

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
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AMBASSADOR WILLIAM C. HARROP

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INTERVIEW

Q: All right, today is April 19 2022 and this is ADST's [Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training] interview with William Harrop, principally on the issues related to the American Foreign Service Association [AFSA]. But just to set this in time, Bill, when did you enter the Foreign Service?

HARROP: Let me see 1954.

Q: At that time, when you were entering and beginning your career, had you heard of AFSA? Had you had any contact with them?

HARROP: With the Foreign Service?

Q: No, with the American Foreign Service Association [AFSA]?

HARROP: No, never heard of it.

Q: Okay. As time went by, in your career, when did you first encounter AFSA? Or become at all involved with that?

HARROP: Well, let me take a moment. I returned to Washington in 1958, from Rome. Shortly after that, I joined the committee, which awarded scholarships to Foreign Service kids. I worked on that committee for a year or two, and then the chairman of it was assigned abroad, and left me to be the chairman, which I did for a couple of years.

Q: During that time did you also become more cognizant of the overall activities of AFSA?

HARROP: Not really too much. I rather specialized in evaluating candidates for the scholarship program. I had a little committee of people working on that. I really didn't become involved in AFSA, generally at that time.

Q: Okay. Now, as you're moving through the Foreign Service, and so on, obviously, in the 1960s, the Vietnam War heats up. A number of officers disagree with the policy and so on. But where did you find yourself as you became more aware of AFSA's activities?

HARROP: I had been principal officer at the consulate in Elizabethville [Lubumbashi], in Eastern Congo, and then came back, had a sabbatical year at the Woodrow Wilson School in Princeton, and then became the director of the African section of INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research]. I'd been there less than a year when a very eager Lannon Walker came to see me and said, "Don't you want to really get involved in AFSA?" And it turned out a boyhood friend of mine, Charlie Bray, was very involved also. So I agreed to do that and ran for the board with the understanding that I would probably replace Lannon and maybe Charlie also as the chairman.

Q: At that time, how was AFSA generally understood? Was it still principally something that was thought of as a professional organization? Or had it begun taking on more of a union?

HARROP: No, it was entirely professional and at that time, the government published an executive order which allowed the employees of different parts of the government to organize. It was a very difficult task to fit the Foreign Service into that union framework. I had just become president of AFSA, the title was chairman at that time, and had been relating to Bill Macomber, the undersecretary for management.

Q: Also, at that time, were the other foreign affairs agencies USIA [United States Information Agency] USAID [United States Agency for International Development] and so on. Were they part of AFSA at that time or did they have their own separate organizations?

HARROP: No, the Foreign Service element of all three agencies were part of AFSA, although a subsidiary part I would say. The State Department was the main operation. We became, when I say we, it was mainly Tom Boyatt, Tex Harris, and I, who were really running AFSA at that time, supported by a strong board. We became much more conscious of the need to organize as a representative of the Foreign Service component of all of these various member agencies, USIA [United States Information Agency], USAID [United States Agency for International Development], Agriculture, Commerce, and State (by far the largest).

Q: Now, in your own oral history and then also in the history that Harry Kopp writes in The Voice of the Foreign Service, there are a number of major events that do take place during your tenure as chairman of AFSA. You have Alison Palmer, and the issues related to women and the prejudices against women. You have the eventual agreement between AFSA and management on a number of issues that slowly transform AFSA into a union. Are there recollections that you have at that early time that you didn't feel were quite right, for detailing in your oral history or that have come to light so far, that are important to recall from this vantage point?

HARROP: Well, I think that it was a wrench for the Foreign Service that AFSA should become a union. But we wanted to have more say in the management of the Foreign Service. And we realized that had we not done that, the federal government division of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations] was going to represent the Foreign Service. We definitely wanted to do it ourselves rather than have a national union be the exclusive representative. We became more and more involved in the election of a representative. Harris and Boyatt were the main actors. We had a lot of help. A good friend of mine was a partner of Covington and Burling and we had pro-bono help from that large law firm. At that time, there was an excellent partner there who was, more or less, their union expert. We worked with him and others in that big law firm. They helped us a great deal. Then we had an election in which we were pitted against AFGE [American Federation of Government Employees], the AFL-CIO advocate, and we won the election in the three main Foreign Service agencies: State, USIA, and AID.

