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

# ROGER G. HARRISON

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

State Department; Staff Assistant, Political/Military Affairs 1974-1976
- Personnel issues
- Duties
- Operations

The White House; National Security Council 1976-1977
- Brent Scowcroft
- Middle East arms sales
- Egypt- Soviet relations
- Kissinger
- C130 sales to Egypt
- Duties
- Defense Department
- Agency reports
- Jack Anderson source
- Intensifying cold war
- Changes of Administration problems
- Arms to South Africa
- Perks
- Personnel

Air Force Academy; State Department Faculty Member 1977-1979
- Curriculum and assessment
- Student body composition

State Department; Political/Military Affairs; European Bureau 1979-1981
- NATO Military Affairs
- Helsinki Accords
- Madrid Conference
- Soviets
- Afghanistan
- Administration change
- French relationship
- Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech
- French
- Confidence Building Measures (CBM's)
- Non-Government Organizations (NGO's)

London, England; Pol-Mil Officer/Deputy Political Counselor 1981-1985
- Committee on Nuclear Disarmament (CND)
- Soviet SS-20's
- British Anti-nuclear Campaign
- Defense and arms control policy
- Reagan's Star Wars speech
- Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

MIRV's
MX missile funding
Nuclear War
European thinking on defense expenditure
Nuclear deterrent issue
Margaret Thatcher
Duties
NATO's Article 5
Labour Party
US Ambassadors
Committee on Missile Deployment
British defense spending
Germany
Reagan-Thatcher relationship
British Political Parties
British Foreign Office
British personalities
Conservative Party
British and nuclear weapons
Reagan visit
Grenada invasion
Lebanon
Qadhafi

Tel Aviv, Israel; Political Counselor 1985-1987

Intifada
West Bank and Gaza economy
Expelling Arabs from Israel
Sharon
Israeli politics
Ambassador Pickering
Rabin
Peres
Jonathon Pollard case
Israeli government
Embassy operations
Israeli economy
Lebanon
Syrians
PLO
Soviet Jews
Jewish lobby
Settlement policy
Shamir

State Department; Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of 1987-1989

Political – Military Affairs
Formulation of policy
US/Soviet Agreements
Star Wars
ACDA
State/Defense relations
Geneva Conference on Chemical Weapons

Diplomat in Residence, Colorado College 1989-1990

United States Ambassador to Jordan 1990-1993
Jordan – Saddam Hussein – and the US
Iraq invasion of Kuwait
King Hussein's assurances
Prince Hassan
Iraq's debt to Kuwait
King Hussein's US visit
Jordan – Kuwait relations
Kuwaiti reputation in Arab world
Jordanians population support of Saddam
Royal family position
Refugees from Gulf issue
US Naval blockade off Aqaba
Friction with NEA Bureau
Embassy evacuation
VIP wartime visitors
King Hussein
Hussein/Israel relationship
US Jordan relations
Queen Noor (Lisa Halaby)
King Hussein's proposed solution to Kuwait crisis
Saudi-Jordan relations
US Government views of King Hussein
Secretary of State Baker
King's anger with US government
Strained US/Jordan relations
Crown Prince Hassan
Relations with Crown Prince
Hussein/Hassan relations
US attack on Iraq
Demarche to King Hussein
Jordanian fear of Israeli reaction
Contacts with PLO
Arafat
King Hussein rehabilitated
Personal post-war relations with Royal Family

Security
Local environment
Views on Madrid Conference
Injury in motor accident

Retirement 1993

Post Retirement 1993-
Professor of Strategic Studies, US Air Force Academy

## INTERVIEW

*Q: Today is the 30th of November, 2001. This is an interview with Roger Harrison. This is being done on the behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. To begin with, could you tell me when and where you were born?*

HARRISON: I was born on the 25th of May, 1943 in San Jose, California.

*Q: All right. How about, could you tell me a little bit about the background of your mother and father?*

HARRISON: My mother was second generation of a Swedish immigrant family that eventually ended up in the Central Valley of California. They were farmers. My father's family came to Santa Clara Valley via Iowa and Alabama, where they had a turpentine operation. My grandfather had achieved some notice as president of the Spanish American War Veterans in California. His sons were less distinguished. My father was a grocery clerk.

*Q: How about, did either of your parents go to college?*

HARRISON: Yes, they both graduated from San Jose State.

*Q: What was your mother's field?*

HARRISON: She was in music. When my father died, when I was ten, she went back to teaching music and taught choir in a place called Cupertino, a little country outpost in those days. Now it's the heart of Silicon Valley. She taught choir and when they could no longer support a separate music program, she went back to school and got certified to teach social studies.

*Q: Your father, what did he study at college?*

HARRISON: He studied sociology, and had his degree. But he never used it. During the

war, he worked in a chemical plant, so was exempt from the draft. After the War, he bounced around some and ended up working in Keilly's Market in Santa Clara.

*Q: As a kid, was that area basically a farming community in those days?*

HARRISON: Santa Clara Valley was called the Valley of the Hearts Delight. It was a wonderful place, a wonderful climate, no humidity, no smog in those days and not too many people, just orchards from valley wall to valley wall.

*Q: Where did you go to school?*

HARRISON: I went to variety of public grammar schools, to Campbell High School and then San Jose State, graduating in 1965. In '63, as part of my undergraduate program, I spent a year in Germany at the Free University

*Q: I want to take you back a bit. Elementary school. What were your interests in school?*

HARRISON: Reading. I read a lot. Nothing particularly elevating if I could help it. But still, it was my primary education. My grades in high school were lousy.

*Q: What sort of books did you read?*

HARRISON: Oh, I read a lot of adventure books, books about sport heroes. I read just about anything that came along that looked vaguely interesting. That was my leisure time activity.

*Q: Mutiny on the Bounty? I was wondering.*

HARRISON: No, I didn't read Mutiny on the Bounty. I did read Twain. Early on, I started adult fiction. I read The Naked and the Dead at 13, hoping for more naked that Mailer actually delivered. Although it was racy for its day. And Mickey Spillane – My Gun is Quick. Great title.

*Q: In high school, did you go out for any sports?*

HARRISON: I went out for basketball and tennis. I won my letter in both. Always a scrub. I was one of those guys the coach would thank at the awards dinner for 'also' making a contribution.

*Q: Your father died when you were ten? Were you a problem for your mother?*

HARRISON: Oh, no, I was a good boy, the one who cut the lawn, washed the car. And I must have been learning something from all those potboilers I read because, although I maintained a resolute C average through high school, I also became a National Merit Scholar.

*Q: Well, how can you be a national merit, how does this national merit scholarship work?*

HARRISON: A nation-wide test. There were 500 people in my junior class who took it, and three of us were recognized. My selection, I remember, astounded the other two. Usually, recognition in the national merit system is a help with college admissions. But my grades were so bad, the better colleges were not all that interested in me. Plus, there was no money. So it was San Jose State for me.

*Q: How about during the summer in high school and all? Did you have summer jobs?*

HARRISON: A lot of them. I was a fry cook, did a lot of fast food counter work, pumped gas, shined shoes in a barber shop, cut lawns at the high school, worked at an A&W Root Beer stand. I made my first payment to social security at 14. Then I moved to cannery work as soon as I was eighteen. I worked in canneries every summer and pumped gas, changed tires and did lube jobs the rest of the year.

*Q: Was Del Monte up there?*

HARRISON: There was a Del Monte cannery right next to us. I never worked there. I did work at Dole one summer, first as a machine oiler and then on the fruit cocktail line. The Santa Clara Valley had a dozen or so canneries in those days. In the summer, you could smell the tomatoes stewing all around town. It could be hard physical work, horsing lug boxes of apricots around 10 hours a day during the season; but it could be a lot of fun, too.

*Q: Did politics, your mother and prior to that your father, had they any sort of affiliation or interest in politics?*

HARRISON: The extended family tended to be mid-west conservatives and I was a fiery young liberal, so we had many hot political discussions around Thanksgiving dinner tables.

*Q: Well, I mean, they were doing their thing. While you were in high school, did the outer world intrude at all? Did you read newspapers about what was happening?*

HARRISON: Oh, yes, I always read newspapers and delivered them, too, on my bike – which, by the way, lacked brakes. It was an old track bike from the 1930's; direct drive, single gear, no brakes. A gift from my dad. You'd be in family court for it now. The paper was the San Jose Mercury news. I was up at 5 AM, folding papers and reading the headlines: Don Larson's perfect game in the World Series; and later, the day Sputnik went up. After Sputnik we were all going to be engineers. Do you remember? We weren't graduating enough engineers, and in the Soviet Union, everyone was an engineer, so they were going to bury us. But not if my high school administrators could help it. There was a lot of pressure on all of us in high school after Sputnik to go into some other technical field. My dad, when he was alive, thought it was the key to prosperity. I

remember him telling me the engineers earned $10,000 a year, big money to him.

*Q: It was an Eisenhower priority.*

HARRISON: Yes. It's one of the things that government can't do. I was getting an early education in political futility.

*Q: The whole thing worked out pretty well anyway.*

HARRISON: Yes. But Sputnik shook things up.

*Q: We always plan for the worst case. Well, San Jose State, you were there from when to when?*

HARRISON: I was there from '61 to '65 with the exception of that year I went to Berlin.

*Q: When you were there in '61, what sort of major were you?*

HARRISON: International relations.

*Q: What brought you to that?*

HARRISON: They had a government career day out in front of the library, people at card tables pitching the Labor Department, Commerce, the FBI and so on. The military was there as well, of course. But what caught my eye was one natty looking individual. He was an FSO on a year sabbatical at Berkeley pitching the Foreign Service. Sounded good to me. So I started aiming in that direction.

*Q: What was San Jose State like?*

HARRISON: It was a big place. You sat in classes of 30 or 40. There were good professors there – as good as anyone, some of them, and not as arrogant or cloistered.

*Q: Before you went to Berlin was Europe sort of attracting you?*

HARRISON: No. I heard about this program and thought it would be an interesting thing to do, but the main thing about it was that it was cheap and they had some scholarships available for it. So, it ended up costing me about $1,500, which I could make in the cannery in a good summer. I'd been studying German so it would obviously be a way to perfect those skills. Plus, if I wanted a State Department career, this would be a good way to see whether I liked living abroad. So, off I went. Tom Lantos ran the program. He was a professor at San Francisco State in those days, and a handsomer or more charismatic man you'd be hard pressed to find. Became a Congressman later.

*Q: From '61 to '65 how did the sort of the election of 1960, did this engage you at all?*

HARRISON: We had a party to watch the returns. Hosted by a guy who thirty-years later became Chairman of the Board of MGM. I think in those days I was for Nixon, strangely enough. Why would I be for Nixon?

*Q: Well, you were interested in foreign affairs and Nixon seemed, he was a young man, too, it was not that cut and dried.*

HARRISON: I'd seen Kennedy at a campaign rally in San Jose. He drove by sitting on the back of a convertible. I also watched the debates. All that is very vivid. I guess as it is to most people who lived through those times.

*Q: When you went to the free university, what was your impression? This was your first time abroad I take it?*

HARRISON: Yes, in fact, the first time on an airplane. I went off to a Goethe Institute in a place called Arolson in the Federal Republic to improve my German, in the company of a motley crew of Americans, Guineans, Turks and others. Then on to Berlin. My German wasn't bad by this time. At least, I didn't think it was bad. Germans had a different impression. The University was typically European. There were lecture classes you could attend if you wanted. The professors would post the times and hope someone showed. Sometimes the lecture hall would be filled. For other professors, no one would show up. I attended lectures by this Eastern European intellectual in a hall that could seat 500 and often did – for other people. There were three of us there. He walked in, laid out his notes, read them and walked out, paying no attention to us at all. I could understand why the crowd stayed away; but I felt sorry for him, so I came back every week. There were seminars as well, of course, but the level was far beyond anything at San Jose State. I remember a seminar on African politics in which the talk was of local elections in Nigeria. Some of the students had been and worked there. The discussion went forward on the micro level; I was macro, and didn't get much out of it. Eventually, I stopped going to seminars and instead wrote a long study, in German, of the origins of the Cold War. I had an old manual German typewriter, a pre-War model that weighed about fifty pounds. But it had an umlaut, which was the important thing. Nobody would have mistaken my German prose for Goethe's, but it wasn't bad. And I learned a lot. Eventually, my German housemates even stopped complaining about my pronunciation. An early suggestion I remember was that I would have a better accent if I just left out the 'r's altogether. Maybe they just decided to deal with it. It was already clear that I was not a born linguist, a conclusion that I often had reason to reaffirm in the interim.

I moved into a house with 30 German students in a place called the Studentendorf. It was new at the time, a residential apartment complex for students of the Free University. I was 20 at the time, a lot younger than the German students, who averaged 24-25. I was shy about my German. We had a communal kitchen, and I'd eat late so as not to encounter my house mates and have to use my language skills. Finally, one night, I was busy cooking away and one of the German students walked in. He asked who I was. I told him. He said there was rumor around that an American had moved in the house, but no one believed it, since there had been no sightings. After that, I said what the hell and

ate with everybody else.

I'd been there about a month when Kennedy was shot. That was about 7:00 or 7:30 in the evening Berlin time, and by 10: 00 that night the German students had organized a torchlight parade. Someone handed me a torch, a long stick of some fabric coated in wax. Purpose built. They must have a stockpile of torches somewhere in Berlin for this kind of event. Maybe from before the War, who knows.

*Q: I was just thinking that torches are not something that you just whip up.*

HARRISON: Right. Hard to think we have a stockpile in Arlington.

*Q: Leftover from Hitler.*

HARRISON: At any rate they whipped them out and we took off on this long procession and ended up front of the Berlin City Hall. It's now called John F. Kennedy Platz because of that night, when 10,000 people filled it with torches. Then Willy Brant came out on the balcony and eulogized Kennedy. It was a touching moment, but I couldn't help being impressed with the organization that went into it. That, and the overwhelming outpouring of sentiment for Kennedy, something you can't imagine attaching to any of our subsequent presidents. Nobody would have thought to do anything like that for any of them.

*Q: I was in Yugoslavia at the time. Actually I was in Graz and then I came over and I went back to Belgrade. Flags were at half-mast, Yugoslavia was in mourning.*

HARRISON: People were stricken. He had some quality that's hard to define, especially when we know his faults in a way we didn't at the time.

*Q: It was the youth I think, too. The feeling of youth I mean it was.*

HARRISON: Absolutely, yes.

*Q: When you look back at it, it wasn't that impressive, but there was an aura that made a difference.*

HARRISON: Yes, it did and I don't think it's going to be seen again. Clinton was young, too. But there is no chance of recapturing what existed then. In any event, the assassination was a pivotal moment in history. Like September 11th. I remember thinking the next morning that history had switched directions and the new direction was not as promising as the old direction had been. Things were going to be worse. And they were.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the sort of the German attitude at the time about whether or the relations between east and west. Was there a feeling in Berlin particularly?*

HARRISON: Oh, yes, it was fascinating. The Wall was new then. I guess for future

readers, if any, I should explain about the cement wall the East Germans had built right through the heart of Berlin. It was an ugly thing. Reagan had a great line about it being as ugly as the idea behind it. Cement slabs piled up – they built it in a hurry because their population was drifting away to the West. It must have been 15 feet high, and behind it the East Germans bulldozed an open area, strung with barbed wire maybe 200 yards wide. Most of old Berlin was the Eastern side, but as American students we were free to cross whenever we wanted. In fact, just for the hell of it, a friend and I marched in the May Day parade in East Berlin. There were several checkpoints, the most famous being Checkpoint Charlie. Cement walls and a chicane to navigate, then a mobile home up on stilts with a long counter inside and a wooden counter. You passed through the American side, which was just a matter of showing your passport, past a barrier and then into the East German side, where there was another long building. The East Germans would check passports and let you through. On the eastern side, it was a different world.

On the Western side were little museums with picture of the wall, and of VoPo's, East German border police, ominously staring through their binoculars at the West. Once, when I was crossing into the East, there was a VoPo standing at the barrier doing exactly that. So, I walked over and asked whether I could have a look. He handed me the binoculars and I stared ominously westward. I remember they had range finders in the lens.

On the Western side, Checkpoint Charlie had evolved into a tourist attraction. There were wooden platforms so you could peer over the wall, and vendors selling ice cream and post cards. On the other side, there was that open area and barbed wire. There was a minefield, or at least warning signs about one, and a drag strip, which is a strip of soft soil to show footprints. Beyond that were grey, cement tenements. No eastern tourists peering back at us, obviously.

You never saw war damage in the West. But there was a great deal in the East. It was haunting, especially the bombed out hulks of the great palaces from Prussia's golden era. We would walk among them in solitude. Ghosts of a vanished civilization, and in sharp contrast to the wilderness of concrete housing blocks the Soviets had financed after the War, not to mention the ugly showpiece, Stalin Alley, which had been and, now, again is Unter Den Linden. The linden trees had been replanted, but now they fronted Soviet modern architecture, long rows of massive, blunt buildings, broken here and there with little squares with the requisite statues of Lenin or heroic workers. Dreadful.

We were free to wander, and we did. We also went to the Opera a great deal. The drill was this: you changed your money in West Berlin at 30 to the dollar, then smuggled the money across the border in your sock. At the opera, the best seat in the house was 30 East German Marks, but not many could afford it. For us, it was a buck. And we got to know the ladies who did the seating, the little old ladies who looked like they'd been working there since before the War. When the house lights would go down, they'd smuggle us over into the golden horseshoe. A little act of rebellion. The East Germans spent a lot of money on their opera companies – there were two of them - and their best singers were available, since travel was very restricted. So the Opera was marvelous, beautifully sung

and staged. Der Komische-Oper was particularly good, one of these cultural showpieces that the Eastern European leaders used to show that they were really wizard people after all.

I think now as I look back that anyone who dealt with Eastern Europe or lived there could see that it wasn't working. The evidence was right in front of you. My impression of East Berlin, for example, was that it entirely composed of side streets. You kept walking down these streets expecting to come around and see the main street, but there was no main street. It was lit with cold, white neon, and not much of that. It was like an empty, dead city: the store windows semi-filled with drab merchandise, the magazine kiosks with their government approved magazines, all featuring healthy and wholesome stories, all printed on this rough paper, brown paper. And everywhere this shabbiness.

I remember once being there on my own. We'd wandered a lot around the center of the city, but I was curious about the neighborhoods, so I took a bus to Pankow, which had become the seat of Government for the DDR, the Deutsche Demokratische Republic. I looked around for a while, then decided to take in a movie, an East German production. It was a kick. The plot revolved around a brave border guard, a VoPo, with a beautiful wife and four cute children. Our hero tries to prevent an escaping East German from crossing the wall into the West, and the escapee shoots him. In the back. It was an interesting perspective.

Another time, we met a student. She was handing out Christian literature in front of the Humboldt University. I thought that was interesting, but it turned out the Church, like everything else, was an institution of the State. There was nothing subversive about what she was doing. On the contrary. Anyway, we started talking and she offered to give us a tour of the University buildings. This was another part of her job, as it turned out. She was cute, so we went. We were in these wooden, fold down seats in a big lecture hall. She got worked up about East German glories, leaned over to make point – and the arm of her chair fell off. A small victory for capitalism.

What brings it all back now is the smell of soft coal, burning. I smelled a lot of that in Warsaw years later as well. You smell it in poor countries, where they don't have the luxury of burning anthracite. That smell, and the smog, stay with you. I can't smell it without thinking of the awful, squalid dead hand of communism that descended on those societies.

*Q: What about the students you were with at the free university?*

HARRISON: The students, German and American, were pretty conventional. The counter culture hadn't arrived yet. Everyone drank, but there were no drugs around, or none that anyone offered to me. The Germans I met at the University were interested in careers, although not quite yet, since everyone was having such a good time. And the place was tuition free.

Now and then the tanks would rumble down the highway outside, making a tremendous

racket in the wee hours. The Wall, of course, was a reality for everybody and especially for the Germans who lived there before the Wall went up.

The mindset was curious. We thought we were on the defensive. Communism was sweeping all before it, especially in the third world. They were ruthless, we were naïve. We worked ourselves up in this national psychosis which prevented us from seeing the societies as they were. Even when you were standing there, looking at them. And, of course, the expanding Communist menace. One of the few modern things in East Berlin was one of those lighted signs – like in Times square – running at the bottom of broadcast house with the last news. I remember the headline one cold night we were there; the 100th American soldier had just died in Vietnam. It would have astounded us to think there were 58,000 or so still to die.

*Q: Well, this is one I think historians in the future will kind of wonder what in God's name what in a way was the concern.*

HARRISON: Yes. Communism had become a cynical exercise in power. A cover for corruption. Nobody believed in it, but a person's standing depended on mouthing the pieties. Come to think of it, it was like SDI in the Reagan Administration.

In short, we were suffering from a short of national psychosis, and it went on for a long time. Reagan was still pounding the drum in the mid-1980s, when even the pretense of faith in success had long since disappeared from the Soviet bloc.

*Q: Did you ever feel when you were in Berlin that the students there were enjoying Berlin but were going to get the hell out?*

HARRISON: Yes, most of them came from other places. They were subsidized to study in Berlin. Most things in Berlin were subsidized because it wasn't a natural place to live, off from the rest of West Germany. The education was good, it was cheap to live, but nobody wanted to stay forever in Berlin.

*Q: Did you have any contact with the American mission there?*

HARRISON: Oh, very little. I think we were invited once to some kind of reception for students at the mission. Oh, I should mention I did go interview a guy in the political section at the mission and asked him about the Foreign Service. I don't remember him as particularly welcoming, but he did give me some time.

*Q: Well, you went back to San Jose in, this would have been in '64 and had your senior year there? Was your resolve firm about diplomacy or were you looking at other things?*

HARRISON: No, my resolve was firm. I got married in February of that year and we had a baby, a son, the following February. Then my wife got pregnant again. I was in dire need of a paycheck. Had Harvard, or Berkeley, or even the local junior college offered me a teaching job, I might have reconsidered – which would have been a great mistake.

Now I'd be a strange old professor, given a wide berth by colleagues and students alike. But no jobs were offered.

*Q: What is the background of your wife?*

HARRISON: She was also a Californian who had been raised on the opposite side of the Santa Clara Valley. Actually I was a flatlander and she was up in the hills on the East Side of the valley. Very much into horses and 4H and that sort of thing. And beautiful beyond description, inside and out. She was studying to be a nurse when we met. I blush to tell you I was 19 at the time. Made the right decision about a lifetime partner, by God's good grace.

*Q: What was her attitude toward Foreign Service?*

HARRISON: She thought it was going to be a great experience. Of course, in those days, women accepted this kind of thing much more readily than they do now. So the notion that she should pack up pregnant and go off to Manila in the Foreign Service was simply accepted. That's what you did. I don't dwell on this aspect of life when I talk to my son in law; he would probably break down in tears. And, she thought it was great that someone had a goal.

*Q: Also, I think much more than today the thrill of going overseas. Americans didn't really have much opportunity to go overseas.*

HARRISON: If you had the good fortune to be born in Santa Clara Valley, as I was, there was little reason to go anywhere else. Climate, opportunity, everything was there. All of my friends from high school stayed, knowing a good deal when they saw one. And they all got rich, at least compared to us public servants. Jo Ann and I had more adventures, of course.

*Q: When did you take the Foreign Service Exam?*

HARRISON: My first year at Claremont Graduate School in Southern California. I had applied to the Woodrow Wilson School. It was Princeton, and it was free; if you were accepted, you got a scholarship. I was interviewed in LA. The question I remember the interviewer asking was why I had gotten married. What he actually asked was why I had decided to take on additional burden at the beginning of my career. My wife's still mad about it, thirty-seven years later. I didn't get in, so I went where they offered me money, Claremont. Not a lot of money, but enough to pay tuition. Still, I knew I could not tarry long, so I took the Foreign Service Exam at the beginning of my first year.

*Q: Well, it used to be the first week in December.*

HARRISON: December, yes. I passed and then I took my oral I think in June or July and was accepted. So I knew I had a job waiting. That summer we came up to San Jose from Claremont because my mother was dying from cancer. Jo Ann, my wife, was a nurse, so

we thought we could be helpful, but we had $80.00 altogether to our names. Luckily, I got a job in a factory making field refrigerators for Vietnam. These were big air transportable refrigerators. It was a new factory, and we were a motley crew of people. Wonderful fun. Never looked forward to going to work as much before or since. It paid $3.00 and some cents an hour, $3.50 I think. I was in the door installation crew, paired up with this Hispanic guy. Couldn't have been more different from me, but we became friends. I learned a lot that summer, especially that it's a lot of fun to do something well, even its installing doors on big refrigerators. My work partner and I got into it. We wanted to be the best. We got this huge competition going among all the door installer crew working outside, which in San Jose is a pleasure in the summer. It would be hell here. It was a great summer of work, it was a sad summer because my mother was dying and did die soon thereafter, but I was able to make a little money, which we needed because we had a year of graduate school to go and my scholarship was bumpkus. Back in Claremont, Jo Ann started working swing shift in a rest home. I used to bring the baby in to nurse. It was about a mile from our house so she'd nurse on the job and then go back to work because we couldn't afford for her to lounge around after the baby was born -- six weeks and then, hey, back to work. It wasn't easy for her. Sometimes she would take the baby to the office and leave the intercom on and so she could hear him wherever she went. We lived in a wonderful little cottage with big garden for a hundred a month. We were poor but happy I guess is the way to sum that up.

*Q: Do you recall your oral exam, do you recall any of the questions?*

HARRISON: Yes, I do. I'd kind of scoped out the oral exam. The written exam, too. I was asked to give a summary of the literary history of the United States from the Revolution to the present. So I did. I thought I might get a question like that so I'd read a book. I knew all the jargon in those days. I was asked if I were the administrator of economics in a developing country and suddenly we were given a grant from the United States for economic development, how would I spend the money? I had fortunately taken a course in this in graduate school, so I was full of theories. Anyway, I passed the oral exam and knew after my first year of graduate school that I was going to become a Foreign Service Officer, which was a good thing because Jo Ann was pregnant again. I passed my PhD comps and we were off to Washington. My dissertation took another ten years, but I finally got it done.

*Q: What was your field of your dissertation?*

HARRISON: Hegel, a German political philosopher, partly chosen because I thought I could work from original sources in case I wasn't close to a library. I'm just writing an article about Hegel now. He's kind of stayed with me.

*Q: At Claremont were you able to get a professor to go along with this?*

HARRISON: Yes. After a year of going to class I decided I didn't enjoy going to class and listening to other peoples' opinions. I wanted to talk. So, my second year, I arranged tutorials with various professors. I'd just go in and ask them if they'd agree to give me

one tutorial a week. Most agreed, surprisingly enough. A far superior method than sitting in a seminar. Ted Waldman was a professor of philosophy. He was the kind of guy Martin Birnbach had been in undergraduate school. That is, he was very tough, intellectually vigorous, but willing to admit that maybe you had a point. Fortunately, I ran into a number of those kinds of professors in my academic career, for which I'm very thankful, because it makes all the difference and there are few of them around.

*Q: Just to finish up on the, I think it would be hard to get the continuity over ten years, I mean, you know, faculties change and all that, were you able to?*

HARRISON: Besides which they decided to charge tuition every year for dissertation study. I could never afford to pay, so I never knew whether they would let me defend my dissertation, if I ever got it done. They did, fortunately; but I had to pay all that back tuition. My advisor was still there and some other professors I'd worked with. I'd never be able to do it now, when the average time to completion, even for full time students, is seven years or so.

*Q: The drag it out, like a guild.*

HARRISON: They have to keep professors employed, and it takes time to transform sensible young people into academics.

*Q: Well, you got into the Foreign Service around '67 or '68?*

HARRISON: '67, 69th class in the old numbering system, yes, and it was a big class. There were 70 people including USIS people in my class, including some future luminaries: Ned Walker who went on to be Assistant Secretary and is now a mainstay on the talk show circuit around town. President of the Middle East Institute. Bob Blackwell who has had various positions of power and is now Ambassador to India. Dick Bowers who went on to be ambassador to Bolivia was in my class. Tim Carney who became an Ambassador in Cambodia. It turned out that there were some people who proved themselves to be able public servants.

*Q: How did you find, I mean, coming to Washington and getting into this big class. Did you find it was what you expected or what were your reactions?*

HARRISON: I wasn't disappointed at all. I thought that the FSI course was good. In those days they brought in luminaries to talk to us, like Joseph Campbell and Dean Rusk. We had women in the class. The Department was trying not to be racist or elitist, so a big deal was made of the few blacks in our class and of the 'democratization' which had brought state college boys like me in. But the organization was so thoroughly sexist that it was oblivious to its own sexism. The woman were told that nothing awaited them, and they had to resign if they got married. It took a court challenge to end that.

*Q: I was wondering whether you felt coming from San Jose State and Claremont, a fine school, but I mean still, out of the sort of Eastern orbit.*

HARRISON: I was naive about that in those days or maybe I was too self-confident, but I didn't feel that I would be at a disadvantage to the people who come out of the Ivy League. The Ivy Leaguers and the guys from Georgetown and SEIS did have an advantage early on; snobbery and the old boy network were stronger than I knew, although I only discovered that later thankfully. State and the CIA had drawn from the same East Coast, Ivy League communities. State appealed more to those who weren't sociopaths. But now, they were bringing in some lower middle class State college boys like me. In the end, what mattered was how you did the job. If you could deliver, you'd be fine, but I think initially, yes, if you'd come out of Georgetown or Harvard, if you'd come heralded by some professor calling in to somebody he knew at the State Department to foretell your coming, you got chances earlier at jobs I could only dream about in my early career. I think I was shunted aside a little bit, but it was probably my own fault, too, because I imagine I impressed my interviewers when we got to the assignment process as being, I'm trying to think of a non-scatological word, a jerk. That's the four-letter word I'm after and you know I think I probably was a bit of a jerk.

*Q: Well, there are jerks and jerks. What kind of a jerk?*

HARRISON: Well, I was the kind of jerk doing consular work who loved to talk about what meaningless stuff it was to my supervisors, who were career consular officers. But, I still think it's true that the State Department is over impressed by Ivy League credentials. I never found when I became a supervisor that it made the slightest difference. I think some people can do the work and some people can't and whether you went to graduate school or what college you went to seemed to me not to correlate with performance very well. That bias simply exists, and out of the starting gate it gives an advantage. My assignment out of the starting gate was a two-year visa mill stint in Manila. Complete waste of time, although I wiser young man than I would have kept that opinion to himself.

*Q: I was going to ask did you have any, you know, going through this, what were you picking up in the corridors? You know, where were the hot spots, where do you want to go?*

HARRISON: You know, I think we were entirely ignorant about all that stuff. Now, I'd say the intelligent thing to do out of FSI is go to State, stay home, get mellow for a couple of years, and the people in my class who did that tended to do very well later – and to avoid consular work altogether. They knew how the system worked. It took me six or seven years to find out, and I did three of those as a visa clerk. Vice Consul was my title, but visa clerk was what I was. I was supposed to see the value of it later, but it's 35 years later now and I still think it was a waste of time.

*Q: What was it like, I mean, did you get anything from being sitting on a stool in the consular section?*

HARRISON: I suppose I learned something about the Foreign Service culture I'd gotten

myself into, but the work itself, no. Giving out immigrant visas, in particular, is a pointless exercise. By the time they reached my desk, there was nothing left to do but sign them. An old Muslim man insisted one day that he believed in plural marriage, but I pointed out that if he did, I couldn't approve his immigrant visa, and he changed his mind. We were processing visas for the new Filipino wives of our men in uniform. Most were prostitutes. Manila was surrounded by huge military bases in those days, and the bases in turn by these huge brothel communities. Naturally, love bloomed. In short, I was a lousy consular officer, not altogether convinced of the seriousness of the enterprise and not very good at it, although I don't know to this day what 'good at it' might have required. Not turnover. I was good at that. I used to do about 200 non-immigrant visa interviews a day, just cranking them out. At least half were fraudulent, but the politically acceptable level of turn downs was 10 or 15%. So I would go through these things everyday, sitting on a window on a stool which reminded me of my old A&W Root Beer days where I sat at a window on a stool, too, and took orders. I didn't ever think that there was much more substance to it than that.

*Q: What was life like in the Philippines in those days? You were there from what, '67 to '69?*

HARRISON: We lived in an older compound, a guarded walled community, much like the richer parts of California are today. It was all very manicured, all very nice. There was wonderful food, a lot of good restaurants in town supported by this thin veneer of extremely rich people living well above the poverty stricken mass. There's present day California again. Actually, it's a shocking thing. We came from California through Hawaii, and we were probably 15 hours out of Hawaii when we finally got there. Joanne was pregnant and we had an 18-month year old boy and so it was not a happy trip. When we got there we drove through some of the worst parts of Manila, which were by the airport, and the poverty smacked you in the eye. Tired as we were, it was quite an experience. Vast cardboard cities which, I imagine, are still there. I wasn't the Peace Corp type. Made me want to turn around and catch the first plane out.

That was also the effect our greeter had on us – and continued to have for as long as we were there. The consul general's wife, Fiera Gleek – all those screeching vowels in her name, as if she'd been christened after somebody heard her speak. In the arrival area, Mrs. Gleek shook our hands, than commenced berating everyone within range. Awful woman. She was a Foreign Service wife of the old school who felt that the other wives in her section were chattel. Once, when her washer was broken, she sent the dirty laundry to us – unannounced. So, we were kind of stunned already and were also jetlagged of course, and then driving through the worst parts of Manila on the way to a rundown hotel, and being greeted by this harridan, it was a shock. But we settled in. We mixed with the wealthy and drove past the poor. That contrast was the other disturbing thing about the place and I'm sure it still is. You could live very well in Manila in those days and many people did.

*Q: How did you get along with the powers that be within the consular section?*

HARRISON: Luckily, there was a man named Lou Crossen who was head of the visa operation and his wife, Maggy, a wonderful woman who took us under her wing. In fact, I think the first break in this general gloom was when Maggy Crossen showed up at our door in the old Philippinas Hotel (known locally as the "American-penis" in honor of the people who usually stayed there). She was just full of life and good humor, and was an angel for us. Lou wasn't my immediate boss; he was head of the visa operation. I had a couple of intermediate bosses, but also liked them. All of that was fine. Lou Gleek who was the head of the consular section was a disappointed political officer who had had something happen in his career, which had been meteoric but had stopped being meteoric four or five years before. He was just on the brink of being selected out. He made an occasional shot at showing me the ropes, but it was a difficult time for him and he was married to Fiera, which would have been a trial at any time. At any rate, I came to discover that my affection for my supervisors was not reciprocated, and my OER's stunk. I got a semi-automatic promotion the first year, but after that, nada. OER's, as you remember, Stu, used to have two parts. The first you saw, the second you didn't. Later, when the system changed, I was able to read some of second sections from Manila, and saw why I wasn't promoted. Professionally, I was hanging on by the skin of my teeth for years afterward.

*Q: Did you get any feel, I realize that this is a huge consular section and all, and you were buried in the bowels of that, did you get any feel for either the ambassador or the American Philippines relations in that period?*

HARRISON: Well, some yes, because one of the things I did was occasionally sub for the special assistant to the ambassador. William McCormack Blair was ambassador and an aristocratic man in the best sense. I wasn't from Chicago so didn't know the significance of that double barreled name, but I knew he was a classy guy. Blair was replaced by G. Mennen Williams, who had been governor of Michigan and had carried a lot of water at the '60 campaign for Kennedy. He was all politician and kept running for office once he got to the Philippines. No hand he wouldn't shake. I made two or three trips with him when his usual special assistant begged off. One was up to Angeles City for a funeral, where our host was Benito Aquino. He's mostly forgotten, but was later to play a key role in Philippine history.

By the way, when the special assistant left, all the FSO's of a certain rank were interviewed to take his place. Mennan Williams was Ambassador then. He fell fast asleep during my interview, but woke up before the end. I didn't think it was a good sign. Frank Wanning got the job.

*Q: Oh yes, his assassination and his wife's descendants.*

HARRISON: Right. One of his henchmen had been killed and the Ambassador was invited to the funeral. I went with, and found out some of the down sides of being an ambassador. One was that you were in the place of honor in the funeral cortège, which meant behind the exhaust pipe of this 1955 Cadillac hearse on a 100 degree sultry day to Angeles City for what seemed to me 20 or 30 miles. After that we went up to the

compound of Aquino's wife's father. Aquino didn't come from money, but she came from great stacks of it. The compound was in the middle of this vast sugar plantation. A circle of mansions surrounded by a private golf course. It was my first taste of how really wealthy people live. Sort of liked it.

You shouldn't form the opinion that I was a substantive member of the US party. My job was more basic. I had this briefcase full of paperweights, a genuine imitation bronze bust of Lyndon Johnson encased in plastic. Not something a person would want staring up from the desktop. LBJ had paid a visit the year before, and the paperweights were left over, so the Embassy wanted to put them to use. So, as Williams shook hands, I handed them out, along with various medals and beads and bits of colored glass.

But I did get to go to the meeting, which is a tribute to Williams. I have met many senior people since who would have made it a point to keep someone like me out of a meeting like that. After all, what's the good of getting into a meeting unless others are kept out? But Williams wasn't a professional so didn't know the drill.

Anyway, as we were leaving, Aquino said, "I want you to meet my wife." He went to the kitchen and came back with a shy woman who'd been cooking our food. I remember very clearly that she was blushing and wiping her hands on her apron. A learning experience for me, because, of course, it was she and not he who was fated to become President of the Philippines. We'd been talking to the wrong Aquino. We should have been out in the kitchen talking to Cory.

As you probably know, he was later exiled by Marcos, then allowed to return under pressure from us, then assassinated on the ramp of the airplane when he got back. They shot some poor petty crook, dumped his body and claimed he'd been the assassin. But, the world press corps was on the plane, so it wasn't going to wash. For me, that sums up the Filipinos – that mixture of the ruthless and the childish. Who but Filipinos would have thought they could have gotten away with killing Aquino at the airport?

*Q: It's just incredible. I mean, you know, the stupidity of that.*

HARRISON: It was an example of the absolutely profound stupidity of the ruling class in the Philippines. Impenetrable stupidity. Aquino was an exception, so he had to go. I remember on another occasion, I was at the residence for a reception and a Filipino staggered up to me, threw an arm around my shoulder and said something in wino. I couldn't understand it. It was just drunken babble, but the babbler was Ponce Enrile, the Minister of Defense. Ponce is right.

*Q: Was Ferdinand Marcos or Imelda Marcos in the picture at that time?*

HARRISON: They were, still democratically elected, still darlings in Washington. Imelda was in her glory, a beauty queen, gracious, well dressed and, of course, magnificently shod. The layers of fat, makeup and pretense were in the future. Within a couple of years, Marcos decided the democratic process had become inconvenient, but

there were already signs of corruption. Oligarchic families jostling for booty. All these families ran their own television stations, keeping them going so they could be used when elections came around. There were more television stations in Manila than in Washington, D.C. in those days, and they were hard up for things to put on. Anyway, one of the stations wanted to do real time US election coverage in '68, Nixon vs. Humphrey. They asked the Embassy for people to be announcers, and I was chosen. It was great fun. We would post numbers off the wire service, interview various people and just banter – for twenty hours as results came in. We had a big map of states, and we would announce which had gone for whom, and then color them in. As I remember, we got tired late at night and started awarding states arbitrarily. That's how Nixon won Illinois, although history has never given us credit. Anyway, I was a television celebrity briefly in the Philippines as a result.

As a sidelight, Mennen Williams, who wanted to fit in, would come to work wearing Philippine national dress, these embroidered shirts called barong tagalogs. Marcos always wore a business suit to the office. They'd be photographed together, Williams in Philippine national dress talking with Marcos in our national dress. I think was a lesson to me about going native.

But Williams was a good Ambassador, especially at the meet and greet part of the job. He was wonderful at it. He went to places in the Philippines where even the people there were a little uncertain about where they were, and he got out and shook hands and I handed out trophies and Johnson paperweights. I remember we went up once to where there is a concrete marker where the Big Red One, a Michigan division as it turns out, had come out of the hills of Luzon after a terrific, bloody campaign against the Japanese in '44. It was just a cement pillar which had been painted red at one time, surrounded by weeds. I don't think anybody had visited this thing in decades, but he did. The villagers were just astounded; an American ambassador had never been within 100 miles of there in any direction. But it was a Michigan division, so there he was. He was marvelous. He just had a politician's drive and a politician's gift. I greatly admired him for that.

*Q: Did the Vietnam War intrude at all while you were in the Philippines?*

HARRISON: Oh, very little. I was still in contact with a lot of my classmates. Many had gone to CORDS in Vietnam, which was the program for Foreign Service officers, who became deputy or assistant province advisors. Some FSO had come into our class at FSI to proselytize for CORDS. I remember he was wearing sidearm to show us that this was macho stuff, none of the panty waist Foreign Service officer business most of us were going to do. CORDS didn't have much appeal for me. After the Tet offensive, one of my FSI colleagues, Tim Carney as I remember, sent me a piece of the facade that had been blown off the embassy by Viet Cong rockets. I had it on my desk for a long time.

My contact with the War was second hand. When a carrier came in to Subic Bay from Yankee Station off Viet Nam, 10,000 to 15,000 sailors would hit the beach, and it was just astounding. The town outside Subic, Olongapo, was a vast brothel, a mile long strip of bars, where every form of human vice was pursued with absolute dedication. The legal

officers out there became friends because we worked together on visas for the new wives who came out of Olongapo. So they took me there on a couple of occasions to do research. Quite a shock for a nice Methodist boy like me. Sodom and Gomorrah – although mostly Gomorrah, of course.

*Q: This is tape two, side one with Roger Harrison. You were saying it was all a silent process?*

HARRISON: I guess you could say that Vietnam passed without changing my world. I never went there, I never served in the military and I was never an active anti-war protestor.

*Q: You weren't picking up having a strong opinion about what to do there and all that?*

HARRISON: No, I was never a radical. I remember we went up to one of those free speech rallies at Berkeley in '64, but as tourists, not protestors. That was as radical as I ever got.

