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

CHARLES HIGGINSON

Interviewed by: Raymond Ewing
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with Charles Higginson. It's October 13, 1998 and this is being conducted under the auspices of The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm Raymond Ewing. Charlie, it's good to be talking with you this morning. A good place to start might be near the beginning. You came into the Foreign Service in 1961. Tell me what happened before then and what got you interested in the Foreign Service.

HIGGINSON: I had always been somewhat interested in the Foreign Service. Back in college, I thought about the Foreign Service. My stepfather, Dr. Edwin J. Cohn, the inventor of protein blood plasma and a university professor at Harvard, had done a lot of traveling abroad and had taken me abroad and introduced me to the various issues that he was very interested in. Then in my junior year at college, I visited my roommate in Buenos Aires just as Milton Eisenhower was making his tour around South America. I had a fair introduction from my stepfather so that I ended up seeing a lot of people that Milton Eisenhower had seen about a week or two earlier. They were very encouraged by that trip. It totally encouraged me to join the Foreign Service. I took the Law School Aptitude Test, went to Harvard Law School fro three years and then joined the Boston law firm of Hemmingway and Barnes and practiced law for four years.

During that period, I became more and more interested in European communities and the new anti-trust law that they were creating. Then one day I had an automobile accident case in the lower court in Middlesex. My client was lying, but the other client was lying worse. The problem was that the brother of the opposing lawyer was the judge. So, I was less than happy. The Marines were going into Lebanon. I didn't feel that I was working on issues that meant a great deal. So, I took the Foreign Service Exam. I didn't pass it. I took it again a year later, but that time I did some preparation and did pass it. I then waited for the oral and physical. I always remember the physical exam because you take it at the nearest federal medical testing center. The nearest one to me was right near my house, but was a naval pilot training center. So, they had absolutely superb young men taking the physical and I came in and failed everything and felt that I was a complete relic by the time I was through. But my health was good enough for the Foreign Service.

Q: We should probably note that you did go to Harvard University as an undergraduate, as well as Harvard Law School.

HIGGINSON: Yes. Going back further, one of the influences in my life and always has been is Dean Acheson, who went to the prep school, Groton School, that I went to and gave the commencement address for my year. He definitely influenced my thinking. I passed the medical and the oral. The oral exam I had been warned about that there would be some sort of a trick problem. Mine was the leaking glass, which if you just put your finger over the hole and kept it there, you didn't dribble water all over the place. The other thing that I was warned about coming from Boston and having studied on the East Coast was that they might think I was too provincial. Luckily, they asked me a question as to what ports if I was a trading captain of a ship I would go into between Alaska and California. Luckily, I had sailed in that area, so by the time I had gotten about 100 miles down the Alaskan coast, mentioning each little port, they gave up on that and felt that I had a broad experience.

Q: You mention Dean Acheson being the graduation speaker at Groton School. That reminds me that Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson was the commencement speaker at my college graduation. That was an important influence on me, too. So, you came into the Foreign Service after the exams in 1961. You had your initial training at the Foreign Service Institute. What was your first assignment after that?

HIGGINSON: My first assignment after that was a problem in that the Department (This would have been in January 1962.) had run out of all travel funds. Nobody was going anywhere and would people please indicate where they would like to go working in the Department. Almost all of my class indicated various interesting offices in the Department and all got assigned to the visa section. I didn't see much sense in that and thought that I would take leave without pay, so they assigned me to work with Walt Rostow in Policy Planning. He gave me some work to do on Latin America and his idea of a (inaudible) Point 4 (inaudible) countries, which was fascinating work. I never did get my leave without pay, but I clearly had one of the better jobs and Walt Rostow was

somebody to watch. I always remember one thing. It was the Peruvian economy that I had been trying to review and the statistics were fine for five years and then there weren't any figures. I mentioned this to Walt and he said, "That's exactly (inaudible). When these countries do arrive (inaudible), the statistics usually are lacking to make that decision."

Then my first assignment was to the embassy in Brussels. Ambassador Doug MacArthur was reigning at that time. He was in Washington and I duly visited him and paid my respects. Then I left after the Fourth of July holiday for Brussels to go to the embassy. When I arrived in Brussels, I was told that, no, I wasn't at the embassy, that I would be at the U.S. Mission to the European Community, which was my desire all along, so I was delighted. This was an FSO general assignment. The idea was that I and a couple of other FSO classmates would rotate between the U.S. Mission and the embassy in Brussels. That way, you could get visa experience and commercial work and the whole gambit. However, the agreement to do this, which had been carefully worked out by the DCMs of the embassy, the Belgians, and the U.S. Mission, collapsed and the two ambassadors, Doug MacArthur and Walt Butterworth were in a rival situation and would not discuss it any further. Therefore, I spent two years at the U.S. Mission to the European Community and was very glad of the chance.

Q: Doing a variety of things probably.

HIGGINSON: I was by far the most junior officer by about three grades and was working on economic matters primarily, since I was a lawyer, the European Communities Anti-Trust Program, which was my chief interest. I also worked on the entry of third countries into the European Community, the enlargement. The big issue at that time was the English negotiations to enter the Common Market. One recollection I have is that, as an FSO generalist, I didn't really have a desk and was moved around through various offices. The political counselor, Jack Larson, who I couldn’t think more highly of, was off on home leave, so I took over his desk for two months. I remember going through his files and reading up on the reporting on the U.K. entry and was less than surprised when Mr. de Gaulle vetoed their entry. I think we and the English were rather optimistic when we thought they would be allowed to enter at that time. This was a good time to be in the U.S. Mission to the European Community because we were very much in support of the success of the Community. George Ball, who was Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, had quite a substantial influence in the original drafting, especially the anti-trust provisions of the European Community, the Rome Treaty. We worked very closely with the Community as a beneficial member mostly in urging the rest of the European Community countries to stand up the French.

Q: Were we working primarily with the Commission, in effect, the executive staff of the Community at that time or more with delegations from other member countries?

HIGGINSON: We were involved very closely with the Commission. My first ambassador, Walt Butterworth, and then later for three years, Jack Tuthill, worked very closely with Walter Holstein and the European Community staff. Almost all of my

contacts were with the European Community staff. The other members of the U.S. Mission worked with the various perm reps of the six member states of the European Community, some of whom were very helpful in keeping us informed.

Q: Who was the DCM while you were there?

HIGGINSON: Most of the time, Russell Fessenden was the DCM. He is one of the best career Foreign Service officers I know. He knew all of the substance. He took care of run of the mill work of the mission, (inaudible) concentrate on the overall policy and do think pieces. Russ Fessenden also paid close attention to what the various members of the mission were doing and was very helpful and a friend of mine. I can't speak highly enough of the man.

Q: It looks to me from something you've said already that you were in Brussels at the Mission to the European Community for four years. Is that right? If so, that's a very unusual first assignment.

HIGGINSON: Yes, that is so. I was reassigned for two years. The Department of Justice wished to send a Department of Justice official to the U.S. Mission to follow the new European Community legal issues. The powers in the State Department did not wish to have the U.S. Mission encumbered with any more outside agencies than possible. Therefore, my legal background was of use to the Department and I got reassigned specifically to follow the anti-trust law. Also, at that time the American Bar Association was having a meeting there and they, too, were extremely interested in the anti-trust law, so it was important for the Mission to follow that very carefully.

Q: The anti-trust legal framework of the Community was just being developed at that time or was it already in place and being implemented?

HIGGINSON: The Rome Treaty, George Ball did a lot of drafting. Obviously, it copies a lot of U.S. anti-trust provisions. But they had not been implemented. Commissioner Van Der Groeben, Director General Fore was the anti-trust man there, and the way he implemented the Rome Treaty was to make it necessary for all appropriations to file any agreements they had with other corporations and also notify on all merger agreements. So, therefore, those rules were just being published while I was there and U.S. lawyers were extremely interested and U.S. law firms were beginning to come into Brussels in some numbers.

Q: The people at that point who were primarily interested were U.S. law firms, the Department of Justice. What about U.S. multinational firms themselves? Were they coming around to the Mission or not so much yet?

HIGGINSON: Yes, some of them would come around. But it was just beginning. Ford Motor Company set up their international office in Brussels. They were around a fair amount. Lykes Lines, the shipping company, came around. They were interested in the

European Community making common rules for the dimensions of barges in Europe. This affected future building plans of Lykes Lines. International Telephone and Telegraph was located in Brussels. But the big move to Brussels really occurred after I was there. They were coming and it was obvious what was going to happen, but most of them weren't there yet. Brussels was still a reasonably sleepy town. Cleary Gottlieb was the lead U.S. law firm in the town. That was George Ball's old law firm. The senior representative there, Andy Newburg, had been in Brussels for some time. He knew both the Belgian side and the European Community side. By the time I arrived, I knew him and he introduced me to both, but I never knew most of the players on the Belgian side the way you did. Nobody that I know ever came to the same situation he did.

Q: This was, as you say, kind of an early period in the Community. The Commission, the staff, was still relatively small and manageable compared with what it later became. I assume it was easy to move around without a lot of bureaucracy and difficulty.

HIGGINSON: The European Community staff was pretty large. It must have been at least 1,000 people. However, the relationship was very much different. We had ready access at all levels of the European Community staff and really knew the ones that we had to deal with on a first name basis. They were just implementing their rules and they were fascinated by what the U.S. had done in integrating our country. They had a lot to learn and we had a lot to offer them.

Q: We were not a member. We were not inside the tent of the six. Certainly, as you say, George Ball, the connections with somebody like Jean Monet, they were looking to us in larger issues, but also in smaller ones as well.

HIGGINSON: We weren't in the tent officially, but unofficially, we were very close to being a member. In those days that it was alright to be a real supporter of the European Community and the Department set up an area of Atlantic specialists, people who would just concentrate on the U.S.-European issues and economic issues.

Q: But still, the French were very difficult and probably rather resented that kind of an American role.

HIGGINSON: Oh, absolutely. The French knew perfectly well that some of the perm reps were telling us exactly what happened at each meeting and were not appreciative of it. The French sent some unbelievably capable diplomats as their permanent reps to the European Community and had a tremendous influence. I take my hat off to the Quai d'Orsay.

Q: Is there anything else we ought to cover about this four year assignment to the U.S. Mission to the European Community?

HIGGINSON: From a very young Foreign Service officer point of view, I was the chief of the mission up in Luxembourg for a short period of time when the member of our

delegation who lived up there following the Coal and Steel Community went on vacation and I went up there. Nothing much happened except that one of the High Commissioners died and the issue was what level do you correspond? Does the President do it to a High Commissioner or is it the Secretary of State? I remember all sorts of problems in trying to resolve that issue. I think they ended up with the President writing, which was not exact protocol but was another sign of the U.S. trying to foster and support this new supranational European organization.

Q: When you covered this responsibility in Luxembourg, you were part of the embassy. You were not the chargé. You were just doing the Coal and Steel part of the embassy's responsibilities.

HIGGINSON: Originally, the U.S. Mission to the European Communities was located in Luxembourg because the Coal and Steel Community was the oldest European institution. Then when the Common Market was created, the Mission and finally the ambassador, all before I arrived, moved to Brussels. By the time I was there, there was only one person in the U.S. Mission to the Coal and Steel Community in Luxembourg. That, too, ceased to exist by a year later. Everything was handled from Brussels.

Q: At that point, that officer was, in a sense, part of the U.S. Mission to the European Communities and was resident in Luxembourg, not part of the embassy?

HIGGINSON: Correct, being supported by the embassy, but not part of the embassy. That was closed down as a budgetary move some time ago. My chief accomplishment, one that I feel most proud of, was working with the Department of Justice and the Assistant U.S. Attorney Generals for Anti-Trust. They had to come to Paris to the OECD anti-trust meetings twice a year. Usually, they would come up to Brussels to talk to the European Communities. I worked upon and finally drafted a letter of cooperation. My chief fear was that the anti-trust provisions would be used to discriminate against large American firms. That has turned out to be a legitimate worry, but only about 15 years after I left. The agreement provided that before either anti-trust division would take an action against a company of its states, it would notify the other and hold discussions if there were any questions.

Q: That was an agreement that you negotiated or helped prepare between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Commission of the European Communities?

HIGGINSON: Yes. It was an exchange of letters from Van Der Groeben and Assistant Attorney General Turner, head of the Anti-Trust Division. One of our more famous judges now is Leon Heginbotham, who was an early Assistant U.S. Attorney for Anti-Trust Affairs. He came up from Paris and I was going to meet him at the airport. I said, "I'm quite tall. I'll be wearing a dark suit so that you'll be able to recognize me." He laughed and said, "Don't worry, I'll be the only black man getting off of that airplane." It showed how he had risen above that issue. He was a great man.

Q: Still is. I think he's at the Kennedy School or Harvard University, has a connection there now. You had mentioned earlier that one of the reasons for the extension of your assignment in Brussels to a second two years for a total of four years was to preempt the need for the Department of Justice to have their own person in the Mission. How did you get along with Justice overall and did they feel that you were meeting their needs for the kind of work that they had wanted done there?

HIGGINSON: I got along very well with a total of three U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretaries for Anti-Trust Affairs, some of whom I've kept in touch with. I'm not sure that I was quite so popular with the Justice Department staff, who would have loved to have come to Brussels, but luckily my contacts were almost exclusively with the Deputy Assistant Secretaries so that I had no problem and they couldn't have been more helpful to me.

Q: Where did you go when you finished in Brussels?