Q: Now, at that time, among the issues that were bubbling up was the question of the uniqueness of the Foreign Service, as opposed to civil service or other aspects of the US government. How important was that, at the time, the sense of, what some people might say, elite, others would say, just discreet decor of the Foreign Service as a different kind of organization?

HARROP: It was very much the case. The Foreign Service was very different from the Civil Service of the government, very much a different type of organization. We had rank in person, we had a demanding process for entry, we had worldwide availability. We had an up-or-out system that at that time was resulting in more departures than previously. The Foreign Service in many respects really managed itself and I had a later experience, when I was Inspector General, with Senator Jesse Helms who said, on the floor of the Senate, "we're dealing with an organization which appoints itself, assigns itself, promotes itself, and (heavens to betsy!) even inspects itself. That's got to stop." He got a bill passed and I was the last inspector general from the Foreign Service. Anyway, you can see that there were real issues even back in the 1960s.

Q: Now, one of the other things that is recorded, as AFSA develops, is the sense that AFSA and Foreign Service officers in general, really were not supposed to address congressmen or Senators directly that everything should go through channels, essentially. Did you as AFSA chairman, and subsequently, did you begin having relations with individual congressmen or their staffs?

HARROP: Very much so. Harris, Boyatt, and I spent a lot of time on Capitol Hill. There was not really, I would say, a rule where you couldn't do that. But the Foreign Service and the Department altogether tended to deal through H [Bureau of Legislative Affairs] with Congress. But it was not forbidden. We did spend a lot of time with Chairman Wayne Hays and other members.

Q: Often it's said that the State Department does not have much of a constituency in Congress or more even more broadly among American people. How did you find those

early contacts with Congress? Were there any significant wins? Did you begin to change minds in Congress about the Foreign Service?

HARROP: I think we developed a certain amount of understanding and respect for the institution of professional diplomacy. And I think that there were quite a few members who began to learn more about the Foreign Service. But this basic issue persists today.

Q: Is there an example that stands out in your mind from that time of the work that you'd been doing with Congress that was helpful for some aspect of AFSA's development?

HARROP: Certainly, Wayne Hays, Chair of the Government Operations Committee, we worked a good deal with him. One of our big issues was a grievance system for the Foreign Service. We had sympathy on Capitol Hill that the Foreign Service was isolated in not having a decent grievance system. So, we worked very hard to set that up. Tex Harris became our lawyer really, for the organization, and he did a lot of work drafting a decent system. The Department resisted at one point when it became a real confrontation between AFSA and the undersecretary for management and also, the deputy undersecretary, Alex Johnson at that time. We had permission to communicate directly with the field as part of our original deal with the Department, and I sent out a message to all ambassadors just from AFSA to the chief of mission at every post and said, "I think it's time for the Foreign Service to have a decent grievance system. Here are the issues involved." I had an absolutely gratifying return from the senior officer serving as Ambassador. That helped a great deal in a difficult negotiation.

Q: Was the grievance system completed and set up while you were chairman or did it continue into Tex Harris' tenure?

HARROP: It was completed while I was there, in the form of legislation.

Q: Since you're mentioning Tex Harris as he was one of the most active in these early days when AFSA was stretching its wings, so to speak, as a union. What do you recall about his activities and are there things you recall now, that looking back were particularly important?

HARROP: Well, I think Tex was instrumental on the grievance system. He's extremely extroverted, outgoing, and friendly. I think as effective as Tex was, he could be a boy at times. I had to kind of restrain Tex a bit from time to time, he was so energetic and enthusiastic, and people oriented. He was very effective for that reason. He also proved to be a pretty good lawyer. So we had a lot of troubles in those days, we had some very discontented members of the Foreign Service. A fellow named John Hemenway was a real pain in the neck. John Harder was another one. We had difficulty with a young woman FSO who became a representative of AFGE.

Q: Is that Alison Palmer?

HARROP: Yes.

Q: Because she would go on and become well known for, ultimately, the class action suit for women.

HARROP: I had a very difficult experience with her personally, I'd known her before, when she was working in the Congo. She was assigned to Vietnam, and I was running the African part of AFR [Office of Analysis of African Affairs] of INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research], and Lois sent me a note saying, "they've assigned me to the Board of Examiners, which really seems to be an end of the road, sort of a job. I don't want to leave political work, I'd very much like to work in your office in INR." So I called up personnel and said, "this young woman would like to go work in my office." They said, "Okay, we'll change it. We can do that," and they did. Then later on, Alison turned that favor against me by saying my influence proved that I was a supervisor, and therefore not eligible to run a union. Therefore, we had to go to the Labor Relations Board to fight that issue and ultimately almost all FSOs were allowed to be in the union. I thought that was pretty cheap, frankly. Alison was very active and her role in life was activism.

