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

SMITH SIMPSON

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Initial interview date: May 13, 1991

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INTERVIEW

Q: Is your full name Smith Simpson?

SIMPSON: No, I had to drop the Robert. There were too many Robert Simpsons, too much resulting confusion, so I dropped the Robert and just used the middle name and the last name.

Q: This is being done also with Ambassador Jack Crowley. It's going to be a joint interview concerning Mr. Simpson's career, with Crowley working more on the labor side and I'll be working on the other side. Mr. Simpson, I wonder if you could give me something about your background. Where were you born and when and all that sort of stuff, and where did you get educated?

SIMPSON: I was born here in Northern Virginia in what is now called Arlington County, then called Alexandria County, so I grew up in the Washington area. My family was jubilant over the election of Woodrow Wilson, and I therefore took a keen interest in national politics. Used to go up to the Hill to listen to congressional debates; became familiar with the figures up there.

Woodrow Wilson left the Congressional Country Club because he struck a golf ball on its links without announcing he was driving off and it hit a fellow member of the club, who objected in rather vigorous language, so Wilson left that club. He used to drive out in the morning to the Washington Golf and Country Club, and this took him by my little two-room schoolhouse. So every morning we would line up in front of the school and cheer him as he went by.

Q: You were born when, by the way?

SIMPSON: 1906. Then, of course, Wilson's campaign for the League of Nations fired all youthful imaginations. So when I went to college, which was the University of Virginia, in 1923, I went there with an interest in international affairs. Took the pioneering course in international relations there, given by Bruce Williams who had been in World War I. I resurrected the student magazine so as to make it more of a forum of discussion by students and faculty, and we got into international questions as well as university issues.

I then went to law school in the North, having arrived at the conclusion that I'd had all the southern exposure I needed. There again I started a student publication which addressed not only university and national issues but international. I led the Cornell delegation to a model League of Nations assembly at Princeton.

By the time I was approaching the end of law school, I realized that the law and I were not altogether compatible for life-time association. So I applied for a fellowship in international affairs and international law at Columbia, and Columbia gave it to me. After receiving my law degree, I enrolled at Columbia.

There, was James T. Shotwell, who was quite a celebrated international relations professor. Had his finger in a lot of the peace movement's activities and had helped to engineer the Kellogg-Briand Pact. He was quite an extraordinary person. He had contacts really all over the world, apart from Latin America and Africa, and exposed his students, of course, to this breadth of interest and experience.

I gave a paper on the Kellogg-Briand Pact in his seminar, raising the question of what was war, because the Briand Pact renounced war as an instrument of national policy. So my question was: exactly what were the governments renouncing? I brought to bear on this my legal training. Shotwell was impressed by it and at the end of the year invited me to become his research assistant.

That year with him of course deepened my interest in international affairs. But I really wasn't interested in teaching it. Of an activist temperament, I was interested more in contributing to the movement in this country to take a more active part in international affairs.

This brought me to 1933, which was the year in which the New Deal was inaugurated. I spent that summer abroad, first in England for a month studying unemployment and unemployment relief and what they call unemployment insurance, but what we were calling in this country unemployment compensation. And then the rest of the summer in Geneva as a member of what was called the American Committee, which was a committee financed by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to escort American tourists through the League of Nations and the International Labor Office, to explain to them what these institutions were and how they worked.

And that was where I met my wife. She was on the ILO staff. So in all respects it was a rewarding experience.

When I returned, I came to Washington with the New Deal as a special labor advisor in the National Recovery Administration. In time I was shifted over to the NRA administrative staff, where I dealt with the development of the code of fair competition of the asphalt, shingle, and roofing industry--U.S. Gypsum, Johns Manville, Certainteed and the rest. That industry eventually took me to New York as their advisor on their Code of Fair Competition. I was there until the Supreme Court declared the National Industrial Recovery Act unconstitutional.

I then accepted an invitation to join the faculty of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. There I had time to do some writing on labor questions, and became a co-drafter of the Pennsylvania Unemployment and Compensation Act. Served on the staff of the Governor's Commission on Unemployment and Unemployment Relief. Helped New Jersey to set up its unemployment compensation agency. And wrote on international labor affairs, including a monthly article on the ILO for the American Federationist. I wrote position papers for the American labor delegate to the Governing Body and to the International Labor Conference. So I got an undeserved reputation for knowing something about labor problems and, more particularly, international labor problems.

When Pearl Harbor came along, I got a telephone call from the War Shipping Administration, inviting me to work for them on two major labor problems. One, which the admirals at War Shipping were calling desertion of seamen from allied ships, and I flabbergasted them by saying, "Well, don't let's call it 'desertion,' let's call it 'absenteeism' so as to avoid the emotionalism surrounding that problem and get us headed to examining the causes." The other major labor problem arose from the fact that we were turning out Liberty Ships faster than we had crews and officers to put on them.

Q: Would you explain what Liberty Ships were?

SIMPSON: Liberty Ships were rapidly fabricated ships which Henry Kaiser was turning out in shipyards to carry supplies to the Allies. And of course after Pearl Harbor we used them to transport our troops and supplies to Europe and elsewhere. As I said, we were turning out those ships faster than we had crews and officers to put on them, and so it became a question of intensive recruiting of anybody at all who had ever been to sea, and establishing a training school for both crewmen and officers. Which we did, only to discover in the course of time that one of our problems was a morale problem on board our ships arising from the fact that the cooks were insufficiently trained. So we set up a school for cooks in Long Island. And so it went. It was a busy time and I had a feeling I was contributing something to the war effort.

By the time we were over those problems and had solutions largely in place, the State Department had come to the stage of drafting the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals, which dealt with a United Nations Charter, and had come to labor and social provisions in the charter for which they felt they had no expert advice. So they came over to War Shipping to see if

I would join them, which I did when they obtained the permission of War Shipping. So I worked on that part of the UN Charter.

After Dumbarton Oaks, a logjam broke in the State Department on a proposal to establish a labor attaché program in the Foreign Service. This proposal originated with Larry Duggan, who was the son of Stephen A. Duggan and very bright young civil servant in the department, interested primarily in Latin American affairs.

The proposal had been held up. There was a lot resistance to it: it was new, it was innovative, it was viewed even as radical. But Sumner Welles finally swung behind it, when the war was approaching its end.

This was early 1944, and the State Department had no contact whatever with the emerging underground movements in Europe. The only contact this country had had with those movements during the war had been through the OSS, the Office of Strategic Services. Welles recognized that this would be a severe limitation on the State Department and the Foreign Service. So he saw the labor attaché program as giving the Department an opportunity to establish contact with the emerging underground and to exercise some influence over it, to orient it towards the West, and away from the East. This was the thrust of the labor attaché program when it first got underway, at least insofar as Europe was concerned.

In participating in negotiating this program in the State Department, I was well aware of the fact that we were going to encounter problems with the program in our embassies. The Foreign Service officers with whom we negotiated were not, let's say, well-informed on the labor factor and saw no reason for the program.