HIGGINSON: I went back to the Department of State. I wanted to be in EUR-RPE, which handled U.S.-European relations, but I was assigned to be staff assistant to Walter Kotschnig. He was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Organizations covering most of the European UN organizations in Geneva, specialized agencies, economic agencies. He knew them very well. He was an Austrian who spoke with a very strong accent. That was not an area of interest to me. I desperately tried to change my assignment. Russ Fessenden couldn't have been more helpful in trying to find out exactly why I had been assigned there and whether it could possibly be changed. The word came back from the Department that really if I knew what was good for me, I would shut up and that it was a much better assignment than I thought. So, I went to IO, but the position as staff aide to Walter Kotschnig was a euphemism. I was really to be staff aide to the Assistant Secretary, Joe Sisco, which is a totally different position, but he wanted to see me before he committed himself. Luckily, he accepted me and I went to work as staff aide to IO. I will put in a plug at this moment to any young Foreign Service officers. I think the staff aide position is about as good a position to get to know the Department and how it works as there exists in the Department. It is an excellent position. The hours are awful.

Q: The hours are awful, but you certainly become aware of who does what and the range of issues and can make your own judgment about the effectiveness of people and organizations. You were there from roughly 1966-1969. This was a time of war in the Middle East and a very active Assistant Secretary, Joe Sisco.

HIGGINSON: Yes. Ambassador Goldberg was our ambassador to the United Nations and active in seeking a peaceful solution in Vietnam. There were all sorts of extremely top secret contacts in efforts, none of which panned out, to start peace talks in Vietnam. I spent a substantial amount of time running upstairs to the seventh floor and to the Executive Secretary of the Department of State to get the eyes only messages from Goldberg and whoever he was in touch with. Joe Sisco had made it very clear to me that I succeeded or didn't succeed in my job on how well I kept him informed of what the

ambassador to New York was doing.

Q: You were there for approximately three years. Were you with Sisco the whole time?

HIGGINSON: No, it really is a grueling job. You had to be in there so that you can read all the cable traffic before Joe Sisco arrived and that was at 8:30 am. So, you had to get in there pretty close to 7:30 am. Then you had to put everything away after he left and he didn't leave until 6:30 pm or 7:00 pm, so you didn't get home until 8:00 pm or 9:00 pm. Given those hours, basically, IO has a staff aide work for about a year. I worked for 18 months. Then you get your choice of positions in IO that become available and are somewhat near your grade.

One of the initiatives that was just taking off at that time was the Law of the Sea talks. Actually, it was the Deep Sea Bed Committee. I love to sail. I'm a lawyer and I lived in a house overlooking the ocean. Oceans and law are a great interest of mine. So, needless to say, I jumped at that position in IO/UNP, United Nations Political Affairs. As staff aide, I had to take care of the other Deputy Assistant Secretaries. The senior Deputy was David Popper, who I believe at one point was the youngest FS-01 ever in the Foreign Service and a truly brilliant man who scared his staff assistant to death. He could look at a piece of paper covered with writing and spot the typo and then he would send it back to me with a huge red pen saying "Poor staff work." But I knew if I could get anything by him, Joe Sisco would be able to accept it. He reviewed everything. In retrospect, he was an excellent senior Deputy Assistant Secretary and, as I got to know him better, a very, very nice and kindly man.

You mentioned the Arab-Israeli War in 1967. I was a staff aide at that time. It occurred over a weekend. A lot of the Department of State was away. It was a long weekend. I remember that I worked all day Saturday, most of Sunday, and a good part of Monday. I figured I'd add up my overtime hours just as a joke and hand it into the Executive Director of IO because I figured that, if you calculated it all out according to the salary rules they would owe me somewhat close to $1,000 for my extra hours. I thought it was amusing, but he did not.

Q: And you did not get paid.

HIGGINSON: I did not get paid. There was no question. Now, I guess, you would, but at that time you did not.

Q: Tell me a little bit more about this second job you went into. You say it related to the Law of the Sea the United Nations/Political Affairs. You were backstopping a UN committee on the Deep Sea Bed in New York and doing other things, too?

HIGGINSON: The Non-Proliferation Treaty was being negotiated and I was the working level for the Bureau of International Organizations on that. So, those were the two. Also, chemical and bacteriological weapons were being discussed. The U.S. and Russia had

seen that the efforts of many countries to extend the territorial waters was detrimental to their military interests. Therefore, they had, even during some of the bleaker U.S.-Russian periods of relations, continued to talk to try to figure out how they could move ahead to resolve some of these problems. The Deep Sea Bed Committee was where they decided to work ahead on it and continued to meet constructively. David Popper and Leonard Meeker were the two lead people. Leonard Meeker was the legal advisor in the Department of State.

Q: Was the State Department on this issue getting a lot of pressure from the Navy for finding some kind of way to move ahead?

HIGGINSON: Yes. The Navy definitely was the moving force on it. Also interested was the Fisheries Division. That was the period when the tuna boats off of Latin America were being boarded and confiscated for fishing within the 200 mile zone of the South American countries. We had legislation which provided that we reimburse unilaterally the fishing owner. So, this had become quite an expensive situation. Therefore, there was some urgency to try to resolve it.

Q: At that point, there wasn't yet a commitment to negotiate the Law of the Sea Treaty?

HIGGINSON: No, it was still the Subcommittee on Seabeds. However, I remember leaving a memorandum to my successor that what was going to happen was the negotiations on the overall convention of the Law of the Sea. The United States was going to have to give up its position, which was for three miles, though we might condescend to go to six miles as far as territorial waters were concerned. I remember this was considered to be an extreme view. The final settlement was 12 miles and then another 12 miles and then a 200 mile fishing zone. So, we gave our position up, but we also picked up more territorial water than any other country in the world. I won't say we didn't do very well by the arrangement.

The other thing that I still carry around was there was a major effort by the developing countries that the seabed would be for peaceful uses. I had to get approval of this language for the Subcommittee meeting down in Brazil. David Popper had been unable to get this before he went. So, the cable came back saying that all was lost unless we could agree to the terms. In those days, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and President Johnson met, had lunch, on Wednesdays. If you could get the critical piece of paper into the Secretary of State's pocket, he could get clearance on that at a very high level, which occurred. I could send the message out and everybody has been complaining about that language since.

Q: It was probably the most controversial aspect, what eventually was negotiated and so on.

HIGGINSON: I was pleased because the UN was very pleased about this and produced a silver medallion for peaceful uses for all mankind of the seabeds, which they issue. I

bought one and it is now my key chain.

Q: Anything else about your time in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs?

HIGGINSON: When I was staff aide, the issue was still each year the vote in the UN on whether to recognize Mainland China. The count that we kept of all the countries of the world on that was very time consuming. We had a very hard policy. I remember that the Asian Affairs Bureau had a lady that we called "the Dragon Lady" working on it and she would never give us any room to negotiate. So, as long as I was there, by closer and closer margins, we always won the Thai rep vote, but at great diplomatic cost.

Q: And not for too many years thereafter.

HIGGINSON: No.

Q: Where did you go after IO?

HIGGINSON: After IO, I went for six months of economic training at the Foreign Service Institute in preparation to being assigned to the Office of Trade Policy in the Economic Bureau. I should say that I have four sons and the longer I could stay in Washington so that they could get an American education, the happier they, my wife, and I would be. So, I was trying to stay in Washington for seven years.

Q: In the Economic Bureau, you were involved with what, GATT and U.S. trade policy? When did you go into that job?

HIGGINSON: I went in right at the end of 1969 and I stayed there about a year and a half. Primarily, I was working on trade, but non-tariff trade matters between the United States and European countries. So, my chief bureau that I was working with was EUR/RPE. The head of that bureau was Abraham Katz. I have never lost so many battles to any one man as I have to Abe Katz. So, finally, I decided that this was a losing proposition and I succeeded in getting reassigned to EUR/PE as officer in charge of OECD Affairs.

Q: So you could be on the winning side.

HIGGINSON: I could be on the winning side, exactly.

Q: This was a period where tariff negotiations, the Kennedy Round, had been completed not that long before and there was a big emphasis on non-tariff barriers.

HIGGINSON: Also, I wasn't working on it, but the tariff assistance to the Lesser Developed Countries was going to be the next issue not before GATT, but before the UN. We were trying to work out an agreement of equal reductions in tariffs to less developed countries with the European Communities even though we were not going to use the same process. This led to a great deal of economic accounting and arguments.

Q: For us, it led to the Generalized Preference Scheme for Developing Countries.

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: The other major actor in this period besides the European Bureau in the State Department was the U.S. Trade Representative, USTR. Were you quite involved with them?

HIGGINSON: They were more interested in strictly tariff matters. Yes, I did deal with them, but you just had to clear messages on non-tariff barriers with them. They weren't that interested. I didn't spend that much time at USTR. I was there enough so that I was later assigned to EUR/PE.

You could say that USTR was going to be more and more of a player. I felt that it was unfortunate for the future of the State Department that the USTR would really be the lead actor on trade matters. I was not happy with our Secretary for agreeing to that. I felt it was going to diminish, especially for an economic officer, the cone that I was in, future role.

Q: How about the role of the Department of Commerce? The Foreign Commercial Service hadn't yet been established.

HIGGINSON: No, it hadn't. I spent more time talking to the Department of Commerce and getting papers cleared. They didn't initiate very much and you would get sparks of interest from individual offices over there, but no long-term continuity or involvement. They were a player, but not at the same level as USTR or Treasury.

Q: As you saw it from your admittedly somewhat limited perspective, what would you say about the role of the Economic Bureau within the State Department? You mentioned that you lost a number of battles with the European Bureau on non-tariff barrier issues involving the European Communities. What was the role overall of the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs?

HIGGINSON: At that time, there was another review of the role of the Economic Bureau. I remember writing a long memorandum to the effect that the Economic Bureau should be strengthened and one way of strengthening it was to make the Economic Bureau responsible for the international economic institutions - i.e. they would be responsible for the European Community, the OECD, and for the purely economic aspects of the UN. I make that argument because the office that has the personnel, has the everyday contact with the embassy or mission abroad has a tremendous advantage in policy disputes. Therefore, I was quite convinced that for EB to really determine economic policy for the Department of State and also to get better economic officers into that cone or into EB, they should be responsible for a number of posts overseas - i.e., the international economic missions. Needless to say, this didn't come to pass. EUR disliked it. I did mention that Abe Katz won a great many arguments. Frequently, those arguments were

with another Katz, Jules Katz, in the Economic Bureau. The two of them enjoyed their disputes. That was more important than the resolution of the disputes. I remember there was some questioning how useful I was running between the two because really all I was doing was setting the stage whereby the two of them could negotiate directly without my middleman role.

Q: What was Jules Katz' position in the Economic Bureau at that time?

HIGGINSON: He was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Commodities and Energy.

Q: But got very involved in trade policy, as I recall, having been in the Bureau a little before.

HIGGINSON: Yes, definitely.

Q: I think that was his title, his position.

HIGGINSON: But he was the trade man in EB. He was very capable.

Q: Anything else about your time in EB or shall we take you over to the European Bureau, where you were officer in charge of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?

HIGGINSON: I can't remember that much more, special events in the Economic Bureau. When I went to the EUR/BE, the OECD is a little bit of a second cousin in that office. The European Communities is their principal center of attention. But Abe Katz followed the OECD quite closely because it organizes extremely high level meetings of ministers of finance, treasury, and anti-trust. He realized that he could have as much effect on U.S. foreign policy through those contacts as anything else. So, he followed the OECD very closely. The chief thing that came out of my period with the OECD was, we needed an initiative for the ministerial, which we didn't have. We were casting around for what could be done and centered upon the nascent energy crisis. Petroleum was at a very low price at that period of time, just about the same price it is right now in 1998. Everything seemed to be going very well. Then the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy, Jim Akins, who became ambassador to Saudi Arabia, did a study really mostly on his own which pointed out that OPEC really has a stranglehold on energy supplies; if they ever got organized, they could stop the supplies and raise the prices and create a major energy crisis in the world. This study caught the attention of Secretary Rogers and he passed it around the U.S. government just to make people realize this potential crisis, which there had been no sign of to date. Abe Katz had the foresight to realize that this really was a potential crisis and decided the best thing to do was to internationalize it by creating in the OECD a wise man group of three eminent energy specialists to review the status of the world's energy supply. This came to pass. With some difficulty, we chose three energy experts. Before they even really started to work, the energy crisis was upon us and all that we forecast for why this study was necessary came to pass.

Q: As you say, this preliminary study in the OECD, all this happened before the September 1973 Arab-Israeli War, which in a sense led OPEC to take the action they did later. Did we give OPEC the idea or did this work show the world that the conditions were ripe for an embargo?

HIGGINSON: I don't think we did it that way. Basically, the Akins study was highly classified and the OECD agreement was arrived at, but reasonably quietly for the OECD. By the summer of 1973, I was transferred to Algeria, where I was the petroleum attache and economic counselor. I saw this later on from another point of view. I believe the idea came from a U.S. consulting company to their client in Algeria. There was certainly a memorandum to that effect preceding the embargo. The Algerians were very much leaders in the whole exercise. I don't think our study gave the idea away, but I do think American think tanks suggested it to their oil clients.

Q: To come back to the OECD, it seems to me looking back that this was a period when the OECD was very important to the United States, but also to countries like Japan and the Europeans. It brought people together in a way that wasn't being done anywhere else. I think the OECD at times has been seen as sort of a static, bureaucratic staff not getting so involved in important economic policy questions. Is that right that this was a pretty good period for the OECD?

HIGGINSON: Yes, I think it was a pretty good period for the OECD. The OECD is not an action organization. When you judge an organization by its actions, the OECD doesn't do very well. As you described it, its primary utility to the United States is to bring together, not in a head to head controversial fashion, the leaders of our international economic policy with the European Communities. We were beginning to see some of the problems coming forth in the OECD because of the European Community's dominant position there. At that time, there were only six or eight members of the Communities. But that's quite a lot, just shy of an absolute majority of the OECD. I think that's still a problem we're going to have to work out as to exactly how you arrive at decisions where the European Communities has as many votes as they have members while we only have one vote. That is an issue that has yet to be resolved. Another issue that weakened the OECD was a sense of jealousy between the European Communities and the OECD. Which was going to be the leading economic institution? The very definite international organization operating by consensus, the OECD, or this nascent and still growing and strengthening European Communities? Now, there is no question, but at that time there still was an issue. The European Communities and, in some cases, our staff in Brussels would prefer contacts between high level U.S. officials to occur in a direct bilateral situation rather than utilizing and somewhat diluting the role of the European Communities.