*Q: Well, then here you were coming out, did you, what was your experience? I mean you had two kids, you had to have money and you were in a job where you were getting money. Did you feel this was for you or were you dubious?*

HARRISON: Oh, no, I was very dubious. I mean, certainly consular work wasn't for me. I always counted the days. I knew I wanted to be a political officer and there was no possibility of that for my first two years. So, I saw visas as a necessary hurdle to get over. I was making money, but what was I making? I think I was probably up to $9,000 a year, but we had to maintain an establishment. We had two maids. You know, we'd come out of a situation in of happy penury in graduate school and suddenly we had maids and a dressmaker. Everybody I knew back in real life was doing more interesting things, or so it seemed to me.

*Q: Did you have any problems while you were in the Philippines with people coming to you for visas and all that?*

HARRISON: Oh, yes. That was huge. I'm sure if you talk to a vice consul in Manila today it would be exactly the same. Anyone who wanted a visa wanted to know me, and invariably found me witty, erudite and good looking. Who wants to be seen as the font of travel documents? It was always at the edge of every personal relationship I had with a Filipino.

*Q: From your observation, was there a problem of the officers who were coming to the lure of money, sex, and prestige, what have you? You know, in other words was this something that you were watching from the side or not?*

HARRISON: After I left Manila, they uncovered a huge operation in the visa section. The locals were selling visas. I'm sure it was going on in my time as well. It's almost

inevitable, but I never had any immediate experience of it there. Were officers lured by sex? There was no end of allurement, but we were a civilized sort of community, with wives in residence, and the revolution in mores then taking place back home hadn't made it to Manila yet. To Saigon, yes, but not to our little community. Or perhaps they simply didn't invite us. People did drink a prodigious amount. All through the 60's and 70's, in Washington and in the field, colleagues would get incoherently drunk at parties. I made it a rule never to drink when I was out publicly. People pushed booze in those days, and it was always around. All that was needed to become a drunk was to take a drink every time one was offered. It offended people when I didn't do that, but it was easier on my liver.

I should mention there were good things as well. Once, I was assigned as greeter to an Ambassadorial reception. I think it was still Blair at the time. Anyway, the job was to stand on the front steps, introduce myself to the invitees, ascertain their names and then introduce them to the Ambassador and his wife, who would pretend to remember them. But one of the guests of honor at a very crowded reception like this was Thurgood Marshall. After my greeting duties were done, I pushed my way through the crowd and introduced myself. I told him I just want to tell my grandchildren someday that I had shaken his hand.

*Q: Okay, I think this is probably a good place to stop now. We'll pick this up in 1969 when you're off to Warsaw. Great and we'll talk about that.*

HARRISON: Okay. Morals were generally looser by then – not mine, of course, but generally speaking - so it's a good transition point.

*Q: Today is December 10, 2001. Roger, 1969, going to Warsaw how did the Warsaw assignment come about?*

HARRISON: In 1969 I went to language training and in 1970 to Warsaw. The personnel system was rudimentary. When the bidding system came in, the cable describing it was two pages long; the last one I saw, twenty year later, ran to 50 pages, although I suspect the outcome is pretty much what it has always been. I expressed a preference for Eastern Europe because it seemed to me to dovetail with my German experience. No one told me that a German/East European expertise was useless, whereas a German/Soviet concentration would be great. Suppose I might have figured that out for myself, but I didn't. No one was going to send a marginal officer like me to Moscow in any case. So I was assigned to Warsaw and sent to Polish language training. I was over complement at the time, but someone had to drop out, and off to Warsaw we went, and back to my trusty visa stamp.

*Q: How effective was language training? Often, when you take a language you are getting quite a feel for the culture of the country and how people act as you're interacting with these native speakers. How did you find this?*

HARRISON: I think there is a universal experience when you encounter a native speaker on native soil for the first time, and have no idea what he is saying. In my case, it was a

border guard. I stammered at him and he looked uncomprehendingly at me and I wondered if the whole FSI thing had been useful at all. But overall, the FSI training was fairly good. The reputation in those days was that Monterey had more rigorous training. I doubt I would have been any better no matter where I studied.

*Q: I graduated from Monterrey in '51 and sat for three more years listening to Russians.*

HARRISON: You've probably taken FSI courses as well as Monterey, so you have a better basis to compare.

*Q: Well, you know, I'm a lousy language student. I found when I got to Yugoslavia after a year of Serbian when I hit the border guard there was this look of incomprehension, he was trying to figure out what I was saying. Finally, we ended up talking German.*

HARRISON: That's the trouble with German, the easy language pushes out the hard one. My brain wants to go the course of least resistance. When I left Poland I was pretty good, at least on political topics, but then two or three years later when I was in a situation to speak Polish, German words kept popping up rather than Polish ones.

*Q: You got to Poland in 1970. What was the situation relation wise between the United States and Poland and also what was the government like at that time?*

HARRISON: Right. Well, that was the last few months of Gomulka. He was one of the Poles who had been nurtured in exile by the Soviets and then reintroduced into Poland with Soviet troops at the end of the War. Lublin Poles they were called, after the City where they were first established. There were a lot of Jews among them, so anti-semitism became, later on, a way to protest Soviet domination and assert Polish nationalism. Gomulka had been accepted by the Soviets as a reformer in '56 after the riots that year, but he wasn't someone with whom Washington felt it could have very fruitful relations. I was in the consular section again, and just as bad at it as ever. The system is Warsaw at the time was a year in the consular section and then two years as a political officer. I learned to speak the language in visas in a kind of limited way; I certainly got to listen to a lot of southern Polish dialect. One of my predecessors had pasted insulting phrases in Polish on the desk slide out thing to use to get turndowns out of his office.

I wasn't directly involved in political analysis although I was up in the political section sniffing for work - maybe a speech from a lesser Minister or reporting on something they didn't have time to do. Tom Simons was the second ranking man in the political section at that time and a dauntingly gifted diplomat. A marvelous linguist, a marvelous political analyst with a Ph.D. in history, he really had all the tools. I was trying to learn at his knee, and he was kind enough to give me some things to do. One of them was a trip to Gdansk, using the cover of my consular duties in charge of shipping and seaman. There were seldom American shipping and seaman in Polish ports, of course, but it was part of my portfolio. The upshot was that I was in Gdansk about a week before the riots there in December of 1970, and then again about a week afterwards. I stayed in the same hotel. American diplomats always stayed not only in approved hotels, but also in the same

rooms of approved hotels. The first time it was a boring visit; the second time, a week later, the city had been transformed.

I was virtually alone on the streets the second time and saw the result of public outrage boiling over. This bustling center had been turned into a ghost town with burned out buildings, including police and party headquarters. To say that we had any inkling of any of this in the embassy in advance of the events would be wrong. It took not just me, but the agency and the diplomats charged with political reporting, entirely by surprise.

*Q: Could you put for the reader in picture and explain what had happened?*

HARRISON: Yes. There had been a price increase for basic food stuffs in late November, 1970, leading up to the Christmas holiday season. That led to a spontaneous outbreak of violence, especially where industries were concentrated – coal mines in the south and the shipyards in the north. The shipyards were taken over by their workers. It was the beginning of the Solidarity movement. Lech Walesa, the future Prime Minister, was an electrician at the shipyard, and a leader of the uprising. The government, taken by surprise, had no idea how to respond, so defaulted to force and some shipyard workers were shot. There was also an effort to lay siege to the shipyards – and the mines in the south – to starve the workers out. But there was a breakout at the shipyard, the party headquarters in Gdansk was burnt, and general anarchy reigned until the government finally cut a deal, giving into the demands of the protestors.

No one at the Embassy as far as I knew had any sense of the depth of the resentment. We knew the system wasn't working. But it had been 11 or 12 years since the last public riots in Poland. The tendency is to take circumstances for granted in a situation like that. It's also the safest course bureaucratically, since predicting fundamental change rather than continuity is almost always a bad bet. Had we been wiser, we would have seen that disaster had been brewing for the Regime. They could no longer afford to subsidize food and fuel at the old levels. But those subsidies turned out to be a vital part of the real social contract that kept the public more or less pacified. So, in the end, the subsidies were reinstated. And once they were, they couldn't be questioned again, although the economic situation kept getting worse. That created an unsustainable policy that would finally bring the regime down a decade later.

In the short term, the government, once things calmed down, tried to resolve the dilemma by becoming 'open'. The leadership began trooping out to factories for meetings with the workers, and more critical articles about mismanagement and corruption appeared in the press. They even tried a televised call-in program with Party leaders answering questions live – a hilarious thing to watch, especially before they learned to screen the calls.

The old fudds of Lublin days were clearly at the end of the line. Gomulka lost his job and Edward Gierek became First Secretary Gierek was a "new man", the party leader in the big mining region and was supposedly more modern, a technocrat it was said, younger generation, 20 years younger than Gomulka. It was all relative of course. Gierek was just another party hack, and eight years later he made the same mistake Gomulka had made.

He tried another assault on food and fuel subsidies. Even with the same pre-holiday timing. That was the end of him, and of the regime itself. Good riddance.

In the aftermath of the December 1970 events, Washington became more interested in Poland. The unrest there was a possible flashpoint with the Soviets that we wanted to avoid. And perhaps the new leadership could be weaned away from their Moscow overlords. They certainly professed to be open to new ways of operating. They wanted Western capital, and in practice that meant US government guaranteed loans of hard currency from Western banks. We provided the guarantees, as a way of encouraging reform and of subtly separating the Poles from the Soviets. And they made the appropriate noises about reform. Eventually, they defaulted on the loans. Turned out it wasn't capital they needed, but a new economic system. Putting capital in the economic system they had was like flushing it down the drain.

So, the system that emerged out of the Gdansk riots was fundamentally unchanged, with this important exception: the workers had shown their power to prevent any peripheral economic reform. That's what the food price increase represented, an attempt to reform piecemeal, beginning with the unaffordable subsidies on basic commodities. The workers said no, the government acquiesced and the inevitable decline continued.

*Q: Is it true we didn't want the Poles to go too far because frankly we didn't want to see the Soviets move in and so we were hoping that the workers didn't get too uppity?*

HARRISON: Oh absolutely. We had proven in Czechoslovakia and Hungary that we wouldn't risk confrontation with the Soviets on behalf of the Eastern Europeans. The border we were defending was the inner German border, the border between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. We had no great pretensions about rollback. We weren't interested in fomenting revolution, and the local revolutionaries understood they could expect no help from us. Our overwhelming national interest was to avoid a direct military clash with the Soviets. The Poles were counters in that game. We were interested in stability in Poland and gradual reform, but stability overwhelmingly.

*Q: When you were in the consular section, can you tell me a little bit about consul work. What sort of things were you dealing with?*

HARRISON: I was a visa officer. It was another mill, slightly smaller than Manila, but, like Manila, a conduit for workers mostly to the Chicago area. Most of our applicants were ineligible under U.S. law, but in Warsaw as in many other places we aimed at a certain turn down rate thought would be politically defensible. It was all informal, of course. But the message was, turn down the egregious cases and don't worry too much about the others. That was my natural inclination in any case. My predecessor turned down 10%. I raised that to about 15-20%. Then my successor, who was a man from Maine with little patience for political nuance and a literal view of the law, raised the refusal rate to 85%, which was about what the law dictated, taken literally. It couldn't last, of course. Eventually, there came a huge Congressional reaction, visiting delegations, investigations of various sorts, charges of racism and so forth. But I have to

give my successor credit. His name is Doug Keene, and he kept up that refusal rate much longer than I would have thought possible. In fact, my memory is that he was out of there before the real detritus hit the ventilator. It meant a lot more work for Doug, especially in Poland where those you turned down did not take refusal lightly. So, hats off to Doug Keene for a consular officer of integrity. It is a rare and precious species to which I myself never belonged.

One of the things that I always remember about doing consular work was the evidence that would walk into my office everyday that the system wasn't working. For example, there was one scarf on sale for women that year. You could buy a scarf in Poland if you didn't mind that scarf. It was a paisley scarf and somewhere in the bureaucracy of the central planning office it had been decided that this was the scarf that would be produced. So, every woman who came in my office who was wearing a scarf was wearing that one and there was something similar for men. Also, the men, the farmers all had that great farmer tan.

But I was as bad at it as I had been in Manila. Turned out that we did have a visa scandal in Warsaw. A couple of the visa clerks, local employees, were selling visas. They were forging my signature. The reason they chose me was that I signed the visa forms with a scrawl. Lois Day kept trying to get me to use a full signature. I suppose I was showing my disdain by not doing that, but the result was that my forms were easy to forge. I remember sitting with my colleagues going through a few thousand of these forms to pick out the ones that had been forged. It was a Saturday, they weren't happy about it and let me know for the eight hours or so we were there. So Lois Day, who in any case was irritated because I was spending too much time in the political section, was all set to write a scathing OER and be rid of me from the Service once and for all. I heard that Tom Simons talked her out of it, and I got an average report instead She may have thought that with my record, an average report would be enough to scuttle me. And it damn near was. But anything I accomplished in the Foreign Service, I owe to Tom Simons, since I would never have survived the sort of report she would have written without his intervention.

Ironically enough, Menotti's Opera, "The Consul", was put on by the Polish Opera about this time. In that opera, the Consul is portrayed as the devil and fate wrapped into one. I'm sure that's how I looked to many of the applicants. To me, they were hardly individuals at all, just cases I had to get through as quickly as I could. Many of them were scared to death. Even coming to Warsaw was a frightening experience for them, since our applicants were mostly from the provinces. I must have looked like a man of great authority to them, although I was powerless in every other respect. In short, I didn't like it. I thought it was demeaning for them and corrupting for me, and I got out of there as quickly as I could. Of course, that attitude was not career enhancing.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the Warsaw intellectual community that's usually the one saving grace about doing something like that; you do get in touch with sort of the artistic intellectual community sometime.*

HARRISON: The consul saw most of the interesting cases.

*Q: Who was the consul?*

HARRISON: Lois Day was her name.

*Q: I replaced her in Seoul.*

HARRISON: Is she among us? I don't know. Her job was, if anything, less enviable than mine because she was dealing at the political edge. In those cases where I did turn someone down, she had to deal with the appeals, sometimes from people with political connections. Often, my turn downs would be reversed. A lot of my colleagues got exercised when that happened to them. Because of my conviction that the whole system was essentially arbitrary, I didn't get upset. I didn't even want to know what happened on appeals, and mostly didn't find out. The only perk Lois had was interviewing the interesting people who showed up. That was OK with me, too. I just wanted to finish my year. Lois interviewed artists, musicians, athletes -- the ones who could travel. Many of course could not travel, without serious restrictions. For the most part, the culture was bottled up, but there was certainly a lot more freedom of expression than in the Soviet Union. The artists, for example, weren't held to the standards of Soviet Realism. There was much abstract art, and a lot of very dark imagery -- I remember a painting of an autopsy being featured in one of the fashionable shops.

*Q: You were in the political section. Who was the ambassador while you were there?*

HARRISON: Walt Stoessel, the first year and then Davies, what was his first name?

*Q: Dick Davies.*

HARRISON: Yes. Dick Davies came in for year two and three. So, when I was in the political section it was Dick Davies, Stoessel had left.

*Q: Who was the DCM and head of the political section?*

HARRISON: Gene Boster was the DCM and do you know Gene?

*Q: I know him yes.*

HARRISON: Is he still around?

*Q: I don't know. He was interviewed some time ago.*

HARRISON: Stoessel was one of the grand old men of the Foreign Service. He looked and acted just as I had imagined an Ambassador would, at least before I got to know a few of them. He was an old style ambassador. He would come in about 10:00, read the cables, go off and play tennis and come back in about 3:00 after lunch and a nap and read the cables and then go out to the social rounds in the evening. He led a very gentlemanly

existence. He was not driven by that puritan excess which is so marked in Washington in particular. I never thought it interfered with his efficiency at all. In fact I thought it was a good way to do the job and wish I had followed his example. Part of that was because Gene Boster was a good DCM; an experienced and unflappable guy and someone that Stoessel had 30 years association with. That took a lot of the burden off of Stoessel's shoulders.

It occurs to me that I was lucky in my first three Ambassadors, briefly Blair and then Mennan Williams and then Stoessel. All shining examples in their various ways. Davies, not so much. The head of the political section in Warsaw was a man named Giff Malone. He was the son of Dumas Malone.

*Q: Yes, the University of Virginia scholar Jefferson?*

HARRISON: Yes, a Jefferson historian, author of a four or five-volume biography of Jefferson. I met him when he came to visit his son. Seemed to me a very contented man. I don't know what happened to Giff Malone either. He disappeared from my scope.

*Q: Oh, I interviewed him some years ago, but I don't know where he is now, I think in the area.*

HARRISON: The drill was, you did your consular year and then became the junior political officer. They ended that system after me, which meant that poor Doug Keene had to spend two years in the consular section. Maybe that's why he raised the refusal rate to 85%. Anyway, we became a two-man section -- just Giff and I. And we knew very little about what was going on. The more powerful you were, and therefore the more information you presumably had, the less incentive there was to share any of it with us. Everyone was under surveillance, of course, especially everyone who came into contact with us. So we met with a pre-approved group of quasi intellectuals and journalists. They were charming, for the most part, but hardly dissidents. It was summed up for me in the person of a journalist named Gornicki. He wrote for the supposedly non Party paper, Zycie Warszawy, and his style was so obscure we all imagined he must be a dissident, or at least an iconoclast. The upshot was that Gornicki never had to pay for his own lunch or dinner; we diplomats competed to entertain him, and we bragged to each other that we'd just had a conversation with him. He came to my going away party, took me aside and assured me that no one else in the diplomatic community would have drawn a similar crowd. That would have been more ego boosting had he not said precisely the same thing to me about Tom Simons at Tom's going away party two years before, and to my British colleague, Nigel Thorpe, when he left

Anyway, when Martial Law was declared in '73 in an attempt to put down Solidarity, the genuine dissident movement, who should show up as spokesmen for the Generals than Wieslaw Gornicki, now dressed in a Colonel's uniform.

*Q: You were saying that one reason why we didn't penetrate the system intellectually was?*

HARRISON: Because they were so well organized to deal with us. They knew our game and they set limits on where we would have access and they were careful to debrief those people with whom we had access on a regular basis. My impression was that in Krakow, where we had a consulate, the situation was a little bit different because there was a group of Catholic intellectuals, some of them gay, who had their own publication and were under the fierce protection of Cardinal Wojtyla, who was to become Pope John Paul. They had a little more latitude. But they, too, had to be careful with their contacts with us. Also, the dissidents were not particularly knowledgeable. So how did we do political reporting? We did all the usual Soviet Bloc things: we paid attention to who stood next to whom at official party functions, and watched for changes in the Politburo, and tried to decipher what real information might lurk between the lines of Party publications. The problem was that the personnel changes, to use one example, were meaningless politically, except within the parochial confines of the Party and Government. One clueless functionary would be replaced by another; the first would get a bigger apartment, the latter would be sent off as Ambassador or to manage a hog butchering operation in the provinces. The Poles had a joke about it: the pile of dung stayed the same, they would say, only the flies change. Our inclination, of course, was to see much more significance in these maneuvers than was actually there, since we wanted interesting things to report. We worked hard, pouring over Polish newspapers, talking to whatever Poles would talk to us, keeping our noses to the grindstone and our fingers in the wind. But we were dealing with people who themselves didn't understand the country they were ruling, or even how they were ruling it.

Gomulka summed all this up in memoirs he smuggled to the West and were published while I was still in Warsaw. He wrote about how difficult it was as First Secretary to get any reliable information about what was going on. He'd be walking down the hall in Party headquarters, Gomulka wrote, and he'd see the Minister of Finance. But as soon as the guy spotted him, he'd have a look of panic and scuttle off in some other direction. He was afraid, Gomulka wrote, that he might be asked a question about the economy, and since he had no idea how the economy was functioning, he wouldn't know how to answer. That sums it up. The Party was clueless, the Government was clueless. They had absolutely no way of discovering what was going on in that economy, or society for that matter. Ironically enough, they were cut off by all the mechanisms of control they themselves had established. Meanwhile, having no legitimacy, the government had no real way to persuade people to behave as socialist theories of society dictated. The response was two-fold. On the one hand, they had to spend enormous resources on internal security to compel people to behave -- or refrain from behaving -- in certain ways. And on the other, they had to devote millions of man hours in propaganda campaign to prove they had the legitimacy they so clearly lacked. Any government that has to devote so much effort to proving it's legitimate cannot possibly *be* legitimate. The very effort to establish legitimacy undermines it. *TribunaLudu*, Party newspaper, exemplified all this. It was exactly the opposite of what it professed to be. The front page contained no news. I'd hold up the paper when I met with visiting VIP's and read the headlines. Every story had to do with establishing the government's legitimacy. So, there would be a statement from the First Secretary of the Party, announcing plans, or praising

some group of workers, or talking about the glorious socialist future. There would be stories, below the fold of course about what lesser Party officials were doing, perhaps greeting a delegation from a fraternal communist party, or even some visiting officials from the West. None of it was news. All of it was to show that the government was legitimate, that it was functioning and that, regardless of appearances, it knew its ass from a hole in the ground. It wasn't until page two that you found any news of the traditional sort. In short, the Government's problem was the same as ours at the Embassy. It was a vast conspiracy of ignorance. We at the embassy didn't know what was going on largely because the Government and the Party had established a structure to prevent us from discovering that they didn't know what was going on either.

*Q: Well, I remember one person I interviewed who was at a consulate general, where was that?*

HARRISON: Poznan or Krakow?

*Q: I'm not sure, but he was saying that when he was there which was in the '70s that statistically there were probably about three convinced communists within Poland.*

HARRISON: I never ran into one, but it's possible I suppose.

*Q: There had to be someone somewhere.*

HARRISON: Ideology was long dead by then. Nobody believed in communism. I think what people believed in was the necessity of maintaining the system against something worse, which was Soviet intervention. I think the Soviets were frantic not to have to intervene. That was the Polish bargaining counter. In many ways. the Soviets had the same problem the Poles had. They needed foreign investment and legitimacy for their empire, and both were undermined every time they had to send troops to a fraternal Warsaw Pact neighbor. What the Soviets wanted, I'm convinced, is for the awful, pesky, demanding Poles to take care of business. To, for heaven's sake, quiet things down without shooting too many people. And the Polish leadership did their best, but with absolutely no inkling of how to make this system which didn't work, and couldn't work, work.

*Q: Well, now were you getting anything from some of the at the workers' level, I mean were the shipyards producing ships, were things coming out?*

HARRISON: Yes, things were produced. Ham and coal. Later, some textiles and that awful, over-varnished, wooden furniture the Germans seem to like. I'll give you a good example. As I mentioned, the U.S. arranged loan guarantees for the Gierek Government. The Poles built a few tourist hotels in Warsaw, but the center piece of the modernization our aid was supposed to foment was a TV tube factory. That was going to be their export money earner. But by the time factory was up and, the tubes it was equipped to make were no longer in demand – except, of course, in the Warsaw Pact, where no one could pay with hard currency. So, no hard currency came in, the Poles couldn't service the

loans, and they defaulted. This happened in a bigger or smaller way across the Polish economy, whenever a little hard currency was available. The system was simply beyond repair and wouldn't respond no matter how many dollars were poured on it. When there was some export activity – assembling clothes was one area – the Poles were soon outpaced by emerging Southeast Asia countries where labor was even cheaper and a great deal more productive

It was obvious on the Potemkin factory tour the Foreign Office arranged. We saw drunks on the job, awful working conditions, people standing around – and this in the showpiece factories. Not all were that bad. There were some managers obviously trying to do a good job. But it just wasn't working. But I don't think that was the story the Embassy was telling. I'm not exactly sure why. In my last year, I did a cable saying that the Gierek political reforms were running out of steam. Things were returning to what they had been before the Gdansk riots. My boss at the time sent the cable to the Ambassador with a note saying I was too pessimistic. I don't remember whether the cable went to Washington or not. In fact, of course, it wasn't nearly pessimistic enough. What I described was exactly what was happening. But it ran counter to the general line, which was that Gierek gave us a possibility to wean the Poles away from the Soviets, and that a little infusion of capital was going to solve many of Poland's problems.

*Q: This is one reason we weren't predicting the collapse of the Soviet Union. It seemed like it would go on forever and always be a menace.*

HARRISON: Of course, the Reagan administration for its own reasons was trying to build up the Soviets as a military rival in the early 1980s. You may remember the pamphlet Soviet military power they published – about three years before the Soviet Union collapsed - to prove that we were way behind militarily.

Oh, by the way, that was a fascinating thing I did in the political section. I was the religion officer, which made me liaison to the Church hierarchy, and chief overseer of Jewish antiquities. The Catholic Church was by all odds the most interesting social organization in the country, and the only one not under direct Party control. It was very strong at the time. I attended Easter service with Senator Hatfield from Oregon in the Warsaw Cathedral one year. We sat up behind the alter rail, right across from Cardinal Wyszynski, mentor to the current Pope and a towering figure in the Church in those years. He dozed off for much of the time, but the thing I remember was the great tapestry that hung behind the Cardinal's chair, with the old Polish Imperial Eagle in white on red background.

Church officials were constantly dicing with the Communist party about things like church building permits, and the number of priests who could be trained. The Government manipulated those things to keep the Church in line. Meanwhile, the Church would harass the Party on the margins, without attacking them directly. We were not involved in this contest; the last thing the Church wanted was the U.S. as an ally. But I was an interested observer, with a good vantage point. What I saw was that the Church had an interest in the status quo. What Church officials wanted to avoid appearing to be

in open opposition to the government and causing a crackdown. They took the long view. The motley bunch of usurpers then in power would fade away, and the Church would remain. Plus the Church has never had a problem with authoritarian rulers, being the prime authoritarian organization in the world.

The other thing job I had which was interesting was trying to trace the Jewish community in Warsaw, which had been reduced to fewer people than were necessary for a minion. There had even been anti-Jewish purges after the War, run by 'nationalist' forces and aimed at the remnants of the Lublin Poles, which is to say the Soviet controlled Poles who had been installed in power by Soviet troops after the War. You couldn't announce a nationalist campaign, of course, since that would be seen as anti-Soviet; but a campaign against Jews in the government was a good cover. So some Jews emigrated, some went undercover, some assimilated, and by the time I went looking for them in the early 1970's, there were none to be found.

The American Jewish community was interested in the remnants of the Polish Jewish community because it had been the main fodder for the Holocaust. So there was international attention focused on Poland, and the Polish government was reluctant to eradicate all signs of the old Jewish community, although the ghetto had been largely blasted to pieces by the Russians and Germans at the end of the War.

The synagogue, the central one in Warsaw, was still there. The new grid of streets built after the War was different from the old grid, so the synagogue was cocked at an odd angle to the street, on an empty block between all these terrible, concrete socialist apartment houses. I went there to visit periodically. The first time, it looked empty. The big double wood doors in front were padlocked, with a chain, but I knocked and eventually this old man scuttled out with a key. He was a caretaker, a Jew who supplemented his income by making matzo, and he was the one who told me that there wasn't a minion in town anymore.

*Q: Minion is what?*

HARRISON: Ten male Jews, the number necessary for a service. The caretaker told me that when Jewish babies were born, which was extremely rare, they couldn't find a Rabbi to perform circumcision. So the community had sunk to that level. There was also an old Jewish cemetery from before the War in the center of the rebuilt city. The Communist government for years had wanted to build a road across it. My job was to drop by occasionally to make sure they weren't beginning work.

It was an incredible experience. The cemetery had been there for 150 years, but had been entirely untended for thirty-five years after the War, so it had gone back to a forest primeval. You came through the gate, there was a gatekeeper, an old guy who never shaved or was ever sober for that matter. He had this huge bronze key that he'd rattle at me, cackling away. These great iron gates would swing open and I'd walk into another world. The caretaker never went with me. On reflection now, I don't think he'd ever been through the gates himself. It was a kind of wonderland of forests and vines, the trees

overhanging so it was always twilight, with tombstones hidden under the vines or cocked at odd angles. They were all elaborately carved with the records of people of remarkable accomplishment. One, I remember, had been concertmaster of the Warsaw Symphony. Another had been a Scientist, and all his accomplishments were carefully listed in stone. It was the cream of Polish Jewish society, now turning to dust in this secret garden, and all forgotten since those who might remember had all been exterminated by the Nazis with the aid in many cases of their fellow Poles. After the War, no one wanted to dwell on any of this. So the cemetery became this abandoned, primeval necropolis, which – I would guess – it still is.

*Q: Well, when you think about this, I mean, the effort that you put into this, it's sort of like a criminologist.*

HARRISON: Tom Simons had an insight: he thought the best and the brightest in the Polish system joined the secret police. The thugs were really the elite. They would emerge, he thought, as the real powers in the country. Which is what happened, not only in Poland but in the old Soviet Union. Putin is a good example. Tom knew some of these security people. He drank with them, smoked cigars with them, knew Polish history better than they did. Plus his language skills were extraordinary. The combination made him as good as we could have had in that system at the time. But even with that horsepower, the changes to come escaped us. Or maybe we lacked insight because there was no insight to have. The system was dead. There was nothing behind the facade.

*Q: Were the Poles, you were looking at what the Poles were doing overseas. Were they a tool in all of the Soviets as far as Africa or elsewhere?*

HARRISON: They probably were and we weren't aware of it. We needed them for peacekeeping operations, especially in Vietnam, where they helped cover our withdrawal. For their part, the Poles were eager to do anything that gave them international legitimacy outside the Soviet Bloc. Also, I should mention that the Agency was doing great things in Poland at the time. I didn't know about it then, of course. But subsequently, it came to light that they had a mole in the Polish military command structure with access to all the plans of the Warsaw Pact. So, hats off to my CIA colleague of the time, Dick Luther, who really was producing something useful.

*Q: Well, then, after this rather depressing look at a depressing situation, I mean did you feel this way at the time or was it all kind of new and kind of fun?*

HARRISON: I was happy to be a political officer, finally. I liked writing cables, and reading cables from elsewhere. I liked getting to know something about the society. And I liked competing with the British Embassy, which was about the only other one in town that was trying to do any sort of political analysis. My rule was always to call everybody. I would invite myself over to talk with people much more senior than my own rank warranted. Got turned down a lot, but a surprising number of these senior people would actually talk to me. Since the Polish right wing had been neglected, I did some prospecting out there, going to see the nationalists in their dingy offices. And I don't

want to give you the impression there weren't a lot of decent people. People in Poland were forced to operate under two personas. I met some fascinating people operating with grace in a system which made that difficult. When I went to England, which we did occasionally, I would try to meet with Poles in exile there, including Leszek Kolakowski, a political philosopher and former Communist who has now become quite famous. But it was not a situation in which you could have a wide circle of friends. You could have a lot of acquaintances, but that was the extent of it.

*Q: Did the large American community, Polish American community in the United States did that have any affect on you all?*

HARRISON: Not as much as one might think. The Polish lobby was never well organized in Washington, perhaps because the American Poles didn't really think of themselves as a minority. Plus, of course, such political organizations as existed were anti-Communist, and therefore more interested in ending rather than helping the existing Polish government. That community became involved when our visa turn down level got high. And Polish-American politicians, or those with large Polish constituencies, would visit to build their credibility back home. Clem Zablocki was one of those; I spent a week with him. He was Chairman of House Foreign Relations at the time and therefore a powerful man, and he had provided some aid to Poland, in particular to build a Children's Hospital in Krakow. We visited the hospital, as he liked to do every so often, just to make sure the money we had provided was well spent. Quite an admirable guy. He was treated like a king wherever he went in Poland. Then there were others, like Jack Kemp, who had a lot of Poles in his district in Buffalo and was chiefly interested in having his picture taken with various semi-luminaries -- the Mayor of Warsaw, for example.

*Q: What about, when you traveled or just going around Warsaw, were you targeted or given a difficult time by the security forces?*

HARRISON: I was followed occasionally, but no, the general answer is that I was much more closely surveilled when I drove across Saudi Arabia in the 90's than I ever was across Poland in the early '70s. Out in the countryside in Poland the regime didn't have much to worry about. They hadn't tried to collectivize in Poland, so the countryside wasn't revolutionary, and it was relatively productive. Or maybe they just didn't think I was worth wasting security assets on.

*Q: Did you ever get involved in the checking of social security claims and things like this?*

HARRISON: Never did that. Much of time was spent trying to rescue my career, however. I was still on the cusp, still an FSO-6 after four or five years. Some of my colleagues, the crueler ones, gave me the title of Doyenne of the Six Corps, the Senior Six in the Service as they used to say. At one point I was called out to Frankfurt with some other unfortunates from around Europe to meet a panel from the Foreign Service. I was told that if I were to transfer to the consular cone, I could be promoted, but as a political officer, I would probably be selected out. I told them I'd take my chances. I

always thought it was ironic that they'd offer to promote me in a function I had repeatedly demonstrated neither the aptitude nor the desire to perform. But, they needed consular officers, as always. It was bit of blackmail, to tell the truth. To deny people promotion because they hadn't done political work was a little rich, given that most of the people in that situation had been trying to do political work but hadn't been able to persuade the Service to give them a political job. Also, the Service wouldn't count CORDs in Vietnam as "political" work, so a lot of those who did it got screwed.

*Q: And given promises that never were kept and that sort of thing.*

HARRISON: Yes, the Foreign Service is an awful organization. I had friends who thought that somebody, somewhere in the system was screwing them. It's a comforting notion compared with the truth, which was worse than that. In fact, the Foreign Service was a soulless and often mindless bureaucracy. To progress, at least if you were someone like me, you had to figure out how it operated and then beat the system. Which I did, although it took a while. After all, a guy who spent 10 years battling selection out ended up an Ambassador.

*Q: In 1973 the very personalized personnel system is ready to do something for you. What had it thought up?*

HARRISON: Nothing actually, but I had wanted to take a year's leave without pay so it allowed me to do that. I went off to Oxford for a year to finish my dissertation, which I had left unfinished in '67 when I joined the Foreign Service. I applied for leave without pay and it was granted and off I went.

*Q: So, how did you support yourself for this?*

HARRISON: I had built up a lot of leave. In fact, my leave didn't run out until February and I left in Oxford in May. Plus, I think they may have paid me an extra month or so, which I've meant to bring to their attention for the last thirty years or so. But the result was that I only had about three months of relative poverty and we rented a house from a British diplomat outside of Oxford who gave us a break on the rent.

*Q: Again, what was your dissertation on?*

HARRISON: Hegel. There was a Pole there who had fought in the Warsaw uprising in '44, by chance had been taken prisoner by the Wehrmacht instead of the Gestapo and had therefore survived the War, ending up in Britain where he became a tutor at Oxford. I'd read of book of his and written to him with my thoughts, asking if my wife and I could visit when we were on leave in England. He encouraged me to come ahead. Zbigniew Pelczynski, another of those figures who popped up in my life to shed a little light on the stony path ahead. All blessings on him for the great scholar and kind man he is. He invited me to come and study with him for a year, and arranged it administratively. Oh, and all blessings on my wonderful wife as well, who urged me to do it even though it meant another few years of penury for us.

*Q: How did you find the system there at that time?*

HARRISON: At Oxford? It was fairly agreeable.. I had always preferred the tutor student relationship to the classroom because I got to talk more. I'm absolutely serious about that, by the way. I learn by talking or writing. And I have very seldom heard a speaker who can so thoroughly engage my attention as I can myself. I went to some classes at Oxford, but I found it excruciatingly boring. They pride themselves on being boring. Exact and learned, of course, or at least I think they would have been if I could ever have paid attention long enough to find out.

*Q: What were the classes?*

HARRISON: Whatever you're interested in, someone at Oxford knows more about it than anyone on earth and will speak on the subject at considerable length. But I didn't go to many classes. We lived in a Manor House, South Leigh Manor. The building was 600 years old, and it looked more like a smallish country house than the turreted vision that comes to mind when you say manor house. This place had a brush of fame in the 1940's when Dylan Thomas and his wife dried out there for a year or two. In fact, he and I wrote in the same alcove, twenty-five years apart (his muse, unfortunately, had left). The house had been updated. It had central heat, although never enough of it. It was set off in what might have been called grounds if anyone had ever taken care of them. But it was so old that the floors in the upstairs bedrooms sloped a good fifteen inches from the door to the outside wall. We had to prop one side of the bed up on books -- about a half-dozen thick ones. And the house was haunted. Really haunted. It had a poltergeist which took the form of a bumping noise (my mother in law thought it sounded like a heartbeat) which would start in the wee hours at the foot of the stairs and make its way up to our bedroom, with a bump every fifteen seconds are so, ending with a resounding bump at the foot of the bed. Since we were in the Manor, the owners of the other big house in this small town considered us their social equals and would invite us for tea. The other villagers ignored us, until we bought a basset hound. The basset hound would chase their chickens, but the British have a remarkable tolerance for dogs, and developed a minor tolerance for us once Dolly Rocker, the Basset, was in residence. For the most part, I wrote and thought and read and went to my weekly sessions with my tutor, Pelczynski, who was to be Bill Clinton’s tutor five years later. It helped me in the Foreign Service far more than any job I might have gone to at that point. For one thing, the Service is snobbish, so the Oxford cache was useful. It did for me what San Jose State didn't. The upshot is that, for the first time, I was actually pursued for a job -- as Special Assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, a man named George Vest, who needed a special assistant like I need another toe, but did want someone to arrange his cables on his desk at a time every morning when any self-respecting GS secretary is still in bed. I was a professional, you see, so I could be made to do the menial at any hour of day or night. But I must admit it sounded grand. Special Assistant to the Director. Tom Stern, who was George's deputy, called me in Oxford and offered me the job.

*Q: This is tape three, side one with Roger Harrison. You’re saying Tom Stern?*

HARRISON: Tom Stern tried to get in touch with me at Oxford. Calling Tom back, from a pay booth in Oxford, was one of the great logistical feats of my life. I remember stuffing all that odd British change -- twenty bucks worth as I recall -- into the slot. If you didn't get enough in, the phone would just cut off mid sentence. He offered, I accepted, and off I went -- early because we needed the money and because I was tired of working on my dissertation. The family stayed on for a couple of months until school ended, huddling in one bed with the Basset hound when the poltergeist made an appearance.

*Q: From '74 until when where you in the politico-military bureau?*

HARRISON: '74 for about 18 months. It turned out that George Vest, grand old avuncular soul that he was, conceived of my job as really another staff assistant. What he wanted was his cables arranged and underlined, taskings followed up and the daily activity report to the Secretary compiled -- it was Kissinger at the time, so this was serious business. He wanted me to come in about 6:30 because Kissinger had a morning staff meeting at 7:45 and no one, including George, wanted to go into Kissinger's presence unaware of what had been the cable traffic. That meant riding my bicycle to work, winter and summer. Mr. Vest was also testifying quite a bit before Congress, and I assembled his briefing books. It was the beginning of what turned out to be a long association with various xerox machines. Once I asked Mr. Vest – I would never have called him George, of course – if I could go up with him and see what the testimony was like. He said no. Don't know why, exactly. It seemed like an obvious thing to do.

That left me, as usual, scratching around for something interesting to do. Eventually, I whined enough to persuade Tom Stern to let me staff the Bureau on personnel decisions. No one else wanted to do it. But it was an education to me. It meant that I read a lot of personnel files. This is in the days before privacy became a concern. If I wanted somebody's file, all I had to do was call down to personnel and ask for it. And up they would come, warts and all. It was an invaluable education into the nature of the system and the people who infested it. And it taught me a lot about what efficiency reports did and didn't do for you. By this time, what we used to call the 'back end' of the ER's, that is, the confidential comments about you that weren't shown to you, had been eliminated as part of the regular OER process. But incredibly, all the old ones had been left in files.

*Q: There was a confidential part.*

HARRISON: And it was just astounding. Any tendency I'd had to overestimate human nature was swiftly corrected. The pettiness, the closet queen cattiness of it is hard to describe. Needless to say, the confidential comments were often far different than the comments in the front end of the reports, the one the rated officers saw. It taught me how to write a good report for myself, too, which came in handy since I wrote almost all my own reports in the years after that. And, of course, I got to read the back end of my own reports from Manila.

The other benefit of that job was coming into contact with a lot of people that were later

to play roles in my life and in foreign policy who were either my fellow special assistants, although more elevated than I like Ned Walker, or were working in PM like John Kelly.

*Q: What was PM about when you were there?*

PM was about five years old then. It was State's answer to the Office of International Security Affairs at Defense, often called Defense's "mini-State Department". They had a mini version of us, we wanted a mini version of them. The Bureau did a lot more than it does now, since many responsibilities that PM used to cover, things like nuclear proliferation, have been broken off to become separate bureaus. I wasn't responsible for issues of any sort, but wandering around I learned a lot about all of them. People suspected that I might know what was going on in the front office. Not true, of course, but I didn't disabuse them.

In fact, I don't think I ever had a conversation with George Vest about anything substantive. It's a little strange. George obviously wanted me to underline the cables cogently, and to line up on his desk those most important to him. But he left me to figure all that out on my own. I never knew what went on in the meetings I staffed him to attend, or whether the staffing was good or bad, or what he thought about the world.

George's deputies, and especially Jim Goodby, were a different matter. I learned a lot from Jim, from Tom Stern and Lee Sloss, the other deputies, and from Jonathan Stoddard and Fred Ladd, who were office directors. If I asked about something – what our policy was about an issue – they'd tell me, and even sometimes spend time explaining what was what. If I gained anything from that job, it was because of them.

*Q: Could you tell me about how Tom Stern and Jim Goodby operated, I mean, what were their roles?*

HARRISON: Goodby had the arms control portfolio, and Tom Stern did the arms sales and oversaw the munitions control office which licensed arms sales. Les Brown was head of the office that was dealing with NATO and dealing with the F16 issue which was a big issue. Which airplane was NATO going to purchase? We were in a competition with the French, and we eventually won, which had enormous implications for us economically and politically. The F-16 went on to be the standard fighter for most nations in the world. I also read those cables I underlined, which was an education for me.

It was an education of a different kind to deal with GS secretaries that existed at State Department in those days. A vanished race now, but at the time a tribe unto themselves and much more sensitive to their relative standing than the officers I dealt with. We had three in the PM front office, and one of my great battles was whether they would answer my phone. They felt themselves too senior. This was before answering machines. We had a prolonged negotiation about that which ended with them agreeing to answer my phone under protest, but not to answer it when I was there, and never with my name. They refused to say, "This is Roger Harrison's office." But they would say "hello". Then, after

more negotiating, they agreed to take a note or two about who the caller was and what they wanted. One of them was Ruth Sinclair; we ended up great friends. And when I'd go back, in later years, I was always greeted like a prodigal son. But you had to earn it.

