimbabwe becomes an afterthought, which is in fact what happened. So, Mugabe welcomes Mandela in. They have this meeting. It probably didn't amount to much. And then Mandela goes back to South Africa, and they continue for another three or four years until they had elections in 1994. But in 1990, it was a foregone conclusion; this is what's going to happen, it's just a question of playing this whole thing out. And Mugabe becomes an afterthought. He's no longer important. Now that Mandela is free, Mandela is the patron saint of the Anti-Apartheid movement, not Mugabe. So, Zimbabwe passes into history in terms of that issue.

Another event occurred, which I didn't enter here, and I'm only thinking—this happened on Thanksgiving, 1987. And I remember that because I was having dinner with the ambassador at his residence, our families. During the dinner, he gets a phone call—the ambassador does—from the head of the CIO, the intelligence organization, saying, "Mr. Ambassador, you have to know there's been a massacre in Matabeleland." Matabeleland is the western one-third of Zimbabwe going in towards Angola. There was a terrible massacre of missionaries, and quite a few of them are Americans. So, oh my god. No, he didn't have names yet. So, we get our consular officer in a car heading down towards Bulawayo where they bring the bodies in. And what had happened, there'd been an incipient revolt in the Western third of Zimbabwe by Joshua Nkomo's forces- ZAPU. They were the other liberation movement, but they lost the election to Mugabe in 1979. And Mugabe then, in terms of domestic politics, spent most of the next four or five years cracking down on anybody that was loyal to Joshua Nkomo.

These were guys that had been fighters for Nkomo, they were then operating in the bush, and they had killed white farmers before this. But these weren't farmers, these were missionaries. This, again, also got on the front page in The New York Times, obviously. What they did, they went into these two farms joining each other and they rounded all the white missionaries up. And they lined them up, and went into a building, one at a time. And inside the building, they hacked them to death. Didn't use guns. Used shovels and

machetes. Men, women, and little children. Pretty, pretty brutal. And the missionaries put up no resistance—they knew they were going to be killed. They knew they were lined up and going into this room, they were going to be killed. And there was no resistance. And they were killed.

We handle it like a consular problem, which is what it was. It was also a terrible brutality. Eventually, Mugabe forces Nkomo to surrender. And they, in theory, merge the two parties. In fact, it was a surrender by Nkomo, and Mugabe then is unchallenged domestically inside Zimbabwe. Because the whites had ceased to be a political force in 1979. And they were an economic force, not a political force. So, Mugabe destroys his opposition. And then the opposition comes to us. Nkomo starts meeting with me, wanting us to help him make sure he basically doesn't get killed by Mugabe. And he probably figures, "If I'm talking to the Americans, Mugabe will be less likely to move on me." So, I have about four or five meetings with Nkomo, which don't amount to much. But the purpose of it was just to be seen as talking to the Americans. So, it was a difficult situation to be in. We're talking to Mugabe's opposition. Mugabe knows that the opposition wants him to know it. So, again, relations with Mugabe remain bad.

The one event that is counterintuitive to what we're saying about Mugabe not wanting to work with us, is RENAMO. RENAMO is the acronym for the National Resistance Movement of Mozambique. And RENAMO was started—now, this is 1989—it was started in 1976 or 1977. It was started by Ian Smith's secret police. And once Mozambique had majority rule, the country then became a springboard for Mugabe's forces to launch attacks into Rhodesia. And it's a long porous border. And the Rhodesians did not have the troops to protect it. So, they were waging counter guerrilla war going into Mozambique, and trying to hit base camps. So, one of the ideas they come up with is, "Why don't we start our own movement with a lot of weapons? There's people in Mozambique that don't want to be part of the Samora Machel regime. Or they're just mercenaries. We can arm them and have them start to go after the government." So, they did that in 1977.

Okay, Rhodesia collapses in 1979. Mugabe takes over and, of course, all that support to RENAMO by Rhodesia is cut, but the South Africans decide they will pick up the support of these mercenaries. So, they begin to provide weapons and arms into Mozambique. And this goes on from 1980 to 1988. This is not a large guerrilla movement, but it's significant. And the government of Samora Machel is militarily very, very weak. And politically. It's corrupt. It's ripping off the people. So, a guerrilla movement like RENAMO does get popular support. But then RENAMO starts to teach Mugabe a lesson. So, they started doing raids into Zimbabwe for reasons I never understood.

Their battle is with Machel in Mozambique, not with Mugabe. But they come in and they basically—they don't kill anybody. They raid a bunch of white farms. And they take—the initial stuff, they take kids. And the kids serve as bearers. So, they carry the food and whatever is worth stealing from the farms back into Mozambique. And then, for reasons I don't understand, before they send the kids back, they cut their ears off. And I first heard

this in 1987 or 1988. What possibly could that accomplish? And it wasn't just one or two, they were starting to do it wholesale. They didn't kill the kids, they just—probably if you're living in the bush and your ear's cut off, you're going to die of infection—but they didn't kill the kids. They just lopped off their ears. Pure terror.

So, RENAMO becomes more and more of a problem for Zimbabwe. And Mugabe sees it's a problem. And we do as well. By this point, Washington is reconciled with Mozambique. Samora Machel has died. He died in 1986 when the plane crashed. And Chissano [Joaquim Chissano] was his replacement. A much easier guy for us to work with. So, the our embassy in Maputo, working with State, how can we bring about reconciliation? Well, we've got to talk to RENAMO. So, at this point, I get a phone call from Assistant Secretary Hank Cohen. And he said, "Hey, I've got a mission for you if you're interested." I said, "What's up?" So, he said, "Okay, I noticed that you speak Portuguese." Well, that's true, and it's not true. I spoke Portuguese fifteen years ago; I hadn't used it since. He said, "We can set up meetings with RENAMO, with their leader Afonso Dhlakama. And we'd like you to go into these meetings. These are all going to be clandestine. Not in the press. And they'll be set up by either the presidents of Malawi, Kenya, and including Zimbabwe. The Zims were up to doing this." So, my guess is, this had been set up with the intelligence people on different countries. So, I said, "Okay, it's going to take me a while to brush up on my Portuguese." So, they give me a budget and I hire a Portuguese woman who lives in Harare, she's a friend of a friend. So, I spend about three or four weeks, about four hours a day, trying to speak with her. And as I said earlier, I'm not a natural linguist. And it's coming back very slowly and very difficult. But I'm the best they've got in the area that speaks Portuguese, and they can't send somebody from Maputo.

So okay, it's set up. And over a period of maybe four months, I think I do three meetings. And one of them was in Malawi. One of them is in Nairobi. And they took place in the back room of a bar. It's like a scene out of a bad John le Carré movie. I was on my own. I would go there. I had nobody with me for two of the meetings. And he was essentially on his own. I'm sure the place was staked out by the intelligence services of the host country. I didn't feel any particular danger. I mean, the agreement was we were going to meet. I had no talking points. It's not like Washington was, "Okay, here's what to do." No, you're on your own. No one's met this guy before.

We need to take a measure of him to begin with. So, I had these meetings, and I was able to understand him very well. It's my locution that was not that good. But Portuguese wasn't his first language, anyway. I mean, he was brought up in the bush. But he could handle his Portuguese. So, we talked about what was going on. What his grievances were towards the government. Like any good revolutionary, he will go on and on how bad the government is. And I was, at first, just trying to figure out how intelligent is he? How adept is he as a leader? So, it went pretty well and then I figured, I had to think of something to address RENAMO's behavior, so I decided to make a request. Pulling something out of thin air I said, "You know, what you've been doing, we condemn this. You're killing people indiscriminately." Inside Mozambique, they were killing a lot of people. In Zimbabwe, they just cut the kids' ears off. But it could easily turn into mass

killings. So, I said, "You know, one of the things you've done that you really shouldn't do is to kill Red Cross workers." I said, "In the world, nobody kills Red Cross workers. That's an accepted rule everywhere. All revolutionary movements adhere to this. They are protected." And he hadn't thought of that before. Anyway, it worked in the sense that they weren't going out and killing a lot of Red Cross workers anyway. But my point was to get something to them, say, "Okay, you know, sort of back off some of the things you're doing."

Then we began the other meetings to talk about, if you could work with the government, would it be possible? And he allowed that it would be. That we can work something out if we have free elections. After our third meeting—the biggest one—we slip in, back into Mozambique. And we were in Nairobi. I fly from Nairobi—I forget how we did this. And we took a single engine plane from some backwater airport in South Africa. Flew into Maputo. Again, it's something out of a spy novel.

On arrival we were met by our ambassador and by Chissano's aides. And they took us right to Chissano's residence where I spent an hour and a half debriefing him with our Ambassador present. I had not yet debriefed Washington. And I was flying directly from the meetings in Nairobi by secure-ish routing and getting in there, debriefing him on what I thought of RENAMO, of Dhlakama as an individual, what he was saying, was negotiations possible. And the main takeaway from this whole thing is yes, negotiations are possible, we can work out some way to make a deal.

FUGIT: So, the three meetings produced a breakthrough in the sense that a line of communication between RENAMO and Chissano had been opened up indirectly. And that Chissano took our word that he could deal with this guy. Because up to this point, he, Chissano, had no first-hand contact and knew very little about Dhlakama. So anyway, that was my main contribution to peace in the world. It ended up—that was 1990. In 1992, they signed the deal, RENAMO and Chissano. And they had elections; Chissano won, but they allowed Dhlakama to be a free man and to have seats in parliament. And this continued for twenty years. And Dhlakama became a thorn in the side of the government, like most opposition leaders are. But he never broke the deal. He never went back to the bush. He kept his men in the bush, but he didn't return to fighting with these men. He had a force in being out in the northern part of the country. And it's still going on there now, except his troops have been taken over by an offshoot of ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria]. Islamic fighters are now in that part of Mozambique. Had nothing to do with RENAMO but his people are, I'm certain, are part of this. Okay, so that was my main contribution to any kind of policy in Zimbabwe. Mugabe was going his own separate way and we weren't going to change it. So, go ahead. Yeah.

Q: Let me go back to the AID thing. So—

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: —in '86. Now, we tell Zimbabwe, "This is what we're going to do."

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: So, how does AID handle this? You're saying that there's quite a bit in the pipeline. So, they're not having to make any personnel changes—

FUGIT: No.

Q: —or anything? The AID director, I think, was Allison Herrick?

FUGIT: Yeah, she was very good. And her instructions, "Okay, continue the projects you have underway. You're just not going to get new projects." So, when work was done on these projects, the staff that did them could then be moved somewhere else. And that was a very slow process, because we had a large number of large AID projects out there.

I should, at this point, mention something that we did accomplish with them. This is now 1986-89. And you're beginning to see news reports about the outbreak of AIDS [the late stage of HIV infection]. And if you remember, it was originally located in the Congo. Zaire. Almost nobody knew what was going on with it, what the disease was. However, two events that happened in Zimbabwe and AID was helping us on it. The main trucking route—through Africa, from Zaire, through Zambia, through Zimbabwe, to South Africa—ran right through, north and south, through Zimbabwe. And the truckers—these were all blacks—they were taking mineral supplies and everything south and equipment coming north, et cetera. So, a lot of people were using the route. And there were truck stops all along the highway between Zambia and South Africa. And the truck stops were frequented by prostitutes, local women from the villages. Then we started hearing from AID personnel—because they were in the bush a lot—they started hearing that this AIDS thing is starting to break out in these little villages, inland, away from the road. And they tried to figure out what it was.

We could do tests. Zimbabwe still had a first-world medical system. There were well staffed and functioning clinics, there were blood banks. Blood could be tested. And the blood banks were suddenly showing up with a large amount of donated blood that had HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] in it. And we could tell where it was donated. And AID was sort of sleuthing around on their own, "Why is this happening?" And the supposition was that it was being transmitted from the truckers coming from Zaire who were coming south. They would sleep with the women along the highway and the women went back to the villages and passed it onto the men there, which actually happened to be the case. So, we're beginning to get numbers that were dependable. Real numbers because you could do the bloodwork.

And then, separately, but at the same time—as I mentioned, the Brits had a large military training mission, training the Zimbabwe army. What they did was, as soon as they would take in a battalion with about 800 men, they would give them all first-class physicals. And the physicals, they would do bloodwork and they were starting to see, suddenly, an outbreak of AIDS amongst the soldiers. And this was quantifiable. They were doing a known universe of people, military personnel. So, between what we were getting from

the villages and the missionaries, and then from the British military mission, you could see that AIDS was spreading and how it was spreading. It tended to be in the military, The officers tended to have a higher incidence than the enlisted men, because they had more money, they could afford women.

We realized this is going out, we didn't know what to do about it. At this point, AID had a U.S. government grant to provide prophylactics. So, they brought in as much as they could. And they took it upon themselves and hired local groups. And we would put boxes of condoms in restaurants and truck stops all over Zimbabwe. Along the highways in the cities and bars. Just put them in there, take them, free. And it's all you could do. There was no other cure at the time. But the idea of, maybe this would reduce the incidents of it. Anyway, that was something that they worked on. Sort of off the books, almost, because there was no treatment program, obviously. But AID, they continued while I was there. Even after I left, they were still winding down these programs. And probably at some point, in the Clinton administration, we probably restarted some degree of foreign aid to Zimbabwe, but never to the degree that they had before.

Q: Now, this program. You said that it's sort of off the books, but obviously it was in cooperation with Zimbabwe and medical authorities?

FUGIT: Not really. We may have told them. AID already had permission to provide prophylactics through family planning clinics and stuff like that. Well, here, they were just going a step further and putting it in any accessible place, which was not a bad idea. When they told me, I said, "Well, that makes sense." Because as long as somebody's using it—the people take a handful and they sell it, doesn't matter. If somebody's using it, that's one less possible incident.

Q: Now, with this incident of July 4 and the way the United States is treated, I have to imagine that your public affairs officer was very busy. Can you talk about the PAO [Public Affairs Officer] program in Zimbabwe during this time?

FUGIT: I was good friends with the PAO.

Q: Which one? Charles Bell?

FUGIT: No, it was...

Q: Charles left in '87 and Samir came in.

FUGIT: What's the other name?

Q: Samir Khoutab.

FUGIT: Yeah, Khoutab, right. Who's Palestinian, by the way. Anyway, yeah. He came in, very good. And I said, "You know, let's try something. Let's do a booklet, a magazine size thing, highlighting all the projects the United States has done for Zimbabwe. We'll take it

and we'll distribute it to people in the government, to the press, whatever." So, we did this. And so, he put it together and it was very slick, very nice. I'm not sure it changed any minds, but at least it was out there and showing that we had done these things for the Zimbabwe's people. And that's what it was aimed at. It was a program to help the people out. Had the government lived up to their side of it—for example, staffing the agricultural training school— it would have been a huge contribution. They were supposed to do it and they never did it. They may have done it after I left, I don't know. Because this is a country that lives on agriculture and now it can't support itself.

Q: Would a program like that be a local initiative as Samir or something USAID Washington would have directed?

FUGIT: What, for the booklet?

Q: Yeah.

FUGIT: No, that was my idea. I went to him and to the AID directors, said, "Okay, look, you guys support this. And PAO has to pull this book together." He was, at first look, I'm not sure but he did it. Now, we didn't go to Washington. Just, "Okay, this what we're doing here. We're just publicizing it."