Q: I went to Switzerland in the summer of 1973 as economic counselor. I remember the Swiss being very interested in the OECD and chairing something called the Executive Committee in Special Session, which as I recall was a-

HIGGINSON: EXCSS. That was created while I was the officer in charge. It was the final point I wanted to make on the OECD. At that time, I believe, it had 21 members. That's too many countries to arrive at critical decisions. Some of these countries (Turkey and New Zealand) really don't have that much in common or similar interests. Therefore, we created the EXCSS, which was a small group of the leading members of the OECD, in order to have a more executive body to make quicker and somewhat more classified decisions.

Q: The history of the OECD and the reason that it's in Paris and the reason it's in the European Bureau is that it was the coordinating mechanism going back to the Marshall Plan period in the post-war reconstruction of Europe. On the other hand, the E in OECD doesn't stand for Europe or European; it stands for Economic. By the early 1960s, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand were members. Having served in Tokyo in that early period, I know that for Japan, it was very important to be part of the OECD. It brought them into the inner circle of the world's industrial developed economies. From your period, how were Japan and some of these non-European countries thought of by us as we approached the OECD?

HIGGINSON: You were very influential in bringing Japan in. It was definitely U.S. policy. I'll go back to my ambassador in Brussels, the U.S. Mission to the European Communities, Jack Tuthill. He changed the OEEC (The Organization for European Economic Cooperation) into the OECD, which therefore was no longer exclusively European and could be enlarged to include Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This made the difference. It really could speak for the world. Also, I haven't mentioned because I wasn't so involved in it that the OECD was a major coordinator of aid to developing countries. That was almost 50% of its work, but that was more handled by AID than myself. It was an extremely important part of the OECD then. I think since that time it has diminished in influence as far as economic assistance programs are concerned.

Q: That was done through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Is there anything else we should say about the OECD and your time in European and Canadian Affairs?

HIGGINSON: I want to go back to two things. I was responsible for work on chemical and bacteriological weapons when I was in the Bureau of International Organizations. The majority of the world was pressing very hard for a ban on these weapons. Neither the United States nor Russia were that enthusiastic about a ban, so they agreed to perform an expert study. This group of experts met in New York to do a status report of where these weapons existed. My principal recollection of that was the extremely capable Russian who spoke perfect English who was forever disagreeing with the English of the White House Science Advisor, who was (inaudible) to this committee. The English had a great deal of influence because they usually were the arbitrators of this debate. On the importance of language, switching out of the OECD and the Anti-Trust Committee meetings, there our representative spoke English, the French representative spoke French,

and the German representative both impeccably and totally led and controlled meetings. It gave me a very quick and early understanding of the importance of being 5/5 (fluent) in many languages.

Q: The OECD is known as an institution that has meetings, constantly delegations arriving from Washington and Paris for all sorts of committees and other deliberations. Did you go yourself often to Paris for the Anti-Trust Committee or any others, or did you pretty much backstop from Washington?

HIGGINSON: I pretty much backstopped from Washington. Abe Katz went to a fair number of the OECD meetings. I always went to the Ministerial meeting with Abe Katz. One of the issues was who would represent the United States. Technically, it should be the Secretary of State, but he is usually too busy. Therefore, the Assistant Secretary of State, now Deputy Secretary, would be frequently the U.S. representative. That created problems because the Treasury usually sent its Secretary to those meetings. Therefore, he outranked and should have been the U.S. representative. It was a continuing problem. John Erwin was our rep. at one meeting I went to, which was sort of amusingly full of problems. His bodyguard forgot to report that he had weapons on him, so he got arrested at Dulles, which took a certain amount of effort on my part to explain that this was just the way it ought to be and we were sorry we didn't get those papers to the guards. Then we arrived in Paris. You remember the long moveable sidewalks. Our ambassador, Joe Greenwald, was coming to meet us. Unfortunately, Joe stepped on his moving sidewalk just as John Erwin stepped on his moving sidewalk and they neatly passed each other. Joe showed his great tennis ability and athleticism by vaulting the railing and therefore being able to greet John Erwin. It was amusing.

The other thing about the OECD was when I was officer in charge there, every morning first thing, I talked to the ambassador's aide so that he and I could agree basically on all the messages and what the tone should be on the messages coming back and forth. This gave me a tremendous head start in working with the rest of the U.S. government on OECD matters and shows the importance of bureaus being responsible for missions overseas.

Q: You mentioned the Treasury Secretary going to the Ministerial meeting. The Treasury Department was very interested in a range of issues taken up within the OECD. I believe at that time one of the deputies to the U.S. Representative at the OECD was from the Treasury Department. Were there problems for you in coordinating with other agencies, particularly with the Treasury Department, or did things work out pretty smoothly?

HIGGINSON: Working with Treasury at the lower level (i.e., my level) was sometimes quite difficult. However, as you moved up to higher levels, there was a great deal of cooperation and understanding. I didn't see that many difficulties. At this level, it was primarily Abe Katz who would be working on the issues. He was very adroit at knowing his corresponding number at the various other agencies (USTR, Treasury) so that the problems didn't descend to me. The problems that descended to me were... The Secretary

of the Treasury was Paul Volcker. He is 6'6" and he demands a bed that's close to 8' long and there aren't that many of them in Paris. My problem was to get it and to have it in his room.

Q: Would that be in a hotel?

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: Anything else on the OECD? Maybe we ought to go on to your assignment in 1973 as economic counselor in the embassy in Algiers.

HIGGINSON: This was an assignment I wanted and liked. It was just after Henry Kissinger had raised SALT, which was the disarmament negotiations in Europe, with some members of our embassy in Mexico at a dinner table and received the salt and pepper. Then he decided that there should be more intermingling of the Foreign Service officers so that we would have expertise in all worldwide issues. Therefore, from my record of four years in Brussels, there was no way I was going back to Europe. So, I looked around. It seemed to me that Algeria, which was then in the African Bureau, and we did not have diplomatic relations, so I was actually assigned to the Swiss embassy in Algiers, would be a place where I could still follow European issues with some care. So, that was where I was assigned.

Q: This was actually the U.S. Interests Section of the Swiss embassy. Who headed it?

HIGGINSON: Bill Eagleton was the head of the U.S. Interests Section.

Q: You went there under Henry Kissinger's Global Outlook Policy (GLOP).

HIGGINSON: Yes. The Department sent me to the University of Chicago's Petroleum Institute in order to learn more about liquefied natural gas. The Export-Import Bank was about to make a major $500 million loan to the Algerians to make LNG (liquefied natural gas) at Arzu in Algeria. They kidded me that that would be my prime responsibility to follow that area.

Q: How long was that course?

HIGGINSON: It was a two-week sabbatical. Mr. Kahn was the head of the program and did a really superb job on me. Since the University of Chicago was also working with the Algerians on a training program, I saw him quite a lot in Algeria and he was a very useful contact in continuing education on liquefied natural gas processes and issues.

Before I got there, I was going to leave on July 15 to the U.S. Interests Section in Algiers. Abe Katz called me on July 4 and said that he had just succeeded in having me assigned to the U.S. Mission to the OECD and which did I want to do? Actually, it was closer than that. I was leaving the next day for Algeria. Much to my wife's consternation, I felt that I

had been educated for the Algerian job and that's what I should do. That's what I did do.

Q: You were there at the time of the September war.

HIGGINSON: I was there at the time of the September war. Remember, Algeria at that point, Boumedienne was the President; Bouteflika was the Foreign Minister; I think he was also either then or immediately thereafter president of the United Nations General Assembly. Before the September war, Algeria had the meeting of the non-aligned countries in Algiers. Algeria was a major player in international economics and the "new international economic order." So, it was a fascinating post to be assigned to. For my Foreign Service career, it was clearly what one could hope for as a Foreign Service officer.

Q: Diplomatic relations had been broken in 1967 at the time of the previous Arab-Israeli War. Did you have much to do with the Swiss embassy?

HIGGINSON: No. An Algerian taxi cab driver explained it all to me. They broke diplomatic relations. The American flag was pulled down at the U.S. embassy. The brass embassy plaque on the wall was removed. But otherwise, there was no change. He didn't realize that there were two changes. One, officially, our ambassador was Ambassador Raleton of Switzerland, who was one of the nicer and more gentlemanly and sort of perfect international ambassadors that I ever had. He gave us no problems. Socially, we saw a lot of him. But from a foreign policy point of view, there was practically no contact. It was good for him because we had trucks, cars, and supplies that he didn't have because our U.S. Interests Section was some 10 times the size (That means there were 20 people in it.) of the Swiss embassy to Algeria. But the important difference is, since we had broken diplomatic relations, we could not speak to the Algerian Foreign Ministry. They couldn't speak to us. Therefore, what to do? The United States was too big a country to ignore, not to do anything. So, the Algerians figured out that the best solution was for us to talk directly to their president, Boumedienne. Therefore, we had better contacts to him than any other embassy in Algeria. I was there when we recreated diplomatic relations and had to go through the Algerian Foreign Ministry. So, really, there was a setback as far as the effectiveness of our embassy in Algeria with the re-recognition.

Q: At the time you went there, the building where the U.S. Interests Section was located was the former U.S. embassy.

HIGGINSON: Yes, without the flag. Before 1967, there was another residence which was a larger, more impressive building, but separate from the chancery. The new and now present ambassador's residence is more convenient and is still a very fine building overlooking Algiers Bay.

Q: Bill Eagleton was the head of mission, but didn't have the protocol or prestige of being ambassador. He didn't have to line up with the rest of the diplomatic corps.

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: You say you were there when relations were reestablished and the embassy was reconstituted. Do you remember when that occurred?

HIGGINSON: It was late 1974. Ambassador Dick Parker replaced Bill Eagleton as our Chargé d'Affaires ad interim to Algeria.

Q: It's interesting that it happened that soon. If you think about the 1973 war and then the OPEC decision, there were a lot of things that were burdening the relationship, I would think.

HIGGINSON: No. Remember, at that time in the Middle East process, Boumedienne had a major catalytic role. Henry Kissinger came four or five times and the first couple of times it was just an interests section. Then he believed, given the important of the Algerians in the whole process, that he and Boumedienne agreed to forget this charade and return to full diplomatic relations. I make light of being a U.S. Interests Section. In actual fact, I, my wife, and many of the other staff there still remember when U.S. One with that big American flag on its tail and Henry Kissinger in it came and landed at the airport. It was very good to be real again.

Q: And to have the flag go back up.

HIGGINSON: Later on, have the flag go back up. Actually, I have that flag up in my attic at home in Boston.

Q: When it was the Interests Section, you talked about the good relationship with the presidency and the need to not go to the Foreign Minister for protocol purposes. What about other ministries around the government? Were you able to go directly to them as you needed to?

HIGGINSON: Yes, especially the Oil Minister.

Q: Tell me more about your day to day, month to month relationship with the Petroleum Ministry, particularly after the OPEC decision, or maybe the period leading up to it. Did you feel that you were pretty well informed?

HIGGINSON: I was desperately trying to keep informed. Luckily, there was a very well named Frenchman by the name of Mr. Well in their embassy, and he was well informed. He and I were very good friends. So, we used to compare notes pretty continuously. Basically, the only way you could find out what was happening was to know people who were handling the bowels of the oil pipeline. That was the only way you could find out how much oil was going in which direction and where. The Algerians were trying to indicate that they were cooperating, but were not leaders in the oil embargo and there had been no interruption of their liquefied natural gas shipments. At that time, there was a

contact with District Gas, the (Inaudible) Corporate to import LNG. One ship a month was meant to go to Boston. During the "embargo," that ship left Algeria, but had engine troubles in the middle of the Atlantic and didn't get to Boston until after the embargo was lifted. The Algerians always insisted that they had never embargoed and were a completely secure supplier of liquefied natural gas. To the best of my information, the "engine troubles" were decreed from Algeria.

Q: How long did this embargo actually last? There was an embargo and then a significant price increases.

HIGGINSON: That was the gas lines in the United States. It didn't last that awfully long. I think it was about six weeks. Algeria was exporting oil during that period, but not officially. The war, we listened to BBC and followed it quite closely. At one point, there were rumors that the U.S. Interests Section might be a target of public resentment. You could hear the crowds down in the lower city. We carefully destroyed most of our records and were ready to abandon the mission. But nothing ever transpired except that we no longer had any historical records in the embassy.

Q: Did you draw down the staff or evacuate?

HIGGINSON: No. We maybe could have, but we hadn't gotten to that point when it was quite obvious it wasn't necessary. Boumedienne and Bouteflika, primarily Boumedienne, given the chaos in Algeria now, had an absolute control over that country. Nothing happened there unless they wanted it. I remember, every morning you'd read El Moudjahid, their big French newspaper, and it sort of counted the number of women and children we had killed in Vietnam. The U.S. was just trashed every day. But it didn't stick with the Algerians. Again and again, individual Algerians showed us a sense of kindness. One little incident was just after we arrived, we were at the beach. Since it's a hot direct sun, we were worried about our kids getting sunburned, so we put shirts on them when they were swimming, which got them arrested because the Algerians were in the full mode of becoming westernized and one thing a westerner did was that he swam in a bathing suit rather than fully dressed. These kids had violated this law. So, the police were trying to take the children away. We just finally figured out what was happening. But the Algerians knew what was happening and they just came down. They all started yelling at the police. The police let them go. Then the Algerians took our kids over to an ice cream vendor and gave them ice cream much to our consternation because we didn't want them to have ice cream because we were quite sure it wasn't sanitized. But that is just one example. Again and again, the Algerians were individually extremely nice to us, though we had a young student staying with us who was going to the University of Algiers. He had met a young Algerian girl and she came to visit us several times. Then her parents came and said, "Look, will you please end this relationship. Each time our daughter comes to your house, it goes into the police log and we're being investigated. This is about to be a blot on my career." That showed you a little bit of what a police state it was.

