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

AMBASSADOR GERALD WESLEY SCOTT

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INTERVIEW

Q: Where does your family come from?

SCOTT: My mother, Dorothy Heidlage, was a farmer's daughter. She and her two brothers grew up in south-west Missouri in an area with a number of related families of German descent. Her great-grandfather and his wife emigrated in 1844 from the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, first to Cincinnati, then to Oldenburg, Indiana. Members of the family eventually moved to farms in Missouri. They were hard-working, honest, modestly educated, and obscure.

There was one exception: Johann Bernhard Stallo, my mother's great-great-uncle, came to the States at sixteen. His father was a schoolmaster and the boy was bright. He had learned English and French and the classical languages, but did not want to become a schoolmaster, at least in Germany, so he emigrated to Cincinnati, and taught German, Latin and Greek while enrolled in a local college to study the sciences. A few years later he taught at St. John's College in New York, but returned to Cincinnati, studied law and was appointed a judge. He broke with the Democratic Party as the question of slavery grew more acute and was one of those involved in the establishment of the Republican Party. When the Civil War broke out, he called for "freedom-loving Germans" to fight for the Union and helped organize the Ninth Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Discouraged by the corruption of Republican politics after the war, he returned to the Democratic Party, and Grover Cleveland appointed him Minister to Italy in 1885, where he stayed for the remainder of his life. An impressive man, of whom I was told nothing as a boy. I think his story had entirely disappeared from the memory of my mother's generation and perhaps that of her parents — whose lives were so far removed from the experience of someone like him. I only came across a reference to him in a little genealogical sketch prepared by a great-aunt of my mother, an aged Franciscan nun who set down what she knew of the story of the Heidlage family. And then I found his entry in the Dictionary of American Biography**.**

Happily, though uneducated himself, my grandfather saw that his children were schooled. His sons went to college: the older returned to take over the family farm; the younger was a Navy pilot, lost at sea in the Aleutians in 1944. My mother spent a year at a small

college in Kansas, and then went to St Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City to take a nursing qualification.

Q: And your father's family?

My father's people came to the Republic of Texas from Mississippi in 1840, and established themselves as cotton planters on land near the Louisiana border. They founded a town, "Scottsville." My great-great-grandfather was elected to the last Congress of the Republic. Shortly after arriving in Texas, he and his father-in-law got involved in the Regulator-Moderator conflict (roughly speaking, two groups of vigilantes attempting to establish some order in the lawless area on the Louisiana border.) One result was that the Scotts ended up shooting Robert Potter, at one time Secretary of the Navy of the Republic of Texas — an incident that Charles Dickens mentions in his American Notes reporting his visit in 1842 as an example of the barbarity of the United States (or, at least, of Texas) at that time.

My paternal grandfather, born during the Civil War, read for the law, and failed as a lawyer, tried farming in Arkansas, and failed at farming, then took the remainder of the money and with his father bought ranch land in West Texas, where they failed. He then sold his share, packed his family in two covered wagons in 1903 and drove to the Gulf where he bought a schooner, determined to become a merchant skipper. He found a Mexican to manage the crew and teach him to sail, but on his second run out, they sailed into Galveston and the ship was condemned by the Coast Guard; he was left high and dry, literally and figuratively. My grandmother then put her foot down. Her sister had married a Jewish merchant with a store in Indian Territory. "My brother-in-law will find you something to do." They went up to Ardmore, Oklahoma in the year of statehood, 1907. My grandfather went back to Texas shortly thereafter, with the understanding that when he reestablished his law practice in Atlanta, Texas, he would send for the family. Well, he never sufficiently reestablished the law practice. My grandmother, who had a good education by the standards of the time (perhaps in some ways higher than the standards of our own day, come to think of it) became a school teacher and then a principal and raised the family more or less on her own in Oklahoma.

There were three boys and three girls. The girls all got qualifications that would support them—training as secretaries, education to be school teachers. My father, as the oldest boy, was instead taken out of school at 16. There was an oil boom under way. Grandmother told him he was the senior man in the family, stuck a cigar in his mouth to add the illusion of age, and sent him down to the local hotel to find out what all those men were doing to make money and see if he couldn't do it too. He got to know some of the oil men. He was seen as a likely, enterprising lad and was taken on by somebody who eventually taught him the rudiments of oil transportation, tank cars and pipelines, and gave him an opportunity to make some money. He married his high school sweetheart. They moved to Oklahoma City, and had two children.

My father was always sensitive to the fact that not only had he not gone to college, but he had never even graduated from high school. But he was hard working, intelligent, had the advantage of a schoolmarm mother, and was driven by ambition as well as the need to support his family. The depression came, and just about wiped them out. He came back to Oklahoma City after a business trip and discovered that his wife and his infant son were dying of the flu. In these difficult circumstances, it was agreed that his surviving daughter, my sister Joan, would be raised by his sister and brother-in-law, a childless couple back in Ardmore.

Q: And your parents met in Oklahoma City?

SCOTT: Yes. They married in 1939, four years after my father's first wife died. They were not exactly of similar backgrounds: my father was a southern Methodist (circuit riders had converted the family three generations earlier), and mother was Catholic. But her parents saw that he was a good man, hard-working and devoted to their daughter. He had a formality of politeness that was very southern of his generation: he tipped his hat and stood for women, and I never heard him raise his voice. And he accepted that the children of the marriage would be raised Catholic — though this was not an easy thing for him. Until rather late in his life he retained a solid, if generally unexpressed, prejudice against Rome and all her works and pomps. Before they married, my father had accepted a job managing a pipeline in southern Illinois, so my parents lived there until 1943 when he was transferred to Dallas. Then, in about '47, he decided he wanted to be an independent oil producer.

I went to the public school for the first two years and then transferred to the local parish school, which was taught by the Ursuline nuns, who were excellent teachers. But as I was finishing the sixth grade (fifty students in the very well managed class room under a nun who really knew how to organize), my father, as oilmen sometimes do, drilled one too many dry holes. He was very close to broke. He had a producing lease near Duncan, Oklahoma; he thought that if he went up there and managed it himself, it would support the family and he could reestablish his finances. We moved to Duncan, which was at that time still the headquarters of the Halliburton Company. As a result, the town had something of a professional class and therefore a high school which benefited from parents with middle-class expectations for their children.

Q: How many children are in your parents' family at this moment?

SCOTT: At this point, it was I and my younger brother, Michael. My sister was by then married and living elsewhere.

I seldom forgot that had we stayed in Dallas, I would have been sent to the Jesuit High School and benefitted from their superior system but, nevertheless, I found that some of the teachers in Duncan were very good, partly because bright women had limited options—nursing or teaching. Of course, there were a few distinctly poor teachers as well. The high school football coach taught world history — a good football coach and a bad history teacher. But I graduated and went off to college.

Q: Now before you do, just one or two other questions. Dallas, Texas, in the late forties, early fifties was not a hotbed of Catholicism. But you were in a Catholic school being taught by Ursuline nuns, then you moved to Duncan, Oklahoma, which I think, even less so would have been—Catholic.

SCOTT: If Duncan had a state religion, and it almost did, it was evangelical Protestantism and the dominant church was the First Baptist Church. Every school day began with a short Bible reading, and there was a monthly chapel or assembly at which a local minister would speak. The Catholic priest managed to get himself inserted in the rota, but it was not an automatic accommodation. We never had homework on Wednesdays because you had to leave the boys and girls free to go to church on Wednesday evening. Baptists didn't believe, of course, in dancing and they didn't believe in drinking. But neither did many of the other churches in town — Oklahoma and Mississippi were still "dry." There was an annual essay contest sponsored by the Women Christian Temperance Union; we were invited to write on the evils of tobacco and alcohol. The only real dispute occurred when the Baptists almost lost control of the school board, to be replaced by the Church of Christ; people feared the Church of Christ really really didn't believe in dancing (we had sock hops on Saturday night at the county hall). But the threat to the Saturday night sock hops was beaten back by a larger than usual turnout at election, and the Baptists and others, more moderate in practice on dancing than in principle, retained control. I think it was, in many ways, good to have been raised in a place like Duncan. Certainly, the church influence had its virtues: a Christian moral code that was preached and generally accepted; intact families were very much the norm, and out-of-wedlock births were few — I knew of none in my school class. And, for a Catholic, there was enough of a challenge to cause one to question one's church commitment, to do some reading and thinking about an important question.

The schools were segregated, of course — most Oklahomas were of Southern origin. But Duncan responded quickly to the Supreme Court's 1954 decision of Brown vs the Board of Education and we integrated within two years. It went well. I remember that, clearly on instruction, the football quarterback walked down the hall on the first day of classes with his arm around the shoulder of one of the Black boys. And the Black community was small, in any case.

It was a standard curriculum for the time. One could study two years of a language if one were more or less on the college track: Spanish, and Latin, which was well taught. Most of the college-bound boys took mechanical drawing, from my standpoint a waste of time, but the alternative was shop which was not seen as appropriate. (Though in retrospect, it would have been better for me.) The girls took "domestic science." The English program was good. American history was well taught by one of my favorite teachers, a woman who was really given to the subject.

The unofficial religion of the town was football, about which my friends and I feigned an interest. But Oklahoma also had a strong tradition of high school debate, and I got

involved in that. Perhaps the most useful thing I did in high school was to spend four years on the debate team.

Q: That's quite interesting. Had the family finances stabilized somewhat before you went to college?

SCOTT: My father drilled some producing wells, and, while he was never by any means the fabled Oklahoma oilman, we had sufficient money to pay for the tuition at Georgetown and take a trip to Europe when I graduated.

Q: Why did you pick Georgetown, or did they pick you, or how did you—

SCOTT: I had never heard of Georgetown. The college guidance program in my high school was lamentable unless you wanted to go to college in Oklahoma, or perhaps Texas. I wanted to see the world. I was already attracted to diplomacy. I didn't really know what that meant, but it sounded exciting. And then I came across some reference to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. The catalog was wonderful. It had no math or science requirement, but there was lots of history, lots of other things that looked good. So I applied. My grades were not impressive because I was the sort of student that didn't see any need to study if I could pass the exams and read everything that caught my interest instead. But my SAT results were good and I got in on that.

Q: Was there any interview, any visit to the campus, or was this all by post? How did you—

SCOTT: I was given a trip to Washington for winning an oratorical contest sponsored by the Rotary Club. And so the family had all gone to Washington in the summer of 1957 to meet me there, and then to New York. I visited Georgetown at that point. I was impressed. It was of course a different time.

Q: It was all male, for one thing.

SCOTT: Almost all male. There was the nursing school and the School of Foreign Service let in 25 girls a year. A great concession, since one might not easily have imagined that women had real career prospects — but things were changing quickly. And as for social life, there were organized “mixers” with the girls' schools in the area and two or three black tie dances a year. And the student body itself was a revelation to me. I wasn't any longer the odd, bright, geeky kid. I was one of a number of bright, geeky kids — amongst a larger mix. I think for me, Georgetown was a perfect fit.

Q: So you enjoyed your time there. You were in the School of Foreign Service.

SCOTT: The School of Foreign Service believed in liberal education. One had almost no electives. They told you what you needed to take and you took it. You had to take a foreign language. If you knew a foreign language, you had to take another foreign language. There were many outstanding teachers—President Clinton cited one man,

Carroll Quigley, who taught a course called The Development of Civilization —- a brilliant course in ancient and medieval history.

Q: Did you feel socially at ease? Was it culturally a surprise to you in any way or were you pretty much prepared for the environment you found yourself in?

SCOTT: I don't know that I was prepared. I was surprised at the variety. There were always a few rich boys from Latin America who'd come up; they almost entirely constituted the polo team and one of them (not on the polo team) was assigned to me as a freshman roommate — a nice guy and we got along well, though I had never before met a Panamanian nationalist, and one with such a negative view of the historical American diplomatic record. (We met again, 40 years later; it turned out that he had at one point been assistant to his uncle, the President of Panama.)

I thought my education wasn't all that bad until I met some of those who had gone to good prep schools, or good Jesuit schools. One was Vincent Battle, a colleague in the Foreign Service who served as Ambassador to Lebanon; he had attended what was probably the best Jesuit school in the United States where they had—I don't know — four years of Latin, three years of French, two years of Greek. Something that was simply not imaginable in the public school system of Oklahoma. Nor the sort of education that the voters of Oklahoma would have been willing to support, had the thought occurred to them. (Vincent received a PhD from Columbia and had taught in Libya (whence evacuated) and Uganda (whence evacuated). I asked him why he finally joined the Foreign Service and he said that for his next evacuation he wanted admin support.)

Q: Washington in the 1950s was a very different sort of place.

SCOTT: Yes … I mean, you're in college, so your social world is constrained, but it seemed like a marvelous place. You could go down to the National Gallery and see pictures that you had never seen before. I had never really been to an art museum. I remember in my second or third week, my English teacher had us all go down to the National Gallery, find a picture that one liked, and write about it. Everybody wrote about the Impressionists. To those of us ignorant of art, they were easily appreciated — except one student who wrote about Gainsborough. The symphony was there; you could get tickets. I had little knowledge of serious music, but I thought, "Well, one ought at least to try," so one semester I got tickets to the symphony. I could afford these excursions because my father gave me a generous allowance, and I understood how kind he was to me in that regard. I didn’t find the local theater very entertaining. It seemed to be only a couple of steps above the amateur; one always had the impression that the Washington Post was praising them because you had to praise the effort, and not because it was all that good.

Q: Yeah, to keep them in town. The School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, of course, at the time was a major feeder school of Foreign Service Officers to the Foreign Service itself. Princeton and Georgetown and a relative handful of places—the Foreign Service has never been quite homogeneous. There's always been a little bit more diversity than I

think is commonly acknowledged. Amongst your colleagues and fellow students there, was there a strong desire among many to join the foreign service? Did you share in that?

SCOTT: There were not so many as one would have thought. Some who were attracted to Georgetown were treating it as a pre-law course. And the school was established with a view of providing education for people interested in foreign service of all sorts, including business or various work with an overseas component.

I graduated in ’62. Perhaps five or six eventually went to the State Department. Of course, most of the men had the draft to deal with. Most of us had military service as the immediate reality.

Q: John F. Kennedy lived down the street for a while.

SCOTT: He did and it was interesting, I was at Georgetown when he was elected to the presidency. I am a product of my time and place. I knew that I was a conservative, and Oklahoma is one of the most politically conservative states in the country. I was not in favor of Mr. Kennedy and I was surprised how many of the Georgetown students shared my view. But Kennedy was attractive and his wife was glamorous, and we all knew which house he lived in.

Q: So yes, you came from a conservative place. You knew yourself to be a conservative person. But there was an excitement and a degree of glamor around John F. Kennedy and his wife that you were alert to and your colleagues were alert to at Georgetown. Kennedy also brought a kind of outward looking, new-frontier enthusiasm, including a lot of rhetoric and a lot of energy around how we engage the world.

SCOTT: He did. Eisenhower, of whom one might think, looking back, as one of the great presidents of the 20th Century, was painted at that point as a doddering old golfer who had run out of energy and ideas, and we needed the bright, fresh vision that the Democrats and Kennedy brought. For example, the idea of the Peace Corps. I must tell you that I thought the Peace Corps was a ridiculous idea. Turning all these kids loose in foreign countries? God knows what's going to happen, and they'll disgrace themselves and us. I was, of course, wrong. Certainly, some of the best diplomats we've had are ex-Peace Corps, and the Peace Corps on the whole has made
a very positive contribution to our overseas presence.

As I was ending my senior year, I suddenly got my draft notice. I've always suspected that back home, there was an attitude of, "This kid's gone east for school, let's see if we can't draft him." I had two choices. I could go on to grad school or I could do my military service. I had been accepted at graduate school, but I thought, "I do not want, at this stage, to crack open another book," so I volunteered for Naval Officer Candidate School. There was something of a naval tradition in my family, and there was a feeling in a state like Oklahoma that "Doesn't it sound wonderful to go to sea?" , so I went off to Officer Candidate School in Newport Rhode Island.

Q: A place to which you returned later in your life.

SCOTT: A place to which I later returned. We were there during the Cuban Missile Crisis. We all woke up one morning to discover that all the destroyers had sailed away. We couldn't figure out why, but the story was shortly revealed.

Commissioned an Ensign, I was posted to a destroyer tender out of Long Beach, California—which ship hardly ever went to sea. I wasn't particularly happy as a Naval officer; it was clearly not something that I wanted to do over the longer term. But then our involvement in the Vietnam war began to grow, and my best friend in college went off to Vietnam as an Army officer. I said, "I think the Vietnam War is justified, and I'm in the military, so why shouldn't I go to Vietnam?" I was just about to finish my three years of service when this idea bubbled to the top, and I called the Bureau of Personnel and said, "I'd like to go to Vietnam." Their reply was, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm Gerald Scott; I'm a reserve officer." They said, "You don't understand, young man. The war is small and glorious and reserved for Naval Academy graduates, not people like you." I hung up and then called back a couple of days later and said, "What if I wanted to learn Vietnamese?" The response was, "Why would any Naval officer want to do that?" But then they looked through their three-by-five cards and discovered that there were, in fact, a couple of slots for the training of Naval officers in Vietnamese, so I got orders to the Defense Languages Institute in Monterrey. I spent almost a year studying Vietnamese. I was designated a Psychological Operations Officer, what they used to call psychological warfare back in the day.

Q: Whatever the label, that goes on today.

SCOTT: Indeed. So in January, 1967 I went out to Vietnam and spent four months in a mangrove area south of Saigon, working with the equivalent of the National Guard and the Vietnamese navy, which had a small detachment there. Then I was sent up to Da Nang to a major American naval base where my little group of advisors worked with the junk fleet. We had Vietnamese junk fleet posts at the mouths of the various rivers attempting to control traffic in and out. One of the more interesting things we could do — they would get a defector from the Vietcong side. We would get a radio message, and I would chopper down with a Polaroid camera, take a picture of this chap, his shoulder clasped by the arm of the commanding officer of the junk fleet base standing next to him under the RVN flag. If he could write, we would have him write a statement saying, "My name is so and so, and I've just joined the wonderful winning side and I encourage all my friends to do the same, particularly so-and-so in Platoon Three." We could have fifty thousand leaflets printed up within 36 hours with his picture on one side and his message on the other and release them to flutter down on his old position. Often enough, I gather, the cadre hadn't fully understood that he'd gone missing. Then you would sometimes get one or two more defectors, especially if they'd been named in the text. It was a bit like pulling pickles out of a jar. If you get the first one out, then the next would come out easily, and then they would tighten up security and that particular flow of Vietcong would close down — until the next time.

Q: How were your language skills?

SCOTT: My language skills were poor. The trouble was that I left language school and then I spent four months in the United States without speaking any Vietnamese, doing PSYOPs (Psychological Operations) training and going through survival school. By the time I got to Vietnam, my capacity had degraded, and then happily or unhappily, my counterparts spoke either English or French, so my Vietnamese was not what I should have liked it to have been.

Q: Was your initial period south of Saigon? Presumably in part of the Mekong Delta somewhere? Can Tho or—

SCOTT: No, it was called the Rung Sat Special Zone and it was only about 30 miles out of Saigon. It was where the Saigon River flows through to the sea.

Q: You were an adviser to the Vietnamese?

SCOTT: Well, I was doing PSYOPS down there, and we were a small mixed Navy and Marine Corps unit. I had a good officer who was directly above me, a Marine. We spent more time working, as I say, not so much with the Navy as with a unit of what would have been the equivalent of the National Guard, formed from one of those minority religions of Vietnam, the Hòa Hảo, that had been converted to the anti-communist cause because when the Communists had a lot of control during the late French period, when they had brutalized the Hòa Hảo leadership, as they had the leadership of the Cao Đài (another minority religion), and the nationalist anti-French political parties. Many people talked as if the Communists had a justified claim to the leadership of the nationalist independence effort in South Vietnam or Vietnam, but the truth is that the Communists had done their best to eliminate anybody who might have been in a position to contest their dominance, either because of their religious organization or because of their political organization. The Hòa Hảo, who lived in that area and formed the military units that we were dealing with as advisers, were distinctly anti-communist.

Q: Were you working with the CIA at all at that time?

SCOTT: No. The CIA was very important, as I later discovered, in the embassy structure. They weren't down at my level; what counted was the American military.

Q: Yes. I wanted to pause for a moment to explore a bit about—you talked about being a conservative person and you sort of cast it as a function of your upbringing things and with respect, I think, your conservatism is more deeply felt than that and considered, and I was going to ask what you thought about at Georgetown, and whether learning there had helped shape your views, but let me try to amalgamate a couple of things into one, over-elaborate question. I want to ask you really about—people talk about the lessons of Vietnam. You've had a good part of a lifetime to reflect on your time there, on the nature of our intervention, the nature of Vietnamese politics. What do you think about it, at this great remove?

SCOTT: Can we address this at the end?

Q: Sure. Oh, absolutely.

SCOTT: Because I went back to Vietnam in the Foreign Service and I have stayed intellectually and emotionally engaged to some degree, and it's a subject of real importance to me.

Q: Okay. Then, may we tag back very briefly to your political views and formation?

SCOTT: Much of it had to do with Georgetown, an interesting place. Poor President Nixon at one point decided he should address the dissent of the youth. All these letters of protest came into the White House and a particularly well-written one was selected from some young man objecting to the war. This must have been in 1968 because I had left the Navy and I was in graduate school. I remember seeing this on television. Nixon's staff composed a response, and the resulting letter was delivered to this young Georgetown student — the White House choice as the representative of disaffected youth. The camera pans in on this fortunate recipient of the President's attention, and he turns out to be—in 1968, when there are riots in the streets and demonstrations outside the White House, and I'm getting the occasional whiffs of tear gas in my first floor apartment over on P street — this chap is addressing the evening news in a three-piece suit and is the one-man member of the American Monarchist Party. President Nixon, writing to an intelligent representative of the youth of the day, managed to get it wrong again.

Georgetown was interesting in great part because some of the teachers were interesting as people as well as scholars. One of the most interesting was Jan Karski, a courageous man who had escaped Poland during the Second World War as an agent of the Polish underground to carry the news of the extermination camps to both the senior members of the British and of the American governments. Father Walsh, who established the School of Foreign Service, saw the quality of Karski, brought him on the faculty and he was still there teaching comparative government. Jules Davids, reportedly a major contributor to Kennedy's Profiles in Courage, was a very good professor of American domestic and diplomatic history. We had, in addition to a survey course in ancient and medieval history in the freshman year, and modern European history in the second year. Then I suppose under the "know your enemy" rubric, we had Russian history. And three years of economics, and constitutional and international law. And Shakespeare. And two years of philosophy. And two years of theology (required for Catholics, optional for non-Catholics who could otherwise take courses in the History of Political Thought). Almost all of these courses were taught by really — they were not for the most part great scholars, but they were impressive presenters of their subjects. Oddly, theology was an exception. It seemed to be the view that any Jesuit could teach theology.

Q: They were great teachers.

SCOTT: They were mostly great teachers. The atmosphere there was rather formal — this was before the 60s. (I graduated in ’62 and the '60s began in a cultural sense in about 1964.) We were all required to wear a jacket and tie and nobody objected. It was just automatic. It was how gentlemen dressed, and we were supposed to be learning to be gentlemen — another somewhat outmoded concept. You addressed all of your teachers most politely, and if you had a special request to make, there was a form to fill out and the form began, "I most respectfully request…” —that was printed—and then you could write in your request. The idea of the Sixties vulgar free speech movement was inconceivable.

Q: Well, let's move forward a little bit in the 1960s, because by the time you completed your service in Vietnam, you did a year of graduate school, is that correct? At Johns Hopkins, it was kind of different.

SCOTT: I had wanted to stay on in Vietnam for an extra six months, but the Navy captain who had that extension in his gift interviewed me and I gave him various suggestions on how his program could be improved. Turns out he was not pleased to have his program criticized, and the opportunity to stay on for the next six months disappeared. So I left the Navy and went back home. At that point, the graduate schools faced a problem because the almost automatic deferment had ended and there was a great risk that their male students could be drafted. Here I was, draft-proof, having served. I could have gone anywhere. I had done very well on the Graduate Record Exams. I remember I called up Columbia and I said, "Would you like to let me in for the next semester?" They said, "You're calling rather late, and we don't let people in over the telephone." I said, "Oh!" Then I called John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and I said, "Would you like to let me in?" They said, "Why don't you fly out for an interview?" It did occur to me they weren't going to ask you to fly out unless they were pretty well prepared to let you in. I should have called other places, Yale or Harvard or Stanford. I should actually have gone to France and managed to get into Sciences Po or something like that, but I didn't, I went to Johns Hopkins, spent two years there, and got an instant master's. A lot of what I was taught repeated what I'd had in Georgetown six years earlier, but it prepped me for the exam. I had taken the exam in my senior year in Georgetown, passed the written and failed the oral. They'd said, "Come back and see us after you've done something else." So I took the exam again as I finished up at Johns Hopkins, happily passed the written and the oral and went on to join the Foreign Service in 1969.

Q: Were you disconcerted at all by the divided nature of America with respect to the Vietnam war and the social turmoil of that era that you encountered?

SCOTT: Absolutely. I came back believing that the war was justified, thinking we still had a chance to win it, admiring many of the Vietnamese that I had known, and came back to an atmosphere in which, certainly at the universities, all of this was scorned and derided. It was good I hadn’t chosen Columbia, since the students rioted and torched part of the campus that year, 1968. Johns Hopkins was not as bad as some others, still an atmosphere of decorum to some degree—but, intellectually, at least in some circumstances, if the teacher wasn't firm in his control, his class could descend into one

of these contested sessions centered on Vietnam and all that. I was the only one in my class that had been in the military, been to Vietnam, knew enough to say, "Look, you've got it wrong in the following explicit particulars." There were two or three Vietnamese students there whom I got to know, so I took refuge with them to some degree. I felt that the United States was in a serious cultural and political crisis. I think that anybody who lived then can see the enormous change that took place. The Foreign Service, happily, has its own strong culture and its members devoted to the advancement of American interests through diplomacy, and we thus escaped much of the turbulence. So at State I found myself with members sufficiently like-minded, not in the sense of being of my domestic political views, but that's irrelevant. I don't think that domestic political views, at least within the ordinary spectrum, have much relationship with the practice of diplomacy.

Q: I couldn't agree more. In fact, one of the reasons I wanted to explore that with you a little bit was the fact that you embody my view. You're a very good example of how a person may have well-formed, deeply felt, thoroughly researched domestic political views, which are then not in any way biasing, in any way fashion the work of that person as a Foreign Service officer. It's one of the finest parts of our tradition. By exploring that, I did not mean to cast this in some negative light….

SCOTT: Well, an interesting question. My first vote was for Barry Goldwater. Which will not—Nathan, we have known each other for a long time — will not surprise you. In my time in the Navy, the officer corps was still essentially a white corps. Suddenly, reporting to the ship was a Black officer who turned out to be my boss, a man for whom I felt a great sense of friendship at the end, but I remember feeling that I owed him an explanation of who his subordinate was. We also shared a stateroom. So I took him out for coffee and said, "You ought to know that Gerald Scott voted for Barry Goldwater and doesn't regret it." My boss swallowed hard and said, "Well, that shouldn't come between us." I said, "Fine, I just wanted you to know."

But I haven't found…. I think it's an axiom that foreign policy has its own set of presumptions and considerations. I was happier in some ways under Republican administrations than under Democratic administrations because one of the elements of my worldview certainly was that we had a historic obligation to deal with the communist threat. I always thought that the Republicans were perhaps more focused on that than the Democrats. Having said that, I ran into a number of Republican appointees during my career that I was distinctly—

Q: Unimpressed by?

SCOTT: Unimpressed by. Again, it very much depends on circumstances that you meet in the context of this special world that we inhabit as diplomats.

Q: Yes. Here you are on the cusp of that special world. You've taken the exam again, you've been interviewed and were accepted. Why don't we go through your first couple of assignments, if we may, and then take a break.