Q: Now, during the time that you were there, the administration changes and in 1989, it's the Bush administration. Did you see any particular policy changes?

FUGIT: Yeah, we did see change. What I found interesting—because this is going from one republican to another—you'd think it'd be a seamless handover. It wasn't. It might as well have been republican to democrat. All the Reagan people—Chet Crocker, my ambassador—they were all told, "Send your resignation in, we'll accept it. So, they left. And Bush appointed his people.

The individual that Bush appointed to Zimbabwe turned out to be the opposite quality of his predecessor. And if one of them was the poster child for a successful non-career ambassador, the other guy is the poster child for "Oh, my god." He came in, it took him about a year to get to post so I was chargé for another year. And he had this problem and that problem and nobody from Washington was giving me a straight answer as to what the problems were. And then he comes out. And he had wanted me to stay, and I already did four years and there was nothing more I could do there. So, I wasn't going to stay. But I still had an overlap of about four months with him. And it was very unsettling. He didn't cultivate those we considered the movers and shakers in the country. He sort of went with a different crowd.

I left in June 1990, and I was happy to leave. About two months after I left, I'm in Pakistan. And we get a—it's in the news, actually. That we had recalled our Ambassador to Zimbabwe. So, he waited about two months in Washington then quietly was allowed to regned. That was the right ending.

Q: Who replaced you as DCM, then?

FUGIT: I'm trying to remember it now. We didn't overlap. I think I had lunch with him in Washington, that was about it.

Q: We can look it up. What was your military attaché—his duties? Kim Henningson.

FUGIT: Kim Henningson. We sold some surplus military gear to Zimbabwe. Mainly it was British stuff, but we sold some things. We sent quite a few officers to the states for training. At this point, it was a very impressive army. The British had broken it down and rebuilt it in the British likeness, and that's fine. So, he had good contacts. And also, it was obvious to all of us, like everywhere else in Africa, the army kept the president in power or didn't. So, he was well plugged into the Zimbabwe military. He gave us insights as to what people's thinking was, which we were also getting on the intel side. And he was a very, very good officer. He then goes on, his next assignment after Zim was to be the Deputy Director for the Africa section of the CIA, which is very unusual. Because he had worked very closely with the station chief in Harare on several operations. So, he had also already—he was the first Army Foreign Affairs Officer to go through the farm.. The Embassy was a very, very strong embassy, except the ambassador at the very end.

Q: Let me go back to the atrocities against the missionaries.

FUGIT: Oh, yeah.

Q: I'm thinking about the Jones thing in Guyana?

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: Your consular officer was Arthur Mills, I think, at that time. How much of a job was that and certainly it wasn't just left to him to–

FUGIT: Oh, it was pretty brutal. I mean, we had to send somebody down. We had to physically identify the remains, and then get in touch with the mission organization and families and ship them back to the States. Now luckily, they were all there as missionaries. So, their missions, their churches paid to ship them back. I don't know if you know but Uncle Sam is not allowed to pay to ship bodies back. If the family won't pay for it, we turn you over to the host government, they put you in a pauper's grave. So anyway, we were able to send the remains back to the States. It was really a tragic group situation.

Q: Because the consular officers in charge, too, of taking possession of people's goods that were there—

FUGIT: Yup.

Q: —paperwork and all that kind of stuff. Obviously, it's something that must have taken the consular officer a considerable amount of time to accomplish.

FUGIT: I'm sure it did. Yeah. Yup. That was handled as well as it can be. Again, it's not something they teach you in consular school; how to handle mass dismemberments and mass casualty events . And then shooting is one thing. When you've got a room with probably twenty bodies strewn—different pieces of bodies.

Q: One last question. How big was the diplomatic community there? And how were your relations, sharing information and whatnot?

FUGIT: It was a very big diplomatic community. And there's a reason for that. Not Zimbabwe, per se, because they all knew from 1984 on that Mugabe was going to take over the Non-Aligned Movement. So, all the third world embassies had already been beefed up significantly to handle coordination on Non-Aligned Movement things. So, it was a very good diplomatic corp. Much more so than you normally find in a third world posting. And I had—particularly with the Chinese—very good relations until Tiananmen Square, and then they went into hiding. I had good contact with the Iraqis. This was prior to the invasion of Kuwait. Yugoslavs, and they were good. And these were guys that were there because Zimbabwe was the Non-Aligned Movement, so they all had big missions. So, it was a good diplomatic corps in that regard. Western embassies were pretty good. One of my good friends was the New Zealand ambassador. He was the only New Zealand ambassador in all of Africa. He was accredited to forty-eight countries. And he was the equivalent of Mickey Mantle in New Zealand. He was probably the greatest living rugby player. Very smart. And he wasn't a career guy, he was a political appointee. And they sent him to Zimbabwe to rub South Africa's nose in it, because South Africa was excluded from international rugby, and their biggest competitor has always been New Zealand. But it was a good diplomatic corp. And I was pretty free to tell them what we were doing with Dhlakama. So, I would brief different members. And Hank Cohen knew what I was doing. I wasn't telling the press, but we weren't doing it in secret that much that we were meeting with this guy.

Q: Why don't we roll it up at this moment? Looking good, it's been very interesting. Do you have any last thoughts on Zimbabwe? What did this assignment in Zimbabwe teach you about the foreign service?

FUGIT: This was my first time, obviously, running an embassy. And of my four years there, two of them were chargé. And most of the other time when I wasn't chargé, I was still running the place because both of my ambassadors said, "You take it." I had a very positive experience. When I finished up there, I'd been doing that part of Africa for seventeen years straight. And it's getting old. I knew where all the bodies were buried throughout the area. Because you read all the traffic every day from Botswana, from Angola, from Mozambique, everything that's going on politically. This is not just your own little countries. It's the whole region.

I understood, as I said, where the bodies were figuratively buried, and I was pretty much bored with it. And as I was finishing up, I thought, okay, I had to find a another posting that had a high school. My kids had real schooling problems in Zimbabwe, and the only AF post—there are two at my level. One was DCM South Africa, which I thought I had a good shot for. I did, but I didn't get it. And the other was DCM Kinshasa, because they both have high schools. And Kinshasa looked real possible for me. And then the guy who was there extends, so that killed that. So, then I had to find a post. And that's where I call my friend Ed Abington [Edward Abington], who was in Islamabad. And his job was listed as available and there was a high school there. So, I get in touch with him and asked him what it's like. And we chatted, usual stuff. So, I put my name in and I'm not sure there were a lot many volunteers for Islamabad. So that's how I ended up there. And I replaced Ed, which was good because he was able to brief me in advance, as we'll talk next time. Everything in Pakistan, nothing had anything to do with Africa. It was a different environment.

Q: Well, that's for our next thing. So, thank you very much.

Q: The recording here. It's the ninth of March and we're returning to our conversation with Ed Fugit. Ed, let me start over a little bit. We're going to talk about Pakistan here so, how did you get this assignment?

FUGIT: Okay, that's an interesting story. I had done four years as the DCM (deputy chief of mission) in Zimbabwe and one of the problems that arose there was getting a suitable high school education for my boys. In fact it turned into a major crisis in our lives. And we had to send—while we're in Zimbabwe—the oldest son who was 15, back to boarding school in the United States, because the British schools that they—the type of British education in Zim—he got there at the wrong time and we should have left him back a year, long story. So, we were looking for a follow-on post that had a high school. In Africa, that is very few. The one that did was in Pretoria—DCM, Pretoria—I was interested in that and I had all the background, but the ambassador picked someone else, fine. The only other place that was opening up that had a high school was Kinshasa, which also I had plenty of background on. But then the officer there decided he was going to extend for a year, so that killed that one. So we're getting into January, February of '90, I don't have an ongoing assignment, and I'm checking the broader assignment list. And I noticed Ed Abington's name on here, as Political Counselor in Islamabad and Ed as you know, was in our A-100 class. And I've had no contact with him in the intervening 20 years. He went to different parts of the world and he never was an African guy. But I call him up, and I say, hey, you know, basically tell me about this job. So he gave me a rundown on the issues and challenges because this is totally different than what you do in Africa. He also said the school was very good. It's not a big High School, but it's a well-run high school and has a lot of kids in it. So that sort of settled it. There wasn't really any other place that I could get.

So I checked with State and they are fine, yeah, you can have it. There weren't a lot of people applying for Pakistan. There never is. It's one of those posts. It's extremely important. Probably one of the five most important in the world. But it's also a difficult

assignment. So anyway, I got the assignment, and we went out there in the summer. In the meantime, our oldest son graduates from boarding school in the U.S. and goes on to college. Middle son is going to be—he'd been in boarding school for two years—so he was going into his junior year when he went to Pakistan. And the youngest boy is in seventh grade, and it was as advertised: the school was very good. That wasn't a problem.

So anyway, we come back, do the home leave bit, quick consultation in Washington, talk to a bunch of people and I realize that I know almost nothing about Pakistan in terms of the depth that you have to have to do a good job. I had done 17 years straight from 1973 to 1990, working on Southern Africa and I prided myself on knowing what was going on there. And I realized that in Pakistan, I did not have any insightful information. I didn't quite understand how this game operated. How is the political system in Pakistan different from Africa? There was no resemblance at all. Oh my god, you know, I'm really behind the eight ball here.

We get out and over the summer of '90, Pakistan was a front-page story and the issue was nuclear weapons. What kicked it off the front page was, of course, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August. But up till that point, what was happening in Pakistan got tremendous attention. So I got briefed on this in Washington, by lawyers and by subject matter experts as to what was happening, what was going on. And I think I realized that this was much more complex than anything I had seen in Africa. Africa was a one subject political situation, your subject was white minority rule and removing that. Pakistan had six or seven major ongoing political issues in any given month.

As it turned out—I didn't know that at the beginning—in terms of professional development and being a good political officer, this was the best assignment I could have had. It was a challenge. It was totally different. It was important, much of the things that we were touching on, were vital to US national security interest. So we're going to talk about some of these.

The embassy itself was physically a very big embassy. Also, it was—it looked like a minimum security prison because in nine—10 years, 12 years before I arrived—in 1978, there was a riot in Islamabad, and the Pakistani President, the military dictator at the time, would not provide protection to the embassy. So the embassy was a pretty sturdy operation, a big wall and everything around it. As the riot started the embassy staff pulled in, went up to the safe rooms, closed the stairs up there, and the mob broke into the building and started a fire under the safe haven. The idea was to roast the people there and force them to go out through the roof to escape where they can be shot. And I think one or two people died in that.

Q: Yes. Two. One of them a marine.

FUGIT: One Marine, both Marines?

Q: No, one marine.

FUGIT: One Marine. The staff huddled in there, they're forced up to the roof and—because they have no choice, you know, you can be roasted, or you take your chances with being shot. And they had some weapons—so they went up to the roof, and just about at that point, the dictator, the military head, changed his mind and sent police to clear the crowds away. So we had two killed. So the embassy was a fortress for good reason. And it was a fortress long before the Inman Reports in 1984, after Beirut, where they mandated all this security. Pakistan had already done all that. So when we get there in 1990, I mean, there's barbed wire over everything, the security force there is very large, and local hire people. So, the embassy was set up to handle a difficult problem were they to occur. The ambassador was top notch, Bob Oakley, have you ever served with him? Or hear about him?

Q: No, but I knew him, out of NEA.

FUGIT: Yeah. He was a legend. And deservedly so. Later on I'll be talking more about him. He's the kind of Ambassador you want in a third world country. He's not the kind of Ambassador you want in Brussels. He doesn't wear a suit and go sit down and, and have coffee and discussing issues—I mean, he's used to, as I was with him for quite some time—he's used to wheeling and dealing. He has no great love for Washington or their policies, and if he doesn't like it, he'll change the policy. And I've sat with him with the president of Pakistan when he takes his talking points from Washington and mentally rips him up and gives the president a different set of talking points. These points will get you to the same place but not the way Washington wants to do it. That was the way he looked at things. And later on in Somalia, three years later, we have Blackhawk down and he was involved in that, I was working with him on it. I got to see this up close. So Bob Oakley was a wheeler dealer.

His wife was equally good. She was one of the women who was screwed by the old regulations. She joined the Foreign Service, met Bob and married Bob. But the rules then required her to resign from the Foreign Service. So she leaves the Foreign Service, then she comes back in 10 or 15 years later. Her career is delayed. She's got a gap in there. She's junior to him. But he was in Pakistan, she was in Pakistan, and she was the Director of Refugee Affairs, okay. There were two or three million Afghan refugees in camps in Pakistan at the time, and they were being supported by the UN and by us. And she was a marvelous manager of this kind of a problem working with the UN and other organizations to get things going to help refugees out. And, you know, it was really unfortunate that the rules had basically stripped her of 10 to 12 years of her career.

Beth Jones was DCM. She is a second-generation Foreign Service officer, her father was Foreign Service. She was very good as well. She was about a year younger than me. Tremendous reputation. And managing an embassy as big as Islamabad—you had the embassy there. And then you had very large consulates in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar. Peshawar particularly, has always been a nightmare to manage, because it's right on the frontier with Afghanistan, get into that a little bit later. The other officers that I worked with were similarly top notch. So even though there weren't a lot of people applying for jobs in Pakistan, the ones who did apply and get there were good. The political section

that I inherited was large, I think there were six or seven officers. And we needed them. I mean, there's so many topics that we're working on. Because Beth was there, she was able to recruit several young women in the political section, who are also very good. One junior officer, one mid-tier officer. So it was well staffed.

Q: And what did the staffing of the political section look like? Who were they?

FUGIT: Who were they? Okay. I've got, okay. The internal affairs guy was Scott Delisi, who was our Urdu speaker. And he had—it was his second tour speaking Urdu. And he was good at his Urdu. In fact, he didn't need it, but that's beside the point. And he goes on, he was ambassador to three different countries. I think Nepal, Uganda and somewhere else. Janet Bouge was one of the officers. She had the Afghan portfolio, which was quite a job as I'll talk about in a minute. We had two other junior officers, both female. Anyway, it was a very good group. And they all wanted to be there.

Q: You were mentioning, one of the guys had Urdu, you didn't have any language training to post.

FUGIT: I had two weeks in Washington. No, I had no language training at all. And as I discovered when I got there, I didn't need it. The Pakistani elite, the people who were in Parliament and politicians, their English is as good as ours. It's British English, but it's still perfectly good. And their English is as good as their Urdu. So no, I didn't need that.

There were a lot of major problems that I had to sort of get my mind around rather quickly. I'll start with nuclear weapons because that was boiling when I got there, but so was Afghanistan. And these are boiling at the same time—they're not related, but they're both major major issues.

In terms of nuclear weapons, the issue surfaced in April of 1990. Pakistan and India have been bitter enemies since 1948 when Britain divided them up. Pakistan was a completely artificial country cut out of the British India possessions. From 1948 on there were two pieces of Pakistan, East and West. East Pakistan was on the other side of India right near Burma. And then the arrogant Pakistani military in 1970 precipitated a revolt in East Pakistan, and the Indians kicked the Pakistanis out and defeated them totally in East Pakistan. So Pakistan is then cut in half, this is long before I got there. But the countries India and Pakistan had fought four major wars from 1948 through to the 70s. And after the Pakistanis were defeated in Bangladesh, the prime minister was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, an incredibly important figure for many reasons. And he decides—this is in the early 70s—Pakistan needs the bomb, the only way they're going to stand up to a much bigger India was having a nuclear weapon. So they undertake a program to develop the bomb from scratch.