Two other incidents which are sort of amusing. I had some sea boots which I had kept in a friend's boat in the harbor and they were stolen. I mentioned this at a cocktail party to the Chief of Police of Algiers. The next morning, the boots were on my doorstep. This was in a city of two million people. It gives you an idea of how thoroughly they kept control of what was going on.

Q: The government was a police state in many ways, had very tight control of the country, anti-American things being said in the newspapers. What was the government attitude toward you, the U.S. Interests Section on a day to day basis?

HIGGINSON: The individual Algerians really liked the United States and liked Americans. But the official line was anti-United States. The way this worked out was that the lower levels were very cautious in dealing with us, but the upper levels had no qualms. Many of them had been to the United States, been trained in the United States. One of my contacts was Rosalie, who was the head of SONATRAC, the Algerian oil company; and Upsalaam, who was the Minister of Energy. Both of them were extraordinarily busy, but they had both committed themselves to trying to move Algeria from being totally oriented towards the French to feet in both camps, in the United States and in Algeria. That was the whole point of the LNG contracts so that they would diversify; they wouldn't be just exporting the LNG to France, but also the United States so that France wouldn't have sort of a hammerlock on them. I think this was very much in the minds of all of the ministers. When I was there, General Motors came to talk about a world or Arab automobile assembly plant. This was the Department of Industry in Algeria. They couldn't have been more cooperative and interested in General Motors. Nothing came of it. The big contract that interested me was with General Telephone Electronics. This was a bid put out by the Algerians to build a whole electronics industry, a $500 million complex. They were going to make telephones, radios, and T.V. sets. GTE was meant to train all of the workers, build all of the buildings, and design factories to produce these radios and television sets, of which only less than 10% would be important parts from the rest of the world. The Algerians wanted to have total independence, sovereignty over the production. This contract was signed just as I was leaving Algeria. I remember the final negotiations. There was a red telephone on the table and that was directly to Boumedienne. The final sticking point had to be, that telephone was used to get approval of it. GTE built the complex. My chief interest in it was that I thought this would be the lead-in for GTE and American companies to supply a lot of the electronics industry in Algeria. It wasn't a big enough market. They never followed up. I blame GTE and I've told GTE this, that they had a potential market and they never took advantage of it. I think this was repeated again and again as one reason why the U.S. has such a trade imbalance and almost tied markets of the developing world. It's coming now, but this was a perfect example of where we, GTE, didn't take advantage of it.

Q: Missed an opportunity.

HIGGINSON: Yes. I must say the Algerians gave them an unbelievable amount of grief. Later on I was in the Senior Seminar and wrote a paper on this contract. I went up to

Connecticut to talk to GTE top level officials. They indicated this was a contract that they had never heard of, not that they didn't make money on it, but things they hadn't figured on like the training school north of Boston. They bought a bankrupt girls school and put a bunch of young Algerian men there and almost immediately had all sorts of paternity lawsuits on their hands, all suing GTE. GTE had not figured on this sort of issue.

Q: You mentioned off and on the French embassy, the Algerian interest in diversifying away from total reliance on the French in the economic area. What would you say generally about the role of the French as you saw it in the couple of years that you were there?

HIGGINSON: I guess from my earlier comments in Brussels, I am a great admirer of the French, but also highly critical of them. They knew what was going on in Algeria. They were by far the largest embassy in Algiers. They were well qualified. I always looked at them as an adversarial position, except for this petroleum attache. But he was not a French foreign officer and was treated by their embassy as an outcast and that's one reason why I got along so well with him. The French were so totally involved in Algeria that most of their issues were not, except at the most high level, like whether Algeria should just sell gas to France or some to the United States... On the everyday level, they had so many French in Algiers, they had to take care of them.

That reminds me of one thing. The Belgians were very well-informed on Algeria. You could join their aid program instead of joining the military in Belgium. Therefore, there were a great many young Belgian doctors, engineers, businessmen, who took jobs with Algerian firms or American firms in Algiers. This all counted as their military service. They were sharp people. They were given jobs with a great deal more responsibility than they would have gotten in Belgium for their age. I felt it was an extremely effective program both for the individual's sake, for Algeria's sake, and for the Belgian's sake.

Q: Was there any other European country that played a significant role in Algeria at that time other than France and, in a special way, Belgium?

HIGGINSON: The English were there, very much so. Again, we have a rivalry with them. The other country getting liquefied natural gas, but it almost ceased by the time I was there, was England. They were interested in the oil supplies of Algeria.

Going back to another point, how did we get on with the Algerians? The Algerians with the choice would choose a Texan to be their oil crew and hired a fair number of them. The two, even though they didn't speak the common language, got along. They had no problems. It was really quite a thing to see. You'd go out in the desert and here were these Texans and they could run an Algerian oil well crew while the French, the whole colonialism; the English didn't have it either. With the Texans, there was a camaraderie among the oil workers that transcended nationality.

Q: You mentioned at one point what's happened in Algeria in recent years: the chaos, the

Islamic fundamentalism, political and social changes. Did you see any of that coming? You were primarily on the petroleum economics side in the period that you were there in the mid-1970s.

HIGGINSON: Yes and no. You could see it coming. We had a maid who wasn't live-in, a nice lady. She tried to come to us in her western clothing. She had a lot of trouble in the buses and the trolley cars to get to us. People bothered her, harassed her. So, she switched back to the veil and had no troubles commuting. The student that we had living with us, who was at the University of Algiers, would take trips out in the desert. In his college, young girls would be in Levis and just would have looked just right in an American university. When they got near their hometown, on would come the veil and the burqa. When they left the town, they'd go back into Levis. To that degree, you could see it. I remember this poignant issue coming back from a trade fair where the U.S. had a pavilion. The transportation system had failed and I was coming back in a station wagon by myself. There were a bunch of people hitchhiking, so I stopped and three young girls got in. We were talking. They were three sisters. The older two spoke French and were secretaries with French companies. The youngest was an Arabic secretary. The older ones were in the process of being let go because they were no longer meant to speak French in Algeria, while the younger sister was a very valuable commodity. They realized it and they knew that, basically, they had no function thereafter. They joined the unemployed, which even at that time we guessed was in excess of 30%.

Q: You speak French from your time in Brussels and so on, but not Arabic. Did you use French almost exclusively in Algiers? Did not knowing Arabic make it difficult for you?

HIGGINSON: No. Basically, the oil community could all speak English. The other people like the General Motors group had carefully selected Arabists to come to Algiers to talk to the Algerian government. But the officials in the Algerian government could speak Arabic. I was dragged in to translate French-English so that the communications... I think now it's mostly all Arabic. But at that time, until you got out into the desert, French would get you by without any problems. My wife learned some Arabic and it was useful sometimes in directions out in the desert.

Q: Did you travel throughout North Africa, or were you pretty much just in Algeria?

HIGGINSON: Algeria is big. It's the second largest country in Africa from a square mile point of view. I only got out once to Morocco and that was after about six months. I still remember driving in from the airport in Rabat and seeing by the side of the road a boy and a girl holding hands, looking at each other, and smiling. I suddenly realized that I hadn't seen that in Algeria for six months. The population pressure, the industrialization pressure, the police state, it was a driven populous and was not that happy a populous. They didn't know who they were yet. I remember one of the revolutionaries against France had been tortured by the French. His back was just all laced with scars and everything. But when asked what his hope for Algeria was, it was "To be a big country like France." There was a real mix of a love-hate relationship at that time.

Q: One of the things they were really trying very hard to do was to rapidly take advantage of their natural resources, the petroleum and natural gas, but also industrialize, try to move very quickly ahead. Did you get any observations about that? It was probably hard to see the results.

HIGGINSON: You could see the results: the cement, the oil production. That was going up very rapidly. But with the advantage of hindsight, it was a disastrous policy. I mentioned the 30% unemployment. They should have been putting money into whatever would create more jobs. Again, in home electronics, if they would have just imported some of the tubes, the more complex parts, they could have gotten more modern machines, cheaper machines. But, no, they wanted to have it all Algerian. That was a waste of money on their part. No, again, I completely say with the advantage of hindsight, Boumedienne's industrialization policy was a total disaster and has led to a lot of what is now going on in Algeria. But I really respect Boumedienne. It was done with the thinking at that time. There was corruption in Algeria, but not that bad. It really was a mistaken, honest attempt, and a tremendous attempt.

Another huge problem is the population. It is just exploding. This I will fault Boumedienne on. I remember coming on the radio with an old Algerian gentleman, with his arms around him saying, "This is a true Algerian. He has just has his 13th child. This is what I want you people to be like." That led to this huge population. It's a very young population. They've done a wonderful job in educating it, but they don't have the jobs. The cement factory and the oil industry just doesn't hire lots of people. It doesn't build houses. They missed the boat there.

Q: So, all of this is not uncharacteristic of a number of other developing countries. The other thing that I've noticed in many countries is the tremendous influx to the cities. Was that beginning to happen? You said Algiers was a city of two million. It probably is a lot more than that now.

HIGGINSON: When the French left, Algiers was somewhere around 700,000. They've gone to two million and probably no houses have been built during that period, or there has been no net increase in housing. So, you just are cramming everybody together -again, clearly in my mind leading to some of the passions of today. Also, they were coming in from the desert and the farmland. Algeria, given its weather and its location to Europe, should be supplying fresh vegetables and fruit to the European market. They started on that route before I got there and it just all fell apart. They never followed up on it. They never got a steady supply of reasonably sorted out fruits and vegetables. When we were there, there really were food problems and shortages.

Q: Do you want to say anything about Algeria's connections at that time with southern Europe across the Mediterranean? Was there a pipeline to Italy or did that come later?

HIGGINSON: That came later, but the contract was signed while I was there. They were

talking about a pipeline that they're now building to go by Spain, which again gives these diversified routes of supplying gas to Europe.

Q: What about tourism? Where there tourists there at that time?

HIGGINSON: Yes, there were tourists. They had built a number of resorts, but it was a one shot deal. They were very inexpensive tour groups, but nobody ever went again. The food was terrible; the service was terrible. The resorts were rather attractive externally, but then the plumbing didn't work. The major industrialization, you go to Morocco and they've done the same thing with German companies. The German companies insisted that they have a continuing contract to maintain the hotels. So, there, the toilets worked; there was water. In Algeria, forcing their independence, paid for it by none of these things working and they were pretty miserable places to stay.

Q: Do you want to say anything about the organization of the U.S. Interests Section? You were the economic counselor and petroleum attache. Was there a DCM?

HIGGINSON: No, there wasn't a DCM. Actually, three of us arrived at the same time. Bob Pelletreau, who was a very successful career Foreign Service officer, was the political counselor. Then there was a Consular Section. Bill Eagleton had been there the longest time. He ran the whole place and very effectively. It really was a one man show. From a systematic organizational point of view, it was not a good arrangement. But in actual practice, since Bill was so capable and knew the country and everything so well, it worked very well indeed as long as what you were doing was within Bill's periscope.

Q: His interest.

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: Then when the relations were reestablished, Dick Parker came as ambassador and it became a more traditional organization.

HIGGINSON: Yes. Then there was the usual issue of who comes first. I believe Bob Pelletreau was made the DCM. I can't now remember whether he was officially made DCM or just in practice was DCM. Anyway, he was the alter ego of the ambassador and had become the alter ego of Bill Eagleton. If you don't know Bob Pelletreau, he is very capable, an Arabist. His real strongpoint is dealing with people. I don't know anybody who was unhappy in their dealings with Bob Pelletreau. He knew how to handle people and work with them at the same time. I never had any problems, issues, or anything but the utmost respect for Bob, except for the tennis court (He always won.).

Q: Well, that's important, too. Just as a reminder, this was the period from 1973-1975 when you were in Algiers. Is there anything else that we haven't discussed?

HIGGINSON: Two years was enough, especially for my wife. We had a wonderful

residence right across from the embassy. It was the DCM's residence, but without a DCM, I lucked into it. It was a 15th century Turkish summer palace. We sort of rattled around it very comfortably, which was very rare. Most people had lousy housing in Algiers. We were very lucky.

The American school in Algiers was also on that property. I had two sons there. One of my auxiliary functions was to be chairman of the board. I think I spent more time working on school problems, parent-teacher relations, headmaster-teacher relations, and board of director relations... There really were more direct negotiations involved in that job than most any other Foreign Service job I've had.

Q: At the time, the school went up through high school?

HIGGINSON: No, it just went through the ninth grade. Teachers were a problem. It turns out that we needed a third grade teacher, so I drafted my wife to do that. She had 16 students, only one of whom was a native American speaker. All the rest spoke various other languages. The school was in the ex-slaves quarters of this Turkish palace. It had nothing. However, it educated Stevie Higginson, my third son, unbelievably well. It just proved to me the importance of teachers over bricks and mortar. A number of teachers were young American women from the Midwest who were schoolteachers who had married sort of startling, dramatic Algerian young men, and come to Algeria. They had been shut in the house, told to wear a veil, and thought maybe they would leave. They were informed they could leave but their children would stay behind. So, they decided to go back to teaching at the American school. They put their lives into it. Some of them were really dedicated and effective teachers.

Q: Was the student body from the diplomatic corps?

HIGGINSON: From American oil companies, English oil companies, anybody who wanted to speak English, and a very few highly, very well-to-do Algerians who didn't want to have their children in the Algerian public school system and wanted them to learn English. But the Algerians really tried to discourage that.

Q: How about these teachers who were married to Algerians? Were they able to have their children in the school?

HIGGINSON: Yes, some of them were in the school.

Q: You were appointed to be the head of the school board?