Luckily for me, I realized my relative power standing in the hierarchy, which was that I had none, so I was suitably humble. There were a lot of colleagues in my generation who were personally abusive to subordinates, and many of them did quite well. If I can praise myself for anything, it would be that I was not one of them.

It occurs to me, however, that when in later years I was in EUR, I was called to personnel after three secretaries had quit and told that they were sending me the toughest they had, Sandy Grigola, and if she left, I'd have to do without. So, I suppose I wasn't always the sweetheart I've described myself as being. Still, I'm convinced it wasn't because I abused them. We had a lot of work to do, and I expected everyone to work as hard as I was working. At least, that's what I told myself. Sandy and I got along fine, by the way.

*Q: Well, one of the things I've noticed is that in these jobs you meet everybody, you get known and somebody who has the reputation of producing or getting things done, but the problem is, there's no real bloody responsibility. It's not the best place to have your top talent tested: a little of it goes a long way.*

HARRISON: As I reflect on that experience, it seems to me that there is a unique insight into how the Department works, because the paper trail was everything. You learn how the Staff Secretariat works, how papers move, how the Secretary's office functions. And all those people get to see you hanging around, so people begin to know who you were. Special assistant to a seventh floor principal was the job of choice. Failing that, special assistant in a geographic bureau was good, because those were the guys with futures in those bureaus. PM had no jobs overseas and lacked the prestige of the geographic bureau, so I was really sort of hanging on at the periphery of the special assistant business. But it had the advantages that all the special assistant jobs had in terms of sort of getting yourself about. Also, of course, I saw a wide variety of information, including intelligence, highly classified stuff. And beyond all that, I had a wonderful title. I was special assistant to director of political military affairs and staff director of the interagency political military group. I think I mentioned that when I was in Warsaw, Tom Simons had anointed me as his successor as scribe, that is, notetaker, for the U.S.-China talks. That was a big deal, our only contact with the mainland Chinese in those days. But as soon as I got the job, Kissinger went to China and the Warsaw channel shut down. The same thing was true of being an executive director of the interagency political military group. It never met after I had the job, so I never executive directed anything. In fact, I was never quite clear on what the group had done when it was still doing things. Nifty title, though.

In this regard, the advantage of PM as a functional bureau over the geographic bureaus was that our responsibilities were worldwide, so the variety of things I saw was great – a real education.

So, now by the end of that period, I had been in the Foreign Service eight or nine years. I had never supervised anybody or had responsibility for any substantive issue; I had been told officially that my future in the business was bleak, and had been promoted a grand total of once. If there was someone around with a less promising career than mine, I didn't encounter him.

But then I got a break. A big one. The big break was that Tom Stern, who had taken an interest in me, was also a friend of a staff member of the national Security Council staff at the White House. An opening came up in what was called the planning staff of the National Security Council, and Tom arranged for me to get that job. So, I moved from being at the bottom of the bureaucratic ladder to being on the White House staff, which was about as great a leap bureaucratically as could be imagined. Before I could go, I had to get George Vest's approval. It was out of usual assignment cycle so there was no one waiting to replace me. George's proviso was that I find a replacement for myself before I could leave. He needed those cables underlined. I was sitting in my office pondering the problem when a guy walked by my open office door. I'd never seen him before, but my staff assistant muttered that this guy was just back from Vietnam looking for a job. I jumped up, ran down the hall after him, grabbed him by the shoulder and said "Have I got a job for you." His name was Joe McBride. And with that I could depart.

*Q: Okay, we might pick it up then in 1976 about?*

HARRISON: Yes, now we're in '76, exactly. Yes, the late summer of '76, no spring of '76.

*Q: Today is the 16th of January, 2002. Roger, we're in what, 1976?*

HARRISON: Yes, let me get back to 1976. In 1976 I was just about to go to the White House. Tom Stern had arranged that and it came out of the blue. Tom knew there was an opening over there because David Ransom was departing a job in something called the planning staff, which had been a powerful base for a very powerful bureaucratic player named Dick Kennedy. The story that was current after I got to the White House was that Dick Kennedy and Brent Scowcroft had had a power struggle from which Scowcroft had emerged victorious. Kennedy had left, and Scowcroft, who had been elevated to assistant to the president and then to NSC advisor, wanted to make sure the planning staff wouldn't become a power base for anyone else. So he promoted Kennedy's old deputy, an Army Colonel named Clint Granger, to the directorship of the planning staff and took away many of the office's functions.

There were two other members of the planning staff when I arrived there. Don McDonald, who was active duty colonel in the air force, an ex-phantom pilot from Vietnam, and Terry Dargis. I was given the political-military portfolio, including arms sales and security assistance budgeting issues. That meant working as well with Bob Oakley, who at that time was the head of the Middle East office at the NSC, and also his deputy, Arthur Houghton, since most of the arms sales issues revolved in one way or another around the middle east. One of our major issues for example, was the Israeli

military aid levels. Another was Administration's effort to begin sale of non-lethal military equipment to Egypt. There were others on the staff then who became quite famous later, including Bob Gates, a junior guy like me at the time, who later became CIA Director, and Bob Hormats who made a lot of money on Wall Street.

*Q: This was before Camp David, way before?*

HARRISON: This was before Camp David, but well after the Yom Kippur War of '72. Sadat was then President in Egypt. Sadat was in the process of expelling the Soviets so the Administration was eager to build a relationship with him, and military sales were part of that. The central item were C-130's, but there were some jeeps and trucks on the list as well. Symbolic ways to restore the relationship. This was all before Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, which obviously made such sales a lot less controversial. But in these days there was still a lot of opposition on the Hill. The pro-Israeli lobby was already very active and had been in trying to curb the arms relationship with Saudi Arabia. Now they added opposition to Egyptian sales to their agenda. This was true even though the signals that we were getting at that time from Tel Aviv were that the government there was not necessarily opposed to the improvement of U.S. Egyptian relations.

*Q: This often happens. Governments tend to be more realistic than the lobbies who claim to represent them. It's a lot easier to be hard lined if you're without responsibility.*

HARRISON: Yes, and in the absence of countervailing force they tend to carry the day. Then as now it was difficult to marshal a congressional majority for any equipment sales to the Arabs. The Hill had given itself a legislative veto over such sales. The Administration had to notify before such sales could go through, and Congress could disapprove. I was in charge of getting the clearance from the administration to go forward to the Hill with such requests.

*Q: Where was the initiative come from for arms sales within American government? Was it the Pentagon, was it State?*

HARRISON: It was a combination actually. The Pentagon had an interest because it extended production lines and lowered costs. The C-130 was a case in point. This was just after the withdrawal from Vietnam and before Reagan, so it was a time of restraint for them.

The State Department was interested in improving relations with the Arabs and weaning the Egyptians away from the Soviets, so they were in favor of some sales, although not of lethal equipment. Still, what with Congressional skepticism and great suspicion between us and the Egyptian, it all inched rather than bounded forward. President Ford was in office; Nixon had resigned a month or so before I got to the NSC. The new president, as far as we could tell from the NSC, was generally in favor of an opening to the Arab countries. Of course, he was also a consummate politician who had come up through the House of Representatives and therefore sensitive to the sort of problems we had on the Hill with these sales. So, as I say, we inched forward and picked our issues carefully. The

key was the Chairman of the House Armed Service Committee, a Mississippian named, I believe, Otto Passman. He bartered support for the arms sales to Egypt for rice subsidies for his constituents. That's the sort of deal Ford was comfortable with.

Q: *How about C-130's?*

HARRISON: I'm not sure the C-130 is still the plane of choice for the emerging world, but it certainly was at that time. It had a great capability and when you bought American weapons systems you got a logistical tail and an American presence that was welcome. The Soviets were never very at aftermarket service of their weapons systems and the weapons systems themselves were never as reliable. They were expensive to maintain and the Russians tend to be more obnoxious guests in other countries than we are. But, the political connection which all of this brought was what many of these countries were looking for as well. It was extending U.S. sway and that's one of the reasons the State Department was in favor.

*Q: Looking at the globe, from your prospective you must have been seeing a different world than the normal person does and that's a market. Where could you see opportunities, where did you see places we didn't want to mess with and all that?*

HARRISON: I'm not sure that I was thinking geopolitically in those days. It's quite a transition to go from being a special assistant in the State Department, where no one ever asked me what I thought of anything, to the center of power at the White House. Kissinger had established a system within the bureaucracy which essentially funneled everything through the NSC staff. Staffers like me would prepare decision memoranda for the President, attaching all the inputs from various concerned agencies at tabs, but the key was the cover memo. That was from Kissinger, and later Scowcroft, to the President. The cover memo summarized what was in the various agency submissions -- usually taking no more than a paragraph to give the gist of a memo from Defense, for example, that might run to twenty pages. Then the memo would list the options, the recommendations from the agency and finally -- and this was the key -- Kissinger's recommendation. Although we would get guidance and draft these recommendations for Kissinger's signature, we never knew what he actually recommended. The agencies never saw these decision memoranda and, therefore, never knew how we had characterized their views. The process gave Kissinger great power. Of course, Nixon knew his own mind about foreign policy. But Ford was a relative novice, so at least at the outset of the Ford Administration, Kissinger remained very powerful. There also comes into this Kissinger's personal force, because everyone was afraid of him. Respect for his intelligence was widespread in the bureaucracy, but more important was the general sense of his ruthlessness. No one wanted to cross him. The upshot of this was that the NSC staff had become vastly powerful as well. It had also taken on an organizational culture, which derived from Kissinger's own approach and was characterized by a general contempt for the bureaucracy.

By the time I got to the White House, some of this power had drained away. For one thing, Kissinger had engineered this strange process whereby he became Secretary of

State while remaining National Security Adviser. When that happened, Kissinger transferred much of his power base to the Department of State, and Brent Scowcroft, who had been Kissinger's deputy, managed day to day operations at the NSC. Scowcroft was a very bureaucratically canny guy and knew he had no independent source of power, and that the real power in foreign policy was still with Kissinger, wherever he was. So the NSC had been downgraded. But still, some of the old Kissingerean aura still clung to the place. And Scowcroft, without ever competing with Kissinger, began to establish a unique position with the new President. To me, it was a whole new world. As an example, one of the things that we did was approve navy ship movements. If the navy wanted to redeploy carriers from one part of the world to another part of the world they had to have White House approval and White House approval, in practical terms, meant me. An agency would be reluctant to go around someone like me because they know they'll have to deal with me in the future, and also because circumventing me meant engaging some high official to call someone senior at the White House, and because for all they know, I was reflecting the position of those senior White House people, who will be irritated that their views are being questioned. In one case, for example, the Navy wanted to cut carrier deployments to Asia from three carriers to two. I objected, since I knew the Soviets were getting more active with their naval forces in the region. Young and untested and entirely ignorant of Asian politics as I was, I nevertheless stopped that redeployment, which caused the Navy Staff great consternation.

*Q: But when you're getting something like this, you would think there would be something more than Roger Harrison sitting at a desk saying I don't think this is a good idea?*

HARRISON: You would, wouldn't you? But here's the other part of the equation. The Navy could have gone over my head, but they never did. If I had said yes, they would have moved those carriers, and if that policy turned out to be a bad idea, they would have pointed a finger at me. Since I was resisting, their only choice was to try to persuade Scowcroft, but they had determined, I'm convinced, that Scowcroft wouldn't like the idea. They hoped I would be naive enough to take the bait, and they could bypass Scowcroft. They were trying to sneak the policy change by.

*Q: But it wasn't just you, was it?*

HARRISON: Well, I had to go and talk to Ken Quinn who was the guy in Asian affairs who was kind of my level and who later became an ambassador to Indonesia. But he supported me, as a good Asian specialist would.

There as another aspect as well. To get a decision from the front office of the NSC on something like this was virtually impossible. It was a very insular environment, and very secretive. Scowcroft was, to put it mildly, not easily accessible. Phone calls did no good. Memos did no good. You had to physically corral Scowcroft and then he was very gracious. This was true generally on the NSC staff, which meant, on one hand, that on big issues we were paralyzed, but on smaller issues we had a great deal of independence. I experienced this first hand when I was made, briefly, acting director for African Affairs.

Now, you're thinking I knew nothing about Africa, which is entirely right. But there was only one staff member for Africa, a nice guy named Hal Horan, and when he left to be Ambassador to Liberia -- near the end of the Administration -- he wasn't replaced. They didn't want to bring anyone to the White House at that point. I had been working with Hal on some issues, so I was told to take over the portfolio, although I obviously wouldn't be given the title since at the time I was still equivalent of an Army captain. Scowcroft never talked to me about my new responsibilities. Jeanne Davis, staff secretary, told me about my new responsibilities, but even she didn't tell me what I was expected to do. I don't think the NSC leadership was expecting anything to happen in Africa, or at least anything important enough to warrant the President's attention.

I've never been one to let ignorance stand in my way. So I had a big map of Africa hung behind my desk, to make me look like an African specialist on the one hand and so I could search for the countries referred to in the intelligence I was reading on the other. Never did find Burundi, as I remember. Once, I absolutely needed guidance on a policy issue from Scowcroft and couldn't get it. So finally I went over, sat in his outer office and waited. He was at a meeting. When he got back, I blocked his way into his office until he gave me a decision. That's what you had to do. He was nice about it, though.

But it was a great deal, that temporary Africa job. Got me invited to State dinners and to the Bicentennial Reception and Dinner at the White House. There's a great story about that. The Bicentennial Dinner was a big event. Ella Fitzgerald and Roger Miller were the entertainment. Drinks on the lawn, then dinner in this great tent which had been set up, followed by dancing in the East Room. Liz Taylor was only one of the luminaries, and there were many others. White tie, of course. My wife and I showed up in our old station wagon at the East Wing, in line behind all the limos. There was a red carpet set up there, with klieg lights and what seemed like a thousand photographers. The valet putted off in our car and we walked up the carpet. The Governor of Maryland and his wife were in front of us, and when they walked up the carpet the flashbulbs and cameras going off were quite a spectacle. Then we walked up the carpet, and there was silence. Not a single camera man took a picture. Not so much as an instamatic. You'd think that someone would have taken a picture on the off chance I was a reclusive billionaire.

During the dance after dinner, Jo Ann and I were standing off the dance floor when the President walked over and asked if I'd seen Gromyko, the Soviet Ambassador. I hadn't seen him, worse luck. Still, heady stuff for a guy who only six months before had been riding a bike on icy roads at 6:00 in order to underline cables for George Vest. Washington can operate like that sometimes.

The other reason we had little guidance from Scowcroft, at least on the planning staff, was that Clint Granger, my boss, was scared to death of him and Bud McFarland and the whole front office. It's hard to exaggerate just how fervently Clint wanted to avoid their notice. For example, when I got to the staff I asked Clint to take me over and introduce me to Scowcroft and the others. The staff maybe had 30 professionals on it then, and I was one of them, so it seemed like the appropriate thing to do. And Clint agreed to do it, but he never would make good. I never was officially presented at court. He was just

afraid to. He had the feeling, I'm convinced, that if they ever noticed he was still around, they'd ax him.

Clint was an amazing guy to be occupying a position of responsibility in the federal government. Absolutely bereft of common sense, as I rapidly became aware. I'll give you an example. We had three secretaries for our four man planning staff, but they were never available because they were always at the xerox machine. They were xeroxing five or six hours a day. One of the things true about the NSC staff in those days, I guess it's still true, is that you see everything pretty much that the U.S. government produces. The CIA output for example, National Intelligence Daily, a lot of code word items, intercepts, overhead photography, great stacks of top secret material every day. And because we were a functional office with responsibilities worldwide, we saw more of this stuff than virtually anyone else. And Clint was having it all xeroxed, taking it home in his briefcase, putting it in legal binders and lining his family room walls with it. I didn't know that, but I knew about the xeroxing, so I went to the Executive Secretary, Jeanne Davis, told her what was happening, that our secretaries were xeroxing the entire intelligence product of the American government, in many cases ripping off Top Secret, Do Not Reproduce cover sheets to do it. But nothing was done. The xeroxing went on. Clint departed the NSC at the end of his tour. After he left, he got into a very messy divorce. His wife sent some of these legal binders to Jack Anderson, who was the chief muckraking columnist in town at the time. That led to a series of columns from Anderson based on this material. Eventually, she ratted Clint out. This was after my time, but the story was told me by someone who had stayed at the NSC. He said they had to send a step van over to pick this stuff up there was so much of it. I asked my informant, who by then had become a considerable figure in Republican foreign policy circles, why Clint wasn't prosecuted. He said it would have been too embarrassing. To prosecute Clint, the White House would have had to admit that nearly everything produced by the intelligence community of the United States had resided for several years in a suburban family room in McLean, Virginia.

*Q: It really is. Troop movements, I'm coming back to the carriers, just to try to look at various things. What were the concerns?*

HARRISON: Well, the concerns were that the Soviet Union was always a question of what signals we were sending. There were policy reasons. I was talking before about the heady experience of actually having some control or power over bureaucratic issues like that, but the issue was how we should counter growing Soviet naval power. If the Soviets had not reduced their presence, could we reduce ours? The navy's concern was logistical and budgetary. How much did it cost? How much wear and tear on their equipment? So, it was an issue of their bottom line against our policy requirements and whether or not this was the place to save money. The Navy has different priorities. And we had the great advantage of not having to worry about where the Navy would find the money. The Soviets at that time were being very aggressive. Our relations were on a downward trajectory, which culminated with Afghanistan a couple of years later.

*Q: December of '79.*

HARRISON: About a year off or so, but there was already a kind of general atmosphere of worsening relations and of the cold war intensifying. In the political dice game that we played with the Soviets where profile was important, the presence of those navy carriers was important. At least that's what I thought. They didn't have to accept my view. The issue was how much they wanted to invest in their policy, how serious they were about it. If they were serious and determined, there was no way a guy in my position could have made any difference, but if they weren't serious and determined and they encountered resistance, they might decide to shift their priorities. In this case, they decided it wasn't worth the effort. So, what I did was the final word not because I had the final power. I didn't have a policy role like that.

*Q: You were there when to when?*

HARRISON: I arrived in '74, it would have been the summer and left in the general exodus of Carter's victory and that would have been the beginning of '77.

*Q: What about arms to Iran? Was this sort of these things like arms that usually you didn't question, you just chopped on?*

HARRISON: In these cases there's a lot of economic force behind these sales proposals and some of them can be quite large. So, there's a standing constituency for arms sales. Since the Shah was still in power, and still eager to buy, there was no important opposition. On the contrary, arms sales to Iran looked to be win win. The only question in such cases was technology transfer. Should be sold the very latest stuff, and could we guarantee that the technology wouldn't leak. As I recall, we never did sell the cutting edge technology, or the best version of planes like the F-14, but my memory could well be faulty on that score. We were ambivalent about the Shah, but he was our guy. The revolution in Iran was still in the future.

*Q: I was just wondering because as I recall when the Shah was in full power there was some questioning within newspapers and others and I think people I knew in the State Department, saying what the hell are we doing. I mean, we're a little concerned about what the Shah might do.*

HARRISON: I'm only relying here on my lack of any memory of any issues coming up with Iranian arms sales in those days, which isn't to say that none did, but that they were not prominent enough to have stuck with me all these years later. Whereas, what we did on foreign military sales and with aid to Israel and Egypt was a battle fought every year. The Ford Administration wanted to cut Israeli aid, and actually did in the meaningless budget Ford submitted after he lost the election in 1976. My view was that Israeli aid should be phased out over time. Otherwise it would distort the Israeli economy and their decisions on defense and other policies. So, I promoted the notion of a schedule phasing out aid. There was some sympathy in the front office, but there was never enough political juice to push an idea like that through. We did get a big cut in aid to Israel, but it came in a form that had no impact. Every outgoing president has to devise a budget for

the coming fiscal year because. As I say, in his final budget, the one that was largely fictional, Ford cut Israeli FMS substantially. It was a gesture, and soon forgotten. But we were right. All the things that we said would happen, happened. The hard decisions that the Israelis would have had to make on economic reform, and on continue with an expensive settlement policy, became less pressing because of our aid. It was a disservice to them and the peace process. And the aid continues even now, though Israel per capita GNP is 10 times what it was then.

*Q: Did arms to South Africa raise any questions?*

HARRISON: Yes, they did. That was obviously a very hot issue in those days. There was an embargo on arms sales to South Africa, but the Administration was pushing political engagement, and one of the sweeteners on our side was to be the sale of non-lethal equipment to the South African military. This dual track approach, embargo plus engagement, meant the Ford people were more open to dual use kind of items than otherwise they would have been. When the Carter administration came in, and Andy Young took on some of these responsibilities, all talk of engagement ended, and with it the issue of non-lethal military equipment sales.

So, that's generally how I spent that 18 months, usually frustrated because I couldn't really get a lot of guidance from the front office. I could extract guidance on occasion if I was persistent enough. And the general situation became a lot better will Bill Hyland took Bud McFarland's place as Scowcroft's deputy. I was there when Hyland arrived, so he treated me more like a regular member of the staff rather than someone who had inexplicably gotten in the door. My African stint was 9 months or so at the end of the Administration, Hyland was approachable, Entebbe and some other things happened at that time, so it was interesting.

*Q: Explain what Entebbe was.*

HARRISON: Entebbe was a raid by Israel to free hostages being held at the airport in Uganda by the Idi Amin. The Israelis brought a C130 in and unloaded commandos. Bibi Netanyahu's brother led the operation. He was killed, but they did rescue those people and took off again successfully. One of the brave commando raids of history. I was the one notified at the White House about this, and I notified Scowcroft. A small role in history. And there were many other benefits to being at the White House. There was, for example, the Christmas party inside the White House with all the decorations, and your kids can go into the oval office. At the end of it, however, when Ford had lost, there came a very strange period. All the power and influence, and all the work disappeared overnight. Calls ceased to be returned. Elsewhere in the bureaucracy, people are busy writing briefing papers for the new Administration. But not at the White House. It was almost three months of sitting around.

*Q: I mean, there must be a two-layer thing. One is the day to day government where somebody has to make decisions because you're the United States government irrespective of anything and the other is policy.*

HARRISON: Right. Policy making basically stops. If there were a crisis it had to be dealt with, but I don't remember one in this period. It was a strange environment. It was also strange because everyone wanted to stay on the staff, and a surprising number of people had hopes of doing so. For professionals like me, it was the middle of an assignment cycle, so nowhere in particular to go. The older hands like Hal Horan, who saw the end coming, had jumped while the jumping was good. And Carter's people interviewed us all, fostering that hope in some minds. But in the end, we were all shown the door, except, I think, for Gary Sick, who did Iranian issues, and Bob Kimmitt. Bob had a summer between law school classes and he came as an intern. He was put in our office and I was given the job of finding things for him to do. We got on, which was important to me because 12 years later, it was Under Secretary of State Bob Kimmitt and he advocated for me when I was looking for an Embassy. Bob stayed through the transition, went back and finished his last year at law school and then was brought back, having caught the eye among others of Jim Baker who was at the White House then. It was the beginning of a rapid rise. At the beginning of the Bush administration Baker became Secretary of State, and Kimmitt became Under Secretary for political affairs. By the way, another staffer at the NSC at the time was Bob Gates, who later had a remarkable rise to become Director of Central Intelligence.

*Q: Well, what were you looking at? I mean, did you find for example, for one you're off cycle with personnel, but also being on the NSC, does this create certain tensions with you and other people. The power there and all?*

HARRISON: No, not so much with me. There were tensions with defense, but I wasn't going back to defense, so that was okay. No, there weren't any tensions in particular with the State Department. It's true that in my NSC role I was chairing interagency meetings I wouldn't have been invited to a year earlier. Tom Stern, who had arranged the NSC job for me, had to raise his hand in meetings to be recognized by his old staff assistant. But I had the sense not to push it. The policy process in those days involved sending National Security Study Memoranda (NSSM's) to the bureaucracy, giving rise to recommendations to the President sent through the NSC by the process I described earlier. The President would check an option, or ask for further study, and this would be communicated to the bureaucracy by National Security Decision Memoranda (NSDM's) over the President's signature. In the meantime there were meetings, both to look at options and to monitor the implementation of decisions, and these were chaired by various NSC functionaries, including me. When Ford lost, Scowcroft convened the staff and decreed that all existing studies were to be finished in the period before the new Administration took office. So we staffers dutifully sent tasking memos to the agencies. No one paid the slightest attention. All the real power was gone, and so was all the reflected power for staffers like me.

By the way, when Reagan took office, Haig as Secretary of State ensured that State instead of the NSC would chair interagency meetings like the ones I ran. But that never worked as well, particularly because State was no longer the obviously preeminent foreign policy bureaucracy in town.

I was going to go back to my home bureau which was PM, but I was to be over compliment because there weren't any jobs. Frank Wisner, who was at that time director for South Africa, had a deputy named Dennis Keogh, who was going off to Africa. So Wisner asked for me to fill in for a couple of weeks while Dennis was away, assuming because I'd done Africa at the NSC that I must know something about it. Wisner persuaded Les Gelb, the incoming director of politico-military affairs who didn't know me from Adam and had no job for me anyway, to let me go fill in for Dennis. At this time, the battle had been joined over South Africa, that is, whether we should continue this kind of dual track policy we had followed under Ford. Carter's people took a much different view, but the carry over civil servants staged a last ditch defense of dual track. Frank Wisner was the point man, and Frank made me his sacrificial lamb. He sent me off as his representatives to defend this suddenly unpopular policy to people who had great contempt for it. I got belted around pretty good. Meanwhile, he went up to address his prep school graduating class one day, announcing that he's be back "this evening". We were still manning the barricades at 10:30 that night when he blew back in. It was, generally speaking, a suicide mission.

It was short but intense, and then I was back in PM reduced to even more menial duties than those I'd left to go to NSC. My job in essence was to assemble briefing books for the Under Secretary for Political Military Affairs, Science and Technology. Her name was Lucy Wilson Benson or Lucy Benson Wilson, I can never remember. It was one or the other.

*Q: I think it's Lucy. Let me stop there.*

HARRISON: Lucy Wilson Benson had been president of the League of Women Voters. She knew nothing about arms control, science or technology, but she found herself in command of precisely these vast and complicated areas of policy. That required her to do a lot of testimony on Capitol Hill. My job was to put together briefing books for that testimony and then to answer the letters which inevitably came in after the testimony from the staffers on the Hill wondering what on earth she'd been talking about.

I have several times in my career been in charge of putting together briefing books for powerful people and my experience is that some of them don't read. Ms. Benson read, but it is very difficult to get up to speed as quickly as she needed to for Congressional hearings. Luckily for her, Inouye, who chaired the most important committee, liked her and he's not the most aggressive person.

*Q: You're talking about the Senator from Hawaii?*

HARRISON: Yes, Senator from Hawaii. Dan Inouye. He's still there. He was always polite to her. She had mastered various answers from her briefing material, but she didn't always connect those answers to the right question. The staffers would read the transcripts of testimony and send letters, over the Chairman's signature, asking for clarification, and I would staff responses telling them what our Under Secretary had

meant to say. And by the way, when I say I put together briefing books, I mean I xeroxed and punched the holes in the paper and threaded the paper onto the three ring binders and made sure the tabs were in order. No one knew quite what to do with me. Those GS secretaries I mentioned before were still the supposed administrative staff, although now with the specter of word processing and answering machines hovering on the horizon about to gobble them all up. They could refuse to do menial work, and did, so the hole punching was left to the professionals like me.

I got good at the xerox machine. The key is, never put the top cover down since it makes no difference. Of course, that's maybe why I went bald. So I was underemployed and took various initiatives to offer assistance to others. One such offer was to Henry Precht, with whom I had worked on Iranian arms issues when I was at the White House, but he felt that he could get along fine without my advice. The temporarily mighty had fallen. It was not a happy period and it lasted for about five or six months I think.

*Q: This is tape four, side one with Roger Harrison.*

HARRISON: It's always been my experience that leaving your fate to the personnel process is a bad idea. I think most people in the State Department have that impression. I wanted to avoid the clutches of personnel system and the danger of being mistaken for the guy with a similar name who drinks too much. So, being unhappy with my hole punching duties, I decided to push for a job nobody else wanted at the Air Force Academy. It was one of those life altering decisions that aren't immediately recognized. I had wanted to be DCM in Gabon. Don't ask me why. I think I just wanted some responsibility, and Africa was the only place I was likely to get it. And having been the acting senior Director for Africa at the White House, I might even pass as an African expert. But a genuine expert got that job. So, one day in the green glow of the Xerox machine, I said to hell with it and nominated myself for the Academy - with the proviso that they allow me to start out there in June at the beginning of their summer session rather than waiting until September or August. They agreed, I said goodbye to my trusty hole punch, bought a motorcycle and off I went.

I bought the motorcycle on Tuesday and left the next Friday, although I'd never been on a motorcycle in my life. That will give some indication of my state of mind. I showed up, bug spattered, in Colorado and became an assistant professor in the department of political science. I was the only civilian in those days. Everyone else, several hundred faculty members, were military. That meant that I got treated outside normal protocol. By rank I was captain, and from all appearances a terminal one, but as a civilian I was treated like a general. That was super. I got a parking place in the building, which is important up there because winter can be harsh and walking down from the remote parking in a blizzard is no fun. I got a window office overlooking the Front Range. The most beautiful view you will ever see. I got a locker in the gym of my own. I was treated with great courtesy and, after a while, genuine friendship, discovered a liking for cadets and found a calling. A great place to live. I was teaching young people who, in the interim, have miraculously been transformed into men and become friends of mine. There's a kind of a legacy in the sense that I have continued to run into people whom I taught who remember

me fondly from those days.

*Q: Well, in the first place, you were there from '77 to when?*

HARRISON: '79.

*Q: What was your impression of the educational system?*

HARRISON: It's overloaded. Cadets all have 20 or 22 units or so. A lot of those are hard science units, electrical engineering and so forth. Then they have military duties, plus they have mandatory physical education. They prosper or fail according to how they juggle priorities. I was teaching what is known to cadets as fuzzy studies. It's the kind of thing you might be able to guess. You can't do that with electrical engineering. It was my job to convince my young charges that political philosophy and the other things I taught were useful and interesting -- even entertaining. I had a lot of fun. I think I made an impact. At least, I had cadet auditors, which had never been known there before. For a cadet, already taking 20 units, to audit a class for which he is not getting credit was unheard of. So it was good. I enjoyed it a lot. I keep running into these cadets as I said, including one who became a political philosopher and who told me it was because of the class.

*Q: When you talk about political philosophy, what are we talking about in the context of the air force academy?*

HARRISON: It's traditional political philosophy, Socrates, Plato, Machiavelli and so forth. I came to realize that the best of the cadets were of a capability that is difficult to imagine, people who were much brighter than I was, and would, on a level playing field at the same age, have made short work of me. That doesn't mean I was intimidated about teaching them, but it does mean that I don't underestimate the quality of the officer corps of the United States.

*Q: I'm wondering whether, you wouldn't have been in a position to compare and contrast, but the air force had the reputation of being concentrated on technical things, whereas the navy was in driving ships, whereas the army and marines in a way were a little looser because they had to consider going into foreign countries and doing things rather than steaming the seas or flying over.*

HARRISON: I didn't lecture at West Point during my tenure at Colorado Springs, so can't really say. I think the problem those academies all have is that the cadets for the most part can't afford the time necessary to think. They can't do any independent study because they don't have time. The impetus is to meet the requirement and fill the square, go to the class, pass the test and move on. But even then, some excelled. Chris Miller, the guy who's up in the council on foreign relations now, wrote tests for me that I could not have written myself; extremely thoughtful, smart, nice kid, as many of them were.

*Q: Women were there, too.*

HARRISON: Women had just arrived. That was one of the great controversies. LCWB, "the last class with balls", the fabulous class of '79. They resisted the inclusion of women, of course, very strongly. I heard a lot from male cadets about the incompetence of women. And the women were harassed. In fact, all the other challenges that cadets face, the women had twice as much stress. Still, a lot of them excelled; you had to be competent and self-assured to get through that process if you were female.

*Q: This is after the Vietnam War and we had pulled out, it wasn't that long thereafter. Much of the military had really taken particularly the army, had really suffered both in the contempt with as much of the civilian society, but also a deterioration of morale and all that. Were you running across any after effects of this?*

HARRISON: I can't really say that I was. I had no basis of comparison then except that there is a degree of cynicism in the wing that hadn't been there before. I had colleagues and friends then and now who had been in early classes of the Academy and they had taken all the ideals at face value. No longer. But the drugs are mostly gone, too, now that they do urine tests. There were a lot of drugs in my day. I left there in '79.

*Q: '79?*

HARRISON: '79. Actually I thought I'd extend. I thought my Foreign Service career was probably over. I imagine most others thought so, too. Among other things I had not been promoted. I was still an FSO-5 after ten years. The system was trying to tell me something.

*Q: This would be a major in the military?*

HARRISON: Captain. I was a captain. I remember getting my ten year length of service pen, which I deposited in the waste basket. My thought was that I would probably try to find a job out in Colorado and leave the Foreign Service, which seemed not to think highly of my efforts. Then, near the end of my second year there, I got a call from Dick Bowers, who had been a classmate of mine but who had made much better progress and become Executive Director of the European Bureau. That was a very powerful position, the executive officer of the most powerful and prestigious bureau in the building, and therefore the guy who had control over EUR personnel. He didn't make the decisions, but he influenced them. He'd seen a job opening coming up in EUR's office of political military affairs. It was the job overseeing NATO political affairs; it was the best job in the Department of State for someone like me. Absolutely the best, bar none. It was rated a grade level above mine, so it would have to be a stretch. But Dick thought he could engineer it. And he did. It helped that Jim Goodby was by then a Deputy Assistant Secretary in EUR. And it helped that I knew the Director of RPM, Steve Ledogar, from my time at the NSC. Because of all three of them I got that job, and it was the best I ever had in the Foreign Service. I had an office of four people, including Bob Hopper, Marty McCain and Jim Cunningham, who's now our Ambassador to the UN. We had fascinating things to do, great access to the front office and a great deal of latitude. In

particular, we were in charge of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the CSCE process, which was at the forefront of our relations with Europe and with the Soviet Union at the time. We had responsibility for the political dialogue in NATO which was a key part of foreign policy in those days. We also had responsibility for a meeting of what is called the political directors of NATO, that is the big four, the French, British, Germans and the United States, who met regularly at the assistant secretary level. Bob Hopper was my deputy and the "sherpa" for George Vest in that consultative process. We also staffed the Secretary for NATO Ministerials. Every day was an adventure. Plus I did a lot of traveling to Europe -- twenty three times in the twenty-four months I was in that job, for the most part working on CSCE issues with the Europeans. God, it was fun.

*Q: These are the Helsinki Accords?*

HARRISON: Yes. They had originally been a Soviet suggestion, a way of legitimating the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies as European nations, and thereby, they hoped, ending containment. The notion was to get all 33 European nations together to talk about economic development, security issues and, at our insistence, human rights. Their part of the deal was agreement to start conventional force reduction talks in Europe, which we wanted. But CSCE took on a life of its own. In the so-called "Third Basket", the Helsinki process had included a commitment to respect human rights. The Soviets treated such things as a necessary cost of doing business; they would sign commitments like that and ignore them. But this time was different. Suddenly, the Soviets were being hounded by Helsinki Watch groups that had grown up spontaneously to publicize the Soviet failure to live up to the commitments made in CSCE. They were surprised, and I think a little affronted, that anyone would expect their commitment on human rights to be more than a sham. Suddenly there were these watchdog groups in the Soviet Union and everywhere in the world holding their feet to the fire on human rights. It violated the accepted rules of the game. I'm ashamed to say that we at the State Department shared some of that attitude. What we wanted from CSCE was Soviet participation in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks. CSCE was a quid. And it pacified the Europeans, who wanted their own forum. But no one at State really took it seriously, which is why I could be left in command. Had it been thought to be important, somebody important would have been in charge. As it was, when it became important, I was the only guy in the building who knew where the bodies were buried. Fortune had smiled on me. I took full advantage.

Congress strongly supported the Helsinki process, and created the CSCE Commission to oversee the State and make sure we didn't downplay the CSCE and especially human rights. Dante Fascell was Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and also Chairman of the CSCE Commission, so there was real muscle behind it. The Commission was run by Democratic pol named Spencer Oliver, who had been a Foreign Relations Committee staffer. Spencer thought he should properly dictate policy on CSCE. State, he often said, was filled with appeasers and stooges. The Commission represented the factions in Congress and the private sector who wanted to use CSCE to confront the Soviets, whereas State, of course, is always inclined against rocking the boat. Historically speaking, they were right and we were wrong, but I didn't realize it at the time. And, to be

frank, it wouldn't have mattered very much to me anyway. I remember the first time I visited the Commission's office -- and this was new, too, by the way; none of my predecessors had ever visited the Commission offices -- Spencer spent our hour together denouncing George Vest as a liar and a fool. Another time, Spencer and I were up in New York somewhere jointly addressing a Jewish organization about CSCE. I spent my time describing the policy, and Spencer spent his denouncing me and the State Department in the most insulting terms. That is, they would have been insulting had I not known Spencer fairly well by that time.

I have to admit I sort of liked Spencer, and got along very well with the members of his staff. Anyway, CSCE was my baby, and because it was a backwater when I first got there, nobody else cared much about it and, therefore, I got a great deal of latitude on issues. I have to admit as well that I pushed the limits. I never was much of a team player and had a fairly cavalier attitude about the clearance process. Although CSCE was not on the front burner in Washington, it was important to the Europeans, so I got a great deal of exposure in European capitals, too. When I would go through London, I would find an invitation to lunch waiting for me from the Foreign Office. I had become the go to guy.

CSCE became important for two reasons. One was that other elements of detente had ground to a halt. MBFR talks stagnated, SALT talks stopped, Soviet U.S. tensions were very high after the invasion of Afghanistan, and the only detente game in town was CSCE. The other reason was that it gradually dawned on the Administration that CSCE provided a convenient club to beat the Soviets over the head on human rights, not because anyone thought that their performance would improve but because a club was needed just then. We'd go to NATO experts meetings to discuss the policy, and I would be head of a delegation of fifteen people from various agencies all there to make sure I didn't say anything that hadn't been approved. There were still a lot of people sniping at CSCE. Prominent among them was Bob Blackwill who had fetched up at the NSC. He had been a classmate of mine at FSI, but had done much better than I had in the Service and was a couple of grades above me. He wanted to kill CSCE which he considered a breach in the wall of containment as well as soft-headed human rights nonsense. He was a formidable bureaucratic opponent, someone of legendary arrogance. It burned him, I think, that he had to call me to find out what was happening, and when he did he tended to be preemptory. Once he told me on the phone that "my President" wanted me to adopt some position or other. I can't imagine anyone else saying that. I hung up on him, the only time I ever did that to anyone, and also, he told me later, the only time it was done to him. So, there was a huge bureaucratic conflict over CSCE, and keeping it alive, nurturing this little blossom through this bureaucratic storm, was my job and it was great fun. We could do all kinds of interesting stuff. It brought home to me how much power you do have as a staff person, especially on an issue like this which is complicated and which no one has been paying much attention to while you have been paying all your attention to it. Once, the NSC, in an effort to curb what we were doing, called an interagency meeting. The idea was to bring State under control. But it dawned on me that if I didn't attend, they couldn't really have a meeting. No one else knew enough about it. So, I persuaded Avis Bolen, who was later assistant secretary for European Affairs and my colleague at the time, to go in my place, saying I was sick. And by God, the meeting

couldn't do anything. That's a wonderful position to be in.

There's another story about the power you can wield in a job like that. NATO has biannual meetings of Foreign Ministers which take place in Brussels and then in capitals alternatively. The NATO Ministerial in the Spring in 1981 was going to be in Rome, right at the time of my 20th high school reunion in California and I wanted to go to my 20th high school reunion. Since my office did all the staff work for the Secretary, and since I had to attend the Ministerial, I had to either change the reunion date or the Ministerial date. It turned out, the latter was easier. The date of the ministerial was in what is called a "silence" procedure at NATO, which meant that the date had been agreed subject to checking with capitals. If any country did not agree to the date, that country would "break silence", something which was very unusual, since silence was really a final, fail safe sort of stage. Anyway, I got with Bob Harper, and together we concocted a memo to Secretary Haig. The memo argued that breaking silence and moving the Ministerial from June up to the beginning of May would show the urgency with which the Reagan Administration, then newly in office, attached to the NATO relationship. It would also give us an earlier opportunity to impress on the Europeans the substance of our agenda for Europe. We were sitting there at the word processor, chortling and concocting this stuff from whole cloth. And, by golly, Haig signed off. So we broke silence and insisted on early May for the Ministerial. Of course, the Europeans wanted to be accommodating to the new Administration, so they agreed. The upshot was that we ended up in Rome freezing to death in early May. They had chosen a venue that had no heating because they thought it was going to be in June. With the Ministerial over, I could go off to my reunion. The best part of the whole thing is that it probably did help establish our interest in NATO at a time when the Europeans would doubtful about it.

*Q: So you froze the delegates?*

HARRISON: Some were actually wearing overcoats at the conference table. Haig liked muscular verbs. If you populated your memo with all kinds of imperatives, he was likely to approve.

*Q: To strangulate, to crush, to press, to thrust.*

HARRISON: Crush, press, thrust, all that kind of thing, he'd like it much better and I'd already figured that out. I guess it was from one point of view it was frivolous, but you got to have a sense of humor, and God it was fun. That's what people don't recognize about government work; so much of it is play.

*Q: You know, the whole Helsinki Accords, what are they three baskets and all sorts of eggs in each basket, what specifically were the issues you were dealing with?*

HARRISON: It was centered on preparation for the Madrid Conference, the second follow-up conference to the original Helsinki accords. These follow up meetings had been decreed in the original agreement to review implementation. The issue for the U.S. government as always in CSCE was how confrontational to be with the Soviets. They, of

course, had not implemented any of their obligations on human rights. And they were taking repressive action against the Helsinki Watch groups that had formed spontaneously in the Soviet Union to monitor their compliance. All this resolved into the issue of whether we should name names, that is, whether we should mention specific individuals in the Soviet Union who were being persecuted, or content ourselves with criticizing the Soviet record in more general terms. The State Department had been opposed to naming names for fear of destabilizing the relationship with the Soviets, poking them in the eye. Some of the smaller Europeans, like the Dutch, didn't mind naming names, but the major European allies were very much of the State Department's view on this. They remembered that at the first Helsinki follow up meeting, in Belgrade four years earlier, the U.S. had named names and the Soviets had retaliated by bogging down any progress in other areas. The Soviets were threatening to do that again in Madrid, and if they did it would weaken the only element of detente that was still operative. But the NGO world, including Helsinki Watch groups that had grown up in the United States in sympathy with those in the Soviet Union, was in favor of a much harder line. Naming names was central to them – by far their highest priority. They were cheered on the CSCE Commission, and cheered on the Commission in turn. And both were more than willing to name names as well of those in the bureaucracy they thought were opposing them, particularly George Vest, the EUR Assistant Secretary, who was not, to tell the truth, paying much attention to the issue. The formation of these Helsinki watchdog groups had been spontaneous thing, but they became a more and more effective and powerful tool to expose Soviet repression and hypocrisy. State was slow to catch on. So the argument about naming names raged on through the run-up to Madrid.