So this goes on over 20 years. At the same time, just putting in perspective how important Pakistan is. Zulfikar was the person that Henry Kissinger used to open to China. I presume you're aware of that back and forth? And what Zulfiqar did, Kissinger asked him secretly, not through the ambassador, but directly to set up a meeting with Chou Enlai and

Kissinger. If they could do it. So Zulfikar flies to China, gets an agreement to do it, goes back, passes the word back to Kissinger. Kissinger comes out with his entourage and then pretends to be sick and—which is very normal for people traveling to Pakistan, almost everybody gets Delhi belly over there—so that was the cover story. Kissinger then flies to China, meets with Chou Enlai. The meeting goes well, then there's a subsequent meet and greet with Mao Zedong—this is 1971 or 72—then Kissinger comes back and still the State Department does not know this is taking place. This is Kissinger being Kissinger and it's Pakistan that set the whole thing up. That's my point here. They're an important ally of ours.

At the same time, on certain subjects up until today, they'll knife us in the back. This is a glass half full glass half empty situation, depending on the subject. And it really hasn't changed. And that was remarkable. I got there in 1990, and you get this question of nuclear weapons. And what happened was in April, India and Pakistan almost came to war. So, Pakistan, by this time, had developed the components of a bomb. American law passed in the 1980s, at '86, or '87, I used to know the name of the law, stated that any nation that possesses—and the key word in this whole argument is the definition of possesses—any nation that possesses a nuclear weapon, is not eligible for US foreign aid. This is part of our anti-proliferation program, which didn't work then and still doesn't work today. But nevertheless, that's the policy.

So Pakistan, then—we have a good idea what was happening within the Pakistani government regarding nuclear weapons. We knew that what they had done, and what our lawyers had said, is the definition of possession that would trigger this law. It was not that you had uranium and not that you had a detonation device. It's that you combine the two together. And I understood, because I've taken this nuclear weapons course for South Africa. It's not that hard. Once you've designed these, to take A and put it on to B, which is what the Pakistanis did in 1990. So once we got evidence of this, the intelligence services—I had no hand in this part. This is all before I got there—they go to President Bush, and say, basically, boss, here's the law. Here's what just happened. They've crossed the threshold. You have to cut foreign aid. The law requires it. Oh, the White House acted like they always do, is there any way we can—any wiggle room out of this. They can buy a month or two to talk to him. So Oakley was then charged with talking to the military leadership in Pakistan. Two years before this, the American ambassador and our defense attaché were killed in an airplane crash of a C-130 with the president of Pakistan Zia on board., Everyone on the plane was killed, but those were the main people that were killed on the airplane—so Zia dies, and suddenly Pakistan is sown in turmoil.

This is 1988. That's why Oakley became ambassador. They sent him out from Washington in 1988. He was head of counterterrorism. They sent him out to Pakistan, to be the acting ambassador. And while he was there, they decided to keep him as ambassador. And as I understand it, he did his hearings remotely, he never came back to Washington. Somehow, they arranged it that he, this was pre-Zoom days, but he somehow, he called it. So he gets confirmed, stays at post. Now in 1990 he gets instructions, goes in and talks to the government, trying to convince them to walk this nuclear issue back. If they walk it back and disassemble these things and keep them

separate, we might be able to wiggle our way around the law. So that's what his mission was. And he went in, talked to the general at the time, who was nowhere near as powerful as the Zia who died two years previously, who had been the dictator for a decade and did immense harm for Pakistan.

So Oakley goes in, and the way Pakistan works, you have a civilian government. That didn't matter a bit. All the important decisions in Pakistan were made by the Chief of Army Staff, COAs. And they had—even though it was the army, the nuclear weapons in Pakistan were under the control of the army, not the Air Force.. Oakley goes to them, tries to convince them to back off. We offer all sorts of inducements. And basically, the Pakistani argument with us was—and while we were good friends, we were used to hard headed negotiations. Their answer to us was that the weapon—nuclear weapon—is more important to Pakistan than all of these military things we can give them because the weapon guarantees that India cannot attack us. Your airplanes don't guarantee it.

Long story short, they would not walk it back. But I think September, October of '90, we cut off foreign aid to Pakistan. Pakistan was the third largest recipient of foreign aid in the world after Israel and Egypt. And it was half a billion a year between military and civilian aid. And that was cut off. Now, at the same time, it was cut off, war breaks out between Kuwait and Iraq. Iraq invades, occupies Kuwait, we start trying to pull together a coalition. Pakistan would normally have been part of that. But now we're on bad terms with the Pakistanis, worse than we've ever been. And they don't particularly want to participate as part of this coalition. We had suddenly become sort of an enemy to Pakistan because we cut off its military aid, which was considered vital by them, which we know was vital, but you guys have to disarm these weapons. This subject was to play out over a couple of years, but it didn't produce any results- neither side would budge. The big events were in August, September of 1990. And their nuclear weapons program then continues to develop. Pakistan was looking at this, survival is having the bomb, we're going to have the bomb. That's it.

The next issue we had also going on, Russia had decided in '89, that they were leaving Afghanistan. And the rationale had to do with politics inside the Soviet Union. They had been having a really bad time fighting against the Mujahideen in Afghanistan for 10 years, partly because of the assistance that we gave. And our arrangement with the Pakistanis, which was still in effect when I got there, is that all American assistance to the Mujahideen had to go through Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence- ISI. We had to give our weapons and our money, as do the Egyptians, Saudis and others, to the Pakistanis, and they will decide which of these five or six major fighting forces in Afghanistan would get the assistance. And Pakistan's interest in this was different from ours. Now during the entire 1980s when the war was against the Russians, we pretty much agree. But they were pushing their weapons into some of the more militant groups. One of the guys is still alive—Gulbuddin Hekmatyar—which is amazing. So those were ultimately no friends of ours. So basically, the Pakistanis were cut out.

But the Russians were now leaving, and they were pulling out. And we were then—we the embassy and Bob Oakley—we're given the brief by Washington to try to cobble

together a coalition government of the Mujahideen to take over the country? Sounds easy. It became impossible. And it's not unlike the same situation you have in Afghanistan today. There's these different regional warlords, they had their own forces. Each of them wanted, at the end of the day, to end up running Afghanistan. They did not trust the other groups. So all these Mujahideen groups have operations in Pakistan, because that's where their weapons came from. So Oakley set up any number of meetings at the embassy—negotiations is the right word—with the Mujahideen and Pakistanis involved, and us, to try and work out a compromise government to run Afghanistan. These negotiations were excruciatingly slow and long. And at the end of the day, fruitless, this is what's the sad part.

Oakley was able to get agreements that lasted two to three days. They would all agree to be good boys, they would work together, they leave the embassy and go back to their camps. And either their followers or the jirgas in—the Mujahideen were semi-democratic inside each of their groups. They had a cabal of senior leaders that would sort of make decisions as to what this Mujahideen group would do, or that group would do. So those people did not want to give up power. This went on for a good part of a year. And Oakley tried his damnedest, we had support from Washington, we had carrots that we could offer, money always seemed to work. But we weren't going to put money out there until we had a group agreement in place that these guys would live with. And in fact, we could never get that agreement.

This went on for a year and a half. Even after Oakley left groups kept on trying to negotiate. At one point, we—basically Washington said, "Okay, we're done with this. We're not sending American troops into Afghanistan to police it. You guys can't work it out yourself. Okay. Here's a number to call us when you have an agreement."

One of the things we had to do at the same time, was to try and collect all the stinger anti-aircraft missiles that we had given to the Mujahideen in the 1980s. These were the critical weapons systems that basically made it impossible for the Russians to maintain a military presence, because these were allowing the Muj to shoot down Russian choppers across the country. I don't know how many hundreds and hundreds of these weapons were there. We gave them to the Pakistanis; the Pakistanis had distributed to which these Mujahideen groups they wanted them to go to. In 1991, the agency was tasked with collecting these back from the Mujahideen groups. This was important because no one wanted Stinger missiles floating around the world. Well we got some back but not all. Basically, what happened was a bidding war between us and the Iranians. That was the point Washington said, we've had enough. Because while this is going on, the real thing in Washington was the Gulf War, Desert Storm, the lead up to it, the coalition, the fighting, the defeating of Saddam, etc. That was the main issue in Washington and what normally, the Pakistani nuclear weapons, arms, stingers, coalition government would have been a top issue, but was then totally eclipsed by the Gulf war.

I'll skip ahead just a little bit. A year later—this was 1991. The Soviet Union is then split. And there's now a Russian Embassy in Islamabad. So, I got instructions, the Russians asked for our help. They were getting pressure from their own citizens to get an

accounting of the missing Russian soldiers in Afghanistan. Guys that had been taken prisoner over the previous 10 years. So I got in touch with my counterpart at the Russian embassy. And he'd been given a job by Moscow of getting contact with a Muj. I was the facilitator. And I arranged meetings between the Russian and the Mujahideen office in Islamabad so that they could get an accounting. And I told the Russian off the record, I said, "Look, what I understand secondhand is there's almost no prisoners that the Mujahideen now hold. There is one exception, one type of exception, and these are prisoners who were Central Asian and appeared to be either Muslim or Asian, in racial background, they didn't kill them. They kept them as prisoners. There may have been 30 or 40 of these, I'm not sure, not very many. But everybody else was executed, which is just the way that Mujahideen have always fought their wars.

So anyway, I worked with the Russians on this, as it ended up, it produced no real meaningful results. The other event I worked on with Pakistan at this time—again, early 1990—is the Pakistani contribution to the fighting against Saddam. We'd set up, and Secretary of State Baker had done a marvelous job pulling this coalition together. The Pakistanis sort of wanted to participate but did not want to be part of an American lead coalition. Finally the deal was, they would commit a division of 15,000 men for the effort. They would ship it to Saudi Arabia and they were placed on the extreme northern end of the flank against Saddam. And the idea was everyone understood the rules of the game. The Pakistanis would be there to show the flag. There were quite a few troops, but they weren't going to fight unless there was an attack. They would not go into Iraq or Kuwait. But they were there so they could claim they're part of the coalition.

I coordinated this with the foreign ministry and Ministry of Defense but it was not a major contribution to the war effort. It's not like the U.S., British, French and others who actually had combat troops. These guys weren't that. They could have been, but they weren't going to be. So our whole relationship with Pakistan—I got there in July—that period for the next nine months till after the fall of Iraq was not a good one. Nuclear weapons went the wrong way, trying to get a Mujahideen coalition together went the wrong way, etc.

One issue that was somewhat more positive was the idea of sending the refugees back and that Mrs. Oakley was doing it. And we were getting quite a bit of money and as the Mujahideen established more and more control over the countryside, many of the refugees were able to return to Afghanistan, to their villages, which was a positive thing, because their presence was an economic burden on Pakistan. Eventually they were mostly sent back. So internally, the foreign policy side wasn't going well.

Internally, the Pakistanis were wrestling with the idea do they either want to be a dictatorship or democracy or a mixture of the two. And of course, the answer is a mixture of the two. The person that had been appointed the acting Prime Minister in the fall of 1990, was a leigh-weight nonentity, completely at the beck and call of the military. But he was nominally independent and they had elections. And the interesting thing, I sat through three or four Pakistani elections, they were remarkably free. You have a situation where the military is in control, but they wanted to have these elections. The military

would not intervene. This was not like in Burma, where you have, you know, a third of the candidates has to be army officers. There were no army officer candidates. These are all politicians around the country.

There were two major political parties, Benazir Bhutto's and Nawaz Sharif's, and depending on the month, the army would support one or the other. And we were involved in this. We had excellent communications with both political parties because we, frankly—and they didn't either—we frankly didn't know who was going to win the election.

For a while Benazir Bhutto is the elected Prime Minister. However, the Army gets sick and tired of her. And even though you were the Prime Minister, and you technically had all this power, you actually had very little power. Because all the major decisions were made by the Chief of Army Staff. But you had a parliament, they did vote, they voted on budgets, they argued, like Washington, incessantly bickered. In Pakistan—I was to find out—because Pakistan was so different from Africa. This was another thing when I got there. Africa was tribal, every country I was in there were different tribes and the political parties broke down along tribal lines. In Pakistan, it was regional. These weren't tribes. But there were different ethnic groups in Sindh province, and North West Frontier, etc. And these groups, they really didn't owe a lot of allegiance to the party leadership.

I was amazed at the willingness of people to switch parties. And basically, they were getting bribed. If you support x, we're going to make you Minister of Transport or whatever if you switch parties. And a good bit of money. The thing that struck me coming from Africa as a political officer, is the nature of Pakistani politics. It doesn't resemble anything in India. And when I read about it, and they were constantly referred to as the feudals, which to a Western, that's a derogatory term. Feudals. I get there, they, these politicians, refer to themselves and their group as we're all feudals. And then you look at it—you go back to your history, that feudal England—these guys were for a large part, they fit the definition of feudal. They ran areas, each one a huge agricultural area—farms is the wrong word—agricultural areas, and with tens or hundreds of thousands of people working for them. They were the Gods. They appointed the sheriff's; they appointed the clerics in the mosques. If there were any schools, they set them up. Everything they did, their power was absolute in their area. And what they wanted to ensure by the elections is that they will get elected. And they would have this power again. And one of the big things about the power I mentioned, is the sheriff, the head of the police. And if you're the Member of Parliament for this district, you get to choose your police chief, which means they are not going to arrest you for dirty dealing of which there is quite a bit.

These guys, the people they ruled over were basically serfs. They basically had no rights—they weren't slaves, that you can argue this definitionally—they weren't slaves, but they couldn't leave the land. They were raised on the land, everything they got, had to come from the feudal landlord. Any schooling, which wasn't much. When their daughters get married— this is terribly important—they want to give them a good wedding. So the feudal would loan the serf, X amount of rupees to do a wedding. And then he'd be in

depth for years and years. That was how the game was played. These people, in reality they could not—but in theory, they could not leave, they were stuck to the land, stuck as being under vassals to the feudals.

That situation is still in existence today in Pakistan. It is simply the nature of the political beast. And you would think, somebody will break this down and a political party would represent the serfs, Benazir Bhutto was the one that was the enlightened for she's the progressive. And she talked a great game. And some of the things she did were good, but she never, ever tried to break down the feudal system. And I don't think she could have. They would have abandoned her and shifted to the other party.

In my first year there as a political officer, I'm just beginning to understand—it takes about a year in a system like that to understand what is going on. How political power is derived and how it is executed. After we got through the Gulf war, we fail on the negotiating in Afghanistan, and we left Afghanistan to itself. Now, we still reported on it because we had closed the embassy in Kabul in the late 1980s. So any of the political reporting on Afghanistan came from us. And Janet Bogue was the point person on this. And she stayed in touch with all the Mujahideen factions, and they went on their own merry way to destroy the country.