HIGGINSON: Yes. The United States supplied at that time over half the budget. Therefore, the chairman of the school board was to be an American official. It usually was the political counselor, but Bob's Pelletreau's children were so young that they didn't get to that school. Mine were and it was also the place where I was living, so it made sense. I opted for it. I remember it with great interest. It did take up a great deal of time.

At times, I wished I had never heard of the school.

Q: Those schools certainly do take a lot of time on the part of the president of the board, the chairman of the board, or the school board itself. But, as you say, they also are, certainly for our children, the best experiences they have in terms of their early education.

HIGGINSON: My son is still in touch with a lot of his classmates. One of them was a Bulgarian girl who he was rather fond of. She has since married and then left Bulgaria, immigrated to the United States, and she and her husband are now very involved in the air conditioning business. My son was their sponsor. This to me was the first sign that the communist regime was about over. These two kids' parents were absolutely at the top of the Bulgarian Communist Party leadership. If they couldn't make it or wanted to get out, it was clear that something was wrong.

Q: Is there anything else about Algiers?

HIGGINSON: Nothing except where I was going to go next. The Department in its wisdom thought that I would go to be economic officer in Saigon. I didn't feel that that was going to be a long-lasting position, my wife couldn't go, and I was horrified at the very thought. Therefore, I called some friends back in Washington and got my assignment changed to be the deputy U.S. representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, which was much nicer and much better.

I would like to back a bit. In between when I was with the OECD, I was sent for three months to Vietnam. I was a junior Foreign Service inspector. It was a new program. It's an interesting period.

Q: Tell me about how that came to be in 1971 and what your experience there was.

HIGGINSON: The Department was very worried over equal treatment of all new Foreign Service officers who were automatically sent to Vietnam and wanted to be sure that they were equally treated by promotion panels. Since some of the Foreign Service officers were assigned to very small villages in Vietnam where they had almost no contact with Foreign Service officers, it was thought that it would be a good idea to have the inspectors see every State Department employee in the country and do a very complete personnel report on each one of those. That being decided, it was realized that this was much too much of a job for the usual Foreign Service inspector team. Therefore, they decided to augment it and also to experiment with what was called junior Foreign Service officer, middle grade. So, Dan Phillips and I were selected to be the first guinea pigs for this experiment. We were sent to Vietnam. Luckily, I knew Dan from a prior work relationship. We were already good friends. That made it much easier for the whole assignment.

We went to Saigon in early June. As an economic officer, I was assigned to look at

economic cone Foreign Service officers. Then the political officer saw the political officers. First, we worked in the embassy. That way, the leader of the team, Ambassador Sweeney, who was on leave from his ambassadorship in (Inaudible), I believe, could also review our role as neophyte inspectors and make sure that we learned all the ropes correctly. I remember, this was just after the Paris Offensive. I would say militarily, if we won the war in Vietnam, that was when we had most won it. It was really quite a peaceful time, at least in the southern half of the country. Vietnam was divided into four corps. The first corps was the northernmost; I did not ever get to the first corps area. The second corps had some fighting, but was reasonably peaceful. Some inspectors went out through that corps and through the third corps, which included Saigon.

Q: You saw officers.

HIGGINSON: Yes. First, as far as impressions in Saigon, it was very peaceful, quite comfortable, a very large embassy and a mammoth American presence. I'll get back to this later. I also remember clearly that every weekend, we all went over to the political officer's house. He had a swimming pool, and had large water polo games that were a long way from the hardships that one considers when assigned to Vietnam. I also remember, we thought we'd like to go swimming at a beach. Ambassador Sweeney asked permission and it was duly granted. We hadn't realized that it entailed an airplane ride up to the beach area. He had the equivalent rank of a four star general, so we had to have armed jeeps in front and in back of us to go to the beach. One soldier had to stay within 50 feet of Ambassador Sweeney when he was swimming. He would be holding his machine gun right over his head. They also put a machine gun location right at the top of the beach. It wasn't totally peaceful and it seemed excessively unnecessary.

The young American officers that I interviewed in Vietnam were very capable and dedicated. They really put their utmost into trying to bring the Vietnam countryside into 20th century democracy and a stronger economy so that, hopefully, it would exist on its own. I really want to give the highest praise to these individuals. They certainly colored my future thinking on the Vietnam situation. They really had gotten out into the country. I remember a lunch with one farmer and the local CORDS program village representative. He had just put his whole life into the Vietnamese. The whole village liked him and worked with him. The farmer expressed his gratification. It was also brought home to me quite clearly that there was quite a way to go when, as we were leaving, the farmer offered me his daughter.

Later on, I was asked by the deputy ambassador (We had two ambassadors in Saigon at that time.) to stay on in the Economic Section. I graciously declined. From my point of view, there was no chance that the Vietnam experiment was going to work. It worked fine as long as we were bringing in just billions of dollars into the country's economy. As long as that could continue, I expect it's part of Vietnam (and as far as Vietnam is concerned, I was sure it could continue), but I also didn’t feel that we could continue to put that sort of money in there and assume that the money started to be reduced. I saw the economy in Vietnam going to shreds very rapidly. I didn't want to have anything to do with it. Plus, of

course, you couldn't take your family out there. It was less than attractive to me.

Q: Who was the Deputy Ambassador at that time?

HIGGINSON: Ambassador Sam Berger. He was an elevated DCM. But I believe he was also confirmed by the Senate. So, it really was an ambassadorship.

Q: And the number one ambassador was Bunker?

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: The focus of your activity there as an inspector was on the junior Foreign Service officers, evaluating their work, rather than a program that they were doing. Or were you involved in both?

HIGGINSON: It depends on what you call the "program." We were involved in the program of the operation of the embassy as a Foreign Service mission. We were specifically told not to involve ourselves in whether we should be in Vietnam, or we shouldn't be, or we were doing everything wrong as far as the Pacification Program was concerned. That we were told not to be involved in. I believe Ambassador Sweeney treated that in his cover memorandum to our report. Basically, our report was to look at the operations of the embassy and, more specifically, Dan and I were meant to make sure that each junior Foreign Service officer got a thorough efficiency report out of the inspectors.

Q: I assume there were some junior Foreign Service officers in the embassy in Saigon as well as the many that were out in the provinces.

HIGGINSON: About half would have been in Saigon itself or over at the CORDS headquarters. Less than half the embassy was scattered around Saigon itself.

Q: And you evaluated them.

HIGGINSON: Yes. One of the things I had to do was the communications. I remember wondering about some of the mail expenses. But again, that was too close to the heart of the whole matter and I suggested that that issue not be raised further.

Q: When you say "communications," you mean the communications process within the embassy?

HIGGINSON: Yes, the airplane flights and things like that, which were, in my opinion, a little excessive.

Q: How long did this last?

HIGGINSON: This lasted three months. It was a chance of a lifetime. I was and still am very pleased to have been out there, to have seen what the U.S. tried to do out there. I came back some years later during the difficulties over Vietnam and the demonstrations in Washington and I agreed to be a monitor for the Department of Justice to make sure there wasn't police brutality in Washington. Therefore, I was down in the center of the demonstrations. I and a lawyer with the Department of State, Jerry Carter, kept together and watched and were extremely impressed by the care that the police took in not being too aggressive in controlling the crowd. Then just towards the end when everything got tear-gassed, the crowd started throwing rocks at the Department of Justice and the organizer of the march with extreme bravery stood up on the wall between the building and the rocks to try to keep down the rock throwing. One person next to me picked up a rock and fired it at the building. I stopped him and asked, "What did you do that for?" He said, "Look, I took a bus for three hours to get here for some action. There's nothing going on and I want to see trouble." He couldn't have cared less about Vietnam and what we were trying to do there.

I just mentioned that because of the conflict in my mind and the dedication of the U.S. team in Saigon trying to really rebuild this country and then back home where the whole issue was being lost, the real total lack of interest in the Vietnam issue per se, but one of really youth demonstrating and trying to assert itself against the government.

Q: But you also said that you really wondered whether South Vietnam was viable, whether it could really work without the billions of dollars in money, commitment, time, military strength that the United States was pouring in there. So, you really didn't see that it was a winnable situation when you were there that summer.

HIGGINSON: I'm not talking about a military point of view. I really was not involved in the military aspects. They simply provided helicopter flights all over. I just thought that the economy was so dependent upon U.S. aid that there was no way that we could sort of extract yourself without the South Vietnamese economy failing, which I assumed would bring on a greater communist progress in taking over the country.

Q: Let me ask you to sum up a little bit more about your experience as a mid-level officer as an inspector for three months. In 1972, I was sent on a similar program to Copenhagen. So, the situation was very different. I thought my main reason for being there was not so much to evaluate junior officers, but simply to add some more manpower to a small inspection team to make it possible to finish their work there in a reasonable period of time. I felt that it was very useful for me to sort of look at a different embassy that I had been serving in in terms of all its dimensions. I thought that was an experience that, even though I never was an inspector again, was very useful. I don't know if you felt similarly or whether you were so specialized in terms of the great numbers of junior officers that that had to be your primary focus.

HIGGINSON: Certainly from a time point of view, writing up all those efficiency reports took up a lot of time and attention. But I think I commented earlier that an aide to an

Assistant Secretary was a wonderful way of seeing the Department and training for junior middle grade officers. I thought the junior inspector program from that point of view was very successful. We had a meeting every morning, all of the inspectors, and you saw their view of what they were worried about and what they had seen at the embassy. It's a wonderful opportunity. The two areas that I was responsible for, communications and the Economic Bureau, were certainly of interest to me. I am a special case in that I had never been in a real embassy. The Mission to the European Communities does not have a communications section, an administrative section, a consular section. It is purely a political and economic division stuck off in a separate building which the embassy completely serviced. So, it was especially good for me to see the service end of foreign service.

Q: I think that pretty well covers the Vietnam inspection period. Let's skip ahead again over your time in the OECD office in the Department and your time in Algeria, which I think we pretty well covered. Your next assignment was to Rome. What did you do there? What was that like? I believe it was from 1975 to 1978.

HIGGINSON: Correct. I was the deputy U.S. representative to the Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome. This was just after the World Food Conference. There was a major worry about the ability of the world to supply enough grain to feed. Mr. Kissinger promised that we would set up a rural food program and an investment bank to assist agriculture throughout the world. I came after that. Primarily, the problem was to put the whole thing together. The investment bank turned out to be a very tricky thing to negotiate. We didn't have the funds that were originally promised to put into the bank. My role was primarily to service the AID officials who were coming over to negotiate it. This did get me into many of the meetings.

What is the role of a mission to an international organization? In my mind, you know the people on the spot, the personal contacts, which can help the negotiators in Washington who come. Most countries utilize their on-site officials for these meetings. Therefore, this is a big advantage. The other thing is that you should know most of the secretariat. This can be of great assistance. It gets down to international conference negotiations. At various times, you have a position that is not going to be accepted. The question is whether to go to loggerheads or delay until you can get some new instructions from Washington. If you know the conference staff well enough, you know how much time the interpreters can do overtime. You know how long to delay so that there will be a halt for the evening so you do have time to get further instructions. The other major help to me there was an Australian from their Department of Agriculture who was very helpful in negotiations. We would take turns in taking rather extreme positions well to the right of what our final instructions were. Then he or I would come in with an extremely moderate, sensible position. The rest of the room would be so relieved to be away from the extreme position that we could frequently get what we wanted. There were only two countries who really wanted that in the room. At this time, the Group of 77 was fairly unified and were having meetings before every meeting. They basically were going into each meeting as a very large underdog. I still remember with great fondness this Australian. I talked to him

about what our best approach would be in each of these meetings.

Q: The Group of 77 that you're referring to was the loose organization of the developing countries, the Third World. You say the United States and Australia were often together as major agricultural producers and grain exporters. Were we also close to countries like Canada and some of the other exporters?

HIGGINSON: Yes, we were quite close. Frequently, a lot of these countries basically would agree with our position and they had instructions not to rock the boat and to let the United States carry the ball. They would come on along. The Canadian mission was larger than the Australian mission and frequently had people from Ottawa over there. Therefore, the members of the Canadian mission had less autonomy than the Australian individual, who I might say was going well beyond his instructions. His ambassador was not pleased with everything he did, but he rather relished that situation.

Q: You were the deputy U.S. representative. Of course, the United States was the leading member of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Council that ran the World Food Program. Who was the U.S. representative in those days? Did that person have the rank of ambassador? Was it Paul Burns?

HIGGINSON: I basically took Paul Burns' position. He was not the U.S. representative. At that time, FODAG was under the U.S. ambassador to Italy. Therefore, initially, the ambassador there was Mr. Volpe from Massachusetts, who was quite well-known in Massachusetts for the construction business.

Q: That's the governor.

HIGGINSON: I know him from the construction business because I was also a lawyer in Massachusetts and there was a certain issue about the road that Mr. Volpe constructed that we took him to court on. Needless to say, he wasn't very pleased to see me suddenly arrive in the embassy. We decided not to talk that awfully much. He left almost immediately. Dick Gardener became our ambassador. Dick had been a deputy in the Bureau of International Organizations, so I had dealt with him there and knew him reasonably well. I worked with him very closely as far as the Food and Agriculture Organization was concerned. He was basically an international organization expert and was very interested in the FAO. Unfortunately, I remember taking him over to his first meeting with Mr. Sowumo, who was the new head of the FAO with U.S. support over the budget of the FAO, which the U.S. was trying to reduce some. It was a total disaster of a meeting. Dick Gardener said to me on the way back to the embassy that he was never going to see that man again. Much to my knowledge, he never did. But he also did follow up quite closely what we were doing and he gave us his advice quite frequently.

Q: You mentioned that a lot of what you did was to support officials from USAID who were coming to negotiating meetings and so on. What about the U.S. Department of Agriculture?