They also looked at it from the standpoint of the swelling of wartime agencies, which had flooded our posts abroad with all manner of eager beavers. The major ones, of course, were OWI (the Office of War Information), and the Bureau of Economic Warfare, which later became the Foreign Economic Administration. These people were unversed in foreign affairs. They were often ignorant of the countries to which they were sent. So they managed not only to offend a lot of local officials but complicated the work of embassies and consular posts, with an inordinate amount of time and energy having to go into straightening out the confusion and overlapping activities of these various wartime agencies which were operating abroad. The Foreign Service felt it had all the headaches it wanted from these kind of people, so the officers were far from hospitable to the new program.

Q: Excuse me. Jack will be asking most of the questions now, but there's just one thing I wonder if you could clear up. When these programs were set up to contact the labor movements, which were of course, in occupied Europe, an underground movement, but when they were beginning to emerge, and you said Sumner Welles wanted to be sure they were oriented to the West, what was the feeling in the State Department at that time about the Soviet Union, Marxism and all concerning the labor movement, as you felt it?

SIMPSON: The State Department of course was conservative minded, but I never detected there, either in my post-war planning work or in the labor attaché movement, that there was any hostility towards the Soviet Union. Of course there was a recognition that communism posed a real problem for us, both in this country and abroad. The Department and the Foreign Service were not too sure as to just who these labor attachés were going to be, where they were going to come from, what they were going to do, and whether they were going to get in everybody's way. Does this answer your question?

Q: Yes, it does.

QC: It's interesting what you say about the origin of the labor attaché corps. A number of people, sources that I have looked into also contributed to the origin. For example, David Morris says pretty much that he conceived the idea and that he sold it in Labor.

SIMPSON: No, that is not correct.

Q: And Frances Perkins, I have some testimony that she gave in Congress where she said she conceived it. And then other people say, well, it was Isador Lubin, you know, who was the director of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, who told Mrs. Roosevelt and she... But it's very interesting to try to get to the root of it. Maybe several people had the same idea around the same time.

SIMPSON: No doubt. No doubt the idea was not simply that of Larry Duggan. All that I'm saying is that, as far as the State Department and Foreign Service were concerned, it was Larry who introduced the idea into the Department. And it was he, with Sumner Welles's support, who gave it the push that put it through. I wasn't aware at all of any contribution from the Labor Department. And I knew Frances Perkins very well. I had met her in New York when I was working with Shotwell. My position with Shotwell gave me entrée to a tremendous scope of contacts in New York, including Frances Perkins.

The labor attaché program had to be instituted in the Foreign Service auxiliary, because the Foreign Service did not recruit during the war. So anything that was introduced as a part of or an appendage of the Foreign Service had to be done through the Foreign Service auxiliary. And it was well understood, by legislation, that this auxiliary would automatically terminate at the end of the war. So this meant that every program, including the labor attaché program which came out of the wartime period and was made a part of the auxiliary, would then come to an end automatically. This was one of the things we had to keep in mind in setting up the program.

In taking part in the negotiations in the department to create the program, I became well aware of the fact that, as I say, there were going to be problems abroad in each of the missions in which we had a labor attaché. There was a great educational job which had to be done in embassies to get a labor attaché functioning and to provide him the necessary embassy facilities to do his work. So those of us who went out, having participated in the

creation of the program, had to do what we could to convince our colleagues in the embassies that this was something that should continue, and to convince the Department, so that the program would survive the end of the war.

I told my chief of the division, Otis Mulliken, that I wanted to go out as a labor attaché to see what the problems would be and how they could be overcome. He agreed, on the condition that I would serve one tour abroad and then come back. It took my absence for a period of time to convince him that I was not indispensable.

I was offered Moscow, which was an interesting proposal. And this goes to the question you raised as to what the attitude was in the Department. The attitude was, oddly enough, that a labor attaché could function in Moscow. I wasn't convinced of this. I asked, "Who would you expect me to talk to and what contacts would I have?" So I politely turned this offer down.

I was then offered a choice of Paris and Rome, which I also turned down, because I wanted a place where I could easily travel and wartime conditions would make this impossible in France and Italy. If I went to Paris, I would be limited to it. I wouldn't know at all what was going on in the country. The same would be true if I went to Rome.

So I asked for Brussels, because this, in a very small area, presented a cross section of Europe, economically with agriculture, industry, and mining, politically with Communist, Socialist, Liberal and Conservative parties and socially with all the liberation and post-war problems of the larger countries. Moreover, it was a crossroads. People were going back and forth between England and Germany, which would help to keep me in touch with many European developments. Added to these features, I could get around, I could get a real feel for the country and what was happening in it and perhaps do something effective with the underground.

So I went to Belgium.

QC: When was that?

SIMPSON: That was in early 1945. I was scheduled to go in November '44, but the Battle of the Bulge occurred. The military said no more civilians; it didn't know whether it was going to be able to hold on to Belgium for a while. That situation didn't clear up and transportation wasn't made available until early '45. As a matter of fact, I left on one of the old Pan American Clippers on Valentine's Day, so that was February 14, 1945.

QC: Were you accompanied by Mrs. Simpson?

SIMPSON: No. Oh, no. No one was allowed except working civilians.

We took off from Baltimore Harbor. When I looked at that old sea plane, I wondered if it was going to be able to make it. But it got into the air and landed us safely in Bermuda for

the first night, where we refueled. Then the next day we set off for the Azores, where we were supposed to refuel but were unable to land. "Land" is a poor word for a sea plane, but anyway, we couldn't settle down there because of a heavy swell, so we went on to Lisbon.

And I well remembered that, on the Tagus River about a year before, one of the Clippers had capsized, throwing everybody into the water. A young Foreign Service officer had been aboard. He rescued a young lady who was a passenger, and she turned out to be an actress, so he shortly married her, abandoning his Foreign Service career for a life in Hollywood.

I also was mindful of the fact that one of the planes from Lisbon to Britain had been shot down sometime before, the Germans thinking that Winston Churchill was on board.

Q: Leslie Howard was on board instead.

SIMPSON: And that was the end of Leslie Howard. So I wondered whether I was going to survive this last leg of the journey. But we settled down on the Shannon River in Ireland and then picked up a plane to take us into London. There I had to wait for ongoing transportation to Brussels. Eventually, I got to Brussels, and when I passed across the threshold of the embassy in Brussels, my antennae told me that I wasn't exactly welcomed with wholehearted fervor.

The first question which the embassy wanted to know was whether I represented the AFL or the CIO. It took a little time to reassure them that I was actually a representative of the same government they were and was only interested in serving my government with objective reports and conduct.

QC: Had you actually ever belonged to a labor union?

SIMPSON: No.

QC: You were more of a scholar and an expert in labor law and labor affairs.

SIMPSON: I had what you might call an academic connection. Some of the labor people in Philadelphia, where the University of Pennsylvania is located, wanted me to work closely with them and even to live in one of their housing developments, to bring a little culturization to the working man. I didn't do that. I felt I could be most useful if I were impartial and objective. For the same reason I decided not to join the American Federation of Teachers.

Another interest of the Embassy Brussels was awakened by the fact that I was consulting with employers and employer organizations as well as labor leaders and labor organizations. This greatly mystified them; but it did reassure them in the end. One of my

best friends in Belgium, as a matter of fact, was the leading employer of the time in Belgium, Maurice Van der Rest.

Q: Who was the ambassador there then?