Q: Other than this particular example, were there other people who had similar complaints about assignments and so on, that you were able to help?

HARROP: Well, sure, AFSA became large fairly quickly, starting in that period. As a union we began representing AFSA members who had grievances and problems, whether it's an assignment or whatever it might be. In my opinion, that member service, requiring a team of lawyers has become disproportionate in the AFSA organization. It's hard to turn a member down with a grievance or a claim of unfair treatment by the Department. Anyway, we did very often help people, members of AFSA, and it began at that time.

Q: As long as people were calling you, asking you to use your authority or your network to put them in different positions. There was an impression that the Foreign Service was an old boys network. If you knew the right people you could be placed in, in the right jobs. How did you see that notion at the time and looking back now on the weight that AFSA had and so on in the assignments process?

HARROP: Well, I don't think that AFSA had much influence on assignments. I think in a sense, it probably is a liability that individuals in such a small organization as the Foreign Service can influence assignments. That's just the nature of the world. I don't think AFSA was particularly involved in that. It was more, I suppose, a case of representing people who had complaints of some sort.

Q: I see. Now, to go back for a moment you mentioned that Tex Harris was a particularly active individual. Was there one particular episode where Tex's activity or intervention stands out in your mind that maybe has not been recalled in any of the history yet?

HARROP: Well, I believe I told the story in my oral history about Tex and Under Secretary Bill Macomber. There was a difficult issue between AFSA and the Department.

I can't recall what the issue was, it was something that was very important to AFSA. I either went over to see him or called Macomber up and said "you know, we really care about this one, this one we need." Macomber said, "if you'll promise not to send Harris over here again, I'll do that". He knew how insistent and persuasive Tex could be. He was joking, but luckily Macomber and I were both former Marines and we worked pretty well together.

Q: Similarly, you had mentioned Tom Boyatt, again, one of the early major influences in AFSA. Were there particular activities that Tom undertook that stand out in your mind?

HARROP: Well, Tom is still around and we are close friends. He was instrumental in the election campaign. In fact, I spent yesterday with Boyatt going to see the new Undersecretary for Management in the department. I don't quickly think of particular incidents. Tom is a very forceful fellow. In fact, not an AFSA matter, he persuaded even Kissinger on an issue to do with Cyprus and Greece. I'm sorry, I'm not good at recalling individual incidents. Another matter that was important to us and important to me personally was the role of women. We had one very fine member of our board, named Barbara Good, the only woman. Barbara, she was the State Department president of WAO [Women's Action Organization] and was a very skillful interpersonal operator. She was very much her own person and very effective in working within the system, on women's rights and women's role in the Foreign Service. She was very good. The only woman we had on the Board, probably the last time when there was only one woman on the board of AFSA. The situation began to change pretty quickly after that time. Then we had the long and difficult issue of Charlie Thomas and his energetic wife Cynthia, that you probably have heard about.

Q: Yes. Although, I don't know many of the details of it. Since it happened so long ago, what do you recall as the most important aspects of that case?

HARROP: Well, the fact that the fellow killed himself was the main issue. He was not promoted and was "selected out" of the Foreign Service. They were assigned to Mexico City. Astonishingly, he killed himself. They had several children and such extreme action seemed unbalanced to me. That he would do that with a wife and family to take care of. Anyway, Cynthia was extremely loyal to him. She came back to Washington and really stirred up a hornet's nest, spent a lot of time on Capitol Hill criticizing the State Department management. She was probably a help for us in getting the grievance system through because she was very outspoken on that question. There recently have been stories that Charlie Thomas may have played some kind of a role in the visit to Mexico City of Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. I am skeptical of that story, I don't think there's much to it. I was not in Mexico at the time, of course, and I can't say with certainty, but I think it has been blown up.

Q: In your recollections, you don't have any other sense for why he was selected out of the Foreign Service?