*Q: The major thing that the Soviets wanted was to firm up the lines of the European borders with them inside and also the German border and all that. This is what they wanted, to be on the side, the human rights, oh sure, freedom to travel, what the hell.*

HARRISON: What they didn't anticipate was the public relations use what would be made of them by dissident groups in the Soviet Union and then by their supporters overseas. So, gradually, the American government, which had seen CSCE as generally a negative thing meant by the Soviets to legitimate their regime and empire, came to see CSCE's potential to do the opposite, to de-legitimate Soviet rule. For their part, the Soviets had signed a lot of agreements promising to respect human rights and then ignored their obligations. They saw no reason CSCE should be any different, but found they were being held to their obligations. It was wonderful to watch. Suddenly the Soviets were open to public scrutiny.

*Q: Also in context by this time if I'm correct, the invasion of Afghanistan in December of '79 had taken place. This is after you were on the desk, but that meant that we weren't being overly, we were beginning to look at the Soviet Union in not so benevolent terms.*

HARRISON: It's a fascinating story. Marshall Schulman was then at the State Department as a kind of Soviet factotum. He was outside the normal bureaucratic stream, but influential in forming policy toward the Soviets. Schulman's view had been that the Soviets were a xenophobic and essentially defensive power. It was a relatively benign

view of the Soviets; they were stupid and repressive, but not expansionary. Then came the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. That killed the Schulman thesis. One could no longer argue within the bureaucracy that the Soviets were not an expansionary power because they had just used their military force to dominate a neighboring country. The truth, of course, is that the Soviets had blundered into Afghanistan out of ignorance and stupidity. Schulman was probably right about them, as we now know from Soviet archives. But the truth didn't matter. It seldom does. What mattered were the assumptions on which policy now had to be based. It affected our defense spending, and it put the final dagger through the heart of detente. Our policy became much more confrontational than it had been. All this would have killed CSCE as originally envisioned, that is, as an element (although to us, an unwelcome one) of detente. But by the time of Afghanistan, the idea of CSCE as *part* of a confrontational approach had begun to take hold, that is, CSCE not as a form of cooperation but as a way to hold the Soviets' accountable on human rights, and to attack their legitimacy. That saved CSCE and helped to undermine the old Soviet regime. And the key figure in that transition was Max Kampelman. He was appointed to be deputy ambassador to the Madrid conference, and Madrid was the focal point for a confrontational approach.

*Q: This was in 1980?*

HARRISON: Yes, the 1980 Madrid conference. Max was a conservative Democrat, a Henry Jackson hardline democrat, and a strong human rights advocate. He was the perfect man for the job. But he wasn't the Administration's first choice. Griffin Bell, the ex-Carter Attorney General, had been the first appointee as ambassador with Max as his deputy. Max likes to forget that Bell and he weren't co-chairmen, but that was, in fact, the case. We tried to get William Scranton to take the job, the ex-governor of Pennsylvania, but he turned it down. I don't know how Griffin Bell's name surfaced, but he was appointed. NATO was going to have its first meeting of delegation heads in the run up to Madrid, and Bell's appointment came in time for him to head the delegation, with my office and me as staff. We had put together a huge set of briefing books for Bell to prepare him for this meeting. We sent the books to Bell in Atlanta, and then, a couple of weeks later, I went down to brief him further and see if he had any questions. It turned out that the date for that meeting with Bell was Election Day, 1980. Anyway, I soon discovered that Bell hadn't so much as opened the boxes the briefing books came in. There the unopened boxes were, stacked in the corner of his office. He had absolutely no interest in talking about CSCE, of which he obviously knew nothing. He wanted to talk about how and why his friend Jimmy Carter was going to lose the election to Reagan. I tried to brief him on CSCE, but he paid no attention and kept changing the subject. Reagan did win, of course, which made Bell a lame duck, but he went to the delegation head meeting at NATO anyway. We had talking points for him, and he read them faithfully. The problem was that he read everything on the page, not the just the talking points but the things that he was supposed to avoid saying. He just put his head down and started reading and read until he got to the end of the page. He read the stuff that said "don't say this". If it was on the page, he read it –headings included. We were at this big U-shaped table, with heads of delegations in front and all us staffers sitting behind. All the other staffers were looking at me, some of them laughing up their sleeves. But Bell

was soon gone as delegation head and Max Kampelman took the job.

The advent of the new Administration meant fighting the CSCE battle all over again. It was a more conservative and hardline Administration, of course, and there were many people in it who wanted to kill the process, in part because of their view of the Soviets and in part because of the French, who were key European supporters of CSCE. Anything supported by the French was anathema to this group. CSCE was in peril again. But it turned out that Al Haig, who had become Secretary of State, wanted to repair relations with the French, so what was anathema to the rest of the bureaucracy was in fact a positive aspect of the policy for Haig. Haig made the decision that we would continue on the course with CSCE, with the new, harder line approach that had begun to emerge on human rights. Max, for whom I have great respect was, as I say, the key figure. But I was the one who decided the issue of naming names. I did it at a NATO experts' meeting, which had become the forum for coordinating NATO policy in the lead up to Madrid. On my own recognizance, I announced we would name names. By then, I knew it was inevitable, so why not? I didn't announce a policy change as such; I was brash, but not that brash. But I intervened in the discussion, after the French delegate had argued against naming names, and made all the opposite arguments, in particular the argument that generalizing our charges against Soviet human rights practices, instead of giving them concrete form by highlighting how particular individuals had been abused, would weaken our case and let the Soviets avoid their CSCE obligations yet again. I could always defend this as simply part of the discussion, an attempt on my part to make sure all aspects of the issue had been examined. But the other delegations there read it as a change of U.S. policy. And since no one ever corrected me, then or later - it would have been politically impossible at this point -- the deed was done. And it did help de-legitimate the Soviet Union, which deserved to be de-legitimated, God knows.

That's also where Max Kampelman came in, because of his conviction that you could take an aggressive approach to the Soviets at Madrid as long as we kept the allies on board. This came to a head right at the beginning when Madrid convened. The Soviet delegation head asked Max for a private meeting, and Max was inclined to do it. I argued as strongly as I could that Max should consult with allies beforehand. The Soviet was trying to give the impression that there was a U.S./Soviet condominium at Madrid, that the great powers would decide things behind the backs of their allies. That's what the meeting was for, I was convinced. So before meeting with the Soviet, Max should get an agreed agenda from our allies, and then he should report on the meeting in detail afterward. That's what I told him, and that’s what he did, although whether it was because of my advice or not I don’t know. It turned out to be the absolute foundation of our success in Madrid, and the beginning of a very fruitful collaboration with allies.

Let me give credit here as well to Ronald Reagan, someone who doesn't need my approval. I didn’t always understand his role at the time. For example, when Reagan made his evil empire speech, I had the standard State Department reaction that it was unnecessary provocative, political posturing. But I came to see over time that Reagan’s willingness to be frank about the Soviets as in the evil empire speech was also a great influence in delegitimizing the regime, and that the erosion of its legitimacy, in the eyes

not only of the West but of its own citizens, was a key factor in wiping away that awful stain from Europe and from those nationalities the Soviets had imprisoned. That drove home to me that you can fall into the State Department habit of speaking or thinking, the temporizing over-cautious thinking that other bureaucracies in town always accuse us of. In the case of CSCE, we were wrong initially.

*Q: It's caution trying not to be too provocative.*

HARRISON: Moderation, negotiation. It is a necessary flywheel in the jungle of Washington politics and what everyone expects the State Department to do, but it's not always right. Some of those in the bureaucracy who had contempt for us and our approach turned out to be smarter about these things than we were. Some of them were personally odious people, and that colored my view. Still, it taught me to be a little less confident in my own opinion and more admiring of Reagan although I'm conflicted to this day about him. We can talk about that next time. We can talk about SDI and all that.

*Q: One question before we finish this session. As you got there, what was the role of France because France was not in the military side of NATO, but in the political side of NATO which is something often forgotten. During this time you were there, what was the rule of France?*

HARRISON: France cast itself as the main bulwark against U.S. dominance of Europe. It saw itself as the source of maintaining a European identity and existence, recognizing the importance of the United States but nevertheless asserting very strongly first an independent French identity and then, under assumed French leadership, a European identity. That's why the French were so strongly in favor of CSCE, which they saw as essentially a European organization in which the French should by right have the key leadership role, and in which both the U.S. and Soviet Union participated as guests of the Europeans. One of the things that we saw happening then and of course is vastly increased now was the tendency of the Europeans to want to agree on a policy among themselves before the issue was raised in NATO. In the process leading up to the Madrid conference, for example, there would always be a European caucus before NATO met. Europe would decide and then we and the Canadians and the Icelanders would be invited to discuss the issue with a united Europe. Strength in numbers was the idea. Their problem, of course, was the British, who wanted to maintain a special relationship with us The British also realized they could enhance their own influence by mediation between the U.S. and a French-dominated Europe. The Germans meanwhile were playing a subordinate role. They weren't as assertive in foreign policy in those days as they are now, although more assertive than they had been in the 1960's. But their security depended on a strong American role in Europe. So Europe was far from united on these issues. There was tension within their caucus as well as between them as a group and the United States.

Part of this tension revolved around the issue of conference building measures, which the conservatives in our government were very concerned about. We can go on with this the next time. I'm going to have to go, but I think that's maybe where we should leave it with

some prospect of talking about how the defense department saw confidence building measures, how the State Department did and how the Europeans did and how that led to the Conference Building Measures regime that we ended up with.

*Q: Very good. Is that part of the Madrid conference?*

HARRISON: Yes We can talk about the Madrid conference and some of the bureaucratic dynamics, which I find always more interesting than policy I have to admit. .

*Q: Today is the 14th of March, 2002. Roger you heard where we were last time so you want to continue?*

HARRISON: The issue on CBMs, confidence building measures, was a main security focus for Madrid. It was in part I think a product of desperation because other arms control processes were going very poorly at that point. MBFR, the mutual balance force reduction talks, had been stalled for a long time by our demand for asymmetrical reductions in conventional forces. We were arguing for this on the grounds that Soviet troops were not only more numerous, but closer to the battle field and therefore they would have to reduce more than we. That's why we always called these talks mutual and "balanced" force reductions which, of course, the Soviets never accepted, either as a principal or as a name for the negotiations. The SALT, strategic arms limitation, talks were also going nowhere, partly because of Soviet objections to American pressure in the Carter administration for human rights improvements and Carter's reception of certain Soviet dissident figures in the White House. That had put the wind up in Moscow and they retaliated by slowing down strategic arms discussion, but there were other issues there, too. One was the advent of MIRV's, multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles, which vastly multiplied the potency of each side's missile forces. All this meant no progress on real arms control But the Europeans were eager to show some movement on some kind of arms control, and eager as always to stabilize the border between east and west Europe. CBMs, confidence building measures, were one of the responses.

CBM's have become quite trendy in recent years, but this was the first time they were a negotiating point between the great powers. The battle lines in Washington were drawn around the question of the military significance of these measures. The fear of those opposed to CBM's was that they would be confused with real arms control, and that there would be a relaxation of vigilance in the West even though nothing fundamentally had changed. The hard liners in Washington, with some justification, thought the Europeans would seize on any excuse to spend less of arms, and put more of the burden on us.

To give you an example, one of the CBMs being talked about was notification of military exercises. The notion was that you would have to give a notification a year in advance of all the major exercises that you had planned, thereby creating some predictability in the exercise that you staged. If you staged some exercise outside that context, for example, if you mass troops on the border of one of your neighboring states as political pressure this would be a violation and, therefore, bring a rebuke or some other political pressure on you to withdraw. There would be a kind of standard predictability in the process, except,

of course, when there wasn't.

The view that the Joint Chiefs took was that CBMs were only valuable if they enhanced warning. As the principal State Department action officer for getting some agreed CBMs approved, I set out to discover what enhanced warning meant. Defense was very reluctant to talk about it. Finally, somebody over at Defense told me the secret. Enhanced warning really reflected a general fear at the Pentagon that political leadership in times of crisis will tend to temporize, would avoid taking the military steps necessary. And this would be damaging because we needed to react quickly in order to reinforce in Europe if the Soviets meant to attack. The Generals didn't want the politicians procrastinating while the situation went to hell. So, the thinking was, if you could devise CBM's which the Soviets would have to violate in order to mount any military challenge in Europe, in other words, if you could make any meaningful preparations for that sort of thing a treaty violation, U.S. political leadership would be forced to respond. After all, it's one thing to vacillate in response to signs of Soviet preparation which might be explained away, and another thing if those same acts are a violation of a solemn treaty. Or so, at least, the Chiefs thought. And Defense wanted to use CBM's to reduce that latitude, to force the political leadership in the United States to react forcefully to potentially threatening military steps by the other side. Enhanced warning was politically more potent warning, warning which gave political leadership less political flexibility. Once I understood that, it was easier to design CBMs to win Pentagon agreement. By the way, I knew that nothing would really constrain Presidents, who tend to want flexibility in crisis regardless of what red lines or treaties exist.

A sidelight from the CBM's discussion. I needed a clearance from Blackwill, whom I've mentioned before. He was at the NSC then. He was complaining to me on the phone one day that confidence building measures were a trap because they didn't increase U.S. security. So, on the phone, off the top of my head and just to get his clearance, I suggested we change the name to confidence "and security" building measures, or CSBMs. That's how CSBM's became to the official name. You couldn't make this stuff up.

*Q: During these calculations, was anybody looking at what, in those days, we called satellite states, East Germany, Poland, looking to see if you mobilize troops.*

HARRISON: One of the State Department's motives in pushing these CBMs was to make it more difficult for the Soviets to coerce their allies. At the same time, the Pentagon had a scenario where the Soviets would ostensibly be massing to repress the Poles or the Hungarians or the Czechs and would use that as a cover for invasion of Germany. There was some coincidence of view between State and Defense, since State did see the value in keeping the Soviets away from the Czech border when the Czechs were being rambunctious. My job, as I saw it, was to find areas of common ground like that one between the various agencies. There was a coincidence of interest in CBMs if you could formulate them correctly. The NSC view, again it was Blackwill, was that CBMs were only useful if they were militarily significant. Now there was another phrase that had a slippery meaning. What was military significance? How could you get agreement on

that? You couldn't. But the solution I engineered avoided the problem.

It was elegant, though I say it myself. At that point, the Soviets had not proposed any particular CBMs, but they had announced criteria that any CBMs agreeable to them would have to meet. All I had to do was devise criteria that were the opposite of theirs. That avoided the bureaucratic problem of agreeing on substance. We could never have done that. But we could agree on criteria, especially if they were the opposite of Soviet criteria. Their CBM's were largely symbolic, so we would insist CBM's be militarily significant. Theirs were voluntary, so we would insist that CBM's be mandatory. Theirs would not be verifiable, so we would insist on verifiability as a criterion. And they wanted CBMs to apply only to the European areas of the Soviet Union, so we would insist they apply from "the Atlantic the Urals", thereby making the point that the USSR had hinterlands which were not in Europe, but which had to be taken into account in any European security arrangements. It satisfied the hard liners in our government, since it was the exact opposite of what the Soviets were proposing. And it avoided the problem of negotiating the substance of CBMs within the U.S. bureaucracy, which would have bogged us down forever. And I knew that substance would emerge from the negotiating process itself, since – at some point – we would have to have something substantive to propose, if only to steal a march on the other side. The important thing about the four criteria was that they implied U.S. agreement to the idea of confidence building, which is what State wanted. The criteria looked tough, but in fact they left the door open, and that made virtually certain that a regime of CBM's would finally be agreed. So we met the hardliners within our government, outmaneuvered them and, in the end, ate their lunch. We came, we saw, we conquered. Damn, it was fun!

*Q: What were the Soviets thinking?*

HARRISON: What the Soviets wanted was to be accepted as a European power with an equal voice in European councils. They wanted acknowledgement that both they and their European allies were legitimate governments and properly part of Europe. CSCE therefore meant U.S. acceptance of the status quo in Europe, the end of roll back. And they wanted to be non-European when that was convenient. The interesting thing about it, as I say, is how it was turned around to be used against the Soviets in ways they had not anticipated, and the role that NGO's and Helsinki Watch groups played. Now, in retrospect, I can see that this was an early example of the effects of globalization. By the mid-1970s, it was becoming very difficult for the Soviet regime to control information. Their borders had become transparent in ways they had not been before. So they could be monitored. Helsinki established the criteria, and the Helsinki Watch groups seized on them. It knocked the props out from under that awful regime.

*Q: Back to the confidence building measures, are the American military only concerned about the political mindset of the United States with these things or do they have military problems with these confidence builders?*

HARRISON: The military leaders are, above all, pragmatists. The Office of the Secretary of Defense is filled with ex academics and ideologues who can afford to fantasize about

what's possible and what's not. The Chiefs of Staff can't afford fantasy. They have to implement in the real world. So, when OSD was insisting on very strict verification measures in arms control, for example, which would have required that U.S. observers be at Soviet bases and production facilities -- and insisting on this as a way of scuttling any progress on arms control -- the Chiefs did not support them. In such cases, reciprocity rears its ugly head. The Chiefs didn't want Soviet observers at their bases. So they supported a more moderate approach. That's the thing about people who have to actually do things, rather than simply gassing in Washington meetings about what should be done. The Chiefs saw some regime of CBM's as inevitable, and concentrated on making them marginally useful and ensuring that they didn't impinge too much on our operations.

Anyway, the Madrid meeting was my last hurrah. After that, I went to London.

*Q: You were in London from when to when?*

HARRISON: From '81 to '85.

*Q: What were you doing in London?*

HARRISON: I was, after a short interval, the deputy political counselor in London, but my portfolio was all the defense stuff, arms control, military cooperation and so forth.

*Q*: *What was the political section like*?

HARRISON: It was filled with future ambassadors. The geographic bureaus all wanted a liaison person in London, and they tended to send their rising stars. So we had Gib Lanpher and later Bob Frazier doing Africa, and Brunson McKinley for Latin America. Jim Hooper was there doing the Middle East. Robin Raphael later took his place. All became Ambassadors, some, like Robin, several times. The section was headed at first by Tom Simons, of whose sterling qualities I've already spoken. He was replaced after a short interval by Dick McCormack. Rick Melton was the deputy for a few months after I arrived, and when he left I took his place. Dick McCormack took the view that quality people didn't need a lot of supervision, which suited me and the rest of them very well. We had to coax Dick to have a staff meeting once a month.

*Who were your ambassadors?*

The first was a man named John Lewis, a republican donor and political appointee. He was a very nice, but also a very shy and modest man. He admitted when he arrived that he didn't know much about foreign policy. The problem was he kept saying that as long as he was there. He'd always been a rich man, and he'd never – as far as I could tell - developed the jungle survival skills that government service requires. In any case, he was naive about how brutal the bureaucracy and the press can be, and that did him in. I'll talk more about how that happened.

But first I should mention our Minister, the redoubtable Edward J. Streator. Ed was a

very cosmopolitan man with great style, a throw back in many ways to a former, Ivy League-dominated men's club sort of Foreign Service. He dressed beautifully, was a member of all the best clubs in St. James, entertained at a very high level with the best minds in Britain around his table and was extremely well connected politically. He had terrible taste in art – he had a thing for gamboling nymphs - but it was the best bad art money could buy. He'd been there for six years when I arrived, and as far as we in the political section were concerned, he ran the place. He could be irascible, God knows, not to mention arbitrary, dismissive and demanding. But what a great break for me, because Ed liked to shake things up. He also knew good work when he saw it, which is surprisingly rare in any business. And he liked new ideas. If you had one, and it was good, he'd back you to the hilt against Washington or the devil himself. A nod of approval from Ed was praise indeed.

I should mention Charlie Price, who took John Lewis' place. That "Charlie" is indicative. He was a rich candy manufacturer from Kansas City, the inventor of "candy by the foot" (the boxes were long and one chocolate wide) and also a nice man, but anything but shy. He had a stupendous Washington Wall, Charlie Price with every famous person you ever heard of. Ray Seitz, who took Streator's place my last year, had his own Harvard year book picture blown up to portrait size, framed it and hung it as a joke in the middle of the Price's Washington Wall with some fatuous inscription. Price laughed and left it there. You had to like a guy like that. But he was no more a professional ambassador than John Lewis had been.

*Q: What were the issues you dealt with?*

The first, just as I became deputy, was the Falklands. Carrington was British foreign minister when the Argentineans invaded the Falklands. He resigned in disgrace, saying on the way out that it was always little things that get you. Certainly the invasion was unexpected. But Thatcher was Prime Minister and she was anything but "wobbly". So there was never any doubt that the British would respond, if they could. Nor was there any doubt that the United States, Reagan's United States, would support with intelligence and various other things, which we did. Since I was the political-military guy, this was largely my issue at the staff level, with Dick McCormack as counselor taking the lead and Peter Sommer as the OSD rep contributing his contacts. Still, special relationship notwithstanding, the British were far from candid about what they were going to do, and in the end lied to us about their willingness to negotiate.

Q: *They had to scrape together a navy, which had already, to go to the Falklands right?*

They did. It was the very much the last hurrah. Most the principal ships in that armada were already headed for the scrapyard. It will never happen again, but this one last time it was still possible. And – thanks in large part to Thatcher, who was in her element as the warrior leader – their blood was up. But there had to be some feint at negotiation, and our Secretary of State, Haig, played right into Thatcher's hands. He began a shuttle between Buenos Aires and London. I'm convinced that he was trying to replicate Kissinger's Middle East shuttle diplomacy. But Cairo is only an hour from Tel Aviv by air, and BA is

20 hours from London. The White House Staff, who generally despised Haig, made sure that he got the slow 707 without windows that would have to refuel a couple of time on the trip. I was at Number 10, looking out the window just above the famous door, on one of these trips. Haig, who had spent 40 of the last 48 hours in the air, got out the car looking like death, with his staff struggling out behind him, only to be greeted by Thatcher, fresh as a daisy, beautifully made up, hair coiffed. It let her look like she was negotiating, and Haig may even have thought she was. He wasn't the brightest bulb ever to adorn the national security tree. But the MOD and FCO people were making clear to me and others that the last thing she would do is march her army up the hill and march it down again. They took this pretense of negotiation as far as telling my colleague, Peter Sommer, than when the armada arrived off the Falklands it would circle around giving another chance for negotiation. He wanted to report that, but I fought against it. As soon as they got there, I argued, they would attack. It would be a practical necessity, since an army three weeks at sea is going to degrade rapidly. And the last thing they wanted was a settlement. They wanted to exact revenge. I lost that battle, but I was right. They had lied to us about the date. As soon as they arrived, they attacked.

*What other memories of the Falklands?*

Carl Bernstein came to town, reporting for one of the networks. Someone told him that I was the guy who knew about the Falklands, and since British officials wouldn't tell him anything, he took to buying me beers and calling me at home. He'd come up with something, call me and do that thing Dustin Hoffman did in the movie about Watergate. He'd say, if this information is correct, don't say anything for 10 seconds. And I'd tell him it wasn't going to work. I'd seen the movie. Once he called me at home when we were giving a dinner party and my daughter answered. She told him we had guests, and – like a good reporter would – he asked her who they were. In fact, I didn't know most of what he was asking me about, but he didn't believe that, so we had an intense and brief acquaintance.

I guess I was also impressed with how some people resemble the stereotypes we have of them. Bernstein was exactly what I'd imagine him to be. Richard Hastie-Smith, an undersecretary at the MOD, who wore pinstripe suits and a watch fob and stuffed his hanky up his sleeve as all good graduates of some Cambridge College do, looked like he'd come from central casting. And, come to think of it, I was the bumptious and embarrassingly open American yokel who had to be jollied along. So, we all lived up to our roles.

*It was a near run thing for the British, wasn't it?*

It was close. The Exocet anti-ship missiles had just arrived and the Argentine pilots hadn't been able to practice with them. Plus the armorers got the fusing wrong. Otherwise, the armada would have been toast. As it was, the British lost a number of ships. But there were several cases in which exocets passed through ships without exploding. When they did explode, it was all over, because it turned out the aluminum in superstructures burned. We found out the same thing later with one of our cruisers hit by

an Iranian missile in the Gulf.

One incident from that time. Rick Burt came out to consult. He was Assistant Secretary for EUR then, and he told the FCO leadership how he'd been well informed about events from CNN. I piped up from the back row when he said this and added in a stage whisper: "Not to mention the insightful reporting from the Embassy." It got a big laugh, but we were laughing past the graveyard. CNN had showed up in everyone's office by then, and that's where policy makers got their info. Nobody was reading our stuff. We'd seen the future. I would argue that no single diplomat, or any group of them, has had the influence Wolf Blitzer has had on Washington perceptions in decade since.

I was in Parliament when Thatcher gave her victory speech. Churchill's history of the Second World War has that line: "In victory, magnanimity". Thatcher must not have read it. She had been staunch, done the right thing, and magnanimity be damned. Went over well.

*Other issues you dealt with*?

The big one for almost all my four years was the deployment of intermediate range ballistic missiles in Britain.

*The Women of Greenham Common?*

HARRISON: Yes, indeed. They and the Committee for Nuclear Disarmament and Monsignor Bruce Kent. The Greenham Common protest began with a march from London out to the base, which was one of our INF deployment sites. This was well before the missiles arrived, and meant to prevent deployment. But it rained, and the men, being men, went home. The women stayed on rain or shine, and when the men came back – the weather had improved – the women were radicalized and refused to let them in. They built an encampment and harassed the base as best they could. They would lie down in front of the gates, and pour super glue into locks in the fence, and generally try to keep their cause visible.

CND, the Committee on Nuclear Disarmament had been built in the 1950's as a protest against deployment then, and was revived by our prospective INF deployments and by fear of Reagan, who was seen in Britain – pretty much across the political spectrum – as an unreliable and not especially bright actor with a love of nuclear weapons. Far from the truth, of course, but it was a politically potent image.

Her Majesty's government was making common cause with us in getting these cruise missiles deployed so what we did - actually what I did - was to form a committee which included them and us at the Embassy and then the commands in Europe that had charge of this, EUCOM, for example, to get everybody together. We did that once a month to plot strategy, which in the end was successful.

Turned out, the peace forces had a mole inside the defense ministry, right in Defense

Minister Haseltine's office, a young woman who leaked to the papers the day that the C-140s were going to show up with the first of these missiles. It was a Saturday when this leaked and the British government being civilized doesn't work on Saturday. They all go to their country homes, those who have them. We being puritans and having left behind the sinful slothfulness of Europe, work on Saturday much of the time. When the date leaked, I was at the Embassy. The protestors were organizing to shut down the base at Greenham entirely to prevent the airplanes from landing; that would probably have led to violence. So, I called the Under Secretary of Defense, Morey Stewart, at his country place and we conspired to move up the date of the arrival by one day. The demonstrations were planned for Monday. We got the missiles there on Sunday. We kind of stole the march on them. Wrong footed is the British term.

That was the main thing I was engaged in, but I was also coordinating with HMG on all aspects of defense and arms control policy which was great fun because my counterparts in the bureaucracy at the FCO were so professional and competent. They were tremendous people. Some of them were patronizing in a way which renders them less effective than they otherwise might be; they cling to a sense of superiority with tenacity which would amaze. Neither of the people I dealt with principally was in that category. I was very fortunate in my counterparts and my interlocutors. They were much higher ranking than I was, but you know, I was the U.S. guy and it was very good.

This was the period of the Star Wars speech by President Reagan March of '82 I think it was. He gave the Star Wars speech, taking our bureaucracy and theirs by surprise, and it changed 35 years of nuclear strategy overnight. It showed the power of a popular president who knows what he knows. A lobby group called High Frontier had produced this cartoon of laser platforms in space destroying nuclear warheads. It looked like a good idea. Complete fantasy at the time, and a complete fantasy now as far as that goes. It had great political appeal and Reagan was a great politician, maybe the best certainly since FDR, a man who knew what would appeal. If it appealed to him, it would appeal to the electorate, and it did. But it didn't appeal to the people who had laboring in the vineyards for years to build or limit weapons in keeping with existing nuclear strategy, and now found their assumptions – particularly the assumption that defensive measures were really offensive in effect, since they would prevent retaliation and therefore encourage preemption - overthrown. Defense, in short, would invalidate "mutual assured destruction". MAD was all bloodthirsty, awful, academic nonsense of course, but Reagan was the first President to question it. MAD just didn't make sense to him.

*Q: How did your British colleagues react? How were they seeing this?*

HARRISON: Very negatively. They thought it was terrible because, among other things, it was going to end the strategic arms reduction negotiations. MAD was the thing. Our force posture was based on it, the negotiations were based on it, everything was based on it. Although the Soviets never accepted MAD as such, their force posture was based on it, too. As for the British, they were just then trying to get their submarine-based nuclear force modernized – there was great opposition in Parliament – and Reagan was saying, in effect, that we would make nuclear missiles obsolete. There was also the implication in

Reagan's approach, at least from Europe's prospective, that we planned to shelter behind our nuclear defenses and avoid the irritation of dealing with pesky foreigners, including them.

I dutifully reported all this negative reaction – it was the FCO reaction, by the way, not so much the public reaction. Rick Burt, who was then Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, asked for as much negative reaction as we could report. He was a traditional MAD kind of guy, and shared some of the European view. Jim Dobbins told me that Reagan would probably forget the whole thing in a couple of weeks. Needless to say, he didn't. The problem for me was that I went on reporting the negative feedback after the political winds in Washington shifted and Burt decided he better get with the program. I found out about my gaffe from Dobbins, who read me the riot act. Truth is, they'd forgotten to turn off the tap. Reagan persisted. SDI might contradict three decades of deterrence theory, but he either didn't know or didn't care, which was precisely the right attitude to take, although I didn't think so at the time.

*Q: Tell me how did you feel about this, were you seen and your colleagues as having to look at this hard; in more practical terms than the academics, you know, the blackboard and they're sitting back in New Haven?*

HARRISON: Well, no, I mean I was in the mindset. I'd been raised in that mindset. In retrospect, it was nonsense, but our reality was shaped by it.

*Q: But, were you seeing the stuff we were doing as nonsense or had you gotten so absorbed in the minutia that you're beginning to lose the forest?*

HARRISON: I think there was a bit of not seeing the forest for the trees, yes, but there was also an argument to be made, and which can still be made, that no matter how nonsensical, it was stable.

*Q: If the other side is looking at it the same way, then it has a dynamic of its own.*

HARRISON: But they always refused to, that was the kicker. They said it was an American device to justify our nuclear armaments program. Once nuclear war started, the Soviets claimed, it could not be controlled. And sure enough, when we ran our games, that's the way it always came out. The battle plan never lasts beyond the first shot. So the Soviets were right, but their position was not dictated by the demands of logic, but by the fact that they had, or at least thought they had, a conventional superiority. If the nuclear weapons were taken out of the equation because they could not be used without ultimate destruction for both sides, we were left with the conventional imbalance. That meant we had to spend more money, put more troops and persuade our recalcitrant allies in Europe to actually do something robust, which we knew was beyond them. Nuclear weapons were *our* weapons of choice.

*Q: Were you seen at this time, now it's extremely evident that the Europeans were falling way behind in technical innovation, well investment in military things?*

HARRISON: Oh yes, absolutely. We spent a lot of time talking about it. Carter had set a 3% goal for growth in the defense budgets of all NATO members. Our allies signed up, took the pledge, and then ignored it for the most part. They didn't have any political constituency to increase defense spending, so that was the end of it, although it did give us something to talk about, endlessly, at NATO.

In Britain the situation was better. They made the 3% or 4% in real terms in Thatcher's first four or five years. On the continent it just wasn't going to happen and when the Soviet Union faded from view, we were out of luck. They spent their money on other things.

*Q: While you were doing this, although you were with the British, were you seen, how were the French on this? I mean, the French usually are the odd man out.*

HARRISON: We hadn't made the mistake of trying to deploy any of these missiles in France, so they didn't really have a voice in debate. They had their own nuclear deterrent and had always refused to rely on American systems. Their nuclear forces were small. But the theory was that all you needed was the ability to bloody the Soviet nose. Since France was not that big a prize or that threatening an enemy, there was a limit to how much damage the Soviets would be willing to sustain to obliterate France. Or, at least, so the French thought. All you had to do was ensure that you could do more than a France worth of damage, so to speak, and they'd leave you alone. Be able to 'rip off an arm' as the French said. So they were not actors in this play. The Italians were, because we wanted to deploy there. Also the Dutch, for the same reason. We wanted multiple basing countries for political reasons. We knew if we tried to put all the missiles in the most likely place, Germany, we'd be defeated politically. The Germans needed other European countries as cover. But multiple deployment sites meant we had to fight in multiple parliaments, and in everyone of them it was a political battle. We knew that if one Parliament defeated basing, the others would follow, with the exception perhaps of the British. To shore up our political position, we needed to be active diplomatically on the arms control front, even as we worked to deploy. Thus was born 'two-track', simultaneous preparation for deployment and negotiation with the Soviets to limit the numbers. This was the Reagan Administration, of course, and dominated by people who were very anti-arms control. But they found that arms control was the price of deployment, so they held their collective nose and agreed. Their goal throughout these years was to look credible without doing anything, least of all actually reaching a limitation agreement with the Soviets. At State, we wanted a real negotiation. We thought the phantom process favored by Defense would be too transparently bogus, and would lose us European support. We misread Reagan in all this, but not as badly as Defense did. Reagan didn't like nuclear weapons. He wanted to see them gone. He rejected the deterrence theology, which was very refreshing and in a way wonderful. It had always been nonsense, and even worse, academically inspired nonsense. But we were all trapped in it. Not Reagan. At Reykjavik with Gorbachev, Reagan agreed to give up all land based ICBMs if the Soviets would do the same, and then had to be dragged into a bathroom during a break by Bob Linhard and Richard Perle and persuaded that he couldn't do that,

after which everyone spun their hearts out in claiming that Reagan hadn't done it after all. But everyone in the Washington community knew the truth, and it had a marvelous impact. It was the beginning of the end for the hardliners at Defense, who soon began to depart. Perle followed by Gaffney followed by Weinberger. Their evil influence is greater now than before, of course, but at least for a while we were rid of them. And that was Reagan's doing.

Before that happened, however, Perle thought of a way he could use the President's apostasy on nukes to achieve his own ends of frustrating any possible movement on intermediate missile limitations. That was the zero option. Why not propose that both sides simply eliminate all intermediate range missiles? Perle had every reason to believe the Soviets would scoff at this idea. They had already deployed1800 odd warheads on SS-20 missiles. They'd spent a lot of money doing it. There was no assurance that we could deploy a single Pershing or cruise missile in response. We didn't yet have political agreement in Europe, and might not get it. So we were giving up something we didn't have in return for something the Soviets had already deployed. It made no sense that the Soviets would agree. In the meantime, however, zero would prove our bone fides to the Europeans. It was marvelous propaganda, and effectively undercut the peace movement by adopting precisely the option they had been pushing, then putting the onus on the Soviets for failure to achieve it. Genius.

At least Richard Perle thought so. Not that he wanted zero. It made no sense in terms of deterrence theory, and Perle never trusted the Soviets to comply in any case. But he could have his cake, which was deployment, and eat it too. The irony of course is that Reagan did not see the zero option as a tactic, but as a genuine negotiating goal. He got Gorbachev to agree. All those missiles I had worked so hard to see deployed in the early 1980's, and which we had started to deploy, were all removed and destroyed by the early 1990's. A new era was dawning, and the INF Treaty was the harbinger.

*Q: Okay, well is there anything else developing during the London time?*

HARRISON: This was the period of the coal strike, and Thatcher's success in breaking the unions.

*Q: Yes, I'd like that very much, the view of Thatcher and the coal strike and particularly how this is dealt with. So, we'll pick all that up next time.*

*Q: Today is April 30, 2002. We're in London in 1982.*

HARRISON: It was a period when the Labor movement in Britain as it has evolved between the Wars was essentially destroyed. The labor unions were crushed, and the Parliamentary Labor Party reduced to an ineffective rump group. This was partly the result of Thatcher's campaign against them, and partly the political suicide of the unions and the Labor Party themselves.

One symptom of the problems for the Labor Party was the party split, with the moderates

forming the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the radicals who remained the Party becoming even more radical. The issues between the two groups on renationalization of industry and unilateral nuclear disarmament, among many other things, had become too wide to reconcile. And it was historical moment when Thatcher took on the Miners Union, the most powerful of the unions and the mainstay of the Labor Party, and won decisively. The SDP had a brief bubble and then merged with the Liberal Party, so it turned out to be what the British call a damp squib. But the miners' strike was turning point in British history.

*What was U.S. standing like with the British public?*

Not high. The British public was very wary of Reagan who was pictured as a cowboy, not too bright, a nuclear hawk and therefore absolutely undependable. But Labor's position was untenable. On the other hand, they were arguing for the abolition of British nuclear forces, the Polaris system, which the Tories wanted to modernize. The argument against British nuclear missiles, at least from the leadership of the Party, was that the U.K. could depend for nuclear deterrence on the U.S. At the same time, they were capitalizing the anti-Reagan sentiment of the rank and file, and picturing him as an undependable, hawkish simpleton. I used to tell them that they were pressing on the gas pedal and the brake at the same time. It was not a credible policy; it was not acceptable to the British public. For this and many other reasons, Labor was decisively defeated in the elections and driven to kind of a rump party in parliament.

The protest in the meantime was going on in the streets, CND was gathering 400,000 or 500,000 people in Hyde Park to protest the deployment of these missiles and the British government under Thatcher was staunch for this, as she was staunch for many things. There is no underestimating the value of staunchness in politics. You had on the one hand an absolute force of nature in Margaret Thatcher who was solidly behind the deployment policy, and on the other, a divided Labor Party indecisively led that opposed deployment. The outcome was never really in doubt.

*Q: I take it that you and others in our embassy felt quite comfortable with her?*

HARRISON: The Administration certainly was. John Lewis was Ambassador then. My sense was that he felt personally uncomfortable in Thatcher's presence, largely because, as he kept saying, he had no real experience in foreign policy.

*Q: Somehow or other Lewis and I overlapped at Williams, but I never knew him.*

HARRISON: The Foreign Service isn't a career for the shy, but many introverts are attracted to it. It was torture for Lewis. I was once going out to the residence in the car with him and I asked him what he was going to do on the weekend and he said he was going to out for a country weekend. That meant he would be among gentry for a string of house parties and cocktail hours from which there was no escape. He told me how much he was dreading the weekend to come and the worst of it was, he said, there wasn't even a golf course within range. There would, however, be shooting. He was a great shooter of

birds, was John Lewis, and that I think helped keep him sane.

*Q: Tell me, what was your estimate at this time of the British military establishment.*

ARRISON: The standards of professionalism are very high and of course, the traditions were strong. But the force was shrinking. I once had lunch in the regimental mess at Sandhurst. It was like eating in college at Oxford. Nobody had briefed me on the drill, so I was watching everyone else for cues about what to do. You don't just tuck in. Damn near ate something before the toast to the Queen, which would have been a flogging offense at the very least. I don't remember all of it, but it's a little like the church service of a religion you don't belong to.

*Q: Well, we've kind of done a tour of the horizon, but we will pick up any issues in '82 to '85 so to speak. Great.*

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*This is the 31st of May, 2002. Roger, let's, we may be repeating ourselves, but you were in London '82 to '85. Do you want to talk about the British election that was held then and from our perspective what were some of the issues?*

HARRISON: Thatcher's first re-election. She had been in office four years by the time I arrived and the outlines of Thatcherism had become fairly clear: bootstrap capitalism, breaking the power of the unions, stopping the growth of the welfare state and the privatization of key industries. The Labor Party had been drifting left as the Conservatives moved right. It was the last gasp of old Labor, and to memorialize it, they nominated the intellectual symbol of Labor's glory years, Michael Foot. He was an ex-newspaper man, and very much old, socialist labor. He ran on a platform which might have been written twenty years before. But the moment had passed. I suppose if Labor had thought they had any chance of winning, they never would have nominated Foot. But he'd been staunch over the years, and they weren't going to win anyway, so Foot it was – a sort of nod to their past before they rushed onto the future. He was a truly awful campaigner, absent minded, slovenly dressed, a bad speaker. And he was saddled with programs nobody wanted. Thatcher was going after the unions to general, if muted, approval. Foot had to pander to the unions. Thatcher had the image of a warrior from the Falklands. Labor's defense policy was muddled at best – a combination of fear of Reagan and reliance on the Americans for nuclear deterrence, a combination that made no sense at all. To add to the burden, the progressive forces within the Labor Party had given up, dropped out and formed the Social Democratic Party, leaving nothing but the ideologues, hacks and unions behind. So, naturally, Labor was crushed in the election. No one at that time could see someone like Blair in Labor's future. Foot was as far distant from Blair – in both a good way and bad – as one can imagine.

One of the key issues was updating their Polaris missile system, which also touched on the perceptions of Reagan, who had a very poor public image in England, much as George W. does now.

*Q: We're talking about George W. Bush the first time in Russia who was able to tour the Hermitage Museum in 15 minutes which I thought showed a great grasp.*

HARRISON: Quick on the uptake so you think? Reagan had something of the same dull-witted reputation and since Thatcher had seen the Reagan connection as one of the mainstays of her foreign policy, this was used against her as well.