We were watching this and what happened—there was an agreement at one point where Group A would be in charge in Kabul and be the Prime Minister for six months, they would then leave and Group B would come in for six months. Okay, so Group A goes in—I can't remember the groups now—they were in Kabul. As they get towards the end of their six months, the Prime Minister says "You know what, I'm not leaving. I like to stay." So Group B who was supposed to take over and was headed by o Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, decided, "Okay, if you're not going to leave, I'm going to bombard the capital." And the Russians had left dozens or hundreds of Scud missiles and 122-millimeter rockets. So Hekmatyar could sit out 10, 15 miles outside of Kabul, and literally rain these rockets down on the city. When the Taliban finally won in 1995 Kabul was a mess not because of the Russians. Kabul had barely been touched during the war with the Russians. It was a mess because Hekmatyar had bombarded it for two years.

There was no love lost amongst these groups. And they had not only these weapons. During the war against the Russians, we had sent tons of military equipment in. And what they did was, , that these Mujahideen military leaders had taken these weapons, and a good portion of them went into caves for the civil war they knew was going to come. And the other portion, they used to fight the Russians. Then when the Russians left, these guys had a very significant source of weapons to fight their own Civil War, which then went on for almost four years.

The Taliban came into the picture after 1993 after I left Pakistan, and all this mayhem was the Mujahideen against Mujahideen. The Taliban comes in—they are people that were educated in Islamic schools inside Pakistan. They're going to try and establish a Islamic State. And by this point, this is 1995, the various groups were just tired. They've been fighting for 15 years. The Taliban was fresh, they swept up from the south, through

Kandahar up to the north. And what happened was very briefly, the other Mujahideens just pretty much collapsed. They lost a series of battles and to everyone's surprise, probably including the Taliban, the Taliban ended up as top dog and they took Kabul.

But again, we couldn't care less. By 1995, we were out of Afghanistan. Okay, the other issue that came up—started after the Gulf War was narcotics. Afghanistan was, or became, one of the leading producers of heroin and narcotics in the world. It was the only cash crop most of these poor farmers in Afghanistan could make. Other than that, they'd raise a little bit of wheat, they weren't very good, the soil was rough. So the Mujahideen had been encouraging them to raise and sell heroin because the money, they tax the farmers and the money then kept enabled the Mujahideen to stay in business. The only way in those days for these supplies to get out to Europe was through Pakistan. And you can either come due south from Quetta, or you could come through the Khyber Pass, north-west Frontier and down. And it didn't take long, as in Mexico, for a huge enterprise to develop in terms of growing and then shipping and selling narcotics in the west. And we have anti-narcotics people, we were working on it. We tried to convince the Mujahideen "Look, we'll give you money to give to the farmers, have them raise something else." Well, just like nuclear weapons with Pakistan, where they looked at and say, you know, we really need the weapons. The Muj decided that they needed the money that the drugs would bring in. And what we were putting on the table to give to the farmers wouldn't make up for what they'd lose.

We had very, very good communications, coordination, with the military—you had to if you were going to work in Pakistan—so when the ambassador after Oakley was Platt, Nick Platt and he was also a superb officer. Then we got instructions from Washington to go in and make a proposal to the army. And the proposal, the guidance, was to convince the army to—the Pakistani army—to take some of their troops—they had, it was a huge army, 500,000 men—to take some of their troops and put them into the fight against narcotics. Because there was anti-narcotics police. But as in Mexico, it had long been subverted by the bad guys.

We see the Chief of Army Staff and put it on the table. Then a week later, he calls us back in. And his answer from my point of view, not Washington's, was again absolutely the right answer. He said, "Your Excellency. I cannot do this. If I take my army, which is the only institution that runs in Pakistan," which is true, by the way. He said, "If I take that and put it in anti-narcotics, the drug runners will subvert, they'll corrupt my officer corps. And I will be left with a hollow army of people that are basically in it for the money. I can't do it." And I agreed with him 100%, that this would be a disastrous move for this country of Pakistan. It would fit our policy needs, we needed somebody to slow up the drugs, but it wouldn't work. They would. He's right, they would have broken any agreements. Anything the military did would be undermined within six or eight months. The money was so immense. He said "What I will do is I will take several of my very good officers, two stars. And I will put them in charge of the counter narcotics operation." He said, "but those officers will never come back into my army." This is a very interesting, very astute observation, because if they come back there, he knew they were going to be corrupted. There's nothing that could be done to stop it. If they came

back to the army, the corruption would spread. He did not want them back. So, interesting.

You know, we're trying to accomplish things in Pakistan and one after another, they don't work. And then we try to encourage democratization and elections. We went through the motions of doing it. You had Benazir Bhutto who was the darling of the West. She was well thought of, articulate. Her husband wasn't very good. Her husband who's still alive, was known as Mr. Ten Percent. When she was Prime Minister, if you wanted to contract with the Pakistani government, you went through him. This is the way it worked. And when we would meet them at social events when she was Prime Minister, and he was the husband of, he was just a nasty guy. We tried to avoid doing any business with him because he was so tainted. And we wanted to work through Benazir to try and strengthen her hand. It helped a bit, but you couldn't end up on top, and the army would keep on picking fights with either Benazir or Nawaz Sharif, the two political parties and kick one or the other out of the country. They go in exile into the UAE or into London for a couple of years. And what would happen is the army would—the government would announce charges against one or the other. But they wouldn't be arrested immediately, they were given time to catch a flight out to the Gulf or London, they could jump on the first flight out of Pakistan to London. Everyone understood that's fine. They're out of the country. And then the army can go on doing what it wants to do.

So, our efforts over these three years to try and encourage democracy was semi-successful. You'll never get—the army is, as far as I can tell, and still is today, running the country and major decisions. And the political parties have free elections. They debate incessantly in Parliament. They have a budget, that's the only thing they passed. Almost no legislation—when I was there—almost no laws were ever passed other than a budget and that was a pro forma. And the army made sure that the budget gave them all the money they needed, which was a lot.

The other issue we kept on working was India. The worry, for most of the West, was of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. And it was a very real possibility. They've had, they've come close in 1990. There was constant border skirmishing across what's called the Line of Control, which is the ceasefire line from 1948 when Britain gave independence

Now, 70 years later, it's still the Line of Control. They still shoot across it with great regularity and the danger is that it's going to blossom into something worse. A couple of years ago, there were some aerial dog fights over the line of control. A Pakistani shot down an Indian plane, captured the pilot, and it was a day of national rejoicing in Pakistan. As a result we were constantly trying to build confidence between India and Pakistan? And the embassy in Delhi was also a very good, a very well-staffed mission. And we were, I think, in fact, the ambassador was Frank Wisner in the mid 1990s. And we would get together—we the embassy, our embassy, and folks in Delhi, vice versa—would try to brainstorm how, what kind of confidence building measures can we present to both of these, because we were the country with the most influence with both of them.

Pakistan was an ally of China, India close to Russia, which at this point in mid 1990s, was a spent power. But India was powerful. We tried different things and you again, nothing worked. The governments in Islamabad and in Delhi were more interested in their own power and not allowing the other guy to claim any kind of a victory or any kind of an evolution in their favor. For example, why don't you both pull back along the Line of Control and have a buffer zone? Yeah, but if I do that the enemy will take advantage and expand his lines. I'll have to shoot him. So we can't pull back.

They were also fighting up on the glacier. It's the highest spot in the world where you have military forces—17,000 feet. And each army has 8000 to 10,000 men. They've been there for 70 years. And this is idiotic, and I flew up there one time in a special helicopter. Have you ever been to 17,000 feet? No? You get off the plane. And the oxygen is just sucked out of your lungs. So, they wanted us—to leave us there for a couple of hours. So, we went up, got out of the helicopter, walked very slowly, couldn't even run, walked to the bunker, got into the bunker. And then the captain who commanded this sector would give us a briefing as to where the Indians were etc etc. And we were trying to think oh no one wants to fight up there. These troops would take seven months of preparation, where they acclimatize them starting at sea level and move up until they were ready to go up, and they would then spend two to three months at 17,000 feet, then they would be moved out and somebody else would come in. You couldn't keep people up there much longer. I mean, at that altitude, you're lucky to survive. So we came up with ideas. Neither side was interested in making any concession that would give the other side some opportunities.

Q: Well, for the same reason. The Chinese Indian War of 1962 evolves from the same circumstance because India's claim of Kashmir goes deep into China.

FUGIT: Yes. Yeah.

Q: And so that causes the Chinese side to respond.

FUGIT: Yeah. No, it's really bizarre. And I feel sorry for those troops up there.

Q: Yeah. Speaking on the pommel side of things. You were talking about the Pressler amendment. When they brought the sanctions. But the Pressler amendment was invoked in October 1990 and banned the sale of F-16s I think it was. to Pakistan. And did that F-16 issue, then go through your old assignment have to be dealt with and...

FUGIT: It did. The Pressler Amendment was an attempt to reward Pakistan with F-16s and other equipment in return for them not “possessing” nuclear weapons. It would give them air superiority over India. In the end it didn't change anything. We couldn't get the Pakistanis to agree anyway. So those were the main issues that we had.

Q: Speaking of sensitive things. In the State Department itself, a new Bureau was carved out of NEA, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. That administrative change at the State Department mean anything to you?

FUGIT: Yes it did, we thought it was a great idea. And that the stans, the six former Soviet republics in Central Asia, really belong in a South Asian grouping. Their focus, we hoped, over time, would be south into Pakistan. We didn't count on them looking East to enter China. So right now, those states are sort of in between the Chinese Silk Road proposals and Russia's desire to have hegemony over its near abroad. And these states still require an exit to the sea from Pakistan. And if China ever completes the railroad that they're planning to come across through Central Asia and then south through Pakistan, to either Karachi or Quetta, or Gwadar could make a huge difference. Topographically, it's almost an impossible task of putting a railroad through those mountain passes. But if you've got enough money, presumably you can do anything. So those states, that made sense to do it. And my next assignment when we get there, the thing about when I was at CENTCOM is I was instrumental in getting those states stripped from European command, and given to Central Command, and we'll get to that later.

So anyway, it seemed like a good idea. And at the beginning, everyone thought this could be a new area for Pakistan to open up. And maybe this can be the catalyst that will change things inside Pakistan, and they can be the dominant influence on these Central Asian states. Well, they couldn't. One of the sad things for Pakistan is that it's a country that is 10 years away from being 10 years away. It never makes it. In the early '70s—I remember reading a book on this. South Korea sent delegations to Pakistan, to try and learn the benefits that Pakistan had, and it could help in South Korea. Well, as we know, South Korea is ten or fifteen times wealthier than Pakistan, because nothing Pakistan has done for 40 or 50 years economically has amounted to anything. It has textiles, yeah, that's about it. It never became a place like Indonesia or Malaysia where you had huge offshore factories making clothes or anything. They have a little bit but this country of 180 million people, and it never developed a significant economy that's not based on feudalism. And we worked on that. We tried different ideas, sending people to training courses. But Pakistan was politically such a mess that people with money just were not willing to invest in Pakistan. And it's still that way today, it has never developed to what it could be. Education is atrocious, so you don't have a base from which to recruit employees to run more sophisticated operations. Yeah, you might be able to do some very basic textile work, and that's about it.

Q: Now, in this environment, the rest of the embassy is trying to do its thing. I think when you arrived Sandy Dempsey was head of the refugee section. And you touched on refugees a little bit. You want to go a little bit further as to how that fits into the perception of the embassy.

FUGIT: That was one of the few success stories we had, is getting some refugees back into Afghanistan. And the refugee camps were not that bad, you know, you look at like the Rohingyas now in Myanmar, how terribly bad they're treated. These refugee camps had a lot of money and they weren’t hovels. I mean, no refugee camp is a fun place to be.

But these were pretty good, and the people wanted to go back to Afghanistan. Once the Civil War moved out of their areas, they would return. I suspect though today—and I don't know the answer—there's probably still a million or so people that are in refugee camps, but it's nowhere near what it was before. And the catalysts behind a lot of doing this was Mrs. Oakley. She was connected, she knew how to work with the UN, the World Food Program, etc, etc. So that was as close as we had to a real success.

We also had one other project I was working on, because this will fit in, partly into my next presentation. In late 1992, early 1993, Somalia went to hell. The government collapses in 1990. So there's no government and then there's a terrible drought in 1992. People are dying, or about to die by the hundreds of thousands. The UN wants to send in food aid. The first couple of planes they get in there, everybody gets shot at, because the different warlords in Somalia want the food to feed their troops. Then the UN decides, okay, we need to put a UN force in there to protect the food from the warlords.. Pakistan volunteers to send in a full battalion, the Pakistani army is a very good army. It's not like the rabble that I was used to in Africa. These guys knew what they were doing. So we agree—the US agrees.

This is not a US operation. It's a UN operation—but we agree that we will send lift aircraft to Karachi, pick up the Pakistani troops and fly them into Mogadishu and the supplies will come by sea. Okay. My job is to coordinate this in the foreign ministry and the defense ministry in Pakistan. Because those two ministries don't talk to each other, honest to God. I would go into the defense ministry and say, "Okay, you guys can provide this, we'll have these airplanes of blah, blah, blah. And you want to tell the foreign ministry". They looked at me like I'm crazy, why would we tell them? So I went to the foreign ministry. I have very good relations with the foreign minister, these are good officers. I tell them "Okay, you know, you need to go to the UN, here's what you need to do, the troops are going to fly out." "Well, thank you, glad we knew this," etc.

The Pakistanis send their troops to Mogadishu. And what happens is a classic, classic third world mess. They get there, and this is only a battalion, maybe 600 or 700 men, and they don't think they need any more just enough to protect the supplies and get them out to the rural areas. Well, the various warlords had different views on it, they wanted the supplies. As the Pakistanis were standing in the way, they had more troops than the Pakis did. So within about a week, the Pakistanis were effectively in the Alamo. They were confined to the airport, and only a portion of the airport, they didn't have enough troops to move out. And the warlords were stealing the food, basically.

The problem wasn't being solved and we had a whole Pakistani battalion being held hostage. And this is the point in 1993, where I leave Pakistan and I go to Central Command, which I'll talk about that next time. But what happened in Central Command is a result of the Pakistanis being cut off. And the UN decided they must send in more forces to protect the food supplies. What a mess and that leads months later to Blackhawk Down later on with mission creep. But anyway. I did pull the Ministries together. But it didn't work because warlords were adamant that they were going to get the food. They needed to see their own people first and to hell with the civilians.

Q: You're talking about liaison with the foreign ministry. At what level were your counterparts?

FUGIT: Okay. All the way up to the foreign minister, depending on the issue. I would deal with the regional directors. Their foreign ministry was well organized and the people that worked in it were first rate. These guys knew what they were doing as diplomats. They were professional diplomats. They weren't job seekers trying to line their pockets. That happened later. But at his point, these are people doing the right thing. And I was able to coordinate, I could pick up the phone and say, what's going on with this and with that? I had good contacts, the ambassador had excellent contacts. I mean, anytime we wanted to talk to the Prime Minister, or anyone else, we could get through instantly. And that applied throughout the time, even when we had different differences of view, the Pakistanis wanted to work with us. And if they had a different idea, they would tell us. In that sense, it's a very professional operation. In terms of success, most of the things we worked on, we were not able to bring to fruition, which is too bad. You really feel sorry about it. And as I got to know more about Pakistan, I can see that it was essentially, and is today, a failed state. It can't provide good jobs for its people. It has a lot of educated folks, but they tend to go to Britain or the U.S.to live and study and work. You still don't have the nexus of a developing economy in Pakistan. India is decades ahead now of Pakistan. Which it wasn't in the early 1990s.