SIMPSON: Charles Sawyer. Sawyer was an Ohio businessman, lawyer, politician, and had served as governor of Ohio. So Sawyer well understood the labor factor. There was never any problem in his mind--as soon as I reassured him that I wasn't either CIO or AFL. And of course this had some influence on the staff.

The first DCM there was Julian Harrington. Julian was quite a remarkable officer. He had came up through the consular branch and his feet were on the ground. He had no pretense, no jealousy of turf, anything of that sort. Julian was a very fine colleague of mine, with a wry sense of humor. This helped, too.

The problem there, personnelwise, came from the political section and from the economic counselor, who was an old Herbert Hoover trade commissioner. His first foray into foreign affairs had been as a trade commissioner for Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, so he shared the prevailing mentality of the 1920s, when it had all been Keep Cool with Coolidge, and Prosperity Through the Great American Businessman and his Leadership, etc. He was never convinced of the need for a labor attaché and never sympathetic with my work.

QC: In the organization of the embassy, where was your position? Were you independent, or were you in one of these sections?

SIMPSON: They didn't know what to do with me. They didn't know whether I belonged in the political section or the economic, so they asked me, "Well, where would you like to be?"

I said, "It makes no difference to me. As long as I can get my job done, I don't care where you put me."

The political section was just as glad at this reply, and so I wound up in the economic. The economic counselor never understood why there should be a labor attaché. Nor did he ever understand anything about labor. To him labor was just a problem, a headache, one of those things you had to endure in life.

Q: When Ambassador Kirk came, did that affect your relations there at all?

SIMPSON: No, Kirk was neutral. He was neither for a labor attaché at his embassy nor against him.

But by Kirk's time I had established contacts all over the country. And this was an interesting innovation, too, in the Foreign Service, because no officer in the embassy

traveled outside of Brussels except two of us: the agricultural attaché and myself. The rest depended on sources in Brussels. So the agricultural attaché and I were picking up information and insights around the country as to what was going on, what people were thinking and what was brewing, what crisis was likely to erupt next. All of this the embassy recognized as highly useful, which helped to make the labor attaché program more acceptable, although I found out later that acceptance was not reflected in efficiency reports in which old attitudes and prejudices found expression.

When the issue of the King's return reached a climax, I happened to be in Paris attending some conference, probably of labor attachés or maybe the IFTU Congress. I had to get back to Brussels in a hurry because the embassy wanted to know what the labor movement was going to do. The labor movement was threatening to strike if the king came back, and the embassy wanted to know, if this was for real. Getting back to Brussels in a hurry was something of a task, but I won't go into that.

When the war came to an end, the auxiliary was abolished and its labor attaché program terminated. We were offered appointments to the Foreign Service Staff. After things shook out a bit the program entered the Foreign Service itself on a permanent basis, as we attachés received appointments as FSOs through the Manpower Act. I took the oral examination for the Foreign Service in early 1947 and was appointed shortly after I arrived in Greece in May of that year, as our first labor attaché there.

QC: As well as the labor attaché.

SIMPSON: As well as labor attaché.

QC: So you went from Brussels to Athens in 1947.

SIMPSON: That's right.

QC: And you didn't come back to work for Otis Mulliken in Washington after all then.

SIMPSON: No, by that time Otis had discovered Simpson was not really indispensable: there were other people who could perform in the Department as well as he.

I had gone back to the States on home leave in early 1947, and took the Foreign Service exam in Washington. Under the Manpower Act, those of us who had served during the war in various capacities could enter the Foreign Service through an oral exam. We were viewed as having a broad background which rendered us suitable for the Foreign Service. And that background plus wartime service the Department felt demonstrated a sufficient grasp so that we didn't have to take the written exam. We just had to take an oral exam.

I went before an oral panel headed by Joe Green, who was one of the real giants in those days. Joe Green was a Princeton graduate and had been a member of the Princeton

faculty, had entered the State Department and really was one of the great people in the Department at the time.

I'll never forget that examination. The Department of Commerce representative on the panel asked me specifically, quite pointedly, I thought, "What are your relations with Ray Miller?" Ray Miller was the economic counselor, so obviously something had come back from Ray raising a question as to: Who is this fellow Simpson. What is he up to? How qualified is he? What does he know about anything? So I was somewhat surprised because although I was aware of Ray's point of view, it had not bothered me. I had been able to function the way I wanted to function, I could only respond with a somewhat flustered answer, "As far as I know, they're good." Apparently, I convinced the panel I was material it was looking for, as I received appointment as First Secretary and Consul.

I was sounded out in Washington as to whether I would be interested in going to Greece as labor attaché. The ambassador there, Lincoln MacVeagh, had been requesting a labor attaché for some time. He was obviously pressing for one, so I was asked if I'd be interested in going.

I said, "Normally, I would go anywhere at any time." But Mrs. Simpson was then in bed with double pleurisy. The conditions in Belgium were not very good on account of the war. We had difficulty keeping houses and offices heated. She had come down with pleurisy once, and then in going to the doctor's office for a checkup in the winter, the waiting room was unheated, she became chilled and this brought her down a second time. Since she was already weakened from the first bout, she was having great difficulty to get over the second bout. So I said, "In view of this, in view of the fact that she's in bed, I would rather stay in Belgium until she recovers."

So I went back to Belgium persuaded that we were going to stay in Belgium for a while, only to find a cable awaiting me from a quick trip I made to Holland after my return, instructing me to proceed forthwith to Athens.

At that point I almost resigned. I didn't see myself leaving Mrs. Simpson in bed in this weakened condition. Furthermore, I didn't understand why this was not a persuasive ingredient of departmental thinking. But then I reflected: If every officer resigned when an assignment was very difficult, we wouldn't have a Foreign Service. So I obediently got myself transportation to Athens.

Our oldest daughter had contracted a lung problem-- again, because of conditions in Europe. We'd had to send her to a school in the mountains in Switzerland, so I stopped off in Geneva and went up to the mountains to see her. We hadn't seen her for some time. And then I went on to Athens.

I arrived there without any instructions, and none were awaiting me. So when I paid my call on the ambassador, I said, "Mr. Ambassador, what are my instructions?"

He said, "You don't have any."

So I said, "What am I here for?"

He replied, "we have a problem. The Communists have a considerable representation in the labor movement. And they say that they're going to see to it that no American aid reaches this monarcho-fascist regime. To prevent our supplies being unloaded they will strike the longshoremen. `If you bring in longshoremen,' they say, `we'll strike the dockers, so that the stuff won't move from the docks. Then if you bring in dockers to move it off the docks, we'll strike the truck drivers and the railroads. And if you bring in trucks and drivers to cart it, we will strike workers at the points of destination." So MacVeagh said, "This is the problem."

I asked, "Have you any suggestions?"

He replied, "You're the labor attaché."

Bill Braine, who was the British labor attaché in Rome, and Sam Berger, who was our labor attaché in London, had been brought in, and the three of us set about to negotiate an agreement setting up a free Greek trade union confederation. One had existed earlier in Greek history, but under Metaxas, who was the dictator, the trade union confederation had been brought under the control of the dictatorship. Then came occupation and Communist penetration of the labor movement, so that there was no Greek labor confederation. So we negotiated one. We brought in the leaders of the various factions.

QC: Was Irving Brown or any of the AFL people cooperating with you?