*Q: Would you say is that endemic to the situation, does the foreign office represent a point of view if the British government gets too far to the right or to the left, the foreign office feels it should balance it?*

HARRISON: No, the foreign office has an institutionalized view, much like the State Department; they are inherently multi-lateralists and congenital negotiators who like reaching agreements and upholding international law, at least when it benefits Britain. Like all diplomatic services, they are very distrustful of the kind of rightwing recklessness that is evident both there and here, and also very suspicious of left-wing internationalism. The State Department now is populated increasingly by political appointees who are sent there as an effort to control what is seen as recalcitrant bureaucracy. From the point of view of incoming Administrations of whatever party, State is always a hotbed of what you don't like. So they send people to control it down to the office director level; political appointees might be sent to levels even lower than that, but the appointees resist taking jobs that might involve some actual labor. For the FCO, there are no political appointees except the minister and his immediate subordinates, who are also Parliamentarians of course; but their number is limited, and the rest of the building is staffed by professionals. So the place is more coherent and professional than State. The weakness is that the FCO is also more isolated from the everyday ruck of politics. Parliament's investigatory powers are limited; civil servants don't have to testify, parliamentarians don't have subpoena power. That means that bureaucracies don't have to worry about parliament as the State Department has to worry about Congress. But it's a weakness, too. It keeps them out of touch, and not a little smug. I remember having some senior FCO officials to dinner along with some senior Parliamentarians with an interest in foreign affairs, and the two groups had were complete strangers to each other. John Weston from the FCO later thanked me; he said he read about these people, but hadn't had occasion to meet them.

*Q: Did the mirror the traditional tensions between the Pentagon and the State Department?*

HARRISON: That competition was not as overt in London as it had been in Washington. But, as in Washington, Prime ministers tend to distrust diplomats more than generals, at least initially. The distrust of diplomats seems to be genetic; the distrust of generals is learned from experience. So, from the outset, Thatcher largely ignored the FCO and did in foreign policy as she wished, relying on a close company of advisers. Part of this was to avoid being captured by the bureaucracies, a problem both there and here. After the overwhelming Thatcher victory in the 1982 elections, everyone in Labor knew Foot had

to go as Leader. I think they were down 140 seats, something like that. We were very interested in who was going to take over as Labor leader. Were they going to move to a new generation leadership, or recycle another old stalwart? Labor had lost its moderate center to the SDP, except for one or two, including Dennis Healey, a very canny, very visceral politician who had made his peace with the unilateralists to keep an influential role. Ed Streator, who was very well connected, had Healey to lunch to ask him about who would be the next leader of Labor now that Foot had gone down to defeat. I was there. Healey said if the succession battle lasted six months, he would emerge as leader; if it went on longer, it would be Neal Kinnock, a rising young Welsh politician, red haired with a radical wife. In fact, within three months of that lunch the party had turned to Kinnock to become Foot's replacement. The very night he did, Streator had him and his wife to a small dinner party. The Kinnock's were elated when they arrived because they now had a car and driver. They couldn't stop talking about how convenient it was, plus they didn't have to worry about parking. It was a wonderful example of how working class the Labor Party still was then, even at the highest level. At dinner, Kinnock talked about how he had to move the party back to an electorally attractive ideology, but also about all the left-wing problems he had to face and the particular power of the unions. He didn't seem to have a particular strategy of how to accomplish this, but in the end Thatcher solved much of the problem for him by breaking the unions, beginning with the Miners. That diminished the labor movement generally, including within the Labor Party, so Thatcher did some of Kinnock's work for him.

*Q: This was Scargill?*

HARRISON: Arthur Scargill, head of the Miner's union, a man with an epic comb over and no particular gift for public relations.

*Q: In other words he combed his hair back?*

HARRISON: He combed his hair over. A choice, as you see, I chose not to make.

*Q: This is tape six, side one with Roger Harrison.*

HARRISON: Thatcher wanted to close inefficient coal mines. Economically it made sense; socially it was a disaster. She also wanted to break the cycle of wage increases that weren't tied to productivity, but larger goal was to break the power of the whole of the union movement – the labor movement culture. The coal miners were symbolic of the movement. They had to be dealt with. So Thatcher began building huge stockpiles of coal, and then provoked a strike. Scargill was the perfect foil. He was conveniently radical, and he looked and sounded like a race track tout. He was no match for Thatcher. The government just waited out the coal miners, broke the strike and the union, at least in its historic form. That meant they could close pits, which the proceeded to do – and that destroyed a lot of communities in England and Wales.

I suppose breaking the miners made it possible for the Labor Party to modernize. And so they got Blair, who, I'm sure, wasn't happily surprised when he discovered the job of

Leader included a car and driver. The old leaders of Labor, unelectable as they had become, were great advocates and big personalities. Blair could have as easily become leader of the Tories, with no change of style and only a slight change of emphasis.

*Q: From the embassy point of view, was the labor movement blocking the United Kingdom from a solid economic power?*

HARRISON: We were working for a Republican administration that thought so. But it was also clear enough that the old system of labor in Britain was anachronism and had to be modernized. That, I think, would have been the view whether our Administration was Democratic or Republican. But still, a big meeting with the labor officials, or a party with the union people, was always a lot of fun. There was a Labor Party dinner at the residence every year, which various Republican ambassadors' wives were always threatening to cancel, but never did. They'd start singing and drinking and it was wonderful. Tory dinners were all bejeweled women, merchant bankers, shirt tail royals and boring chat.

*Q: While you were there did Reagan come over at any time?*

HARRISON: Yes, he did and made a famous speech to Parliament announcing his democracy initiative. There was no real program then, just a great line for a speech to Parliament, but it would eventually issue in the U.S. Institute of Peace. Thatcher of course, made a big deal of it.

A couple of other things. One, I wrote some remarks Reagan used for a meeting with Parliamentarians. All Tories, of course We got them up to the residence, which is this great eleven-acre thing in Regents Park, disgorged them and they all went and stood adoringly beneath the podium. Out Reagan came and read my remarks, beginning with the heading. Then he realized what he'd read the wrong thing, but segued into the text so smoothly that I was the only one who knew in that vast crowd what he'd done. A real pro. He could sell even my turgid prose like it was great philosophy. The other thing about that visit was the grandeur of the United States. Outside the Ambassador's mansion there was a great crowd gathered, and two lines of helicopters, big ones, arrayed down the lawn into the distance. There was a Marine bank tooting away on Hail to the Chief, the entourage swept across the lawn past rows of saluting soldiers in full fig, orders were shouted and then this great airborne armada lifted off. Quite a thing to see.

What else about this before we leave bonny old England? I guess some impression of the Labor Party that no longer exists. The Parliamentarians I knew were all nice people. Anti-nuclear, of course, and greater imbibers, but still connected to the grass roots and with backgrounds not too much different from mine. I always made it a point talk to people who didn't like us. This included CND people, the Committee on Nuclear Disarmament. As an enlightened leftist movement, they couldn't say they wouldn't see me. So I'd have tea in Islington with Monsignor Bruce Kent, who led the movement. He'd always be affable but wary, as one might be to a visiting demon.

Denzil Davies, a Welshman, was opposition spokesman on Defense for Labor at the time. Rick Burt, who was EUR head, was coming on a visit, and sent word ahead that he didn't want to see the same old people at dinner. How about some new people with different points of view? I drew up the list. The guest of honor was Denzil Davis. Then we had Roger Scruton, a rightwing columnist for the Times, and eccentric even by British standards. There was a left wing columnist for the New Statesman, I remember, and Andrew Neil, who edited the Sunday Times, along with some FCO folks Burt hadn't met. Anyway, Davis arrived belligerently drunk. He sat to dinner and started insulting Burt. It wasn't witty, the usual saving grace when the British want to be insulting; it was just nasty, drunken rant. There was a senior FCO guy there, who intervened with something to calm the waters, but Andrew Neil shouted "typical foreign office twaddle" down the table at him. It was so embarrassing that the whole dinner was over by 9:30. The New Statesman guy who was there – I can't summon his name – came up to me later in a bookstore to say he was sorry that a fool like Davis had represented his views. Davis later faded – I suppose because of his fondness for drink – and was replaced by Robin Cook. Cook was a sharp little guy with a goatee, a left-wing intellectual, more rational than most, who was smarter than you and wanted to make sure you knew it. He later became foreign minister and had a mistress issue for a while, but survived that, too. Maybe he is smarter than me. We dealt with a lot of interesting people.

*Q: Somebody I interviewed who was in the White House during this period said how in the White House they would get very nervous when Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were in a room alone together.*

HARRISON: It's always true that bureaucrats hate it when the political leaders are together, alone, and could be doing something out of control. She was incredibly influential on Reagan and very proud of her relationship with him, but it had not been without problems. One of them was Grenada. Our ambassador, it was Lewis, got instructions to ask Thatcher's advice on the invasion. This was a rare occurrence because State generally ignored Lewis. Over he went to Number 10 and read his instructions requesting Thatcher's advice. She convened her cabinet, but before they could decide anything, word came over the wire that the invasion was underway. It was clear to everyone that we hadn't actually wanted her advice at all. We were simply being polite. She was humiliated before her cabinet. So she was absolutely furious. She couldn't be furious at Reagan, so she was furious at poor Lewis, who had simply followed his instructions.

*Q: Well this is the problem in the normal course of events these political ambassadors, particularly to places like the United Kingdom, France or Germany.*

HARRISON: As a rule, in my experience, Washington will make no effort to keep an Ambassador informed, but Lewis wouldn't have known that. And Streator, to be honest, was not eager for Lewis to play an activist role. Streator obviously liked it that people in the society saw him as the go to guy at the embassy and Lewis as a sort of figure head, so he was willing to pamper Lewis on the one hand while he ran the operation on the other. This was generally recognized in Washington and London, but it was thought an

acceptable arrangement under the circumstances.

Perhaps a better Ambassador, or one more wired in, would have known that this demarche on Grenada was pro forma and would have taken a little spin off his instructions. On the other hand, Washington had left Lewis hanging out there to dry. After that, Thatcher didn't see much value in dealing with Lewis, and didn't.

*Q: It may also be somewhat responsible for the coldness that our invasion of Grenada .*

HARRISON: She didn't hide her displeasure. She hadn't known, they didn't give their blessing and this was especially painful for them because traditionally it had been an area of their responsibility. Of course, they had withdrawn from all that years before, but they still felt some paternal interest in the area and felt they should be consulted on it rather than being, in effect, patronized.

*Q: I think the British ambassador didn't see that there was any danger, when there was a real danger.*

HARRISON: It's hard for me to reconstruct what threat that might have been. The Cubans were building an airfield. It seemed we were just looking for a place to flex some muscle after the terrorist attacks in Lebanon.

*Did the London Embassy have any role in the response to Lebanon?*

HARRISON: We did. The Marine Barracks attack blunted our interest in the place overnight, and we were eager to get our troops out. The British also had a contingent of troops there, and we were instructed to go see the political director at the FCO, a fellow named Julian Bullard, and coordinate the common withdrawal. We wanted it to be joint, dignified and for our forces jointly to hover off the coast for a while. Streator carried that message to Bullard, with me as note taker. Bullard interrupted to say the British were already gone. They wasted no time.

*Q: Did the bombing in Berlin and the disco and the responsive bombing of Qadhafi, did that happen on your watch?*

HARRISON: No, that was later. But we did have a dustup in Libya just after I arrived in London. The issue was freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Sidra. We dispatched a carrier and challenged Qadhafi's assertions about an exclusion zone off his coast. He sent some MIGs up to challenge, and our carrier aircraft shot a couple of them down. The Navy Admiral in charge of the Med, whose headquarters were across from the Embassy on Grosvenor Square, commanded that operation, and I was at his command center as Embassy liaison, watching that little battle unfold in real time.

*Q: What was the reaction of the British?*

HARRISON: It didn't make a great ripple. Qadhafi was not a sympathetic figure. He was

at the height of his antic behavior at that point.

*Q: He was messing around in Ireland, too?*

HARRISON: Yes, he was sending weapons to the IRA, and generally doing his standard vaudeville act. Labor made an issue of the operation, but Thatcher's polls didn't suffer. Remember, all this was taking place after the Falklands. Thatcher had rescued British honor by means of an enormously expensive and distant war to recapture useless territory. It was, I'm sure, the last great overseas expedition we'll ever see of British arms. A heroic farce. Still, the pacifist base for opposition to a show of arms in dubious battle was no longer there.

*Q: Roger going back a bit, do you want to talk a bit about Rostow and Haig?*

HARRISON: The incident that I recall involved the editorial staff of the Economist magazine. Rostow was a frequent visitor to London. He was an Anglophile, as many of the Republican Party stalwarts were in those days. They think it communicates class. Weinberger was another who was constantly thinking of excuses to come through London. Since Rostow who was head of ACDA at the time, I was his bag carrier. The Arms Control Disarmament Agency, now gone, had been established at the behest of Hubert Humphrey as an advocate for arms control within the administration. But, as the case with many congressional initiatives to change the way the executive branch does business, it had miscarried. ACDA ended up being simply another agency taking positions based on the ideological leanings of its director. When Republicans were in, that meant anti-arms control. To maintain ACDA's illusory independence, the legislation had left a very ambiguous relationship between the director of ACDA and the Secretary of State to whom the director of ACDA was subordinate in some respects and from whom he was supposedly independent in others. If you had two strong personalities like Gene Rostow and Al Haig, it was a formula for conflict. Plus, they hated each other, in a gentile, repressed, pseudo-upper crust sort of way. Haig, a small town Army guy and a Catholic, would never have been accepted in the East Coast Brahmin circles Rostow had been born to. But Haig had seen real battle, whereas Rostow's experience was limited to battling in the faculty lounge. In the end, Haig was never quite able to bring Rostow under control, and Rostow was never able to make himself into the arbiter of arms control policy in the State Department that he would have liked to have been.

The incident that highlighted this for me was a Rostow lunch with the editorial board of the Economist. I was there in my usual role as bag carrier. Rostow's goal seemed to convince the editors of the world's most influential political journal that Haig was insane. Not just nuts in the normal bureaucratic sense of the term, as a lot of people are, but clinically insane. He did this by indirection. He talked about the medication Haig had been taking since his bypass surgery a couple of years before and how unpredictable Hague had become because of it. The phrase he used which I thought was at once a nice stiletto and prime example of Washington-style hypocrisy was that "Al's friends" no longer recognized the Al they had known. He followed that with examples of Hague chewing the scenery and drinking too much, which may or may not have been accurate.

That the director of ACDA would try to convince the editors of the Economist that the Secretary of State was not responsible for his actions stunned me. That he would do it in my presence, on the other hand, wasn't so surprising. Note takers are like taxi drivers: largely anonymous.

I went back to the embassy and talked about the incident with Ed Streator, who sent my report back channel to Haig. Maybe that had been Rostow's intent all along. If there were any consequences I never heard of them and Haig was soon gone in any event, a victim of his own missteps and the poisonous hatred the White House staff had for him. I think he'd been more effective in that rigid hierarchical military structure than he was in the looser bureaucratic structure that he came into. He looked better in uniform than in those aggressively pin striped suits he wore.

*Q: He used the term he was the "vicar of foreign policy."*

HARRISON: He tried to organize the national security system so that it funneled through him, as Kissinger had successfully done. But Haig wasn't Kissinger, and Reagan wasn't the isolated paranoid Nixon had been, so that sort of system was no longer possible. There were simply too many pretenders to power, and too many agencies who felt they had equities in the foreign policy arena, to allow State to play that role. In fact, I notice that presidents have stopped even paying lip service to the notion that the Secretary of State is the leading voice of foreign policy.

*Q: But now we're coming back to your leaving.*

HARRISON: I had pretty much worn out my welcome, too. The things I had been sent there to do had been done. We had a new ambassador my last two years, and a new DCM my last year, Ray Seitz who later became Ambassador, the first FSO ever to do so. But he wasn't a bomb thrower like Ed Streator had been. My influence had waned within the Embassy, and when that happens it affects access in the policy community. So, I was ready to go. Not that I would have been allowed to stay a fifth year in a place like London anyway. I was offered the job as Director of EUR's office of NATO affairs. That would have once been a dream job for me, but I didn't want to work for Jim Dobbins, who was the DAS at the time.

Q: So, off to Tel Aviv

HARRISON: Yes, in May of 1985. I became political counselor to Ambassador Tom Pickering, who needed no political counsel, least of all from me. As I arrived, the Israelis were suffering with the impact of an indecisive election the year before. Instead of a grand coalition, Labor and Likud decided that Labor's would supply the Prime Minister for the first half of the five-year term, and Likud for the second half, first Labor's Shimon Peres, then his political opposite, Shamir from Likud. But it was political arrangement, not a constitutional necessity, so there was no legal requirement for Peres actually to relinquish power after his 30 months. The burning political question was whether he'd honor his agreement or – and this was the alternative -break the government, go to the

elections and win a mandate on his own and Labor's behalf, without Likud. To do that, however, he'd need an issue which would ensure Likud intransigence on the one hand, while pleasing public opinion on the other. Likud was aware of this possible Peres gambit, of course, and had every interest in keeping the government intact - in effect, waiting Peres out. So whatever issue Peres chose to break Labor's agreement with Likud, it would have to be one that Likud simply could not tolerate. If it had American support, that would be a plus.

While all this was going on, the economy was in decline, the labor unions were agitating for better wages, defense spending was weighing on society and the bureaucracy – with traditions imported intact from Eastern Europe – had become a real obstacle to reform. In retrospect, I think we were witnessing the sharpening of divisions in Israeli political life - an end to the founding societal consensus. The major parties are slowly shrinking, rump parties with their own agendas were proliferating, coalition building was becoming much more difficult and more costly, since those small parties had to be bribed to participate. All these trends which were relatively new then are taken for granted now.

*Q: You were there from when to when?*

HARRISON: '85 to '87. I left in July of '87. This was just before the first Intifada. When I was there the occupation was cheap for the Israelis. It didn't take a lot of people or resources. They had roadblocks here and there, but I would guess a couple of hundred reservists would be all you would find on the West Bank and in Gaza on any given day. This was partly a legacy of the economic prosperity the Israelis had brought to the territories, especially in contrast to the conditions when the Jordanians and Egyptians were in charge. Arafat had been forced out to Beirut, and then, after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in '82, to Tunis, so the PLO leadership was dispersed and ineffective. So stable was the situation that I could ride my bike from my house north of Tel Aviv to Tulkarm on the West Bank without realizing what I had done. It was only nine miles or so, and I was suddenly in occupied territory and riding down the main street of an Arab town. Of course, the Kach Movement was in existence, agitating for expelling all Arabs from Israel, including the West Bank. But that was a fringe idea at the time.

*Q: You talk about expelling the Arabs not just from Israel but from the West Bank, too?*

HARRISON: Oh, yes, from the West Bank in particular. The question of expelling them from Israel was always more ambiguous. The Arabs in Israel proper were Israeli citizens – for most purposes at least. They could vote, for example. Still, Kach was not about nuance. Just push the Arabs across the river into Jordan, and that would solve the problem. For all that, the territories were generally peaceful. Occasionally, some Arab youngsters would throw rocks at Israeli patrols and the Israeli would occasionally over react and some rock throwers would be shot. All the irritations, all the implicit discrimination against the Palestinians, all the contempt for them which is so much a feature of Israeli political life now was in evidence then. Still, in those years, the dirty secret of the occupation was that it didn't take a whole lot of effort. So there was no political impetus in Israel to do anything about it.

*Q: The ambassador for a while was Sam Lewis?*

HARRISON: Sam Lewis was just leaving Tom Pickering was coming in. Lewis gave a press conference within a day or two of departure in which he charged that Sharon had lied about the invasion of Lebanon five years before. Sharon had told Lewis, and through him the U.S., that the Israelis only intended a limited incursion – 50 KM - to clean out some troublesome fighters in the south. In fact, they had intended all along to go to Beirut and once there to install their own man, a Christian Maronite, as Prime Minister. It shows both how arrogant the Israelis had become, and how ignorant of Lebanese realities they were. So, Sharon had lied to us, and Lewis wanted to make sure the world knew it. So much evil had come from that invasion, not least the creation of Hezbollah and the extension of Iranian influence in Lebanon. It's a general problem, I think, and the Israelis were an example: if you're arrogant enough, you don't realize how ignorant you are. Certainly, they didn't in this case.

By '85, when I got there, the remnant of their invasion was a so-called "security zone" that had been established in southern Lebanon, patrolled by Israelis and the so-called "South Lebanese Army" or SLA, which the Israelis had created out of local inhabitants. The steady trickle of Israeli casualties in the security zone would eventually become intolerable, and the whole business – along with the SLA – would be abandoned. But the pressure to get out of South Lebanon was still in the future.

Anyway, the invasion of Lebanon and the aftermath – particularly the massacres in the Palestinian refugee camps outside Beirut, had put Sharon in the political wilderness as I arrived. Peres was Prime Minister, but scheduled to hand over that office to Shamir. Rabin was Minister of Defense, and would remain in that job even after the transition to Shamir took place. At that point, Peres would become Foreign Minister, and in the meantime, Shamir presided at the Foreign Ministry.

Tom Pickering was an activist ambassador, and in Tel Aviv that meant the peace process. No progress in that area was likely once the transition took effect and Shamir was Prime Minister, so Pickering set about conspiring with Perez to prevent transition from happening. The plan, in outline, was for Peres to sponsor a peace proposal broad enough to gain sufficient support in the Knesset to break the government and bring on new elections. The elections would be a referendum on Peres' proposal, which Pickering would help craft and then sell in Washington. Peres would win, transition would be avoided, and peace would break out. The intelligence types back at State were skeptical that Peres had suddenly become a devotee of a political settlement, but Pickering was convinced. But he kept his strategy very tightly. He dealt with Peres, and Yossi Beilin, the senior of Peres' two young advisors, and later the prime mover the Oslo agreement. I wasn't part of the discussion.

Perez promised Pickering he could deliver the Knesset for his peace proposal. The notion was to have an agreement with Palestinian signatures and present it to the Knesset as a *fait accompli.* That's exactly how the Oslo Agreement was later handled. Pickering was

trying to bring off the same diplomatic coup by breaking a government, rather than cooperating with one.

Meanwhile, the transition to Shamir was looming. Pickering's assessment there was accurate. With Shamir in power, there was no way forward. I witnessed many of their encounters both before and after the transition. Pickering is a dynamo who would be activist and enthusiastic wherever you put him down. He would breeze into Shamir's presence, a big man all energy and drive, always with this big, constant, meant-to-be-ingratiating smile, and unleash a torrent of words. I would scribble away on my notes, always a few sentences behind. Since I heard the same torrent many times before, I never worried about filling the gaps later. The great wave of rhetoric would break around Shamir, who would just sit there, impassive, unmoved, with this slight smile on his face. Shamir in Hebrew means stone of flint, and that's exactly the image I have. The wave receded and there was the stone, exactly as before. It was never a problem to take notes of what Shamir said because he never said anything. That is, he never offered anything. He said no more than necessary to acknowledge that Pickering was sitting there and had just spoken. And then he'd wait, with that little smile, for the next wave. He even joked about it to his cronies, as I was told second hand.

What Pickering and Perez were pushing was a relative mild form of Palestinian autonomy. It would have done something about settlement expansion, which was still then a potentially containable problem. It would have set in motion arms-length negotiation between the two sides, without – as I recall – grasping the nettle of dealing with the PLO and certainly very far from acknowledging the need for a two state solution. Most importantly for Peres, it would break the transition and avoid Shamir – and simultaneously keep Peres at the center of the center ring. And it would make Pickering a player as well.

I thought Peres was over promising. In my view, he could not deliver even the Labor Party for his ideas. I thought the Peres-Pickering plan would be seen, quite correctly, as a transparent power grab, and that the electorate would react negatively, not so much to the substance as to the greasy political maneuver, something Peres had long been known for. And I thought Pickering's enthusiastic, partisan participation in endorsing such losing cause was not appropriate. Shamir, when he became aware of it, didn't think so either, which is why he never gave Pickering the time of day and joked about him in private. Whether we liked them or not, whether you could deal with Sharon or Shamir, neither we nor Peres nor both together could jam something like this down Likud's throat. They represented the views of too many people

So, I composed a dissent message, or tried to, but Pickering held it up for 24 hours because he realized that the 24 hours were the period in which this decision was going to be made in Washington. I didn't know that. It was a dishonorable thing to do. Washington rejected Pickering's initiative anyway. My dissent message therefore played no role, although a senior personage in Washington later said that most had read it and agreed with it.

There were some good aspects of Tel Aviv. I saw a lot of Rabin, although not usually on my own. I was the political counselor, but it was not a good job. I had an activist ambassador who was also retentive and distrusted me, and an activist DCM with whom my relations slowly deteriorated. I had very competent subordinates, including Dan Kurtzer and Joe Sullivan, who didn't need a lot of guidance from me. In that sort of situation, political counselor is the worst of jobs.

*Q: Who was the DCM?*

HARRISON: It was Bob Flaten the first year I was there. As for Pickering, he was not a man tortured by self-doubt, so he didn't use the political section. He'd talk to Dan, whom he respected, and used him to keep in touch with Peres' aides, and Dan would tell me what was going on. And then, every so often, I'd find myself acting DCM and, even once briefly Charge', so I'd poke around in the file to discover what Pickering had been doing. Interestingly, what we had been reporting from the political section contradicted or undercut what he was doing; had I known that, I probably would have dialed a lot of that stuff back. But we were left to ourselves to do whatever we wanted; I doubt, in fact, that Pickering ever read our stuff, unless someone in Washington brought it to his attention, and probably not even then. It will seem incredible, and did to me at the time, but in my 28 months or so as Pickering's political counselor, he never tasked us to do anything. In two instances, I was in meetings with visitors from Washington who referred (positively, since I was there) to cables we'd done, and it was clear in both cases that Pickering didn't know what they were talking about. It was a little of like operating your kind of own little satellite in orbit around the great planet, but out of radio contact with the home base. In a word, awful. There were a couple of occasions when, literally, I was in a waiting room waiting for some official or other (Yossi Beilin was one) and Pickering would walk out, say hello and leave. It became a kind of a standing joke in Jerusalem, so a very uncomfortable position to be in.

*Q: Then, of course, it being such an intense political place, everybody understood, I mean the people you were dealing with understood your position?*

HARRISON: Yes, they understood it. I was the object of sympathy, but of no particular respect. People would see me to be polite, or because they weren't important enough to be seen by anyone else. But I wasn't a player. None of us in the political section were, except Dan Kurtzer. For all that, it's a fascinating place, with frenetic politics and interesting and talented people, so I suppose my marginal role at the Embassy was offset by the chance to be at least spectator as great men operated. Especially Rabin. I got to know him pretty well.

*Q: Rabin, at that time, was what?*

HARRISON: Minister of Defense. Then in his 60s, he had once been a great, fighting general. When his military days were done, he had been ambassador to Washington and Prime Minister. He'd been brought down by a scandal about money that he and his wife had taken offshore to avoid various stringent currency regulations. He had been forced to

resign, but had come back in glory later – a typical part of Israeli political life. No one ever goes away for good. He had this great, cigarette infused basso profondo of a voice; he didn't so much talk as rumble The great thing about him, the thing I admired so much, was his absolute lack of pretense. That and his wicked dry sense of humor. I developed a respect for him greater than for any other person I dealt with in public life. And that respect increased later because of spiritual journey he made from being the most effective of the old Arab killers to being a man who finally reached out to deal with Arafat. Uniquely among that band of old warriors, Rabin came to understand the need to bestow respect on the Palestinians, to recognize Palestinians as human beings. And not because it put him in the spotlight. Because it was the virtuous thing to do.

*Q: I take it that was something that was really lacking in the body politic of Israel at that time?*

HARRISON: Lacking then and lacking now. Some Israelis understand the problem as Rabin did. But he didn't leave a legacy behind. Perhaps if he'd lived. I don't want to seem fawning. Rabin had political motives for what he did. He wasn't without ambition, and he had great capacity for ruthlessness. But what he did was genuine in the sense that was beyond the political. It was a genuine acceptance of the humanness of his antagonist. Take a look at the video of that handshake with Arafat on the White House lawn. This is now skipping forward a few years. The first time he shook hands in public with Arafat with Clinton beaming in the background. Look at Rabin's body language. It's the most tortured position physically. His hand is out there, but he's leaning as far backward away from Arafat as he can. It's as if his hand has been detached from the rest of his body to do a necessary, though distasteful, service to his country. The journey, the spiritual journey he made written in his posture in a way that was very graphic for me.

*Q: I think it was Phil Brown who in an interview was saying that he was talking to Rabin I think shortly before the handshake where Rabin you know, put out his cigarette and says, "Well got to go now, showbiz."*

HARRISON: You know there's a great story in Rabin's biography about a visit to Carter at the White House. Carter invited Rabin to join him upstairs to say good night to Carter's daughter Amy, who was about 10 at the time. Rabin declined. Tony Blair would have trampled Carter on the way upstairs. Not Rabin. There was also the contempt Rabin always had for these army drill teams, with the chrome helmets throwing their rifles back and forth. He thought it turned warriors into vaudeville entertainers, that it demeaned them. Pure Rabin, and quite right, too.

*Q: I always feel uncomfortable around those.*

HARRISON: They're fighting men; they should be treated like fighting men. A great joy of my professional life was being able to see Rabin up close. He came to one of my going away parties, which I took for a great compliment. Peres came to another one of them; he didn't know it was for me and my wife, but there he was. There's a picture we treasure of the two of us standing with Peres, facing the camera. She has this strange look on her

face. She told me later it was because Peres was grabbing her ass while the picture was being taken. So, you had this dichotomy. Rabin without the pretense, Peres with little else.

And then there was Pickering ,trying to be a player, to make a difference, to do things Sam Lewis couldn't do. Sam Lewis meanwhile was showing up every month or two, spending weeks in Israel.

*Q: Seven or eight years. It must have driven Tom Pickering wild.*

HARRISON: Yes, although Pickering never would have admitted it. It was just bad form from Lewis. Lewis never cared much about what people thought of his form, bad or good. At least he didn't by that stage of his career. So, I'd keep seeing him. Parties, night clubs, the foreign ministry. Mysterious errands. By the way, I got there only a few weeks before Lewis left, so I never really suffered under the lash. I heard all the Lewis stories about chewing the scenery, but I never witnessed it. Then Pickering came in and we began this very strange association which was no real association at all. Lewis yelling would have been infinitely preferable.

*Q: Was there any, I'm not sure what the right word is, I won't say warmth, I mean, friendliness?*

HARRISON: No, no, no warmth at all. He's doesn't do warmth. He's just this huge depository of information and energy. He is a phenomenon. I've never met anybody like him, and hope I never do again. I would bring people in to brief him and, however esoteric the subject, in three or four minutes Pickering would be briefing them. He knew more than you. He *had* to know more than you. A lot of it he certainly did know more about than I did; but I was able, and he wasted a couple of years of my life. But, of course, they're not about to name me to seven ambassadorships as they have him, so you should keep that in mind.

*Q: Roger, I'm looking at the time. It's probably a good place to stop and I'll put at the end here as usual where we are. You're in Tel Aviv from '85 to '87?*

HARRISON: Okay. Yes, '85 to '87 and I have talked about, I haven't talked about Lebanon yet, so we have to talk about Lebanon, what the Israelis were doing there because that was one thing that was in my portfolio. I don't think we've talked about the political situation very much as it unfolded, Shamir, the prime ministry, haven't talked about that. The good, the bad and the ugly. What a place!

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*Okay, this is the 10th of September, 2002.*

*Q: Did you find yourself pulled into this by, I mean, by indirection in talking to political leaders and all that?*

HARRISON: No. I pulled myself in at the end, but Pickering was running this, and everything else he thought important in the political arena, out of his vest pocket. I never knew what he was doing, and he wasn't interested in what I did.

The other Pickering initiative in those days was to do something on the aid for Israel. Aid had been pegged at $3.2 billion at that point for oh, I guess for seven or eight years. I'd worked on the issue at the White House when Ford thought phasing out the aid was a good idea, or at least proposed reducing it in his last budget submission. Weapons were getting more expensive, the Israeli economy was not doing well, so the push was on to increase aid and Pickering wanted to be helpful. His solution to the problem was to index Israeli aid to the inflation rate in the defense sector, which was running six percent a year or so at the time. There was some support for this idea on the Hill, but then Jonathan Pollard, an American citizen and Israeli spy within the U.S. intelligence community, was picked up in the driveway of the Israeli Embassy in Washington, where he had gone with his wife hoping to be granted asylum.

*Q: This is tape seven, side one with Roger Harrison.*

HARRISON: On the issue of Israeli intelligence sharing, we were more restrictive than the Israelis thought we ought to be. Pollard saw himself as the solution. The counter intelligence people discovered what he was doing, and he was about to be arrested. But he was tipped off, packed his wife in the car and showed up at the Israeli Embassy seeking asylum. The Israelis were not about to acknowledge him, of course, so the Secret Service came and collected him. Eventually he was put in jail, where he remains, thank God, to this day. There was much speculation Clinton might be provoked to pardon him.

*Q: Yes, well when Clinton left office there was thought that he might pardon him, but he didn't.*

HARRISON: No, the intelligence community has always been extremely opposed to that. Pollard apparently compromised some of their agents, who were – so the rumor went – subsequently murdered, although not by the Israelis.

*Q: Was it apparent at that time, I heard Seymour Hirsch on the radio once saying that Pollard had been tasked by the Israeli handlers to supply up to the minute information on American nuclear submarines, the theory being that the Israelis were, peddling it to the Soviets in order to get more Jews out of Russia or something like that. Did that come up?*

HARRISON: I heard the story. I don't have any reason to think it's true, but it was certainly true that the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel became a huge cause for Israeli foreign policy. My recollection is that this began in earnest in '88 and '89, a couple of years after Pollard. Anyway, the Pollard affair ended the idea of indexing aid, and that cost the Israelis, in the long run, a lot of money.

I was going to talk a little bit about Lebanon, one of my portfolios. My main Israeli

contact was Uri Lubrani.

*Q: He was the Israeli coordinator?*

HARRISON: Yes, the Israeli coordinator. After the '82 invasion, the Israelis had created a security zone in southern Lebanon, created a pseudo army called the Southern Lebanese Army under a general named Lahad. It was essentially a local militia paid by the Israelis to create the appearance that there was no Israeli occupation. But, of course, the IDF did most of the fighting and took most of the casualties. Lubrani was the political coordinator for Lebanon and a man of great charm who could speak for an hour without conveying any useful information. I became convinced that the Israeli presence in Southern Lebanon was more permanent than they were admitting, since withdrawing at that stage would have been politically risky. It stayed that way for a decade afterward, until the steady cost in casualties and treasure persuaded them to leave – and Lahad to up stakes for Paris, where he lives in some splendor I understand. They achieved nothing in particular except to encourage the radicalization of Hezbollah, who claimed they had forced the withdrawal. They were right about that. By the mid 1980's, Israelis had given up any notion they could mix successfully in Lebanese politics, and had yielded that ground – outside the security zone - to Syria. There were informal agreements brokered between the Syrians and the Israelis about where Syrian forces could be stationed in proximity to Israel's northern border. Both sides were always testing these informal demarcation zones, on the ground and in the air. When the Syrians did something egregious – in one case, digging tank revetments south of the informal line – Rabin would summon Pickering, or me if Pickering were out of town, and ask Washington to pass on to Baghdad that if the transgression were not ended, the Israelis would take military action. The phrase he actually used in that great basso profondo was: "we will break their heads." The message would be passed, and usually the transgression would cease, only to resume again in some place. But occasionally the process didn't go so smoothly. On one occasion when I was there, Syrian fighter planes, as they often did, made a feint at the Israeli border. There was also a missile lock on an Israeli war plane, and the Israelis shot down three of the Syrian planes. There was considerable fulmination from Baghdad as a result, but no particular repercussions. Both sides had an interest in keeping the lid on. Part of the reason, I think, is that Assad knew by then that the Soviets would no longer simply make up for his losses. They had begun to insist on cash up front. That made an air war an expensive proposition for him, so the provocations in the air ceased. Assad and Rabin were old adversaries who knew each other well, so Assad knew not to discount threats from Rabin. If Rabin said he would break heads, he would break heads. The other favorite pronouncement of Rabin's was that if there were an incident and he wanted to respond, he "knew the right address." Still, the Syrians could and did bring pressure to bear on the Israelis in Lebanon by supporting the resistance, and – more decisively – by giving Iran permission to establish training base and make arms shipments to Hezbollah. Rabin wanted to make Assad the address for Israeli reprisals, but it was far from clear that Assad could control Hezbollah, especially after the Iranians had established themselves in Lebanon. In addition, of course, there are diplomatic inhibitions against constant reprisals, especially because the Israelis had no international sanction for their occupation in Lebanon. In short, as long as it stayed an irritant rather than a threat, Assad

could be relatively sure that the Israelis could not massively move against him. The Israelis would, on the other hand, mobilize the tanks every so often and huff and puff around on the Golan.

*Q: Did we have any stand on this security zone, were we telling the Israelis at least to get out or were we winking at them?*

HARRISON: We were winking at them. We accepted the necessity of the security zone while publicly supporting a unified sovereignty in Lebanon. So we were playing both sides of the street, but that's not the sort of tactic to raise eyebrows in the Middle East.

*Q: What about Jerusalem, and the West Bank and how about the Gaza Strip? What were your views on them?*

HARRISON: Well, you asked first about the relationship between the embassy and the consulate in Jerusalem in those days, which was interesting. Actually they weren't bad. They had by all reports been awful in the early 1980's when Brandon Grove was Consul General in Jerusalem and Sam Lewis was ambassador down in Tel Aviv. Neither man lacked in self-assurance, so there was a good deal of mutual sniping. In theory, the Jerusalem consulate is subordinate to the embassy in Tel Aviv, but in fact it has always been the de facto embassy to the Palestinians. There was a natural friction between the consulate and the embassy, which was exacerbated because Grove and Lewis were not best of friends. But Wat Cluverius had come in to be Consul General just before I arrived, and he had a deft touch in dealing with the Embassy and Pickering. By the same token, Pickering was much less interested in subordinating everything Jerusalem did to the embassy than Sam Lewis had been. Pickering certainly saw the peace process as his issue, but he was careful about including Wat as an advisor – a good idea, since Wat was an Arabist and Pickering wasn't. Doug Keene, with whom I had served in Warsaw, and was later to be my DCM in Amman, was number two in Jerusalem at this time and had very good contacts within the Palestinian community, which the Embassy lacked. So there was a natural division of labor, and with the ego problems solved, the relationship worked well.

*Q: Where you stand is where you sit as they say?*

HARRISON: Yes, so it was natural that the consulate would see the justice of the Palestinian cause in sharper relief than Washington or the Embassy did. I thought, and still do, that those who can discern a moral superiority of one side of this issue or the other have a more sensitive moral compass than I do. I thought we ought to be very skeptical about both sides and realize that our interests were separable from the interests of either. But I don't think has been the prevailing opinion in our government.

*Q: Did you find the embassy staff, I'm particularly thinking of the officers, with their biases there or not?*

HARRISON: No, none that I ever saw. Dan Kurtzer was an orthodox Jew, but I never

saw any hint of bias in his work, and had the highest respect for him. His analysis was always based on U.S. interests.

*Q: What was his job?*

HARRISON: The peace process. Joe Sullivan who later is ambassador in Namibia was my deputy and his portfolio was the Knesset internal political scene. We had I think six or seven people. It was a big section and there seemed to be considerable interest in our reporting. Not in our own front office, but in Washington.

*Q: Well, I've talked to political officers there and you can tell they had fun. I mean because they could talk to people as opposed on the Arab side where you never really got beyond a certain veil.*

HARRISON: That's right. On the Arab side, you could talk to everybody, but they all had the same opinion. Talk to one guy and go sit by the pool. In Israel there were as many opinions as there were people to express them. In fact I've always found that the debate about Israeli policy toward the Palestinians is much more honest and lively in Israel than in Washington. The key, I thought, was to understand that Israeli politics were all about brokerage. The system was built to avoid zero sum outcomes. Issues would arise, reach a crisis very quickly, a solution would be brokered behind the scenes and everyone lived to fight another day. It was a histrionic but essentially moderate system. Once I understood not to take the rhetoric seriously, it all made better sense.

*Q: How about the religious parties, I would think they would be the most difficult ones to reach compromises with?*

HARRISON: No, I don't think necessarily. They wanted things from the political system, and bartered their support to get them. One of their bargaining points was potential support for land for peace, since orthodox doctrine held that no government in Israel could be legitimate until the Messiah had returned. In the meantime, there could be no sovereignty over the land, so who had temporary charge of it was not an essential point. What they wanted exemption for their yeshiva students from military service, and to impose Kashrut within their neighborhoods without interference from the government. They also wanted economic support, which eventually turned into graft. All that could be accommodated. When they tried to impose their interpretation of law on the wider society, on the other hand, there would be a reaction, sometimes violent. For example, the orthodox began picketing at soccer games that began so soon after the end of Shabbat that the crowd would have to begin traveling during Shabbat to be there on time. There was a great pushback against that. The police on horseback just waded into the protestors and began beating them with night sticks. Occasionally beating orthodox Jews on TV is a sort of national ritual in Israel – a way to let secular Israelis vicariously purge their frustrations.

*Q: Did you ever see the change with the Soviet Jews coming in at that point?*

HARRISON: No. It was a cause but not yet a reality.

*Q: What about Jewish lobby in the United States. At the time you were there, did this affect your reporting, did it affect the operation of the embassy?*

HARRISON: It had no effect on us. The lobby concentrated on Washington and Congress. I would be very surprised if they cared about our reporting. Certainly, there was no effort to influence it. Some of the major organizations were interested in affecting Israeli politics, inclining toward Labor. But their influence was less in Tel Aviv than in Washington.

*Q: Could Israel really exist without American financial support, both from private donations and government aid?*

HARRISON: Yes. The Arabs tend to exaggerate the impact of our aid. Aid has drifted up a bit from my day, but the Israeli economy has increased six fold. It's now a $100 billion economy, of which aid in all forms probably represents no more than 5percent. Our aid never gave us much leverage on core issues, like the peace process or settlements. We hoped at one time to limit them, but it seems we've given up that cause.

*Q: The current Washington commentators that say that in the end the Israeli settlements will have to be dissolved and a part of Jerusalem will have to be given up.*

HARRISON: Someone said we have the light, now we have to dig the tunnel. Everyone knows what the political outcome has to be; the issue is whether the political will exists to get there. There was some thought early this year that we would put new energy into our efforts, as the price of Arab support against Iraq, but that has been successfully countered politically in Washington by the argument that unseating the regime in Iraq will have a positive impact on the peace process. I doubt it will, but reality is not the point.