SCOTT: Came out of the A-100 course. We were the first A-100 course to ask for and, rather surprisingly, to be granted an opportunity to look at the list of assignments into which we would be slotted. We all put down our top three choices, careful not to put down London, Paris, Rome and—

Q: We were in the '71 period?

SCOTT: This is 1969. I should say at the beginning, I had taken the written exam, passed the oral, then I got a letter on gray Thermofax, it was distinctly unimpressive, from somebody— telling me that they weren't quite sure they could get to me on the admissions list, but if I would volunteer to go to Vietnam for two years under the aegis of the State Department, but seconded to the U S Agency for International Development (USAID), then my path into the Foreign Service would be guaranteed. I swallowed hard, and wrote back that I was much obliged to them for this offer. However, having served in Vietnam with the Navy, I preferred that my first post be a standard diplomatic or consular assignment. So they admitted me, and I went into the A-100 course. About a third of the men had accepted the Viet Nam offer, and there were some grudging remarks, "How come he doesn't have to go and I do." Then halfway through, the word came down that they needed more "volunteers". I went to the man running the course and I said, "If you want me to go, I'll go, but I've been to Vietnam. I really think that somebody else should have that opportunity." He said, "Fine, I will not put you on the list." Two or three additional classmates were directed to go to Vietnam. One refused. This came to the attention of the Director General and the young man left the service.

I perhaps should have gone to Vietnam at that point. It would have gotten my Vietnamese in good shape and it would have been something that I would have been good at. Instead, I got assigned first of all to Johannesburg. That assignment lasted about a day and then they said "We're not going to send you to Johannesburg. We're going to send you to Windhoek, in South West Africa," so I went to find Windhoek on the map. Then they said about three weeks later, "No, no, you're not going to Windhoek. You're going to Kinshasa." I said, "Alright." At that point I was doing catch-up French and they said, "No, you're not going to Kinshasa, you're going to go to Tangier as Vice Consul." So I went to Tangier. It was professionally of little interest, but was otherwise a fascinating assignment. Tangier had been an international city, ruled by the Consular Corps, and there was still a certain respect for the Consular Corps not found elsewhere. It was certainly affordable. And it was a haven for writers and artists.

Q: Slightly louche.

SCOTT: Well, it was the headquarters on the literary side of the International Homosexual Conspiracy. And I became by happenstance a friend of Evelyn Waugh's elder brother, Alec. I had been put next to his wife, Virginia Sorenson, at an early dinner party. Virginia, who was an American writer from Utah, made note of me, and pretty soon I got an invitation to their apartment for drinks and I became their extra man. "Can you come for dinner on Thursday night, Gerald? We're having some people, I think you'd like them, and we'd love to have you come." I got to know a number of other writers less

well, a nodding acquaintance with Paul Bowles and some others. It was, from that standpoint, very interesting.

Q: Was Alec Waugh a writer?

SCOTT: He was a novelist and writer of short stories and reminiscences. His nephew, Auberon Waugh, said his uncle "wrote many books, each worse than the last." But he wrote over 50 books. His father was a minor literary figure, and Alec at eighteen had written a book called The Loom of Youth. It was the first sort of quasi-scandalous, public-schoolboy-tells-all novel. (He had been sent down from Sherborne for "the usual thing.") It came out during the First World War. Then Alec joined the army and was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1918. At the end of the war he came back to London, took up writing again, and claimed to have invented the cocktail party. I have long asserted that he deserved no praise for this. He had become a practiced seducer of young women and was disheartened by the fact that between tea and dinner there was no opportunity to cultivate their acquaintance, so he said he invented the cocktail party. He was also something of an expert on wine, and wrote a book or two about it.

I remember once he said to me, "Gerald, I am the most selfish man I know, but my manners are so polite that no one ever notices." It was perfectly true; he had a very winning way about him. I was warned by his wife that I was right to avoid talking about his brother because that was a comparison that was not flattering to Alec, but he did have one great success — a book called *Island in the Sun* in 1955. This was made into a major film, securing from Hollywood more money than had ever been paid for a novel. (Exotic Caribbean setting, James Mason, Harry Belafonte, Joan Fontaine, discrete inter-racial sex, couldn't but be a hit.) That set Alec up financially for the rest of his life. He told me, "I could decide to upgrade my standard of living, stay in a better class of hotels, et cetera. But I decided, no, if I am reasonable about my expenses, this will be my pot of gold," so he treated it as such, quite wisely. Among other things, he introduced me to port and to his tailor in London. "You may have a future in diplomacy, Gerald, but not unless you dress better." Of course, Alec was probably thinking of the British foreign service of his era rather than the American of mine. Brooks Brothers always seemed to me to be entirely adequate.

Q: Not to go down too many cul-de-sacs but did you observe drug use in those days? Hashish or anything?

SCOTT: Well, it seemed that my whole purpose for being in Tangier was to deal with the hippies in jail on charges of marijuana possession. Some young man would be arrested and he would automatically claim to be innocent. I was tempted to believe that for the first ten times, but then it occurred to me that they were all lying. They were all as guilty as sin. I would explain the limited role that I could play, and what his options were. The police generally caught him with a bag full of marijuana; they could have picked up a score of people, but these were the lucky ones selected to fill the quota for that week. I said, "Look, you will be tried; you will be found guilty. You will be given a sentence; you will appeal; your lawyer will charge you a large fee for the appeal and the result will be

dismissal with time served; you will then go free." That's how it worked in 85 to 90% of the cases.

Q: Yes, men and women.

SCOTT: There were a few women, not many, but some. Occasionally there would be somebody who would kick against the pricks, who wouldn't cooperate or didn't have the money to pay the lawyer. And there were the occasional other consular problems.

It was a small Consulate. We had three officers. The other junior officer was Robert Carr, Bob and Missy Carr, who could not have been nicer to me. They had me to dinner immediately I arrived and then the second night they had me to dinner again. I said "If this is the way the Foreign Service treats incoming, freshly minted officers, how fortunate I am to be part of it." Never found anybody quite so solicitous as Robert and Missy Carr, but on the whole we do a pretty good job of that. He was the administrative officer and I was the consular officer and at some point we switched. The place was really run by—what do we call them these days? Foreign Service Locals or—what is the phrase now?

Q: Let's see—Foreign Service Nationals—

SCOTT: Foreign Service Nationals. In Tangier, it was Ricky and Elsie Katzaros who made the Consulate General function. Ricky was the consular assistant and Elsie was the administrative assistant and they told you what to do and you did it. You did a very good job by following their instruction. Both had British passports, but were an example of the old European Tangerine community. Ricky's grandfather had been secretary to Ion Perdicaris. You may remember that in the 1904 Republican Party convention, Secretary of State John Hay electrified the delegates with the cry "Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead!" It had been reported to the State Department and to President Roosevelt that an American citizen, Ion Pedicaris, had been seized from his Tangier villa by a Moroccan Berber chief who held Pedicaris against a massive political ransom demanded of the weak Moroccan Sultan. Roosevelt insisted that the Sultan meet the demands and obtain the release of Pedicaris, and sent a squadron of ships to Tangier to strengthen the Sultan's resolve. Pedicaris was ultimately released. America's forceful action to protect American interests was demonstrated to great domestic acclaim and Roosevelt was re-elected. Years later it was revealed (something Hay and Roosevelt had learned mid-way through the crisis) that Pedicaris had a distinctly dubious claim to American nationality, but there was no wish to back down in our demands on the Sultan at that point, and this disconcerting element was concealed from the American public for fear of tarnishing another victory for energetic Rooseveltian foreign policy.

Q: That was the height of the sort of hippie circuit, Marrakesh Express. Well, good for you. This was also your first monarchy, your first Muslim country. Did you have any reactions to either of those—

SCOTT: From the standpoint of a Vice Consul in Tangier, I didn't have a very clear understanding of the larger situation, except that it seemed to me, seems to me still, that for all the defects of the Moroccan system, it has preserved Morocco from much of the destruction that violent political change has brought elsewhere. The king in those days, Hassan II, was said not to be fond of Tangier, so it got little attention. We had a governor who gave an annual reception for the Consular Corps, and, given Tangier's history, there was a large Consular Corps. If one happened to have striped trousers and the proper jacket one could go, but I had at that time not fitted myself out with the proper dress, so the Consul General would represent us unattended. At the end of a year, I was transferred to Rabat for a four month period in the political section.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SCOTT: The ambassador was Stewart Rockwell. He was, so far as I could tell, very good. More important was the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), Richard Parker, who was one of the best diplomats of that generation.

Q: He went on to do a number of things, including helping to found the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

SCOTT: Indeed, a model of a diplomat with a strong intellectual side. The political counselor then was a man named Earl Russell and that was a tragic story. Mr Russell was someone from whom, had I been there longer, I would have learned a lot, but he was named DCM in Dakar, and he decided to drive down to Dakar on a break to familiarize himself with that position. He and his wife, and I think their son, and another colleague—a car broke down in the desert in Mauritania and he died. They had gone off the badly marked main road. People had been told to send back word if he had not crossed the Mauritanian border by a certain time and that scheme fell apart. Then suddenly it was realized that he was supposed to be in Dakar and he wasn't. Where was he? A plane flew out from an American base in Spain, spotted the broken-down car. Another plane which could land on that ground was sent and the body and the survivors were evacuated.

Q: As a consular officer, were you helping to—

SCOTT: No, at that point I was in the political section of Rabat, so I had no consular responsibility. But, of course, we were all doing what we could for his wife who later worked for the State Department in the Africa Bureau for a number of years and everybody thought very highly of her.

But I must note that Earl Russell's death was not the only example in my first tour of the sometimes dangers of the career. In July of 1971, the King gave himself a birthday party on the golf course of his summer palace near Rabat. The Ambassadorial Corps was invited. Suddenly, at the party armed military cadets appeared, seized the King and rounded up the guests. Ambassador Rockwell was next to the Belgian Ambassador who, for some reason, was shot and killed.

I was in my apartment that Saturday morning, and got a telephone call that there was some disturbance in the city. I was to call the people on my telephone tree to tell them to stay at home. But after an hour or so, seeing no signs of disorder in my neighborhood, I decided that my place was at the Embassy, so drove there and learned the story and saw Ambassador Rockwell, still in his golf clothes which were splattered with the blood of the Belgian Ambassador.

Q: Well! Interesting. But you are completing your first tour, you are confirmed in your choice of a profession. You are happy with the—.

SCOTT: I thought I was a Southeast Asia specialist. After all, I spoke bad Vietnamese. I studied Southeast Asian politics in graduate school. I had ended up in Morocco, but what I wanted to do was go back to Southeast Asia. At that point Washington sent me a cable saying, "Would you curtail in Tangier to take a position in a French-speaking African country as a political and consular officer?" I accepted since I realize that however much fun Tangier was, it was not career-enhancing. Unfortunately the position in question, which I didn't have enough sense to examine more closely, was in Gabon. A small embassy run by a good Ambassador and a good DCM, but I was down there as a consular officer with very little to do. The political work was done by the Ambassador and the DCM and of consular work there was almost none.

Q: When did you get to Gabon?

SCOTT: This would have been 1971. Omar Bongo was the president. When I realized how little there was for me to do, I was unhappy about it. At some point the inspectors came through and the Ambassador must have said something to the effect that Scott down here is not exactly the perfect fit. In retrospect, I think the Ambassador and the DCM were generous in not writing a damaging EER, but I was sent back to Washington. I wanted to go to Japanese training. Instead, the system said, "That's all very well, but what you really need to do right now, what we need you to do, is to be staff assistant to the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs." I went and spent a year being a staff assistant, which has some interesting elements, but again, not particularly career enhancing. It was an honor to work for the people in the front office, however. Marshall Green, William Sullivan, Art Hummel. These were all major diplomatic figures and it was a bit disheartening to see how little use the White House and the most senior levels appeared to be making of them.

Q: Before we skip away from Gabon to distantly—what a quintessential backwater that place is, really—that's what you felt, you were young, a little bit bored, fairly ambitious and you were glad to have gotten the life—

SCOTT: I should say a couple of things about Gabon. One was that the big issue at the UN during that time was the admission of mainland China, and we made a major effort to preserve a seat for Taiwan. We were willing to see mainland China admitted, but we wanted to see a position reserved for Taiwan. This was a—

Q: Knock-down, drag-out—.

SCOTT: Yes. The Permanent Representative in New York was George Bush; he flew to Gabon to meet President Bongo and nail down Gabonese support on this vital issue. I do not remember whether in fact we got Gabonese support.

Q: Do you remember the visit?

SCOTT: I remember the visit because nobody could have been easier to deal with than George and Barbara Bush. They both came, stayed at the Residence. There was no side at all. They were just very easy people to deal with. My wife later heard a story, which may even be true, but it was certainly being passed around amongst the wives years later that at some point they were staying at a Residence. Their entourage had said they wanted their laundry done. Mrs. Bush woke up to get a glass of water at 2:00 AM and heard a noise and went out and discovered that the Ambassador's wife was manning the washing machines. The explanation she was given was, "Well, your people wanted the laundry done and we don't keep staff in the evenings. This is not a hotel, but I am prepared to wash and dry all these clothes." The next morning, Mrs. Bush called a little meeting of her staff and said, "Embassies are not hotels; you need to be more respectful of where you are, and you can always wash your socks in the sink." Whether true or not, this greatly increased the appreciation, the admiration particularly amongst the wives of the Foreign Service, for the Bushes.

Q: I had heard another variant of that story, so perhaps there is a kernel of solid truth there somewhere. Interesting about George Bush and his time at the United Nations when he was interviewed on C-span about what he learned in that experience and he spoke of the importance of personal connections, he spoke of calling on African delegations. You saw him in the field in Africa. Did you think he was an effective diplomat at the time?

SCOTT: I did not go with him to call on President Bongo. I can only assume he was good at that part of it. I am a great believer that much of effective diplomacy is in the personal contact. You simply need to get out of the embassy and go out and meet people, and, since time is limited, the right people. Sometimes this is not possible. There were few people to meet in Gabon. The Gabonese were distrustful, officially, of the Americans. There had been an attempted coup d'état a few years earlier. It had been decided that since you had to blame it on somebody, why not blame it on the Americans? One could always go down to a restaurant, have a drink with a Frenchman or something. There was a very small American community, oil people because there was some important oil production. You couldn't go out all that often because the cost of living and the exchange rate, unlike in Morocco, were hideously punishing. A simple meal in a good restaurant would run you far too much money.

Q: Bongo went on to serve many, many more years before—

SCOTT: Another story. At some point we asked Bongo to go to Brazzaville and talk to President Marien Ngouabi who had continued the Marxist orientation of Congo-Brazza. Bongo was quietly to explore the possibility of some improved relationship with the United States. Bongo agreed to do this but said, "Look, if you're an African Chief of State, you don't just fly around visiting these poor countries," which Congo-Brazza was, and Gabon distinctly was not, at least in the African context. ”You have to be generous. I need something with which to be generous since I'm doing this on your behalf." Word went back to the State Department, "A little generosity would be appreciated." I understand that some people were shocked and thought we should certainly not be shipping money out to Bongo to distribute amongst the undeserving, but that's not the decision that was made. A pouch arrived and I remember we were in the Ambassador's office, stacking up the fifty dollar bills. I don't remember the amount, but it was large. The DCM took it over to the palace. Bongo went off and came back and I don't think he converted President Ngouabi, but I've often wondered whether that story was ever passed down to succeeding ambassadors. One of the defects of our system is that something like that can happen. There is no automatic means of recording it and making it a matter of useful record at the appropriate level. Bongo knew that he had taken the money and attempted to perform the service . The ambassador ten years later would probably not have known that this had ever occurred. But it might have been an element of some relevance in Bongo’s understanding of the bilateral relationship.

Q: Indeed. I served there many years later and I do not believe that knowledge was passed down. You make a very good point that ambassadors are sent out and often don't know where all the bodies are buried or the skeletons lurk. You finished up in Gabon and headed back to Washington where you were staff assistant of EAP (East Asian and Pacific Affairs).

SCOTT: Right. It was an interesting job. You were in at seven o'clock in the morning and you or your colleague would stay until seven or perhaps eight at night when the office generally shut down. Marshall Green ran a clock-like program. He would have his papers laid out every morning in a certain order and he would sit down with two secretaries. In those days, the secretaries all took shorthand and there was a mute button on the telephone so they could listen to all his telephone calls and take shorthand notes on his conversations. If he made a commitment, or if he made a statement, or received some information during the conversation, all of this would be preserved and they could go through it with him later, and type out the useful bits. I thought that was a handy and important element of good management at that level, to have these conversations properly recorded. However, at some later point, it was thought to be improper and the whole system, which was widespread in the Department, was declared offensive to enlightened thought and so abolished.

Q: A sort of invasion of privacy?

SCOTT: I guess. I mean, my presumption was that anybody who was dealing with someone in that position should have understood that it was not the equivalent of a private conversation and it was a small loss to effective diplomacy when the system was

abolished. Ambassador Green would stay until perhaps seven-thirty. When he left, I would pack a briefcase of papers for him to take home. Then I would call his wife and would tell her that Ambassador Green was heading home, and she would presumably be there with a martini waiting. (Mrs Green was an interesting figure in her own right; an old-fashioned Ambassador's wife with the virtues and perhaps some of the defects implied in that title. But what little I saw of her I quite liked.) Ambassador Green would come in every Saturday morning, slightly later, but he would leave in time for his golf date at the Chevy Chase Club with U. Alexis Johnson and Robert Murphy.

Q: Robert Murphy, the World War II era, Diplomat Among Warriors.

SCOTT: Indeed, an extraordinary career.

Q: This was the end of the Nixon—

SCOTT: Well, not quite the end. Kissinger is dealing secretly with China.

Q: We're opening to China?

SCOTT: We're opening to China, we're trying to deal with where we are with Vietnam, and as I say with inadequate use of highly experienced people. It was not my impression, not that I would necessarily have known at the staff assistant level, that the White House was making best use of the talent they had at their disposal — but Kissinger was distinctly unsupportive of the State Department at that point.

Q: Nevertheless, these are pretty big issues on the plate.

SCOTT: One of my favorite stories—William Sullivan, another great ambassador, was down the hall as a Deputy Assistant Secretary and I had hardly reported to duty, when his secretary, whose last name I forget, Molly, a woman with flaming red hair and a very attractive but imposing manner, charged. "Gerald, I understand you're the new staff assistant." I said, "Yes ma'am." She said, "I want you to know that if William Sullivan, Ambassador Sullivan, needs any staff assisting, I am his staff assistant." I said, "Yes ma'am." I let that relationship remain untouched by my ministrations and she was truly up to any requirements that he might have had. We of course had a growing number of women in the Foreign Service as officers by the time I came in, but one was seeing the trailing end of the old presumption that a young woman of good background and good schools would find a rewarding career in the Foreign Service as secretary, often enough marrying Foreign Service Officers. Nowadays, they tend to join the Foreign Service, but not as secretaries, nor do secretaries nowadays seem to know how to take shorthand. But that's another question.

Vietnam peace negotiations were going forward. A solution of sorts had been found with the Paris Accords, and elections had been promised. With that in view, Kissinger suddenly decided that he needed two Vietnamese-speaking officers in every province in Vietnam. If you were a Vietnamese-speaking officer and wanted to go to Vietnam for six

months, your assignment, whatever it was, would be broken. You would get orders to Vietnam; you could come back to Washington for consultations three months through your assignment, and State didn't care whether you came to Washington or not. You could go to London, Paris, Rome, Madrid whatever the equivalent cost of the fare to Washington would cover. I suddenly saw this as the next step. It had been made clear to me that I needed a serious political job, having done consular work and EAP staffing, but nothing politically substantive since I had been commissioned. I had also then decided that at the age of 33 or 34 that I had neither the time nor the intellectual malleability to master Japanese. So I volunteered to go to Vietnam on this six month program, asserting that my Vietnamese was better than in fact it was. And I also negotiated a two-year follow-on assignment. I was sent to Da Nang, back where I had served in the Navy advising the junk fleet, to this very large Consulate General headed by a man named Paul Popple. I began doing political reporting in Da Nang, though much of the reporting that counted was done by the Agency. There was a small military DAO (Defense Attache Offices) presence and a considerable AID presence. Paul Popple left early. The story he gave me was that Graham Martin, the ambassador, had become aware that Popple had had a conversation with somebody that was less than entirely supportive of the rosy official embassy view of the Viet Nam situation — and perhaps there was more to it than that. In any case, he was replaced by someone whom Martin trusted, Al Francis, one of the most interesting FSOs (Foreign Service Officers) I have ever met, a man for whom I have great respect.

Q: What was it about Al Francis that earned your respect, and was he as honest as Popple in his reporting?

SCOTT: First of all, my view at the time, and since, was that Vietnam was justified, worth it, and defeat was not automatically written into the text. In that context, I was pleased to have as my superior someone so qualified as Al Francis. He had an unusual background. If I remember his story accurately, he had flunked out of college, joined the Army, ended up in the Korean War, standing knee deep in icy water, so he told me years later, staring at the Chinese and saying to himself that there must be a better way than this. Came out of the military; decided that he really wanted to be a diplomat; figured that diplomats needed to go to good schools; applied to Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford; was rejected; applied to a second tier of schools; was rejected, applied to a third tier school; was rejected. Finally, he walked into the admissions office of some distinctly lesser university in California and grabbed the admissions director by the front of the shirt and said, “You're going to let me in.” The man said, "Let me down! I'll let you in on two conditions: a) You make nothing but As, and b) you take only the courses I tell you to take.” Al said it wasn’t difficult. In fact, once he gave up partying and began to study, making straight A's was not that hard. “What you have to do is read all the books that are assigned on the reading list. Then, read one more, and participate in the class, and you will almost certainly get an A. "

Q: He'd figured a couple things out!

SCOTT: Yes, a little late for me; if only I had known. He had come to Martin's notice when Martin was Ambassador in Thailand. I learned from a colleague at Embassy Saigon that Martin, whose story needs to be set down, had befriended Nixon at an earlier point, when Nixon was on a trip as a private citizen after the loss of the election for Governor of California. Nixon had come through wherever it was and Martin, an admin cone officer, had met him and said "Mr. Vice President, you are a man of considerable importance in the history of the United States in the 20th century; I acknowledge that, and I want you to know that anything that I can do for you while you are here, you may call upon me to do." When Nixon became President, he remembered that. Another story goes that Senator Humphrey came out to wherever Martin was as ambassador and at the formal dinner Humphrey rose to make a toast. Martin said, "I'm sorry, Senator, but as the President's representative it is up to me to make the toast."

Q: My goodness.

SCOTT: He reportedly later told Humphrey that if Humphrey were ever President, he should be confident that Martin would be as assiduous in representing him as he had Nixon.

Francis told me that Martin considered that the role of "personal representative of the President" put him in the dominant position vis-a-vis all the elements of the US embassy, so when Martin went to Thailand, he told the Agency, "I'm sorry, but there is no wall in the communications office. I am the President's representative and I see everything." Now, whether or not he in fact saw everything, I cannot say, but Al Francis said that he had, at one point, the duty of going in and reviewing all the transmissions and bringing to Martin whatever he should see. One certainly had the impression in Saigon that Martin knew whatever it was he needed to know.

At any rate, Martin sent Al Francis up to Da Nang, and Francis sent me to Hue. Our man there in charge of the non-Agency side was an AID employee, but I was supposed to be doing the political work and trying to see, primarily, what life there was, if any, in the old Vietnamese nationalist political parties — what was there to work with at that end of the political spectrum should there, in fact, be elections or a political contest of sorts. The real political party in South Vietnam was, as one Vietnamese general put it to me, the "Khaki Party"—the military. That was what the Agency was dealing with, not the Foreign Service.

Hue was an interesting city. I met my wife there; she was part of a nursing team sent out by the British Save the Children Fund. (She had earlier served in Nigeria and the Yemen.) We met at a CIA New Year's Eve party, Dec. 31st, 1974. Then we began to date. The first dates were to Mass on Sunday. I had earlier run into a Vietnamese priest at a reception. I had mentioned that I was Catholic and he said, "Where do you go to Mass on Sunday, Mr. Scott?" I didn't want to tell him that I wasn't quite as faithful as I ought to have been, so I said something to the effect of "Father, if you had a decent Latin Mass—these Vietnamese Masses are not really something that I find all that inspiring —but I suppose you're afraid of your bishop and that's why you don't have a Latin Mass." Then he said,

"Old Father Oxarango over there isn't afraid of the bishop." He pointed me to an ancient—well, probably younger than I am now—Basque missionary who said a Mass every Saturday afternoon for a convent of six nuns; two wanted it in French, two wanted it in Vietnamese, and two wanted it in Latin, and if I attended I could cast the deciding vote. I promptly named Father Oxarango the chaplain to the Consular Corps, which consisted of myself. But then I was required to go to Mass every Saturday afternoon, so when I discovered that Frances was a Catholic and had decent antique tastes, I thought, "If I take her to Mass, then she can sort of represent me if I want to go down to Saigon or whatever," so those first dates were to Mass, and then a gin and tonic. Eventually, Mass, gin and tonic, and supper.

Q: Sounds like a nice pattern evolved.

SCOTT: Well, indeed. Three months later we were evacuated.

Q: Let's back up a moment because you've opened a couple of very interesting doors for further conversation. One of course being your wife Frances—and perhaps we'll need to interview her on her own, but, providing nursing care, working with Save the Children, and the kinds of places she had been: Nigeria, Yemen, and now Vietnam with a war on—a rather intrepid bride you found yourself out there. But before that you arrived back in Vietnam. I know we'll talk about Vietnam in greater depth at the end of this interview, but what were your initial impressions and thoughts returning to Da Nang after an absence of four or five years, I think at that point? What were your immediate impressions? How do you think this is going? Well, this is—

SCOTT: I will try to treat of this more fully later, but what struck me most forcefully when I returned to Viet Nam was that when I had been in Da Nang and, for that matter elsewhere—in Saigon in 1967—I mean, one did not unthinkingly go out in much of the countryside unescorted in one's jeep for 20 or 30 miles without some thought to the possible risk. But when I returned in '73, I could have driven a jeep from Da Nang to Saigon. I might have been robbed for my wallet and the vehicle, but I would not have been attacked by the Vietcong. The country, with some significant exceptions, was pacified to a degree that it had not been earlier.

And I never felt in Vietnam that the Vietnamese, at least those with whom I had any contact, were anything but sympathetic to what we were trying to do. Some may not have liked us very much from time to time. They may have had good reason to find things we, collectively or individually, did that were objectionable or worse, but I think the Vietnamese that I knew were—we were all on the same side and trying to secure the same thing. I'm not sure that applied in Iraq or Afghanistan, but it was, certainly, generally true in Vietnam. Like a lot of Americans out there who had much contact with the Vietnamese, I came to admire many of them considerably. A mixed bag, as we all are: people with an interesting culture and, as individuals, one occasionally established friendships with them. The American side was ungainly and we were fortunate in Da Nang in that the commanding general, General Trưởng, a man of austere personal manner, was the most respected military leader that South Vietnam had. So the charges of

corruption and malfeasance that you heard often enough elsewhere applied much less, I think, to the five northern provinces.

But as Congress began to cut the aid, you could see the effects. The economy shrank. The military hadn't the unending and massive supply of artillery shells and other necessary elements that were there earlier. I knew of a man who put his children in an orphanage, not because they were orphans but because in the orphanage, they would be fed and he was no longer making enough to support the family. It seemed to me that we were behaving in a disgraceful manner. Looking at the gains in pacification I said, "No, this is still a winnable situation."

But we were making an effort, even so. When I went up to Hue, one of the most interesting people I met was a USIA officer, a man named Art McTaggart. I suppose if USIA were filled with Art McTaggarts it wouldn't work very well, but he was not interested in scheduling second-rate American guitar players on cultural tours or whatever. He had mastered decent Vietnamese. He rode around town on a bicycle. He taught a course at the best girls lycée (high school) and another course at the best boys lycée. He taught a course at the University of Hue. Every evening he would cook up the Vietnamese equivalent of a pot of red beans and rice and hold open house where the Vietnamese students who wanted to could come by and get a free meal. He was a real and admired cultural presence in that city. I don't think he made it past FSO-3. After Viet Nam fell, he retired and went to Korea where he had earlier served, and taught at a university.