SIMPSON: Irving Brown came to Athens at that time. He was on the periphery, because this was not really his job but he wanted to keep informed as to what was going on. He did not take part in the negotiations.

To make a long, arduous negotiation short, we got an agreement. And it included the Communists. For strategic reasons, we wanted the Communists in it. We wanted to be able to say this was representative of all factions. For some reason, they agreed to come in--perhaps just to know what was going on. But they signed the agreement along with the others. And that agreement set up a provisional executive body to hold office until free trade union elections were held.

QC: Were they affiliated with the WFTU?

SIMPSON: Not yet. That was one of the tugs of war that entered into the negotiation. At my suggestion, that question was deferred for a decision by the duly elected executive body.

The agreement also included sending a delegation to the International Labor Conference, which was then meeting in Geneva, because we felt this would be a good thing to get these fellows out of the quarrelsome atmosphere of Athens and breathe a little free air, expand their horizons, get them to realize that there was a big issue for them in the reception that they were going to have from the rest of the Western world, that they would be able to make a case in Geneva that they were not part of a monarcho-fascist regime, that they were independent, and explain how they came to be independent and so on.

Immediately on the signing of this agreement, Messrs. Braine and Berger departed in haste. The reason for their hasty departure was that agreements had been negotiated before on at least three occasions, two by representatives of the British TUC, and the other by the WFTU, which sent Louis Saillant to Athens and they had negotiated agreements which had evaporated after they had left Greece. The prospect was that this would also happen in our case, that no sooner would the negotiations come to an end and the negotiators disperse than the factional quarrels would resume and the whole thing would fall apart.

It was one of the functions of the American labor attaché there to see that this didn't happen. It took a little doing, because the Greeks, a very lovable people, are intensely individualistic, just as in ancient times. So it was difficult to keep them together, to move the newly organized provisional executive into planning for free trade union elections. This meant cleaning up union lists, because the Communists, and perhaps the Metaxas dictatorship, had resorted to the good old Tammany Hall device of enrolling names from tombstones. So in order to hold free trade union elections, the union lists had to be cleaned up. Fortunately, we had an incorruptible judicial system in Greece, so we used the judges to clean up the lists and to supervise the elections, thereby guaranteeing the thing would be done properly and fairly. All this took a little time and effort but it was done.

Early on, after Braine, Berger and Irving Brown had departed, I felt I just had to get out into the country to sell the program. We were dealing up to this point almost entirely with Athenian labor leaders. Most of these were as much politicians as labor leaders. And those who were not actually in politics and sitting in the Chamber of Deputies, as was Fotios Makris, had at least party affiliations and subsidies, and we wanted this ended. We wanted a free, independent labor movement.

I talked over on a trip with the ambassador. He saw no objection. He said, "I want to warn you, though, that you are getting beyond the safe precincts of Athens." I understood. I was then in the economic section of the embassy. Its chief and other officers didn't express themselves one way or the other whether they favored my travel or didn't favor it, whether they supported it or didn't support it, I was on my own and it was my decision, with, as I say, the Ambassador's approval.

In the meanwhile, we had got a group off to the International Labor Conference in Geneva. Among these were some of the leading factionalists, because they saw this as a glorious opportunity to get out and breathe some free air and enjoy the sights and flesh

pots of Geneva. When they heard through their pipeline that I was planning this trip and I would take along with me the acting secretary general of the newly established labor confederation, they immediately objected for they were members of other factions than his. They felt that such a trip would enhance the prestige of the acting secretary general. They sent me a telegram from Geneva asking me to postpone the trip until they got back. I declined to do this. I didn't feel that anything needed for the success of our aid program should be postponed in deference to factional interests. If this was something we felt must be done, we were going to do it. Furthermore, I didn't want to lose the momentum germinated by the negotiations. I wanted to keep that momentum going. So the acting secretary general and I started out.

But before we did, desiring to see how well I could cope with this kind of a venture, using an interpreter, and improvising travel, I took a short trip outside of Athens to the trade union center in Volos.

Finding I could get my points across through an interpreter, I started out on the longer trip. This was the trip to Northern Greece. We flew to Salonika and then took the train across by stages. Sometimes we would move by car if the distance was short.

The Communists were well aware of this trip. When I told my interpreter, "I want to go incognito," he replied, "You'll never go incognito. Your face is your passport. Anyway, the Communists know who you are and what you're up to."

I should go back and say that three days after we had negotiated this agreement, the Communists received instructions from Moscow to drop out. So they recanted on the agreement. They said, "We're no longer a part of it."

I told them, "You signed it."

They said, "Well, never mind. We are no longer part of it."

QC: Were they the majority in the labor movement?

SIMPSON: I had concluded they were not. I had a strong suspicion that their power came from a well-organized, well-disciplined minority. I felt that the ambassador may have exaggerated their ability to frustrate our aid program, although I recognized that a well organized minority can produce strikes without majority support--wildcat strikes.

We started out, first checking in at our consulate general in Salonika. I asked the consul general if his staff had any knowledge of the area or the people in it. He said no, they didn't, but one officer had gone out on a short expedition. That was as much travel as they had done.

We took all reasonable precautions. For example, I recall a meeting in a town we were going to visit which we alerted not too far in advance, because the guerrillas were

dropping their calling cards everywhere we went. The acting secretary general that I would depend upon him to see to it that the word got the word around and the union hall was full to over-flowing. The gloom was so thick you could cut it with a knife. My message cheered them up. I was much moved to see how the visit of someone from Athens reassured them they were not being forgot and better times were on the way through American aid. I pleaded with them to hold free and fair union elections, clean up their unions and get a free and independent labor confederation going which could cooperate with us. They responded with cheers.

So we went around. We were constantly beset, of course, by rumors of Communist insurrections in towns we were to visit. I can remember, there was a strong report that the Communists were going to produce an uprising in Kavala the night we were there. Was this for real, or was it just a scare tactic so that we wouldn't appear in town? If we said we were going to be there, we couldn't afford not to appear. So we held to our schedule and there was no uprising. We had our meeting undisturbed.

And I can tell you, at these meetings I was very impressed by the intellectual caliber of the ordinary Greek worker. After I had made my talk before a meeting, some fellow would get up in the back of a dimly lit hall and begin to orate. He would recall the grandeurs of ancient Greece, and then present a philosophic analysis of the situation facing Greece, which put me to shame. I couldn't match this. All I could do was to speak very simply of the immediate need of their establishing themselves as a free trade union movement in order to cooperate with us, and we were there to help them, to help their country, so we needed them as partners. That was my theme. So it was very simple, very down to earth, urging them to cooperate with their provisional executive and with the judiciary in cleaning up the trade union lists, holding elections, and getting themselves in a position to function effectively with us.

So we went all the way across Macedonia and Thrace. We, of course, encountered expected difficulties. When we went through a narrow defile on our way to Alexandroupolis, the train was fired on and we had to duck under the seats. And then on the way back, a fellow came down the track headed towards our train, waving his hand. It turned out that he had discovered a mine under the tracks. He was what they called a keeper of the fields. He would walk around fields to make sure nobody was trespassing on other people's olive orchards. In his walking around, he had happened to pick up the railroad track and was walking along that, and just saw that some ground had been disturbed in one place. He took a closer look and discovered there was a mine, so he ran down the track in time to spare us some inconvenience.