*Q: While you were there, were nuclear developments an issue at all?*

HARRISON: No. The only issue was Vanunu, the technician who worked at the Dimona reactor site and leaked details about the Israeli nuclear program. He was picked up in a honey trap -a woman he found impossible to resist - brought back and locked up. The existence of Israeli nuclear weapons had been an open secret for a long time. We've never had any hope of affecting the program, or really wanted to as far as I can see. It hurt in our campaign to stop proliferation, and it strengthened Arab arguments about a double standard. But an end to the Israeli program probably wouldn't have affected countries like Iraq and Iran anyway. Others, like the Egyptian, saw nukes as a bad option.

*Q: Were you there when the Israelis bombed a nuclear facility?*

HARRISON: That was four years before I arrived, something they take great pride in now. In fact, it's interesting that the Iraqis just took the newsmen to that facility the other

day to show them that it was still destroyed. This was very much in keeping with Saddam's inherent maladroitness. Saddam is an opponent right out of central casting. If you could choose an enemy in the world, you couldn't construct him from identikit any better than Saddam has been constructed by nature or nurture. He suits our every purpose. Whenever he seems to be gaining in some in public relations terms, he's careful to screw something up.

Q: *How about the Intifada*?

That broke out a few months after I left. I can with certainty say that nobody at the embassy and no one in the intelligence community predicted the first Intifada. The analytical community in Washington is not equipped to deal with revolutionary changes. They're equipped to deal with nuance within a given political structure, but not with great change. That was certainly true of the Soviet Union; it was true of the Palestinian uprising in '87 as well.

*Q: There's also a straight-line projection.*

HARRISON: Yes, it's the safest prediction, and therefore the most likely to be made. Occasionally can be heard a voice crying in the wilderness, but such individuals are almost universally ignored, because their supervisors are not willing to take the risks that would be necessary to promote a point of view which depends on things tomorrow being in any fundamental way different than things today. There is a 90% chance you will look foolish and only 10% chance you look prescient, and that's a no brainer in the bureaucracy.

*Q: Well, in '87 you left?*

HARRISON: Yes, thankfully. What a delight to leave! I wrote a letter to Alan Holmes who was then the director of the political military bureau at State. I'd heard from Vlad Lehovich, a wonderful colleague who had been my supervisor back when I was in the European bureau, that Alan needed another deputy. Vlad was one of his existing deputies, along with Bill Burns, but Alan needed someone for the arms control portfolio. I will be forever grateful to Vlad for passing on this tip. I knew by that point in my career that I should not wait around for the Foreign Service to decide that I was just the right person for any job I wanted; if I wanted a job, I better campaign for it, so I did. I had done that a lot. I wrote a letter to Alan and told him I was just the man he needed. To my great joy, he wrote back to say that he agreed. It was a wonderful job because the deputy assistant secretary chaired all the interagency arms control working groups. Bill Burns, the father of the current assistant secretary for NEA, was then the senior deputy in PM and had been chairing those groups. I think the plan was to keep him in the chair, but after a couple weeks in the bureau I spoke up and said that chairing those groups was properly my job, and before anyone could figure out how to deal with that effrontery, there I was in the chairman's seat. I stayed in that position for the last couple of years of the Reagan administration which was fortunate because Reagan had by that time discovered arms control and, because of that, the roadblock which had previously been placed by the

ideologues of OSD to any real progress had been removed – along, eventually, with most of the ideologues themselves.

*Q: Richard Perle?*

HARRISON: Richard Perle, Doug Feith, Frank Gaffney and the rest. They had been undone by Reagan's apostasy on the nuclear reduction issue. They had confidently expected him to be a cold warrior and he had not been. He'd actually become the most anti-nuclear president we had ever had. He wanted to see those weapons gone. Insofar as you could appeal to that sentiment, the President was on your side, and State therefore now had all the best of the interagency debate.

It was also a crucial period because there were ongoing negotiations with the Soviets on conventional arms reductions in Europe, chemical and biological weapons bans, intermediate nuclear forces in Europe, strategic arms reductions and non-proliferation. The negotiating teams needed guidance, which it was the job of the committees I chaired to produce. Once negotiations are underway, negotiators want to negotiate. Even hard liners like Paul Nitze, who was in charge of the intermediate missile talks, suddenly find themselves cutting deals and asking for approval. So the USG has to act, and that means coordinating the views of all the agencies with equities – intelligence, defense, state, ACDA and even Commerce on some issues.

The OSD strategy had been to tie up all important questions in the interagency process, delaying things if they could, but forcing decisions to the White House if they could not be delayed. They were confident that if issues reached the President, decisions would be made in their favor. As you know, Stu, if there is disagreement at the assistant secretary level, which was effectively where I was operating, the various positions are put in a memorandum that goes to the White House for decision. If that happened, the OSD guys thought, they would win every time, because Reagan thought as they did. When they discovered he didn't, there was panic in the Pentagon. That happened in the second Reagan term. In the first, relations with the Soviets had been in the deep freeze, still affected by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and by the impossibility of dealing with Brezhnev and the other geriatrics running the USSR. In the second Reagan administration all that changed. By then, there was a new Soviet leadership led by Gorbachev, and Reagan had become interested in nuclear reductions. So OSD's bureaucratic strategy changed as well. Now they were apprehensive about what would be decided on issues forced to the White House, so they began to try to make the best deal they could in the interagency process. That made those interagency meetings a lot more interesting. Now, the dominant theme was compromise.

This had really come into its own just as I was coming onboard as the chairman of those committees. I was both chair and State Department representative. I had to establish credibility with the members of those committees as an impartial chairman, and meanwhile establish credibility with my own betters as an energetic advocate of the State Department's view. It was an interesting position to be in and, for me, fascinating. We made a lot of progress on strategic arms limitations and also signed an intermediary

nuclear weapons agreement with the Soviets in this period. We were working late at night, on 24-hour suspense most of the time. Great fun.

*Q: Were you involved in the SS-20?*

HARRISON: Oh yes, that was the INF negotiation. The other thing about that system was that Reagan, although he had strong views, was, to say the least, not a detail man. He didn't care how the machinery of government operated and paid very little attention to it. Also, our impression was that he didn't care about the details of these agreements, and didn't know much about the doctrine which had informed our policy for years. Mutual assured destruction, flexible response, defense in depth, escalation dominance, all the jargon was still very much the accepted wisdom. Also, Reagan had launched his SDI initiative when I was still in London.

*Q: Strategic defense, called Star Wars?*

HARRISON: Right. The right wing in Washington had welcomed it because they thought it would make any negotiation with the Soviets impossible. The Soviets would see missile defense as threatening, since it could lessen their retaliatory capability and therefore encourage a U.S. first strike. That's what the doctrine said, and that's what we had argued when the Soviets had dabbled in anti-missile development. But if Reagan knew about that doctrine, he didn't care about it. The problem was that when you came to negotiating details of an agreement which affected the fate of a thousand or so nuclear warheads, that's serious business, you have to get the details right. The last thing anyone wanted to do was to ask Reagan about details. Theoretically, the substance of such important agreements had to be a presidential decision, but in practical terms everyone labored long and hard to keep that from being the case. As I said, Defense didn't want these issues to go to Reagan because they were afraid of Reagan's anti-nuclear leanings. That had been underlined the Reykjavik summit, where Reagan and Gorbachev had agreed, very briefly, to abolish all land based ICBMs before Reagan could be hauled into a bathroom during a break by Bob Linhard and Richard Perle and told it was impractical thing to do, especially at a time when the Administration was trying to convince Congress to fund a new generation of land-based missiles, the MX. But Reagan still might have bought the deal, in my opinion, if Gorbachev had not insisted that it be tied to limitations on Reagan's anti-missile program. Anyway, the whole Reykjavik episode had sent a chill through Defense. But State was wary of Reagan, too. My bureaucracy didn't want Reagan deciding on the details because the perception was that he had absolutely no capability intellectually to do that, that he was remarkable political leader precisely because he didn't get bogged down in details and couldn't be influenced by facts.

So, there was a mutual though unspoken agreement in the bureaucracy to keep these issues away from the President. The mechanism for doing that was called the Contract Group, an informal group that met at the White House under the chairmanship of a man named Bob Linhard. Bob Linhard had come to the NSC staff as a lieutenant colonel, and never rose above Colonel during this period. But – and this is not just my opinion – he was the single most important individual on arms control in the second Reagan

Administration, bar the President himself. As I say, by this time there was considerable incentive to agree at the level of the committees that I chaired. But when we could not agree, options were sent to the White House for decision. Bob would summon the contact group – assistance secretary level officials from the various agencies – to discuss the disagreement. The State rep was Jim Timbie, who was advisor to the Secretary, but also a kind of a free agent separated from the State bureaucracy. Richard Perle was on the contract group, along with reps from the CIA and other players. I was never invited – despite repeated requests. The Contact Group would discuss, but not decide. That was the genius of the process. Then, a few days later, a decision would issue from the NSC over Reagan's signature. But no one thought Reagan was actually making the decisions. Of course, I can't know for sure. But my impression is that the Contact Group meetings were for Linhard to test the waters, to see what compromise might meet the essential demands of State, Defense, CIA and the others. Everyone trusted him to do this with intelligence and judgment, and realized that he was the only one who could fashion language to square the many circles. Of course, there were issues where Reagan had to be involved. But there were literally hundreds of other details where bureaucracies disagreed but a common U.S. position had to be fashioned. Linhard was only a Colonel. He couldn't over rule Schultz at State or Weinberger at Defense. He had to have a sense of what the traffic would bear, and he had a genius for precisely that.

I'll give you an example. Verification was always an issue in these negotiations. We had never seen an SS-20. How would we know how many were being produced? The solution was to station observers at the portals of production facilities to count them. But the missiles came out of the factories in canisters – not just the SS-20's, but other missiles as well. Even if we had observers counting canisters, how would we know what was inside? Of course, we could have them opened, but then we would see other missiles that the Soviets wanted to keep secret and weren't covered by the agreement. The solution was to image them electronically. But then, how should the imaging device be configured so as not to compromise details of other missiles? In other words, what was the minimal imaging needed to ensure that we were counting intermediate range missiles. Since all these processes would be reciprocal – the Soviets would also have observers at our factories, and would be imaging our missile canisters – this was a very fraught issue for the Joint Chiefs. It required a President decision. But no one thought Reagan actually made it. Bob Linhard had tested the bureaucratic waters, crafted language that nobody liked but everyone could live with, and that was the guidance we all received.

Of course, Linhard operated under real constraints. This was the era of Shultz and Weinberg at State and Defense and they had an unhappy relationship. Linhard couldn't directly cross either of them. At the same time, there was the general disinclination to involve Reagan in the details – a disinclination that, I'm convinced, Reagan shared. That gave Linhard maneuvering room which he used with great deftness and intelligence. When Bob died about four or five years ago at 51 or 52, I wrote an obituary for him saying that he was the key player in the successful efforts at arms control under President Reagan. Mike Glitman who had been our INF negotiator and Paul Nitze and other people who'd been aware of Linhard's contribution all signed it, and we wanted to publish it in the Washington Post. The Post wouldn't publish it on the basis that they didn't publish

joint letters like that. So we sent it to Bob's widow.

As a bureaucratic situation, it suited me very well, because you could accomplish a great deal. Also, my committee had good people on it. The old ideologues had been washed through. Frank Gaffney was the last of them, but he was intellectually arrogant and therefore usually poorly briefed. He didn't think he needed to read all those boring papers prepared for him. Detailed briefings were for lesser men than Frank. Also, he wasn't well liked by the JCS, or by the team that replaced Perle and Weinberger. Bob Joseph, who is now at the White House in charge of proliferation and all such matters, was the next OSD rep and although he's conservative, he's a very decent guy. Lou Nosenzo was the ACDA rep. I'd known Lou for a long time. He was an extremely intelligent and able guy and had the great advantage in that group of having no ideological clients to represent. ACDA had been created as an advocate for arms control, but in the Reagan administration they were led by ideologues like Ken Adelman who had no interest in arms control, so Lou could be a casting vote in favor of a rational approach, and that is very valuable. I think God, who doesn't like nuclear weapons, arranged for Lou to be there. Tom Fox was the JCS rep. These were all people for whom I have great respect and who were public servants in the best sense. Bill Heiser from the White House, Lynton Brooks; we might disagreed about issues, but always within the context of the benefit of U.S. national interest. That was the ultimate test of all of the people that I've named. People with enormous ability. It made for a very exciting time, and a lot of fun, too. I feel privileged to have been able to do something meaningful in association with a group of people like that, all of whom have remained my friends. We would spend 12 hours arguing and people would lose their tempers on occasion, but there was a core of mutual respect in that process which really made all the difference and I don't think exists anymore.

*Q: What was the outcome of all this? You left there when?*

HARRISON: The outcome was the INF treaty. We never were able to solve some of the strategic arms limitation problems, but we made progress and success would come later. We pretty much put the stake through the heart of mutual balanced force reductions with the Soviets; the Soviets would never agree on asymmetric reductions on conventional forces, so that negotiation never got anywhere. The INF treaty was the central achievement, and one of the hallmarks of what became the US-Russian relationship after the demise of the old USSR. But we did preliminary work on a chemical weapons Treaty that would be signed in 1992. If you'd asked me in '87 when I took up that job, would there by a Soviet Union in 50 years, I would have said yes without doubt. In our work on the Helsinki process, and on arms control, we were paving the way for its destruction, although we didn't know it. The USSR was losing its legitimacy. Plus, a thousand nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles were destroyed on the two sides, which is a good thing.

The other great thing about that job is that we had a lot of fun. We had a great office. Alan Holmes, one of nature's gentlemen, was the director of PM and he always maintained a very nice atmosphere. We had very good people including Ron Bartek who had been on the INF negotiating team and is a good and great public servant, and Vlad

Lehovich. So that front office was like no other that has ever existed on the seventh floor, or ever will again. For example, the on-going penny pitching contest, which Bartek has always claimed, erroneously, to have won, will probably never be repeated. The best job I ever had, and certainly the most fun I ever had in the Foreign Service.

*Q: Who was your putative boss at that time? Well, it was Alan Holmes?*

HARRISON: Alan Holmes, yes, was the boss. We had an Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Reggie Bartholomew, but he never really impacted us at all. To be honest, Alan didn't either. I had the bit in my teeth in those days.

*Q: Did you find that you had to operate below the Shultz-Weinberger enmity?*

HARRISON: Oh yes, that was a given.

*Q: I mean if you're trying to get something done, you had to keep it from them.*

HARRISON: It didn't influence my relationships with the guys at DOD. You're competing bureaucratically, but it was a fair fight in those days. There was a context that made it less the bloodbath that it has become since. We all felt that we were on the same general team and again, I think there was a mutual respect and a feeling that the other guy was honestly trying to do what he thought was in national interest.

*Q: Did you run across, was there a breed of cat who really loved the nuclear weapons or not or were most people kind of repulsed by them. You know, I mean Reagan was and I mean everybody should be.*

HARRISON: Well, yes, I think there was a whole group of people who thought it was a legitimate weapon of war. They had congregated in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. But the Joint Chiefs people didn't feel that way. They were always very practical about this stuff. In fact, that was one of the revelations about how the system works. People at our interagency meetings represented huge bureaucracies. They're not free agents. The positions they bring to the table result from a long internal process within their own agencies. When they appear in the interagency process, there has already been an intra-agency process of accommodation and compromise. That's as it should be. So the JCS was on our side against OSD on nuclear issues more than you'd suppose.

In short, we routed the neo-cons – the Gaffney's and Perle's and Feith's - largely because the President wanted arms control. But you never win forever or lose forever. The neo-cons regrouped, and now have the whip hand. Still, those old agreements stand. The warheads and missiles we got rid of won't return.

The other thing we did in those years is an example of how much you can accomplish from a relatively junior post if you know how the system works. One of my officers, I forget his name for which I apologize sincerely, pointed out to me that the Geneva

convention on Chemical weapons from 1925was in need of updating. It occurred to me that the French, who had been sponsors of the Geneva Conference and subsequent Treaty that had mandated an end to chemical weapons, had an interest. Also, it was 1989 and they were about to celebrate the bicentennial of their great revolution. Might they be interested, I wondered, in re-convening a conference on chemical weapons in Paris to mark the occasion?

*Q: This would be the 1989 bicentennial?*

HARRISON: Of the French Revolution, that's right, a big celebratory year in France. The idea was to convince the French to reconvene the Geneva Conference parties as a reaffirmation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I suspected the French would love the idea, but I had to get our bureaucracy to agree, and there was great resistance, especially from OSD. They thought chemical weapons were a legitimate war fighting instrument, and assumed – and here they were right – that the Soviets were producing and stockpiling CW weapons and wouldn't be inhibited by a conference in Paris. In fact, it would give them a venue to look like part of the anti-CW crowd. So the only effect of such a meeting would be to strengthen limitations on the United States. They were wrong about the latter, but probably more right than I was overall. Still, I outmaneuvered them. Since our government was split, I proposed, as a compromise, that we send a letter to the French to assess their view of such a conference. I already knew, of course, what the answer would be. Since it didn't commit us to anything, it was hard to oppose the letter, so I got clearance for it, and then hand carried up to the French UN Ambassador in New York. The French government ran with it, as I knew they would, never crediting us, of course, or asking our advice on what should happen at the meeting. It turned out to be the biggest international arms control conference ever held, but I didn't attend. Allen Holmes wanted to take his secretary, so I got bumped from the delegation. My satisfaction was to know that I was the author of the whole enterprise. It would never have occurred to the French, still less to Allen Holmes.

The next question was how to build on the momentum. It occurred to me that we could have a meeting of manufacturers of precursors of chemical weapons with the governments who wanted to stop proliferation. How could we control and track the sale of precursors.

*Q: What does that mean?*

HARRISON: A precursor is a chemical which itself may be harmless, but is a necessary ingredient in the manufacture of chemical weapons. There are some chemical weapons you can manufacture simply by buying commercially available chemicals. The issue was how to keep track of those chemicals so as to monitor and control that trade. The key was cooperation between governments and chemical manufacturers, which had been nonexistent up to that point.

It was neat bit of work if I do say so. It was one of those periods of government austerity; we had no money for new initiatives. Also, something on CW coming from the US would

be seen as directed against the Soviets and generally ignored. But I knew that the Australians had staked out a position for themselves championing limitation on chemical weapons. If the Australians raised the idea of a conference to facilitate conversations between governments and industry it would be taken seriously, and everyone likes the Aussies. But how to get the idea through our bureaucracy and to the Australians?

Jim Baker was now Secretary of State, and that the made the task easier. Baker was about to go make his first speech at NATO. He was the 800-pound gorilla in that administration on foreign policy. And here's a tip for future bureaucrats, at least those willing to take the occasional risk. Principals are always looking for new ideas. They don't want to give the same old speech, especially at the beginning of an Administration. Baker wanted to make his mark, to announce policy departures, and he needed innovative ideas. People like Baker don't have time to think innovative thoughts; they count on their speechwriters for that. But speechwriters aren't necessarily innovative thinkers either, so – in a situation like that – they are desperate for new ideas. I knew Dennis Ross, who was writing the NATO speech; and I knew that if I could get an idea through Ross and into that speech, it would become policy. If Baker said it, that was it, and too bad for the rest of the bureaucracy and especially for DoD.

So, I fed some things to Ross - he was grateful and put my ideas in his text. They were new and Baker liked them, so suddenly they were policy. On the conference issue, since it was Baker, we could bypass the interagency. But we had, of course, to get the Australians on board. So at my suggestion, Baker called the Australian Prime Minister. He, of course, was all over the idea, and flattered into the bargain. This was right up Australia's ally, and he wasn't about to ignore Baker in any case. The upshot was that Baker could announce at the end of his NATO speech that the Australians at our suggestion had agreed to host an international conference on the control of CW precursors. It was a good idea – indeed, an idea so good that no one could think of a reasonable way to block it.

It turns out the Prime Minister hadn't coordinated either. He'd already agreed on the phone with Baker. So, the day after the NATO speech, I got a call from my contact at the Australian Embassy in Washington asking about how much financial support they could expect from us for this conference. I remember telling him that the answer was none; we didn't have money, and any way, I told him, that was what hosting meant.

Now flash forward five years and I'm ambassador to Amman and my Australian colleague, a nice guy, a good friend, had a party assembling all the Australian ambassadors from the region. It was there I was told about the disruption to families of the diplomats who had been transferred when posts closed across the Pacific. They had closed, I was told, because of the need to raise money to hold the conference I had created. Unintended consequences.

Anyway, the meeting took place and created an organization which still exists called the Australia Group. But the lesson for me was how you get things done bureaucratically. It's possible if you know how things work to get a big bureaucracy like the State Department

to turn on a dime.

There was another example in that NATO speech. I suggested that Baker announce that we would speed up the withdrawal of chemical weapons from West Germany. That would please Helmut Kohl, which the new Administration wanted to do. And the weapons were coming out anyway, although on a much slower timeline. Baker liked the idea.

But I was little more cautious about this idea. I took it up to the head of the Staff Secretariat, Mel Levitsky, and told him we better send it over to Defense for clearance. "Does the Secretary want to say this?" Levitsky asked. I replied that he did. "Then to hell with Defense", said he. So it wasn't cleared. A cable went to Bonn to inform Kohl that the initiative was coming, and Kohl went public immediately without our permission. Defense went absolutely nuts, partly because they were reading about all this in the papers, but mostly because they had no idea how they were going to speed up withdrawal of those weapons. There was a question of security – of getting them out of stores and transporting them to the sea ports. There was only one destruction facility, on Johnson Island in the Pacific, and that facility was already operating at full capacity. You sure as hell weren't going to take the weapons anywhere else. Anyway, they were mad, and saw me as the major culprit. In my own defense, I had tried to clear the idea, but they were probably right. Anyway, in the aftermath they arranged for hearings before the Senate Armed Service committee. Strom Thurmond was in the chair, looking fresh from the taxidermist, but his staffers were primed to pillory me. Bob Linhard and Bob Joseph were there as witnesses to my perfidy. But I was the first witness, and I took the blame. I said it had all been a mistake. When we realized that the cable had gone without Defense clearance, I said, we had tried to call it back; but Kohl, without our permission, had already gone public. It had been a grievous oversight, I said, and should have never have happened as it did. I didn't mention Mel, who was the real culprit since it was his job to make sure this sort of thing was fully cleared. And I had suggested he clear it with Defense. Anyway, taking the blame is always a good idea because it disarms your critics – and that's what happened. Joseph and Linhard who were there to denounce me simply submitted their testimony for the record, since I had already denounced myself. Michael Gordon was the Washington Post defense correspondent then, and he didn't really like me much. But he congratulated me on this occasion. It wasn't without cost, of course. They have long memories at Defense. But in the end, they got the CW out earlier, and Kohl was happy, which were both good things

*.Q: This is probably a good place to stop. So, when did you leave?*

HARRISON: I left in '89 about six months into Bush. Then went off for a year to Colorado College as diplomat in residence, then I went to Jordan so we're coming up to the end of the culmination of my career.

*Q: This is tape eight, side one with Roger Harrison. Today is the 20th of September, 2002. Roger, how did this appointment to Jordan come about? First of all, what dates are we talking about? You were in Jordan from when to when?*

HARRISON: From August of '90 through July of '93. The appointment came about as most appointments in the Foreign Service do, by combination of good luck and circumstance. I left the job as Deputy Assistant Secretary in Political Military Affairs in June of 1989. It was a new Administration, and it soon became clear that I was old regime. I was not unhappy to leave that job in June of that year, so about four months after the new bunch came onboard.

*Q: This would be Bush?*

HARRISON: Bush One, yes. At that point I had no assignment, but there was a program called Diplomat in Residence from State and I had a friend out at Colorado College, so I arranged for the Colorado College to invite me. State was happy to do it because I was a senior officer without an assignment. They're always happy to find places to put people like that. In the meantime, the State Department had sponsored me as the ambassador to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, but I'd been blackballed by Ron Lehman over at OSD because of his unhappiness with the chemical weapons convention conference in Paris which I'd been instrumental in setting up in '88. He was not eager to see me as ambassador in a forum where arms control was going to be the chief subject because, I was told, he didn't think I was sufficiently robust with the Soviets. Luckily I had someone in the hierarchy working on my behalf in the person of Robert Kimmitt, who had been appointed Under Secretary for Political Affairs. I mentioned earlier that we had worked together when he was an intern at the NSC. He had lined up Tunis for me, but Bob Pelletreau had decided to extend there, so it fell through. The next thing I knew I got a call, to my house in Colorado Springs, telling that I'd been paneled as ambassador to Jordan. It was a surprise. Nobody had mentioned Jordan.

I wasn't an Arabist, of course, but official Jordan was an English speaking post, and the Washington shied away from sending Arabists there for fear they'd be easily seduced by King Hussein. My predecessor had been notorious for referring to the King in cables as "His Majesty", something I wouldn't have been tempted to do in any case. Back I went to Washington to study Arabic and prepare for my confirmation hearings. I imagined a panel of hostile Senators, but it was just Senator Moynihan. There were three of us there that day, including the appointee for Bangladesh. Moynihan had some complaint or other about how the government of Bangladesh was behaving, and it soon became apparent that he was presiding over the hearing so he could put his complaint on the record. So my colleague – I've forgotten his name – got a real grilling, but questions for me were pro forma. Moynihan – or the staffers who'd written the questions – didn't think much of the King's recent moves toward great democracy, and said so. I replied that it wasn't Switzerland, but the policies had increased participation and should be welcomed. Iraq hadn't invaded Kuwait yet – that was still a couple of weeks off – and so the King's support for Saddam didn't come up. Lucky for me.

I'm not properly communicating the terror of a confirmation hearing. I was extremely happy to have uttered comprehensible sentences and even happier to get the hell out of that committee room. It feels as you sit there that your whole life is hanging in the

balance. Saint Peter will probably be even more intimidating, but not much.

It also taught me a lesson, which I later passed on to others. Unless you're controversial, the Senators don't care what you say, or even listen to it. Like Moynihan, they're there to do a favor for State or to grind an ax of their own. But there are some in the audience who do care a great deal. I mean the reporters from the newspapers in the country you're going to. My remarks were reported at great length in the next day in the Jordanian press, and ended up as my introduction to the people I would deal with. It worked all right, but I wish I had known that. Future ambassadors, take note!

Another thing occurred during the period that influenced my time in Jordan. As I was briefing up at the Department there was a visit by the foreign minister of Jordan to Washington and I was invited to sit in on the meetings between him and Secretary Baker. That gave me my first real sense of the atmosphere of U.S. Jordanian relations at that time, and it was not good. Tensions with Iraq had been on the rise, and King Hussein had cast himself as the role of intermediary between Saddam Hussein and Washington. Marwan Qasim, the foreign minister, dutifully tried to convince Baker that Saddam was actually someone with whom the U.S., with Jordan's help, could deal. King Hussein knew Saddam well, said Qasim, and the Iraqi dictator was not as bad as he was portrayed. Baker treated Qasim and his arguments with contempt. There were none of the compliments to the plucky little King that one would expect on such occasions. Instead, Baker dismissed Qasim's description of Saddam out of hand. It was very chilly. In the aftermath, it occurred to me to pay a call on Qasim at his hotel. I wanted to introduce myself, of course, but I also wanted to offer some useful advice. Probably not the smartest thing I ever did. Washington was not, I told Qasim, prepared to accept that Saddam was a benign or a potentially useful actor in the region, and there was a danger that the Jordanians by their statements would look complicit in Saddam's strategy. I don't know why I thought Qasim had missed that point; Baker hadn't tried to soft peddle it. If Qasim had any sense, which, I was to learn, on occasion he did, he couldn't have missed it. Still, I rushed in where a wise man might have hesitated. That conversation was going to play a role later because the foreign minister took my statements to be an indication that Washington was set on war with Saddam. I wish I had a nickel for every time in the next three years he reminded me of our talk and claimed it was proof that Washington was bent on destroying Saddam, and that the invasion of Kuwait was just a pretext. I had unwittingly strengthened that perception, at least with him.

I was due to leave to take my assignment up in the last week of August, but the invasion took place early in the month. It was the day at my meeting with the President before my assignment. By the way, he never called me personally to ask me to accept it; I thought that had been the practice.

*Q: Well, I don't think Bush did, Reagan used to call.*

HARRISON: I thought it was the custom before that.

*Q: I'm not sure.*

HARRISON: At any rate, I didn't get a call, but I did get my ritual meeting with the president to get the photograph for the mantel at the residence and so forth. Scowcroft was there because he and Bush were conferring hour by hour on the situation regarding Kuwait. They conferred and I listened in. I remember Scowcroft telling the president that it was actually looking a little better, that it might be easing a little bit at that point.

*Q: Was this on the day of the invasion?*

HARRISON: It was, yes, it was about three hours before the invasion. It was 3:00 in the afternoon in Washington, so that would have been midnight in Kuwait. The invasion came in about 3:00 AM. They, at least from that conversation, were not aware that the invasion was imminent, which was a point I often made to the Jordanians who thought that we had organized the whole business to trap Saddam. The other thing that I did to help ease tensions with Jordan was to engineer a letter from the President to Hussein that I could take with me. I wrote the letter, had it cleared at State and sent it to the White House for the President's signature. The gist of the letter was that we were about to embark on this very difficult period, but that the president's relationship with the king was going to stand us both in good stead, and words to that effect. I also decided the day after the invasion to speed up my departure. That meant canceling the ceremonial dinner the Jordanian Ambassador had planned for me as well as the ceremonial swearing in. I departed on the 10th of August instead of the 24th, which had been the original plan.

*Q: Question, Roger, when you saw Scowcroft and President Bush just before the invasion and you had your picture taken, was this completely pro forma or did either of them say, Jordan's going to be a key component or something like that?*

HARRISON: I'd love to tell you that they asked my opinion, but they used the time to talk about the situation and largely ignored me. I think the president probably wished me well and did all the usual things, but I was a spectator. At any rate, I arrived on the 11th of August with that letter in hand. My wife and I waited in a cab outside the old EOB for the signed letter to come out, then sped to the airport arriving just before the plane was to leave. My son and daughter had come from Colorado to see us off, but we had time for no more than a quick hug.

The first job, when I arrived, was to get the President's letter delivered, a problem since I hadn't been accredited yet. I ended up talking to the crown prince Hassan on the phone and he sent a courier for it. I think it bypassed the Foreign Ministry altogether. I should say, too, that as I was briefing in I noticed a change in the tone of the briefers in the last week or so before the invasion. I think the intelligence community had come to conclusion that there was going to be an invasion. The key indicator was that the Iraqis were moving expendables up to the border, ammunition, petroleum products all the things you need for a modern army.

So, that had been changing, but the King was still telling us that it was all a diplomatic ruse, and that peace could be brokered. The King's assurances on that score became an

embarrassment once the war broke out, and the King was reluctant to call the President again, until the letter I'd drafted showed up. The King immediately called Bush. Bush invited him to come to Kennebunkport. I guess I could say that I was therefore indirectly the author of the Kennebunkport meeting, but since it turned out badly, that may not be a thing I want to claim. With the meeting set, there was a need to get me accredited, so a ceremony was arranged within 48 hours of my arrival, and within 72 hours I was on the King's place headed back to Washington.

The accreditation ceremony was also my first meeting with the King. I handed him my credentials and made the ritual statements about desire for eternal friendship. He said much the same and shook hands, so I was officially Ambassador.

My first real meeting with any of the officials of the Jordanian government was on the King's airplane coming back from Amman to Washington. I found myself walking out to the plane with a short gentleman I didn't recognize, but I chatted amicably with him about political philosophy of all things. It turned out that he was the crown prince, Hassan, but because he was in a military uniform I hadn't recognized him, until just before we got to the ramp, when the penny dropped.

The King always piloted his airplanes to take off. It was a DC-10 fitted out as an executive jet. The center of the plane was a sort of conference room complete with tables that rose hydraulically out of the floor. Lot of wood paneling. In fact, the pilot told me when we stopped in Iceland, that the plane was so heavy with wood paneling it's range had been shortened by a couple of thousand miles. Once on board, I sat down on one of the lounge chairs in one corner. In opposite corner across this lounge area, the cabinet was meeting. The foreign minister Qasim, the chief of the royal court Zaid bin Shaker, Adnan Abu Odeh, a Palestinian who was the King's advisor and sometimes speech writer, and Badran, the prime minister, were all huddled around the table, smoking like crazy and occasionally glancing over at me. No one came over to say hello, but Bin Shaker, a cosmopolitan guy, winked at me.

When we reached cruising altitude, the King came from the cockpit, sat down with the others and they smoked and conferred. I just sat. Eventually, King got up from that group and walked over and sat down with me for my first real conversation with him. A conversation with the King was never an exchange. He knew what he wanted to say and said it. He listened to my response. Questions might be asked. But there was never any argument, or even much discussion in the sense of give and take.

He began to lay out what he planned to do in Kennebunkport. He said that over the previous year he had trying to avert the crisis with Iraq, partly by urging the Kuwaitis to be moderate and partly by urging Saddam to be restrained. But, he said, the Kuwaitis had ignored him and been increasingly obdurate with Saddam, insisting that the Iraqis repay the loans the Kuwaitis had made to them during the Iraq-Iran War. The Kuwaitis had also opposed Saddam in OPEC, refusing the raise oil prices to allow Saddam to pay his debts. The Kuwaitis had claimed, the King said, that they were resisting higher oil prices at US request, but the King himself thought they had their own, long term oil strategy. So, as

the King described the situation to me, from Saddam's point of view, the Kuwaitis were demanding repayment of loans and then denying the Iraqis the means of acquiring the funds necessary. The king said he had been warning Washington about all this, meanwhile trying to talk sense to both sides. Now, at Kennebunkport, he wanted to explain to the President that he had been, in effect, both a prophet and a peacemaker, and that he was in no way responsible for the invasion of Kuwait.

I told him that I thought that was not the right approach to take. It seemed to me, I told him, that he had a limited time with the president, who was going to focus on what we should do now, what our future collaboration was going to be, how we could ease tensions as we jointly attempted to address the situation. The President would not welcome a recapitulation of the King's various initiatives. Part of the reason that I told him that was because I knew he'd been playing a far more duplicitous roll than he was describing, and his interlocutors in Washington would know it, too. There was a lot of very good intelligence about what he'd been up to. Also, I told him, the approach he wanted to take would be fruitless. What were we going to do to cooperate to get Saddam out of Kuwait? That was their interest.

He took all that onboard, went back to flying the plane and we eventually got to Washington about 3:00 AM Washington time. David Mack was there, and he and I went directly to State Department to write my report for Baker. I'd been in Jordan about 72 hours by then, so I was the resident expert. In my memo, I told Baker the King's plan for the Kennebunkport meeting and how I had responded. Then, the following morning, I met with the Secretary and we rode out to Andrews together. That was the longest conversation I had with Baker during my three year tenure, even though he came to Jordan seven times. In fact, I never had a one on one with him again.

We flew up to Maine and helicoptered to Kennebunkport, and the King and the President immediately went into a private meeting. I was in the outer room with Bob Gates, Baker, Scowcroft and others I've since forgotten. The thing I remember about that session was Baker's unhappiness that an announcement of the call up of the reserves made the previous day had not been cleared with him. He thought it was a diplomatic move and he should have been consulted. There was no indication that he thought it was an unnecessary step, just that his territory had been transgressed a little bit. Part of this, I think, is that it was still unclear whether we could or would take military action. We didn't have Saudi agreement yet to base our forces in the Kingdom, and without that, a military response would be unlikely. In fact, the Saudi leadership was due at Kennebunkport just after the King left, so there was a need to move the King through before the Saudi arrived – there being no love lost at that point between the Al Sauds and the Hashemites

There was a lunch, I remember. The unwritten rule was that policy cannot be discussed at meals, and so the table talk was mostly trivia. In any case, the one on one had apparently gone badly. The King had not been deterred by my wise and sagacious advice and the reaction from Bush had been as I expected. I had hoped that the letter from the President and then the meeting would lead to better communication and cooperation, but the

opposite was the case. The King dissembled, not knowing that we knew better. He was absolutely intent at this point of adverting war between the United States and Iraq. The president, on the other hand, was increasingly hawkish in those days and therefore bound to view what Hussein was trying to do as appeasement of Saddam. Had the king been a little bit more adroit he might have approached that meeting in a way which would have solidified his relationship with Bush and increased his influence. He was often moved by emotional considerations and by the necessity, as he saw it, to justify himself. At any rate it was not a happy occasion. I did get to know members of the Jordanian cabinet because we then hopped on the plane and flew all the way back. But the meeting itself was a worse than a bust; it just increased mutual suspicions.

*Q: Well, when you were talking to them, did they reflect how badly this had gone?*

HARRISON: They didn't really know. None of us had been in the private meetings. The open meetings had been amiable. I think it was only later that as the reaction to the meeting set in. I don't know whether the King realized it hadn't gone well. Maybe he did. It didn't come through in anything he said to me, though.

The other thing that happened in Kennebunkport was played up negatively in the Jordanian press. There's a long, winding path between the main house there and the helipad. The President was walking with the King, and when we passed a cottage on the grounds where Bush's mother lived, the President asked whether he could stop off there. His mother had lost her remaining brother the day before, the President explained, and he wanted to spend a little time with her. The King, of course, was gracious. The president was therefore not with the King when he got on the helicopter, where the press was assembled, and that was recorded for posterity by the news media in Jordan as a slight. It blew up a storm in Amman. Perhaps the King, on reflection, thought he had been slighted. It's certainly true that the Saudi delegation was meanwhile cooling their heels at the airport, waiting to helicopter in once the King was gone. But if there was a slight, I'm sure it was unintentional.

As I say, what the King wanted – and this explains a lot of what seemed at the time inexplicable -- was to be *credible* as an interlocutor for both the Iraqis and the Americans. It was all about credibility. So he felt he had to prove to Bush that he was an honest broker. Because, once he had it he could play the mediator role. And that would be the culmination of his long march, his crowning diplomatic achievement. That's what he meant when he prattled on about an "Arab solution". If such a thing was to be, only Hussein would get us there. Mubarak and Assad were happy to see Saddam brought low, and the sheikdoms were too cautious and frightened to do anything but hunker down and write the checks. And they all had something to gain from a war. So peace, if there was going to be peace, would be King Hussein's achievement. Or so he thought.

*Q: During this flying and talking with members of the cabinet, did you find any sense of indignation or something over the fact that Hussein had invaded Kuwait? Did they have the same reaction that we had?*

HARRISON: No, absolutely not. I think the cabinet and the King to a degree shared the view of the public in Jordan, which was that the Kuwaitis had it coming. The Jordanian-Kuwaiti ties were perpetually strained by Jordan's constant demands for cash. The King had been treated with less and less courtesy on his periodic begging trips to Kuwait City. The Kuwaitis had increasingly lorded it over their poor cousins from the north, and the Jordanians were gleeful that they'd got what they had coming.

*Q: Apparently from people, who have been in the area, the Kuwaitis have a reputation of being insufferable.*

HARRISON: I think the one thing that unites the Arabs, or did at the time, was that everyone detested the Kuwaitis. We did, too. They consistently voted against us in the UN, and took the high hand when we protested. But, of course, such distaste had to yield to geo-political and economic interests once Saddam embarked on his adventure. So, the invasion imbued the Kuwaitis with virtues that had been invisible to us for decades, but it certainly hadn't rescued their reputation in Jordan. The Kuwaiti ambassador in Amman was even less popular in Amman than I was. Aside from my periodic visits to see him, he was absolutely isolated. The Foreign Ministry treated him as a non-person. Meanwhile, the overwhelming public reaction in Jordan was in favor of Saddam Hussein. It was an emotional catharsis for the Jordanians to think that here was an Arab leader who was decisive, who had whacked those jumped up goat herds in Kuwait, bopped the Persians and now might well unite Arabs against exploitation by the West. And the West feared him into the bargain. Jordan is not naturally a politically unified place because it has a Palestinian community and a dominate Bedouin, East Bank elite who view each other with mutual suspicion. But on this issue they were absolutely unified. I never heard anyone express an anti-Saddam opinion, partly because it's also a small and therefore a conformist society and partly because Jordanians tend to express the view that's acceptable to the palace. But the main thing was the outpouring of repressed anti-American and anti-Kuwaiti feeling. Everyone, and I mean everyone, was swept away by it.

*Q: It sounds a little like the reaction in that part of the world to Nasser taking over the Suez in '56.*

HARRISON: Absolutely. Nasser had been the great hero but with feet of clay; but now, here was a real champion to lead the Arab cause. Suddenly, pictures of Saddam were everywhere; kids were hawking them on traffic islands. Every shop had Saddam's picture; posters of Saddam were glued to the rear of taxi cabs. At the beginning, these portraits included little icons of the king up in one corner seeming to look down with admiration at the Iraqi leader. Then it was just Saddam. The King's image disappeared. Much consternation at the Palace about this, of course. None of this was because Saddam was adroit at public relations. On the contrary. Remember that video the Iraqis put out of Saddam greeting one of the young girls who was being held hostage? He was smiling and holding out his hand, and she was absolute paralyzed with fear. I guess you couldn't expect much in the way public relations in Baghdad, where they thought of public relations as holding the occasional public hanging.

*Q: Did this attitude surprise you because you weren't a Jordanian hand when you came out there and I think you know within the United States all of us were sort of realizing that this was a pretty beastly act by Saddam. Were you ready for this when you got there?*

HARRISON: Yes, I was. First of all they had been reporting about it from the embassy so I knew about it intellectually, but also, after 23 or 24 years in the Foreign Service, I didn't have illusions about how people in other countries view the United States. In Jordan especially, there was a good deal of anti-American feeling waiting to be tapped, and Saddam had hit a gusher. It showed the context in which the king was trying to conduct his diplomacy. It was also true that his Kingship was and always would be artificial. All the symbols of monarchy were for Western consumption. For example, the symbol of a crown was everywhere, on the stationary, on the tails of the national airliners. So one day, as I sat in the protocol director's office waiting to see the King - the wait was usually at least an hour and sometimes two or three – I asked where they kept the crown. He laughed. They didn't have a crown. Or a throne either. That was for Western consumption. I dawned on me that everything – the uniforms, the medals, the gowns, the bagpipers – was all an elaborate game of dress up. The Arabs with oil didn't have to perform for the West like that, and they didn't. The Arabs without oil had to assert their sovereignty in terms the West would understand. The King had only as much legitimacy as he could convince his own people, and the West, he had. He was an autocrat, of course, but for this reason he could not safely defy such a strong wave of public opinion.