Q: But, as you say, he was very effective on the ground, in a fraught situation, at advancing our message and interests. You describe our presence as ungainly in some respects. You had a perspective from which you could observe how the State Department and USIA and the Agency and the military and all those elements of our presence sort of interacted. What did you think? It was a war, I suppose the military must've been the 800-pound gorilla. AID, I should throw into the mix as well.

SCOTT: From my perspective, as Vice Consul at the end of a long dotted line, I'm not sure at all my perspective was accurate in this—in Da Nang, at that point the military were represented by a retired sergeant and a couple of other retired enlisted men who had been trained to take reports from such people as they still had on their lists of contacts. The massive presence was the Agency and they made little effort to conceal their identities. They had a different sort of car. We in State had, I think, some sort of American car and they had nothing but Japanese cars because Japanese cars worked a little better. Air conditioners were rationed. You could have an air conditioner in your bedroom if you were State Department; if you were Agency, the entire house was air-conditioned. I mean, there was no pretense whatsoever that their roles should be disguised, and clearly they had more money. Then you'd walk down the hall at the military headquarters and you'd see some Agency man there, door open, taking notes in a conversation with his Vietnamese contact. Now what happened to that conversation, how it was reported, whether it was reported with the Vietnamese source's name attached, which might have made it more interesting or useful. The contacts knew they were

talking to an American and many weren't hiding the fact that they were talking to an American. The report would have been more valuable if you had identified who it was whose views you were reporting. But that was not my problem. As I say, with Ambassador Martin's own approach to these things, he doubtless saw a lot more of the unvarnished, useful reporting than would be available in Da Nang. And he controlled the reporting to Washington. Martin thought that if you were too negative, there would be a risk that the report would be leaked to unhelpful elements in the United States. He believed that the war would be decided in the United States and not in Vietnam, and he was going to do his best to deal with that. There wasn't a lot of objection to his policy that I knew of. Those of us who were there by that time were not opponents of the war. We were people who wanted to see American policy succeed, and I think we believed, or at least hoped, that it still could succeed.

Which is an important social and political element in the entire mix. But the situation unraveled very quickly when the North finally understood that the American commitment was smoke and mirrors and so made its big push. I was in Hue, and suddenly it became clear that the North Vietnamese were attacking. We began evacuating our people in Hue in choppers. I reproach myself for not having been more aware of what the real choices were. We slipped back into sort of an automatic, this-is-what-one-does mode, and there was no larger useful guidance from Saigon or from Da Nang. We had some cars. Because they were valuable American products, valuable State Dept. assets, it was determined that they not be abandoned. Two or three of the most trusted young employees volunteered to drive them down to Da Nang. It was a four hour drive, and all that time during the daylight— but of course they never made it. Hai Van Pass and the highway were jammed with refugees. Here come a couple of chaps in American cars with consular plates. What happened to them? I do not know. Why did we ever do that? Why were the cars important? Al Francis was on leave at that point, though he came back almost immediately. But the acting Consul General was engaged in micro-management, and I was ordered to stay on base, so to speak. "Don't go out into the town, your job is just to evacuate the office and staff" But I was there, I knew what I was doing, so I went around to all of the Europeans that I knew and said, "I can get you out, come now if you want out." There was one French priest I knew and he said, "Let me come with you, if we have time", and we went around to a couple of other people that he knew, one madly packing the seminary library to somehow take with him. And my priest friend said, "No, you have two choices. You can stay or you can go. Packing the library is not part of the program." At one point he and I were weeping. Why did nobody understand what was going to happen? He said, "Look, Gerald, it has been impossible to address the Vietnam issue in France for years. As in the United States, people are beyond listening. They have a position and that's all that will get through." We got all the foreigners out that I was aware of and who wanted to leave. It turned out that the Agency had been evacuating people for two days and we, on the Foreign Service side, had not been told. I confronted the Agency man. He was unapologetic; He said "It's not for me to tell you. This was coordinated further up and it should have come down to you through your chain of command." I still hold that against somebody because had we had more prep time and perhaps thought things through more carefully, we could have done a better job of it.

Q: Of course, in 1989, we had the Lockerbie shoot-down, which ushered in a no double-standard policy, so we're all admonished to ensure that the American citizen out there in a foreign land has the same information we do when it comes to danger and evacuation. There you are, at the end of a war, and within our own government we're not sharing the information we needed to. Was it chaotic at any point or orderly?

SCOTT: Well, what I saw, given our circumstances, was pretty orderly. One of the amazing things is that it wasn't more chaotic. People in Hue clearly had not yet taken on board what their situation was going to be. We got down to Da Nang and then it was decided— Al Francis was back at that point—that we would fly a chopper into Hue during the day since the city was not yet under attack. As one of my last gestures, I had gone over to the chancery of the diocese and I'd run into the chancellor. I said, "Look, I'm leaving. I've got a house full of food. If someone is going to set up an emergency feeding kitchen, don't hesitate. Take these keys, go in, empty out the freezers." Next day in Da Nang, I realized I had not dismissed my guards, so I told one of the people going back in the chopper that day to go by my house and dismiss the guards. He came back with a story. "Yes, the guards were pleased to know they were free to go. They reported that a priest came by with keys to your house and they let him in." I said, "Did he take the food?" "Oh no, he took the stereo."

Q: (Laugh) A priest with priorities. Did I hear you correctly that you slightly deviated from your instructions when you went around talking to Europeans in town and others?

SCOTT: Often enough, I have to say, one knows more about what's going on than—

Q: Than the distant voice of command somewhere.

SCOTT: When we got down to Da Nang and Frances and her team had gotten down to Da Nang, Al Francis, the consul-general, made me his gofer — sort of attached me to him 14 hours a day to do this, do that, do the other. I decided that I needed to get Frances and her team out of there. I went over and met with—the admin people were two young British ex-officers. One of them had been in the Trucial Oman Scouts, and their idea of fun was just this sort of thing. James and John — Frances referred to them as “the Blessed Apostles, James and John.”

Q: You and Frances are not married.

SCOTT: We were not married, but we were engaged — well, almost engaged. I went to meet the team and said, "It's really time, I think, for you all to go down to Saigon; things here are getting a bit confused”—I felt I could not bluntly say that the end was at hand. "Well, we can't do that. We've got things we have to do here. There are orphanages that depend on us getting out to them every day." I replied, "I'm sure that's true, but there are orphanages in Saigon and things are getting awfully dicey here and you don't want to be caught offhanded." They said, "Granted, but if things were really getting difficult, surely we would be told." I said, "Sometimes you're being told, and you don't realize you're being told," and they sort of blinked at me. I had said as much as I thought I could say. At

that point, I was just exhausted and Al, probably realizing that I was increasingly of little use, told me that he was sending me down to Cam Ranh Bay, that the end was nigh. The Vietnamese would be taking junks, motorboats, whatever, down the coast. Some of these would be employees of the U.S. government. If I were in Cam Ranh Bay and standing at the pier, they would recognize me, come up, identify themselves, and it would be my job to get them further south. I flew down to Nha Trang. First night, I stayed in the quarters of the Consulate. The Consul-General was having a reception. He said, "Who are you? What are you doing here?" I explain, and he replied, "Really? You think Da Nang is about to fall? Surely not." Next day, I choppered out to Cam Ranh Bay ….

Q: Here came the flotilla.

SCOTT: Yes. People would come up to me and say, "Don't I recognize you?" I would talk to them and get together a little group. At the end of the day, I radioed Nha Trang and said, "Send a plane; we've got some people that we have to get down to Saigon." A plane came and flew them away.

That night I slept in the bed of a pickup truck I had come across. The next morning I was up and again, more people would collect. Mid-afternoon, I decided that I should call for a plane again. I radioed and they said, "There are no planes; we're in the midst of an evacuation." Then I looked around and saw a ship moored at a pier.

Q: What kind of ship?

SCOTT: A freighter, it had been contracted to the U.S. government to carry supplies to Vietnam. It was empty and it was tied up. I went aboard and I told the captain, "I've got a bunch of Vietnamese who work for the U.S. government. I want to bring them aboard the ship, and when you get underway, then we will sail south, ideally down to Saigon, and I will offload my people." He didn't know any better, and I presented myself as somebody in charge of something, so he agreed. I went back ashore and organized my little group of twenty or twenty-five people, but I was being followed by a larger group, many of whom were armed, clearly soldiers separated from their units.

Q: Were these people also seeking to get out of there?

SCOTT: They were all trying to get out. I went back to the ship and there was a tiny little gangway, two planks that had been put down. I got my people on board and I told everybody else—we had rather a large crowd at this point—"Sorry, that's all we can take right now, but something will be done." I then went aboard and pulled up the planks. Why I wasn't shot, I'm not quite sure, but I checked on my Vietnamese, and then collapsed on the floor of the captain's cabin.

I woke up two or three hours later and something had happened. The ship was full—there must have been 10,000 people aboard. Every deck was full and they could hardly sit; most were standing. The captain had been, one way or the other, convinced to take all these people aboard. We put out to sea and then we headed to Vung Tao, the port of

Saigon. We got down to Vung Tao the next day and I radioed the port to say that we had all these people to offload. Vung Tao said, "No, no, you will not come and offload your passengers here. You need to sail down to Phú Quốc, a little island at the bottom of Vietnam where they planned to offload these 10,000 refugees." I said, "Look, we've got people dying on board. We've got to get some people off." They said, "Alright, we'll send a barge alongside, and you can fill it, just make sure they're disarmed." I said, "Right." The barge came alongside and all these military chaps jumped on the barge with their guns. I was not going to go around and try and take their guns away from them. The barge pulled away and the crowd on board had been reduced a little bit; we're still anchored out. I collapsed again and went back to sleep. I woke up at about two in the morning and I found that there were two tugs alongside. They were manned by Philippine crews and under contract to the U.S. government. I told the captain, "I'm going to take my Vietnamese and put them on these tugs and we're going to go up river to Saigon. What you're going to do with the rest of these is your responsibility."

Q: Yours being these 22 or so people who had been U.S. government employees.

SCOTT: At three in the morning, I jumped all these people onto the tugs and a number of other men of course jumped on too. We start up the channel towards Saigon and we got about two or three hours up the river when we were stopped by a Vietnamese patrol boat, I think from the same unit that I advised in the Navy in 1967. They told me we couldn't proceed. They had orders to prevent any craft coming into Saigon. I argued but got nowhere, so we turned around and sailed back to Vung Tao. We anchored out, and I said, "Look, I'll take the launch and go in and arrange for our debarkation." At which point, some young man aimed his rifle at me and said "I think we're all going in together" and I said, "I think you're right. I think we're all going in together." We went in and disembarked. I found the American office and was choppered to the Embassy. Frances was there. They had lost contact with me and did not know what had happened to me for about two days. She got out on a commercial flight within a day or two. I was in the embassy for maybe three weeks, attached to the political section working for Shepard Loman and Lacy Wright, two really outstanding officers.

Q: If we could just recap the experience of moving yourself and people from Da Nang, south—there's an extraordinary 24—36 hour period there where you go from the Consul-General having a cocktail party or reception of some kind and unaware just how close to the end was, to being able to summon an aircraft, to take out one group, to being unable to summon a second aircraft and therefore having to secure a ship and moving with that ship south. The conditions you just described and through it all—by the way, it seemed to me that Al Francis had a pretty savvy tactical sense when his idea was to send you off on the end of the pier because you were recognizable and our own foreign national employees would find you.

SCOTT: Al, in fact, came down with a ship while I was in Cam Ranh. There had been the evacuation from Da Nang, which was chaotic, but which thanks to his leadership had been successful. Frances and her team were on that ship, and the ship came to Cam Ranh. He and I had 15 minutes of "This is what I think you should be doing, Gerald", not that it

wasn't fairly obvious at that point what the choices were. He, Frances, and the people from the Consulate-General in Da Nang were then flown down to Saigon.

Q: Did you have a sense of personal risk?

SCOTT: Up to a point, but there's a psychology about these things, which helps. I mean, I remember my first night in the countryside in Vietnam, in the Navy, and I heard these guns going off. "Oh, my heavens, we're being shelled." Went outside, quite perturbed while, surprisingly, everyone else stayed asleep. I understood the next morning that it had been outgoing artillery, not incoming. You pretty quickly realize that most of this stuff is background noise. But your perception can change quickly; you can suddenly realize, my God, I'm in serious danger. But most of the time you just walk forward through it.

Q: The 22 employees, do you happen to know, were they Agency?

SCOTT: No idea who they were, though I may have recognized one or two.

Q: What happened to them?

SCOTT: I do not know. On the evacuation from Saigon, there's a good book. Honorable Exit by Thurston Clark about the last days in Saigon from the standpoint of the evacuation of local employees.

Q: The one thing that had stood you in good stead throughout that whole evacuation period up to the point where we were, was your language skills—

SCOTT: Well, the Vietnamese had come back to a considerable degree and that was of course very useful.

Q: Also your cultural understanding.

SCOTT: In Saigon, I met Al Francis again. He didn't explain all of this to me at the time because he had the professional discipline to avoid spreading disconcerting news, but I later learned that he had told Ambassador Martin that it was time to move quickly on evacuation preparation and Martin didn't want to do it. Instead, Martin ordered Al to leave. Martin was in the end committed to getting out as many Vietnamese as he could, but if I understand his argument, it was a) that a truce could ultimately be arrived at which would give us time for an orderly evacuation, and b), anything that was perceived as planning too openly for evacuation at that point would risk chaos in Saigon and elsewhere. I was later told that Martin had two Agency sources: one said that the Communist takeover would be quick and brutal; the other advanced the possibility of a negotiated transition. Martin, in error, believed the second. As a result, Martin was very slow to allow much planning to go forward, so planning was taking place behind his back. Some of those plans came to useful fruition, particularly the barges in Saigon.

I want to mention one of our colleagues, Charles Currier, who stayed there at the end and was important in getting a lot of people out on the barges in Da Nang. Charlie, whom I got to know quite well later on, was from an old New York family and he, an idealistic student at Columbia, had gone down to take part in the civil rights freedom effort in the South during that struggle. He ended up in Vietnam making a contribution to what we were trying to do in Vietnam, and later left the Foreign Service to practice law. Charlie was just one of many examples of FSOs and others who were putting themselves at serious risk by staying and carrying out the evacuation process. Mel Chapman was another whose name comes to mind.

Q: Having secured passage on one ship for you and 10,000 of your closest friends, you ultimately debark with others upon a tug, you tug up river trying to get to Saigon, the South Vietnamese navy tells you to turn around and go back. You catch a transport of some kind of helicopter, presumably back to the embassy and it's the last days of the embassy. Take us back to that point of the story.

SCOTT: Well, I don't have my chronology at hand, but I think I stayed in the Embassy for three weeks. I had orders out, and I should have contested them. One of the great regrets of my life is that I didn't insist on staying. There was a serious effort to thin out the embassy. Those of us who were not part of the Saigon contingent, who'd come in from Da Nang or Nha Trang or elsewhere, were seen as—time to move on, time to get out of the way. I took my airline ticket and went. When the time came, I managed to get out. And meanwhile we were running black flights out of the airport.

Q: What's a black flight?

SCOTT: Well, these were unauthorized, multiple flights evacuating Americans to—I don't know where they ended up, the Philippines perhaps. Martin presumably more or less knew what was going on and he tolerated it because we were stuffing these planes with Vietnamese. Key contacts, employees, whatever it may have been, but you had to have a connection to get on board. You had to have somebody in the embassy or in the mission who said, "All right, Lac, get your family together, I'm going to put you in a car, take you to Tan Son Nhut; we're going to talk our way past the guard and get out to the warehouse and you will be put on a plane." The senior consulate translator in Da Nang was a man for whom I had great admiration. One of those people who was something of a traditional scholar with the virtues that go therewith, but he didn't strike me as a robust chap who would easily survive the chaos at the end. I put him in a car with his family and I got them out to the airport and I think that was the day before I left. I should have stayed and done that another 15 times. But I didn't. I was taken to the airport by a Vietnamese friend who wouldn't take my offer to go out on one of our black flights when I offered it. He managed to get out several months later. He had a wife of French nationality, so the French after the fall of Saigon managed to get him out. He took me to the airport, and a clerk stamped my passport and remarked. "Leaving a little early, Mr. Scott?" and I muttered something shamefacedly.

Q: What was the atmosphere at the Embassy as you left it?

SCOTT: It was orderly, but there was a lot of emotional tension. People were volunteering to "marry" Vietnamese secretaries if that was thought to be useful in getting the papers they needed. Not that it was—once you learned that if you could get them to Tan Son Nhut, they could get on a plane and go. There was Martin at one end trying to hold up, keep the lid on and everybody else working not always in the best organized way at the other to arrange some sort of evacuation.

Q: As you say, some of the planning was sub rosa almost. It was a quiet and—

SCOTT: It was, and then you had people like Lionel Rosenblatt—do you know about him? Lionel had previously served in Viet Nam. He flew back to Saigon to get out people that he knew. He took leave from Washington and came with a colleague. I never ran into Lionel, though I later knew his brother in the Foreign Service. Most admirable on his part.

Q: What was the sense of Washington and its engagement? At this point, Gerald Ford is now president.

SCOTT: Well, I know that only from later reading accounts. I mean Washington was irrelevant to my concerns at that point.

Q: Not to Martin's, he was—

SCOTT: No, Martin—the story is, again, retold in this book, Honorable Exit about Martin and his bureaucratic confrontations with Kissinger and company. I liked what I saw of Martin; he had a distinct persona. He was a soft-spoken, stately sort of southern gentleman of an earlier generation. Absolutely willing to do what he thought needed to be done, and he was not inhibited by excessive self-doubt. At one point, a general disappeared; Martin had had him recalled very shortly before the end. Martin was in charge and you had best understand that. The people that I worked with in the political section, I think, had a great deal of respect for him. At that point, it was finally clear that the end was at hand and we were not going to get everybody out, nor did we. We left thousands behind. Tragic stories that have entirely escaped the understanding of the vast majority of the American population.

Q: Again, as a person, sitting in your morning room, many years later you can look back at having saved lives, having secured the safety of many people, but also cognizant of those who were not saved. Others, no doubt, have the same kind of mixed view of the time.

SCOTT: Yes, well I got out and I went back to the States, stopping in England to meet Frances's parents, and was promptly sent down to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, where we had a refugee camp.

We had, I think, four of them in the United States, and my unofficial orders were to do what I could to identify the former American employees and take care of them. There was a certain amount of, "Everybody has to be treated equally here, no distinctions," to which my answer was, "Nonsense. We have a special obligation to these people and we will do for them what we can."

I identified a handful of Vietnamese, one of whom was my old counterpart from Navy days whose name I found on a list in another camp, and I said, "What can I do?" I went back to my hometown, Duncan, Oklahoma, and I met with the Ministerial Alliance. I said, "We've got a lot of Vietnamese families, and this community should step up and do something. How many are willing to sponsor a family here?" Four churches agreed. I sent four families back to Duncan, and the churches housed and fed them and found jobs for them. One of the four families included my old Navy counterpart. Now, forty-five years later, there is one family that has stayed in Duncan. They were the least qualified of any of them. I think he may have been a guard. I'm not sure that he was literate. As in many cases in that culture, the women have an enormous drive, and in Vietnamese society, it is often the women that handle the money. In this family, the wife got a job at a beauty parlor. He mowed lawns, they took care of their kids. They were out there six days a week or more doing something, and they have, in a modest way, prospered. The other Vietnamese families ended up going to Houston or some other place where there were large settlements of Vietnamese.

After Ft Chaffee, I went to England to marry Frances, surely the most important event in my life and the most fortunate.

When we returned to Washington, I worked for a short time in the Refugee Bureau under Shepard Loman who had been my boss at the Embassy in Saigon at the end. We were primarily trying to deal with the problem of the boat people — the thousands of Vietnamese trying to escape Viet Nam by boat, and many at the mercy of pirates, especially off Thailand. Then I was assigned to the Republic of China Office.

Q: I see. Just before you get there, let me ask about Dick Armitage and his efforts to secure the passage of folks out of Vietnam. Were you aware of—

SCOTT: No. I later became aware of it. An admirable and happily successful effort. I should say that we all got back and, bureaucratically, Washington wanted to forget about Viet Nam. We were being reassigned—of course, we're all coming back out of cycle, and there must have been something of a scramble to find some place to put us all. Congress didn't want to hear about it; the Administration didn't want to hear about it. But several of us objected. However disgraceful the entire series of events may have been in some ways, a lot of us who were there wanted to have this recognized, and we insisted that the Department provide for awards for service rendered. Ultimately, Kissinger reluctantly agreed. Nominations were written up and there was an award ceremony and some of the FSOs received various awards. It was not because anybody at the senior level was saying, "Let us see how we can recognize them." Quite the reverse.

I ended up in the Republic of China Office which was shrinking in number because our relations were shifting to the mainland. However, it had two extraordinary people dealing with the issues. The office director was Burt Levin and his deputy was Chas Freeman.

Q: Chas is remarkable. He was in the Republic of China Office?

SCOTT: I particularly admired both Burt and Chas. I also had a lot of admiration for the Republic of China Embassy. First of all, they knew that solid contact with State Department people would be important, especially given the marked general enthusiasm for the opening to the mainland, so they cultivated us with a remarkable level of attention. We probably lunched with them every week or two. Somebody has come to the Office? Let's all go to lunch. Somebody leaving the Office? Shall we all go to lunch? It's your birthday; let us take you out to lunch. If there's no excuse, one of them would call you up and you would go to lunch. Of course, in Washington, Chinese restaurants were divided somehow into those that were thought to be favorable to the rising sun and those that were favorable to the setting sun. The food was very good; they ordered off the menu, and they did their best to make themselves friendly. I spoke no Chinese. I did not find the young diplomat who was sent occasionally to attend to Gerald when lunches were otherwise not scheduled, a chap who had particularly good English, but they all were out there, trying to do their jobs effectively.

I'll tell you a story about Chas. The Chinese were bringing some sort of cultural program to the Kennedy Center. In those days, when a PRC delegation came to State, you did not take them in through the main entrance because the flag of the Republic of China was hanging there with all the other flags and it was feared they would seize upon this to stage a scripted protest. So one day a telephone call came through, which ended up with Chas. It was the Kennedy Center. What were they to do? They were having this mainland Chinese cultural event, and were suddenly made aware of the whole flag issue since one of the principal halls was decorated with foreign flags. Chas's solution: "Well, don't you think it's time to take all those flags down and send them to the cleaners?" So all the flags came down with an almost plausible excuse should the question be raised.

Then, because the Office was shrinking, one day my job disappeared. So I, at that point, was looking around for my next assignment and had turned down one or two proposals. But then I was told that I had exhausted my options; I was directed to go to the Somalia desk.

Q: I see where things were already happening by the time you got there. Let me ask just a final thought on your experience. I'm not sure how we—as a service—how good a job we do of dealing with people who have come out of very intense, very chaotic, high adrenaline 24-hour kinds of overwhelming experiences like the one you had at the end of your tenure in Vietnam. One is more or less expected to show up at one's next job and just sort of get on with it. Did that work for you? Were you in need of some decompression time? Were you able to focus appropriately on your Republic of China duties? How did you—

SCOTT: I think it made a difference that immediately after Viet Nam I spent a couple of months working in a refugee camp at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas dealing with refugees; that allowed a useful psychological transition. I think all of us who came out of the end of the war were marked. I'm sure we all had nightmares and perhaps more besides, but nobody had heard of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. One just moved forward. I was fortunate in that the only evidence I found post facto were the nightmares.

But back to the next job. I had thought I was a Southeast Asia specialist. Somehow or other I had ended up speaking bad Vietnamese and decent French. Now, after brief service in the Republic of China office, I found myself at the Somalia desk. Of course I knew where Somalia was. But I went to the globe to make sure it hadn't moved since the last time I had checked. Somalia was in a peculiar position. Its small importance was entirely a condition of the Cold War. Somalia had been a British, Italian and a French colony. The French part of it, French Somaliland, maintained its separate identity as the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas, avoiding the word "Somali" in the title. Italian and British Somaliland became Somalia and its government had chosen to align with the Soviets. Siad Barre, who adopted a Marxist single-party system, ran a dictatorial government in Mogadishu. We had an embassy—.

Q: A rather brutal dictatorship.

SCOTT: Yes, but the degree of the brutality was not all that evident to people from the outside, at least to me — and the really extraordinary brutality occurred later, in the 1980's. But what was evident to me was of course that we had witnessed a revolution in Ethiopia, the Derg in Addis had also adopted a Marxist identity and had aligned itself with the Soviet Union (one of the post-Viet Nam dominos, one might argue). So here, in the Horn of Africa, we had lost major influence in both the states that counted in the Horn — Ethiopia, which was important, and Somalia, which was considerably less important, but they were now both Soviet satellites. I, with my particular Cold War concentration, concluded without much hesitation that if we could at least lure the Somalis away from the Soviets, this was a good thing. I spent two years working with that in view.

Q: Had the Somalis invaded Ogaden yet?

SCOTT: I don't remember whether they were there when I came on the desk. They were certainly there shortly thereafter. We were forestalled from extending aid because they were the aggressor in this war. Siad, of course, denied that there had been any aggression, but we had the satellite photographs with the tank tracks to prove it. But we couldn't show those to him. In those days the capacity of satellite photography to capture such detail was highly classified. So the dialogue consisted of the American ambassador, John Loughran, an admirable man, telling Siad that we had more than adequate evidence of Somalia's aggression and Siad denying it. This went back and forth. Meanwhile, the State Department bureaucracy, particularly at the political level insofar as I could observe it, was very much unsupportive of the effort to lure Somalia toward the camp of democracy and Cold War virtue on the grounds that Siad was a dictator and you couldn't trust him.

Q: Jimmy Carter is president.

SCOTT: I felt this was a short-sighted view, which missed the bigger picture and my office director, Richard Post, I think, shared my presumptions, but we were running up against the front office in AF in the person of, and I'll have to think of it.

Q: We're not talking about Dick Moose?

SCOTT: Yes, we're talking about Richard Moose whose only serious objective as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs seemed to be ending white rule in southern Africa, particularly the Rhodesia question. And he represented a Carter-administration view that one should try to insulate Africa from Cold War considerations. But, though I was far removed from any contact with the White House, I had an ally in my efforts in the person of Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Advisor, whose view of the relevance of Cold War considerations was much as was mine. In any case, Time Magazine did a cover article called "A Day with President Carter." In the story, the President is being briefed on Somalia and President Carter is quoted as saying, "I want you to do everything you can to make Somalia our friend," which was, shall I say, contrary to the Dick Moose effort in the front office of the Africa Bureau. I pinned this quote to my door for what it was worth. Not that I believe that diplomacy is much advanced by the publication of such a comment, but it seemed to do no harm or, for that matter, much good.

Q: You grasped this straw.

SCOTT: I grasped this straw, this quite weak weapon, and proceeded to push that policy along.

One thing that I want to underscore is how useful INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) was to me. INR was not an element in my world until I became a desk officer, but the ability to go to the INR office and talk about the information which they had at hand, but just as important to speak to people who had longer-range view of the Horn of Africa or who could fill in some of the historical background. I could test my ideas against somebody who was not in my bureaucratic chain of command. Their willingness to argue with me or informally validate my views, as the case might be, was a very valuable experience. The Somali expert at that point was a woman named Anne Reid and she was very good.

Q: Stayed a long time if I recall.

SCOTT: They were all good. INR is, in my view, one of the unappreciated elements of the State Department system.

Q: There you are on the Somalia desk and, as you say, the world is changing a bit. We've got an administration with a different attitude towards human rights, but you have this fascinating confluence of African developments and the Cold War, which is still on. You have Ethiopia, which had been an American ally in the Haile Selassie years. Descended

into revolution and the Emperor is gone. Ethiopia is undergoing a sort of Red Terror, which is itself quite brutal. Somalia, barely a country in real terms, ends up in the hands of Siad Barre, and the two go to war with various proxies in the wings. Before this story is over, we'll have Russians and Cubans and North Koreans and you name it. There you are on the desk and you think, "Our interests would be better served by having some ally in this region," which has some importance to our interests. More on how you pursued that.