QC: When you were having the meetings with the local labor people, was there any heckling by the Communists?

SIMPSON: No.

Q: The Communists just probably didn't come.

SIMPSON: Apparently they didn't show up. Or if they did, they thought it wiser not to speak up.

Q: You talk about the shooting and all. Was the civil war in full scale?

SIMPSON: In full scale. At that time it was concentrated in the north where my trip took place. I scheduled it through that area because I felt we had to defy the Communists on their own grounds. It wasn't important that I travel through the Peloponnesus, for example. I felt I had to take them on, on their own turf. This was needed. The morale of the Greeks in the north was low. They were very despondent. So it was a tremendous boost to their morale to have somebody show up, interested in them and in their plight, assuring them that if we got effective cooperation from the Greek people and their government we could reverse the situation. Such a trip was very useful not only from a labor standpoint, but from the standpoint of Greek morale and the success of our aid program.

Our aid program, I might say, was underway--at least in Washington. President Truman signed the aid bill on the day I arrived in Athens, but it was taking a long, long time to assemble the personnel. Not many people were eager to serve in as chaotic a country as Greece. The labor part of the aid program really didn't get underway until Clinton Golden arrived. And that was, according to my recollection, sometime in September (1947). So months were going by without much sign of our aid materializing. In the meanwhile, it was the labor attaché at the embassy who had to keep going the momentum generated by the May agreement, plead for restraint in wage demands and deferment of strikes and otherwise keep the labor situation from deteriorating still further.

QC: Did you have an exchange program? Could you send Greek labor leaders to the United States?

SIMPSON: No, we needed them right there. The ones that we would normally have sent were the ones who could produce the leadership votes in union elections which would bring the new confederation in existence.

QC: After your time there, how did you feel about what you had accomplished?

SIMPSON: What I had accomplished...well, that reminds me of the meeting of American labor attachés in Geneva, which I flew to right after my trip and had made my report to the embassy and to the department. The labor attaché meeting was already underway in Geneva, so I got there a little late. One of the questions Dick Eldridge (our labor attaché in Paris) asked me was, "Smith, what do you expect to come out of all this?"

And my simple answer was, "Nobody knows."

But your question was what I accomplished. I held the Provisional Executive together until our aid got underway. Out of this came free trade union elections, through the instrumentality of the judiciary. There came, therefore, a freely elected national labor convention and out of that a freely elected executive, and thus a free labor confederation--the first Greece had had for decades. People were organized who would cooperate with us in the aid program. They had difficulty sticking together, and it was my job to see they did stick together and keep their eye on the ball, which was the reconstruction of Greece. I got restraint in calling strikes. I inspired a willingness to tighten belts so as to get recovery going.

When Clint Golden arrived, as the labor man in our aid mission, he had a staff which could work with him in the aid program. My main job then became simply to hold the confederation together. Clint said to me, "You do that, because you know these people, you've been through it, they trust you. So you keep at it, you keep them together. I'll deal with wages and other labor questions involved in the reconstruction of Greece." That's how we divided our work. Clint and I worked very well together. He was a wonderful person to work with, a genuine, warm-hearted person who was absolutely above board. He was simply and exclusively interested in getting the job done. He had no turf feeling whatsoever.

One of the problems of holding things together was, of course, the desire of people in the government, including Constantine Tsaldaris, the prime minister (later deputy prime minister) and minister of foreign affairs, to keep their hands on the labor movement. So I had to go constantly to Tsaldaris, report to him what was going on, and use those opportunities to reinforce our desire that this be an independent labor movement, that only an independent one could possibly serve the Greek cause.

We nearly lost our battle in my last months there. This would have been the end of 1948, when all the elections had been held, and the national convention assembled. An old crony of Metaxas thought this would be an opportunity for him to stage a come-back. So he ran for secretary general. He had a lot of money, and I always suspected it came from Tsaldaris, because the Metaxas crony was able to bribe enough votes to really give us a run for it. He nearly won. Irving Brown was on the scene as the AFL's fraternal delegate to the convention and he and Alan Strachan, who had succeeded Clint as the AMAG labor adviser, pitched in to help hold the moderates together.

QC: After two years there, you moved to Mexico City as first secretary.

SIMPSON: That's right. Yes, and I left Greece thoroughly worn out.

QC: Were you a labor attaché there as well?

SIMPSON: Yes. As a reward for Greece, I was offered a choice of Mexico City, Rio, Ottawa, and Stockholm, which was a nice choice to have. I chose Mexico, because I felt I'd always had the American point of view about the Mexican- American War, but I'd

never heard the Mexican view. And I got it very quickly. There were plenty there who rejoiced to find a Norte Américano who was interested in hearing their side of that conflict.

Yes, I was the labor officer there, this time in the political section. This was the usual kind of a labor attaché operation.

QC: Was the ambassador William O'Dwyer during this time?

SIMPSON: He came during the latter part of my tour. The ambassador when I arrived was a career man, Walter Thurston. He had been born in Mexico. I think his father had been an engineer in Mexico, so the ambassador really should have known the Mexican psychology. He, again, was not too sure what a labor attaché was and whether he was really reliable. Like all the old timers, he really didn't like this kind of intrusion. But the more I traveled around and the more information I picked up as to what was going on, the more he began to realize that here was somebody who was useful. The Communists were then carrying on an intensive peace propaganda, with the dove of peace and all this kind of thing, and this led to an amusing experience.

Q: This was the worldwide Communist propaganda campaign.

SIMPSON: Yes. Thurston got more and more annoyed by it feeling more and more that the Mexico City press was falling for it.

So one day at our staff meeting he said, "I'm thinking of calling in the editors of these newspapers in Mexico City and telling them I think they are making a great mistake: they're falling for Communist propaganda. What do you think of the idea?"

He began on his left, with Carl Strom, who was then the counselor for consular affairs, and went around the table. I was over near his right hand. Everybody around the table said they thought this was a great idea; I thought it was awful. I had to figure out a way to voice my dissent so as not to appear to stick up like a sore thumb. I wanted to make converts. This is what we've had to do in the labor attaché program all along, to win friends, make converts.

So I thought, "How am I going to express my dissent?" A thought occurred to me, so when it came my turn I said, "Mr. Ambassador, let's reverse the situation. Suppose this is the Mexican Embassy in Washington, and the embassy (I didn't say the Mexican ambassador, I said the Mexican Embassy) felt that our press was misguided on some matter. So the Mexican ambassador called in the editors of the Washington newspapers and told them this. What would their reaction be?"

There was complete silence. You could have heard a pin drop. To make my point clear, I said, "Well, I think that their reaction would be that the Mexican Embassy was interfering with their freedom of speech."

Complete silence again.

I indicated that was all I had to say, and the ambassador passed on to the next officer.

He did call in the editors. And the next day were banner headlines: "U.S. AMBASSADOR INTERVENES IN MEXICAN AFFAIRS".

I could never understand how a man who not only had served before in Latin America, but had been born and reared in Mexico, could have made a mistake like that, completely misjudging Mexican psychology.

Nobody in the staff meeting but a labor attaché--an humble labor attaché--would say he thought this was a dreadful idea. But in these days the political advice of a labor attaché did not count for much with the Old Timers.