HIGGINSON: Every two years, the FAO have their annual conference. The Secretary of Agriculture is the head of the U.S. delegation and they have 15-20 agricultural experts there. I was usually put on the delegation (inaudible). It occurred twice while I was there. I made sure that the various papers got to all the members of the delegation, they knew what was happening, transportation and everything. I enjoyed working with the Department of Agriculture and was especially appreciative that they got me a Superior Honor Award for my efforts on their behalf. I wasn't totally certain that I deserved it. I remember one horrible occasion when Ambassador Young decided he wanted to change his speech to the FAO at the last moment. So, we were writing most of the evening. Then we sent it to Washington for approval. We got it back the morning that he was going to speak. I by luck had the best secretary, so she had to type it. As she was typing, we were sending pages over one at a time to FAO. Needless to say, that went awry. I was carrying the pages to Ambassador Young on the podium as he was speaking. There was a repetition of two pages and he got half way through repeating himself and had to excuse himself. Then I got him the correct pages. He carried it off beautifully. I was mortified.

Q: This was Ambassador Andy Young, the U.S. representative to the United Nations.

HIGGINSON: Right. He had come for this meeting.

Q: FAO being a specialized agency of the United Nations and he being, in a sense, involved in all of the different arms of the UN.

HIGGINSON: Right.

I liked working with international organizations because, unlike an embassy, you're not just an outsider. At the FAO, we pay 25% of the budget. We have a major influence on what they're doing and are sort of a stockholder in the organization. So, you're within it as well as looking at it from the outside. This gets you quite involved in the personnel assignments of Americans to the FAO. I was on the Budget Committee for the FAO, which again gets you into the intricacies of international organizations' budgeting practices.

Again, it's the importance of a large mission. Since we had five people in the mission, I could spend a certain amount of time really going over those papers and discussing them.

Q: The point you've just made about being inside the organization and a leading member, a stockholder with 25% of the budget and so on, all of this was quite different than your experience at the European Communities, where we had a strong political commitment to European integration, but we were an outsider, not a member.

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: Is there anything else we should say about FODAG? Rome is a big city. FAO is an

important part of Rome, but obviously is far from the only part. It's sort of on the other side of town through a lot of traffic past the Colosseum. I'm sure that just living in Rome is a challenge at times, working there.

HIGGINSON: Yes and no. I had the virtue of going from Algiers to Rome, so Rome was paradise and everything worked compared to Algeria. So, we were very happy. It's much better to go north, my next post being Luxembourg, than it is to go in the other direction in Europe. The problem was that this was the height of the Red Brigade. Aldo Moro had been kidnapped. There were all sorts of security checks. You really did accompany your children around Rome rather than just letting them go free. But Rome itself, my wife was an artist and just loved it. The American Academy there is a wonderful institution.

Q: It's interesting on the terrorist side how quickly things changed in Rome. I was assigned there, as you know, and left in 1973 just two years before you came. I just don't remember that as a significant issue. There were some demonstrations related to Vietnam and other things in the time that I was there, but not a personal direct threat. It didn't exist.

HIGGINSON: That's true. I felt, being accredited to the FAO, that probably I was reasonably safe, that maybe the embassy personnel might be targets, but that they wouldn't target an international aid giving organization. But it did affect you. My youngest son was at the high school in Rome. The project was to make a volcano. The problem was that he needed some rather incendiary materials, which we couldn't get. So, we sent his mother off and we found just the store that had all sorts of chemicals. My wife went over there and got most of them, but one of them they wouldn't give her. She talked to them and said, "But I need this." Eventually, she showed her U.S. diplomatic passport and with some reluctance they gave her the final component. Then she left the store and walked right into the Italian police, who had been duly notified that somebody was buying the necessities for a bomb. They were even more nonplused than the storekeeper was of what to do with an American diplomat. They let her go, but it was an interesting experience.

Q: Did the volcano experiment go well?

HIGGINSON: He won his science fair with a very explosive volcano.

Q: The FODAG office was across the street from the main embassy building?

HIGGINSON: Yes, at that time it was across the street from the main office building.

Q: So, you were part of it, but you were a little separate.

HIGGINSON: Yes. You could have lunch over there if you wanted to. It was pretty close to the ideal arrangement. You had quite a lot of independence, but still the embassy was right there and you got to participate in a lot of these other embassy extras. Once a week,

they took a classified pouch to Palermo, Sicily, and some FSO has to take a classified pouch down, so they divvied that up among the staff of the embassy. It was one of my wife's better vacations, seeing Sicily as the courier.

Q: As you said before, you went north from Rome to Luxembourg as the deputy chief of mission. That's a very different sort of embassy than either Rome or Saigon. Tell me a little bit about that embassy and what you did there.

HIGGINSON: The embassy in Luxembourg is in the city overlooking the Kirchberg Plateau. It has about 20 Americans. That includes the Marines, which I guess were the largest single element. I was asked to come there by Ambassador James Lowenstein, who was a career Foreign Service officer and really knew European foreign policy and NATO. He was a wonderful leader who I got to know very well. In such a small post, basically, I was the only person he had to talk to really on the policy level. So, I appreciated that. He was quite clear. He wanted me to run the embassy and he would take care of the diplomacy. That worked out very well. The reason I was assigned to Luxembourg was that, shortly after I arrived, Luxembourg became the President of the European Communities. This is a rotating presidency at the present time. For six months, each member of the European Communities has the presidency. Obviously, for Luxembourg and its minute foreign office, this was a major strain.

Since I am not a linguist myself, I looked with awe at the Luxembourgers. They are truly multilingual. As they explained to me, they spoke Luxembourgish on their mother's knee; they went to primary school in German; they graduated in French; the newspapers were in French or German; the movies and about half the television shows were in English. They were truly multilingual. I felt there was one person in the Luxembourg Foreign Ministry who I spoke better French than he spoke English. Otherwise, they all spoke English very well. At that time, Collette Flesch was the Foreign Minister. She had gone to Wellesley College and then had been employed by the U.S. embassy in Luxembourg. She knew Americans and English extremely well. My chief contact, who was also the Secretary of the Political Committee of the European Communities, when I'd come in to see him, he would speak English perfectly, switch to Italian to talk to the Italian Foreign Office, talk to his wife in Luxembourgish, and then come back to me in English with never even a mix-up between the various languages. He and I saw each other quite frequently. Since they are so undermanned, I used to collect a week's supply of instructions from Washington and go in to see him with maybe 20 instructions and then go over them bang, bang, bang. He appreciated this. I think he knew I knew his instructions, which I never saw him writing, but I'm quite sure it was "Never so 'No' to the Americans. You can divert them, but never, never say 'No' to them."

Luxembourg is a wonderful country. It's extremely small: 278,000 people. But they are very rich. At that time, they were the second richest country in the European Community. Now they are by and far the richest country in the European Community on a per capita basis. The U.S. is the largest foreign investor there. They still truly appreciate our having liberated the country in the first world war and the second world war. They are true

friends of the United States and treat you extremely well in the country. My predecessor, Dan Phillips, whom I mentioned earlier as my co-junior Foreign Service Inspector, said that if I were too bored, I could go down to the railroad station and watch the trains go in and out. I didn't find that true at all. Luxembourg as a member of the OECD, NATO, the European Communities, and also bilateral relations more than kept the embassy very busy.

Q: That was especially the case when they were for six months the President of the Community, where we were discussing all sorts of international political cooperation kinds of issues with them, I suppose.

HIGGINSON: Yes. This was also when we were trying to free the hostages in Iran, so a lot of those conversations would be started in Luxembourg to the presidency. Obviously, we also approached all the other member states at the same time.

Another virtue of Luxembourg is that it is a small country; you do know the individuals well. So, when there was a European Communities summit and Washington desperately wanted to know what was agreed to, it was quite difficult for the ambassador in Paris to get to see the Foreign Minister, but in Luxembourg, you know the Foreign Minister plays tennis next to you on Mondays or you can get to see the Foreign Minister at any time. As I said, they've been instructed, I was quite sure, not to say "No" to you. So, you could frequently find out what occurred and get early report in on these major meetings.

Q: The headquarters of the Coal and Steel Community was still in Luxembourg.

HIGGINSON: It depends on what you call "headquarters." When I was there, all of the staff of the Coal and Steel Community, the Secretariat, is in Luxembourg, but the High Authority no longer met. They're basically the commissioners. They met in Brussels, which is the headquarters. The European Communities is sort of a headless organization. You've got the International Board of Justice in Luxembourg. You've got the Parliament Secretariat in Luxembourg. You've got the Commission in Brussels. You have an agreement with the French that the Parliament will meet in Strasbourg a certain number of times. This is a very inefficient and expensive way of keeping a number of countries happy. They're going to try to decide sometime as to where to permanently locate the heads of these organizations, which will probably be Brussels.

Q: But you were not really particularly involved with the Secretariat of the Coal and Steel Community or anything else that was in Luxembourg?

HIGGINSON: No, I wasn't involved at all with them, except for the International Board of Justice. Being a lawyer, that interests me. Also, the first high level visitor to Luxembourg while I was there was Chief Justice Burger. He came to meet with his equals, the European Court of Justice. When we began to look into it, we found that Burger was the highest ranking U.S. official to officially visit Luxembourg in a long time. The most vivid memory I have of that was, we had a meeting because Burger wanted to

show some wonderful movies he had made of the major constitutional law cases, which was all fine, except in Luxembourg, there aren't that many people to do things for you. So, I was responsible for the projector and the filming, which was all upside-down. I remember aching arms because my only solution was to hold the camera or the projector upside-down so, therefore, the picture was right side-up.

Q: You never know quite what's going to happen. You were the DCM. Ambassador Jim Lowenstein was the ambassador part of the time that you were there. You were presumably chargé after he left.

HIGGINSON: Yes. I was chargé. It's a tricky situation. Jim has recently separated. Luxembourg is a very small town. You would like to go to other places in Europe. Technically, to leave your country, an ambassador needs approval of the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. He had an exception made for Luxembourg. I always knew where he was. I was there most every weekend. It worked out fine. Usually, he would be staying with the ambassador in France, Arthur Hartman. That worked out quite easily. Ambassador Lowenstein did get remarried while I was there. That was also part of my DCM activities, to arrange the wedding, which was a great success. Then he was removed back to Washington and I was chargé for about nine months until Ambassador Dolibois arrived. He was the first because he was actually born in Luxembourg and raised as a young boy in Luxembourg, so he spoke Luxembourg. He was by far the first U.S. ambassador to speak Luxembourgish. With Ambassador Dolibois, my role shifted in that he made it quite clear that he was interested in the public relations aspect of the embassy, but not in the foreign policy and would I take care of those events, which I was very happy to do.

Q: In some ways, he was kind of a stereotype of a U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg, different in some ways because he had originally come from Luxembourg. But one has the idea that we've usually had political appointees, often without a lot of foreign affairs experience serving there. But Jim Lowenstein is not the only career Foreign Service officer who has been ambassador there.

HIGGINSON: He is not the only, but there haven't been very many. The Luxembourgers had pleaded for a career Foreign Service officer. It raises an interesting issue in that the government of Luxembourg could deal with Ambassador Lowenstein. It worked out very well. They very much appreciated him. But the public image... He would go on the Luxembourg public radio station, talk in Luxembourgish. He was much closer to the people and was a very popular ambassador there. That's an important function, too. It takes a lot of time. It's difficult to do both. It shows where a political ambassador, if he uses his strengths, can be very, very capable.

Q: I think Ambassador Dolibois had been a university person in Ohio.

HIGGINSON: He was the vice president of the University of Miami of Ohio, which has its Center in Luxembourg and sends over about 120 students a year. Luxembourg doesn’t

have any universities itself. It sends all its citizens abroad for higher education. It has negotiated agreements with France, Belgium, etc. to take their students with the belief that it's good for Luxembourg being so small to make sure that all of its citizens have this experience of getting out of Luxembourg. But it gave Miami University of Ohio a special aura to be the only institution of higher education in Luxembourg. It was nice for them. It was nice for the embassy to have the university there and it was especially nice for me because my wife could teach art history there so that she was quite happy.

Q: Did Miami University of Ohio establish the European Center in Luxembourg because of Dolibois' background?

HIGGINSON: I don't know about the "because," but he certainly was involved in it and was very active in creating the institution. The vice chancellor's sister was a secretary to Vice President Bush. That was probably why he became ambassador.

Q: I went through the Ambassadorial Seminar with him. We were on friendly terms for the two weeks or so that we were together. I thought he was rather low-key, but a fairly open person.

HIGGINSON: That's exactly right.

Q: He was certainly not pretentious or pushy.

HIGGINSON: That's right. He just flat out said, "You handle the diplomatic issues and I'll take care of the public relations issues."

Q: And he expected you to run the embassy, too?

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: You also mentioned Miami University and the large American investment. Luxembourg in many ways has been sort of a gateway to Europe for the United States - not the only one, but an important one, partly with Icelandic Airlines, which goes to Luxembourg.

HIGGINSON: Right. This is the cheapest flight to Europe, or was at one point. It produces a fair amount of activity for the embassy with people who run out of money or miss their planes and don't know what to do. We found that lots of our children's friends had our names and we were their last stop in Europe and a very convenient washing machine for all their clothes.

The other thing that Ambassador Lowenstein took advantage of in the closeness of the relations was, the U.S. was just trying to store military supplies in Europe. That way, you wouldn't have to have so many soldiers in Europe. We negotiated with ARBED, the Luxembourg steel company. ARBED is more than the Luxembourg steel company.

ARBED at one time was 1/3 of the gross national product of Luxembourg. They were darn near Luxembourg. Their importance has reduced, but it's still a very large corporation and has a great deal of influence. We negotiated with them to build a storage place so that Luxembourg has now more tanks per capita than any other country in the world, which is a relationship you don't usually consider in Luxembourg. It helps in little ways. To test their bridges, you have to put 100 tons in the middle of a bridge and see whether it sagged. Well, how to move 100 tons is difficult, but if you just take two tanks, you've got it. Could they borrow two tanks for a day to check their bridges? Again, in Luxembourg, you could do that.