SCOTT: Well, we tried to coordinate also with the British and the French. I remember putting together—there was to be a meeting at the Assistant Secretary level of the British and I think the French and maybe one other to be held in Washington. I was doing a briefing paper and I wrote a 10–15 page paper, which I got up to Dick Moose early in the evening before. I had in my mind, of course, that everybody was at least a third as concentrated on Somalia as I was and Mr Moose just needed reminding in an outline of some of the salient points that might come up in the meeting. But looking at the paper, he said "This is not what I need at all." My boss, the office director Richard Post, said, "Well, what do you want, Mr. Moose?" He said, "I want a binder with a question per page, every question that might arise in this meeting, and its answer." Mr Post turned to me and shrugged his shoulders. We walked out, he gave me the briefing paper, and he left. I went down to my desk. Happily, my secretary was still there; she was a woman whom I had not thought particularly efficient, but she always did what was asked. In those days, of course, we didn't have computers. We wrote out our text on a legal pad and gave it to the secretary and she would type up a draft; one would take the draft back and amend that and hand it back and then another draft would be created. In an office of perhaps seven or eight officers, we had four secretaries. I remember one of them was particularly accommodating, and I said, "I would be more efficient if I could learn to dictate." She said, "It's a skill, but I will let you practice with me if you promise never to ask me to use a dictaphone." With her indulgence, I developed the minor skill of dictating an almost decent draft. That night I went back to my ordinary secretary whose last name I unfortunately cannot recall. I said, "Susan, we are going to have to put this together." I began dictating question, answer, question, answer, question, answer, and she would type it up. We were there until 1:00 AM and she never said, "I have to go; this is ridiculous." At 1:00 AM we had the briefing book. I'm sure I owe that secretary and her generous indulgence to my subsequent career.

Q: Did you ever again in your Foreign Service career have a senior principal make such a request of every single question with an answer on a separate page?

SCOTT: No, that was really it. The next day, we had the meeting. It went well, and Dick Moose would flip through, come upon the question, give some sort of answer. But I had gained, as we do under these circumstances, an enormously detailed knowledge of all the relevant elements. In those days, with a front-burner issue like Somalia, you worked at least 10 hours a day and you were in every Saturday and sometimes Sunday afternoons. That is something that has changed in the State Department. Nowadays, on Saturday you go in and nobody's there. In those days, if you had a particularly demanding job, you were probably in on Saturday morning. It was a quiet time to read the cables, which came

to you on paper. More importantly, you could go up to the front office. The Assistant Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretaries were all there, but they didn't have a daily agenda. They too were catching up, and you could go in and knock on the door of a Deputy Assistant Secretary, walk in, and say, "Mr Ambassador, there was something I want to talk to you about. "Well, take a chair." And you would have 15 or 20 minutes to explain the complexity of some element of your brief and know that you had an audience. You did not have to staff it through with a memorandum to get it there; you just walked in on a Saturday morning. I found it a very useful way to conduct business at a time like the ongoing Somalia crisis.

Q: Those times decisively ended somewhere between then and now because one certainly doesn't wander in and out of the Assistant Secretary's office on Saturday or another time, as good as many of them have been and and continue to be. In this Somali–Ethiopian conflict, as I said, it was a sort of uniquely African phenomenon in many respects with the tortured history of Somalia and the Ogaden and Ethiopia itself, but it was also an arena for Cold War conflict. What was our reaction when we saw the amount of support, for instance, that the Russians were willing to provide to the Ethiopians? Even Cuban troops ended up on the ground.

SCOTT: Many of us were, of course, distressed and shocked at what we had lost. Within the context of the Horn of Africa, we had been swept off the board; our queen had been taken. There were people in the Carter administration who saw this as irrelevant, which was the tendency that I was fighting against. I don't think anybody that I worked with saw the Ethiopian revolutionary regime, the Derg, as anything but awful news for the Ethiopians.

One element in this that I should mention was the energy and professionalism of the Somali ambassador, Abdullahi Addou. Happily for the Africa Bureau, most of the ambassadors in Washington with which they deal don't seem to understand how Washington works very well — or, perhaps more accurately, they don't have the immediate challenges that confronted the Somali ambassador. But this man was a master organist who could play all the stops. He was indefatigable. If there were 10 other ambassadors like him dealing with African affairs, the Africa Bureau would have ground to a halt, unable to deal with all of the initiatives that would have been generated. This man had developed ties to the Pentagon. He was calling at the State Department, and he had his people calling the State Department. He was trying to establish White House connections. He wrote letters to the editor and columns explaining that President Siad been badly misunderstood. He reached out to the Hill. He was a phenomenon. At one point I was arranging to sneak him into the White House so the press wouldn't see him going to meet the President. I realized, looking at him, how much of a difference a really knowledgeable and effective ambassador could make, even in Washington.

Q: You have a great deal of experience observing African ambassadors in the United States, both at the UN and in Washington. Let's take a moment to expand on that just a bit.

SCOTT: My real experience was in my last 15 years, when, after retirement, I ended up in New York as the Senior Adviser on African issues for the U.S. Delegation to the General Assembly. We will talk about that later, but African governments for the most part treat their diplomatic service, particularly the senior service, seriously, and the quality of African ambassadors is outstanding. There are exceptions. There is, you know, occasionally the president's wife's brother—

Q: The political opponent one needs to sort of sideline.

SCOTT: Yes. But on the whole I have been, particularly once I got to New York, much taken with the quality of the people with whom we were working. Anyway, the Somali issue continued, and it had not by any means been resolved by the time I left the desk after two years.

Q: Do you think you'd caught the attention of folks in the Africa Bureau?

SCOTT: I did. This, I think, ultimately determined the rest of my career; the thought of being a Southeast Asia specialist disappeared. But let me also mention one of the most regrettable things that I ever did was while I was at the Somalia desk office. The Italian diplomat dealing with Somalia, Pietro Ago, would come to see me frequently and he always had pertinent questions. He walked in one day; we had just sent out a cable with a new key view that was highly classified, very closely held, and now Pietro came in and recited to me the content of this cable. "Is this true, Gerald?" I, who had come to know of this only 24 hours before, was surprised, and shocked and so I denied it. I was taught early on—you never lie. You may engage in little suppressio veri, suggestio falsi, but you never lie. Pietro came back to me three weeks later, "You lied to me, Gerald". I said, “I’m sorry, Pietro, but I did.” It's the only time in my career that I can recall where, given the peculiar standards of diplomacy, I lied to a fellow diplomat.

But next, I was walking down the hall and, as is often the case in the Foreign Service, one gets one’s best jobs walking down the hall. I ran into the Italian desk officer, Brunson McKinley, whom I had known in Viet Nam and with whom I had had further contact because Brunson had to clear on various papers. At any rate, he came across me in the hall, said "Gerald, since you're leaving the Somalia desk, would you like to go to Rome?" I said, "Why, yes." He said, "All right, I think I can arrange it." The personal system seems to have been more flexible in those days. I got orders to go to Rome via Italian language training, to be the political officer dealing with the Christian Democrats.

Q: Good. I wanted to ask just one more question surrounding your time at the Somalia desk and it's about the NSC (National Security Council) and policy-making processes. They varied over time, I think. As they developed through the Obama Administration, for instance, they became quite intense, quite ornate structures of meetings and some meetings culminating in new acronyms of new kinds of meetings and ultimately a decision. I gather there's far less of that sort of process at the moment, under President Trump. How did it work in your day? You were a desk officer, you clearly had some interaction with the NSC.

SCOTT: I wrote papers that were taken by the Assistant Secretary further up the line, making whatever arguments could be made or presenting such facts as were available. What happened after that level was beyond the clouds. Nobody ever called me over and said, "Gerald, let me explain to you the dynamics of the latest meeting over in the West Wing." I just sat there writing the papers, reading the cables, coordinating such delivery as I could coordinate.

At any rate—very pleased to think of serving three years in Rome, off I went to Italian language study. The man who was the ambassador in Rome was a good political appointee, Richard Gardner, who had been a professor at Columbia. Serious, intellectual, foreign policy credentials, said to have believed that he should have been named, if not Secretary of State, then certainly the Ambassador to the United Nations. Instead he went to Rome and, as the Ambassador, he had the right to choose his DCM and his secretary. But Gardner believed that his authority was more extensive and he had an officer dealing with the Christian Democrats, a highly-qualified man named Roland Kuchel, later ambassador to Zambia — and Gardner wanted Kuchel to stay on with the Christian Democratic dossier. Gardner proposed that I go to Genoa for a year, “Give you the opportunity to get your Italian into really good shape, Gerald, and then you can come down to Rome." I was not in a position to argue with the Ambassador and, in fact, he was right. Genoa was a fascinating town. I worked on my Italian, did some more consular work, got to know the Italian scene a bit. I should have had a major advantage because the Consul-General was a man named John DiSciullo. John was a civil servant at State, had been one of the Italian experts for years, and whenever an Italian politician came through on a USIA visit or some such, somehow John would meet him and add him to his Rolodex and maintain the relationship. John became one of the great resources in Washington in interpreting the complex Italian political scene. Let me say that I have never run into a more complex scene in my life. It took me most of the first year in Genoa just to understand how the whole thing worked.

Q: This coming from a person who had immersed himself in Somalia and its clan structure. I've never seen anything more complex than that.

SCOTT: Happily, Siad Barre refused to admit the clan structure existed. It was very difficult to understand under the Siad regime how the whole thing got put together, but it's certainly true that, had you thought of Somalia and Italy in the same sort of structural terms, there might have been some interesting parallels.

At any rate, I was in Genoa working on my Italian. DiSciullo was of very little help to me whatsoever. We were never invited to his residence for dinner. There were never any cables that went out that I saw. What DiSciullo did was to read the papers, get on the phone to his Italian contacts, and then phone the Ambassador or DCM and give them a daily brief. I only realized this when I got to Rome and when, upon the rare occasion, he couldn’t get through to the higher-ups, I would receive his daily brief. But when I was in Genoa, I knew nothing of this service he provided.

But my time was well spent. I got to know some Italians. I read the papers and came to understand Italy much better. There was a local employee whose job, as far as I was concerned, was to sit beside me every day for two hours and we would go through the papers together and have a conversation.

Q: Was there a lot of consular work going on? Were you issuing visas?

SCOTT: There was a considerable amount of consular work. And at one point, on the Fourth of July, I went into the Consulate to review the guest list; I'd left it on my desk; I hadn't taken it home. There was a man standing outside. I unlocked this massive door. He said, "Is this the American Consulate?" I said "Yes." He said "I am Russian. I want to defect." I started to say, "Defect tomorrow, don't defect today." But instead, I took him aside and listened to what he had to say and then took him home and gave him to Frances to provide a cup of tea. By that point, the reception was on, so I went to the residence, explained to DiSciullo, who was obviously looking for his number two to help manage the reception, that I had this chap in the guest bedroom whom I did not want to leave alone with my wife. I was excused and went back to deal with the defector.

Then I got transferred to Rome. Before I went to Rome, Gardner intervened again and decided that he didn't want me to follow the Christian Democrats because there was another officer coming into the Embassy whom he thought would be better at it, and he was quite right. Vittorio Brod had perfect Italian. (His mother was from an old Palermo family and had taught Italian at a university in New York.) He had a real understanding of the Italian system. Wouldn't I like to take the Socialists? Again, one does not argue with the Ambassador. I said, "Of course." Happily, the Socialists were rising in the Italian political world and the Christian Democrats were stalled and beginning to slip. It turned out to be a very good dossier. I spent three years in Rome dealing with the Socialists, the Social Democrats, and a couple of the smaller parties.

Q: Who is prime minister at the moment?

SCOTT: Well, Craxi had not yet taken the prime ministership. Mostly Christian Democrats: Cossiga, Forlani, Fanfani. But also the first non-Christian Democrat since the war was named prime minister, leader of the Republican Party, Giovanni Spadolini.

Q: Reagan is president?

SCOTT: Carter was President when Gardner was the Ambassador. Reagan came in, and Gardener was replaced by a man named Maxwell Rabb. Two good DCMs. Robert Paganelli was the first one, Peter Bridges was the second. In the political section I had in addition to Vittorio, John Willett and Robert Rackmales, Freck Vreeland, — he was our outreach to the glitterati (his mother was Diana Vreeland), and later Ambassador to Morocco. Good secretarial staff, including Barbara Strickland who was the Political Counselor's secretary. The Political Counselor for much of my time was Robert Frowick. Bob was really a very decent man. He wasn't well-read in Italian politics, but he understood diplomacy and the State Department. We were fortunate to serve under him.

Interestingly, his brother was a famous American dress designer, Halston (Roy Halston Frowick).

One diplomatic element particularly valuable to me in Rome was the exchanges with other diplomats. I would get together monthly with my German, French and British colleagues, and we would compare notes. I particularly enjoyed my relationship with the UK chap, Robert Culshaw. He and his wife Elaine, both Cambridge classicists, became our good friends. Not by any means the only time a British colleague proved to be especially helpful — there is a diplomatic reality to the special relationship.

We were trying to keep Washington up-to-date. The Italians, not unnaturally, think of themselves as a people whose importance is not adequately appreciated by, in this case, one of the Great Powers. A major element in Italian diplomacy is to make sure they are always at the head table because, at least in my day, they were always on the edge. They were always, "Oh, we must include the Italians up there with the French, the Germans—"

Q: —at the G7—

SCOTT: —or whatever it may be. John Willett was the contact with the Foreign Ministry.

One element that I was slow to understand was the degree that politics penetrated so much of Italian society. Example: The American secretary in Genoa, excellent secretary, Helen Kalkbrenner (originally a Russian refugee raised in Harbin, China) had a daughter married to an Italian who was editor of a small music magazine. When I went to Rome I discovered that Marco had become the Vice Director of the Rome opera. Would I like season tickets? In those days, the rules were not quite so strict and I said, "Yes, I would be very happy to have season tickets." Unfortunately, the opera then went on strike. But I asked Marco, "How did you get this job?" He said, "Well, the vice directorship is within the gift of the Socialist Party. I am a Socialist. They look around for Socialists who know something about music and I am now the Vice Director of the Rome Opera." When I was in Genoa, I wanted to go to La Scala, and getting tickets to La Scala seemed to be beyond my capacity. Then somebody said, "Gerald, mention your interest in La Scala to your Socialist contacts, see if they can't get you tickets." We were part of a box at La Scala one night thanks to the Italian contact between politics and in this case the cultural scene.

Q: You got on well with the Socialists, despite your personal—.

SCOTT: I got on well with Socialists, the ones I knew were welcoming and helpful. Craxi's Capo della Segreteria, Gennaro Aquaviva, was particularly helpful. He would receive me once a week or so and say, "Look, Gerald, have you seen the article in"—and he would name some paper, a Socialist paper or another one, and I may well have read the article. He'd say "Now, what do you think it means?" I would mutter something. He said, "Now let me tell you what it means," because so much of Italian political life consisted of coded expressions of political views, which could only be deciphered if you had the code book. He and others would sit down and say, "Let me help you decipher this position; why did they do this?" The Social Democrats, who were closer to us, had a

smaller role, but they too had very good contact with me and other major embassies. The Liberal Party then got something like eight per cent of the university-educated vote, though only something like one or two percent of the general vote, but it was as close as you could get to an American conservative party. And they were the heirs of an important older party tradition. I always tried to make sure that they got a portion of my time and energy. Again, people with good education, good background, they presented very well. The system itself may have been more dysfunctional than elsewhere in Europe, but I admired the Italian political class or most of what I saw of it. Gardener, who came out to Rome to have a quiet opening to the Communists in those days of Euro-communism, would meet secretly with a member of the Communist party. Clearly, it seemed to me, he was not much in sympathy with the Christian Democrats, at least from the cultural point of view, but Gardner was an important element in the Italian scene as well. His Italian was good, his wife was of Italian extraction from Venice. The parties at Villa Taverna were very well attended. People talking to him knew they were talking to someone deeply informed and connected.

Q: He was effective.

SCOTT: He was an example of a political appointee who was very effective. He was replaced by Max Rabb, one of the first big New York money-raisers for Reagan. An older man, he would remind you that he had been Secretary to the Cabinet in Eisenhower's administration. He painted himself, and, of course, we painted him, as somebody absolutely plugged into the American leadership. It doesn't matter who your political appointee is. He may be someone whom nobody in the White House would recognize in a police lineup, but as far as the Embassy is concerned, "I wish to assure you, Mr. Foreign Minister, that we are most fortunate to have Joe Smith. Well and favorably known at the highest reaches of …," whatever the reality might be. Max Rabb had some serious claim to entrée, although I don't think he knew very much about Italy and I do not think that, on the whole, we maintained the level of professionalism that had been the case with Gardner.

Q: Did our quiet opening to the communists cease?

SCOTT: I am not sure it was to the same degree, but the big foreign policy issue in Rabb's time was the so-called Euromissile issue. We were trying to get the Italians and the Germans to accept the basing of certain missiles to counteract Warsaw Pact build-up, especially with something called the SS-20 missiles. This was a hard decision for the Italians to make. They ultimately came through, but they came through because, in part, of a calculation of where they stood vis-a-vis America. You don't get what you don't ask for. The Embassy under Rabb asked for this over and over and made the arguments, provided the papers, made the contacts across the board. It was really a major diplomatic effort, and we succeeded.

I do remember, though, I came in one Saturday morning and the DCM called me forward. "Did you just come from meeting with so and so? How did it go?" I gave him a report and he said, "Did you remind him that it is American policy that communists are not to

be admitted to the government of Italy at any level?" I said, "No, I didn't say that. They know that." He said, "I don't care whether they know that or not, Gerald, that is our most important policy here. You will say it at every opportunity, and when you don't say it, say you said it." There's a certain truth in that. The fact that they know it and you know they know it, doesn't mean you shouldn't say it. It's a diplomat's job, often enough, to underline the obvious.

Q: On the missile issue, were the missiles ultimately placed in Italy?

SCOTT: I am not sure ultimately what happened with the missiles, even though a positive decision had been made. There was a certain amount of attention on other issues, there were demonstrations on the street. Italian political life was calming down a bit, but it was still animated.

Q: It's interesting, isn't it, how tensions ratcheted up under the Reagan administration vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the Cold War and many of the conflicts in many places, but that was a prelude ultimately to some rather impressive breakthroughs in the control, at least of nuclear weaponry and in its deployment in Europe and elsewhere. Did you have a sense of those dynamics at play?

SCOTT: To some degree. The Reagan people came in and you felt—I did not find Carter's diplomacy, insofar as I observed it, particularly effective. It was part of the difficulty getting the Somali issue properly attended to in the Carter White House. I wasn't sure that I had a view on the outreach to the communists in Italy. This was a diplomatic and political question which required more thought and information than I could bring to the table. I trusted the people above me at the embassy. If there had been problems, I was pretty sure that Bob Paganelli and the Political Counselor would raise them. Meanwhile, I found dealing with Italian political parties, as I got to know them, fascinating. Again, it's a part of the jigsaw puzzle Washington tended not want to pay much attention to.

Q: Would you say it was extraordinarily complex political culture to inject yourself into, with respect to Italians and their government and, and how one interacts? The embassy itself is a kind of palace there in Rome. One has meetings in very ornate rooms at times and gazes off at the frescoes and the gilt and all that kind of stuff. It's a very different political environment, really, for someone who has not been at that level of European diplomacy in politics before, yet it appears as if you thrived.

SCOTT: Well, I think I did a good job. I think we all did a good job. The political section, the economic section were manned by solid, hard working people. I am amazed when I look at the four of us who were at the core of the political section, how it is that I am the only one who made ambassador. Partly, it's because my real home bureau was AF, which has ambassadorial positions to give out more readily than some of the others. I was certainly not necessarily the best officer of the four. At any rate, coming to the end of my Italian experience, I looked around and somebody said, "Gerald, why don't you ask for the African dossier at the U.S. Mission to the UN? The Africa Bureau will remember

what you did on Somalia, so you should have their support and you'll find the UN an interesting job."

Q: Is Jeane Kirkpatrick up there?

SCOTT: Jeane Kirkpatrick was the Ambassador. Interestingly, Jeane grew up in my hometown of Duncan, Oklahoma. Her family had left before we arrived, but she occasionally found it useful to portray herself as an Oklahoma girl. Insofar as I understood much about it, I thought her positions were solid, and, like many people who hadn't had much experience at a place like the U.N., I tended to admire her approach to issues. I went to New York and it was a fascinating job, but, in some ways, not at all a success. The Mission was badly run. We had five ambassadors there. Four of them were Kirkpatrick's political friends. One was a professional Foreign Service Officer. His job was to deal with management and budget questions at the UN. He told me that it had been made clear to him that his policy remit ran no further. His views were not solicited on any other political questions.

Q: Interesting.

SCOTT: Instead we had Jose Sorzano, who had taught with Jeane in Georgetown, and Charles Lichenstein who made very little effort at outreach across the street. It was he who had remarked at some point that, should the UN sail into the distance, we will stand on the shore waving goodbye. His disdain for the organization to which he was accredited was not concealed and nor was it much with Jeane.

Q: You went into the job with a degree of admiration for what I think the public might've perceived as a tough and straightforward and maybe ideologically clearer approach to the world, but once you got there you had a differing view of the approach to management and the staffing and the worldview that was being articulated and practiced.

SCOTT: It was colored somewhat by an early interaction with Ambassador Kirkpatrick. I had been there for maybe a week or two and I was suddenly called to go across the street to the office of the Secretary-General to be briefed on a question concerning Namibia. The whole Namibia issue was a major part of my dossier. The whole Namibia/South Africa issue occupied a lot of UN political time.

Q: This is another place, if I may, where there are Cuban troops and proxy Cold War conflict.

SCOTT: Cuban troops in Angola, which was part of the whole "constructive engagement" calculation, the solution to the problem of gaining majority rule in southern Africa proposed by Chester Crocker, the AF Assistant Secretary. I thought Crocker's approach was very good, and it proved to be successful. It was not an approach of which, it seemed to me, Kirkpatrick was very supportive. Not that she was against majority rule in South Africa, but the sort of constant dialogue with the more radical African

ambassadors, for example, which Crocker undertook was not her way. I found that her approach was simple-minded and involved unhelpful rhetoric.

At any rate, I'd been called over to be briefed on something concerning Namibia, a conversation between the Secretary-General and the South African Ambassador. The latter had noted that South Africa was prepared, as we all quietly understood, to withdraw from South-West Africa (later Namibia) when the Cuban troops were withdrawn from Angola. But the South African Ambassador went on to say that it was not necessary that all the Cuban troops go before the South Africans agreed to make some adjustments, at least. There could be a more gradual process. The Secretary-General's office wanted to know, since this seemed to be a quasi-softening of the South African position, if this was accurate, if this conversation represented what we understood to be an evolution in South African thought. I was there; I had been called in with my British and my French colleagues to hear this report. (My French colleague, Jean-David Levitte, later turned out to be a diplomatic counselor to the president of France, Ambassador to Washington, French ambassador in New York. Roderic Lyne—Sir Roderic Lyne—later became Her Majesty's Ambassador to Moscow. I ended up as an Ambassador to the Gambia. Among other things, the quality of the level of diplomacy that other people commit to their missions in New York is something to be noted.) I went back to the Mission to write a cable reporting this exchange, and the Political Counselor, Warren Clark said, "You'd better go and show this to Ambassador Kirkpatrick. She will want to see it before it goes out." When Kirkpatrick read the cable, her automatic reaction was that it reported a softening of the anti-communist line; somebody was giving something away. So she telephoned the South Africa ambassador. She did not want to say, "I have a report of your conversation," so she indulged in variations on the theme of "Could there have been some modification of positions on the Cuban issue of which I should be aware?" But the South African ambassador, who did not want to end up in a confrontation with Kirkpatrick, reassured her. "No, no, whatever you've heard, Jeane, there's nothing to that." Kirkpatrick then turned and threw the cable across the desk at me, and told me that I was incompetent, that my predecessor would never have written up something like that, and not to darken her door again with so badly written a report.

Q: That's extraordinary.

SCOTT: I went back and I stuck the cable at the back of a file drawer. I could have turned to her and said, "I may not be a skilled diplomat, but I can take dictation, which is essentially what this cable is." But I didn't say that. I went back to my office, and about two weeks later, Asst. Secretary Crocker came up to brief the Secretary-General as he did periodically. I said, "Mr. Crocker, I wrote a cable on South-West Africa two weeks ago, but it didn't get out." I showed it to him. He said, "Let me take care of this. Jeane isn't always necessarily up to date on everything." Whether he ever spoke to her, I do not know. She never gave any indication that her view had been corrected.

Q: Of course, much of his major preoccupation at that time was securing the withdrawal of Cuban troops from forces from Angola and securing the independence of Namibia. He

had no higher priority. Whatever one thinks of him at the time or retrospectively, he worked very hard.

SCOTT: I think his was a successful policy and I was pleased to have been a very minor part of it. I was on the phone daily, usually with Peter Eicher, Nancy Ely, or others in IO (Bureau of International Organization Affairs) who were working closely with Crocker, but there was a big disconnect between what I was doing and what Kirkpatrick and her staff would do because they had no serious contact with the people at my level. They were concentrated almost entirely on the Security Council, which is a reality at USUN. Of course, periodically an issue would come up dealing with Africa. I remember in one case—I've forgotten the details entirely—but it was a big Security Council issue. I had hardly been involved at all except for writing a briefing paper, and my British colleague said, "Gerald, would you like to know your government's position?" He knew enough of how our Mission was run to suspect that people at my level might have been kept entirely in the dark, so he kindly told me what our position was on this issue.

Q: This is not the way things are supposed to work, is it? I do want to just circle back to this message from the South African Ambassador and was it your sense that he was delivering a message at the time about an openness to phased withdrawal of Cuban troops in exchange for some sort of phased—

SCOTT: He must have been because in essence, that's what Crocker told me.

Q: He was doing so under instruction and then the result of the Kirkpatrick—at least, the immediate implication of her call to that person was to push them back, from what was, in global terms, a promising evolution of their position. That's quite a story, Gerald.

SCOTT: Well, I found that at the UN, watching our role there was often discouraging. I remember that part of what I was involved in, of course, was managing the votes on these southern African issues in the General Assembly. In almost every case, we expected to lose because many were all too happy to join in the criticism of the United States and our allies, the thesis being that South Africa could not maintain its minority white rule if the United States were clearly opposed. As I would occasionally say to an African diplomat, "Well, can we tell you what to do?" "Oh, certainly not." "But why do you think we can tell the South Africans what to do?" "That's different." "How is it different?" Then the answer would become less clear.

And there were bureaucracies in the UN system dedicated to generating anti-Western, anti-American resolutions. One chief one was the Special Committee Against Apartheid. I had no direct contact with these, but they would produce documents and resolutions, year after year. I would see the resolutions appear in the General Assembly. I remember coming back from the GA hall after we had lost the vote on one of these texts, as I expected we would, but we had lost it by a larger margin than I had thought likely. A colleague came back and said, "Can I just relate to you, Gerald, a conversation. Somebody stopped me and said, 'We were going to abstain on that particular resolution on South Africa, but Jeane was in your chair. We just can't resist voting against Jeane.'"

A lot of the effectiveness of diplomacy in a place like that is establishing a sympathetic relationship with your fellow diplomats. A country may have little margin on an issue, but if it's Permanent Representative is approached by you and he has reason to do you a favor because you have been helpful to him or he values the relationship, maybe he can go back to his Foreign Ministry and have the votes shifted. Maybe he has the power to make the decision on his own. Maybe he can just abstain or be absent for a cup of coffee, or tell you of the details of the dynamic in his regional group. There are various ways in which countries can be helpful in both very apparent and in very minor ways, but they matter in the context of these various issues. Kirkpatrick was a negative force and her senior staff were negative forces. They were widely disliked. This is unnecessary.