Conformism, conformism. This was something the labor attachés were up against from the very beginning. They were something new, there advice was different, therefore they challenged conformism from the start.

QC: They had a different perspective.

SIMPSON: They had a different perspective. They had different sources of information. They mixed with different kinds of people, people that the old career boys would rather be dead than be seen with.

QC: In those days, did you know Serafino Romualdi?

SIMPSON: Very well.

QC: Of course, his big bête noire in Mexico was Lombardo Toledano, wasn't it?

SIMPSON: That's right. Which didn't make it any easier for me, because I had to see Lombardo Toledano. I had to keep in touch with what was going on throughout the Mexican labor movement.

Q: Who were these two people, what were their positions?

QC: Serafino Romualdi was the inter-American representative of the AFL, and then, after the merger, of the AFL/CIO. Lombardo Toledano was the Mexican who was head of a hemispheric labor confederation, CITAL, wasn't it?

SIMPSON: I think so. It was Communist.

QC: And so there was rivalry and strong enmity between these two people.

SIMPSON: That's right.

QC: So you had to see Lombardo sometimes?

SIMPSON: Oh, yes. Just as in Belgium, I had to keep in touch with the Communist labor leaders there. They were very leery of me, of course, but they received me and we would talk. I would make no bones about what our position was. I never found them very informative, I must say. I had to develop other sources of information as to what they were up to.

QC: In Belgium, in my time, there were still a few Communists left in the miners' union. And that's where they were when you were there?

SIMPSON: Yes, they were there. In my time they were active in a number of unions and on a number of fronts throughout the country, including the political. You have to remember that was a transitional period in Belgium and things were very fluid.

QC: Were you in Mexico when ORIT was founded, the regional organization of workers?

SIMPSON: Yes. One of the best American labor representatives that I worked with was Ernst Schwartz. Do you remember him?

QC: From the AFL/CIO?

SIMPSON: CIO. He was from the butchers union in Chicago.

QC: I've heard the name, I don't know him.

SIMPSON: He was good, very good. He was not pompous, as the Mexicans viewed Serafino. He did not lecture to them. He was much better than Serafin Otram the Mexican, and we worked together very well.

Then I uncovered a chap who you probably will recall. He was a pharmacist in Texas, on the border, very much interested in labor and in Mexicans. He later replaced Serafino Romualdi. His name doesn't come to me.

QC: Andrew McClellan.

SIMPSON: Andrew McClellan, that's it. I spotted him, and the instant I met him and saw how he was with Mexicans and how interested he was in helping Mexican braceros defend their rights and interests, I encouraged him. Eventually, I encouraged him to give up his pharmacy and give this full time, if he could work out a way to get an income. It was gradually worked out.

QC: When I knew him first he was the inter-American representative for the food and drink people. Then he went to work for Romualdi, and then he replaced Romualdi as the inter-American...

SIMPSON: He was very good. He was one of those rare Texans who really understood Mexicans. He got along beautifully with them, and he was sincere in his desire to work with them and help them. He was a problem solver.

QC: Did you ever get involved in immigration problems while you were there?

SIMPSON: No.

QC: The bracero program or anything?

SIMPSON: No, that was handled in Washington. When Washington wanted any discussions of it in Mexico, they sent a man down from Washington. Usually it was Roy Rubottom, who was assistant or deputy secretary of state for inter- American affairs at that time. Roy, like Tom Mann, was a Texan, and the Texans, including LBJ in the Senate, wanted the bracero problem handled by Texans, to safeguard their interests.

QC: And the old-timer in the PRI unions I think is still alive there, Fidel Velasquez.

SIMPSON: Fidel was then secretary general of the official labor organization. We talked from time to time. He, again, was a little leery because we had not had a labor attaché in the American Embassy before, and he wasn't sure as to what this portended, as to whether this was some form of subtle Norte Américano imperialism.

I worked a lot with the oil workers' union, for it was a hot-bed of Communist influence and generated a lot of anti- U.S. feeling which I wanted to counter-act. As a matter of fact, one of the few Point Four projects that we had in Mexico was mine, to send a petroleum workers' delegation to the United States to visit refineries, etc., to pick up what they could in the way of technological processes, to meet friendly Americans and thereby serve as a good will mission and a source of pro-American feeling in the union.

QC: So how did you feel about your work that you did in Mexico as contrasted with what you had been doing in Europe?

SIMPSON: It was less exciting, but nevertheless necessary and genuinely interesting, because I learned a lot. It was my first experience in a Latin American country, and since I traveled a lot through the country, it was quite an education for me and I developed a good deal of intelligence information. In order to get a good feel for people in communities, and elicit as much information as possible, I would take USIS films with me and show them in villages. This would attract the whole community, and after the show was over, I would stand around and talk and have coffee with some of them in a cafe, which would give me a broad cross- section of opinion in the community. So I used

USIA films and USIA operators extensively. I found it was a very good drawing card to get a community out so that I could talk to a good cross-section and find out much of what was going on.

QC: I used to do a lot of that myself, and I was dismayed to find recently that the USIA has abolished all of its film program and has destroyed most of the film that it ever had. It has gone totally to video. I was quite surprised that technology has seemed to have overtaken the old films.

SIMPSON: One of the films that I used effectively in Belgium was one produced and directed by John Ford on the Tennessee Valley Authority project.

QC: Yes, I know that one.

SIMPSON: You know that one? It's a beautiful film. It showed how a government can, if it's so motivated, use a public works program to educate people and improve their standard of living. This film had a terrific impact on Socialist workers in Belgium. I can remember showing it one time at my house to the leaders of the FGTB, and seeing tears in the eyes of some of the young Socialists from Liege- -because this was something of social improvement that a capitalist society would do. It had never occurred to them that capitalism could be that social minded. My educational effort in the labor movement there had an effect not only for the embassy and the United States, but for capitalism itself and the West. We have to remember that European labor movements came out of the underground fed up with war. And how had this war come about? Through fascism and nazism, and these had developed in capitalist societies, so in their view there was something wrong and rotten about capitalism. In order to orient this emerging underground towards the West, we had to take on this issue of capitalism and show that capitalism could do good things, things that were directed to the elevation of living and labor standards.

Q: William O'Dwyer was former mayor of New York City. I sort of had the impression that he was in Mexico as ambassador in order to avoid prosecution in the United States.

SIMPSON: Well, we won't say that on the tape, but that was the contemporary explanation, to get him out of the country in a sufficiently official position so that nobody would try to subpoena him.

Q: Well, how was he as ambassador?

SIMPSON: A very good one, from my standpoint.

Q: Really, how come?

SIMPSON: Well, he was Irish. I guess you are, too, aren't you?

Q: Well, partly. More Scottish.

SIMPSON: He was Irish and this means he was friendly, outgoing, and he was very gregarious with the Mexicans. The Mexicans didn't feel there was anything wrong about sending an ambassador there who was under a cloud--many of their politicians were under clouds, so it made no difference to them that our ambassador was. As I say, he was friendly, outgoing, unpretentious. This is what they liked. So many Norte Américanos come down there with a superior air, and this grates on them no end. O'Dwyer didn't. He seemed to be one of them.