Q: Now let's talk about how the rest of the embassy is responding to the unique Pakistani circumstance. Bill Lenderking was there as PAU (Public Affairs Officer), what kind of USIA program did we have in Pakistan?

FUGIT: We had a very large USIA presence. It was separate from the Embassy, it was downtown. They had a very big library. They had USIA operations in the other three major cities. And Beth Jones' husband was the deputy in the USIA operations. And they ran your typical exchange programs, etc. We bring people to the U.S. That was all to the good. But nothing again, nothing transpires. The Pakistanis, anything we tried to get them to sign on to, they had different ideas about and they're very strong in their beliefs. For the nuclear one, we couldn't change that. Narcotics, etc. We had two military operations in Pakistan. You had a one star, brigadier who did the military assistance, and then you had an O-6, a colonel who was the defense attaché. The one star was obviously the senior person. But in 1992, the Pentagon eliminated all general officer attaché jobs worldwide, embassy jobs. Then we were left with two colonels. But they were still well connected and the Pakistanis wanted the military connection to continue. And they kept it up and they made sure that their military and our guys were in contact.

The bad thing that happened here, looking in retrospect, is because we cut off aid in September, October of 1990, we also had to terminate very successful military training programs that we had in the United States for senior Pakistani military officers. And in the past they will go to junior, mid and senior level training in the United States. And this opened their eyes and gave us contacts with them. They've been doing this from 1950 until 1990. That was a tremendous asset to the United States. We didn't realize how

tremendous it was till we lost it. Because beginning in fall of 1990, we wouldn't send anybody new. So if you're in a program, you finished it. Well, most of these were eight to ten month programs. So by the spring of 1991, it was cut off. Then later on, when you get to the war in Afghanistan in 2001, 2002, when we invaded Afghanistan, whereas we had had in 20 years before that, very close relationships with the Pakistani military, they no longer existed. They were more pro forma. These officers hadn't been in the United States, they'd been exposed—they were in China, they went elsewhere, but they didn't come to the United States—and that hurts us in the long run. That kind of person to person contact, particularly in a country where the army runs the show. So that that was a self-inflicted wound, we probably could have arranged to keep military training for the Pakistanis, but we didn't. And we paid a price 10 years later. In 2001. That was changed and they reinstituted it. Too late.

Q: You had an interesting circumstance, where Beth Jones was replaced by Ed Abington, who had previously been the political counselor. How did he fit into that job?

FUGIT: Very well, because he'd been there before. He was the office director for Pakistan. So there was no learning curve. He came in and, partly, he and I had the same contacts. There were only just so many senior people you can do it. But he would let me go out and work these guys and then he would work on another aspect of these issues. But then he's the DCM. He's running the place whereas I'm doing political affairs, so he has to spend a lot of time managing a very big embassy. Personnel—you know, when you're a DCM at an embassy, that big personnel is a big issue. Getting good people is always hard in Pakistan. I should make a point here. Since independence in 1948, up till now, there has not been a political ambassador in Pakistan to my knowledge. Every Ambassador has been a career guy. And the reasoning is obvious. If you're giving a lot of money to a President, you're hoping to get Denmark, you're not hoping to get Islamabad because it's somewhat difficult living, somewhat dangerous. Very difficult work. And you have to do some of the work. It's you know, I'd rather be in Denmark type of thing. So, and also because what we're doing is so important on so many issues in Pakistan, which was not true in Africa, that you needed an ambassador who understood the full play of things and how U.S. influence worked or didn't work. So we had, okay, Oakley was good and Nick Platt, and then we had a guy you probably know. John Monjo. He was the Ambassador for my third year..

Q: Let's get into that in a minute. As you're saying, this is a very difficult assignment. Hard to recruit for. Monjo is an Asia hand. He's not a Middle East or South Asia guy, and he's obviously replacing two very strong people. So it sounds like it took him a little time to catch up.

FUGIT: Yes. There's a personality issue, and also because Ed Addington and I had been there. And by the time he got there, Ed and I were plugged into everything. And he did not try to interfere with that, but just the way he played the game wasn't the way we would have played it. And that's just, you know, Ed and I were pretty senior by this point. And we were used to, you know, we knew what we had to do, neither one of us were afraid to change talking points that came from Washington, because—we had two or

three times a week, we would go in and badger the Pakistanis on something, a UN related issue or an India related issue or whatever—and we would, you know change instructions, he would not be okay with that. He would not change a word on the démarche when it would come in from Washington. And our point was, Ed and I said look, Washington has their point of view, but what's going to sell here, how to say this in a way that has a better chance of getting the results we want? And that's where he differed from Ed and I.

Q: Now, let me ask you this. The diplomatic community in Islamabad. Did you have much interaction with the other embassies?

FUGIT: Yes, I should mention I didn't talk much about living in Islamabad. There was maybe one restaurant in the entire city at the Holiday Inn. Almost all the social life—and it's because there are no bars, no movie theaters, not much television—all the social life was at the clubs. So we had a US club, the Brits, the Canadians, the French, I mean, there's maybe six or seven clubs at the different embassies in town. And because there weren't restaurants to go to so every embassy had its own food operation. So that was the social nexus of everything that went on. There wasn't much difference between a diplomatic reception and going to the British Embassy for darts. I mean, it was almost in the same place. So the diplomatic community, of course, the Brits had a very powerful embassy there. The Chinese did, the Russians did. India, of course, even though they were pariahs, they had a big presence there. The Saudis, Egyptians, they all had business with Pakistan, North Korea. Somebody is going to write a book someday about North Korea and Pakistan's nuclear relationship.

Q: I think back to the diplomatic community, would there be something like the Tuesday afternoon meeting of the Anglo-Saxon political? People sharing stories?

FUGIT: The get togethers were social at night. Because there was an unending stream of national days and receptions. And we were probably out, my wife and I, probably five to seven nights a week. But the difference in that community was strong. A lot of them had good information. We would obviously trade information—especially with the Brits—on the things we were working on. Australia had a decent presence for a smaller country. And the Chinese were, you know, they were the allies of Pakistan. Had been since 1948. And still are today with this Silk Road initiative they're working on. The remarkable thing is, this is 30 years since I was there, how little has changed. The political parties are still the same families, still a feudal system. The Chief of Army Staff runs the show. If he wants to declare a dictatorship, he'll do it. I mean, and the civilians understand that, they're not going to stand up to the Chief of Army Staff significantly—they'll give him a little push back here and there, but no—the army is going to get the budget they want, period, and the government can survive on whatever's left. So, you know, 30 years after the fact, there's been, sadly, little evolution in the government there Not really.

Q: With an embassy like yours that has all these very serious issues, did you also have congressional visits or the sec state come by?

FUGIT: Never had any sec state visits that I can recall. We had some CODELs (Congressional Delegations). Again, it's not the place that CODELs like to go to. It's not like you're, you know, you go to Geneva or something. If you go to Pakistan, you got to meet somebody, and what else are you going to do? Go to the beach? No. So they've come maybe a day or two, and they would leave. And I was basically the briefer for these guys. We would take him in and take him into the secure room at the embassy. And we would talk, especially talking about the nuclear issue as to what was going on. And most CODELs did not have a good feel for Pakistan. They've probably seen a briefing paper, but they have so much else to worry about. Pakistan is not going to get them elected in their home district, not going to affect 10 votes. So it's not something they're going to jump up and down about. If you get a good senator, congressman who's on one of the armed services or international relations committees, they could be very good, they would listen. But a lot of them didn't. Just going through the motions.

Q: Let me ask, you mentioned that there were three consulates, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar. Did you have a chance to meet them? Or would their officers come down to Islamabad?

FUGIT: We had every six months a political officers meeting in my house. I bring everybody working on political issues in from the Consulate Generals.. We'd spent two days talking about what's going on. One of the things we had in Pakistan was local employees that were political officers. It's not a political officer, but their job was liaison with politicians in Pakistan, and there were two of them. And so if we wanted to meet with somebody who we weren't familiar with, on a certain issue, they would set it up. And all the politicians in Pakistan knew that if they wanted to get word to the Americans, you went to these two guys, who would then set up tea with us. We would meet them at the Holiday Inn for tea. This happened dozens and dozens of times. It was the way politics was done in Pakistan. So we have the political officers and we have our local employees. And we would sit and talk politics for hours. And in Pakistan, there really was politics. We had a good idea how Pakistan was wired politically. And if we wanted to press whatever button, we knew where to go to press it. The top staffers for the Nawaz and Benazir, we talked to them all the time. So it was a very good arrangement.

What we would do is each year, at the beginning of the year, I would assign papers I wanted each of the political officers to write. But we would sit down, and we'd have this meeting. And okay, I want you to look into the educational structure in Sindh or what is the MQM (Muttahida Qaumi Movement) up to in Karachi. And I'm looking for eight to ten pages. This is not something that's going to be read by a lot of people, but it's going to be the central background material that the desk and others can chew on. And it was great training for the junior officers. So we would do that every year. And I got very, very good production. Because they knew in advance, these were not topical things that had to be reported on by Tuesday. This is more of a broad brush, get your head around an issue, and explain its importance to Washington.

I had a big enough staff that we needed something like this to get people focused. And I generally, not entirely but generally had very good results with this. And we sent a lot of

reporting into Washington. Every day, Beth or I would be on the secure phone with Washington. Talking about—this way you can talk about things that weren't written down. Things you did not want to put in a written record.

Q: Speaking of essential background materials, while you were there, there was a presidential election back in the States. And the administration changed from the Bush administration to the Clinton administration. For transition purposes, you would probably have prepared a few papers for Washington or Washington would have asked you. How did you survive the transition?

FUGIT: Yeah. Well, since we, you know, our ambassador was a career person, and nobody asked for his resignation. There was no impact in terms of staffing. Nor did we expect one. I'm sure we, you know, we get briefing papers. The incoming administration, unlike Bush, really didn't care about foreign affairs, particularly, in the beginning. They were more focused on domestic things. But we would outline India-Pakistan relations, I know we sent in quite a few things on those, because the ambassador in India was much more senior in terms of the power structure in Washington than our guy was. But that was not that much of a driving factor. It was to become that later on. Pakistan, this whole question of nuclear things that the administration wanted to change. It couldn't. Everybody comes in thinking, okay, we are going to solve this. Well, no, really, you can't. You can think you are. It's like Israel-Palestine. You know, every administration thinks they're going to be "I'm going to get the Nobel Peace Prize by solving this." And you end up with nothing.

Q: Actually, Monjo comes in as the new ambassador for the new administration, right?

FUGIT: No, I don't think so. I think he came in late in 1992. Because Platt retired, resigned, and they needed to get somebody out there because this is too important an embassy to ignore.

Q: Okay, well, you were suggesting we do the Battle of Mogadishu in our CENTCOM (United States Central Command) session.

FUGIT: It will fit in very nicely with CENTCOM.

Q: Okay, well, let us take a break here, and let me see. Oh, stop.

Q: Returning to our conversation. This is March 17, with Ed Fugit. Ed, I was last asking you about when you left Pakistan, because I noticed that on June 26, the U.S. launched Tomahawk missiles against the Iraqi intelligence headquarters on the grounds that the Iraqis had tried to assassinate former President Bush. You're going into CENTCOM (Central Command), so was [that] a rumor, was [that] verified, or [was that] simply something that was out there?

FUGIT: Yeah. By the time I got to CENTCOM in the summer of 1993—which is two months later — like most stories, it had fallen off the front page. And I was never able to

check on what the intelligence was, because we had moved on. It wasn't something that the Clinton administration was going to immediately follow up on because we had other things we were doing to try and cripple the Iraqis and the Tomahawks were of some utility, I guess.

Q: Well, here we are in 1993 — you're coming on to an assignment at CENTCOM. How did you get this assignment?

FUGIT: I was finishing up my three-year tour in Pakistan. I had been overseas for seven straight years and it had not been a good time for my oldest two sons' education. They both had a difficult time just jumping from school to school. So, I figured, [we] need to go back to the States, because kid number three was going into eighth grade, so I needed to get him into a good school in the United States. I was looking at the available assignments and the POLAD (Foreign Policy Advisor Program) job jumped out at me. At this level — I was a MC (Minister-Counselor)— there's five or six jobs every year for MCs, coordinating with the military and different things, and there's POLADs, and then there's instructors at the Army War College, National War College, Naval War College, etc. So I was thinking that would be interesting for me because I've got a military background and I can fit in. By this time, I had spent three years in Pakistan. I understood what CENTCOM was and what it did —when I got to Pakistan I had no clue at all.

To do this I got in touch with the officer who had the job. I knew him a bit as he and his boss visited Pakistan 3 or 4 times a year. Their policy was even though we had cut off all military relations with the Pakistanis, the four-star general was allowed to continue person to person contact, so they came out. I had met Hoar several times and lobbied for CENTCOM with the Pak military- on Somalia. To make a long story short, State [Department] supported me for the job and I got the assignment. I come back to the states, do some home leave, nothing particularly exciting going on. I report to CENTCOM around the first of August, down here in Tampa.

Before I got there, I came back from Pakistan. I go to Washington for consultations. So, I go in, obviously, the POL-MIL [Political and Military Affairs] Bureau, and [in] POL-MIL, I was reporting to [the] Deputy Assistant Secretary who did political military affairs. So that was the person who I reported to, so I checked in with them. Then I went to the South Asian Bureau, checking out of Pakistan, but I'm still going to be in the area at CENTCOM.

Then I went to the African Bureau just because I was part of it for so long. I'm talking to a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the African Bureau. And they ask me are you interested in ambassadorship? We've got one and I said, "No. Really not, I can't go overseas." When you're in the African Bureau, what you get for your first Ambassadorship is invariably a small, semi-unimportant post, where they probably— they certainly won't have high schools and may not even have grammar schools for English. I said, "Look, I can't do another overseas tour now. I need to get my family back here." Okay, so I thought that ended it. That was in August. In December of 1993, my secretary said, Mr. Fugit, you've got a phone call from the White House. "What's going on?" The call is from a lady from

the personnel office— appointments office in the White House. And she said, "Mr. Fugit? I want to congratulate you— the President has approved your nomination?" And my response is to what country? I had no idea anything was in the works. No one had even done a background check on me as far as I knew.

She said, “Oh, you don't know.” I said, "No." She said, “To be ambassador.” Okay. I said, "Where?" She said Equatorial Guinea. My response was, "Oh, shit." And she said— this is all true. She said, "That's not normally the response we get." And I said, “You clearly don't know anything about Equatorial Guinea.” So anyway, I was left on the hook. After the phone call, I thought about it for about 30 seconds. At this point, Equatorial Guinea is an unimportant post. It's one of the two former Spanish colonies in Africa. And we had at this point, no national interest in Equatorial Guinea. We were there only because Spain over the years begged us to be there. They want someone there besides them. And the [American] ambassador was leaving post. And you know, they had to get somebody. And somehow what I said in August, when I told them I wasn't interested, didn't compute, or it wasn't emphatic enough.