HARROP: We tried very hard to make being passed over not seen as a failure, as being selected out. My goodness, every naval officer in the system expects to have a career that is only so long, and when not promoted, retires honorably. Although the Foreign Service personnel system is based on that of the Navy, we just never succeeded in getting that notion across in the Foreign Service. Always been, "Oh, he's failed, that fellows no good, he's failed." That's a terrible problem. You cannot have an organization in which the entire mass of people who enter at the bottom go to the very top. It doesn't work. You cannot have as large a group of supervisors as you have supervisees. There has to be some way to winnow out people as you go up.

Q: When a Foreign Service officer joins, they join with the knowledge that the personnel system is an up-or-out system. Certainly. It's just that with Charles Thomas, there had been all sorts of rumors and so on about why he did not reach higher levels and was "passed over." Being passed over for time in grade without promotion is the normal way the system operates.

HARROP: At that time, we had a prescribed number of lower rankings by each selection board. You had the list. One time it was five people, but it came down to two or three that had to be low ranked and passed over. I assume that what happened with Charlie was that he was low ranked. That happens, it could have happened to you or to me, it's not a big deal. As I was about to say, I was, in fact, in a sense, pushed out, I'd been over 10 years as a career minister. I was Ambassador to Israel, where my work was not particularly appreciated by some people back in Washington. When I came back, I was not going to be reappointed chief of mission or assistant secretary. So I had to retire for time in class.

Q: During your tenure with AFSA, Harry Kopp mentions that the organization itself had some trouble financing itself of coming up with sufficient and particularly your salaries since you took a year of leave without pay to be the chairman. How did AFSA address this? How did it become better funded, have a better financial foundation?

HARROP: It was a big problem. We had, among other things, converted the first floor of our building into a restaurant. It was losing money. We didn't have enough members, we had between 7,500 and 8,000 members. AFSA is much larger now. We just were not making ends meet. We had a lot of expenses because of the political campaign against AFGE for exclusive representation. There were a lot of difficulties. So, we were not doing well. But that problem no longer exists. Part of our union deal with the Department was that the Chairman (President) and the State Department representatives retained their regular salaries. I think I was the last one who had to do that. Actually, Charley Bray and I went up to New York and called on Douglas Dillon to seek my compensation. He had very warm feelings about the Department and he agreed to pay half of my salary, which would be tax free in the sense of working on public matters. Half would be union stuff. He said he'd pay all of the tax free part and half the union part. So I was able to find another public spirited person who would pay the other part.

Q: Now, the other thing is as the, to go back for just a moment to the grievance process, it has changed and been modified a bit as it has been used over time. How well do you think it's working now as a tool within the organization?

HARROP: Well, I don't know. I'm a little bit old fashioned now, but I think it has worked maybe all too well. I think a lot of people have grievances which are not really justified. AFSA has spent a lot of time defending their interests, but you can't generalize on that. I'm not sufficiently aware of every case to know but I tend to be a little bit skeptical that many of the grievances are fully justified.

Q: When you were interrupted by one of the telephone calls you had been talking about the contributions of Tom Boyatt.

HARROP: Well, Boyatt is a very competent guy. He's an extremely practical fellow, although too dedicated of a Republican to suit me. Well, he's a very, very outspokenly strong Republican, which is not that common in the Foreign Service, actually. It's interesting that that's the case. He even thought for a while that he could work with Trump and he had to give that idea up finally. So I think he sees the Republican Party has now divided the real Republican Party and the Trump Republican Party. So do I. Tom is an effective fellow, he gets things done. I have trouble giving particular examples. He was very good at dealing with Capitol Hill, interacting in a very, very open and frank way with people. I think he's an effective fellow. He has worked as the CFO or financial officer of three of the Foreign Service private organizations, and been extremely successful, putting each on an improved financial footing.

Q: Which does lead me to a question, as you worked in AFSA then throughout your career, are there significant differences in the way a Democratic administration versus a Republican administration deals with the Foreign Service as an organization?