I can remember one thing that happened just before I got there. Crown Cork wanted to establish a plant in Mexico, so they sent a representative down to negotiate it. And he grated on them. But they didn't let on. They gave him everything he wanted: permission to establish the plant, permission to construct it, permission to do this and do that. Crown Cork got the plant all set up but it couldn't get permission to operate the plant, and never got it. Its great investment went down the drain because it sent someone down there who offended the Mexicans. Pretentious, you know, like a lot of Texans. There's bad blood between Texans and Mexicans. Texans never understand why this is so. I didn't know about it, much less understand it, until I went down there and saw the way some of them came into Mexico, as if they viewed it as an appendage of Texas.

Q: Did you find in Mexico that you were dealing with what would be in Europe called the intelligentsia, the academic types and all that? Did you have much dealings in labor matters with the academic world, the writers and all this?

SIMPSON: No, not much.

Q: Then you left Mexico City. You were there from 1949 to 1952. And then you went to Bombay from 1952 to '54. Was this still as a labor officer?

SIMPSON: No, by that time I felt that I ought to broaden out. What I was trying to do in my Foreign Service career, in addition to serving my country and the cause of peace, was to educate myself on diplomacy, to see if it could not be made a more effective instrument of peace. So I wanted to see the process from as many angles as possible. Never having served in a consular post before, I wanted to get that experience and perspective, that insight into the contribution of consular posts to diplomacy. So I requested a consular assignment, and asked for one in the Far East. I may have specified India, because I remember thinking about the different consular posts available in the Far East and I didn't want Japan because I felt that was too Americanized. I think I specified India, and drew the number two post in our Bombay consulate general.

I was in charge most of the time, because the consul general who was there when I arrived, Everett Drumright, was soon hoisted to Washington. His friend in Congress, Walter Judd, who was pro-Chiang Kai-shek, wanted to fill the post of deputy assistant secretary of state for the Far East with somebody who was definitely, irretrievably pro-

Chiang Kai-shek. So Walter Judd came to Bombay on a look-see. Drum had me to lunch with Judd, in the course of which Judd said to Drumright, "You're not going to be here for long."

After the lunch and Judd had departed, Drum turned to me and asked, "What did he mean by that?"

I said, "It's pretty evident he wants you in Washington."

So he did and Drum shortly left. There was a long hiatus before Bill Turner showed up. Bill had been counselor for political affairs in Tokyo. His tour had come to an end and, as too often happens to good officers, there was no assignment awaiting him in Washington. He had to hoof it around the corridors to find out what was available. When he found that the post of consul general in Bombay was available, he put in for that and got it.

Q: This '52 to '54 period was a very difficult time in American-Indian relations. The Korean War was on. We felt the Indians were being, to say the least, non-helpful.

SIMPSON: Plus the fact that we had negotiated an arms pact with Pakistan to supply it with arms. This reached us in India as a stunning blow. Not even George Allen, our ambassador in New Delhi, had been advised of it. He read about it in Newsweek magazine.

Q: This was the first. Since then, it's been a fairly steady thing, but this was a real blow. What was the situation as you saw it in Bombay, and how did you deal with it?

SIMPSON: We, of course, bore a lot of the brunt of it in Bombay, because we were a very large consular district, the size of France. There was a lot of government, press and industry in Bombay itself. For example, the Federal Reserve Bank of India was located there. The leading newspaper of India had its head office there, the Times of India, plus others. The textile industry was located there. Labor unions were strong. The Principal communist periodical was published there. So we got severe reactions from all of these sources, government and nongovernment.

We worked to counter-act the blow through personal relationships, and doing a lot of entertaining and talking over things with the Indians, demonstrating a desire to understand their point of view. We couldn't do some of the things in India that we had done in Belgium and in Greece, such as showing USIS films. The government in New Delhi was too sensitive.

A problem arose over Goa. We were accused by the Communists of having our eyes on Goa for a naval base. Since this erupted in the general environment created by our pact with Pakistan it was dynamite. Since Goa was in the Bombay consular district...

Q: At this time Goa, of course, was under Portugal.

SIMPSON: Yes, it was Portuguese territory and we were alleged to be negotiating with the Portuguese to establish a naval base there. This occurred when I was in charge, so I got in touch with George Allen and said, "How should we handle this? Do you want us to handle it, or will you handle it in New Delhi?"

He said, "It's in your district, you handle it."

So I had a talk with Frank Moraes, who was editor if the Times of India, and said to him, "Frank, how should we handle this?"

He replied, "I think the best thing to do is for you to issue a statement denying it. I will display this in a prominent place on page one, so it will be read."

That was the way we scotched that story. That is the way we operate generally, by talking to people like Frank Moraes and saying, "These are the facts, how can we get them across?" Some Indians, like Frank, were pro-Western and pro- American, and always very helpful in advising us how to do things. We tried to make these moves joint as often as possible. It made them feel needed, elicited a constructive attitude, and nourished a cooperative relationship. We reciprocated whenever we could and filled in with entertaining. Entertainment is no idle affair when done intelligently.

Q: Did you have any problems meeting Indians, people that you should meet? Was it a pretty open society?

SIMPSON: No problems of that sort, but we had another problem stemming from the fact that the Parsis were numerous in Bombay, and they were far more Western-minded than the Hindus. So they wanted to see us, entertain us, mix with us, attend our USIS lectures, and other cultural events. Our problem was to make time for the Hindus without offending the Parsis. But we had to reach out to the Hindus. Few came to us.

Chester Bowles, our ambassador when I first arrived, was well aware of this, and he had given as strict orders as he could to the consulate general to consort more with the Hindus. We were not really under the embassy; we reported directly to Washington. (This goes back to the days when India was a dominion. We had only consular posts then and they reported directly to Washington. This continued after Indian independence.)

One problem was that the Hindus have eating habits disturbing to some Westerners. They eat with their fingers, they don't use knives, forks and spoons. So I was often asked by Hindus, "We'd love to have you at our home, but do you mind our eating habits?" And I'd say, "Of course not, not at all. I'll do the same." So I accepted their invitations.

Q: This was a time when we were fighting in Korea, NATO was forming up, we looked upon the Soviet Union..., it was a time of great tension. And we had a secretary of state,

Dulles, who was saying (I may be misquoting, but not very much), "Neutrality is immoral." And here you were in the country that was par excellence the neutral country.

SIMPSON: Neutral country with a bias. At least a bias among top officials.

Q: Yes. How were you seeing India at that time, from your vantage point, vis-a-vis the United States and also the Soviet Union?

SIMPSON: We were not subjected to as much of that feeling about our foreign policies and our secretary of state, as our embassy in New Delhi was. In Bombay we were distant from New Delhi. There was a better balance of sentiment and opinion in Bombay than in New Delhi. So that we were aware that the feeling existed, but it was not by any means as sharp as it was in the capital and by reaching out to Hindus we were able to reinforce the more cosmopolitan outlook.

Q: But you didn't have the feeling that you were in sort of a hostile territory, or that there was something endemically biased within India towards the Soviet Union and against the United States?

SIMPSON: No, no. We gathered, in Bombay, that this was largely governmental and came from Nehru, Krishna Menon, and a relatively few people like them at the apex, that this was not a widely spread view in India. I felt relatively sure of that for I traveled rather extensively through my consular district. I felt the American media made too much-- and Secretary Dulles made too much--of the Nehru-Krishna Menon utterances. Nehru and Krishna Menon were not India in this respect.