His other problem was that the invasion of Kuwait had upset the careful balancing act between his powerful Arab neighbors and the West - particularly, of course, the United States. Keeping the U.S. happy, hoping for more aid from the rich Arab countries, balancing the bigger powers on your borders, it's a game the Hashemites had been playing a long time with more or less success. It meant, among other things, that they had to take a rational view of Israel. Hussein and his grandfather both admired the Israelis and felt comfortable dealing with them, especially the intelligence types. They couldn't let that be known, of course. Above all, they couldn't afford to be ideologues, about Israel or anything else. They survived by being ruthless pragmatists and because they were outsiders, neither East Bankers nor Palestinians nor Bedouin. They were Hijazi, and minimally acceptable to all the various tribal communities in a way that a Palestinian East Banker would not have been. So they existed on grace and favor, money from the gulf, military support from us and the tacit – at least – support of Israel.

There had been riots two years before when they tried to end some subsidies for food and fuel. The tribes in the south, the King's base of supported, had rioted. The King had been out of the country, so Hassan, the Crown Prince, had gone to calm things down, but he didn't have the King's touch. The leadership was very gun-shy after that. They realized the tenuous of their position. Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown, especially if he doesn't really have a crown.

So, this outpouring of support for Saddam, the knowledge that erasing the border between Jordan and Iraq and would be as easy as drawing it had been 70 years before

when Churchill had done it after lunching well in Cairo, all this was a great existential threat.

*Q: How did things go after the King came back from Kennebunkport?*

HARRISON: Well, the first issue after I came back arose because there had been an outpouring of refugees from the Gulf and from Iraq itself of all different nationalities, tens of thousands Egyptians, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, a lot of Indians, and Bangladeshis, a whole Noah's Ark of folk. They had come rushing out of Iraq and the Gulf trying to get into Jordan, and from Jordan home, and the Jordanians were overwhelmed. They closed the border, so the refugees began to build up in this no man's land between the Israel and the Jordan and Iraqi checkpoints out there. There was about a 30-kilometer strip of desert between these two and that's where these people began to gather.

*Q: This was in August?*

HARRISON: Yes, August in the desert. Two events arose from that. One was the foreign minister summoned me to say that the U.S. navy had stopped a Omani ship coming to Aqaba to pick up the Omanis escaping from the Gulf had been turned away. I learned later it was some problem with the ship's documentation. Qasim, a very blunt spoken man, said that because of this action by our Navy, he'd given orders to close the borders. He demanded that the Navy raise the blockade, and until they did, the border would remain closed. He would let nobody across.

Among those affected at the border would have been several hundred American citizens coming out of the Gulf who had yet to cross. We had set up a temporary consular outpost by the border crossing point to facilitate the process – and for other purposes. Qasim's complaint had all come as a surprise, and I was without instructions. But I nonetheless protested strongly and urged him to reconsider. I said a border closure would unnecessarily damage U.S. Jordanian relations at a crucial time. I reminded him that there was a U.N. resolution which gave the Navy the right to stop ships headed for Aqaba and to search for shipments headed to Iraq. Not only the United States, but the rest of the world, would be affected if the border were closed. He remained adamant; he was an adamant man. So, as soon as I came out the meeting, I used my car phone to call the Palace and ask on an urgent basis for a meeting with the Crown Prince. The King was out country, and the Crown Prince was acting as regent. The request was granted and I immediately went to the Palace. I told Hassan what I'd told the Foreign Minister. Closing the border was a grave error which would have profound repercussions. Then I went back to the embassy. Within the hour I was summoned back to the Foreign Ministry. A very upset Foreign Minister told me that he had rescinded his order to close the border, but that he would impose it again unless the navy gave him assurances that no more ships coming for refugees would be turned away. He and I both knew that there would be no such assurances; I never bothered to report his demand. It was a face saving step on his part.

Two things now occurred. One was that the border stayed open, and that policy

eventually brought great credit on the Jordanians. The other was that the Foreign Minister conceived a great dislike for me because I had gone over his head. Foreign ministers in Jordan are not particularly powerful figures because most of the key point policy decisions are made at the Palace, not at the Foreign Ministry. Most Foreign Ministers are content with that, but Qasim was a very assertive individual in whatever job he had. He prided himself on being blunt spoken and was jealous of his power. He showed his displeasure the next time I visited his office by seating me in the hard chair in front of his desk, rather than on the couch as before, and not offering me tea. That didn't matter as much as it might have. He still had to see me when I asked for a meeting. Jordanian Foreign Ministers have generally short tenures, and Qasim was soon gone. As for me, in retrospect I would do exactly the same thing again.

By the way, the Jordanians ended up doing a very good job with the refugees and getting a lot of credit for it. And Qasim and I ended up on good terms. I made it a point to visit him when he was out of office, and we got on. It was partly my admiration of his forthrightness, an unusual quality among Jordanians, as Qasim himself was always the first to point out. Saddam used to give out Rolex and Mercedes to Jordanian ministers. Qasim told me he'd gotten a nice silver S500 sedan; it just showed up at the house one day with an Iraqi Embassy driver at the wheel. Qasim said he'd sent it back, but the Palace had intervened and ordered him to take it. But he wouldn't drive it, Qasim said; and sure enough, there it was in his garage with zilch miles on the odometer. I liked him for that, among other things. And I think he liked the fact that I never tried to jolly the King or anyone else along about how poorly they were reacting to events, even though it made me an unpopular figure. Anyway, when I left three years later, he gave me a dinner, which was a nice thing.

*Q: About the refugees?*

HARRISON: Yes, there were a lot of them, supplies were running low, so I decided to go out to the border and see for myself. The preponderance, as I mentioned, were Palestinian, Egyptians, Filipinos, Indian, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans. Almost all had been working in the Gulf or Iraq, part of that great mobile work force attracted by oil money to do things the Arabs don't want, or don't know how, to do. Many of them had worked for years in their jobs, always as aliens in their adopted homes, since the Gulfies in particular were not about to dilute the oil profits or political power by given any of either to these foreigners, who weren't, after all, members of the tribe.

As soon as the balloon went up, 400,000 or so of these guest workers headed for the exit, and the only one available was overland, through the Iraq dessert to Jordan, and then from Jordan home. Or so they hoped. Some left of their own accord, to avoid the war. Some were shown the door, particularly the Palestinians, who were considered rightly as pro-Saddam and therefore potential fifth columnists. They were passed through the Iraqi border control with no problems; Saddam had no interest in feeding 400,000 people. Then they reached the Jordanian border and became a huge dilemma.

The last thing the Jordanians wanted to do was let all these disgruntled refugees into

Jordan, with no immediate way of getting rid of them again. They never entirely closed the border, in spite of Qasim's threat to do so. But they were processing people through at a much slower rate than new refugees were arriving.

Between the westernmost Iraqi border checkpoint and the easternmost Jordanian there is a strip of dessert 30 kilometers wide. I don't know why it was built this way; perhaps leaders thought a little separation was a good idea, given the usual hostility between the two governments. They could afford to have this buffer because there was nothing there except flat ground, rocks and scorpions, with maybe a few Bedu shepherds passing through from time to time. And smugglers, of course. I heard that tens of thousands of refugees were stranded in this strip of dessert. My DCM, Pat Theros, had already put a trailer out there with some consular officers and a few intelligence people to process Americans who were coming across, and the reports we were getting from those people were of horrendous conditions.

When I got to the Jordanian border point, I found a group of journalists there, trying to get into the no-man's land to cover the story. But the Jordanians weren't letting them in. The Jordanians were embarrassed, I think, about conditions, and didn't want international pressure to build for letting the refugees into Jordan faster than they thought advisable. My take was that they should get as much publicity as possible on the subject to garner the international help they needed, so I rounded up a couple of journalists and persuaded the Colonel out there to let me into no man's land to look around. What I found was really amazing: sixty or seventy thousand people just literally sitting around in this wasteland, with more coming all the time. It was August, remember, so hot, over 100 degrees. And there was very little shelter – a few tents scrapped together by the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders, who were out there doing their usual good work, but overwhelmed.

When I got back to the border post, I convened as many journalists as were there and gave a series of on the record interviews. I said that conditions were appalling, that the Jordanians were doing the best they could but needed help from the international community. I remember doing a filmed interview for the BBC and radio with others, always making the same point. In the car on the way back to Amman, I agonized about this, since (again) I had had no instructions, and knew how much Baker loathed Ambassadors going public on anything. But I was sure it was the right thing to do

Back in Amman, I went to see Basil Jardani, who was Finance and Customs Minister, and urged him to let the press in, on the grounds that if it isn't on CNN, it isn't happening. And the Jordanians did, although whether because of my entreaties or simply because it made so much sense, I can't say. Then I declared an emergency which allowed me to use $25,000 to help with the situation. We also had some prepositioned meals ready to eat in country – tens of thousands of them – and I got permission to distribute them to the refugees. The problem was that many of the MRE's contained pork. So we set up an elaborate inspection process to separate the pork MRE's from the non-Pork. I made sure this was triple checked. We gave the pork to the Filipinos, who were almost all Christian, and the non-Pork to the Arabs. It's interesting the Filipinos had already set up

their own governing authority in the camps, so we had someone to deal with who could do the distribution for us.

*Q: Washington was helping with all this?*

HARRISON: Eventually. At first I had a bureaucratic problem. There were two bureaus in Washington which might have taken the lead in getting help to the people in no man's land. One dealt with refugees and the other with displaced persons. So initially, there was squabble about what category these particular people fit into, with both offices, because of budget impacts, claiming that the other was responsible. Eventually, I sent a strong message to the Under Secretary for Management, who sorted things out. Then there were little things. For example, my wife, who had really plunged into the effort to help refugees, organizing the other wives at post and doing a lot of good work, discovered that there were many diabetics among the refugees who didn't have insulin. Lionel Rosenblatt, an old Foreign Service colleague who had gone into refugee work after resigning, was coming to Jordan and agreed to bring insulin with him– a picnic cooler full, which is a lot of insulin, and we got it to at least some of the people who needed it.

*Q: What happened to the refugees?*

HARRISON: Once the world community cottoned on to what was happening, help began gushing in. The Jordanians discovered they were being praised for their efforts, which were, indeed, praiseworthy, and really put some effort behind the process. One lesson for me was that in this sort of situation, help in slow in coming, but once it starts it just builds and builds until long after you have enough and more. There's a lag. I remember that in the end, Dr. Bob Arnot from NBC showed up with a planeload of supplies provided by various U.S. Corporations, doing a spot for the Today Show, and by then, the Jordanians were wondering where to put all the stuff.

About a week after my first visit to the border, I got a call from the Crown Prince's office asking me to join a group he was putting together to go out to the border. We were still on good terms then. A Minister of the Indian government was in town and wanted to visit his countrymen in the camps. So off we went in a C-130, landed on the Jordanian side and then took an open Land Rover, with the Crown Prince driving, past the Jordanian border. But we didn't go through the checkpoint. A fresh road around it had been bulldozed through the dessert and that's what we took, never passing or even seeing a border guard. I took good note of this for later.

We showed up in the camps. People were still mostly out in the open, a great sea of them as far as the eye could see in this flat country. We pulled up to this impromptu assembly area, where soldiers had cleared a circle maybe a hundred yards in diameter and formed a perimeter, standing with their arms linked. Word of the Indian's arrival must have spread quickly. There were already five thousand or so people standing around that circle of soldiers, and I could see great groups of others running to join them. The soldiers let our jeep and a machine gun car through, and this Indian got out.

It was quite a scene. The Indian was a sleek headed fat man from the Congress Party, still wearing a Nehru jacket of all things. It was a hundred degrees or so, and no wind. The Queen was just leaving on her helicopter maybe a couple hundred feet away, and this huge brown-grey dust cloud had been kicked up to make the situation of those she had come to succor even more miserable. The Indian Minister was sweating all over his face as he walked, tentatively, toward the edge of the circle to confer with his constituents. The refugees had been out there a couple of weeks by this time, with little food or water and no shelter to speak of and no word from their government. So they were enraged. As this guy approached one point in the circle of soldiers, it would bulge inward toward him as the refugees pushed forward trying to get at him. They were all shouting at once. The sound was this great, rending scream. People were baring their teeth, and I was reminded of a film I had seen once of a school of Piranha fish snapping at a roast beef. The Minister recoiled as the refugees pushed forward. He was sweating and smiling and trying to talk, but they were having none of it, so he walked to a different part of the circle, and the same thing happened there. The impression was that thin line of soldiers was going break and the crowd would make short work of the lot of us. I was standing with the Transport Minister in the shadow of the machine gun on that truck, and I remember he turned to me and said: "What are we doing here?"

But the cordon held, the Minister hustled back to the Land Rover and the Crown Prince got us out of there.

By this time, the Jordanians were doing what they could to call attention to the plight of the refugees and political questions were being asked in capitals. There was a political crisis about the issue in the Philippines and another in Delhi, and governments began trying to evacuate their people. The Egyptians were relatively easy. They could be taken by bus, and I remember seeing a line of them stretching back up the highway for twenty miles out of Aqaba, waving frantically to me as I circled overhead in a helicopter courtesy of the Jordanian Air Force. The folks from the subcontinent and Philippines were a more difficult proposition. In those cases, governments started a ferry service of 747's to get them home. They would be brought down from the border to Amman in groups and dispatched from the airport – 200,000 or so in the end. Pacific Castro, the Philippine Ambassador, was my neighbor in Amman. For weeks, he would bring 500 or so Filipinos in every evening and camp them out in the alley between our houses, ready to catch the morning plane. To keep them entertained, Pacifico would throw a despidida party every night, complete with a rock and roll band. The featured act was always Pacifico himself, doing his Elvis impressions, wearing the whole Elvis get-up. It was an awful Elvis impression. Every night, "Love Me Tender".

The Palestinians, of course, stayed in Jordan, from which many of them had come in the first place. This made the Hashemites extremely uneasy, since the imbalance of Palestinians to East Bankers was already assumed to be running against them. No one knew the actual figure, and they weren't about to take a census to find out. They also foresaw a huge welfare burden as these peopled were resettled. In fact, the Crown Prince had had his people do a study to show that the total cost to Jordan in 1991 along would be $5.0 billion. I pointed out to his staff that this was more than the GNP of Jordan, but they

were not deterred. They wanted aid, of course, which was never forthcoming.

But either, it turned out, was the economic burden. For some reason, maybe because they were such fervent supporters, Saddam let the Palestinians repatriate their money from the Gulf along with themselves, so they added a great deal of purchasing power to the economy. And remember, although they could bring money out, most had been limited to a suitcase or so of goods, and this meant they needed everything. The result was a consumer-driven economic boom. I forget the actual figure, but Jordan's GNP grew that year as it had not done since the Iraq-Iran War. But one point the Crown Prince's people made was irrefutable: none of the refugees brought a drop more water with them.

One other point before we leave the refugee issue. When I got back from the border, I went to see the Finance Minister about sanctions enforcement. Basil Jardani was as honest and honorable a civil servant as I ever ran across. An ex-banker, he also knew what he was doing. But he always maintained to me, when I would come with Washington's latest complaint about goods moving across Jordan to Iraq, that this wasn't happening. The Jordanians had good border controls, and were committed to sanction enforcement. The King would become positively insulted when I would complain about sanctions enforcement, taking the same line. We knew it wasn't true, of course; the Agency at one point rented a truck, filled it with contraband and moved it into Iraq with no more effort than bribing a few border guards. But I couldn't tell Jardani about that, of course, so I would always answered his outraged propriety the same way: whether or not you believe you are enforcing sanctions, Washington is convinced you aren't, so it would be a good idea to take another look.

*Q: This all happened in August? Between Desert Shield and Desert Storm?*

HARRISON: Yes, within a month of my arrival. Things were happening quickly. The other issue at that point was a movement afoot in Washington to apply the sanctions being set up against Iraq to Jordan as well. There was some logic behind it. We knew that sanctions weren't being implemented by the Jordanians with quite the systematic care we would have liked to put it mildly. On the other hand, sanctions would have crippled the Jordanian economy, with particular damage to the trucking industry, which was controlled by Bedouins in the south, one of the Hashemite's' key constituencies. My view was that the stability of Jordan was a key U.S. interest. We were going to win the war, and would need a stable Jordan in the aftermath. I sent a very frankly worded cable arguing this point, and got some support from Tom Pickering at the UN, but not much from anybody else. I was new then, and the cable probably reinforced the impression that another hopeless clientist had fetched up in Amman.

*Q: You mean American ambassadors to Jordan?*

HARRISON: Yes, natural apologists for the king and his cohort. In fact, I wasn't especially sympathetic to the Jordanians, then or ever. Certainly none of them thought so. But it seemed to me that preserving the integrity of Jordan was an important thing to do as we dealt with Saddam.

*Q: It was sort of common knowledge that the political ambassadors who went to Morocco were apologists for the king of Morocco.*

HARRISON: There is a natural inclination to see the State Department people as clientists because, in one sense, they are. It's one of the functions of the State Department is to represent the point of the world to a bureaucracy. At any rate, John Kelly was eager for the King to go public in opposition to Saddam, and indignant that I should resist. The upshot was that I lost support from my bureau, NEA.

Another incident contributed to that. That came to a head because the king had been to Baghdad after his visit to Washington and had come back having been very ill treated by Saddam, his sense of propriety as elder statesman he had kind of come in as an elder statesmen to give this young upstart some sage advice and had been treated like a petitioner. Or so I heard from the courtiers. There was 20 million of aid for Jordan in the pipeline already appropriated that had been held up because of suspicions about the King's loyalties. I proposed that the aid be released. It might be a propitious time, I thought, to woo the King more definitely to our side. I realized it would be controversial, so I had called Kimmitt who was Under Secretary at the time, and told him about the suggestion I planned to make. He said go ahead. The problem was that Kimmitt was in Washington, and Baker was traveling with Ross, Kelly, Tutwiler and others, so my cable showed up with the Secretary's party without warning, and Kelly seized on it as particularly egregious. In response, I got a cable from the traveling party signed by Baker rejecting my suggesting and instructing me to see the king and tell him that we expected him to make a public speech in Arabic denouncing Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. I was on my way to the Palace to carry out my instructions when I decided it was a mistake. The king wouldn't do it, it would further strain relations, and it wasn't a good idea in any case given the King's heavily pro-Saddam population. The cable I'd received had all the earmarks of a staff written directive, albeit couched in terms of a Baker message for the King. So, I had my driver turn around.

It's very uncomfortable to sit on a demarche you're supposed to have made, especially with war brewing. I knew I wouldn't get support from State, so I called David Satterfield at the White House on the secure phone and made my case to him. He said he would see what he could do. A week later, he called and said he was still working on it. But in meantime, I was called up to Damascus to meet with Baker and his traveling party, including John Kelly, whom I suspected had been the author of the demarche I had failed to deliver.

Kelly and Dennis Ross met me at the hotel that evening, and we repaired to Kelly's room for a drink. The message was that I hadn't been tough enough on the King. Ross said I had been sent to Amman because they trusted my judgment, but I wasn't living up to expectations. It was implied that my tenure as Ambassador was in question. The previous cable and my refusal to act on it were not mentioned. But I was sent off to my room to draft up new talking points for the King telling him to come out publicly in Arabic against Saddam or face the consequences.

I did what I was told, ashamed for not putting up a stronger defense for myself. But I made up for that in the morning, when the three of us, myself, Kelly and Ross, met with Baker. We were in the dining room of the Ambassador's residence in Damascus, and Ed Djerejian was also there. I didn't wait for anybody else to talk. I described to Baker the conversation I'd had with Kelly and Ross the night before, and about their instructions to me to tell the King that he had to side publicly with the U.S. across the board. I hadn't finished the sentence when Baker interrupted. He said, "I don't want you to do that." No one else said anything. That was the end of the issue.

So, I had been right. The strategy of forcing Hussein off the fence hadn't been Baker's idea, and when he found out about it from me, he turned it off. Of course, that wasn't really the end. I had been vindicated. But John Kelly wasn't likely to forget or forgive.

*Q: It certainly didn't endear you to your superiors.*

HARRISON: No, it didn't endear me to Kelly, but you know Kelly had been a strange choice for NEA, and my impression was that he didn't have much influence with Baker. Baker relied on Dennis Ross for Middle East advice. And Kelly was gone after a year anyway. Still, all though this period there were hints of unhappiness from NEA, and rumors that my tenure would be short. It was very nerve wracking, of course, but that was relieved somewhat by a call from Kimmitt's special assistant, who told me on Kimmitt's behalf that my standing with the Secretary hadn't been damaged. It all strengthened the sense I had that throughout my tour in Amman that no one had my back. I knew that my desk officer, Stuart Brown, would do what he could to protect me, and so would his boss, Ted Kattouf. I think in retrospect that David Mack, who was DAS in NEA at the time, also shielded me from Kelly's wrath. There are some ambassadors with political clout of their own. I wasn't one of them. I also seldom got prior information or guidance from the bureau front office, so generally I was on my own. It got a little better when Ed Djerejian replaced Kelly, but really not all that much better.

*Q: Today is the 21st of September, 2002. Roger we've got a lot to talk about. I guess the big thing to do is to talk about your relationship with the king and the court and the sort of ruling elite and whatever.*

HARRISON: Our relations were always cordial. At first he brought me into the inner circle because he had no real alternative. His ambassador in Washington was an outsider, and his relations with Bush were strained. So I was invited down to Aqaba for a family weekend. I was deposited in one of the cottages along the beach and left to myself. After a while I wandered into the main house. The family was all there, the queen and princes and princelings. Feisal, the second eldest of the King's sons and an Air Force pilot, was chasing the little ones around the room, everyone was eating from a buffet and nobody paid particular attention to me. After a while, we went out on the beach and played volleyball, dividing up the family with me as the ringer on the Queen's team. The next day we played cards on the beach. I taught the Queen blackjack, which she pretended not to know. Later that night, we went out on the Gulf in the King's yacht, he let me steer and

warned me with a laugh away from the Israeli patrol boats. I was congratulating myself on being a great diplomat. On the one hand, I continued to lecture him on sanctions and Saddam, and on the other, here I was being treated as a member of the family. Of course, it didn't last.

I was there because the King thought I could be useful. He thought so at first, largely because he had no choice. He knew, from brief acquaintance, that I'd tell him frankly what I thought about his political decisions, and he must have thought that I was representing him fairly to my superiors. But even with the people he had known all his life, there was always an elusive quality to him. He was the King and you weren't. And he would rotate people in and out of his favor; you might be shining in the light of his countenance one day, and sent into the outer darkness the next, and then brought back. It kept everyone on edge, and prevented anyone from presuming too much.

*Q: Talk about your impressions of the King.*

He'd been on the throne for 37 years. There were a lot of anecdotal stories about his early relationships with American ambassadors which, for some of them, seems to have been a mentor, student relationship. In the early '50s when he first became king, Hussein was 19 or 20 years old and, by reputation, looking for a father figure. In fact, some people thought that Saddam played that role for him later, too, and that was part of his admiration for Saddam Hussein. I think that's nonsense. Whatever he'd been in the 1950's, the King was fully his own man when I knew him, for better or worse.

He was very formal in meeting, very conscious of his role as King, renowned for his good manners, which were very old school in a good way. He had a habit in social situations of addressing all of the men as sir, and being solicitous for the comfort of the ladies. He was in all those ways exemplary of a kind of an older, gentler European tradition. But he was tough as well. For example, he would never allow anyone to stay in the inner circle too long. He would rotate even his closest advisors in and out of office, sometimes suddenly and for no particular reason. It was done in a very gentlemanly way. He would have them to lunch and tell them they had been working too hard and needed time for rest and contemplation and thank them for all that they had done. He was also not above sacrificing Prime ministers for political causes. He would bring them in for some temporary and unpopular purpose and when they became unpopular, he would fire them again and move on. He did that several times for several purposes during my time there. He was, of course, very jealous of his authority, as the Crown Prince would later find out to his regret when the King was in his final illness and Hassan was regent.

The king had a ruthless streak. He would not hesitate if he thought someone was a genuine threat to have them arrested and tortured. Not killed. He stopped short of assassination, at least in my time. He had a very active secret service, not just for domestic intelligence but for counter intelligence. They had been trained by the British and the CIA with some assistance from the Israelis. Just as well, since they foiled two assassination plots aimed at me, so I suppose I owe my life to them.

Speaking of assassination attempts, the King had survived four of them. He took me once to see his vintage car collection. We drove in his personal Mercedes. There was an AK-47 on the backseat, a MAC-10 in a special holder in the center console and a .45 in the door pocket. I remarked on this. The King said, in essence, that he was the only person he could absolutely count on to defend himself. Body guards might start thinking about their wives and kids. Historically, in each of the attempts on his life, that's exactly what he'd done. He'd grabbed whatever weapon was handy and fired back. No one ever doubted is physical courage. In any case, when it came to weapons, he kept plenty of options near in case the occasion presented itself again. Also, after that talk is when I got my little pump action sawed off Remington shotgun for the back of the limo.

At any rate, the close relationship I had with him at the outset didn't last.

Oh, he always received me when I asked for a meeting. That was true throughout my three years. But the little signs of favor disappeared. There were no more trips to Aqaba after the first six months. I never flew on the plane with him again. It may be that he simply got tired of my harping on sanctions all the time. And it could be I blotted my copybook with him in some way. But, as I say, you never knew. Even when my standing had gone down, he might start musing when we were alone together about succession, whether his brother, Hassan, should take his place when he died, or whether it should be someone from the next generation. He often mentioned Mohammed Bin Talal in these conversations. He was the son of the King's elder brother, Mohammed, who had been passed over for King because of mental issues. Mohammed's son was a very impressive young man, and was the only Jordanian aside from the Crown Prince included in all the official meetings with Baker over that period. But he had Hodgkin's Lymphoma with a guarded prognosis, and it would have meant going outside the direct line. I always thought it was astounding that the King should confide to me about any of this. Hassan had been Crown Prince at that point for going on thirty-years, and there was no more sensitive issue in Jordan than who would take the King's place.

*Q: Well, the War was coming. What other issues were you facing during that time?*

HARRISON:I think one of the hardest issue I dealt with was the evacuation of dependents because of the unhappiness that caused within the embassy community. State abdicated responsibility by announcing that ambassadors would decide on evacuation. Generally speaking, dependents don't want to go. They don't feel any less safe in their environment than they were before. Officers don't want to be seen as expendable, and other ambassadors were arguing against evacuation. So I was really evacuating them against future contingencies that you can't predict. In the end, I ordered evacuation of non-essential personnel. The wives don't want to leave their husbands, but I sent mine out on the first plane, and eventually they all went. It was a huge source of tension, and unconscionable on the part of the Department, especially because in the end, after leaving the decision to me, they complained that I hadn't evacuated enough. What I discovered is that very few people want to go, or will admit they do. Families want to the stay together, and officers don't want it to appear that they can be spared. And they all know what other Embassies in the region are doing. Chas Freeman was Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and

he was fighting to keep his Embassy intact, complete with dependents, arguing that there was no security threat. The situation was calm in Jordan as well, but I was concerned about what would happen when the fighting started. We were under voluntary evacuation for dependents, but there was never any doubt in my mind that, regardless of last minute maneuvering between Baker and his Iraqi counterpart, that the ground war would commence in mid-January, so I ordered mandatory evacuation of dependents and non-essential personnel.

That decision had repercussions beyond our Embassy. All the Western Embassies in town were watching what we did. I had formed a group with the Russian, British, French and Italian Ambassadors. We met once a week to talk about security. The general view was that when the American Embassy started evacuating, the others would as well, although the Russians at this point barely had the money to heat their chancellery. The Russian Ambassador, a good guy, was a Georgian, and so really a man without a country.

There was good deal of squealing. I sent my wife out on the first planeload – it was New Year's Eve, I remember. But people went, of course. Then a strange thing happened. I began to get tremendous pressure to get the total number remaining, including me, down to 12. That would have meant sending out my last marines, and although the Marines are not there to protect personnel - their first responsibility is to protect classified information - I liked the psychological impact of having them around. So I resisted, and got a rocket from Washington, citing the Secretary's personal order that no more than 12 people could remain. Luckily, the war started and was won before any more people could be evacuated.

No one told me until I got back to Washington why 12 had been a sacred number. But eventually I found out. Early in the buildup to War, the Pentagon had told State that they would not be responsible for rescuing Embassy personnel in countries, like Jordan, at risk for serious domestic uprisings when the shooting war started. That left the CIA, which had a very short take-off and landing airplane stationed within range. That plane had 12 seats. Our evacuation plan (which we kept filed under the 'fiction' category, of course) called for those of us left to make our way out of town to a prearranged landing spot, where the VSTOL would pick us up. No one, as far as I could determine, thought that if the Jordanian government could no longer protect us, we were going to be able to get out of Dodge at all. If we were all killed, and it turned out there was no evacuation plan, some political pain would have followed. But if there was an evacuation plan, no matter how unrealistic, asses would be covered.

Nevertheless, we spent a lot of time figuring out how to defend the Embassy, and I got some practice with a shotgun.

*Q: Didn't the detainees in Baghdad, the Embassy personnel that Saddam had been holding, finally come out through Amman? I interviewed Joe Wilson, who was Charge in Baghdad as you know.*

HARRISON: They did transit Amman. The King always took credit in conversations

with me for persuading Saddam that he should let these people go. But there were plenty of would-be peace makers at the time. Ramsey Clark, Jesse Jackson, Mohammad Ali all came through on their way to Baghdad to broker peace. There was nothing official about it, of course. But I met with some of them. For example, I always wanted to meet Jesse Jackson, so when he showed up I went out to the airport and drove him in. On the way in from the airport he was psyching himself up for his meeting with Saddam, not really talking to me but talking to himself. I don't think he realized who I was, and probably wouldn't have cared if he had. One thing sticks in my mind about Jackson, aside from this monologue he held with himself in the car. The Jordanians are very watch conscious. The King and Saddam both handed out Rolex's like party favors, usually the solid gold model.

*Q: This is tape nine, side one with Roger Harrison. Yes.*

HARRISON: Jackson, though, out did them all. He had the solid gold Rolex – the "Presidential" I think it's called - but his also had the diamond bezel around the edges. I was very impressed with that. I remember thinking that whatever else happened, Jackson wouldn't be out-watched. Then Mohammed Ali showed up, complete with entourage. The Champ was far gone in Parkinson's by then, so he wasn't going to persuade anybody about anything, much less Saddam Hussein about making peace. I went over to the hotel to meet him, and found a very large, inert man surrounded by hangers on, all of whom seemed to have an ax to grind. The thing about Ali was how big he is. His hand didn't so much shake mine as swallow it whole. Old Sonny Liston hadn't had a prayer. Anyway, one of the entourage decided to make the Embassy his headquarters, on Ali's behalf of course. He kept showing up at the Embassy, demanding things. I told the Marines to run him off. Very satisfying!

Another thing about evacuation is that it isn't as easy administratively as you might imagine. For example, it meant closing the school because the kids had left. But there were teacher contracts to pay and no income to pay them. Then there was the commissary. A lot of the stock it had was going to spoil, and there was no money to pay for things that had already been ordered and would now be delivered. We rented the building it was in, and suddenly there was no money to pay the rent.

*Q: So how did you solve those problems?*

HARRISON: One of the chief blessings of my early months in Amman was Lee Lohman. There are two kinds of admin officers in my experience, those who look for reasons things can't be done, and those who get things done. Lee was in the second category. He did a marvelous job. It took a great load off my shoulders. For example, when evacuated we stopped construction on a huge new chancellery building. The question was how the building site could be kept secure. Lee devised a bricking up process with all kinds of imbedded wires and things which would be very difficult to reproduce if the walls were breached. That meant we could resume construction when everyone returned without having to tear the existing shell of a building down.

*Q: The intelligence thing, did the King have a good relationship with the Israeli intelligence service?*

HARRISON: Yes, he had a very close relationship with Israeli intelligence. There was one individual in particular whose name at the moment escapes me who was a regular visitor to Amman, as the king had been to Israel throughout his reign. He was forced to adopt a certain public posture, but in terms of the interests of Jordan and incidentally of his own survival, the Israelis were of crucial importance. It had to be secret, of course.

His intelligence services were also useful in solving the problem of keeping the King in touch with what was going on in the country. The sort of authoritarian system he ran discourages bad news moving upward. There were other mechanisms to keep in touch with things. One was the open door policy at the Palace for visiting sheiks from the Bedouin tribes and other petitioners. The sheiks would often just show up, but when they did they would always have their meeting. One of the discouraging things for me was to be summoned to the palace, to open the door to the Chief of Protocol's office and to find the walls lined with sheiks, with their fly whisks and their worry beads. I knew I'd have to wait for all of them before I'd get my audience, and it could be hours.

The other democratic element to the system were petitions. I remember once watching the queen at an event we were staging to open up a project, an aid project in Jordan. As she made her way from the helicopter pad she was surrounded by petitioners, people pressing bits of paper into her hand. She always accepted these herself, then handed them to a lady in waiting who was there for the purpose. They could be anything, I was told, from intervention on a health issue, to a loan request, to college admission for a son. And they would all be dealt with, although not always as the petitioner might have wished.

*Q: I can see this in a Bedouin society, but what about all the Palestinians who were more city folk and all that? Did that type of thing; it sounds like this was designed for the Bedouins?*

HARRISON: That's right, but I think there was the same system for the Palestinians, but it wasn't carried out in a traditional way. My other fellow occupants of the Chief of Protocol's waiting room tended to be Jordanian Palestinians with various requests for the king. Of course, these were the Palestinian elite. They were not as enfranchised in this system as the Bedouins were because they were not as important to the King. In fact, he was suspicious of them. He was trying to purge the Army of Palestinians in my time. He was always conscious of division between communities, but again, he was not of either community. It was one of the keys to his rule.

In short, an outwardly very gentle man – I never saw him lose his temper – with the ruthlessness necessary to preserve family and power. Wait, I take that back. He lost his temper once in my presence – or almost did. It was when Bob Gates, trying to make conversation at a lunch, asked the King how far back he traced his lineage. There is nothing more insulting Bob could have said to Hussein, since, of course, the basis of Hashemite legitimacy was that they traced their descent directly to the prophet through

his daughter Fatima and Fatima's husband, Ali. They also claim a direct descent from Abraham and from the Prophet's great, great grandfather. So, when Gates innocently asked the question, the King visibly stiffened. It took him a moment to get himself under control before explaining to Gates. I guess he didn't really lose his temper, exactly, on that occasion either, but it was dangerous few seconds.

There was also a strain of self-pity and sanctimony in his judgments which often led him astray. He tended to see his cause as just and himself as a great world leader who deserved respect, and he was greatly upset whenever that role was denigrated. For example, he had a very keen eye for demarches which purported to be from Secretary Baker or President Bush but had in fact been drafted by the bureaucracy. Nothing was more inclined to bring a negative reaction no matter what the actual subject matter. I could spot a staff-written piece even better than the King could, so I often rewrote them to excise the bureaucratic traces. I don't know that I ever quite fooled him; he was always a little skeptical. But with a staff written piece, he'd just dismiss it out of hand, sometimes throwing them on the table after he'd read a paragraph or two. He understood that only Bush and Baker were important as interlocutors, and only personal messages from them deserved his attention. He simply wouldn't deal with anything less.

I remember a lot of depression in him in those days. He felt estranged from Washington, from Bush in particular after Kennebunkport. His pride prevented him from trying to heal the breach, which he felt was not his fault. He was smoking a lot and downing Pepsi's by the case, and his affect was very heavy, with occasional outburst.

*Q: What was he doing on the policy side?*

HARRISON: That's interesting. Soon after our return from Kennebunkport, the King invited me to lunch at the palace. These invitations would come out of the blue. I never knew what I was in for. In this case it was a luncheon cabinet meeting, with the Queen in attendance. The king welcomed me very graciously, but it was clear enough that the cabinet members resented my presence. There were a lot of sideways glances. The Prime Minister, Badran, was there, along with Zaid Bin Shaker, the Chief of the Royal Court, Marwan Qasim, the Foreign Minister, and the King's advisor Adnan Abu Odeh. The Prime Minister, Badran, had been appointed because of his close ties to Saddam Hussein and had just that morning from a very harrowing road trip to Baghdad. We were shooting up cars and trucks on the highway at that point.

*Q: This was after the war had started?*

HARRISON: This was during the air war, Desert Shield. Anyway, the lunch began with the Queen delivering herself of a long diatribe against President Bush, U.S. policy, imperialism in general and U.S. exploitation of the Arabs in particular. We exercised a double standard, she said, and were solely interesting in dominating Arab oil. Besides we had a habit of abandoning friends. She went for quite a while in this vein, really getting heated about the injustice of it all, until he simply glanced at her and she stopped, mid-sentence, and trailed off with some comment about taking up too much time. There was

no doubt about who wore the trousers in that family.

*Q: What was the queen's background?*

HARRISON: The Queen, Lisa Halaby as was, was the daughter of the head of Pan Am Airways. She'd gone to Princeton and been raised as an American and a Christian. She had become an interior designer; her firm was hired to redesign the Jordanian National Airlines. That's how they met. He was between wives. His Palestinian wife had been killed in a helicopter accident some years before. As far as I could see, it was a true love match. He did not put her aside as he had some of his previous wives when she reached 40.

All the American wives in Jordan were in a very delicate position once the war started. This was true of Noor as well. She had made every effort to be, and to seem to be, a Muslim. Noor al-Hussein, Light of Hussein, was her Islamic name. But, of course, she was always seen as American. Although she initially did the full Imelda, she'd toned that down. The economy had gone south in the late '80s and there had been a lot of resentment, she'd reacted to it by being less conspicuous on the international jet set scene. She just sort of kept her head down and did her long term good works. Some of this was for appearances, but her projects really were good works and she devoted considerable intelligence and energy to them.

*Q: Anyway, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but you were talking about she was going after you?*

HARRISON: Yes, she did this sort of initial opening diatribe which went on for I guess it must have been five or six minutes, and, as I say, he just cut her off with a glance and she blushed and apologized for going for so long. Then he told me why I was there. He was about to embark that afternoon to Baghdad where he would persuade Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait. I, of course, made approving noises about this, but he cut me short. Of course, he went on, Saddam would have to be given some gain from the invasion or he would lose face with the Iraqi people. He couldn't just withdraw. So, the King said, part of the proposal would be some border modifications in favor of Iraq, and also sovereignty over Boubyan Island, at the head of the Gulf, which the Kuwaitis controlled and which itself controlled the access to the Gulf from the Tigris-Euphrates delta. Then he sat back and waited for my reaction.

I had no guidance. No one in Washington had heard anything about this, and I wouldn't have had to time seek guidance in any case since he was leaving for Baghdad later that day. I should add that the Queen in her book talks about the King's sincere efforts for peace, but never mentions the quid. But it was the heart of the King's proposal.

*Q: You probably couldn't get guidance then, I mean real guidance.*

HARRISON: It would have taken 24 or 48 hours, but in a sense I didn't need guidance because I knew what the reaction of Washington would be. It was obvious. What the

King was describing was a political nightmare for Washington. He would cut a deal with Saddam giving Saddam a lot of what he wanted, but also letting him look reasonable, as if he were willing to compromise. I could imagine the King and Saddam standing on the steps of Saddam's palace announcing that peace was at hand, if only Washington would be more flexible. So sure was I of this outcome – and so sure do I remain now, 15 years later – that I put it to Hussein in the strongest terms I could. I remember myself leaning forward across the table. I said that if he did what he proposed, Washington would repudiate the agreement and repudiate him personally. The personal element was always a big deal to the King – his friendship with Eisenhower and George Bush – and that's why I emphasized this is particular. The only outcome my government would accept, I told Hussein, was complete withdrawal from Kuwait without condition. The King said that Saddam could not simply withdrawal without gain. His people would never accept that. I stood my ground. Then the lunch went on, even more uncomfortably than before.

It made no difference, of course. He went to Baghdad and, by all reports, offered Saddam the deal he had previewed for me. Luckily, Saddam dismissed the idea. It was a golden opportunity for him, but he was not interested in cutting a deal, thank God. He always was a study in diplomatic ineptitude. So, the king came back irritated with Saddam, although he continued to try to play the role of mediator. Hussein never did accept that here was no chance for mediation. If he got Saddam to withdraw without condition, everyone would thank him. But he wanted to offer Saddam something. He wanted to have something to negotiate with. But that was just the point; Saddam couldn't be seen to gain anything. Washington was unwilling to tolerate Hussein in the negotiator's role.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that the king was concerned that he might be making another decision like the disastrous 1967 decision to join in the Seven Day War that lost him Jerusalem and the West Bank? Was he worried about doing it again?*

HARRISON: No, it wasn't as existential as it had been in sixty-seven. It wasn't so much what he stood to lose as what he hoped to gain in terms of international recognition. He certainly knew that Saddam was not going to prevail militarily. He knew how militarily powerful we were. He told me on various occasions that he was trying to educate Saddam about this because Saddam didn't realize the sort of military force we could muster. Saddam's battle experience had been of Iranians running across their front with Qurans held high, screaming and being shot. It wasn't even a matter of siding with Saddam, because the King knew if there were war, Saddam was going to lose and lose quickly. On the other hand, the King had a domestic constituency that was overwhelmingly and emotionally committed to Saddam Hussein, so siding openly with the United States was also a problem. Iraqi withdrawal had to be addressed; but it had to be addressed short of war, because war for him was the worst of outcomes. Iraq would be destroyed and Iraq was his major economic partner. If he could prevent that, he would, and he continued down that track long after it was clear he was alienating everyone, Arabs and the U.S. included. We weren't going to accept a compromise. He and his advisors were frustrated by what they saw as our unreasonableness in this matter, but in fact it was a miscalculation on their part which led the King to do things which worsened his standing with Washington more than necessary. These included, in particular, a series of diatribes

against the U.S. which were designed to please his population, but were very displeasing indeed to the United States. It was also the core of all the talk of an "Arab solution" to the problem. If there were to be an Arab solution, it would render legitimate whatever outcome the King might broker, and also put him where he wanted to be, as the great mediator of Arab disputes. The Kuwaitis would have to sacrifice interests, but who really cared?