HARROP: Not until Trump came along. Both parties respected the Foreign Service. We were dazzled by the Trump administration, which was not a public administration in the normal sense. It was actively hostile toward the Foreign Service and professional diplomacy. It was a very strange circumstance. I'm just trying to think back to different administrations. During the time of Ronald Reagan, I was Inspector General and quite comfortable with the Reagan administration. I worked very closely with George Bush, one of the really fine men we've had, although I found James Baker difficult. Professionally, in the State Department, he worked almost exclusively through three or four assistants. However, he was an extremely effective Secretary of State, and now a good friend of mine. I don't agree with the notion that somehow Democratic administrations are more likely to be pro-Foreign Service; I don't think that is so, at all. I don't recall that with Bill Clinton or Jimmy Carter, when I was an ambassador. I worked well with their administrations. I was of course out by the time of Obama. In fact, at the end of the first term of George W. Bush, I organized a system called Diplomats and Military Leaders for Change. I appeared on tv programs and all sorts of media, really fighting the re-election of George W. Bush. I thought he'd done us terrible harm in invading Iraq. We lost that fight but it was surprising how many senior admirals and

generals were happy to take part in it. They were really upset about what happened after Iraq and of course, Afghanistan.

Q: Even after your tenure as chairman ended, you continued to serve on various boards that are related to AFSA. What are the key outcomes that you recall from those periods?

HARROP: I came back from Nairobi to be inspector general in 1983. I was for about six years actually, in that work, in the department, and I saw a great deal of another good friend of mine, Frank Carlucci, who had a whole series of top senior jobs. I worked with him more as inspector general than as AFSA. I don't think I was really involved with AFSA when I was inspector general, and probably appropriately not. Then later on, after I retired in '93. I served, I guess, on two or three AFSA boards after that. I was also a member of the awards committee, and took a pretty strong position there. I tried to support a narrow definition of qualifications to be inscribed on the wall at the C Street entrance. I felt that we were gradually moving in the direction of anyone who died overseas being honored and I thought that was really wrong.

Q: How would you describe your view then, of the appropriate conditions for being inscribed on the memorial wall?

HARROP: Original definition was dying under "heroic and inspirational circumstances." I thought that you had to be killed by terrorists, for example, all too common these days. This has become a huge issue with AFSA, arguments back and forth. But it always kind of drifts toward easy qualifications for being inscribed. I think that for instance, if you look back to the early days and say look at the very first people on that board and they often died of yellow fever.

Q: Yeah.

HARROP: So if you die, I don't know of COVID 19. Even old age, you may qualify. I don't agree with that. I don't think dying of age puts you on. Or dying in an automobile or air crash. Any death that might just as well occur back home really should not justify being honored on board. So anyway, that's an ongoing issue.

Q: Now, as AFSA developed as an organization, grew larger and took on more responsibilities. How do you see its role today? You know, looking back as one of the early active activists within the organization.

HARROP: Well, I think it's doing pretty well. We have, at the present time, a very strong leadership at AFSA. Eric Rubin is really an excellent leader. In fact, Boyatt and I are thinking about running him for a third tour. Which might not be a bad idea, actually, but it would probably end his career as a Foreign Service Officer. The people who preceded him were probably not quite so strong. I'm not a large admirer of the people who were one or two back who ran AFSA. It's a difficult job and has, no doubt, become more difficult as the years went by. The organization has become much bigger. A great majority of Foreign Service people now belong to AFSA, which is certainly a big

advantage. I think it's a challenge at the present time. There's a sense of laxity at the top of the State Department, of not really defending the Foreign Service the way some of us think it should be defended.

Q: There have been, over time, developments of smaller single interest groups within the State Department. Groups based on ethnic background or race, even LGBT people. How does that interact with AFSA? What's your view of these organizations?

HARROP: I think it's a natural development, although it certainly doesn't make AFSA's life any easier, because AFSA is the official representative of the Foreign Service. I think that a skillful president can handle it, as Rubin, I think, does handle it pretty well. You are likely to have more and more special interest groups, Asian Americans or Hispanics. And you have people with particular interests who kind of come together. But I don't think that needs to be a big problem.

Q: Now, also, your family's Nelson B. Delavan Foundation has been contributing in a variety of ways to the Foreign Service. Could you talk a bit about that?

HARROP: Well, sure. I tried this morning, actually, to jot down the many things we've done. It's a very small foundation as foundations go. It's a foundation of less than \$2 million. Actually, it was bigger than that but we've gradually burned up capital going down, down. We've done a lot with it too.

Q: Just tell us for a moment who Nelson B. Delavan was. And why that name?