Q: We were mentioning that George Bush had been ambassador to the United Nations under President Nixon, and in an interview describing his tenure, he talked about the importance of the personal relationships with, among other people, African ambassadors. He talked about visiting the Burundian ambassador and he certainly grasped the point that the personal relationships and the courtesies yielded dividends in the end, sometimes incremental and marginal, but in the end it all mattered. Whether they liked you or not, whether you were a friendly voice. The skill may have eluded Ambassador Kirkpatrick, but in your case you were learning the ropes.

SCOTT: One thing that's changed, and I noticed it when I went back to my post in a retirement capacity, is cultivation of contacts socially at the working level. I would take somebody to lunch once or twice a month. Perhaps an African delegate, perhaps someone from a European mission working on African issues, and establish a little relationship, talk about the issues, how's the family doing, are you happy with the schools? Whatever it might be, and there was some money available for that. The middle-level diplomats don't do that so much anymore at USUN. I don't know why. I asked several times, "Is there money?" Yes. But that practice seems to have disappeared from the routine of the middle-level diplomats there.

Q: Wow. That's too bad.

SCOTT: Then in Jeane Kirkpatrick's last six months, she spent all the money on herself. I think the last quarter's representation allowance was, I learned, $13,000, $12,000 of which was spent by Jeane. We all found ourselves suddenly in the hole. Our receipts were being returned without being reimbursed and I was significantly out of pocket. Happily, she was succeeded by General Vernon Walters. It was an entirely different example of diplomacy.

Q: He came in near the end of your time.

SCOTT: Yes. Walters said, "Well, everybody will be taking me out to lunch at the beginning; use all that money and pay off these back claims." (Richard Holbrooke, I learned, did the same thing as Jeane; only he, he insisted, had serious representational responsibilities.)

One interesting story: it was, I think, the Special Committee Against Apartheid which decided to hold a series of meetings in the United States and in Canada to support anti-apartheid activists. I was standing beside a potted palm over in the Secretariat one day and I heard somebody whisper to me. I turned around and saw this chap behind the potted palm. It turned out that he was in a position to know what was going on in that Committee; he said, "I need to talk to you, but not here." We arranged to have lunch uptown. He said, "Look, let me tell you, the Special Committee is stuffed with KGB people." He said that the final report on these scheduled meetings had already been written; the Bulgarians had written it. He said that these meetings scheduled to be held across the country (and one meeting planned in Canada to provide some sort of pretended balance to the meetings in the US) were simply a means to invigorate leftist opposition to the Reagan administration. It might not amount to anything, but the people who wanted to be seen as being helpful to the other side were going to make their little contribution, and you should be aware of this." (Early example of Russian (or Soviet) interference in our elections!) I said, "My heavens!" and I went back and wrote up a report to Washington. I sent it off, to no reaction in Washington or from the USUN front office. But then he contacted me again since there had been no US reaction, and I sent another report. Finally, thanks to the information provided, we said that if the Special Committee wanted to hold meetings objecting to apartheid, they could do so on UN territory, but they could not hold them in Detroit and Ottawa. The result was a single meeting in New York. I and my Canadian counterpart attended, sitting over at the side, and there was a morning of speeches, criticizing the US administration. All these people said "You're supporting white supremacy and South Africa." And many of the serious elements of the left wing of the Democratic Party were there. Senator Kennedy was there, among others. I don't know whether they were aware of the KGB connection, but, whether they were briefed or not, they showed up, because that was part of, presumably, a constituency to which they desired to be seen to be attentive.

Q. Well, it was also the issue on which the Reagan administration ultimately lost a great deal of popular support in general, a lot of popular opposition and had legislation forcing its hand passed by our Republican Senate. Very interesting days on that score. Perhaps we might take a break now. (Break)

Q: Thank you for a beautiful lunch, Gerald. We were discussing your time at the UN as a political officer in the Reagan administration under Jeane Kirkpatrick, then Vernon Walters came at the end of your tenure.

SCOTT: Turning again to my service at USUN: While I did not think at all highly of Ambassador Kirkpatrick's diplomatic skills, there were times when her outspoken forcefulness vis-à-vis particularly the Soviet Union and communist powers in general was seen, especially by some Third World member states who felt themselves otherwise distinctly not part of the non-aligned movement consensus, as heartening. I think it is important to keep that in mind.

The team that she brought in as diplomats were mostly inept, with one exception. Ambassador Richard Schifter. He was good at lobbying, particularly on issues affecting

Israel to which he was especially committed. He had a personality which lent itself to comfortable exchanges with other ambassadors. He was sensitive to the ways one makes an argument depending on one's audience. He once said to me that we in the First World make lists and keep appointments, which has a considerable amount of truth to it, and he was very good at keeping lists. When he had us run a vote tally, he had it checked and double-checked and, although not a professional, he was a useful element at the U.S. mission under Kirkpatrick's leadership.

Final story. As I was about to leave New York, Ambassador Walters had just come on board. He'd been there perhaps two weeks. One of the final gestures by Ambassador Kirkpatrick was an attempt to insert into a permanent senior position one of her protegés, a man whose, shall I say, inaccuracy of curriculum vitae, was common gossip in the halls of the State Department, but that made little difference to Ambassador Kirkpatrick, who saw him as a faithful acolyte, and it looked as if he was practically guaranteed to be given that position to the detriment of a long-standing and well-respected civil servant at USUN. It bothered me, so I went to Vernon Walters in my last week there and introduced myself. I said, "You don't know me," but I explained who I was. I said, "There is a story here of which you should be aware." I told him what I knew, and he seemed not to have heard of it before. He thanked me. "You should know that I have been going around the world for a considerable time on behalf of this administration meeting with senior figures and I can leave them very comfortable with the praise that I give them or I can stick in the knife and they will never feel the blade." It was one of his techniques, that flattery was an important element of successful diplomacy. He said he once ran into somebody who said, "Well, people can't successfully flatter me!" To which Ambassador Walters said, "Then you've never been flattered by an expert." (Laugh)

Q: That's good. With Jeane Kirkpatrick, of course, do you recall the Falklands crisis? Were you paying attention to that?

SCOTT: Yes, I was. I recall it very well, but it occurred before I went to New York. I was still in Rome. Of course, she had been seen to back the Argentines, and it struck me, as I think it struck everybody, as an extraordinarily inept piece of diplomatic practice to find oneself on that side of that particular fence, given our relationship with the UK. Then other, wiser heads prevailed, and her position was not accepted by the Administration.

Q: It was also a time, wasn't it? Less than a decade from the fall of the Berlin Wall, close to five or six years before that occurred. By some optics, the communist world seemed ascendant and whether in Nicaragua, the Horn of Africa, southwest Africa or wherever one turned. She, of course, set out a very strong sort of trenchant opposition to that.

SCOTT: I think her basic analysis, the one that outlined her position, was an article in Commentary Magazine, which was called "Dictatorships and Double Standards." She had made the point that there are dictatorships or otherwise unattractive regimes and, often enough, national interests oblige that one swallow hard and accept cooperation with governments whose practices are distinctly below the standard that one should like to see maintained. Certainly, those of us who work as diplomats, not least in Africa, are familiar

with that reality, and it doesn't really need much explanation. But as obvious as this may be to those of us at State, she was making the point at a time when such statements in large parts of her intellectual world were not welcomed. In that sense, she was a breath of fresh air and that's part of what incited my initial admiration for her. The trouble was that she could not easily step out of that academic frame and into a diplomatic frame. I think she really believed that bright people were academics and less bright people were not — and diplomats were distinctly among the less bright.

One of the people that she brought to work for her as an ambassador was Alan Keyes. Alan had been a junior Foreign Service Officer; he was, I think, desk officer for Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho in the Africa Bureau, which is not, shall I say, one of the more demanding desk officer positions, but he was called to be one of Kirkpatrick's ambassadors in New York. Why was this? Well, I found myself at a 4th of July reception and there was a chap standing behind me in the buffet line, so like a good diplomat I turned around and stuck out my hand and introduced myself. It turned out to be Irving Kristol and his wife, Gertrude Himmelfarb. I said, "Mr. Kristol, I am honored to meet you. I read so much of what you have written." He sort of brushed that away and said, looking out over a crowd of three or four hundred people, "I think I'm the only friend Jeane invited here this evening." I did not contradict him; at which point Mrs. Kristol spoke. She said, "Oh, Mr. Scott, do you know Alan Keyes?" I said, "Why, yes, I do." She said, "He was our son's roommate at Harvard, don't you know." Which, I said to myself, explained his appointment here. She then went on to say, "He's quite bright, but I sometimes wonder if his personal style is quite fitted to diplomacy." At which point Irving Kristol said, "Don't worry about that. Alan is too smart to be a diplomat. There are better things in store for Alan." I found this comment so arresting that I left the line, went down to my desk two floors below, and wrote it up in a personal memcon to my file. I did not want that particular example of a perception of diplomacy to escape my mind. But Mrs. Kristol had put her finger on one of the problems with Alan Keyes. Alan treated diplomacy, in great part, as an excuse for a version of a two a.m. college sophomore bull session. He had a number of ideas, many of which, I think, were perhaps roughly correct (at least, in the appropriate context), but he never stopped to listen to anyone else. He would simply assert his views and if you had not brought yourself immediately to agreement, it was because you hadn't heard enough and he would assert them again. I remember being queried by Martti Ahtisaari, who was a senior advisor to the Secretary General and later president of Finland. He said, "Why is it that Ambassador Keyes speaks without notes? Does Washington not think his speeches serious enough to have drafted them in Washington and send him the text?" But that was not the way her trusted subordinates worked under Kirkpatrick. Their speeches on any number of subjects were often enough, ex tempore. And Ahtisaari was right to imply that this practice was to some degree a sign of disdain for the UN. And Alan had a very negative effect on most of the people with whom he interacted, and since he was generally responsible for African affairs, his unpopularity affected me directly. Finally, my political counselor, Warren Clark said, "We ought to address this. Why don't we give a little informal dinner party? Gerald, pick four or five African ambassadors who you think would be susceptible to an informal approach, and we'll let them get to know Alan in a more convivial setting." We gave the little dinner party in an apartment and Alan came and the ambassadors came.

My boss's plot was in effect for all of 10 minutes, then the rest of the time was essentially spent by Alan telling everybody else what to think. It was, as a bridge-building convivial exercise, a complete failure.

Q: It's remarkable how important the personal relationship is. It's remarkable how important listening is to building a personal relationship in countless contexts and certainly in diplomacy. There you are at the UN. You'd been close to some very important issues at a number of junctures in your career now, and you've described a couple of those. Then, Gerald, you move on from the center of a lot of action to Swaziland, a dagger pointed at the heart of what? Pietermaritzburg?

SCOTT: Something like that. But I was fortunate. Swaziland for me was a good posting because I had an outstanding ambassador to work for, Harvey Nelson, who was a decent man, a gentleman, professional, and competent — four distinct characteristics. He was looking for a DCM. His wife had died not too long before. He had been put down for Swaziland. I'm told that he wasn't sure after his wife's death that he wanted to take it up, but he ended up doing so. I think he wanted Peter Eicker to be his DCM, who for some reason didn't want it, but suggested that maybe Harvey Nelson should look at this unknown figure in New York. Ambassador Nelson telephoned to discuss the possibility. "I need to meet you, and I want to meet your wife. I realized meeting wives is no longer something that is supposed to be done, but I'm a widower and your wife will be the senior woman of the embassy. I should like to meet her." I said that my wife's father had been a colonel in the Royal Marines and, at one point, ADC to the Queen. "Frances understands the importance of the role, and she would be happy to meet you." Harvey Nelson came up to New York, and we went to lunch, and at the end of the lunch he said, "Gerald, I think I'd like you to be my DCM." I said, "Why, sir, I'd be very happy to accept." "Shall we celebrate with a glass of champagne?" "Why yes, though I really don't like champagne." "Well," he said, "neither do I." So a second area of agreement was established. We went from New York to Swaziland.

It's a tiny country ruled by a traditional royal family. It was, in those days, a place where we had a fairly large Mission because we would manage much of the aid program for South Africa out of Swaziland . We had Black officers and biracial couples, especially in USAID, and they were not comfortable living in South Africa under apartheid, so they would live in Swaziland. It wasn't the importance of Swaziland that caused us to have the Mission we had, it was the relationship with South Africa.

Q: There were children of prominent South African revolutionaries and dissidents, including children of Nelson Mandela, who went to school in Swazi. That's right.

SCOTT: There was a very good school called Waterford, part of a chain of schools whose patron was Prince Charles's great uncle —he was blown up by the IRA — Lord Mountbatten. In fact, Charles came out once for a Waterford function. Swaziland had a small diplomatic community. The Israelis, Republic of China, Brits, ourselves, and the South Africans under the rubric of a trade mission. The UN Resident Representative and

his wife, English and with impressive Oxford degrees, became especially close friends. There was not a lot to do in Swaziland, but it was a very pleasant place to live.

Q: Let's give Swaziland its due for a moment. It had King Sobhuza, who had ruled for many decades and passed away at around 80, just before you got there. Swaziland is a real monarchy, which is not a joke. Southern Africa has a strong tradition of chieftainship and monarchy that is often not talked about, but which has relevance, I would argue, until the present day. The king's mother had a special role; she was—

SCOTT: Indlovukazi, the Great She-Elephant, was the usual translation.

Q: Yes. That person was powerful in the kingdom. Ultimately, Gerald, if I followed it correctly, by the time you got to Swaziland, the present king had just been installed. Is that correct?

SCOTT: Not quite. The present king was at boarding school in the UK, at Sherborne. He had been sent off with a couple of minders, and he wasn't boarding with the other boys, so how much he got from the British boarding school experience was not entirely clear. In the Swazi system, of all the king's sons, it is a royal council of sorts which chooses the one to succeed. I think this is based on bloodlines and the equivalent of astrological calculations, as is much else. Meanwhile, in theory, the country is ruled by the Queen Mother. Now, when you become a monarch in Swaziland, your mother becomes the Queen Mother. You are the Lion and she is the She-Elephant. There are mystic rites that each performs that cause the rain to fall and crops to grow and so on. When one's mother dies, then one appoints another Queen Mother from one's harem. Sobhuza had chosen as his last Queen Mother a woman who had been a Catholic nun and who had left the convent because she needed to take care of her parents, but her virtue and good sense had drawn the king's attention and the story as we had it was that she had refused. She was a Christian and she could not enter into a polygamous marriage. We were told that Sobhuza said, "Well, that's all very well. I understand it will not be a marriage in that sense, but I would like to make you Queen Mother." She agreed. Now, how she reconciled Christianity or Catholicism with the traditional pagan rites, I do not know. At any rate, she was the Chief of State. Now, when Mswati was chosen—and that was not the name he carried at that point, I have forgotten what it was—and sent off to school, his mother was Queen Mother in-waiting and would have replaced Dzeliwe, the last Queen Mother of Sobhuza, upon Mswati's enthronement, but there was a palace coup by some corrupt senior figures in the royal family who wanted Mswati's mother installed quickly because that would facilitate their own control of various levels of power and money. So Dzeliwe was pushed aside and Mswati's mother was installed as Queen Mother. I remember going with Ambassador Nelson to present credentials to this woman. She was dressed in cowskins and was standing there and the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office in striped trousers was crouched at her feet and we were there and in striped trousers. Ambassador Nelson made his speech and presented his credentials, which were accepted by the Queen Mother and handed to the Permanent Secretary. The Queen Mother then spoke and the Permanent Secretary translated. We backed out and went our ways.

It was almost impossible to penetrate the machinations of the Swazi court. There were ministers of health, education, foreign affairs, et cetera, and they were all Swazis who had western educations. Some of them, one got to know fairly well and respected, but much of the real power was at the Royal Kraal, as it was called. What went on there, one hardly knew.

Then, after a considerable period of time, it must have been maybe a year and a half, it appeared that the Queen Mother had been convinced to revolt against the people who had installed her early. These people had formed a ruling group called Liqoqo. She reportedly, on the advice of a dissident prince or two—

Q: There were many princes.

SCOTT: Spent some considerable time reciting the Psalms, then signed a decree dismissing key elements of this cabal. Such was the power of the monarchy that they left. It's rather like the King of Italy dismissing Mussolini. I mean, they left and a new day dawned.

Q: King Subhoza had died, I just saw, in 1982. You got to Swaziland in 1985.

SCOTT: Yes, that's right. The young prince was brought back shortly thereafter from England and I have forgotten what age he was supposed to be before he assumed power. He might have been a little young, but one just overlooked that. There was an elaborate coronation, speaking figuratively—there was no Swazi crown—and an international gathering. The President had chosen Maureen Reagan as his representative to this. Secret Service people came out ahead of time.

You will recall that when the Secret Service come to advance a visit, the unspoken message is, "You've got a problem, and we're it." In this case, the unspoken message was, "We've got a problem, and she's it." On the appointed day the Ambassador and the Prime Minister and I were at the airport, standing at the foot of the gangway, and the cars were lined up with Maureen Reagan to be in the first car with a driver and a designated Swazi sitting beside the driver. There may have been somebody in the back seat with Maureen, perhaps the Prime Minister. Then somebody came down the gangway to tell us that Mrs. Reagan didn't want that configuration. If she couldn't have her desired configuration, she would fly away. Perhaps one should have seized that opportunity immediately, but one did not.

Q: (Laugh) Was this delivered to you by a faithful staff person?

SCOTT: Indeed. At any rate, we all conferred, and the Ambassador and the Prime Minister agreed that whatever the configuration that Mrs. Reagan wanted would be the configuration that would obtain, so off she went.

There were a couple of things. First of all, she had come with some diplomatic messages to give some substance to her visit. There was a message to the president of Mozambique

who was there, and I think another message to be delivered to another senior figure, and a message to be delivered to Pieter Botha, the South African Foreign Secretary. She also wanted to encourage female empowerment, so we were told to invite some senior Swazi women to hear Maureen Reagan talk about female empowerment. They wanted Swazi female ministers, but there were none, so we invited ministers' wives. One of the problems with that was that Swazi ceremonies like this are a bit like a family picnic. Everybody has certain assigned tasks, stuff the deviled eggs or whatever it may be, and these women were fully occupied. It was not at all clear that they wanted to come up to the Residence and be lectured on the importance of female empowerment, but they were prevailed upon to do so. Mrs. Reagan accomplished that mission. Then at another ceremony, she went around and was delivering her messages. And she got to Pieter Botha, not a man known for diplo-speak. I recall her message was something to the effect that "my father is doing his best to be helpful in these very difficult circumstances in which South Africa finds herself. It would be to your advantage if you were to make his efforts easier by moderating some of the actions that you take towards your own domestic population." At which point, Pieter Botha, being Pieter Botha, turned on her and shook his finger in her face and said that he didn't need any lectures from anybody about what should be done in South Africa.

I think there were three functions that remained. One was an immense march-past in the stadium. One was the proper royal ceremony at the Royal Kraal. The final function was a dinner at the best hotel in town hosted by the Swazi government. We had been told that Maureen Reagan's temper was short, and her capacity for standing around in boring circumstances was not extensive. Therefore, we had decided that we would advise her that she did not need to go to the ceremony at the Royal Kraal because in our experience royal ceremonies never started on time, could be immensely boring as you stood on the fringe, and endless, so we explained that the Ambassador could represent her at that. First of all, we had the march-past in the stadium and she was taken to her seat by some senior protocol figure, who said that he would see her later at the Royal Kraal. She said, "No, the Ambassador will be at the Royal Kraal." He said, "Oh, we thought you were the head of delegation. I didn't realize it was Ambassador Nelson." This lit fire to all her suspicions about being managed by the State Department, and the reaction was blunt and unpleasant. It was she who went to the Royal Kraal, and for the first and only time in living memory, the ceremony started on time and ended quickly, so her suspicions were fully confirmed. She came back and was not in a good humor.

At that point she decided that she would not stay for the formal dinner. She would fly back home early. But since the plane had to fly in to pick her up and then return to South Africa to refuel, she would invite Pieter Botha to come to the plane for a drink while in Johannesburg. Now, why she thought the foreign minister would want to join her for a drink, as if he were that short of Scotch at 11:30 at night, is not clear to me, but that was the invitation that was conveyed. Pieter Botha decided to trump her ace. He said, "No, no, Mrs. Reagan, I cannot think of coming out to the airport to have a drink with you. I will instead lay on a late evening buffet of South African hospitality for you and your entire delegation at the airport." Well, Maureen, who had envisioned herself as being hostess and queen bee on board the airplane, suddenly discovered that she was the guest at

somebody else's party. She decided to cancel the whole thing. I was told to go to the South Africans and tell them that she could not accept the invitation; her schedule did not permit. I said to the person who had delivered her message to me, “Do I understand this right? Ms. Reagan has issued an invitation, the South Africans have quasi-accepted it, and now she's backing out of what in essence is her own invitation?” The man said, “Well, yes, maybe this is a bit questionable. Let me go and double check.” Fifteen minutes later, Maureen came charging down the hall and I received the blunt expression of “You people are supposed to know how to take orders when they are given. When I have sent a message for you, in this case, to decline the invitation of the South African Foreign Minister, I expect it to be done.”

Q: (Laugh) I hope you were properly chastened.

SCOTT: I was properly chastened; somebody else went off to convey the message to the South Africans. I was sitting disconsolately in the hotel lobby and one of her senior figures came by and saw me there, patted me on the shoulder and said, “Buck up. We've all been through this with her.” I said, “Well, it almost makes me regret voting for her father.” He said, “Oh, never mind that. He's a real gentleman.” So she flew away. The Brits had almost as much fun with Princess Michael of Kent, but we concluded that our experience was the more demanding of the two.

Q: Princess Michael of Kent, yes indeed. Speak another minute, if you don't mind, about Ambassador Nelson. He was a pro, wasn't he?

SCOTT: He was very much a professional. He was a man whose friendship I continue to treasure. He taught me a great deal. We did our best to make sure that we spoke with one voice, which was easy, in his case. An element in this entire mix was the secretary, a woman named Mary Grover, the best secretary I have ever seen. She was so very good. We had a good AID team, the director, Robert Huesmann, and his deputy, Harry Johnson. Sandra Smith was an excellent administrative officer. Lee Brudvig was the consular officer; in a better system he would certainly have made ambassador.

One important perception, though, about Swaziland — and Africa — that I gained almost by happenstance—I had gone to a Red Cross meeting that was to be addressed by a senior Swazi figure whom we did not know. I wanted the excuse to give him my card and suggest we get together later. There was a nurse present to whom I gave a lift back to town. It turned out that she'd just come from a year or two at Johns Hopkins for an advanced nursing qualification. To make conversation, I said, “What would you do if you could do one thing to bring Swaziland’s development forward?" She said, “I would eliminate the belief that nobody dies by accident.” I said, “What are you talking about?” “Don't you know,” she said, “If you drive off this road and kill us both, it's not because you're a bad driver, it's because you were bewitched. If I give the wrong medicine to a patient, it's not because I'm an incompetent nurse, it's because I was bewitched. If you were 99 years old and you died, it's not because the time has come to die, it's because you were bewitched. Nobody in this culture dies by accident.” I discovered that nobody talks about this sort of thing, at least to foreigners. But I have discretely talked to missionaries.

Some of the new ones aren't aware of it. Some of the older ones say, "Yes, this is pervasive in Bantu culture." I then found an anthropological study of Swazi customs written by a scholar who was very close to King Sobhuza. It was not easy to come by, nor are the Swazis selling it in the local bookstore, but it was a discussion of the practices of the magical side of the Swazi court. They are distinctly shocking. It varies, clearly, from tribe to tribe and place to place, but this is an element of much African culture that is real to many Africans and under-appreciated in its importance. I sometimes tell the missionaries that they are probably doing more for development than USAID because they are trying to change the mental maps of people. There's perhaps something also to be said for Islam in that Islam takes these mental maps and changes them into something that is closer to our understanding of the way things really work.

Q: It permits science and rationality.

SCOTT: It permits science and rationality to have a more salient profile.

Q: These were also the years of high apartheid. In many ways, a climax of domestic repression and the attempt to keep the lid on and keep that system in place. You mentioned Pieter Botha going head-to-head with Maureen Reagan over what must've been a fairly mild set of admonitions. What were the repercussions in Swaziland of the turmoil across the border?

SCOTT: Very little that we could see. The Swazis were remarkably inward-looking. There was a real effort by the royals to make that so—"We're all proud to be Swazi, and the center of our culture is not modern government and all that nasty stuff, elections. Who wants that when you can have a proper monarch?" The Swazis were closely connected to the Zulus, so when the Swazis were doing anything on the royal side, the Zulus would send a delegation. The proper Zulu culture is very much akin to the Swazis in that it was inward-looking and not entirely in favor of much of the African National Congress-driven leadership of developments in South Africa.

We would go over to South Africa from time to time to go shopping, to have dinner with a colleague. It was amazing how at all South African dinner parties we attended everybody swerved around to "the issue." Everybody agreed that something had to be done and we really had to move forward. Just how we were going to move forward wasn't clear, but we needed to move forward. I never found a single South African in the sort of circles that I moved in that would admit to being supportive of the continuation of apartheid. The problem was, how do you escape from this circumstance? Wolf by the ears. I got a little tired of drilling for something else to talk about. In my experience there wasn't much else to talk about when in such a setting in South Africa, but in Swaziland, it wasn't much talked about at all. Politics were pretty off-limits since it was the domain of the royals, so there were other things—the crops, have you seen our new litter of puppies?

Q: How'd you like being DCM?

SCOTT: Well, I was happy to take the opportunity because I think everybody believes, rightly, that being a DCM is an important step in the diplomatic career. I liked working for Ambassador Nelson. He and I had some rather old-fashioned views. There was a big effort to establish a CLO (Community Liaison Office Coordinator). Neither he nor I understood why we needed a CLO. All those things were done by the wives, who would volunteer to do it. Why pay somebody when we had such good volunteers. There were surely wives who felt that the opportunity to pitch in for the community was a good thing. But eventually we gave way and established a CLO. Sure enough, the wives quit volunteering and the CLO did it all, which may be the way things should work in our happily enlightened age.

One salient memory: the British had a permanent cultural presence there, a couple with theatrical background they had sent out, and their major project for one year was a production of Twelfth Night ,which was the O-level text that the students were expected to study to receive the equivalent of a high school certificate. I had been roped in to take part in one or two of their minor efforts, and the British director asked me to play Malvolio. It was not a very flattering role to play, but I was tempted. I told Ambassador Nelson, "If I agree, much of my time over the next two weeks is going to be devoted to the theatre." He said, "Well, do it. It will be interesting and fun. The Embassy will continue without you; fret not. I'm perfectly capable of working with Mary Grover to do your job." We put on three performances. Lots of Swazi kids came; they had been studying Shakespeare by the light of coal oil lamps in their thatched-roof homes. I would go walk down the street later and these boys would cry, "We know you! We know you! You're Malvolio!"

Q: (Laugh). You were a minor celebrity for a period in Swaziland.

SCOTT: In Mbabane, I was a minor celebrity.

Q: Well done. You move on from there, Gerald, to be a political counselor in Kinshasa. There are some good figures. Did Bill Harrop know you were coming?

SCOTT: He recruited me. I had received a telephone call from a friend who said, "Gerald, would you like to go back to Rome and be the number two at the Embassy to the Holy See?" and since I could imagine few things more delightful than going back to Rome, I said, "Absolutely." I was thrilled. They said, "It's a political appointee who is going out. We have to give him three names, but your name will have the check mark, especially since you've got good Italian." Then, walking down the hall at State, I ran into Ambassador William Harrop, whom I had known when I was the Somalia desk officer and he had been one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries in the AF Bureau, and the one responsible for Somali questions. I certainly remember going in to see him on various Saturday mornings to clarify points. Ambassador Harrop asked, "Gerald, what are you up to?" I said, "Well, I think I'm going to Rome to be number two at the Holy See." He said, "Oh, wonderful job, you'll love it … and you'll never get promoted. That job is its own reward. Come and work for me." I said, "Where are you?" He said, "Zaire." I took a deep breath and said, "Well, Ambassador, should the Holy See not come through, nothing

would please me more." As it turned out, the man going out to be our ambassador was a political appointee who saw that I had worked for Jeane Kirkpatrick. I presume he called Jeane up and said, "What do you think of Gerald Scott?" And I presume Jeane searched her memory, came up with my face and name, and that ended my opportunity to go to Rome. I went to Kinshasa instead. It was a great career advantage. I have to say that the man who actually took my job in Rome was promoted into the Senior Foreign Service and did make ambassador. Harrop was, in that particular circumstance, not entirely correct, but I went to Kinshasa and it was a very good Embassy. It was one of the biggest embassies in the world because our support for Angola was being run out of Kinshasa and that was a major CIA effort.