Q: I don't think this particularly applies to Luxembourg, but the question comes up sometimes about whether the United States should be universally represented in every capital with an embassy, an ambassador, flying the flag, and so on. My question is, did quite a few other countries have an embassy in Luxembourg or were we fairly unique? Could we have covered and done much of the work out of Brussels or The Hague?

HIGGINSON: I believe 23 other countries had embassies in Luxembourg. A lot of countries were represented by their embassies in Brussels. Could we have done it as well? We couldn't have done it as well. If Luxembourg were just another foreign country, the embassy was not necessary. It's expensive. But given the NATO role and Luxembourg's sensibilities, removing the embassy would be a disaster as far as our relations with Luxembourg were concerned. Little things like when we were putting in the radar airplanes for NATO, AWACS, the problem was how to register them. NATO doesn't have a civil air force. All the rest of the members of NATO had their own military air forces and rules for their planes. How were they going to register the AWACS? The final solution was to register them in Luxembourg. I remember a very pleasant evening with the Foreign Minister designing insignia for AWACS. You couldn't do this unless you were resident in Luxembourg and got to know these people very, very well.

I'd like to finish off with some conflicting memories of Luxembourg. One was of the colonel in the Luxembourg army. He was remembering back in 1939 or 1940 when the Germans occupied Luxembourg. He was a young kid, about nine years old. The first thing the Germans did was to gather all the young boys his age together and offer them shiny new bicycles if they would join the Nazi Party, which he thought was a wonderful deal and signed up to do. He went home and boasted to his father, who sent him right back to get that paper to end his association with the Nazi Party. It does bring to life that you've got to look at the circumstances in which people sign up for some of these things. It seems absolutely atrocious now, but at the time, it may come down to just a shiny bicycle that you can't see beyond. The Germans are a very large country. Luxembourgish isn't that far away from German. I was interested early on... I was at a cocktail party in Luxembourg overlooking Germany. We were talking about the weather. There was the comment that all bad weather comes from the east. It was indicative of their concern.

Finally on the Luxembourg embassy, I would say a fair amount of my time was spent on Marine Corps affairs. Having 10 young Americans in a city can lead to considerable

activity as far as the embassy in concerned. We took care of two marriages and a number of fights that were not animosity so much as just young people's excess energy. I still remember coming to the embassy one morning a little sleep and saying, "Something is wrong." I looked very careful and realized that the American flag was upside-down. I was trying to figure out if this was because the embassy had been taken over or if it was just an inefficient Marine. I decided the latter was very right.

Q: A little carelessness sometimes. You were there four years.

HIGGINSON: It was a good post.

Q: You came back for the Senior Seminar?

HIGGINSON: Right. Having been abroad for nine years, I thought this would be a perfect reintroduction to the United States. It turned out to be that way. It was an excellent year. I will not go into that many details except for strongly recommending the program coming back from abroad or maybe just before you go out overseas again. But there's not much sense to do it in the middle of a tour.

Q: Did you do a case study?

HIGGINSON: Yes. It was on the General Telephone Electronics electronics plant in Algeria that I mentioned earlier.

Q: What was your assignment coming out of the Senior Seminar?

HIGGINSON: I came out of the Senior Seminar to be Director of the Office of Fuels and Energy for Oil Producing Countries. This was in the Economic and Business Bureau (EB). I had that job for three years. This was after the oil crisis, but some of the protections that were built into the systems to avoid another oil crisis had just been or were being set up. So, the Energy Office of the OECD had been built up. We coordinated our policy towards producing countries with other major consumers in the OECD.

Q: That was through the International Energy Agency?

HIGGINSON: Yes. My most major accomplishment there was to set up bilateral contact groups with some of our more important suppliers of oil: Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia. Twice a year, the oil policy officials of these countries would sit down bilaterally and discuss various problems or plans for the future, which I think involves a lot of travel and is expensive from the point of view, but is quite critical to long-term foreign relations to have people know each other and understand each other's policies.

Q: Those consultations would be undertaken by the Department of Energy with your office?

HIGGINSON: The Department of Energy and State with a little bit of hassle as to who was the chairman of the delegations vis a vis the other chief point. I'm quite convinced that many of the Foreign Service jobs in Washington is your relations with other agencies. It can be extremely combative or you can be very close and very good friends. We had sort of a mixture in our office with very close and good friendship, but the Assistant Secretary had a fair amount of conflicts with his counterparts, which made it easier and harder.

Q: I think your point is well taken. I think it's particularly true in the functional bureaus. If you're the desk officer for Algeria and somebody from another agency has a problem involving Algeria, they know who to come to and those things can be worked out. If you're the Director of the Office of Energy Producer Country Affairs and you're in the Department of Energy, you may go directly to the Algeria Desk if you have a matter that involves Algeria. Somehow the Economic Bureau or one of the other functional bureaus really has to establish its credentials. I've often thought that is a challenge.

HIGGINSON: Yes. It's the key to be a success or not a success of your job. The Algerian desk officer has all of Washington to worry about. In my position, the Energy Office was 90% of my outside of the Energy Department contacts.

Q: Still, it was probably important in the early period in that office to establish a relationship and a rapport with those officials, as important as when you're in an embassy abroad and getting to know the clientele there.

HIGGINSON: Oh, yes. The other clientele you have to know is your desk officers in the geographic bureaus to make sure they don't forget to either.

Q: Is there anything else about that period? You were in that office for about three years from 1983-1986.

HIGGINSON: No. I'd say my work in that office further confirmed to me my belief that the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs would do well to have certain missions that it primarily deals with, in this case the OECD or the International Energy Agency. It should be their responsibility rather than some geographic bureau that has no functional relationship to them.

Q: When you finished in the Economic and Business Bureau, you went to Personnel as a senior assignment officer finding good jobs for Senior Foreign Service officers, deputy chiefs of mission, ambassadors, and so on.

HIGGINSON: My responsibility was primarily for economic officers and deputy chiefs of mission. The head of the office handles all the ambassadorial legwork, except that he got ill for a period of time, so I had to do that one, too. The ambassadors is a lot of work. That's a full-time responsibility. This had been my first occasion to work in admin. Therefore, I was glad to have some experience in this area. Computers were just coming

in. I'm afraid I was not as successful with e-mail as Bill Swain. What was his title?

Q: He was Office Director first, and then he became Deputy Assistant Secretary?

HIGGINSON: He would have liked it if I had been better at that. His next boss, Director General George Vest, was equally at sea with e-mail. I knew him because I had briefed him to go to Brussels when he was ambassador to the European Community. So, it was a nice time to work with him. My chief success or at least remembrance of Senior Assignments was, I was the only one who succeeded in assigning a Foreign Service officer to a post that he did not wish to go to. Supposedly, you go where assigned. In this case, it was the economic counselor in Venezuela, which is a fine assignment, but the person involved didn't want to leave Europe. Since there wasn't any other further job for him in Europe, he went to Caracas kicking and screaming at me. But a year later, he was gentle enough to admit that this was a very good assignment and he was very glad he did it. But I do remember spending a great deal of time both with my compatriots and with him in forcing an assignment in the interests of the Service rather than in the interests of the Foreign Service officer.

Q: I remember that occasion very well since I was in the office at the time as well. I see that individual from time to time even today. He has, of course, long since retired. I've never directly asked him about his experience with that entire episode, but we're certainly on friendly terms today. I do remember that he did tell me later on that it probably was a good thing for him, not only for his career, but for him personally. I think he did a good job there.

I think we won't go into all the other assignment cases and things that were done in that office. You went from there yourself in 1987 to a very unique assignment. Tell us about that.

HIGGINSON: I had some family difficulties in that my oldest son contracted leukemia, so it was critical that I stay in Washington for his treatment. So, I was looking around for an assignment. The Coast Guard and oceans have always interested me, so I put my name in for that assignment and was duly assigned to be advisor to Paul Yost, Commandant of the Coast Guard. He usually called me his "political advisor" sort of like in the communist world just to make sure that he tows the correct line. You may remember that many years ago, the Coast Guard returned a Russian who had jumped onto the deck of a Coast Guard cutter and this created a furor in the United States and it was decided that the Coast Guard should have a foreign affairs advisor.

Q: Were you the first to fill that post?

HIGGINSON: No, there had been three or four before me. It's an interesting position in that you are basically the only non-Coast Guard individual. You're given the rank of admiral. You have the office next to the Commandant. It's either sink or swim on how well you get along with your commandant. It's also a little different than other political

advisors in that there is a small office in the Coast Guard giving foreign assistance to other Coast Guard navies and you're responsible for that office and do the reports on the personnel and everything. This was, for me, very important. This gave me a Coast Guard staff who I could look to and help me in the intrigues going on with the Coast Guard. I don't mean "intrigues" in the negative sense. Another indication of the colloquialness of the Coast Guard is that of their admirals, of which I think there are about 21, only one did not go to the Coast Guard Academy. In other words, you have people who have been educated together, have served together, and it's one group. They know each other extremely well. They are cautious with outsiders. I sort of felt my role was to be an outsider, that when a suggestion came up, they would look at it totally from their experience, and it was useful for them sometimes to see how a matter looked to somebody who had none of the background that they had. Commandant Admiral Yost saw this virtue and utilized me in that capacity quite extensively. This was an excellent assignment. The Coast Guard as I describe it is a bunch of adult boy scouts. Basically, their function is to save lives and to help people in maritime areas of the United States.

Q: Certainly the rapport that you had with the Commandant, the personal relationship that you established, I would think would be very important in that kind of position. If you were on a different wavelength totally or he didn't trust you or didn't have confidence in your judgment, it would have been very easy for issues to develop to the point where any kind of advice would have been superfluous and after the fact. I assume that was not the case, that you were brought into things at an early point and could make suggestions and give advice.

HIGGINSON: Yes, and things that had nothing to do with me such as whether to close Governor's Island in New York.

Q: These were not foreign affairs issues.

HIGGINSON: No, they were totally internal Coast Guard issues. Not that he would take them necessarily, but he just wanted to have an outsider's view on matters and then he would make his own decision. He had an aide who I worked very closely with. Again, that made a huge difference. He is now the Commandant of the Coast Guard. So, if you pick your aides to contact carefully, it's very important to your success in your job.

Q: I also like the idea that you mentioned that you headed an office that had other responsibilities, not just as a foreign affairs advisor to the Commandant. I think from the POLADS, from major commands that I'm familiar with, I'm not sure that happens very often.

HIGGINSON: I don’t think ever. This was very useful to me and it was also useful to them because, as you know, it can be very difficult to get to see the Secretary of State or something or other. They figured out that my office was next to the Commandant. So, a Coast Guard matter, if they could persuade me of its importance, I could raise it not to make a decision on it, but just to get the issue up to the Commandant or maybe a

dissenting point of view and he could then make his own mind up.

Q: You were in this position for a couple of years?

HIGGINSON: Two years.

Q: Why don't you talk a little bit about some of the more purely foreign relations aspects of what you did there? Did you travel with the Commandant when he went abroad? Were you involved in Law of the Sea matters, negotiations?

HIGGINSON: The Coast Guard is the lead agency in the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Commandant went to those meetings. I would go with him sometimes. Usually, just the Coast Guard officers involved... But all of the instructions were written through my office. Budget matters were worked out with the State Department. We almost lost our vote in the IMO and the Coast Guard had a simple solution. They just paid the U.S. budget. It was chicken feed as far as they were concerned. They were quite horrified to find out that this was going to be an illegal action and that they couldn't do that and had to pull some strings with State Department brass to free up the money from the State Department to pay the back dues. So, this was sort of the IMO ongoing activity.

Q: That's based in London.

HIGGINSON: Yes. There were very close relations with the Japanese Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard. So, that took up a certain amount of time. I went with the Commandant to the meetings in Ottawa and the Canadians came down to Washington. Then a certain amount of very agreeable time from a foreign policy point of view was taking care of the Coast Guard Eagle, which was making its first trip around the world. All of the entry permits had to be arranged and everything was going fine until we got close to New Zealand. The Eagle is registered as a U.S. warship. We have a policy not to declare whether we have nuclear weapons on board, so we could not assure the New Zealanders whether we had nuclear weapons hidden on the Eagle. After a great many cables, it was decided that the Eagle would not visit New Zealand because neither side would look at reality and pressed the policy to the end. The Eagle also a year later was going to visit Leningrad. It was going to be the first U.S. warship to visit Leningrad after the thaw in our relations with the Soviets. The Commandant was going to be on board. I was arranging that trip and visit. Unfortunately, the Exxon Valdez hit a rock and the Commandant was forced to spend his time in Alaska and very nicely asked me to substitute for him as the ranking Coast Guard officer on this trip.

Q: You didn't have to put a uniform on, did you?

HIGGINSON: No. I flew to Copenhagen and then joined the Eagle to sail into Leningrad. We got half-way down the channel and the Russian observer objected because we had the American flag at the main mast. In a foreign harbor, out of courtesy, you fly the host flag

on your main mast. Therefore, would we either stop the visit or change the flag? The American flag is rather an important symbol to the United States and I certainly wasn't going to recommend it being put below any Russian flag. So, everybody was looking at me for a solution to this. Luckily, on the Eagle, the height of her foremast and her aft mast are the same, so we compromised and hauled our respective flags up on two equal masts and either side could imagine theirs was the higher and we went in with both flags flying. We went into Leningrad, where we were very nicely treated. We were still nervous that there could be difficulties between the two teams. The Coast Guard had also flown their Coast Guard band over for the occasion. The opera house had a major performance of the Coast Guard on first and then the Russian military band was going to play. I could see sort of a war of trombones breaking out and just being a disaster. It wasn't. It went off very well, but primarily because after the Coast Guard performance, there was a piccolo duet. The Coast Guard cadet, a female who was about five feet tall, cute as all get up, got up there playing her piccolo, and this great, huge Cossack got up and he was playing his piccolo, and the audience just loved it. Then when they ended, she went over and gave him a big kiss and there was absolutely no problem whatsoever. In the next half, we mixed the two orchestras up and they played very well. But you also knew that in another year, the Russian band would have women in it. Segregation went with that performance.