HARROP: Nelson B. Delavan was my wife's father. He was a self made man. At the time of the First World War, he left college to serve in the war, and never returned to complete college. The family moved to Des Moines [Iowa] around 1930 or '31, I guess. He began a company in his basement to make precision nozzles for fuel burners or agricultural use. Then when the war came, those nozzles were applied to jet aircraft. The company just exploded in importance and size. He made quite a lot and died fairly young. We think of it as young now, in his early 70s. A part of the estate was devoted to creating a foundation. We've done a lot with it, we were the major funders of the handicapped access to DACOR, if you know that. We would finance the 75th anniversary dinner remembering the Rogers Act and the foundation of AFSA. We did most of the financing of the "Voice of the Foreign Service." We financed several major operations at the American Academy of Diplomacy. The first was *First Line of Defense*, a book in which a series of senior ambassadors provided examples of diplomatic achievements. Then did a second book for the American Academy called *Commercial Diplomacy in the National Interest*. We've helped finance the ADST oral history program.

HARROP: There are other things we have helped finance for diplomacy and the Foreign Service. We finance two of the annual AFSA Awards, the Tex Harris Award for a specialist, and the Nelson Delavan Award, which is for what we used to call a secretary, now an office management specialist, people who are really so important to the Foreign Service. We've largely financed an internet magazine called American Diplomacy. Have

you heard of that? You could look it up americandiplomacy.org. It's a bunch of Foreign Service Officers in the triangle area of North Carolina. I'm on the board, but they're the ones who run it. That's really, I think, been quite successful. We give a little money to the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, which is for children of Foreign Service people. I don't know, we try to be helpful. We've given money to the AAFSW [Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide] organization to help them do a particular celebration they wanted to do.

HARROP: We have regularly helped ADST [Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training] and the American Academy of Diplomacy. Anyway, so we do those things. My wife and I are very pleased to do it. We're very lucky to have that access, to have the Delavan Foundation.

Q: Now, you had mentioned that you had some discussions with the Under Secretary for Management, which leads me to a question since your retirement other than the Foundation's activities, how else were you involved with AFSA? Or advising the Foreign Service?

HARROP: Well, the thing we did yesterday was not an AFSA effort. Tom Boyatt organized an outfit called the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). It was a very good idea, to bring together the dozen or so organizations which have a relationship to American diplomacy and the Foreign Service, all the way from AFSA to the American Academy to ADST, to DACOR, to the Association of Black American Ambassadors, which is now trying to be more active, even the association of non-career ambassadors, and all those different outfits. There turned out to be about a dozen or so of them, including the Una Chapman Cox Foundation and the Delavan Foundation. I was the chairman of the Diplomacy Center Foundation, which raises private funds to finance the National Museum of American Diplomacy. We raised over 50 million dollars, a huge effort, but we need still more to get the museum built. So the members of the FAC called yesterday as an organization on the new undersecretary for management. We called several times upon the last undersecretary of management, who is now ambassador in Moscow, and tried to develop a positive relationship. Colin Powell described us as a kind of force multiplier, which is a nice idea. The FAC is thus a large group of organizations that are interested in trying to spread the idea of the importance of American democracy and the Foreign Service.

Q: This organization, and other efforts by the department, do you think you are reaching the American public? Are you at least able to better inform the American public on the importance of diplomacy, the value of the Foreign Service and so on?

HARROP: I think it's a long uphill battle. We simply don't have military bases in every state. You don't have corporations producing defense material. You don't have farmers in Iowa supporting the Department of Agriculture. We just don't have that kind of national presence. It's a difficult job, but we've made limited progress. I think the museum will help a great deal. It's not going to be open for another couple of years, we're already doing some pretty important work with high school teachers and others publicizing the

Foreign Service and American diplomacy. It's always going to be uphill. The American public doesn't have that personal stake in diplomacy the way they do in other parts, like the Pentagon, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture and Commerce

Q: Is there advice you would give now looking back on all of the activities of AFSA that you think AFSA needs to know, or directions it needs to go in now in the 21st century?