But the King didn't help matters by vacillating on Saddam, by his self-righteousness and by his tendency to deny any culpability for the war. On the contrary, he cast himself in meetings with Arabs, as he had with Bush, as the prophet who had warned about what was coming and urged rational policies on his Arab friends. So he alienated not just Washington, but the gulf states and Saudi Arabia, who were his paymasters and had been for a long time. They were not slow to show their displeasure.

For example, one day soon after the beginning of the war the pipeline from Saudi Arabia, which had been supplying Jordan with free oil for 20 years, suddenly dried up. An urgent message went from Jordan to Riyadh asking why that had happened. The message came back that there was a little matter of a bill for fifteen years' worth of oil. The King responded that that he had been assured by King Fahd that this oil would be provided in perpetuity for free. No record of that, the Saudi's said, but pay up and we'll turn on the tap.

That posed quite a dilemma for the Jordanians. They had only the reserves in the tanks at the refinery in Zarqa, where the pipeline terminated.

*Q: Were you called in to try to do something with the Saudis?*

HARRISON: The energy minister called me in to ask for U.S. intervention in Riyadh, which I reported. I think we did raise the issue with the Saudis, but without much conviction, in part because of the anti-King feeling in Washington, and in part because we were just then asking the Saudis to finance the war. At any rate, the pipeline did not resume operation. At that point, Saddam announced that he would make up for Saudi oil supplies to Jordan at a subsidized price. He could send the oil by tanker truck down the Damascus-Amman highway. But that would violate U.N. sanctions. Someone, perhaps it was Pickering in New York, came up with a solution. The Security Council, without altering the sanctions regime, would "take note" of the Jordanian requirement to import oil. Although the Jordanians would technically be in violation of the sanctions regime, the message was that the U.N. would not pursue the matter. So the oil supplies from Iraq by truck commenced.

We had air patrols over Iraq at this point looking for scuds. The Iraqi scud attacks on Israel had begun, so it was very high priority to destroy the missiles on their mobile launchers. Oil tankers, it turns out, look from the air a lot like Scud canisters. We never did find a Scud from the air, but we blew hell out of a number of Jordanian oil tankers. Those were the cylindrical objects shown in the Schwarzkopf videos when he touted the accuracy of our scud counter attacks.

I first found out about this when I was called to see the Foreign Minister. Qasim had departed by this time, and it was Tahir Masri. I was back on the couch and served tea. Masri said we had acquiesced in the Iraq oil supplies, so why were we destroying the tankers? I asked that question of Washington, and when I read the reply to Masri a few days later he said that it amounted to saying that we weren't destroying the tankers and what's more, we weren't going to stop.

*Q: Was there a press corps there that was reporting this back so that the Washington papers would constantly harping on, here is a guy, King Hussein, who had been very popular in the United States, but going against us.*

HARRISON: Yes, I think there was an element of that. In reality, foreign policy is a ruthless business in which interests trump friendships, but there was a feeling in Washington was that we had done many favors for the king over the years, that he had betrayed us now, and therefore that he deserved what he got. The only push back against this tendency came from the President himself and Jim Baker. Of course, that's all you really need. The bureaucracy was all set to punt Hussein firmly between the uprights, but Bush and Baker would not agree. When Hussein denounced them, they wouldn't fire back. In fact, they would express understanding about the difficulties under which the King labored. I was not slow to remind the King of this and to point out how his personal attacks on them were both unnecessary and especially damaging.

*Q: I would think explaining the King would not endear you to the bureaucracy back in Washington, and further drive you into that into the category of oh this is just another apologist.*

HARRISON: Yes, it actually drove me into private industry. I wasn't seen as a friendly force by the military either because of my criticisms of the way the navy was conducting the blockade in Aqaba. I remember we got information about a load of Iraqi dates in Aqaba about to ship out. Iraqi dates are much sought after. I don't like dates, but those who do say Iraqi dates are the best. But sanctions were on, so I went to the Foreign Office to protest, and the shipment was stopped. The shipload fermented in the Aqaba sun there for the next six months until they were finally allowed out to be dumped at sea. That was the only example, as far as I know, of the Navy's blockade ever actually blockading anything.

Through all this, it was always my feeling that I was on my own. My betters were often less than forthcoming with information and felt no particular sense of loyalty to a brother officer in a difficult position. Part of this is the culture of the place, but part of it, too, may have been that I wasn't an NEA hand. But even if I had been, I'm not sure it would have been different. This shouldn't have come as a shock to anyone who'd been around in the Service as long as I had been. Still, it made my job much more difficult. I always had to weigh the danger in my rear as well as try to deal with the people in front of me.

Later, a friend who had been deputy at NSA during my tenure in Amman told me he had

been worried about me. They were after you, he said. They were out to get you. He was really talking about the two assassination plots that were foiled during my time. NSA intercepts had foiled one of the plots. In the other, two Jordanian agents had blown their covers in Syria and been assassinated by the Assad regime in order to save my life. But such was my state of mind that I assumed at first my old NSA friend, when he talked about people out to get me, was talking about Washington.

*Q: The enemy was us?*

HARRISON: It was exemplified in many ways, but one that sticks in my mind was a visit by Skip Gnehm. He was ambassador designate to Kuwait at the time, traveling around the region whipping up support for sanctions enforcement and for Desert Storm. He served twice in Jordan, including as DCM. As we were riding over the palace in my car, Skip commiserated with me. He said he knew that I'd had to bring a lot of bad news to the King. But don't worry, Skip said, I'm bringing a tough message so they'll know this is not just you, that you're reflecting Washington's view. Then we were ushered into the Presence and Skip went all to pieces, gushing about his admiration and toadying in a way that would have made even the Palace retainers blush. His first words were, and I quote from precise memory: "Your majesty, my heart overflows to be in your presence again". That was the toughest thing he said; it went downhill after that. I told him in the car back that I didn't think the King would ever recover from the verbal beating he'd just received. He was apologetic. But I think it was really a part of the process then. I was the front man for Washington's displeasure. Skip fawned. The CIA gave the King cars and motorcycles and didn't bother him about things he didn't want to do. I was left to scold.

*Q: Were there any of these traveling emissaries bouncing through, you know, telling the king what he should do and that sort of thing?*

HARRISON: Rich Armitage came. This was in January of 1991 as I recall, before Desert Storm started. There was some concern that I would object, but in fact I welcomed Rich. He was very popular among the Jordanian leadership because he had done a lot to modernize their military when he was assistant secretary of defense. He delivered a good message. So, I don't want to cast Washington in a consistently awful light here. There was interest in building bridges that came from the top in Washington if not from the trenches. But the King was his own worst enemy.

All of the damaging royal rhetorical came to a head in January, 1991 right after the bunker explosion in Baghdad. We had put an earth-penetrator on a multi-story, underground parking garage in Baghdad because we thought Saddam was there. The bomb penetrated six levels of reinforced concrete and killed a lot of civilians who had been using the garage as a shelter. Needless to say, the intelligence was faulty. Saddam wasn't there. The King watched the aftermath on CNN, ironically enough from a feed installed from our Embassy. The result was a speech on Jordanian television referring to Saddam as his "brother" and denouncing the United States and its century-long exploitation of the Arabs. It was exactly the sort of thing that drove Washington crazy. I remember watching the speech and thinking that it was going to make my job a lot easier

because there would be no relationship left to repair.

As a sidelight, we had information that the speech was written by Adnan Abu Odeh, the nominal Palestinian in the King's group of advisers. That's what we reported. He denies it. I've seen him several times since I left Amman, and every time I do he begins by telling me how unpopular I was in Jordan, detailing who in particular didn't like me, and then denies that he wrote the speech. In fact, he says, he objected to the speech, so the King gave the task to one of his subordinates. I recently told that story to someone who had been at the Palace at the time, and he just laughed.

I thought at the time that the King was giving in to a deep anger that he had suppressed for 40 years. From that point of view, it was an honest speech – foolish but honest. He quickly slipped back into his usual role of loyal ally and friend of peace. He even sent what amounted to a congratulatory message to President Bush on our victory. But for this one moment, the mask came off.

In the end it didn't matter all that much. Hussein was rescued from his folly as he had always been. After the war, we wanted to pursue the peace process, we needed a cooperative Arab partner, and he was more than willing. But the speech was still a huge miscalculation. Those few in Washington who still trusted him, or at least tried to understand his limitations, never trusted him again.

There was another incident soon after that which I should probably repeat in this context. This was the speech from the throne to Parliament. It was after the War. I was there with a few staffers, none of us Arabic speakers. My only Arabic speaker, David Hale, had been filched from me by Ryan Crocker in Beirut over my strong protests. The speech, of course, was in Arabic, but as we were filing in we were given the official Palace English translation of the text. That version repeated many of the tired and extreme arguments about the West that had been the staple of the King's public statements earlier in my tenure. We reported on the text we were provided, but it turned out not to be the speech the King actually delivered. The one he delivered was more moderate and omitted some of the language which was most objectionable. We had to do a very quick report to correct the record, but still the speech resulted in the cancellation of a meeting with Baker in Europe and slowed the rehabilitation of Hussein and, of course, fed his own resentments.

I never did find out why we'd been given one speech and he'd delivered another. That was in fact what occurred.

*Q: Did Crown Prince Hassan have a role in all of this?*

HARRISON: I think Hassan's role was limited. It might have helped matters if he'd had a greater role as counselor to the King, because he was generally sensible and less given, it seemed to me, to the sort of political romanticism that sometimes clouded the King's judgment.

He was a scholarly man who had been educated in England, and he was thoroughly secular. His wife once told me that he kept the air conditioner on all winter so that it would drown out the early call to prayer so he could sleep.

All of the Hashemite leadership was secular to a degree, but the Crown Prince more than most. Hassan spoke in Oxford English, saw himself as the leader of the think tank element of the palace and had a group of bright young men around him. He was continually commissioning studies, going to conferences abroad and entering into the international dialogue. Although we never had a good relationship, I think he was a decent man, and one of the few in the royal family who took his marriage vows seriously. His wife, Princess Sarvath, was an upper class Pakistani lady, very ambitious for her husband, who always dressed in the fashions of the Pakistani elites. Her relations with Noor, so rumor had it, were poisonous. Both were ambitious for their children, of course, and if Hassan inherited the throne, Sarvath's eldest son rather than Noor's would become heir presumptive. King Hussein's wishes might be otherwise, but they would be ignored once the old King was dead. This, and Sarvath's too obvious ambition for her husband, are rumored to be one reason Hassan was removed from the line of succession, but that was well after my time, of course.

Initially my relations with him were good, but not for long. The break began when, during the long build up the Desert Storm, Hassan conceived an international conference to discuss what would happen when refugees began once again streaming across Jordan's borders. This would include possible Palestinians forced across the Jordan border by Israel. He convened a group of ambassadors to ask for their support. I queried Washington about whether I should attend the conference, and was told not to. The role of the United States would obviously be crucial whatever the scenario, so if the American Ambassador wasn't a participant, it would take the air out of the proceedings. Because of this, after my initial refusal, the Crown Prince called personally to ask me to attend. I could have appealed to Washington, and I should have. Perhaps I should have simply gone and not asked for approval, although there would have been some bureaucratic peril in that for me given my record of recalcitrance. Still, I said no. The Crown Prince really never forgave me for that. Dick Murphy, who was my houseguest, was an invitee. A former Assistant Secretary, he was in private life by then. I had shared my dilemma with him, and he shared my confidence with the Crown Prince. Whatever Murphy said, it enraged the Crown Prince, who called me in great anger. He felt personally insulted. I immediately called Murphy back in Washington and asked him what he'd said. He initially denied saying anything. I was angry myself, and told Murphy that whatever he'd said, it had made a tough job a lot tougher. This turned out to be true. Although I apologized to Hassan and told him I could have handled the matter better than I had, our relations never recovered. I didn't see much of him for my last two years in country. I wasn't invited to his daughter's wedding as my fellow ambassadors were. I don't think the CP had much influence on the King in terms of the King's relations with me, but it was an uncomfortable aspect of the rest of my tenure in Jordan. I'd always admired Dick Murphy. But of all the people I dealt with in my three years, he was the only one, as far as I know, who betrayed my confidence

*Q: How about the King's other Advisors?*

HARRISON: As I observed the cabinet in those days, the key figure was always Sharif Zaid Bin Shaker, a very charming and cynical man. I liked him very much. He exemplified a kind of old generation charm and had a great knack of making people feel comfortable in his presence. He also had a good sense of humor and was a very natty dresser. He had been a soldier of some distinction, but saw himself above the ruck of politics, although he was twice Prime Minister in my time. His role, as I observed it, was one of implementation. He would do what the King wanted done, whether as Prime Minister or Chief of the Royal Court. With the King, he was always eager to please.

It was ironic that Bin Shaker despised politics, because the King had reestablished the Parliament, and part of Bin Shaker's job was to keep recalcitrant delegates in line. Half the Parliament was appointed by the King, and the other half came from gerrymandered districts, but that didn't mean that the Parliamentarians themselves were disciplined. They were Arabs after all; it wasn't the Soviet Union. The parliament did play a very useful role as a safety valve of public discontent. I was regularly denounced in debates. I remember once I went with my Australian colleague to an archeological site above the Dead Sea and was then accused in Parliament of having been on a spy mission. My view was that I should be visible throughout Jordan in this period, highlighting the benefits of the good relationship with the United States. So I visited our AID projects like schools, and the business that had gotten started with U.S. aid money. I must say nobody was ever very happy to see me at these schools or these business projects, but they didn't know how to say no. I would try to give as good a name to the United States as possible.

*Q: Let's talk about what happened when Desert Storm began in January?*

HARRISON: First, let me a describe a final visit to the border. During the air war at the end of 1990 we'd had some planes shot down over Iraq and some pilots captured. The King told me that on one of his trips to Baghdad he was going to persuade Saddam to free our POW's. Whether or not it was the King's influence, in fact Saddam did agree to release them, along with some British pilots captured around the same time. Arrangements were made for the Red Crescent to bring them to the border with Jordan and hand them over to me and Tony Reeves, the British Ambassador. The Red Crescent had set up a temporary camp in the desert near an air strip – a big canvas tent and klieg lights powered by a gas generator. It was night when Tony and I got there, but there were already perhaps a hundred newspaper people gathered, waiting for the POW's to appear. They were standing perhaps 50 meters from the tent behind a cordon of Jordanian soldiers. We had instructions from capitals not to allow interviews with the POWs, so we decided to cut a deal. We told the assembled reporters and photographers that we would bring the POW's out of the tent and walk them 20 feet or so to the waiting cars that were going to take them to a C-130 on the strip nearby. So, they would have a photo op from where they were, but they wouldn't be allowed any closer and there would be no questions for the newly released POW.

The POW's arrived in Red Crescent vehicles parked behind the tents and out of sight.

The ex-prisoners were given medical checks and officially signed over. The cars had pulled up as we had arranged and we began to usher them between tent and cars when all hell broke loose. The newsmen and photographers immediately broke through the line of soldiers and came running toward us. In the stampede, someone kicked out the line connecting the generators to the lights and suddenly it was dark as the inside of your hat. There was no moon, and when it's dark in the desert it's by God dark. I'd seen them coming when the lights were still on, so was trying to keep the car door open while the POW's got in, but I was thrown bodily to one side in the frenzy. I heard the car door slam and the cars rev out of there, with a photographer clinging to the rear view mirror, and everyone else running after. Then suddenly I was along in the middle of the desert with no idea where the plane was and no way to get there. Luckily, a jeep pulled up and I made my flight.

*Q: Was the war being followed on TV in Jordan the way it was almost around the world using CNN?*

HARRISON: CNN was not widespread then. We had a satellite feed at the Embassy as part of a deal with Palace to provide CNN to them.

We weren't told about the date of the invasion, but I was convinced that once the deadline passed on January 15, there would be nothing to gain by delay. Our first notification, however, came some hours after the initial attack on the morning of January 16th. The wife of one of my staff was in the U.S. and had seen the news on CNN. I don't think we ever were officially notified. Sometime after that, perhaps 3:00 A.M., a message arrived at the Embassy for the Foreign Minister. I went immediately to his house, where he received me in his robe and slippers. The Jordanians, of course, were already aware of our action. He gave me a cup of tea, and back to the Embassy I went.

The plan was for the remaining staff to come into the Embassy. We slept there for a couple of nights until it became clear that not much was going to happen. This of course, was the land invasion; the air war had been going on for some time. We had an operation center, but after a couple of days it seemed silly. There was nothing going on. The domestic situation had stayed calm, so we all went back home.

Later the day of the invasion, I received a cable with a message for the King. This was the 16th of January of '91. The message was very tough. The essence was that the United States was now at war, and if the Jordanians should impede us in any way, we would not hesitate to swat them aside. I called for an appointment with the king and was told that he would receive me at the military Chief of Staff's office. The King was there along with the Crown Prince, both in military uniform. I sat down and delivered the demarche straight, exactly as it had been received. I simply read it. When I was finished, I waited for comment, but the King just shrugged and smiled. So I got up to go. We were near the door when the Crown Prince began snarling at me about the effrontery of all this, and came at me physically, arms extended. The King pushed himself between us. I said something about how it was a good time to keep our heads, and beat a hasty retreat. It was, in short, a memorable experience.

Of course the War was over almost as quickly as it had begun. The Jordanian public stayed calm as indeed when things got serious as I mentioned before. Soon after the war the king sent a letter to Bush I went over to get which was very conciliatory on exactly the opposite tone than the one he'd been taking before the war. The timing wasn't good. The message was seen in Washington as shameless and blatant. I don't remember any response. Meanwhile, the King ordered the Crown Prince to compile a history of the events leading up to invasion of Kuwait, designed to show that the King had behaved impeccably throughout. I told the Crown Prince this was mistake, but it made no difference of course.

*Q: This is tape ten, side one with Roger Harrison. Roger, talk about the Iraqi Scud attacks on Israel. Was there any impact on you?*

HARRISON: Well, none of them fell short, although my Chinese counterpart often told me how worried he was that one would. The concern in Washington and Amman was that the Israelis would attack the Scud launchers directly by air, which would mean flying through Jordanian airspace. The Commander of the Air Force, a dapper man named Shurdom, called me in for a chat during this period. He said that if the Jordanians tried to overfly Jordanian airspace, the Jordanians would have to defend themselves. He realized, he said, that Jordanian F-5s wouldn't have much hope against Israeli F-16s and F-14s, but the honor of Jordan would demand that they try. We then talked about other things for a few minutes. When I was about to leave, Shurdom said as a parting remark that he'd had a tough week. There was a problem with Jordanian air defense radar in the south of the country. It had ceased to function, and the engineers had not been able to repair it. He pointed on the map in his office to the areas where the Jordanians were now effectively blind. I reported this of course to both Washington and Tel Aviv. Luckily, it never came to an Israeli attack, but if it had, I'm convinced the Jordanians would have had radar problems.

*Q: Were you getting good intelligence from your CIA station in this period?*

The CIA had a long tradition with the king, who'd once been on the payroll. That was a thing of the past in my time, but it was memorialized, so to speak, by the birthday gift they gave him every year. It was a HUM-V one year, and another year a satellite navigation system for his yacht. Traditionally in Jordan the CIA station chief had independent access to the king. I remember Alan Wolf who was a crusty old CIA station chief in London telling me that the station chief really ran the operation in Jordan. The Ambassador was just a figurehead. Station chiefs tend to be a little strange, and Alan Wolf was one of the strangest around. But there was an element of truth in what he said. The tradition in Jordan was that the station chief had independent access to the King. I couldn't have ended that process had I wanted to; among other things, it suited the King very well. The CIA also had separate communication facilities. The interest of the CIA at that point was in exfiltration and infiltration into Jordan, but they also wanted to use Jordan as a base to send balloons with leaflets over Baghdad. Frank Anderson the area director from the CIA came out bearing a new BMW motorcycle and a request that the

King allowed these balloon drops. The king played all that superbly well. He said, "Well, the winds aren't right." He delayed it, he dragged it out, he rode the motorcycle and let me ride it, too. Eventually the war was over.

*Q: We had planes flying over there all the time.*

HARRISON: They wanted to use balloons because they had a psychological warfare division that had balloons and loved leaflets. It was no more complicated than that. Imagine someone picking up a leaflet and deciding to join the opposition. I don't think people are that stupid, but the CIA does.

*Q: We used to get balloons over Seoul from North Korea and we'd get leaflets.*

HARRISON: I think it's a good thing to keep leaflet people occupied and off the streets. The king was not about to let it happen and successfully put it off. He was very cooperative with the CIA in terms of infiltration and exfiltration from Iraq, so his stock was high with the Agency. Also, the CIA takes a very much more practical view of foreign policy than the State Department is forced to take. State has to be the spokesman for all the moral posturing of the administration and Congress. That's much of what ambassadors do. The CIA can be more pragmatic and realistic. It makes their job a lot easier than ours.

One of the things that they had no illusions about in the case of Jordan was the sanctions regime. I spent most of my time complaining about lax Jordanian sanctions enforcement. The CIA treated that whole process with the disdain it deserved. The King knew that when he dealt with the Agency he wasn't going to be hectored. He and my station chief would talk about serious business in a serious way.

This really became a problem after the war when the King became convinced that the State Department was his enemy in Washington and the CIA was his friend. The CIA understood and the State Department did not. He thought that if he could just bypass State and get to the White House, the misunderstandings would disappear. So he tried to send a message to Bush through Gates at CIA, using my station chief as the go between, and telling him not to inform me. The station chief did as he was asked. I discovered this for the first time because I got a call from Djerejian - John Kelly thankfully was gone - telling me that this had happened. The King's missive had reached Bob Gates, who had sent it immediately to Baker at State.

*Q: Gates, you mean the head of the CIA?*

HARRISON: The CIA, yes. He was too canny a bureaucratic player to think he could actually go around Baker with a message from Hussein to Bush. So, the message went to State where Ed Djerejian was given the task of telling me about it. The substance of his message to me was that State would not support me if I wanted to fire my station chief because he had bypassed me. Frankly, it never would have occurred to me that I might expect their support for something like that, so I wasn't surprised.

*Q: That they would not support you?*

HARRISON: Of course not. Although theoretically I had the power to remove anyone on my staff, I was never naive enough to think that theory would accord with practice when it came to the CIA. I reacted in two ways. I told the station chief that if there were another attempt to bypass I would send him home anyway, and he pledged not to repeat what he had done, a pledge which he and I both treated with seriousness that it deserved. I let it be known to the King's principal advisor, Bin Shaker, that it wasn't any way to do business, and that, for better or worse, Baker could not be bypassed no matter how much they believed that the CIA understood them in a way State did not. As far as I know it never happened again, but only because the King realized it couldn't work. Bob Gates was not going to go behind Jim Baker's back. Still, it showed the tenuous grip I had on authority where the station was involved. This was probably more of an issue in Jordan than in many places because of the traditional relationship between the CIA and the King. The King used that channel much more extensively in the second two years of my tenure in Jordan than he had at the beginning. The station chief was really the favored guest in the palace. As I say, the King liked dealing with intelligence people. They wanted things from him, and he wanted things from them, and they weren't inclined to prate about human rights or trade sanctions. I was received by the King, but my Station Chief was invited. The latter would usually come to brief me on his conversations with the King, but it was not a happy circumstance for me.

*Q: Was this a message that was being sent to you, too?*

HARRISON: It may be. It certainly indicated that I was not in favor. That much is clear. Whether that was a reaction to me or whether it was a reaction to the general sense that the people I represented did not have the best interests of Jordan at heart, I can't say. It may have been a combination of both. In any case, we all together embarked on that post war period and the issue changed very quickly from war to peace. I should say that we had taken a line against Saddam's attempt to link his invasion of Kuwait with the Palestinian issue. He would withdraw, he repeatedly said, as soon as the Israelis withdrew from occupied territories. That line had been successful to a degree. Not that the Palestinians in Jordan were self-deceptive enough to believe it, but it did give them another talking point to repeat endlessly to me. In response, we said that as soon as the war was over we would reengage very energetically with the peace process. Of course, no one believed it, and I didn't believe it either. The Arabs view was that, having defeated the only Arab power with any military force and co-opted the rest, we would have the oil producers in our pocket, and wouldn't care about the rest. Made sense to me, although I didn't tell them that. But, of course, the Bush administration to their everlasting credit was serious about it. They engaged in a major way to reenergize the peace process beginning with a series of Baker trips to the region. He began hammering together the outlines of what became the Madrid conference, overcoming Israeli resistance about dealing with the PLO, and attempting to find Palestinians who could be presented, with more or less credibility, as independent of Hamas. This was a fiction, of course, but one just substantial enough for everyone to profess to believe in it. I should say in this context

that Arafat had been, if anything, more compromised by the Gulf War than the king had been. Arafat knew that Saddam was not his friend, and would have loved to have him shot should he ever fall within Iraqi grasp. So he took some trouble not to. As well, the PLO took a very skeptical view of the invasion of Kuwait when it first took place, not least because they got a lot of money from the Kuwaitis and were not eager to see that source of funds cut off. But, the PLO rank and file was overwhelmingly pro-Saddam and Arafat very quickly found that if you wanted to be the leader of the movement he had to be out front, so he took himself off Baghdad to make his peace with Saddam. Saddam needed all the friends he could get at that stage, so it all culminated in a famous hug in Baghdad. The state of intra-Arab relations can always be assessed on the basis of who's hugging whom and how enthusiastically. But this hug, broadcast to the world, put Arafat firmly on the losing side, dried up money from the Gulf and lost him any residual American tolerance he might have enjoyed.

Still, it wasn't fatal for either the King or Abu Ammar. After the war when peace was the issue, we needed Arafat again just as we needed Hussein so in spite of all their transgression they were both rehabilitated. Baker's post war trips to the region were the mechanism by which this was done. A very no nonsense guy, Baker, with very few illusions about anything really and earnestly committed to the cause of peace in the Middle East, as was the president who sent him. In fact, I think Bush eventually sacrificed his presidency on the altar of Middle East peace because it diverted his attention from some domestic priorities. Had he sent Baker to Peoria instead of Palestine I think it would have preserved the popularity that he won in the war, but he did the selfless thing, unexpectedly from a politician. Baker began a series of trips out to the region, six of them in the end and meetings with the king to set out the preconditions.

The King, of course, was more than eager to help. It put him not only back in the game, but in the center of the ring. Our interests were convergent. He, too, wanted a settlement of Palestinian problem, which threatened him in a variety of ways and kept his own Palestinian population on constant boil. So all was rapidly forgiven. Not by the Gulfies or the Saudis. They never forgave as long as the Old King was alive. But we needed the King, and have anyway short memories. What he wanted was not a Palestinian state, but a Palestinian dependency, but still, a peace settlement.

*Q: Talk about the Bush/Baker post war approach to the peace process.*

The idea was to start peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians under international auspices. The hang up, as it had always been, was Israeli refusal to deal with representatives of the PLO. We had also followed that prohibition, but Baker understood that if we wanted some sort of settlement based around land for peace, the PLO would have to be represented. The first step would be to find representative Palestinians who could speak for that community but who could be presented as free from PLO associations. It was a diplomatic fiction, of course, that anyone who represented Palestinians could also be independent of Fatah, so what were wanted were individuals who were not directly associated with Arafat and company, or, at least, could be presented that way. If such could be found, and the Israelis agreed, real negotiations

could begin. After his six or so visits, Baker succeeded in crafting general agreement to a Palestinian negotiating team, and to the opening of negotiations in Madrid. Quite an achievement. The goal was an interim agreement with some increased autonomy for the Palestinian and an end to Israeli settlement expansion. There was no talk at the time of an independent Palestinian state. That would come later, under George W. Bush.

My role in all this was limited. I would shake hands with Baker at the bottom of the ramp at the airport and sit through the meetings. But Baker's habit was to ride to and from the palace with the foreign minister, and to leave Jordan as soon as the day's meetings were concluded. Secretary Powell always rides to meetings with U.S. ambassadors, which is a smart thing to do – and good for morale.

The only time I played a role was in the first meeting with took place in Aqaba and afterwards the king had said something about going ahead without Syrian support. Baker wanted to establish that that's what he really said. He sent me back to the palace to confirm that with the king as Baker waited in his plane on the runway. I was motorcaded over to the palace, talked to the king, motorcaded back, ran up the steps, delivered the message and the plane took off. Otherwise, Baker never seemed eager for my advice. Occasionally I would intrude it at the hotel or when I could catch him unawares.

During the morning session on one of these trips, Baker made a mistake in the way he put an issue to the King. It was important, so I followed Baker into bathroom, took the adjacent urinal and told him what I thought he should do to explain. To his credit, he took the advice, went back into lunch, changed the position and I thought, got the agreement, which I don't think he would have gotten otherwise. That was obviously not a tactic I could use too often.

*Q: Was Dennis Ross did you feel the person, did you feel it was Baker doing this pretty much straightforward on his own?*

HARRISON: I think Ross was his key advisor. The Assistant Secretary, Kelly, had not in the inner circle as far as I could see, but his replacement, Ed Djerejian, very much was. Margaret Tutwiler, Baker's press secretary, was important in that process, a kind of informal traveling partner. And in spite of doing without much advice from me, I think Baker did a marvelous job. He put aside his own distrust of the King and dislike of Arafat, and rehabilitated both. He was tough and relentless, and, of course, he was assumed to speak for President Bush. The Madrid Conference and all that followed were Baker's achievement.

As for the King, he was enthusiastic. He'd always been pragmatic about the Israelis and a relative moderate on the peace process, and now he had the additional incentive of wanting to repair relations with us.

*Q: Did you feel any coolness towards you even more I mean as an aftermath from the State Department?*

HARRISON: No, not in particular. There wasn't so much hostility as a sense of detachment. Baker did not use the State Department much as an advisory mechanism and those few State Department officers who were brought into the inner circle were not eager to serve as conduits to other colleagues. The big issues were the peace process and sanctions enforcement against Iraq as well as intelligence cooperation. Bob Gates paid several visits, usually to Eilat, but later to Amman as well. On one of those visits he made a casual remark that resulted in a thorough take down of our electronic intelligence network in the country. We had had an intercept from the border post in Jordan to the effect that a warning had come out from Amman that Americans were coming to the border, so tighten up sanctions enforcement until they left. Gates alluded to this, and the next day the Jordanians did a through scrub that eliminated a lot of our assets. We knew, of course, that the sanctions were enforced spottily at best for all kinds of economic and political reasons. It was my job to complain about this, but the King always grew indignant at any hint that the Iraqi border might be porous. I would always respond that whatever the King thought, there was a perception in Washington that sanctions were being ignored, that this would have repercussions for our relationship and should therefore be dealt with. I felt duty bound to deliver this message as often as Washington asked me to, which was once a month or so. I was also the conduit for Washington unhappiness on other issues, particularly human rights. When good news was available, the bureau would call in the Jordanian ambassador and deliver it to him.

In short, I would have to say that my last two years there were much less eventful. I was always received by the King when I asked for appointments and never lost access to him. He would sometimes confide in me. Ministers would accept my invitations to dinner, and my relations with the queen were always cordial, as were those with Prince Abdullah, then commander of Special Forces and now the King. He once told me when we shared a flight to New York that he, Abdullah, had been told by his father the King that he was ticketed for Commander of the Armed Forces. Abdullah was the King's eldest, but his mother was British rather than Arab and he himself was more American in affect that Arab.

Things even improved a bit with the Crown Prince. There was one other incident with him near the end of my time. I had been asked to ascertain the Jordanian position on a U.N vote. The King was out of the country leaving the Crown Prince as regent, so I asked for a meeting. He had ignored my meeting requests for some months before that, but this one he granted. He told me that the Jordanians would vote with us at the U.N. I asked if this would continue to be true even if the Syrians voted against us. He replied, with some indignation, that the Jordanians would vote with us regardless of what the Syrians did. That was welcome news to our UN delegation, which used my report to try to build other Arab support. This all happened on a Thursday. Over the weekend, the King returned, and on the following Monday the Jordanians voted against us.

There was some anger at the Jordanians because of this. As for me, I sent a cable saying it was really my fault. I should have confirmed the vote with the King after his return. The Crown Prince had been very definite in his conversation with me, and he wouldn't have appreciated my checking on his word. But it was precedent breaking for the

Jordanians to vote with us against the Syrians, and I should have had foresight and wisdom to confirm that they meant to do so with the only authority that mattered in the country, which was the King. I said in the cable that it was my impression the Jordanians had not switched their position, but that I had misreported it by relying too much on the word of the Crown Prince. In short, I took the blame. It brought great praise from Washington, where no one could remember an instance of an ambassador taking the blame. The result was that the irritation at the Jordanians cooled, my reputation was enhanced, and people tended to forget that it was, in fact, my fault.

Several months passed and Bob Gates came to town. He was still DCI then, and the Crown Prince had him to dinner. He had to have me as well, of course. At some point in the dinner, Hassan launched into a monologue. I always listened closely because the Prince had the habit of switching subjects abruptly and then switching back a few minutes later, without notice and without antecedents. He would just suddenly be talking about something else, then just as suddenly be back on the original topic. I had figured this out and tried to serve as an interpreter, throwing in an explanatory comment so the listeners would know what page we were suddenly on.

In the middle of the Crown Prince's oration, he pulled one of these sudden switches. Sometimes, he said, mistakes were made, even where U.N. votes were concerned. He was apologizing. He never looked at me when he did this, and Gates had no idea what he was talking about. A nice thing to do, I thought, especially for as proud as man as the Crown Prince. He also told the Charge after I had departed that he regretted that our relationship had not been better. Me, too.

*Q: You mentioned your staff. Could you talk a little bit about the role of your truncated embassy during the war and after the war, the DCM, political secretary, economic secretary, how did they operate?*

HARRISON: Actually I think it improved our reporting. We did a lot better job with 12 people than we had ever done with 80 or whatever we normally had. This was especially true of the political section, where David Hale and, later, Stewart Brown, manned the helm by themselves. I would have been happy to continue after the war with 12 staff, if I could have picked the twelve I wanted

*Q: Did you find yourself running into an exodus of Americans during the war when it was cranking up? I know in Israel their consular section was also overwhelmed by the number of Israeli Americans whose patriotism seemed to move toward the stars and stripes at this particular time.*

HARRISON: No, our problem was being overwhelmed by Iraqis once the embassy in Baghdad closed down. We didn't have the staff to deal with it. We could have done better, but I think that we also weren't given any support, so I was at cross purposes with consular affairs for a while. I even sent my DCM down to be consular general for a while to run that operation because I didn't have confidence in the woman who was in charge of it. We were seen in Washington as having done too little too late.

The other thing that I think all ambassadors have to do in that circumstance is to provide some leadership to the American community. Even the diplomatic community looked to us for leadership. My wife was constantly being asked about her plans for departure because our departure was going to be used by a lot of different countries as a signal that the departure of their dependents, too. Only a few ambassadors in town had access to the palace, and I served as a clearinghouse for those who didn't but needed something to report. The British was the exception, of course, because of their traditional ties and because they had a very good man there, Tony Reeves. I held some meetings with the American civilians had those organized to tell them what our apprehensions were about the situation and so forth, keep them apprized and also met with the local employees a lot, so that we could try to keep a lid on the situation.

*Q: How did your Foreign Service nationals perform during this particular time?*

HARRISON: They performed very well. I had no complaints on that score at all. Of course, these were very good jobs and they were eager to keep them, but there was more of a problem for them when the feelings in the street are running so high. They were loyal and efficient and we counted on them when the Americans left of course, more than usual. All my bodyguards were Jordanians and my drivers. My bodyguards never gave me a lot of confidence. Every so often there would be a particular threat – there were two assassination plots, both sponsored by Saddam – and Washington would send a secret service detachment to bolster my bunch. For a few days after, my guys would be very professional, but it always regressed to the norm. I'm not terribly convinced that they were going to take a bullet for me. Luckily that was never put to the test. There were a lot of restrictions our movements around town. I always traveled with my six bodyguards, and when the threat was heightened, with 12 including the secret service agents. Jo Ann and I would sneak downtown now and then by ourselves, but it was always a huge enterprise and not much fun. So, my tour was not as enjoyable from that perspective as it might have been under other circumstances.

As for the peace process, I wasn't able to go to Madrid. I was supposed to go, but on the way to the airport in Tel Aviv there was a head on collision that put me in Hadassah hospital intensive care for a couple of weeks. When I was in the hospital, my wife, who had come from Jordan, noticed I had no security on my room and raised hell about it, so after that I had a series of cute women security people standing by my door. I went back to work three or so weeks after the accident. I should have gone back to the United States and taken a rest, and forever blame myself for not doing that. I looked like something out of a John Carpenter zombie movie. I was bent over because I had had all this abdominal surgery, and abdominal spasms would double me up at odd times, sometimes in meetings. People would recoil when I came into view. It was absolute folly to go back, but I did. I try to reconstruct now my state of mind at the time. I guess it was ambition.

Anyway, in the summer of '93, my time ended. I could have stayed another six months or so. It was a new Administration, and they were slow to name my successor. But I was more than ready to leave, and to try my hand at something outside the State Department.

The Air Force Academy had dangled an academic chair, and I accepted it.

There was final trip to Washington with the King. Once again, I hinted at an invitation to fly with him on his plane. Once again my hints were ignored. In Washington he met at Defense with then Secretary Aspin, Colin Powell and others of the leadership. I was placed on the Jordanian side of the conference table, which tells you something about how the Pentagon views Ambassadors. The King was trying to get some F-16's. He'd been promised some by the Reagan Administration, but Reagan hadn't put himself out to counter the Israeli lobby so the proposal had died in Congress. Hussein felt personally aggrieved by this, since Reagan had given him assurances but abandoned him in the end. Anyway, it wasn't a good day for the King and he made a hash of explaining why he needed the planes. So I asked him for permission to intervene. I thought what the hell, if they're going to seat me with the Jordanians I'll act as if I belong. So I explained that the King had tried to buy French fighters, but had had to cancel that deal when costs escalated. To buy modern fighters from someone like the French would cost a quarter of the Jordanian domestic product, but Jordan needed a credible Air Force because of threats from Syria and Iraq. The King later had one of his aides call to express appreciation for what I'd done, and the worthies on our side – by that I still mean the U.S. side – of the table seemed to get the point. Eventually, the King got his airplanes.

*Q*: *The King's health problems began when you were in Jordan, didn't they?*

HARRISON: Yes. I was summoned to see the Crown Prince one afternoon, who told me that the King had found blood in his urine and was off to the Mayo Clinic. Eventually, they removed a kidney. The King was gone, it seems to me, a couple of months altogether. When he came back, there was a huge celebration. Amman was one giant party. I was trying to get to the stadium where the King was going to make a speech on his return, but the streets were crammed with people. My car was surrounded and people were pounding on it, but they were all smiling.

Then the King got on the back of a halftrack and drove through the City, sitting out in the open with no security and hundreds of thousands of people screaming and trying to touch him. The relief was genuine. He hadn't always been all that popular. And, for all his affability, he could still inspire fear. But he was also loved at this point. No doubt about that.

The health problems mounted up after that. I was also there for the 40th anniversary of the King's reign, in 1993. This was held in a soccer stadium downtown. VIP crowd, by invitation. The place was decorated with big painted posters of the King and a couple of the Crown Prince. There were the usual military units marching around, then the King drove in onto the field at the wheel of a military flatbed truck, decorated with bunting. The cargo, sitting uncomfortably on that flatbed, was Prince Hassan. I was interested because I knew the King had doubts about Hassan as his successor, and the 40th anniversary would have been a good time to begin freezing Hassan out. But instead it reaffirmed his place, although he looked ridiculous trying to hang on as the King whizzed around in that truck. Hassan got the chop in the end, of course.

*Q*: *Anything you want to add?*

I had been offered a chair at the Air Force Academy, and decided to retire after Amman. I would have had to walk the halls for a while, and had no interest in doing that. Also, I wanted to see what life was like on the outside. We had made a home in Colorado Springs when I was at the Academy as an FSO, and wanted to locate there permanently. We were Westerners, never quite at home in DC. Had Bush won the election, it might have been different; they might have had an interest in finding a job for me, but the new folks didn't.

My retirement ceremony from State consisted in handing my building pass to the guard. He thanked me for my service. But the King on his next trip to Washington after I retired and was back in Colorado called me from the Embassy to see how I was doing and to say thank you again. That was typical of the man, and some validation for me as well.

*Q: So, looking back, what do you consider your main achievements in Jordan.*

The ones of lasting importance? Well, I got a blood bank built in Western Amman. Until then, blood supplies had to be sent from the Eastern part of city to the West through downtown traffic. A little boy had crashed through a sliding glass door at the home of some people we knew and had bled to death before the blood could get to the hospital for him. So I got my AID people working on a blood bank, and got it opened before I left the country, under the patronage of Crown Prince Hassan as it turned out. But my name's on it, too. And I was responsible for the fact that my wife was in Amman, and she founded the first Hospice not only in Jordan but in the Arab world. It was a great act of diplomacy. She had to navigate around religious and cultural sensibilities and avoid the impression that she was coming from the West to show Jordanians the way. All this she did with admirable skill. For example, the Prime Minister's daughter was an U.S. educated nurse. Jo Ann drafted her into the effort, then knew to back off at just the right time so the Jordanians could take ownership of the process. Until then, hospitals would simply discharge dying patients to their families so they wouldn't have a lot of people dying on the premises. There was no nursing help, no means of family support, no way to control pain. Jo Ann changed all that. After we left, the Hospice thrived.

Otherwise, I don't know if it would have made much difference who was in Amman. I made a lot of mistakes. But I tended not to blame other people for them. I was never popular. But I never tried to sugar coat the pill to make myself *more* popular at the expense of making U.S. policies and attitudes absolutely clear. When the King said or did something stupid which damaged his relations with Washington, I went to the Palace and told him so. When Washington wanted to do something stupid, I tried to prevent it, but if I couldn't, I did my best to look and sound like a believer. I had a lot of help from loyal staff like Stewart Brown, my political counselor, and Don Dubay my DATT, and Lee Lohman, whom I've mentioned, and I remain on good terms with all of them. And it was never boring.

I had been greatly influenced at the outset of my career by a book on diplomacy by Harold Nicholson, a British diplomat. A professional diplomat may not have instructions of which he approves, wrote Nicholson. But he never betrays by his tone or manner his disapproval. That's was always my goal, and I think that most of the time I accomplished it.

*Q: Well, all right, then we'll stop at that point. Great.*

*End of interview*