Clearly they wanted to put me in. So, I sent a letter. This is like the 17th of December to the Assistant Secretary for AF [African Affairs], saying, "Oh, my God, get me off this. I'm not ready to go overseas, I owe it to my family to stay here." And I said, "Equatorial Guinea has no schools, no known school in any language, much less English." So anyway, they called back and dropped it and then they closed the embassy next year, because they had nobody who was willing to go. Two and a half years later, just as how these things work, US oil companies discovered massive offshore oil fields around Equatorial Guinea. And it's now one of the largest producers in the world, all offshore. If you look at the map, Equatorial Guinea is south of Nigeria. And the Nigerian fields extend out into the Bight of Africa. And the reason no one had mined these previously is because it's so deep, the technology didn't exist. But by the mid-90s, they had developed the technology to drill down that deep. And suddenly Equatorial Guinea was the second largest recipient of U.S. foreign investment in Africa. Anyway, I turned down the ambassadorship.

Back in August, when we arrived in Tampa, we had two weeks when we got there to get our boy in school. School begins like the 15th of August. So, we get there, that means we must find the house to buy like right now, because that determines the school district. We got a house. I looked at four houses and bought one and it took about a month to move in. But my kid was in a decent school, that was issue number one.

Issue number two was adapting into a military command. The way I looked at it from my own point of view because I had both military service in Vietnam and I stayed in the Army Reserves, I should be able to function well in this hybrid environment. The POLAD world in this time in the early 90s, is an interesting one. It has changed to today, and it's changed immensely now from what it was then. But there were, I think, six POLADs, and the POLADs were the equivalent of a two-star general. So that's why we had to assign minister counselors to these jobs. And the POLADs were at the combatant commands. And these were European Command, Pacific Command, Southern

Command, Central Command, those were combatant commands. What that meant for the military, is if there was a war in their part of the world, that command would run it just like Schwarzkopf ran Desert Storm, because it was part of CENTCOM's area of responsibility and CENTCOM's area extended from Egypt all the way through to Pakistan.

We, the State Department, had two-star equivalence, at these—at the four combatant commands, plus transportation command, which is why they are there because we're constantly flying aircraft all over the world. And we need to coordinate with the U.S. embassies with these planes coming and going. So, this was a situation in 1993. By 1997-98, the value of POLADs had been realized, especially in the wake of the whole Serbian-Kosovo operation. And State went from having POLADs at this elevated level of minister counselor, we would also assign POLADs task forces, much smaller commands than Central Command, European command. A task force was an ad-hoc organization set up to do something, might exist for six months, two years, who knew. And so State was assigning officers at the O-1 level, to be POLADs to the smaller organizations, which was a great tool for educating Foreign Service officers how the military worked, and was very valuable to the commanders of these units. Because these Foreign Service people could quickly contact the US ambassador in countries X, Y, and Z, and get something done or get information or pass information, whatever.

From the time I got there in 1993, to 1998, it evolved significantly, the role of the POLAD evolved. At first it wasn't very sophisticated and basically, I reported to a Deputy Assistant Secretary, but not very much. It turned out that many of the issues that I was working on had little or nothing to do with POL-Mill, for the most part, they had to do with the Near East and South Asian Bureaus. I kept POL-Mil sort of informed, they didn't care very much either. I would go up to Washington about every two months, six weeks or so, and spend two days walking in the halls and go in and call on Office directors, et cetera.

The command itself, as I said, covers the whole area for Egypt through to Pakistan, but it did not include Israel, or Syria, because Central Command was dealing with the Arabs. And the feeling was that if you added Israel to it, the Arabs would not trust us and talk to us, because they feared we would pass it on to the Israelis. So, this had been the decision in the 1980s when CENTCOM was set up, and Israel was excluded. You may have noticed two or three months ago, at the end of the Trump administration, they changed that, and Israel is now under Central Command in terms of military coordination. Partly they did it because of the Abraham Accords. And you have these Arab states now having diplomatic relations with Israel. It's not as sensitive as it was before.

Anyway, our area was everything but Israel, Lebanon and Syria. The command was just coming out of Desert Storm, Desert Storm ended in 1991 and I got there two years later. GEN Schwarzkopf, who'd been the commander, transferred out in the summer of 1991. This was before I got there. He was replaced by a Marine four-star named Joe Hoar. And they couldn't be more different in terms of personalities. I knew Schwarzkopf later, he used to come to CENTCOM every now and then, and I had dinner with him a couple of

times. Totally different animal than Joe Hoar. And I'm finding when you get to the level of four stars, which is who I dealt with, personality is everything. Hoar was a gentleman, he was a commander, he could be tough. But he didn't belittle people in public. If you read the books about Schwarzkopf and Desert Storm, he reveled in embarrassing his senior officers in front of other senior officers. It was just the way he did business, and no one liked if you're being dressed down. It happens all the time. It's not like the Foreign Service where it's a very rare event. It's not rare and it's acceptable in the military culture. But you normally don't do it in front of your peers, you do it privately in a room to take care of, Schwarzkopf didn't. Hoar did, he was a gentleman. And he ran a good command.

Now, we really didn't have a mission, CENTCOM, at this point, Desert Storm was over. The one thing that the command was doing militarily— I'll get into Somalia in a second, was to run the No-fly Zones over Iraq, northern and southern Iraq. And this was a political issue as much as it was a military issue. The idea was, and this developed in 92, that the Iraqis would continue to attack the Kurds, the Shias, and the others if we didn't put a stop to it. So, we decreed that Iraqi fixed wing aircraft could not go north of a certain line or south of a certain line. And every day, we would put up a couple of dozen fighter aircrafts, some in the North, some in the South, and these flew from Saudi Arabia for the most part.

And they accomplished their purpose. We did this for a period of about nine years. Remarkably, we never had an accident because we're flying over Iraq. And if you get a flame out or whatever, you're crashing in Iraq, and you give them an American prisoner. So, we did not want that to happen. We did have and this was because of this, a helicopter rescue detachment in Kuwait. And their purpose was if somebody went down to get there and get them out if you possibly could. So politically, that was the most you could do to cover these guys. But the No-fly Zone was a tactical and a political success. Fast forward 10 years when we invaded Iraq, many of the generals who were opposed to the Iraq invasion, argued, look, we've been doing this No-fly Zone, it's worked. Saddam is in a box. Yeah, he's not fully defeated, but he isn’t doing anything. But by this point, the Bush administration in 2002, they're hell bent on going into Iraq.

Going back to 1993, the No-fly Zone was the main issue. And then Somalia. We had a presence in Somalia to feed people, which I was involved in during my time in Pakistan before I left, because the Pakistanis were the first ones to go in and a Pakistani battalion was sent in and was immediately cut off. It was basically a Fort Apache the Bronx situation in Mogadishu. So, then the UN sent more troops in to try and ensure that the food got to the masses. These included some US troops in purely a humanitarian role. Our assumption was that the warlords would not take on US military forces/ Well, that turns out to be wrong.

We had Foreign Service officers working in Mogadishu, not a formal embassy because we closed the embassy in 1989. But we had an office in Mogadishu to assist with the humanitarian efforts. We had basically political officers that could understand what was going on in terms of Somali politics, which was incredibly Byzantine. And it was all tribal based. So, I was coordinating with these officers in the field that was part of my

job, they will report back to State [Department], to the African Bureau, they report back to us.

Given the nature of the work we did— CENTCOM was in the wrong place. Central Command as an institution does the Middle East. Why is our headquarters in Tampa? It is not a convenient place to do business from. The European command is in Europe, Pacific Command is in the Pacific, Southern Command was in Panama, but now it's in Miami. But we're sitting 3,000-4000 miles from our area of responsibility. And that meant that we were on the road a lot. I traveled on average 100 days a year in the Middle East with a four-star General, he had his own plane, and the plane was equipped to do mid-air refueling. So that meant that we could fly nonstop from Tampa to Riyadh, Tampa to Islamabad, whatever. So, we would go out, as I said, about 100 days a year, maybe four trips a year, five or six, into different areas. And basically, what the commander would do, when he got there would be to call on the—first, call on the U.S. Ambassador, we would get a briefing paper from the embassy, I will provide that to the commander.

And then our General would meet with the U.S. ambassador, find out what was going on there, then the U.S. Ambassador would accompany us on our official calls. So, it'd be the four-star General, the U.S. Ambassador, me, a notetaker from our side and from the embassy side, and we will go meet with the head of the Army or the military in country x. And in most cases, we will go meet with the head of state. So, in Egypt we met with Mubarak, we met with the King of Saudi Arabia, we met with the King of Jordan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, and everything else, as well as their military commanders. And this was SOP [Standard Operating Procedure]. And our ambassadors in the field were great at this. And they were supporting—we didn't have any message at this point.

We weren't seeking bases. We just wanted to maintain military to military and military to civilian communications. And we want to help the embassy out. Because a lot of what the embassy could do in many of these countries, in terms of improving their access and making friends, was to provide military sales or military transfers. So, if it's a poor country, Djibouti, Bahrain, where they don't have a lot of money, they can't afford fancy equipment. We would just transfer used equipment to them at no cost. Every year, we would look at what surplus gear the U.S. military had. And then embassies could bid on it. And then deliver it to country X, Y, and Z. So, this helped the ambassador tremendously in those countries, because he was giving goodies to the military. In particular Jordan, because Jordan is not a rich country, you probably know that. They couldn't afford these weapons systems. So, the stuff we were giving from excess military sales was a godsend in terms of our relations with those governments. And that was something that I would coordinate. Staying close to these ambassadors was also important. And what we did when an ambassador was nominated, we would bring him down to Central Command for a day of briefings. And the military is wonderful at these dog and pony shows.

Okay. They do a really good job of this. So, the SOP was, that the ambassador would fly into Tampa, in the evening, I would meet him at the airport, drive them to the base, and put them into VIP quarters at the base. He would eat dinner at the Officer's Club. Next

morning, I would pick him up, and we would go to a beachside restaurant on the base, which was just beautiful, looking out over St. Petersburg. And I could sit and talk to the ambassadors. See, what is it you know, what's going on? Just establish a relationship with him, then we will go back to the headquarters, where the ambassador would call on the commander, usually 30-minute substantive meeting, what are the issues the ambassador sees, and the general would say, here's what we're trying to do in the region or in this country, etc. And then we have a session with the policy plans office, people in the command. And then we would meet with the country area experts. We usually had two or three officers on the staff who worked full time on that subject. So, they would meet with the ambassador. And then at the end of that, we would have this full command briefing, which is a dog and pony show. And it was not something the Foreign Service ever did.

The joke was the military has never seen an audio-visual device it didn't like; the Foreign Service has never seen an audio-visual device period. We did everything by writing. They didn't do it; they did these PowerPoint presentations. So, these visits were immensely successful in me meeting the ambassador, the ambassador meeting the four-star General and understanding that he can call us at any time. And they did overtime and made things happen. So that's the situation that we had. So, we will go out to an embassy, we will fly into the country, meet with the ambassador, as I said, meet with the other top people. Sometimes General Hoar wanted to see historic sites. So, we would spend half a day looking at something of historical interest and the local military would take us around. So, we really got to see some stuff. The second commander, General Peay, wasn't as interested in sights— he was more interested in the military-to-military period.

The biggest issue bubbling at the time, as I said, was Somalia. And some of these warlords in Somalia—all of them basically knew that their survival depended on stealing food from us. And they weren't going to back off, if they had backed off, they couldn't feed their troops and their organization would collapse. Thus seizing the food supplies was important to them. We thought by sending in some American troops, in addition to UN forces, that would encourage them to back off, didn't happen. So, then somebody gets a bright idea. Why don't we put Delta Force in and go after a couple of these warlords and try and capture them? So, we sent them Delta Force with their own special helicopters. And we went to Mogadishu, the general and I and we met with the commander of Delta Force who was a one star. And he said, "Look, we got it that this is a difficult thing. My mission here is to capture these guys." He said the warlords know that. They know exactly what we're doing. He said they never stay in the same place. He said, I can tell you where they were last night. I can't tell you where they're going to be tonight. Very interesting statement. He said to us what we're planning to do, “we've got a snatch team ready to go. If I get information that we know where they're going today in two to three hours, I can launch a raid. Okay?” This is the genesis for Blackhawk Down.

One day they get the information that Aidid, who's the warlord we really wanted, was going to be in a certain house in downtown Mogadishu. This is only two or three miles from our base. So the U.S. Military knows he's there. This is a daytime operation. The intelligence was not good. We knew where he was, but we didn't realize there were so many people with weapons in the area. When our choppers come in, they start to let off

troops to repel down the ropes onto a rooftop. And holy hell breaks loose all over the area. And I don't know how many dozens or hundreds of AK-47s are out there. But the chopper's most vulnerable time is when it's in a hover at 50 feet. And that's what our guys were doing. U.S. helicopter pilots were hovering trying to get these guys on the target. And many of them were shot down, 18 were killed. It was a mess. And we did not know it at the time at CENTCOM.

The Delta commander called up General Hoar and said, "Okay, boss, this has gone bad. Here's what the situation is." There's nothing we could do from CENTCOM. I mean, our forces were limited, there was no carrier sitting off the coast with air cover or anything else. You must survive based on what you have there. So, it took hours and days, and we were finally able to get these troops, most of them out. But then you were left with one pilot who was a prisoner.

This becomes a political firestorm in Washington. This is the first major foreign policy crisis of the young Clinton administration, and it looks terrible, we had 18 troops killed, with pictures of dead Americans being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. And we had no effective way of responding. There was no American—the American troops that were in Mogadishu at the time, other than the Delta team, which was small, were logistics people, they were supply. We kept the UN force going with our logistics. These weren't assault troops— these weren't combat guys. You couldn't send them out and rescue [Delta Force]. So, we were finally able to get troops from Pakistan and I think Bangladesh to help get them out. But then the issue is one pilot is captured,

The next day in Washington my boss, General Hoar, was called up to the White House. I wasn't included in the meeting. The meeting included the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, the four-star General from CENTCOM, the President, Vice President and National Security Advisor. You know, okay, six or seven of the top people. They had a meeting and basically, what we knew was not very much, we knew that the operation had been a disaster. We have a good idea who captured the pilot but what do we do about it?

Basically, you needed a diplomatic/political solution as we weren't going to send in more troops. What happened on that afternoon in Washington, is somebody got the idea that we could get Bob Oakley to come in. Bob had been ambassador in Somalia in 1986-87, before he went to Pakistan. Well, he was retired, and he ran a— like many senior FSOs, ran a consultant service in Washington.

The White House called him up and said, Bob, come to the White House right now. So, he drives over, goes into the meeting with these people. And this is what the readout was from my boss when he came back. They discussed what to do now. Oakley was a great ambassador for these kinds of circumstances. He knew how to wheel and deal, and he'll get something done. He isn't the guy you want to negotiate an arms control treaty with Moscow. He is the guy you want in a third world mess. So, they said, "Look, Bob, would you be willing to pack a bag, go out to Andrews [Air Base] tonight, we'll have a plane take you directly to Somalia. And you can try and figure out what to do." So, he said, yes,

as Bob would. Well, that's just his nature. Now remember, Bob had been my ambassador in Pakistan, in 1990-91. So, I knew him. I knew his nature.

Then I called the staff aide to Secretary of State Christopher, Beth Jones. She had been Oakley's DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] when I was in Pakistan. She knew Oakley very well. I said, Beth, I understand the sentiment of sending Bob out there. What are his instructions? She said, "Ed, he doesn't have any, his instructions are to solve it?" I mean, that's it. You know, people in Washington, none of whom are experts on the third world. And they just did not know what to do. And they had to get it solved.