HARROP: You know, I have not thought sufficiently about that. I think to become as relevant as possible is what's important. We've not done well in organizing on Capitol Hill, we have kind of a lame Foreign Service caucus of three members. It's not enough. That's a great disappointment to me personally, since a very good friend of mine, who is a fellow named Charlie Whitehouse, you may not know, but I've known him for many years. He'd been an ambassador to Thailand, and I can't remember how many countries. His son, who was attorney general in Rhode Island, is a member of the Senate. We've not gotten him to really pitch in and help and he was raised in the Foreign Service. So it's been a disappointment of mine that we haven't persuaded him to become more active, because we don't have very many people with links to the Foreign Service and Congress. It's an uphill fight, you just keep running and keep doing it. Make as many contacts as you can on Capitol Hill and get people to go out and speak to Kiwanis Clubs as much as possible around the country. AFSA is doing a very good job of this, we're getting a lot of speaker operations and people going out talking to you. The other, I think, very important thing, and probably the most difficult part of this is retaining the special elements of the diplomatic career. I think we're going to be very lucky indeed, to retain such things as worldwide availability, as rank in person, as opposed to job, and the whole notion of being passed over or selected out, which you just have to have in some form. Those things are going to be difficult to keep in the modern day. So AFSA, I think, has to try hard to do that but AFSA's board is going to be composed of young contemporary people who will no longer think always in those terms. It's going to be hard to retain this type of diplomatic service.

Q: Throughout AFSA's history, and in fact, throughout the modern history of the Foreign Service, there have always been efforts to integrate the Foreign Service with the Civil Service and in essence say they are more or less the same. Why is the Foreign Service a separate organization? How do you see that working out in the future? Is AFSA active in that debate?

HARROP: I fight that with every fiber of my body, the idea of becoming part of the Civil Service instead of a separate diplomatic service that operates internationally. That pressure is always going to be there. "Why have a separate group when we can come together," and so on. We just have to keep working on explaining why it is necessary to have people trained to work in foreign capitals, with foreign populations and foreign people. Why that's not a normal attribute of the civil service, or of Americans generally, it has to be stressed and we need a great deal more professional training and development in the Foreign Service. The FSI [Foreign Service Institute] should be twice its present size. In my opinion, we should have something we've never had, which is a real developmental or educational cushion of funds and of people as the Defense Department,

of course, enjoys. The Defense Department's job is really war, and, as long as we are not engaged in a major war, the Armed Forces will always have a supply of extra people that can be trained. We don't have that. We can barely assign people to staff the posts that we have. That is something that you just have to keep working on. I think George Shultz and Colin Powell both tried to go in that direction; persuading Congress to fund extra people who are available for training.

Q: Yeah, it's always a question of funding with Congress, whether they will allow enough officers to create what's called a float.

HARROP: Yep, a training float. That's something that we don't have.

Q: To conclude this interview, I've asked you a lot of specific questions, but is there an aspect or are there developments of AFSA that I haven't asked you about that you want to emphasize or highlight now?

HARROP: AFSA has come a long way. It's become just normal daily life that AFSA is the representative, the union of the Foreign Service. One of the things that I was terribly worried about, back in the early '70s, was that we were not going to be able to continue as both a professional organization and union. There was a dreadful example of the National Education Association. They became a union and then gradually lost altogether the idea of being also a professional association. We've maintained that very precious duality. I'm very proud of the fact that it was possible to do that, to combine the two functions in one organization. I think if you look over different walks of American life or different specialties, you'll find that's very rare. The teachers organization had become just a union. That's true in other areas as well. So I think this is an important advantage to AFSA. Really Mark, my feeling is that the nature of American society has evolved to the point that it's going to be pretty, pretty difficult to get people to commit to a lifetime of diplomacy. Younger people now really want to try different things. They tried diplomacy for a while but didn't like that, so they tried something else. It's hard to have a system of people who are not committed for the long term.

Q: That takes into account the fact that perhaps people will stay for only a limited amount of time and leave to other occupations.

HARROP: That's it. It's happening now. My own son was a very successful young Foreign Service Officer and he moved on. He's now practicing law, working in the Justice Department. That's what people do now. As society changes, the notion of retaining a professional Foreign Service, professional diplomatic service, will become more and more difficult.

Q: All right. Well, I guess we're looking at some major evolutions in how AFSA operates and so on. This will be a more interesting time. Well, I thank you very much for taking the time for this interview. Of course, if other things occur to you, after we end this particular session, we're happy to take that. Sometimes recollections return right after the

end of an interview, so please don't hesitate to let me know if there's something you'd like to add.

HARROP: I'll do that. Although you know, these things happened a long time ago. How well I will remember new issues that came up I don't know. We've lost Tex Harris. Tom is still very active, a close friend of mine. There are other people who have, Hank Cohen persists in his concerns and interests. I think maybe that we're kind of a passing crowd. It may be that we looked at the world differently than people are going to from now on. I regret that, I believe the country needs a professional diplomatic organization.

Q: Well, thank you and we will be in touch with you..

End of interview