Q: They didn't play together in a combined unit for Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture?

HIGGINSON: No.

Q: Is the Eagle connected with the Coast Guard Academy?

HIGGINSON: Yes, that's their home port and all of the Coast Guard cadets take their cruise of various lengths on her. She's very expensive. The Coast Guard keeps reviewing, but she's a wonderful ship. I hope they keep on supporting her.

Q: This was the period, I would assume, where narcotics was becoming an important issue for the Coast Guard in the Caribbean. Were you involved with that.

HIGGINSON: Yes. We were negotiating for Coast Guard cutters to be able to operate in the territorial waters of the Bahamas and some of the other Caribbean islands. This was a major focus of attention, especially as Paul Yost obviously has to worry about the financing of the Coast Guard. There were budget battles. This was the time of cutting back on budgets. The Coast Guard needed more assets and drew his attention to the narcotics program or cutting off access to the United States. He picked up a lot of Coast Guard assets and budget money. This took a lot of time.

The other foreign relations thing was, this was during the Iran-Iraq War and the attacks on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and who was going to protect the tankers. We had to reflag the tankers with the U.S. flag to make it so that we could protect them. Then the Coast Guard sent over a few ships and were going to send over a whole raft of their 110 footers to act as convoys. In the end, this program did not work out, but it was an overlap at that

point between the U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard and the smaller ships. I see that the Navy is now building a whole class of small ships to take care of this type of function.

Q: The Coast Guard is part of the Department of Transportation. Were you involved much in liaison with DOT or did Coast Guard people do that?

HIGGINSON: Coast Guard people did that. I had a couple of contacts with them, but they were very slim. It's mostly in name only. The Coast Guard is very independent and by far the largest part of the Department of Transportation. Each Secretary of Transportation came on over and had to approve the Commandant's budget. But I was quite surprised at the lack below the secretarial level of any contact. DOT does have an expert in international relations, but I think I only spoke to him once in two years.

Q: So, the Coast Guard really had autonomy.

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: Did others in the Coast Guard look to you to liaise and relate to the Department of State or did you do much of that?

HIGGINSON: With the International Maritime Organization, you liaise with the Department of State. On narcotics, not too much. The problem was with Cuba and U.S. Coast Guard cutters near Cuban waters in the Straits of Florida. Usually the Action Office of the Coast Guard would handle those problems. When there was a boarding process on the high seas, the process is for the Coast Guard cutter to cable the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard in Washington approaches the State Department desk office, who approaches the embassy to get the foreign country's permission for the boarding. There is a lot of various contacts and time is of the essence for the poor cutter sitting alongside waiting to board. I did not get involved in that. After the fact, I would get all the material, but I was not one of the active chain of contacts, which I was just as glad not to be.

Q: What about issues relating to the Law of the Sea?

HIGGINSON: Issues relating to the Law of the Sea, I was very interested in that. There is a Coast Guard officer assigned to the U.S. mission to the UN in New York who works on Law of the Sea matters. But it wasn't that active an issue. I followed it. Admiral Yost was assigned to the U.S. mission in New York, so he was interested in it. Also, the Vice Commandant had that job. So, there were three of us way up top who were interested in it. But there weren't that many other people in the Coast Guard who were interested in Law of the Sea. They were too busy hands-on to look to a thing that the U.S. had said "No" to. Some years before that, President Reagan had said "No" to the Law of the Sea Treaty and he didn't want Americans involved in it or negotiating it. The Coast Guard in Washington was well removed from it. The individual in New York was very involved in it, but was operating basically from instructions from Washington and from his superior in the USUN Section. Later on, I became the Executive Director of the Council on Ocean

Law, a private organization, and worked on the Law of the Sea. My chief contact was with the Coast Guard official in New York. But I had very little to do with him. He should have been my natural contact, but in actual fact, it did not work out that way.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to say about your two years with the Coast Guard?

HIGGINSON: No, I think I've related most of the highlights. It was a very pleasant two years. I want to again commend the Coast Guard and the Commandant for their personal interest in members of the Coast Guard, but also a stranger like me. Unfortunately, my son died of leukemia in that period. The Coast Guard couldn't have been more helpful to me, just the time off to get up there and then sent the Commandant of the First District down to the funeral and just really paid attention. To me, that was in sharp conflict between the care and understanding of the Coast Guard and the Department of State, which never realized my son was ill or had anything to do with it. These two organizations are approximately the same size. But the Coast Guard is a much more humane organization, I felt. I wish the State Department could learn something from them.

Q: You also were at a very special place with the Coast Guard, as you say, immediately adjacent to the Commandant. In the State Department, you were probably one of many senior officers, but you were also seen at the Coast Guard as somebody who was over there and probably a little bit forgotten.

HIGGINSON: Yes, but you are also in Washington a half-mile or a mile from the State Department. You aren't that distant.

Q: Let me ask you, sort of in a general way, your own personal experience aside for a minute, is it valuable to the Department of State and to the Foreign Service officers to have an assignment like this? I would think there is no question that it is very valuable for the Coast Guard. Is it useful for the Department to have a person in that position at the Coast Guard?

HIGGINSON: Let me say that the position has been canceled. It doesn't exist any longer.

Q: Do you regret that?

HIGGINSON: I think I regret it. The problem is that it is very much a personal contact. Whether it works or not depends upon two individuals rather than the system. That and the expense of an individual over at the Coast Guard in that setting that close to the Commandant, are you really worth it? I think it's a close call. Considering if you have the right relationship between the Commandant and the individual, then I think there is no question, but if it's wrong, then there is no question that it should be abolished. You can't count on it.

Q: Had you known the Commandant, Paul Yost, before you took up the Foreign Affairs Advisor position?

HIGGINSON: No.

Q: You went over and interviewed with him before.

HIGGINSON: That's right.

Q: This background that you talked about.

HIGGINSON: Yes. Our only common denominator is that we both play tennis. But Paul Yost is a Mormon and is totally career Coast Guard, very dedicated. He had I kept reasonably close afterwards. He was Commandant for one more year after I left. He had asked me to extend, but by that time I had my total number of years in the Service in Washington, so I had to retire. No extension could be made.

Q: After you retired, you became the Executive Director of the Council on Ocean Law, a private organization, which you're still doing.

HIGGINSON: Yes, at a much lesser degree. At that time, the situation was still that President Reagan had said "No" to the Law of the Sea Treaty and had said "No" to U.S. participation in any negotiations to amend the treaty. The Council on Ocean Law, being a private organization primarily created by Elliot Richardson, who was the chief negotiator and disagreed with President Reagan's decision, felt it was important that we do participate. It was sort of the ideal job for me because I knew all of the players in both the Department of State and the Coast Guard and in New York. I could go to the Law of the Sea meetings as a private individual and then informally let Washington know what was going on. Sascha Mendan was one of nine Vice Presidents of the United Nations Maritime Affairs in New York. He realized that there was no way the Law of the Sea was going to succeed if the United States didn't participate. Therefore, it was essential to arrive at some sort of an understanding with the United States.

Q: That was during the Bush Administration, wasn't it?

HIGGINSON: The negotiations started under the Bush Administration. They were basically completed there. But our ambassador to New York, who is now Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Tom Pickering, saw that the time was right, that the United States probably could get what it wanted as far as changes were concerned. He requested permission to try to negotiate these changes. He was told by Jim Baker that, "You can go ahead and do it if you wish to, but you're doing it on your own and I'm not giving you any instructions. If it fails, it's your head. If it succeeds, more power to you." To me, the stupidity of a brave Foreign Service officer, Ambassador Pickering decided on his own to go ahead. He succeeded in creating working groups which agreed to the changes that the United States felt were necessary. They basically met all the objections of President

Reagan to the Law of the Sea Convention.

Q: It's interesting that you give so much credit to Pickering for that change in policy.

HIGGINSON: I give him tremendous credit both to get the change of policy and then right down to negotiating some of the words. He was extremely good.

Q: He was not the United States ambassador to the United Nations for all that long.

HIGGINSON: It was just the power of an individual to change a policy through his contacts. He got the Secretary General of the United Nations to do sort of a poll of the countries related to the Law of the Sea and the problems they foresaw in its being put into effect and then created commissions to look into these various problems. It went from something that was just totally unacceptable to the Group of 77 to something that they didn't like, but they realized it was the better of the evils.

Q: This particularly relates to deep sea mining, I think.

HIGGINSON: Almost all the problems are related to deep sea mining. One of the provisions was that the proceeds of deep sea mining tax proceeds would go directly to the UN, which in those days was considered to be considerable sums of money. Then the UN could fund liberation groups, including the PLO. This was one of the provisions that President Reagan felt was totally unacceptable to the United States. Ambassador Elliot Richardson pointed out that, granted there is a paragraph in the Law of the Sea Convention which would allow for payments to liberation organizations, but if you read another three paragraphs, you will see that the United States has a final say before those sums are committed. Both the gentlemen are right, but from a political point of view, just the accusation was grave enough that there was no way, in my opinion, that the Law of the Sea Convention would have been confirmed by the United States Senate in its original form. President Reagan, whom I am not one of the greatest admirers of, his 10 objections to that treaty, which I violently objected to at the time, were probably correct and showed a very good reading of the American will.

Q: What is the status as far as the United States is concerned now of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea?

HIGGINSON: The status is that the U.S. is an interim member of the Law of the Sea Convention, which went into effect when 60 countries had signed it. I think it’s up to about 120 now, including the United States, but we haven’t ratified it. Our interim membership will cease on November 16th of this year unless we ratify it. Since the Senate has just closed for the year, we are not going to ratify it in time, so the U.S. will lose its membership in the Council and budgetary authorities of the Deep Sea Authority. We already cannot have a judge on the court created for the international ocean claims in Hamburg. It's too bad because this court is setting its rules and the initial decisions set up a lot of policy. The U.S. was the prime mover in the creation of this court. Jack

Stevenson, our first negotiator, got agreement on most of these provisions. I think it's a major loss that the U.S. is not a full member of the Law of the Sea Convention at this time.

Q: There is certainly strong interest on the part of the Navy, the Coast Guard, and others in especially the Freedom of Navigation provisions, I suppose.

HIGGINSON: Yes, the Freedom of Navigation provisions, if fully executed, mean that the Navy doesn't have to keep asserting our unilateral freedom of navigation rights. Two, the Convention does provide for carrier groups to operate in formation with planes on their decks and submarines can go through international straits at full submerged depth, which under sort of common international law (before the Law of the Sea Treaty, at least) was not allowed. So, the Navy has a major interest in the Law of the Sea Convention.

Q: Is the problem now in the Senate that they have a lot of other things to do, they just haven't gotten around to it, or is there still a lingering opposition, objection, to this new international bureaucracy, questions about sovereignty and so on?

HIGGINSON: The seabed has almost ceased to be an issue. There were only four U.S. companies (now there are only three) that were potentially involved in deep sea mining. This turned out to be totally uneconomic. Nobody is mining the sea bed for manganese nodules at the present time. The best studies that I've seen don't expect it to be economic for another 20 years or so. That's no longer a problem. The problem is a problem of indifference. The Law of the Sea issues were front-burner 20 years ago. That whole generation has moved on and retired and there is nobody who knows what the Law of the Sea is about or what it entails. So, the issue is sitting up basically in Senator Helms' lap at the present time and he has serious problems with the Law of the Sea Convention. It creates a new UN bureaucracy. It creates a new international court, some of whose powers are supranational. It does still have this provision in it that if there are proceeds from mining the seabed, a small percentage of those would go directly to the UN, and that also is anathema to Mr. Helms. Basically, there is no movement on it because of Senate rules that the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee determines when a treaty will come up before it. Senator Stevens of Alaska is very much interested in the Law of the Sea Treaty, primarily from a fishing point of view. The Convention provides for a coastal state to have a little more influence for common law on high seas fishing. In order to save the pollack in the Bering Sea, a fishing convention had to be worked out which also covered the high seas. The pollack swim around the Bering Sea in and out of the territorial waters, but there is a high sea donut hole. It's only using the Law of the Sea provisions that the treaty meets international legal laws. There is also a High Seas Convention on fishing which was drafted and approved after the Law of the Sea Convention was invented. That is dependent upon the Law of the Sea Convention both as to its authority and it looks to the International Maritime Tribunal in The Hague to settle disputes. Senator Stevens was very involved in those negotiations and was approached and sought to have the treaty considered by the Senate. I think it will be in due time. The Navy has a full court press in trying to get it approved. I don't think it will get approved if

there is a deep and thorough study of the matter just because there is enough internationalism in the Convention so that it draws opponents which are probably the majority in the present Senate. But if it is tied closely enough to our national security, it probably will move ahead and almost has several times in the last year.

Q: Is there anything else we ought to cover?

HIGGINSON: No. It's been a good career. I wouldn't have changed it. An unfortunate part of the State Department is that the sign of success or lack of success is whether you've been made an ambassador. If you haven't been made an ambassador, you haven't had a successful career. I call that "unfortunate" because it probably isn't so. Certainly from a personal point of view, you can be very happy without having made ambassador. But there is still that stigma. The political ambassadorships, of course, close in on that problem. As you can see from my career, I've basically concentrated on international economic organizations. When I entered the Foreign Service, there were 10 of those organizations with U.S. ambassadorial attention, of which all 10 were career Foreign Service officers. Now there are 11 such organizations, 10 of whom are political appointees. It does change the possibilities.

Q: It seems to me that you've had an interesting career with a lot of variety in some good places, not only in Washington, but in Brussels, Algiers, Rome, and Luxembourg. You got involved with a range of issues, but as you say, primarily, in the European economic organizations such as Food, Energy, and, near the end, Oceans. Thank you very much.

HIGGINSON: Thank you.

End of interview