Congress was screaming, many saw this as a chance to embarrass the President and Clinton wanted to get this put behind him. So, Oakley went out and there were a couple of FSOs there, but they weren't as senior as he was. But Oakley knew everybody. When he gets there he immediately puts out feelers to the different warlords and he was respected for his efforts six years previously; they knew who Oakley was.

Some of the warlords agreed, so he met right away over the first couple of days with some of the leaders including Aidid. And basically he was told, as I understand it, "We don't want this guy, we've got everything we need out of him. But we can't let him go, we have to get something political for it." So basically, Oakley is feeding information back to us again but there's nothing we can do about it. He's got control.

Then he comes up with an idea, it is to have a regional conference, which the warlords would be invited to, up in Addis Ababa. And he gets the president of Ethiopia to agree to it. And so, he was going to fly these warlords up there. Then Oakley goes to the commander of the U.S. Air Force detachment in Mogadishu, they have a couple of C-130s, and tells him that he wants to put Aidid on one of these planes and fly him up. The AF commander goes, listen, we're trying to capture this guy, and you want me to put him on my airplane. So, he calls up General Hoar, and says, "Sir, what should I do?" So, I said to General Hoar, "Look, I know Oakley, you're going to lose if you fight him. If you say no, he'll go right to the White House." So, I said, "I suggest you tell the general to put him on the plane," which is what the order was.

They went up, they had this meeting. And after the meeting, Aidid comes back and then he releases the pilot. So the problem is solved. It took about a month, I think, for this whole thing to transpire, and it was basically Oakley's ability to operate in a third world environment that was the reason. He is a good Third World FSO, who can operate in this environment, and who gets something done in a way that the textbooks don't quite understand, it is just, in a different country, you would have done it differently. But these people, he knew them and he was able to be successful. But Oakley, being the kind of guy he is, said "Okay, I'm going to solve Somalia for you. Let me stay here for another month and work with these warlords and maybe we can get a transitional government here."

Okay, that's a bridge too far. Oakley tried it for about a month, got nowhere, because the warlords would not give up control to somebody else- sort of like in Afghanistan three

years earlier. Any kind of a transition government would have required them to relinquish some control with some of their troops, they weren't going to do it. So that failed. The decision in Washington, once the prisoner recovery was over, was to get the hell out of Somalia. We weren't there for any military purpose. We were there for humanitarian purposes, and it didn't work.

It was an UN operation, of course, we had to go work through the UN, et cetera. After about six or eight months, we worked out a plan for the withdrawal of all UN forces there. And one of the things that I was arguing is, at first, we were saying, okay, the U.S. is just going to take the American forces out, and you other nations just worry about yourself. Most countries don't have the capability of sending a bunch of C-130, C-141s to take people out. So, I went to the general and said, "Sir, we're responsible for these people being there, we asked them to go to Somalia, We, as the United States must provide cover for them to safely leave, especially the Pakistanis who were going to be the last unit out and they were the first guys in there. And General Hoar completely understood and agreed. So that was an international amphibious operation to extract everybody from Somalia. And in a way that the warlords would not attack us.

That's how Somalia ends up. And for years it didn't have a real national government. It was, like so many things you do in the third world, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. We were trying to save lives, we ended up losing American lives, we ended up with Somalia even worse, and people still starving.

Then next summer, 1994, CENTCOM had a change of commanders, General Hoar retired, and the army sent in four-star General Peay, also a gentleman who I got along with very well. And I was constantly trying to get him to look at the POL-MIL aspects of what we were doing. He listened and was very responsive. The way it worked was that, after Desert Storm, the State Department didn't really care about the Gulf. I was there for four years. And the Secretary of State only visited the Gulf once, which meant Saudi Arabia and the five littoral countries and that was to get money to build a nuclear reactor in North Korea, which was part of the deal we were working on to get North Korea not to make nuclear weapons. But we didn't want to pay for this. So, we were going to the Arab saying "can you come up with the money" but that was the only time Warren Christopher to my knowledge went to these countries.

So our ambassadors, to get anything done, wanted to give money. CENTCOM was the best spigot they could turn to. What you mentioned earlier became a big thing that we're doing. And the other thing we're doing in two countries, which is political, both in Jordan and in Pakistan. They were both on our list of states that had been less cooperative in Desert Storm. Jordan because in 1990 it had backed Iraq in the Gulf War. Which was interesting because the King of Jordan was completely pro-American, had been for years but the pressures of internal politics in Jordan, he had to back Iraq. So, we cut them off for years from military aid, joint operations, et cetera. But what we could get is surplus equipment. So, I remember, the person that we preferred to deal with in Jordan, this is interesting, is now the king, was then the Crown Prince, he's the son of the king. And he was head of the Jordanian Special Forces. He was a young man, in his late 30s. Very

impressive, very educated. I think that in fact, his mother may have been British. He was friendly with General Hoar and General Peay, he was one of the top people in the country, we were impressed by him. The Embassy believed he was impressive but believed the king was going to pick his brother, not the king's son, to replace him and the king was dying of cancer. So, our opinion, my view was, the King is probably going to go with his son, which will give him more dynastic control, because if he brings his brother in, then it's a different wing of the family. So, he would want to keep it with his son. Okay, turns out a few years later the King dies, and the son becomes the king. And we have worked with the son for a couple of years, providing surplus military equipment, whatever we could do, and trying to get State Department to relax the anti-Hussein policies that will make your life more difficult, because Jordan was incredibly important, which they finally did.

The other country we had to get up to was Pakistan. In 1990, when I talked before about Pakistan building a nuclear weapon, we were cut off, no more military sales, no more military training in the United States, but we could maintain military to military contacts. So, we made sure the general, whenever he could, he added stops in Pakistan. But he couldn't bring any goodies. The law did not permit it. But we could coordinate with them, talk about what was going on. Talk about Afghanistan. So, this was a deliberate policy decision that the CINC made both in Jordan and in Pakistan. We're going to work this politically, diplomatically. And they did, you know, I'm not sure it gave us any success in Pakistan, simply because they weren't going to change. They weren't going to take away their nuclear weapons and we were then stuck with the law as it was. And it didn't change until three days after 9/11. When we realized, "Oh my god, we need Pakistan. We need them badly. We need them today." So, everything that was in the laws restricting assistance to Pakistan was removed from the books. But that was 10 years later, eight years later. But we kept up the POL-MIL [Political-Military] contacts. So, we at least had that.

Another big event with political ramifications, was the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. This was in 1996. And Khobar Towers was an apartment block we had fortified, and that's where there were several hundred U.S. Air Force personnel and they lived in this block and their job was to fly and maintain the aircraft that we used in the overflights of Iraq. We put up a defensive perimeter around Khobar and what we were doing at the time, is you always fight the last war, what we were fighting was what happened years before in Beirut, when the Hezbollah sent those truck bombs against the US Marines and their housing facility and killed about 250 of them. So, in Khobar we wanted to be sure there was no easy path to drive an explosive laden pickup truck into the facility. To make sure the road is curvy, there's roadblocks, et cetera, and they can't get a truck in there.

Al-Qaeda figured what they could do was they took a massive truckload of explosives and instead of trying to penetrate the road in, they parked it right next to the external row of concrete jersey barriers. And then they left, and they blew it up. There were enough explosives to take down the facade on one side of Khobar Towers, and 40 or 50 troops were killed.

Again, holy hell broke loose in Washington, what are we at CENTCOM going to do about it? So, General Peay flies over a day or two later. And the commander, the one-star commander of the Air Force installation, was shell shocked. He hadn't slept in 48 hours. They were policing up bodies and body parts all over the place. Once we figured out what resources they had, what the defenses were, and we realized, okay, we cannot stay in this base. It's too exposed. So, they moved everybody from Khobar on to the Saudi base and put them in tents for a while.

Then we worked with the Saudi government to come up with an alternative that was safer. Well, there was another semi-used Saudi airbase in the middle of nowhere south of Riyadh, in the desert. So that was where we were going to go. Decision was made right away, and we went down to inspect it. My general looked at it, and the Secretary of Defense looked at with us. So, we had a four-star general and the Secretary of Defense, actually walking the perimeter of this new base.

One of the repercussions for my boss is that Senator McCain had hearings about the explosion and why we didn't have a better defensive perimeter. And he was going to question my boss, and he just raked him over the coals. Basically McCain argued that the general should have been out at Khobar and personally looking at the defensive perimeter. You know this, there's three levels of command between that one star and the four stars. He was hung out to dry on this which was too bad. But Washington must have a scapegoat on every circumstance.

We quickly relocated the AF Command into the new desert base and we continued with the Iraqi overflight situation, because it was working, it kept Iraq in the box. And we were lucky we never had any planes crash out there.

You always had a problem with Iran. In the four years I was there we had ships in the Gulf all the time, and neither us nor the Iranians politically wanted a confrontation. So, both sides want to make sure that we don't have any more incidents. And for the most part, although there were a couple of events in the last year or two when I was there, Iran talked a tough game, but had not done anything about it. And we are positioned, that if they do, we can strike back. The danger is we have carriers there that are vulnerable. And the Iranians have missiles they could use.

The rest of what I worked on was mundane stuff, coordinating foreign sales, etc. coordinating with the ambassadors to make sure they were aware of what's going on. The big issue, the big country in the Gulf has always been Saudi Arabia. We would meet the king frequently in purely social and diplomatic calls. It's interesting, we were there basically, as an audience to the king, we would sit there, and he would meet us at two to three in the morning. That was the way he liked to operate. So, we knew this when we got there. Okay, just hang around in the hotel, we'll give you an hour's warning, then you have to get to the palace. And we get to the palace, we would sit there at these formal events, we'd have tea, there'd be about 10 of us on our side, and then the king and his retinue would come in. And he would tell us whatever he wanted to say. I remember one

time he talked about fishing off this yacht. I mean, the king was never substantive with us. This was performative, but they wanted it. Saudi wanted us to meet the king and to engage in this POL-Mil, political communications.

One of the things that did develop is tensions over Qatar. And this is interesting. In 1993, we visited Qatar and the Qataris took us to this airbase that was under construction in Qatar, and it was being built by the French to NATO standards. Basically, the Qataris said if you want it, it's yours. Well, it took time. Eventually, that is where we began to stockpile some military equipment and the idea was that we probably should have at least a full brigade or two, of Army equipment on the ground, in Kuwait or Qatar. Because if something happens, it takes weeks to send tanks and artillery by ship from the United States. Troops you can get over in a day or two. So, you have a pre-po base like we already had in Europe. And then every year we would send over a brigade from one of the US armored divisions who would break the equipment out, do two or three weeks of exercises and then put it back in storage. So, this gave us a political and military capability if it was necessary to respond again to Saddam. So that became a focus of what we were working on.

And Qatar became a thorn in the side of the Saudis. That Qatar wanted us to be there had nothing to do with Iran but had everything to do with Saudi Arabia. Because the Qataris royal family distrusted the Saudi royal family, and this goes back a long time. And they did not want the Saudis to be able to dominate them and they assumed if they had the U.S. sitting on this airbase Saudis are not going to attack because the Americans are here. So, they did that. And they had us there, we were the protection. So, we were there for our reasons having to do with Iran and Iraq. And Qatar had us there because of Saudi Arabia. So that's the politics. The Middle East is always fascinating.

Q: It's politics with a POL-Mil slant. For example, in September of 96. There was another strike on Iraq. Could you sort of go over CENTCOM's view of Iraq and the no fly—

FUGIT: —Strike of 96?

Q: Yeah, it was called Operation Desert strike, [involved] cruise missiles.

FUGIT: I'm trying to remember what precipitated it—

Q: —whole facilities.

FUGIT: I'm trying to remember what the event was that caused it.

Q: The Iraqis tried to do something in Erbil.

FUGIT: That was basically just like what we've done a couple of years before. We launch a bunch of missiles and say, "Okay, you guys calm down. You can't do it. We're not going to let you do it" and then basically they did back off.

One of the events with Iraq, this is important, had to do with weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The UN had a team who were charged and allowed under regulations to inspect suspected WMD sites in Iraq. In 1995, two of Saddam's sons-in-law defected to Jordan. Everybody was shocked, both were young officers who had married Saddam's daughters, and they fled with the daughters into Jordan. And what they wanted was for the US to support them in overthrowing Saddam. To prove the bona fides, they said, "We will tell you where Saddam has hidden some of his WMD." And they did.

To follow up on this the UN went back in and they found quite a bit of it hidden in obscure places like farms and schools. This wasn't surprising. We'd all known that Saddam had been hiding it. We didn't know where it was. We had no sources of intelligence. Now we did. So they found it. These guys who were known to us as "Dumb and Dumber" because Saddam does not take kindly to this kind of treachery. They live in Jordan for six months, nine months. Then Saddam has emissaries that go to them and tell them look, if you come back with my daughters all is forgiven. And they did. Therefore, we call them Dumb and Dumber.

They went back to the border. Saddam's people met them. As soon as they were across the border, they took the daughters, put them in a separate car, sent them on the way and put the sons in a different car. The sons went back to their family. They and their families realized that Saddam was going to come after them and they prepared for a fight to the death because in Saddam's Iraq, if you crossed him, he not only killed you, but he also killed every male family member, older and younger than you. So, these guys knew at this point that they were going to get annihilated. And they were all covered in the press.

But from that we had discovered where he had hidden at least some of his weapons of mass destruction. Now, fast forward three, four years after 9/11 and the intelligence people have this clearly in mind that there was this time in 1996, where we found all this stuff hidden around the country. Did we find all of it? No one knew again. And that was one of the things that led the intelligence community to believe that there still might be WMDs inside Iraq, post 911. So anyway, there was something that we had intelligence trying to figure this out for years and never could get the good sources that we needed.

Q: Now, give me some sense of your interaction with the NEA Bureau.

FUGIT: Actually, yeah, the interaction is basically I tried to work with the Office Directors, guys who are dealing with the countries because this was mostly routine. "We had this kind of equipment available; do you think the ambassador would be interested in it?" And when I would go to Washington, I would check in with the POL-MIL people. But they had other things on their plate, and we were not an important asset for them at this time. The Gulf after Desert Storm was very quiet for the most part for 10 years, not till after 9/11.

This is the part where you get the POL-MIL the DAS. I have good relations with them. But there wasn't much going on in terms of policy and coordination.

Q: In '97 or '96. There's another American presidential election, which Clinton wins. But there's a change in the Secretary of State, there's a change in the NEA Assistant Secretary, any of those changes caused a ripple in your world?