Q: Was Hank Cohen—

SCOTT: Assistant Secretary, at one point later in that period, but not during all of it. When I arrived, there was not a lot for the political section to do because Mobutu was fully in charge. There were few signs of an effective opposition. The bureaucracy had clear instructions to limit contact with US diplomats, in part perhaps because Mobutu suspected that the State Department was infected by an excessive interest in issues like human rights and did not want to hear about that any more than he had to. The political section would write bio reports on new deputy ministers, pull from the press whatever we could, made démarches with the Foreign Ministry, watched the evening news, report what we could find out to report, which wasn't a great deal. We had contacts with some Zairian figures in whom we sensed some independence and political capacity, and who would lament certain difficulties with the Mobutu regime, but who would never present themselves as outright opponents. The Economic section was not as limited as we, and had some impressive contacts, but their exchanges were not politically informative.

Q: Meanwhile, we had an agenda as a country that included a massive CIA operation and support for elements in Angola. Again, part of this anti-communist worldview crusade. Some inconsistencies there. How did you—

SCOTT: One's professional life has its complications. The one thing that Harrop said was that, should one be asked whether we as a mission were supporting elements in Angola—

Q: Jonas Savimbi.

SCOTT: Your reply was as follows, "President Mobutu has said that there is no U.S. support for Jonas Savimbi coming out of Zaire and I am certainly not in a position to contradict anything that President Mobutu may have said on the subject," and that's all you are to say.

Q: There was the formula.

SCOTT: That was the formula. Harrop had a good DCM in Mark Baas, who went on to be Ambassador to Ethiopia. I had a good political section. The economic counselor was,

at the end of Harrop's time, Ralph Bressler. James Hogan was PAO (public affairs officer) at one point. I thought it was a good team.

Q: Another thing that happened, of course, was that George Bush was elected, became the successor to Ronald Reagan and president of the United States. Jim Baker was Secretary of State and the Berlin Wall fell. The Cold War paradigm of our policy in many places began to erode and with it came change—which was not immediate by any means—but a change in our attitude towards Angola and its problems and, to some extent, change in our attitude towards friendly old African dictators with whom we had done solid business for many years. How did you perceive that?

SCOTT: There were a number of interesting events. First of all, I remember being invited, the first such invitation I'd ever received, to the Soviet embassy. I thought, "How came I to have this invitation?" Unhappily, it was a night of a torrential downpour and I was caught in a traffic jam with all this rain coming down and I was about 20 minutes late. It turned out that, unbeknownst to me, I was the guest of honor. Everybody was standing around waiting for our arrival. The Russian ambassador was very polite. We were taken into the Residence to watch a Russian film about some dance troupe, and they had a buffet laid out. I was astonished, after all these years in diplomacy, suddenly to find myself as a special guest at the Soviet Embassy. That was one sign that things were softening.

Meanwhile, things began to change in Kinshasa. I had one very well placed contact, someone closely related both to a senior politician and to a senior churchman. We monitored the Church as closely as we could, and this contact was a good source of commentary on the Bishop's Conference, which would occasionally issue statements that could be seen to be somewhat less than a hundred percent supportive of the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution, the one political party that Mobutu had created as one of the main instruments of his rule. The MPR had school branches, labor union branches; they were everywhere and Zairians were all members from birth to death of the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution. When I met the contact, we would talk about lots of things, but we would never address upper-level Zairian politics directly. Then one day we were having lunch, and at the end of the lunch he said to me, "Let's go talk on the sidewalk." He turned to me and said, "Gerald, he's got to go." I said, "What?" He said, "He's got to go. He's ruining the country." I said, "I don't know who you're talking about." He said, "I'm talking about Mobutu. He's got to go." I went back and reported this conversation to Bill Harrop, whose response to me was, "Gerald, I thought your French was better than that. No Zairian would dare say that to you." That was the first crack that I perceived in the system.

Second crack. Mobutu cultivated special relations with the Communist Party of Romania. You will recall that Ceaușescu had deviated somewhat from the Moscow line and the USG was cultivating this with some effort in the hope of increasing the deviation. Mobutu decided that the MPR, which was "neither to the right, nor to the left, nor even in the center," should be seen to have a relationship with Ceausescu's party (also, somehow, independent), so he sent the Secretary-General of the MPR on a party visit to Romania.

And just as the Secretary-General arrived, the revolution broke out in Romania. You had the Secretary-General, whose departure for Bucharest had been a major item on the evening news, and the next night pictures of the revolution in Romania on all the television screens, and people began to make a joke. They began to say "Mobutu se Ceausescu," not "Mobutu Sese Seko." Mobutu picked up on this and turned off the television coverage of the Romanian revolution, but you could get the news programs on television from across the river in Brazzaville with the pictures and reporting that you were not supposed to see on the Zairian television — which made the parallel all the more striking.

Q: Of the popular uprisings that hastened the end of communism and the Eastern Bloc, Romania's revolution was relatively more violent, not a great deal so, but more violent. Of course, Ceausescu met a sad end.

SCOTT: He met a bloody end.

Mobutu's further reaction to this was to give a speech. He said in his speech that he thought that one-party rule in Zaire was a great success. But that no good system was exempt from improvement. Therefore, he would like everyone to go to his place of work or organization and prepare a memorandum on such changes as might improve the situation. So, as ordered, some people at least gathered to participate in the composition of these memoranda. Two or three weeks later, Mobutu gave another speech. He had studied the memoranda, and he was happy to say that no one had voiced any objection to his leadership, that the progress Zaire had made has been almost universally acknowledged, and no one has objected to the one-party state. (We knew this wasn't entirely true; the memorandum from the Foreign Ministry had been distinctly less than fully supportive of the MPR. The diplomat thought primarily responsible was immediately transferred to an obscure embassy in an impoverished country — with no provision for pay to follow.) However, upon reflection, Mobutu concluded that perhaps there was something to be said for a little political competition and he therefore thought that a three-party political system might be advisable. Now, there was an underground political party headed by a man named Étienne Tshisekedi belonging to an ethnic group, the Luba, who are a bit like the Kikuyus in Kenya. They were widely disliked because they were entirely too successful. Tshisekedi had bravely opposed Mobutu, sometimes in exile, sometimes in prison, sometimes under house arrest. His political party was the Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social (Union for Democracy and Social Progress). Mobutu said, "We have the MPR, with which everybody is pleased. But I'm well aware that there is this group out there called the UDPS. And there may well be room for a third political party and I think that such competition should not be objectionable." And Mobutu had imposed a uniform on all Zairian government officials, the Abacost (a short version of the French phrase "down with the suit"), and anybody who wished to have any sort of position wore this Mao-like tunic which distinctly did not include a tie. One wore a sort of ascot, and if you were caught wearing a tie, this was a sign of dissidence and the tie would be jerked off you by the police and you would probably be tapped forcefully on the head. Everybody submitted. But now Mobutu said, "If somebody wants to follow this slavish European custom and wear a tie and a suit

instead of a good Zairian abacost, I have no objection." He had also imposed a system of nomenclature. "Monsieur" and "madame" were forbidden. You called yourself, as in the French Revolution, "citoyen et citoyenne" (citizen). He said, "Furthermore, if someone wishes to follow, slavishly, these European customs and revert to "monsieur et madame", I have no objection, though I shall always remain "Citoyen Président." At this, universal jubilation erupted. People pulled ties out from the back of the closet, people began referring to themselves as "monsieur" and "madame," the UDPS set up its headquarters on the main street. That lasted around 48 hours until the police came and wrecked the UDPS office. A little hint about the real opening to a multiparty democracy– the third party was sort of MPR light. I've forgotten what it was called, but it was headed by two of Mobutu's lackeys. If you didn't want to be part of the old MPR, you could be part of the not yet quite so corrupt new MPR. But this opened the door, and suddenly other parties were created. A large of these formed a coalition, and they eventually called themselves the Union Sacrée (Sacred Union). They were a combination of Zairian political figures who had been uncomfortable with Mobutu, who hadn't been in the UDPS, but wanted to establish an alternative. Many of them we knew and respected as being good administrators or had some other characteristic which had attracted our favorable attention.

Meanwhile, something that had grown quite popular in Africa was called the "national conference." It was a way to transition from one regime to another. Mobutu decided to call a national conference to deal with all of this. Now, in the midst of these developments, in May 1991, Ambassador Melissa Wells, another figure for whom I have the greatest respect, replaced Ambassador Harrop. Wells brought a new DCM, John Yates, who managed the embassy very well.

One of our contacts was Archbishop (later Cardinal) Laurent Monsengwo, who was made president of the National Conference. Meanwhile, Mobutu, who was a clever man, first of all, objected to the Union Sacrée on the grounds that it was a confessional party group, and that would be an obstacle to national unity. The Union Sacrée leaders replied that they had modeled their movement on European Christian democracy, but one didn't have to be a Christian to be a member; they had chosen the label because it presented a model with an inbuilt nod to morality which they thought to be valuable. So the Union Sacrée continued. But then Mobutu decided that there should be no limit on the number of political parties, and he began to fund, secretly, anybody who was at all ambitious. "Here, take this wad of cash, form a political party, sign up all your in-laws and first cousins, you are now a political party." We ended up with some 400 political parties. And, Mobutu insisted, who was to say that in the absence of elections one party was more popular than another, so at the National Conference, each "party" had one vote.

Q: The press was opened up as well, was it not? A similar proliferation.

SCOTT: Proliferation of all sorts of newspapers. This was an absolute reversal of our situation when I first came to Kinshasa. As I said, earlier nobody would talk to us. The first time I went to the Foreign Ministry—you didn't call them up because the phone wouldn't work—I drove over to the Foreign Ministry, and the first time I walked down

the hall I found the equivalent of the Bureau of the Americas. I knocked on a door and introduced myself to the man behind the door sitting behind a typewriter. “Could I meet the Director of the Bureau?” He looked really frightened and shut the door. I was left standing in the hall and then boom, the door swung open and the Director came out and began to shout at me. “How dare you come without an appointment! Don't you know that we are a serious country? You do not come to the Foreign Ministry unless a diplomatic note has been sent to announce your coming. I know how these things ought to be done, and I expect you to know how these things ought to be done. Do not come to me again until the proper procedures have been followed!” Then he slammed the door shut. I was quite taken aback, but as I later mulled it over I concluded that he was frightened of being seen speaking to an American diplomat and this performance was a way of ensuring that his fidelity to the instructions of the regime had been seen to have been fully obeyed. But we had good relations with the chief of protocol, and I found, happily, that I didn't have to have relationships with the man who had slammed the door in my face because nothing that we did had to go through him. And, continuing with my effort to knock on doors, I shortly later got to know the head of the equivalent of our Bureau of International Organizations Affairs, and the head of the Bureau of African Affairs. Both were senior diplomats whose charm and education were remarkable. I would go in and sit down and talk to them at five or six in the evening. They were happy to sit and sip tea and talk to me. I was taken by the quality of these people. It was a pleasure to deal with them. But I acknowledged that I was plugged into sockets that didn't have any real connection to the electric system.

Q: By the end of your time, the Berlin Wall had fallen. The writing was on the wall, as you say, the national conference movement across Africa was most emblematic of a wave of change that was underway. Namibia was independent. The war in Angola had not ended, but our support for UNITA (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) had abated dramatically. I'm not sure exactly when we finally cut the cord. There's a story of messages being smuggled from tortured prisoners to Jim Baker that supposedly helped sway his thinking on the Angolan conflict. In any case, the landscape had shifted.

SCOTT: It had shifted. Part of what I'm talking about happened, actually, when I came back to Zaire. I had been there for four years with Harrop. Then I was an FSO-1 at that point, and Harrop had written a very strong EER (Employee Evaluation Report). I thought, well, Harrop’s signature on the EER will carry weight, and I should have a chance to be promoted to the Senior Foreign Service. Then Melissa Wells came and she wrote a very strong EER.

Mobutu did not perhaps entirely comprehend the change of the relationship that occurred with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fact that he was no longer a key player in a Cold War scenario. The United States had needed him; he had been very quick in responses. I remember at one point we were always getting our shirt tails caught on the ringer in Chad. We would back a Chadian element and then they would be driven out of Fort Lamy, now N’Djamena, by Qaddafi-backed forces. At one point, we had all these people whom we had supported, and they were cornered, and Mobutu said to us, “If you need a

place to put them, do not fret, you can bring them to Zaire. There is a military camp you can use—at your expense, of course." Nonetheless, who else in Africa would have said that for us quite so readily? I think it was Harrop who was instructed to go in and talk to Mobutu at one point about economic mismanagement. Mobutu's response was, "Mr. Ambassador, you wouldn't speak to the Israelis like this. Why do you speak to me like this?" To which there was no easy response.

Q: He did not perceive the change that was underway.

SCOTT: He certainly did not perceive it accurately. I'm told there were people who tried to explain it to him, but he brushed them aside. Clearly, Mobutu in the early days was a young, attractive, intelligent, dynamic figure. Like a lot of young, attractive, intelligent, dynamic figures who achieve that sort of early power, their virtues become over time obscured by pride and greed. Meanwhile, as you pointed out, we had needed him badly, and then, at that point, we didn't need him so badly. He was, I think, too set in his ways to understand that.

One of the things that happened with the departure of Ambassador Harrop and the arrival of Ambassador Melissa Wells was—and I do not know whether she was instructed to do this. Maybe she just felt it was time to do this—she turned the perception away from the American Embassy being a supporter of the regime to the American Embassy being something of an opponent of the regime. I mentioned the Union Sacrée. At one point, they had a march and they were set upon by Mobutu's forces and badly bloodied. Melissa said, "Why don't we go walk through the hospital?" I'm not sure that, had I been Ambassador, I would have thought that I should walk through that hospital. But we drove to this absolutely miserable hospital. My wife had some little exposure to it because, as a former nurse and midwife, she had always tried to do some sort of medical volunteer work in most of the countries we were. She had just stuck her head inside Mama Yemo Hospital and decided never to return, but we walked through these wards and there were these men lying on bloody stretchers. They would see Melissa and they would half rise up and stretch out their hands to her.

Q: Rather moving.

SCOTT: Quite moving. She was known as Tante Melissa, Aunt Melissa. She could project—and it is an advantage to women diplomats that understand this and have the skill and the presence—it's not given to every woman, by any means, but they have an advantage that men do not have in the regard that they can be seen as a maternal and nurturing figure. The attitude toward the Embassy began further to change. Meanwhile, we in the political section were flooded with all sorts of people, many who had formed one of the many political parties, who wanted to talk to us about human rights; some of them were quite impressive and apparently honest. A lot were seeking their own advantage, but this is not rare in this world of ambition. We were busy establishing, suddenly, dialogue with all sorts of elements of the opposition and not so much with the Mobutuists.

Q: Not including Joseph Kabila, presumably.

SCOTT: Kabila had been entirely forgotten at that point.

Q: He was off in Tanzania, licking his wounds?

SCOTT: Off in Tanzania. Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Kisangani was chairing the National Conference.

Q: Did you attend sessions?

SCOTT: I didn't. I don't know that I sent anybody. The sessions were long and confused, and I hadn't the staff to devote to such coverage. I'm not sure that diplomats were invited. But the Archbishop would meet with us privately and frequently to discuss the situation. At one point, I think we went to the Holy See and said, "I know you got a rule against clergymen playing a political role, but this is an exception. Please give him the leeway necessary to do this."

And then, after Ambassador Wells went through the hospital, we asked what else could be done. I suggested that since she could authorize $25,000 for an aid project, why not establish a fund for the families of those who had been injured or killed in the demonstration?" She said, "How do we do that?" I said, "Why don't we ask the Archbishop of Kinshasa (not the archbishop presiding over the National Congress) to administer it?" We certainly didn't want to get into receiving applications from the families of the battered. I was authorized to go over to the chancery of the archbishop. I met with his chief financial officer, a Belgian priest, and I explained what we wanted. He said, "We can't do that. We can't get involved in politics." I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Yes, absolutely sure we can't get involved in this." I said, "Well, that's fine. We'll just put out a statement that we've offered $25,000 for the poor and destitute and you have refused it." He disappeared and came back and said, "All right, we can do it, but it can't be attached to the Embassy name. We just have this $25,000, which we're distributing." I said, "Well, I admire your desire to avoid the pride that goes with such gestures, but we are not an eleemosynary organization and this is done with malice a'forethought. We will, of course, have to announce that the money comes from the United States." At that point, he came back and accepted that he didn't have much choice. I've always felt a bit guilty about putting that sort of pressure on the archbishop, but, at any rate, it worked.

Q: It's also impressive that Ambassador Wells was behind this plan and was willing to see this go forward.

SCOTT: I think she was very much the right person at the right time in Zaire. We also had a case of an American who had been seized by a dissident group in Cabinda, the northern part of Angola, just to the north of Zaire, that little enclave. He was an employee of an oil company and they were trying to hold him for ransom and some support for their effort. I was the Embassy point of contact for these people. Meanwhile, the oil company had their own channels and was trying to organize whatever they might agree to

so that the man would be released. Eventually a deal was struck and the problem was resolved just before Ambassador Wells came to Kinshasa. We had played something of a useful role in all of that. So then Melissa said to me, “Gerald, I need to get you into the Senior Foreign Service. Weren't you involved in the release of this captive?” I said, “Well, yes.” She said, “Good, I’ll put you up for a Superior Honor Award.” I had always thought that these awards were really not all that significant, but she said that if one didn’t have such an award in one’s file at that level, people would query the lack. And then she said, “By the way, you submitted a dissent channel message when Ambassador Harrop was here.” I said, “Yes, though Ambassador Harrop had encouraged an alternate view, so it was not over his objection. But it wasn't my only dissent message. I think I've just sent such a message once or perhaps twice before in my career.” She said, “The Rivkin Award is given for dissent.” I shall nominate you for the Rivkin Award,” which she did and which I received. I'm not at liberty to discuss the elements of the message, but—

Q: But you had done it before?

SCOTT: I distinctly remember I did it once with two other colleagues in the East Africa Office, pushing the US to change its policy on arms for Somalia. I think we submitted the dissent and by happenstance, within a few days at most, the policy was changed. I don't think our message had a damn thing to do with it, but I always thought the dissent channel was important. The nice thing about it was that it was a way in which you could express a view and theoretically without any repercussions on your career. Which reminds me that I know of a case where it had a repercussion. John Willett, who was my colleague in Rome in the political section, had been at USUN earlier in his career and he wanted to go back to New York. Jeane Kirkpatrick was Ambassador. He had filed a dissent channel message before he came to Rome concerning U.S. relations with the Palestinians. Kirkpatrick was made aware of this and she held that against him. It was sometimes presumed that since Jeane was an academic, she would tolerate and encourage expression of diverse views. This is to misunderstand Ambassador Kirkpatrick. She was a great believer in intellectual enterprise as long as the result more-or-less reflected her own views. I hold it against her that she, in effect, refused a highly qualified officer because he had submitted a dissent channel message with which she presumed she disagreed. But back to the subject at hand.

Q: Yes, the subject at hand, if I may, is that you're leaving then Zaire, a much changed place and in a time of a fair amount of political turmoil and you head to Kenya, where political turmoil will greet you.

SCOTT: Again, in some ways I was fortunate in my posting to Kenya. The Ambassador, Smith Hempstone, was something of a problem, but I was insulated from him to a considerable degree by the DCM, Michael Southwick. I was the political counselor. I had a good staff. Several officers stood out. One was Don Teitelbaum and the other was Joseph Cassidy. A third was Linda Thomas-Greenfield. And Lois Aroian. Titlebaum was

managing the Somali account, going back and forth to Mogadishu. We were following primarily Kenyan internal politics when the U.S. program of emergency aid to Somalia under George Bush was begun. That was an important development, and we needed use of the port of Mombasa. That was something with which I was involved to some degree.

Ambassador Smith Hempstone was an intelligent man and not without assets. He had been a prominent journalist, and had written in support of Ronald Reagan. The Reagan people wanted to reward him with an embassy. Hempstone had gone around Africa in the beginning of his journalistic career with his wife, Kitty, and had visited a number of countries during the period at the end of colonialism so he had a long-standing interest in the continent. He wanted to go back to Kenya and he convinced himself that he could be an element in the reform of Kenya. He would go and establish a useful relationship with President Moi and provide helpful advice, and President Moi would be convinced by the quality of this analysis and Kenya would move forward toward a democratic and prosperous future. The trouble was that Hempstone, for various reasons, was not cut out to be a diplomat, certainly not a Chief of Mission. (I later read the oral history of Hempstone's first DCM, George Griffin. His story of Hempstone's early days at the embassy are, frankly, shocking, and he should have been called back to Washington, but of course he wasn't. When such problems arise, it is almost always never seen as the fault of the political appointee.) But by the time I got to Nairobi, the Ambassador and Michael Southwick, his second DCM, had worked out something of an acceptable modus vivendi.

But meanwhile, the Ambassador had concluded that Moi was not following the script; he was not amenable to Hempstone's advice, and the relationship between the embassy and State House was distinctly negative. So… the Ambassador decided that it was time to see what could be done for Kenya by other means. Hempstone stuck a bit more than a toe into Kenyan politics, supporting various elements of the opposition by encouragement. So far as I know there wasn't any money going forward — there was money going to NGOs, lawyer's groups, human rights groups, the usual way in which we interfere with other people's politics while pretending not to do so. We were not alone in that. Other embassies of major powers were also involved. There was a certain degree of coordination amongst the embassies, trying to move things forward, as we saw it, because Kenya is a country that has a lot of advantages and it certainly has a professional class, which merits one's interest and respect.

My analysis, as it had been to a great degree in Zaire, was that the bedrock political reality was tribal identification. In Zaire, it was the Luba against almost everybody else. In Kenya, you had the Luo-Kikuyu split. Oginga Odinga, I think, believed that God had meant him to be president of Kenya. The trouble was that he was a Luo and that was his political base. I think the Lord changed his mind because he didn't make it. (Old joke: the US will have a Luo president before Kenya does! And, as you remember, President Obama's father was a Luo.) I remember talking to a chap over at the foreign ministry, who was one of these impressive, bright young diplomats. I was complimenting him on something that he had reported having accomplished in his hometown. I said, "Very enterprising." He said, "Not enterprising at all, Gerald. I'm a Kikuyu. That's what we do." I mentioned to him the politics of the Luo and their political future, He said, "But,

Gerald, do you know what these people do? Do you know what their practices are? How could one support people like that?" And, well, there you are.

Q: *Among the horrible practices are that they eat fish and that they fail to circumcise their male children.*

SCOTT: Well, could you provide a more damning list of disgusting practices than that? (Laugh)

There were two major factions opposed to Moi amongst the Kikuyus and Hempstone was privately quite forceful in encouraging a melding of these to oppose Moi. Of course, that didn't succeed. It's amazing how often senior politicians are not able to make that particular sacrifice. I give Moi a certain amount of credit. When we needed his support to use the port of Mombasa in our effort in Somalia. He did not say, or at least he did not say in the way that came to our ears, "Damn these Americans. They have been working against me for the past X months. Let them whistle for whatever they need or at least come in far more bent at the knees than they have come.

Q: Let's not forget how big an operation the Somali intervention was. It was a response to imminent famine. We'd witnessed famine in Ethiopia and elsewhere. The world had come and gone, but in any case, there was an absolute determination at the most senior level of the U.S. government that we would not permit famine on that scale to be witnessed again. We intervene. President Bush visited Somalia briefly. Moi was there when we needed him.

SCOTT: At least in that regard, he was there when we needed him. I'll add one more thing. I would not have chosen Hempstone to be an ambassador but I would have chosen his wife to be an ambassador's wife any day of the week. Kitty Hempstone played that role beautifully. My wife, and for that matter the rest of us are very much in her debt for her capacity in that regard.

But having done about a year in Nairobi, I then got a call from John Yates, who was chargé d'affaires in Kinshasa, asking me to come and be his DCM. Melissa had been withdrawn as a sign of our disapprobation of Mobutu. She had said, "I will go, but if you really want to have him sit up and take notice, you need to withdraw the Station Chief." They both went. John Yates, the DCM, was told that there would be no replacement ambassador in the foreseeable future. He should move into the residence. He said, "If I am for all practical purposes the ambassador, may I please have a DCM and may it be Gerald Scott?"

Q: How did you know John Yates at that point?

SCOTT: I had known him after Mark Baas left and he had been Melissa's DCM when I was in Zaire before. His wife Mary had worked in the political section, herself a Foreign Service officer who went on to be spokesman for Ambassador Harriman in Paris and then later as Ambassador to Burundi and to Ghana.

Q: Then she had been deputy to the commander for civilian affairs at Africom. Then she was the senior Africa person at the National Security Council.

SCOTT: A very distinguished career, as indeed was his. Anyway, John asked me to come back and be his DCM. I knew the dossiers, I knew the people. One was a bit hesitant because, at some point near the end of my time there, there had been riots in Kinshasa. The troops at the airport had decided to march all through the town and do their Christmas shopping early. I was expecting our colleague, Makila James, to arrive to be part of my political section. I was going out to the airport to meet her, and I was waiting early in the morning for the car and driver at my house. There was no car and driver. I called the motor pool and they said, "I'm sorry, sir, but the road to the airport is blocked." Well, Makila's plane landed, the airport was closed, her plane took off again and Kinshasa was at the beginning of a period of looting. This was brought under control at least in the upscale center of the city by the arrival of the French Foreign Legion. French and Belgian troops came in together and secured the area where the diplomats and administrators were located. Meanwhile, we and other embassies were ordered to evacuate. We went from being one of the largest embassies down to having about 40 people, some of whom were expected to spend the night in Brazzaville and come over on the ferry every morning and then go back in the evening, an awkward arrangement. I moved out of my house to something closer to the Embassy. During all of this time, John Yates, the DCM, was on leave and I was acting DCM under Ambassador Wells. She would sleep on the office couch on Mondays and I would sleep on the couch on Tuesdays so we were at hand to take all the telephone calls from Washington as we worked our way through this four or five day evacuation process. At the end of it, we stripped down to a handful of people and in part of the city, at least, some order had been more or less restored. The Embassy moved forward under this smaller number.

Q: By the way, did Makila James take up her post?

SCOTT: She never came back. The political section remained just about the same because we needed all the reporting we were doing and more.

Q: Makila was later ambassador to Swaziland and is currently a deputy assistant secretariat in the Africa Bureau.

SCOTT: Ah, I did not know. Very good. I regret very much that I did not have her as a colleague in Kinshasa, but she has done very well without it. So, that was another important element in my diplomatic experience, the managing, under Ambassador Wells, of a major evacuation. It went pretty well. We evacuated, also, the consulate in Lubumbashi.

Q: You get summoned back?