FUGIT: No, it didn't at that point, I wished it had. As I said, we weren't getting any, our main interest is Israel/Palestine. The Secretary of State's main interest, every Secretary of State from Kissinger on, saw themselves as trying to get the Nobel Peace Prize by bringing Israel and Palestine together. That was the major item in the NEA. They cared about the Gulf, but mainly as a piggy bank. For example, we were in Saudi Arabia going in to see the Crown Prince. And I didn't know it, coming out of the Crown Prince, his office is, I can't remember the person's name now, a very senior member of the White House staff. And I haven't checked with the ambassador, I did not know these people were there. They didn't have to clear it with us. And that was part of this trying to get the Saudis to put up big chunks of money for North Korea. So, we would send these emissaries over, but they weren't there talking about POL-MIL issues. They were talking about money. They see the Saudis as his piggy bank and Washington wanted us to get a deal with North Korea, Congress did but did not want to pay for it. So, State Department has got to find somebody to come up with $200 million, or whatever it was. And the money banks really are the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The other Arab states are relatively poor. They don't have that kind of money. But the UAE does, and Saudi Arabia does. So that was one whenever we wanted to, to dip into the piggy bank. That's who Washington would go to, but CENTCOM wouldn't— we never made a request for that.

Q: Now, military experience of sitting there at CENTCOM. Did you have an opinion of which military forces in the CENTCOM area were the best trained?

FUGIT: Yeah, they would take us where we go to these different countries, they would take us out in the field. And it was surprisingly not impressive. Saudi Arabia, for example, we had two large U.S. military contingents training, the Saudi military forces, this is an interesting problem. Saudi has two armies, as does Iraq and Iran and some other countries. They have an Army and a National Guard. The Saudis wanted us to train both separately and they insisted that there would be a training element for the National Guard, with a one-star general and a training element for the Army with a one-star general in charge. But they were not to coordinate with each other, and this has been going on for a couple of decades and we just accepted it. This gave us an opportunity, the military, to train senior officers. And we got some very good commanders that came out of working with the government. The Saudi Crown Prince, who was number two in the government, was Minister of Defense. And he insisted that this is how it was going to be with these two different forces. And we live with that, and we provide good people. I know the general, when it came time to assign somebody, and these were both US Army positions. So, he would go into the army hierarchy and say, okay, who do you have, and they carefully vet these individuals to do these jobs.

The other countries where we had training missions, it was less important than it was in Saudi. Our relationship with Saudi was and still is extremely complex.

Q: In '97, you had a change in command from General Peay to General Zinni. What was Zinni like?

FUGIT: Zinni was the deputy commander for a year, and was a very, very good officer. He asked me to stay on, it was a two-year assignment. And I upped for another two, so I was there for four years. And he wanted me to stay, and I said— looking back, I probably should have, but State sent a really good replacement, Larry Pope. And I stayed for several months, helping with the transition, and preparing to retire, going up to Washington for all the courses etc. I could have stayed; I could have asked for an Ambassadorship. But I had, I think two years left on the ceiling that you have when you're an MC. And if I got an embassy, my kid was then a junior and senior in high school, and I'd either have to leave the family in Tampa or move them overseas- with uncertain high school. I said, look, so we're going to retire two years before I had to. And I had a good run. Time at CENTCOM was interesting. It was not a pressured environment, except for Somalia and Khobar Towers that became a bit of a political mess.

Q: How, I mean, you're talking about you and the general and all that traveling, but the general has his own staff.

FUGIT: Yes

Q: How was your interaction with the rest of the staff?

FUGIT: It was very good. Both Hoar and Peay had the same schedule. In the morning at 730, the top five staff people would meet with the CINC in a special conference room. It was the commander, the deputy commander, the J5, which is policy and plans, and usually the intelligence guy and the operations guy, plus me. I was the only non-military officer in the group. And we would sit, and we were expected to have been in the office and read the morning traffic. We did this every single day. If I had messages that came in from an embassy, I would say "Sir, we got this issue going down in Bahrain." And then, you know, we would discuss it and figure out what to do.

I spent a good part of my day working with the J5. J5 is policy and plans. And that's where you had the officers that followed Saudi Arabia, that followed Bahrain, that followed Pakistan full time, etc. And I would have a rule of checking in with these guys at least once a week, talking to them, and I let them know, I said, "Look, if you're writing up some papers about Pakistan, or whatever, I'll check them out, and make sure the policy is correct." I got that and I was able to see documents before they made it up to the CINC and make sure that they made common sense. And sometimes it did, sometimes it didn't. And it's dependent also on when these officers were new, they had never been in an environment like this, where they're dealing with other countries. It wasn't familiar for them, they frequently made mistakes, but they were quite willing to work with me to correct these things again, to make them satisfactory.

When we had ambassadors coming in, the J-5 would do a paper for these ambassadors, which I would then clear, make sure they made sense. Remarkably we didn't have an us vs them situation. And that can be a problem depending on the personalities of people on both sides. Because I understood their culture, and how it worked. I fit in.

One issue was, I wasn't familiar with the world of Four Stars. That's a rarefied atmosphere. But when you get to this level, I'm joined at the hip with the CINC, everywhere he goes, I go. He basically deals in Washington with other four stars and some three stars. That's just the nature of the beast. And I found out how nasty politics is inside the Pentagon. It was interesting. The knife fighting that goes on between civilians and military, over policy issues, over personnel issues. It's never easy. It's always a fight. And one of the reasons I didn't want to go back to Washington was because in the State Department it wasn't any different.

When you get to that level. It shouldn't be that way. These people shouldn't be sniping at each other. Thus, working with these four stars, you got to see some interesting personalities. Some are quite good; some were not very good. And you wonder, as we did in the Foreign Service, "How did x get promoted to this?" This guy isn't any good. And that's what we were seeing too often. And nothing I could do about it.

When I finished up, it had been a good four years. And I turned it over to a good successor and he maintained these close relationships. And I've known several of my successors over the years down there and they've gotten along pretty well. But CENTCOM tripled in size after 9/1; it was 600 or 700 people in the mid-90s. And it went to 3000 or 4000, a year after 9/11 because you had the operations for the entire Afghan war and operations for the Iraq war.

Q: Now, I'm noticing that when you arrive, the commanding officer was Marine—

FUGIT: —right

Q: —and then went to the Army and then it came back to the Marine as Zinni. Was there an Air Force component to CENTCOM?

FUGIT: There is but the CENTCOM command and the Pentagon has this thing worked out in terms of which branch gets what commands, and it's very political. But basically, CENTCOM was to go Marine, Army, Marine, Army. There are exceptions. But that was the Air Force, there was an Air Force component. But the Middle East was not an Air Force environment. It was because of Desert Storm. And because it was an Army Marine environment. Transportation command was always the Air Force. European command could be any of the three and Pacific command was almost always Navy. These make sense.

Q: Well, as you were saying, you decided to retire.

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: In late '97.

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: What did you do after that? Here? You are in Tampa?

FUGIT: I signed up for the elephant's graveyard up in Washington, the declassification office. Everyone calls the elephant's graveyard. I enjoyed it, I would go up several months a year, in part because my youngest son had been accepted to Georgetown. And in the Foreign Service school, he was also playing football. So I would try to go up in the fall and work at the declassification office for several months; we did that for several years. Then came 9/11. After 9/11 we're clearly going to war. And CENTCOM was going on a 24 hour a day footing, seven days a week. The single POLAD could not handle the load– obviously and State needed to augment him. Now, the POLAD had a deputy, but he was an Air Force major, he was not a senior officer. Thus State needed another officer to augment the POLAD at the time. State called me up and I came cheap, because I was already in Tampa, so they didn't have to ship me in from somewhere else or pay per diem. So I went back, got my ID cards, etc. and became the deputy POLAD. The POLAD then deployed into the Gulf with General Franks for the most part. And the Command element in the Gulf did a 12-hour shift, then Tampa did a 12-hour shift. I didn't have that much to do because the command— all the big decisions were made forward in the Gulf. Tampa, then became the alternate headquarters. So a lot of the intelligence, logistics work was done in Tampa and then pushed forward to the people in the Gulf. None of the work that I did was particularly important or interesting. That kind of work was done by their POLAD working with the CINC out in the Gulf

Q: Who was—

FUGIT: —when he came back? What?

Q: Who was the POLAD at that time?

FUGIT: I know it....

Q: Oh, we can look it up.

FUGIT: Okay. The new CINC was General Frank's. And I worked with him in Tampa as well when he was back.

And then after a couple of months Afghanistan calmed down. I said to the POLAD and State, you don't need me anymore and I went back home. And then I got a phone call from an office I'd never heard of. And State wanted me to represent State on a secret organization being set up at Fort Bragg at Joint Special Operations Command, which is the Holy of Holies for the

Delta and Seals, etc. And this was about 60 people. It was being set up at the request or the demand of the Secretary of Defense.

And we had a very interesting mission, which has never been declassified, so I'll just leave it aside. I worked six months for these guys. And I coordinated with State regularly but State and POLMIL weren't quite sure what it was I was doing, and I gave them a heads up, I said, you know, you may not hear from me, and that's good. If you hear from me, it's not going to be good. And one event happened in October 2002 at 10 o'clock on a Saturday night, I had to reach out to the State Department and try to get ahold of Deputy Secretary Armacost. And I got a hold of an executive in POL-MIL, got him at home. I said, "I hate to tell you to do it, but go into the State Department and get on a secure line" He actually had a secure phone at home. I passed on the info, and he briefed Armacost, who was at the Kennedy Center, as I understand it. And once I got him involved, the issue was resolved by Armacost with DOD. And that's all I can say about it now.

I stayed on there for 6 months until we got ready to go into Iraq, then State wanted me to go back and be the assistant POLAD again which I did for about four or five months. And I said, Okay, that's enough of this, as the Iraqi war was obviously going to stretch on and on. Nothing that I was involved in, personally, was of particular importance. It was, you know, maintaining things, keeping coordination back and forth. One thing I did notice, Rumsfeld had no use for the Foreign Service. That was absolutely clear. As I understand it, State developed a position paper on Iraq prior to the invasion. And Rumsfeld would not allow that to be distributed in DoD. That was the norm for him. He just felt State couldn't be trusted. I think that's an early indication of this fear about the deep state that some people have that we were disloyal to the government, because we didn't click our heels and support all of these ideas that DoD came up with, and that was when he— remember Colin Powell was still Secretary of State and he got steamrollered which is one of the unfortunate outcomes of this whole thing. He was too good a guy to get screwed like that but he did. And that was the way Rumsfeld ran the operation and he was tough. He knew he was right and he didn't brook any criticism from the generals, or from the State Department. And I've sat in on meetings where he basically steamrollered four-star generals, telling them you're going to do what I tell you to do. So I mean, that's the nature of the way he wanted to run the Defense Department. Now I was familiar with the three other Secretaries of Defense in my years there and none of them acted that way.

But Rumsfeld had his own issues that he was fighting with. So anyway, that was the end of it for me. After Iraq. I said, "Okay, I'm closing up shop, and—"

Q: —Well you were on a detail, wasn't really full time. Your long duty. You'd come back for six months.

FUGIT: Right? Yeah.

Q: But the invasion of Iraq, and Baghdad falls in early April, Coalition Provincial Authority is set up by Jay Garner. Were you still watching at that time—

FUGIT: Yes I was, and he was fired, summarily. Like a week into the job. We would do every morning, a VTC, video teleconferencing, between the White House, the Pentagon, Tampa and the Command Forward. And Garner was supposed to be on every day. And he, instead of going to Baghdad, goes up to Erbil in the Kurdish area, because 10 years previously, he cut his teeth being the proconsul, if you will, for the Kurds under Desert Storm. I mean, he wasn't in Baghdad, and he seemed somehow confused in the VTC. And the next morning out of the blue with no notification, Jay Paul Bremmer is brought in as the head. And I remember my general, the deputy commander, looking at me and said, "Who is that?" And I said, "Well, let me tell you," Because I had known Bremmer, 20 years previously, when he worked for Kissinger and coordinated with me on Angola. And I said Bremmer is a smart guy. But I said, he's a first world diplomat. I'm not sure third world Iraq is something he would be comfortable with. For example, if you notice, he always wore a suit. He may have been the only person in Baghdad with a suit, just wasn't the norm in the third world. I mean, I didn't have any role in this one way or the other. But he became the proconsul there in Baghdad.

Q: Now, the policy he pushed, which has been criticized—

FUGIT: —Yes

Q: —really, was the de-Baathification policy,

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: —disbanding of the Iraqi army.

FUGIT: Yes.

Q: Was that his [idea] alone?

FUGIT: The story— and I was still there for that. The story was that he did this on his own. He didn't clear it with Rumsfeld. I find that incredible because Rumsfeld didn't allow a tree to fall in the forest without pontificating on it. And these were major, major decisions and neither one of them should have been made. And then Rumsfeld is later quoted as saying, in one of the books you know, that Bremmer made the decision. I didn't really agree with that. But then he's out there and it's his call. Nothing that happened wasn't Rumsfeld's call, he made calls on everything. This left everybody perplexed. The regular army, which was two thirds of the total force in Iraq, did not have to be disbanded. They were professional military which would have given us a weapon to stop the looting that was going on, the rioting, and control the country. Yes, these guys were, you know, they were pro-Saddam generals, but they knew Saddam was going down.

The same thing with de-Baathification, it was a bad decision. And it should have been reversed by Rumsfeld, who reversed all sorts of other decisions. And he didn't. So I don't buy the argument. They say, "Well, I didn't know about it." I think you realize a month after it, "Jesus, this was a dumb idea."

I could have stayed longer. But as it turns out, this was— they would have kept me there forever.

Q: And when did you walk out the door and turn in your badge?

FUGIT: I think late May 2003? About a month after the fall of Baghdad. Okay. And by that point, it was starting to get messy. And the problem was the military had not planned on this. The military plans were that— the danger they were worried about— there's going to be refugees, they expected hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to come south because of the fighting that was going on.

The plans were to handle refugees and did not address rioting or whatever. Also, the White House believed that the answer to governing Iraq was going to be to set up an interim government immediately of Iraqi exiles. And these were centered on a guy named Ahmed Chalabi. And Chalabi was in exile somewhere. He had convinced the Republicans, this was a political decision, that he could turn Iraq around, he could if appointed as the interim governor, he has popular support. He'll organize a functioning administration and we'll be able to leave. Well, DoD did not believe this. When he got there, it turns out, there was no uprising of support, upwelling of support for Chalabi. He was just another former politician who'd been overseas. He didn't have the basis of support that he claimed he did. So that undercut us, the idea that we could set up a government.

Neither he nor any of these other exiles amounted to much in terms of politics inside Iraq and it took us about a year and a half to come up with a local governing apparatus. It just was not conducive to getting a coalition formed for these people.

Q: At this point, let me ask you. If you were invited to some college campus somewhere, what would you say is the value of becoming a Foreign Service Officer?

FUGIT: Well, it's a lot of value to the individual. It's a fantastic career. It's interesting, it's challenging. It's difficult. You can have, in certain circumstances, certain times, impact on policy, maybe at a major level, maybe in just a regional or local level. There are things you can do that are beneficial to you and to the country. I strongly recommend it as a career field. Both of my sons tried to take the Foreign Service exam, one of them passed the written, but not the oral.

Q: It was always interesting to me. And in our A-100 bootcamp Foreign Service bootcamp that all these people had passed the exam and they'd pass the oral, but in fact, of our classmates, there was quite a variety of personalities, capabilities, and interests.

FUGIT: Now, that's what you ran into, you get you have, you know, a wide range of people you work with. And great friendships are formed sitting in middle of Africa, it tends to work, sitting in Brussels, it doesn't tend to work.

Q: How about setting up housing in Brasilia?

FUGIT: Yeah.

Q: *Well Ed. I think we have come to a proper end.*

End of interview