SCOTT: I got summoned back to a much smaller embassy at that point. The numbers might have grown a bit from where we were when I left, but not by much, and we were now trying to deal with the continuing collapse of the Mobutu regime. And he was

continuing to prove himself to be extremely clever. He's still able to buy off opposition with large amounts of money. Nguza Karl-i-Bond, who was seen as a valiant member of the opposition, was seduced into taking the prime ministership. I was doing a lot of coordination, particularly with the British and the Belgians. The British were represented by Kaye Oliver, who later went on to become High Commissioner in Lesotho and Ambassador in Burundi, a really good Africanist, and really good at dealing with Africans. The Belgians have many good diplomats, but I think they sent some of their very best to Kinshasa. Michel Lastchenko was my impressive Belgian counterpart. Which brings me to note an interesting element of the Belgian system. They are riven by this Walloon-Flemish divide. The rule, reportedly, is that if the ambassador is of one, the DCM has to be of the other and so perhaps further down. When you are dealing with Belgium diplomats in bio reporting, for Heaven's sake, note which side of the divide they are on. To neglect it is a bit like reading bio reports on Brits and the report doesn't mention their public school. Anybody who is dealing with an Englishman wants to know what secondary school he went to, or did he go to a state school. And when you are reporting on an African figure, then you need to know what the tribe is. You need to record the "ethnicity," as we more properly say. I have made this point to the bio people from time to time. Of course, the bio people all seem to be rather young and blink three times, not quite sure what I'm talking about. At any rate, the Belgians were always in top form.

I remember that I was walking into a wedding reception at the British embassy—two staffers were marrying—and I fell into pace with the number two at the Nunciature, whom I happened to know pretty well. I said, "What have you been up to?" He said, "I've just come from the deathbed of a Belgian nun, most distressing." The more he talked about the symptoms, the more I thought to myself, "Could this be Ebola?" Among the guests was a missionary doctor, Julia Weeks, whose family had long run a medical clinic in Zaire. She was second-generation in that particular Protestant missionary effort. We all knew them and liked them. I said, "Do you know Dr. Weeks?" He didn't, so I asked Dr. Weeks to come over and talk to this priest. He told the story of the dying nun who had come up from Kikwit. She said, "No, there's been bloody flux in Kikwit for months; it isn't Ebola." But the more he described the symptoms, the more she considered Ebola to be a possibility and she began to back away as if he might be contagious himself. To show you what we can do as a country, I then picked up my cell phone, which was in those days about the size of a brick, and called the Operations Center. They immediately put me through to the CDC in Atlanta. Within three minutes, I was talking to the Ebola expert; I put Dr. Weeks on the phone to him. She described what she had learned from our Vatican colleague. The doctor in Atlanta got me back on the phone and said, "Do not use the E-word. We will fly out as soon as we can get there and see if we can't help take the matter in hand." So we were immediately engaged. And then I thought, "This is the sort of thing that the Belgians will presumably have been well aware of before I have accidentally heard of it." So I called my counterpart at the Belgian embassy, who said, "Yes, we're aware of this. We've got blood samples on the way to Brussels." I called back to CDC and they said, "We have very good relations with the medical side in Brussels. We will make sure that we will get immediate samples of the blood here for ourselves." Suddenly, with—I think—the United States in the lead or close

to it, the Ebola crisis was addressed. Happily, Mobutu's neglect had destroyed the roads so nobody could easily get out of Kikwit to spread the disease much further. In that circumstance, it was contained. It made one really proud to be an American, to see us react so effectively and so quickly.

Q: That's impressive. Of course, the great crisis in west Africa was yet to come and as we speak in 2019, Ebola is back in Congo. You too are back in Congo, still called Zaire. Perhaps it's a bit of testimony to the consistency of American foreign policy across different administrations, because the presidency in our country has swung again, in this case back into the hands of the Democrats and Bill Clinton. The somewhat new cast of characters is a somewhat new flavor to the foreign policy. We're certainly advocates of human rights and pressing harder on democratization and things of that sort. The ferment in Zaire continues throughout your second tenure there.

SCOTT: It does. We are doing what we can to be effective in stimulating what we hope is an adequate movement toward a more sustainable and reasonable system. Unfortunately, we didn't get there. I left before the outcome was clear. It seemed to me that the end of the Mobutu regime was near, but his continued ability to divide the opposition was stronger than I had understood. He was still the source of riches for favored politicians. And at one point, he was flooding the place with counterfeit currency. It was shocking. You could go down to the market and the real exchange rate would practically fall before your eyes.

Q: People on the streets with these huge wads of cash.

SCOTT: When the Zaire was introduced, it was one zaire for two U.S. dollars. I forget what the exchange rate was when I returned, but it was thousands of zaires to the dollar. It got worse after I left.

Q: Have you been promoted into the Senior Foreign Service yet?

SCOTT: No. In addition to Harrop's EER (Employee Evaluation Report), Melissa has written me an EER. In that EER, among other things, I could say that in my time in Kinshasa I had been surrounded by a threatening mob at one point and at another point, I went to the foreign ministry because we needed an appointment with Mobutu, and I had to bring a note over there. I had not realized that the foreign ministry was surrounded by people demonstrating. The car pulled up to the gate, and somebody grabbed a large rock and crashed it into the side window where I was sitting. Had I not by happenstance jumped into the DCM's car—this is before I came back as DCM — I would have been at least badly injured. Luckily, that window was constructed with bullet-proof glass. Always helpful to have experiences to allow one to write that the boy stood on the burning deck whence all but he had fled. I thought the EERs were quite impressive and was grateful for their appreciation of my work. I went to Nairobi without a promotion, but the promotion occurred on the next list, so I went back to Zaire as Counselor of Embassy, with the courtesy title of Minister Counselor. I spent about a year there under that circumstance; then I got a call from Washington asking me if I would be willing to go to Liberia as

Chief of Mission. I said that I would; I was flattered to be asked. Then I heard nothing further. I went back home to Oklahoma for Christmas, stopped in Washington on the way. Walked into George Moose's office, the Assistant Secretary. He said, "Oh, Gerald, I'm so glad to see you. You know you're going to The Gambia, don't you? Somebody further up the line had his own candidate for Liberia, but I put you down for The Gambia." I muttered something to the effect that I really felt underused not working in a French-speaking country. George replied that he had got me The Gambia and I should be pleased with that. I said of course I was. I went from Kinshasa to Banjul via Washington—

Q: Did you do the ambassadorial seminar?

SCOTT: The ambassadorial seminar. But then I was stalled in Washington because Senator Jesse Helms refused to approve ambassadorial nominations and then there was a government shutdown. I must have spent about four months in Washington, ready to go out. Reading what one could read, there was not a lot of information in the files on The Gambia, before going out to the embassy—as you know, the circumstance was that there had been a coup d'état about a year before my arrival. A young Army captain, who had just come back from military training in the United States, marched into State House with a list of demands. It happened that the president, who had been democratically elected, was receiving the Ambassador and the Captain of an American ship or perhaps an Admiral embarked. In the confusion, the solution to the problem was to put the president on the ship and sail out of the way of this impending coup. I am not sure that the coup was in fact impending; it may have been something less than that. But whatever was the situation , Jammeh discovered that he was in charge and he declared himself and his small coterie to be the government of The Gambia.

Q: He came in with a kind of revolutionary council.

SCOTT: Yes. Most of them disappeared in murky circumstances.

Q: None of whom were left standing.

SCOTT: I arrive with instructions to make the best of an unfortunate state of affairs. One element was the fact that we cut off all the government-to-government aid because a democratic government has been overthrown by this military group and we were required to do so by law. The Brits cut off aid, the Europeans cut off aid, we all cut off aid, but the Europeans could later restore some of it since their cutoff was a matter of policy, not of law. Almost every conversation that I had with the president involved a diatribe about the insulting American position vis-a-vis the reform government of The Gambia, as exemplified by our refusal to provide any aid. Of course, we had a small aid project for an NGO and I occasionally found some excuse to give money for disaster relief, but the sort of aid program that would have, in his view, helped legitimize his rule was not forthcoming. I rather admired the Brits and the European Union because they could say, "Alright, we've made a point, but it's not working. We're going to eliminate some of this dysfunctional dialogue by starting a small aid program." We weren't able to do that.

Q: That was an unfortunate element in the relationship. You saw a lot of President Jammeh, as I recall.

SCOTT: Well, not a great deal. One point to remember is that I suffered a heart attack a few months after I arrived. That meant four months of treatment, first in London to which I was medevaced, and then in the U.S. When I returned, my DCM, Douglas Rohn, was in charge, and he had done a very good job in my absence. As for Jammeh, I was received by him upon occasion and of course one was always out at the airport for his comings and goings, a purely protocolary event. He had several foreign ministers, all of whom were faithful in reproducing, in somewhat more polite tones, his attitude. We had almost no contact with the government. I did succeed in inviting one minister to lunch. He accepted the invitation, but as he left he said, "I haven't been here; you understand that, don't you?"

Q: Jammeh was still in his twenties.

SCOTT: Yes. His predecessor had been a Christian and then converted to Islam. It seemed to be the politically expedient thing to do. The country was predominantly Muslim, and converts from Islam to Christianity were not sought for fear of provoking a reaction, but there was an accepted Christian presence of some importance. The old governing elite were those people who had been educated, generally, in Christian schools, the Anglican or the Catholic or the Methodist. They were the descendants of freed slaves. When the British patrolled the coast and would come upon a slaver, they would release the captives in Freetown or Bathurst, later called Banjul. These people were then often taken in hand by missionaries and they were the ones that received an education. The people upriver—pagan tribes increasingly converted to Islam through their Islamic contacts in Senegal—were not part of the governing group. They weren't trained in English, and they were, after all, upriver. When The Gambia got its independence, it was this element around Banjul–the university professors, the high school teachers, the ministers—

Q: The question is about motivation and inspiration and professional attitude and what kept you motivated and inspired to do those jobs in these places that Washington wasn't paying a lot of attention to.

SCOTT: Washington's attention is not always a blessing. One of the realities of work in Africa, particularly in the case of someplace like Zaire with Harrop or Melissa Wells, is that they have the confidence of the people in Washington. For the most part, the NSC and White House level don't care. If problems are being managed, they are happy to let the State Department deal with the issues at hand. When things become politically important in the United States, as was the case in southern Africa during the apartheid regime and the Namibia question, then the problem ended up with far more White House attention. Not, perhaps, always to the good, but unfortunately all of this is a circumstance that is inevitable in our system.

I found that diplomacy was something very interesting to do. It's energizing to have the adrenaline rush of a crisis. It's encouraging to discover that you are acting competently under serious pressure, but one should not pray for such opportunities. Meanwhile, the United States needs to be represented. There are interests even in places like Swaziland and The Gambia that are worthy of the attention of a small embassy. Some of these are international questions. Sometimes, suddenly you discover that the international spotlight has shifted and you are caught in unaccustomed glare. When that happens, you need to be organized and be able to respond to whatever needs attention. The Rwanda crisis, which I didn't mention, come to think of it. In Kinshasa, toward the end of my time as DCM, I remember going over to Goma and just seeing the masses of people flooding across the border as the Hutu regime and its adherents were fleeing the forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Suddenly, Zaire had to deal with this or, rather, not deal with it. I remember I used to meet with the Prime Minister. He is now President of the Senate. He was one of the most impressive people in Zaire. I'd sometimes meet him after church on Sunday. I would go to the nine o'clock mass and he would go to the 10 o'clock mass. We'd meet in the parking lot for an exchange of views. I also remember meeting him in Goma when I was sent out there by John Yates to try to get a better understanding of what was going on there. The message was that Zaire had an international obligation to accept these refugees and to care for them. Not that Zaire had much choice. The refugees were coming, whether the Zairians wanted them to or not. The capacity of the Zairians to care for them was nugatory, but they could at least facilitate the involvement of the international community, which happened to some degree. The role of the United States in countries large and small is important. It is part of our responsibility in the international system to fulfill that professionally and, one hopes, adequately and for that one needs a Foreign Service. I have found myself in key positions in large countries and I have found myself in key positions in quite small countries. In both cases, there are things that need to be done, and they can only really be done properly by somebody who is a trained diplomat.

Q: That is perennially called into question. I think at the moment it again faces a degree of skepticism.

SCOTT: I have run into it throughout my career. I will tell the story of my participation, later on perhaps, of a National Review cruise and their assault on diplomacy. I recently had occasion to consult the views of Alexis de Tocqueville. In his On Democracy in America, he pays very little attention to questions of foreign affairs, but in the several paragraphs he writes on the subject, he says that the virtues cultivated by democracy are important, significant virtues, but almost entirely irrelevant to the virtues needed to conduct foreign affairs effectively. That in this respect, the Ancien Régime, the old-fashioned aristocracy, was more valuable than a democratic system because while aristocracies are justly accused of using their power to further their positions and entrench their interests, in terms of foreign policy, their interests are almost always identical with those of the state. Therefore, an aristocracy, in this respect, is rather like a wise old man who never dies. Now it seems to me, without stretching the analogy too far, a professional diplomatic corps can be compared to the aristocracy that Tocqueville discusses. Not that we are, in other respects perhaps, aristocrats, but if we maintain our

corps and pass on our learning, experience, and such wisdom as we may have acquired, we too can be the equivalent of wise old men who do not die.

Q: Well said. Nice encapsulation of some of your thinking. Shall we talk about the Naval War College and the UN?

SCOTT: Let's talk about the Naval War College, first of all. One of the dream postings that I always had in the back of my mind was the Naval War College in Newport. I was sent there as the State Department representative after leaving Banjul, and I found it very rewarding. A two-year assignment. Very good fellow teachers. The Navy has the money to do it right. The curriculum had two major courses. The most important and the one I found most interesting was called Strategy and Policy, sometimes called "A War a Week". Military history is perhaps not a subject much valued nowadays in academia. Places like the Naval War College can afford to pay for really good scholars in these areas, and so they have. I presume the same is true of the other war colleges. The course of Strategy and Policy had been organized by Stansfield Turner when he was Commandant, and he was looking for a way to inform his students of the real choices and elements in dealing with the questions of strategy that confront major powers. The course starts off with readings from Clausewitz's On War and Sun Tzu. They have contrasting approaches to many of the relevant questions. We had weekly lectures by what were, in fact, world authorities on these two authors. Then the second week you read large extracts from Thucydides on the Peloponnesian Wars. We studied the Peloponnesian Wars, we studied the Revolutionary War, we studied the Wars of German Unification, we studied the Napoleonic Wars, we studied the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, we studied the Vietnam War which for many years they could not teach because it aroused so much dissent and controversy amongst the students. We did a couple of others as well. In each case, students are asked to read large extracts of academic studies addressing various questions that the war provoked or its management provoked. What were the underlying causes as seen by each side? What were the presumptions that each side entertained? At least one side would almost inevitably foresee a quick and easy victory. What were the military developments in weaponry that affected the outcome of the war? How were alliances managed? The management of alliances turns out to be, as we diplomats know, of great importance, but generally not much thought about amongst the general public, or, for that matter, the military. What was the civil-military relationship like? Who was in control? How effective was it? What was the end-of-war stage like? This was one revelation to me because one of the conclusions of almost every example that we studied is that this is one of the hardest things to do right, and the United States has very often done it wrong. (I approached the Second Iraq War remembering that this had been very effectively taught at the Naval War College and assuming that the people in control understood that. I was wrong, of course; they didn't understand that. Perhaps they hadn't gone to the Naval War College. The great disaster of the Second Iraq War was our inability to understand the requirements of a successful end-of-war strategy.) To what degree was the situation at the end of the war different from what one had imagined it to be when the war started? I came away from that course believing that its equivalent, one way or another, should be a requirement for senior figures in the State Department. I ended up teaching a package course called

Strategy and Force Planning, which was not too difficult to teach because it was well laid out in the curriculum. Since I had two years there and since, in the first year, they didn't really have a teaching slot for me, I took the entire curriculum and then I ended up teaching that course and another course I put together, which I called Introduction to Sub-Saharan Africa, something I found fascinating to organize and then teach. As I presume any teacher will tell you, there is a lot more work involved in putting together a course like that than one realizes.

Q: A great deal of work. When you think about that strategy course that you participated in and the failure to think through the end-of-war stage and the consequences, for instance, of the Second Iraq War—You said you think senior leaders in the State Department would benefit from such a core discipline and thinking through consequences, how they get achieved and what the different outcomes might be. On a lower scale, as you went through your career, did we think hard enough about what follows Mobutu, what follows Moi?

SCOTT: Obviously we don't. But how you achieve this, I do not know. One of the things that I do think is that there ought to be a role for more in-depth training for people in the State Department. We don't have the equivalent of a National War College. FSI may be doing a lot more than I know of now, because I have, after all, been retired for 20 years. To some degree, it's always a question of money. One got rather tired of being told, "We want you to do X but we don't have the money to pay for it." "We need you in Washington for a conference," I was told when I was up in Newport, "but of course the State Department can't cover that. Why don't you go and see if the Naval War College has the funds to fly you down here and put you up for two nights." I recall, once retired, I was asked to head up the red team in the major war game of the year over at the Pentagon — the locus was an African country much like Nigeria, so I was thought to have some appropriate background. I was brought down to Washington. I had my thick briefing books and the war game was supposed to take place on Monday. I will not tell you how much I was being paid, but it was, by State Department standards, an impressive amount plus per diem. Suddenly, the war game was delayed a week and the Pentagon was putting me up in Washington for a week while I did nothing. Well, I shouldn't complain. When I was being held up for four months waiting to go to The Gambia, the State Department was paying my per diem. But the State Department never seems, at least since the Vietnam days, to have any spare cash in its jeans to do some of the things that would be useful to be able to do. The demands of the career for most officers, I think, are such that taking a tour out to go study something is not easy. Can you now do so without having it counting against time-in-class?

Q: No.

SCOTT: It seems to me that if we are serious about study, we ought to say, "Yes, go off to Stanford or go off to this course at the Naval War College or else to a good program organized by one's self. And no, this will not count against your time-in-class requirement."

Q: Instead, we have an institutional culture that, as you say, is first of all, starved of resources, but also we've got a working culture of hit the ground running, figure it out when you get there. There's not a lot of time allowed for preparation, nor is there a great deal of reflection and assessment of what we've done.

SCOTT: And after the Naval War College, I retired and went home to Oklahoma, primarily to take care of my mother in her last days.

Q: But then you spent 15 years at least part of the year at the UN.

SCOTT: I did. Like most good jobs that I've had, it came from walking down the corridor at the right time. I had retired in the year 2000, and then I decided that being part of the inspectorate would be an interesting and useful way to keep one's oar in, and I was in Washington taking a "how to be an inspector" course over in Rosslyn on 9/11. Suddenly, the course came to an end and we gathered around the television set and saw what was happening. I was stuck in Washington for a week because the airports had been closed. I made it down on the second or third day to the Department and ran into somebody who said, "Gerald, what are you doing here?" I explained. They said, "Will you go to New York? The Africa Bureau's normal representative during the General Assembly suddenly can't take that job. Can you?" I agreed to do so and for the next 15 years, I went to New York every September and was one of the handful of senior advisors to the delegation to the General Assembly. What that really meant was that we would take the instructions that were generated in Washington for the General Assembly, and attempt to convince our target audiences—in my case, the African delegations—to support or at least not oppose the issues that we wanted to advance or, more likely, the issues that we wanted to thwart. It was the sort of diplomacy that I particularly enjoy. I didn't have to worry about my next job, I didn't have to write an EER for anybody. The system assumed that we who were doing these jobs (about half of us were retired ambassadors and the other half were people who, in a normal system, would have been ambassadors) were competent at what we were doing and we enjoyed doing it. I had a very large dossier, all of the African Union members except for the North African states that fall into the NEA basket. I would try to get around to all of them every year. I didn't always make it, but those I missed on Year A, I would hit on Year B and establish a relationship with the ambassador. If it seemed to be useful, I would manage to take him to lunch. I would take people to lunch maybe twice a week once the General Debate was over, when people were free to do such things. And there was always, ultimately, adequate representation; two-thirds of the way through, we would be told there was no money left, but then money would be found. I think that money spent on the cultivation of a relationship is money very well spent.

With a personal relationship established, one could later pick up the phone and say, "Ambassador, I'm sorry to disturb you, but there is an issue coming up in Third Committee that really is important. I wonder if I could fax you a briefing paper on it since we haven't time to meet in person." If you've established that relationship, the answer will almost certainly be, "Why, certainly, Gerald, we'd be happy to see your briefing paper" and sometimes it can make a difference.

We and a small handful of the diplomats at the political and other sections at USUN managed the General Assembly issues as they went forward along that year's agenda. Sometimes issues with the General Assembly are hortatory and expressions of a consensus view. And we were always concerned by what we called the anti-Israeli resolutions that would come up and we were under obligation to counter these in our démarches (representations), which we did, depending on the instructions from Washington, with more or less vigor. Although on this subject one year I had an interesting series of conversations. I had for years, both as a diplomat in the field and now the United Nations, presented essentially the same arguments: These resolutions are all one-sided. They will evoke a negative reaction in Israel. If the UN has an important role to play in any resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, surely the UN should position itself as a less biased element in this argument. The resolutions are repetitive and on the whole it would be much better if they were either rephrased or were not passed. And in almost every case I received a nodding assent to the fact that I had presented an argument, but it had no effect on the votes of the African delegations. Why was this? One reason was that African delegations, on issues like this, pretty much vote as a block and there had been a historic trade off, I think, between the Non-Aligned Movement elements that said years ago to the Africans, "We will support majority rule in Africa. We will help you attack the positions of the UK and the United States vis-à-vis South Africa, Rhodesia and southwest Africa/Namibia. In return, we expect you to support the Palestinian cause vis-à-vis Israel." Majority rule came to Africa, but meanwhile, the Africans and much of the rest of the United Nations were locked into this position vis-à-vis Israel and Palestine. Even our European allies were not entirely supportive. They would often not vote against these resolutions; they would most likely abstain.

It was not as if the validity of our arguments was blindingly obvious to the larger international community, so at one point I stepped away from my talking points and I asked one of the ambassadors, "Do my arguments make no sense to you? They make sense to me." He said, "They don't make sense to me, Gerald. Or rather, there are other arguments in play." I said, "Please explain." He said, "These resolutions are political gestures. If we refrain from making these political gestures, at your request, what will we receive in return? The answer is nothing." I then sought out another African. "Ambassador, I notice your consistent votes for these anti-Israeli resolutions. Why do you do that?" "Gerald," he said, "You may not think of us as very democratic, but we represent a state which is almost entirely Muslim. In the evening on the television in my capital, there are scenes of brutality visited on the Palestinians by Israeli security forces, scenes which never seem to show up on American television. Among other things, we have to be responsive to the attitudes of our citizenry on this issue. They feel quite strongly." I then turned to a third ambassador, very senior and much valued in New York, and repeated the question. He said, "Gerald, however objectionable are the occasional Palestinian rocket attacks on the Israelis (which probably don't hit anybody) or other more violent attacks, they do not rise to the level of violence of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank — something of which you Americans seem to be entirely oblivious." I went back to the Mission and I put that question to somebody who had just come from Israel. I said, "Is there some truth in this story of Israeli brutality?" He said there was considerable truth in it, and he recited some examples of things of which he had direct

knowledge, which do not much figure into the American understanding of that difficult issue. I gained something of an insight into how our position is viewed elsewhere. It was interesting.

One result of the annual GA effort was a report put out every year, "Voting Practices in the United Nations," which I think we have now ceased doing. It began in Jean Kirkpatrick's time and it was partly at her instigation, a checklist or report card of how various countries had voted in the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Q: I think the report card continues.

SCOTT: Possibly. It may continue in an online form. It used to be published as a book. I would take the book around to delegations and I'd say, "You are probably totally unaware of this, Ambassador, but you should know that this report is something made available to the Congress and to others and it has a some importance in framing attitudes towards various countries, and I wanted you to be aware of it. I'm not attempting to defend every element of the analysis, but it's something which your government should understand exists and it has a certain influence as it reflects the record of votes in the General Assembly." I mean, in my own view of the report, of the 12 or 14 key votes, these anti-Israeli votes would always figure prominently, which votes were going to go, year after year, in the same direction. Another series of the votes would be the votes on the country-specific human rights resolutions. These were, I think, far more interesting. They would get widespread support among our major allies. The Canadians would always present one of them. There would, as I recall, be a resolution on Iran, Burma or Myanmar, North Korea, a couple of others. There would be a tendency, particularly among the Non-Aligned Movement and the African group, to say, "No, no, we don't need to support these. It's not that the human rights circumstances in these countries are not seriously questionable, but the Human Rights Council in Geneva is the proper forum for this sort of thing and country-specific human rights resolutions are an example of the West using the stick and not the carrot. The concentration should be on positive encouragement of governments to improve their records." Our reply was that to talk about positive encouragement was all very well, but there were occasions when it was useful to be perfectly clear about the human rights situations in these countries. In these countries, the human rights situation was, frankly, abominable and merited serious international attention. The Geneva process was important, but there was a long tradition of treating these subjects in the Third Committee and that tradition had an important utility and therefore, under these circumstances, we ask for your support on these resolutions." I did not get a lot of African support, but I sometimes got an African abstention or an absence, which was important in obtaining the passage of these resolutions.

Also an issue that always came up in the General Assembly was the issue of the American budgetary support for the UN. We would argue that we were paying the most money and there needed to be greater economic rigor in the administration of the UN budget. This was arguing against, to some degree, the interests of the smaller delegations. They were not particularly concerned that the United States paid so much. They saw the

UN, to some degree, as an opportunity for positions for people from their own countries in the international system. If the UN was a bit wasteful of money, well, a lot of that waste would be spent in the Third World and they might profit from it. In addition, our own position was weakened by the fact that we had negotiated a special assessment for the United States, which was lower than the assessment that would have been imposed had we followed the standard formula. This was a very difficult argument to counter, except that there was no political support in the United States for paying the normal assessment, which we were justifiably required to pay by the international agreements into which we had entered at the time the UN was founded. This political reality needed to be understood, even if it lacked a serious intellectual justification. It was not, however, an element of the issue that I raised unless pressed on the subject.

Q: Now, there was periodic talk of a grand bargain whereby we'd clear up our arrears and I think we struck a bargain at one point.

SCOTT: We struck such a bargain under Ambassador Holbrooke, a highly controversial figure, just slightly older than I and whose reputation in the Foreign Service was, on the whole—

Q: Pretty negative.

SCOTT: Yes, pretty negative. Most people did not want to work for Dick Holbrooke, but he had a naked ambition and drive which could occasionally be harnessed to do serious good. Both in the Bosnian accords, and at the UN where he negotiated, by sucking up to Jesse Helms and company, a resolution to the then outstanding budget crisis. That was an important victory for us in dealing with that aspect of the United Nations.

Q: Well, Jesse Helms had passed the scene at that point. It was the most of Jesse Helms and his fellow travelers, of whom there were many, on the Hill, if I've got that right. Among Ambassador Holbrook's accomplishments was the deal that you spoke of, Gerald. As you say, there was a sort of rote quality, almost, to some of the dialogue that you would have on Israel, on Cuba, on country-specific resolutions, but nevertheless, you chipped away at it. There were small victories that added to the sort of fabric of our work at the UN and our engagement of African countries.

SCOTT: There are certain ways in which the General Assembly sets or reflects important aspects of the international discourse and we need to pay attention. Often enough, the popular attitude seems to be that attention in these matters was wasted, that we were entering an arena where we would not even be seriously engaged. My own view is that in many of these cases, effective diplomacy can mitigate, perhaps even counter some of this, but it requires effective diplomacy. It requires, among other things, a UN mission led by someone who is seen to be respectful of the effort.

Q: Did any ambassadors stand out particularly in that respect, either positively or negatively, as effective?

SCOTT: In both ways. First of all, the American mission's political section is almost entirely involved in the Security Council. The Security Council when I was there under Kirkpatrick would meet three or four times a month. Nowadays, the Security Council can easily meet three or four times a week. The pace of the work is much increased and it's very demanding. Happily, the political section and a lot of the rest of USUN attracted very good officers. I was almost always impressed by the quality of the middle-grade people I saw there, although a friend over at the Secretariat remarked to me that, given the complexity of the UN, our officers should be assigned for longer tours; they get the system figured out, and then they are transferred.

But the US ambassadors who lead the various elements of the program are sometimes very good at negotiation and sometimes less good at negotiation. Sometimes they are seen to hold a disdain for the organization that is damaging to our interests. In my later time with the UN, the most dramatic example was John Bolton. He, like Kirkpatrick, sent out negative rays, and his presence lost us votes. I know that from direct experience. I went up there after Ambassador Holbrooke had left. James Cunningham was chargé d'affaires and John Negroponte was coming on board as ambassador. Negroponte, I think, was universally admired, but, like all of them, his time was spent mostly in the Security Council. Those of us dealing with the General Assembly pretty much ran our own shop.

Q: There are Africans on the Security Council and how one engages them in the General Assembly and the patient cultivation of those relationships over years, which is what you did, have dividends in the Security Council as well as at the General Assembly.

SCOTT: Indeed, one reality is that if you are a member of the Security Council and you are an African, much attention will be paid to you by USUN leadership. I expected that relationship in almost every case to be handled at the level of our Ambassador and our second Ambassador. (There are normally five Americans with the ambassadorial title at USUN.) I did not suppose that the Permanent Representative dealing with Security Council affairs in the mission of Ghana was particularly anxious to reserve a lot of time for Gerald Scott. Under those circumstances, I would go to his deputy. But otherwise, I assumed that I would be dealing with the principal. If I had known him and had cultivated a relationship before he went on the Council, that was another circumstance. Generally, everybody was open to an approach and I was politely received. My routine was to put my head down and make it through the high-level week at the beginning, essentially being at the disposal of the Africa Bureau for their appointments, attempting to go to such meetings as were useful. Once that tsunami had passed, I would begin calling on the ambassadors or inviting them to lunch. They certainly had no time before that.

Q: Of course, your African interlocutors by that point were reeling from the just-concluded visit of their head of state.

SCOTT: Exactly. They had survived that and if I could take them out to lunch two weeks later, they were happy to accept.

Q: Did you get political intelligence in those meetings and lunches?

SCOTT: Not so much that would reflect on circumstances back home.

One thing that I found irritating—I would get my hands on the briefing books that were produced in Washington for the meetings with the Africans—and I'm sure this was true across the board, but I never saw at the end of the talking points, "Finally, Mr. Minister, I trust your ambassador will have met Ambassador Scott. We want to tell you how important we think the role of the General Assembly is, particularly concerning issues X, Y, and Z, and Ambassador Scott looks forward to continuing the dialogue on these issues." It's as if at meetings in New York with the senior figures of foreign countries, the General Assembly, which was the locus of the event, was irrelevant. Every year, we senior advisors would go to Washington for a couple of days before the General Assembly began and make the point, "When you draft these things, put in a line about the General Assembly. Why should they think we care about these issues if you won't even mention the GA?" Generally, the drafters of these pieces were not in IO and I never could seem to engage IO to insist on these lines. AF would take my point and occasionally that would bear some fruit. Part of it was just the mechanics of diplomacy. When I first started going to the GA, I made myself perhaps a little unpopular for saying, "If you're going to send me talking points in a non-paper, I need it in French as well as English. I cannot go to the ambassador of a small Francophone country, present him with an English-language paper, have him fax it back to his ministry and expect them to read it easily." Professionalism in diplomacy requires that we at least take the step of giving them a text that they can deal with. For that matter, we need it in Spanish and in Arabic and in Portuguese or whatever. I made that general point, but I needed it in English and French and ideally also in Portuguese. By the time of my 10th year there, I think I and the other senior advisors who were arguing that same position had managed to get that point across, but there is always a new crew in Washington for whom these things are a shocking revelation.

Q: I will say that your series of reports over the years were highly valued in the African Bureau and a lot of us sort of enjoyed reading them, frankly. A well-managed portfolio.

SCOTT: They were fun to write. When I left the Foreign Service in 2000, you sent cables. When I came back to USUN, you sent emails. I would write a cable at the end of my tour of three months summing up the General Assembly from the African perspective, but everything else was done in classified emails. I also tried to do a lot of bio reporting because I think bio reporting is a key to effective diplomacy. My prejudices in that regard are not adequately shared. One of the problems is that the bio people seem only to want to put out finished bios - at least for people at my level. You have identified somebody at a moderately junior level out in the field when you are yourself a second secretary and you submit a report on him. You put a copy in the file in the political section and over 15 years, that file may well build up. There may be some interesting information in there that could help somebody approach this person when he, in fact, ends up as deputy foreign minister. If you're at post and that file hasn't been destroyed in an evacuation, it's there to be read. People presumably still keep paper files? But you

can't go to bio and ask for that information. Unless that person is an ambassador or a minister, they will not have the time to put on a finished bio report, nor will they allow you to read the rough notes. I remember when I joined the Foreign Service in 1969 you could still find people in Washington who remembered when the bio files were in the State Department. They said that one could come back from post, go through the bio files for a country, read them and take some notes, and then go back to post better equipped to do one's job. Of course, that is no longer possible because the files are no longer in the State Department.

You asked about the ambassadors. I served under Jean Kirkpatrick and Vernon Walters from 1983 to '85. When I came back in 2001 I served under John Negroponte and when he went out to Iraq, he was replaced by John Danforth.

Q: A former senator.

SCOTT: He was there for about six months. People thought that he would have made a very good ambassador. He was not looking to use the position to further a political career; he had done that. He was very good with people. He understood the issues or would read a complicated briefing paper, and we would have been fortunate had he stayed. Unfortunately, he said that his wife did not like New York and he finally owed it to her to go back to Missouri, so he resigned in January of 2005. In the interim, for a number of months, he was replaced by Anne Patterson, who had been his DCM. She had been Ambassador to El Salvador and Colombia, went on to be Ambassador in Pakistan, Ambassador in Egypt, and Assistant Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs. The Mission, under her, was extremely well run. She is a superb diplomat. Then we had John Bolton, which was the reverse. John was accused in his confirmation hearings of being a rough supervisor. I saw none of that in New York. But Bolton's attitude towards the United Nations was no secret.

And he was the sort of chap that wanted to prove he was in charge. I remember when he first came in, I had scheduled a lunch with a brand new ambassador, someone new to diplomacy, the equivalent of political appointee, but someone of real competence. I had introduced myself and the ambassador had clearly wanted what advice I could give on various subjects. Now, it was always a problem trying to find someplace where you could lunch in New York that was quiet and within the limits of the representation allowance.

Q: The adequate was too noisy.

SCOTT: I had booked into one of the solutions to the problem, which was a good Italian restaurant not too far away. Bolton suddenly asked to see where we were planning to entertain. I got a note that said, "Too expensive. Take your guest to the Delegates' Dining Room." Now the Delegates' Dining Room is where you take a visiting cousin. You'd never go there for a confidential exchange over lunch. Everybody there sees with whom you are lunching, and the tables are so close together that many conversations can be overheard by an interested listener at the next table. So I went to the admin officer and said, "If necessary, I'll pay for this myself. I'm not taking this guest to the Delegates'

Dining Room." He said, "Go where you will, Gerald, and just give me the chit. Bolton will never know." This sort of micromanagement by someone who does not understand at least that part of diplomacy was a bit discouraging.

Q: It's June 24th. We're in Richmond, Virginia in the home of Ambassador Gerald Scott, who's oral history we are recording. We've discussed much of the ambassador's career. We're wrapping up with a few thoughts about his relatively long tenure as the senior adviser for Africa at the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the United States and his reflections on some of our leadership at the USUN, as we call it in the business, the U.S. mission to the United Nations. Ambassador, back to you. Thank you.

SCOTT: I was reflecting briefly on the ambassadors, the senior permanent representatives under whom I served in New York at various times. Further to Ambassador Bolton: I have to say that he is a highly intelligent man, committed to the advancement of the interests of the United States as he understands them. He was no slacker when it came to work. He was a demanding boss, but not abusive of his staff so far as I knew. But Bolton came to New York with the well-established reputation of disdain for the UN system. I suppose to the press he would say that his remarks had been taken out of context. Of course, he spoke for effect, as one is sometimes tempted to do, a vice in diplomacy. At any rate, his comments that the UN would have been better off if the top 10 stories of the Secretariat building had been removed were not forgotten. His general attitude was clear. He had poor relations with ambassadors of major allies, particularly, bizarrely, the Brits, with whom we almost always, especially at the UN, have fruitful cooperation. Without having any insight into the particular circumstances, I suspect it was because the British ambassador, being a professional, found Bolton's attitudes toward the UN unprofessional and unhelpful. Bolton was there at the General Assembly during the election of the Latin American member to the Security Council. The Latin Americans had endorsed Venezuela. The regional groups have for all practical purposes the appointing power to these positions. Most of these elections go through by consensus and rather like the U.S. Senate back in the bad old days when some particularly virulent segregationist from Georgia might end up as chairman of the judiciary committee. The answer was, well, that's the way the Senate works. We respect seniority and the substance of objections are waived aside. We forget that element of our own historical practice when we criticize equivalent decisions by regional groups in the United Nations who say, "It's Venezuela's turn," and we're not talking about the domestic political orientation or, for that matter, their friendship with perhaps Russia, it's just the internal dynamics of the particular group that governs the appointment.

Q: Venezuela, for the record, was well into a socialist lurch at this moment.

SCOTT: Exactly. We decided in Washington that this was not going to be something that we would accept this time around, and encouraged Guatemala to compete for the seat. I think we assured Guatemala that with our support and support of all the like-minded major countries, there should be little problem. Guatemala would not be embarrassed in this effort. But Guatemala was greatly embarrassed because it took over 40 votes to resolve the question, votes scheduled day after day, and ultimately it was resolved by

Guatemala and Venezuela stepping aside in favor of Panama. I remember being in the office one day when a telephone call came through from the Guatemalan mission and their message was that they had calculated that when Ambassador Bolton was on the floor of the General Assembly, they lost votes, and could we please keep him off the floor? I'm not quite sure how this message got to Bolton. But the immediate reply: if you want Mr. Bolton to stay off the floor, perhaps you should tell him yourself. Now, it may in fact be that upon careful calculation, this charge that he diminished Guatemalan support was arguably inaccurate, but the fact that it was automatically accepted as likely tells you a great deal about the position that Bolton had. So I asked myself, why is it that we have sent to the United Nations someone who is so diplomatically ineffective, in spite of the fact that he's serious, intelligent, and hard working? There are elements, particularly in multilateral diplomacy, where one's personal interactions with fellow diplomats are a serious element of success or failure. Of course, the answer, I later discovered, was that Vice President Cheney wanted Ambassador Bolton to be Deputy Secretary or the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and Condoleeza Rice was wiley enough to understand that this was not the solution to her problems in Washington. The UN became the consolation prize. It speaks ill of the American value of diplomacy and their appreciation of the UN that this should have been the case.

Q: One wonders why. George Schultz reflected once about Jeane Kirkpatrick, whom he blocked from getting the national security advisor job. In his reflections at the time, his point was that she had many strengths and she could be an effective advocate, but the job at the National Security Council was to reconcile and harmonize views and to dispassionately present them. It seems a good idea to send a person with diplomatic skill to a diplomatic job in New York, but that wasn't always the case.

SCOTT: I was told by someone who knew that George Shultz offered her the position of Deputy Secretary and she refused it, I suppose because she felt much more powerful as a member of the cabinet as a permanent representative in New York and able to express her views with little censorship by the State Department. I think she saw herself as a natural national security advisor and it was even said that she had political ambitions, perhaps for a Senate seat, and then realized that even with her record in New York, this was an unlikely possibility, even from Oklahoma.

At any rate, John Bolton left about a year and a half. He was replaced by Zalmay Khalilzad. I don't have a lot that I can say about Khalilzad. I think he was impressive. He was good at the personal level of diplomacy. He was, of course, America's first Muslim ambassador to the UN. He was presumably highly trusted in Washington by the administration. He was replaced by Susan Rice. I have a lot of respect for Susan Rice. I'm not sure that she was always as effective at the interpersonal side, but she clearly was well established in the Washington decision-making complex. She had a good analytical mind to bring to bear, although she had some distinct preferences which could not be dislodged. She was, on the whole, perhaps one of the better ambassadors. Then she went on to Washington to become National Security Advisor?

Q: Yes, but first under consideration to be Secretary of State, derailed by the Benghazi controversy. But while at the UN, she famously went toe-to-toe with the Russians and it wasn't a calm and tranquil time by any means.

SCOTT: Susan did not shrink from confrontation. I think she gave good direction to the Mission. There was an interim with Rosemary DiCarlo, Deputy Chief of Mission, who was a highly experienced and valuable member of our diplomatic team. Then Samantha Power was named. Ambassador Power was good on the interpersonal elements of diplomacy. She made a decision to call on or try to call on all the ambassadors who were junior to her when she arrived, which was something that, in my experience, no American ambassador tried to do just because there are too many of them. One normally called on the Security Council members, on major allies, a handful of other countries that for one reason or another have a domestic or international profile worthy of attention. Then one expresses the desire to continue with this effort but then it falls by the wayside. The hours in New York are too demanding. Samantha made this exceptional effort and I think it may have been an injudicious use of her time, but highly appreciated by the people to whom she spoke, for how often does an ambassador from any minor country get to write home that he had a 15 minute conversation with the American ambassador at which he presented his country's views on whatever? This is a golden gift to the chiefs of mission of minor countries. But I never saw a memorandum of conversation or any other report of the conversations with these African ambassadors.

SCOTT: *If you believe the demographers, most of the new babies in the world in 50 years will be born in Africa. If we talk population, if nothing else, the world is becoming more African and Africa itself is becoming a more important continent. Do you have any thoughts about Africa, after a lifetime of engagement with the continent, that you'd like to share?*

SCOTT: First of all, let me say that I was almost always impressed by the quality of African senior diplomats at the UN. They send their best and their best is very good indeed. I would have been happy to have seen some of these people as chiefs of our own delegation. Hardworking, intelligent, skilled. Many of them had spent years in New York and they were good at what they did. I almost always found a respectful and serious effort at some form of dialogue when I engaged them. New people would come on stream and they would be a bit at sea, and it would take some effort to cultivate a relationship, but that's what I was there to do. I firmly believe that George H. W. Bush was right, that so much of effective diplomacy, particularly in the international diplomatic arena, is based on personal relationships. You need to be able to pick up the phone and call somebody. You've met him already, you've been polite to him. He realizes that even if you and your delegation and his delegation disagree on important issues, you are personally trustworthy. You can address him and ask a question or request the reception of a piece of American analysis and he will feel comfortable in engaging in that conversation and in considering your point of view. In many cases at the UN, there isn't much room for maneuver. Their instructions will come from capital and there are frequent meetings of the Africa group where they try to hammer out a common position, reflecting Benjamin Franklin's comment that if they don't hang together, they will all hang separately. We

sometimes object to groupthink on the part of various regional groups, but it's a perfectly natural thing to do. It's reflective of the dynamic of a multilateral assembly. As is the case, for example, in our own Congress. It can be, I think, a sign of intellectual laziness to suddenly find all this objectionable at the UN, even if we have a professional requirement to do our best to discourage group-think — group positions when they run counter to our own positions and interests. I found my time dealing with the Africans to be, on the whole, one of the most encouraging elements of my diplomatic career.

On the question of Africa as a whole, I speak with some trepidation. I think one of the things I would note is that, of course, there is a considerable variety. They don't all fit in the same box and you have to understand the politics and the sociology and the history of each individual country that vary all the way from a country like Zaire, where I spent more of my time than any other place in Africa, to a tiny country like Swaziland, or Djibouti where I was briefly chargé d'affaires. One element that is, I think, under-appreciated, and it's not true in every African country, but it's certainly true, for example, in Kenya and Zaire, are the under-the-surface tribal or ethnic competitions. When I joined the Foreign Service, it was impolite to use the word tribe. One was supposed to say ethnic group. I think the word tribe sounded a bit like a Hollywood 1940s film. My impression is that we can now say tribe a bit more easily than we could 30 years ago.

Q: I think, in part, because our society has recognized we are a bit tribal too.

SCOTT: We are. Certainly, the reality of Kenyan politics and the reality of Zairian politics, was that tribal animosities were an important element, which we sometimes did not put adequately put into our own analysis. It's amazing to me, what happened in Africa following liberation or majority rule or the decolonization effort. There was a book written years ago in the 1950s by a man named John Gunther, Inside Africa. He was a journalist, wrote a number of these books, Inside Latin America, Inside Europe, and his picture of Africa at the edge of decolonization was a very interesting one. His picture of Zaire was fascinating because he portrayed a Congo, a Belgian Congo, as having a decent road system, clinics, primary school education. The Belgians, in fact, I think, did not do so bad a job once the period of rule by King Leopold—that awful, bloody dictatorship which he imposed in an effort to enrich himself through the extraction of rubber and ivory—ended. When the Belgian government took over, they ran the colony with a view toward maximizing the profits of the extractive industries, particularly with copper in the south, but they also felt that they had a colonial responsibility. The timeline was a bit off. They thought that if independence were to come, it might be considerably further down the road and meanwhile, they would start slowly, a decent grade school education and then they would advance to bring the next generation into high schools. They are always criticized as having had, I think the figure was 12 or 13 university graduates at the time when they were finally forced to grant independence in 1960. That is not quite true. The churches, particularly the Catholic Church, were rushing through seminarians, grabbing the bright young boys and sending them off because they suddenly realized the future would require something more than religious leadership provided from Belgium. Among the people coming in on stream to govern the country were all these seminarians and they

were sort of given the choice, would you prefer to serve God or Mammon? It is amazing how many of them chose to serve Mammon, and many of them ended up as senior figures in the Zairian government. And that generation at least, could be very impressive in their level of education and talent. However, I noted that quality to a senior Zairian figure that I happened to get to know some twenty years ago. "True in your day, Gerald, but now we have ministers who cannot write a paragraph in decent French."

Q: So Gunther looked at this in the fifties, on the eve of independence, if not quite fully predictable independence, and he saw a relatively positive—

SCOTT: Yes. If you haven't read that book, you ought to find it. It will be an eye-opener. I don't know to what degree it really is accurate. It was my first introduction to Africa. I remember reading it in high school. (Break)

Q: Reflections on Vietnam.

SCOTT: Reflections on Vietnam. First of all, I thought, particularly in the context of the 1950s and 1960s and given the challenge of communism in Southeast Asia, that the Vietnam War was strategically justified. We lost over 50,000 men—a tragedy, but they died attempting to achieve something of importance to the United States and to the world and I do think that an element of American diplomacy, which is disdained by Mr. Trump and Mr. Bolton, is our responsibility also to the larger world. It's not just us. It's also about how we can contribute to a thriving and peaceful international community. I think diplomats need to remember that. I think that our sacrifices in Viet Nam bought time for South-East Asia to deal with the issues of security, and this is often forgotten. In Vietnam, I will not argue that we always knew what we were doing or that we always approached the situation effectively, but when I went there in 1967 as a Naval officer advising Vietnamese units in psychological operations, we were increasingly pushing back the Vietcong and the communists. Then came the Tet Offensive of 1968, and, whatever the realities of that burst of conflict in which clearly on the ground the North was beaten back and their expected popular uprising did not occur, the famous Walter Cronkite saying, "We have lost the war," governed to a great degree the perceptions in this country. America grew tired, people pointed out that this was the sort of foreign engagement at which democracies are not good over the longer term. I share the view that, ultimately, the Vietnam War was lost in the United States, not in Vietnam. When I went back to Vietnam in 1973, the reality was that, for most part, the United States and the South Vietnamese had secured most of South Vietnam. There were elements of the North Vietnamese army that had been left behind in the Paris peace agreements, there were areas in which the Viet Cong were still active and powerful, but for the most part, at least as I observed it, the country had been, to use the term, pacified.

What the country did not have was strategic security. The South Vietnamese government had a long border with Laos and Cambodia. The North Vietnamese had converted the Ho Chi Minh Trail almost into a highway and could have inserted massive numbers of troops at any point along that border. The South Vietnamese did not have enough troops to post in various areas to counter such a threat. The only deterrence to a North Vietnamese

attack along that border was the threat of strategic air power. The South Vietnamese said, “Fine, give us the planes.” We said, “No, no, we won't give you the planes, but fear not. Should you be the victim of such an attack. We will see to it that the North Vietnamese are dissuaded or beaten back.” Then Congress passed the War Powers Act; that tool was taken from the hands of the Administration, and it was, in retrospect, only a matter of time before the North Vietnamese realized that their strategic advantage was almost without any effective counter. It was a tragedy for the South Vietnamese, and it was a disgrace to the United States that we should have left an ally in this position. Montesquieu remarks that honor is not a primary quality of democracies and certainly in my bitter experience, the inability of the United States at the popular level or even at the political level to understand what was happening and to what degree it was our responsibility was shocking. The South Vietnamese army had been taught to fight using American techniques and American supplies. We began to reduce them. Congressional groups would go out and say, “Aha! We have discovered that there are in fact stores of munitions here or there.” Watching General Truong parcel out the munitions in I Corps gave me no reason to believe that these congressional reports were based on accurate information or understanding. I saw the Vietnamese economy shrink; I saw people who were expected to support their families find it impossible to do so, all because we had built a structure dependent on American support and that support was being drastically reduced.

When the end came, we left thousands behind. I had a friend, a Vietnamese officer, and I was in DaNang. A day or two before I left, word came that he was waiting for me at the entrance of the Consulate General, and I thought, “Here comes the bite, the special personal request,” because we were always the people that could solve the problem — that had the money or the resources. In this case, I went down to see him and he didn't want anything for himself. All he wanted to know was, “Gerald tell me the truth. I have my mother in a neighboring village. If I can get her out, is now the time to do it?” I said, “Yes, it's the time to do it. I can't say this publicly, but it's the time to do it.” Ultimately, he got left behind. He was taken prisoner. He was sent to a “re-education camp.” He was harshly treated, but after several years, he was released and rejoined his family in Saigon. Of course, nobody in his situation could hope to have a job. He would pedal into the countryside every morning and try to buy some rice or some vegetables. His wife would then sell them in the market that afternoon or the next day. After years of this, he told his family, “I'm sorry, I'm going to make a run for it.” He and a friend stole a junk. They made it out to sea. They almost died in the effort, but they made it to Hong Kong. There, he was on the list of people who had been trained in the United States. He was admitted to the United States, and ultimately secured the release of his wife and his two children, and they have made a decent life for themselves here. But thousands were left behind, and for most Americans it was passed off as if it were nothing. On the other hand, the reception of over almost 1,500,000 Vietnamese following the fall of Vietnam, the boat people and the people got out at the end, speaks well of the United States … but it was done without much popular support. The city council of Seattle voted almost unanimously to accept no refugees. I was fortunate when, going back to my hometown, that I found four churches willing to sponsor a family each, but I shan’t pretend that had

it been put to the vote of the community of Duncan, Oklahoma, that that would necessarily have been the outcome.

I have a friend who had been an Army officer and who went back to Vietnam as a tourist several years ago. He told me that he was in Saigon in a pedicab and he spoke enough Vietnamese still to communicate with a pedicab driver. But it turned out that the pedicab driver spoke English. They were pedaling through a park by themselves, and he asked the man to tell him his story. The man said, "I was an officer, and so was sent to the reeducation camps." He was sent to the Cambodian frontier where people like him were forced to walk ahead of the advancing Vietnamese troops to explode the mines. "If you came across a rifle that had fallen from somebody's hand, you could pick it up and use it, but you were not issued weapons of your own. You were a mine detection system." He said about half of his colleagues died doing this. "But after several years in the camp, I was finally released and this is what I'm allowed to do." My friend said, "But your children—" He said, "All my children are identified. The system knows who their father was. They can rise higher than this, but they can't rise very high." But this side of the story is almost unknown, or at least disregarded, in the U.S.

Q: As you say, it was an experience that convulsed our country for many years and then was rapidly pushed out of the national psyche.

SCOTT: I do not say that had we maintained the support for South Vietnam at the level we had promised, South Vietnam would surely have survived. I do believe, however, that South Vietnam might well have survived had we maintained, particularly, the strategic air threat against the North. I do say that once we had withdrawn that support, South Vietnam was doomed.

Q: Well, thank you for that very, very thoughtful reflection on one of the single most important chapters of American history whose reverberations continue to this day help to shape our politics and our thinking.

SCOTT: One other subject, if I may. I mentioned earlier a cruise with National Review, the conservative journal. I had subscribed to National Review almost from the first issue. William F. Buckley, Jr. was an exceptional editor, and I found that much of the writing reflected my political prejudices on domestic issues. On foreign policy there was a firm and I thought correct view of the salience of the Cold War. But that said, there was a constant denigration of diplomacy and the State Department. This is a popular attitude not limited to the right, but it seems particularly strong on that wing of our politics.

I had been retired for several years, and Frances and I had for eighteen months been dealing with the sequelae of my mother's death and our subsequent (all too brief) move to London. At that point National Review offered a cruise of the Danube, and we signed up.

I recall that just before the sailing I was again in Africa as acting DCM helping an old friend manage a small embassy in a country afflicted by civil war. He was engaged with the Nuncio and the U.N. Resident Representative in trying to bring the two sides together

and he needed someone to write some of the standard reports. He was himself familiar with National Review and Buckley's work and remarked that the cruise might be a particularly rewarding experience. "Yes," I said, "but not if the usual anti-Foreign Service views are much expressed." "Unlikely to get much exposure with Buckley in charge," he replied.

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As it happened, Buckley left on the second day. And on the third day I was sitting at lunch with some man who addressed me, asking why it was that the State Department consistently refused to carry out presidential policy on Israel and Palestine. I replied that he was misinformed. People in the State Department might have varying views, but we were professionals committed to the implementation of our instructions. "Oh, come on," he said. "Everybody knows that you diplomats resist the President on that issue." Cutting the exchange short, I replied that I could only say what I had said. End of that, I thought.

But I was mistaken. The next day, at one of the presentations between port calls on various subjects by two or three National Review figures, this chap stood up and asked how it was that the State Department was so "full of anti-Americans?" I expected a firm objection, but Kate O'Beirne, their Washington editor, replied that the anti-American orientation of State Department people was shocking and clear to interested conservative observers. And the second National Review participant, Jay Nordlinger, reinforced her comment.

I was uncharacteristically speechless. But after the crowd cleared from the lounge, Frances turned to me and asked if we really wanted to continue the cruise with people like that? I said I thought not, so I went to the National Review publisher whom I knew slightly in another context. "Did you hear what they said about the State Department? If someone had spoken in such terms about the military, there would have been a quick rebuttal, so why not now?" "Oh, did someone criticize the military?" "No, but they were grossly insulting in comments about me and my colleagues." I repeated the exchanges, for which he had not been present. "Well, we never hear anything good about the State Department. We really don't know anybody over there." "Well, you know me," I said, "but whatever your lack of contacts may be, if an apology is not made, Frances and I will leave the boat at the next stop." He said he didn't want that, and disappeared — to return in 45 minutes with the assurance that an apology would be made at the next opportunity. And so it was, though not one particularly robust in nature.

But thinking about that whole experience, back at USUN in the fall, I concluded that something to bridge the gap ought to be attempted. Ambassador Anne Patterson, Chargé d'affaires, agreed to meet with some senior National Review figures and I recruited a couple of other officers of wide experience to make up a contact group. But my letter of proposal to National Review received a blunt rejection. The editors had no time in their crowded schedule for such a meeting.

I have told this story once or twice to National Review people I have come across, and they express polite regret, but any extended reading of National Review will demonstrate

that disdain for State and the Foreign Service remains a part of the political landscape which National Review and much of American conservatism inhabits.

Q: Interesting.

SCOTT: Let me add something else, which is a bit of a cliché, Nathan. Which is to say that, we know, but it's worth remembering. The interests of the United States do not normally vary much between Republicans or Democrats. You might have discerned my own views in terms of political orientation as quite conservative. I don't think this has made much difference in my approach to foreign policy. Of course, sometimes we find ourselves in especially challenging situations, the Trump administration being the most recent example. But whatever the administration, the country cannot do without a strong professional diplomacy. I think that professionalism needs to be reinforced.

But we have been fortunate to be diplomats for the United States and in the 20th and now the 21st century when, on the whole, the United States has played such a key and positive role in world history. We have been most fortunate.

Q. Well, thank you for your reflections over these last two days and thank you for your service. Thank you.

End of interview