Q: Within the Bombay consular district, where you would be meeting officials and all, was there a distance between them and Nehru and Krishna Menon as far as when you talked to them?

SIMPSON: I don't know that I can answer that question in those terms. I wasn't aware of any rift or difference, in the usual sense of those words.

As I traveled around, I found officials, including governors of the states, were amenable to the personal touch. If you met them in a friendly manner, showing a desire to listen to them and understand their point of view, including their political situation, they warmed up to you. Governors of states would come to see me when they visited Bombay, and accept invitations to lunch at our apartment, which was in Washington House. They were very impressed by the fact that an American was interested in what they were doing and thinking.

I can remember on one occasion I visited the State of Saurashtra where a Maharajah had done a great deal for the people, unlike other maharajahs I had met, including constructing a public market so that the farmers of the area had a place to come and vend their products under hygienic conditions and protected from the sun and inclement

weather. I was impressed that such a man would have this social conscience, so I didn't refrain from commenting on this. The word reached him, so when he came down to Bombay, he let me know and I had him to lunch at our apartment. Come Christmas or New Year's, he sent a representative of his down to Bombay with a present. It was a silver tea set. I said to the representative, "It is most kind of the Maharajah to offer this beautiful gift but, you know, I'm embarrassed for I cannot accept it."

He was completely flabbergasted. He said, "But you have to accept it. It comes from the Maharajah.

I replied, "I understand, and that's why I'm embarrassed. My government will not permit me to accept it."

He insisted, "You can't reject it. I'm going to leave it here. I'm going to go back and report that I have presented this present to you. And I hope you will give me words of gratitude to relay to him."

I said, "I give you those words of gratitude and I indeed thank the Maharajah most profoundly for his thoughtfulness." And I said, "I'll stop there as far as you're concerned."

People abroad are astonished that we are not allowed to accept presents.

It's very amusing how my assignment there ended. Turner took over in early 1954, and I resumed the position of number two, the political officer. Jack Jernegan came to India for a look-see. Jack was then deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian Affairs. After visiting New Delhi, he came to Bombay, and we took to each other. He wanted to know whether I would be interested in an assignment to the embassy in New Delhi. I said, "If you're asking me my personal predilection, I would say no, because that's just a government town and I wouldn't have the range of contacts in Indian affairs I have here and the ability to travel into the countryside and talk to the villagers. But if you want me to go to New Delhi I'll go there." He said nothing further, but shortly after he got back to Washington, I got orders to proceed to Lourenco Marques.

I was in my office, looking out the windows over the harbor and admiring the sparkle of the monsoon on the ship masts, when in comes our administrative officer with a little smile on his face and a piece of paper in his hands. He said, "I have news for you." So he handed me this paper which purported to be a cable from the Department transfering me to Lourenço Marques as consul general. I responded, "Ha, ha, big joke" and tried to give it back to him, because I thought he was reciprocating a hoax I had played on him.

I had heard him say on one occasion that if there was one place in the world he didn't want to serve in, it was Reykjavík. Come April Fool's Day 1954, I had faked a telegram assigning him to Reykjavík. If I had had any thought of the traumatic effect it would have on him, I wouldn't have done it, because he was quite desolated, to put it mildly.

So I felt this was just a quid pro quo. But he said, "No, no, no, no, it's authentic."

So I said, "Well, you'll have to prove that to Bill Turner." We went in to Bill Turner, who had taken over, and the administrative officer persuaded Bill it was indeed authentic. Bill pounded on his desk and said, "I won't have this, I won't have this! I've just arrived here. You're my political officer, and I don't know anything about India. They're not going to do this to me!" Which astounded me, because we both knew how the assignment process worked. If the department had decided to transfer me, it already had somebody backed up as my replacement and somebody to replace him.

I said, "Bill, don't do this," because I knew what would happen. I knew the Department would assume that Simpson didn't want to go. But he insisted. He even got George Allen, who was our ambassador in New Delhi, to support him. George got in touch with the department also, but of course none of their objection had any effect.

But I did persuade the Department that, since I had no background in African affairs, it might be advisable if I went by ship rather than plane and used the time to read up on Africa. The Department was wise enough to see this and cabled back: "All right, go by ship."

So I scoured the book stores in Bombay to find everything I could on frica, and particularly the Portuguese contribution to Africa.

By the time we made our first landfall in Mombasa, I knew that Vasco de Gama had almost lost one of his ships there in the channel, because there's a crook in the channel and the Malandisi River comes in with a great rush, and a sudden gust of wind, combined with these other two factors, almost capsized one of his ships.

I also knew that there had been a Portuguese fort there, so I looked that up. It was in ruins, but it was still there.

All the way down the coast I did this. When I showed up in Lourenço Marques and paid my courtesy call on the governor general, he had never seen a white, non-Portuguese man who knew as much about Portuguese history in Africa as I did. I didn't know a lot but more than anyone of his acquaintances.

Q: You were in Mozambique from '54 to the end of '57. What was the political situation there at that time?

SIMPSON: To any objective person, with sensitive antennae, the winds of change had made themselves evident. But not to the Portuguese. They were determined that they were never going to give up their African territories. They were Portuguese territories, not colonies, an integral part of Portugal. So they were never, never, never going to give them up.

The governor general would say to me, "You know, Mr. Consul General, if it comes to that, they'll have to drive us into the sea, because we won't surrender our land."

It was one of my functions, I felt, as the representative of a friendly country, to do what I could to prepare the Portuguese for what was coming. One way I did this was to travel extensively, for this enabled me to comment intelligently on Mozambique. I was able to engage in such traveling because of my good relations with the governor general. As I say, when I arrived, he was really to find that I knew as much (I didn't know much, but he *thought* I knew a lot) about Portugal and its history in Africa, including the Portuguese adventurers and explorers. I think I must have come across to him as a person of good will, for he did me the courtesy of returning my call, which he never did with other consular representatives.

I could tell he was surprised at the kind of quarters we had. The consulate general was located in an apartment house, so that at mealtime, cooking odors permeated the building. When he paid his call it was approaching the lunch period, so he got the full effect of the odors. The quarters also were cramped. I could tell he was rather surprised and disappointed that the United States' representative had such an office. So that, plus a security problem, motivated me to do a little better by my country.

The security problem was to me urgent. My room had French doors opening on a balcony and they were by any standards rather flimsy. Anybody with a good heave of the shoulders could push them open. So I began to press the Department for authority to acquire other quarters, for both reasons--to have more presentable premises and to upgrade security. I finally got it to send the regional security officer to visit us and inspect the premises. He was located somewhere on the West Coast, I think Dakar. He arrived, looked over our quarters and said, "I agree with you, but I can't say so."

I said, "Why not?"

"Because," he said, "my predecessor came here, inspected, and said everything was secure. I can't dispute my predecessor."

"Well," I said, "let's put our heads together and find a way of doing it."

So we did, we got language which wouldn't embarrass his predecessor but which still made it clear that a security problem existed. Sometimes one has to use as much diplomacy in dealing with one's own government as with foreign. Eventually I received word from the Department: "Okay, go ahead, change your location, but don't spend any more money." How do you get better quarters if you don't spend more money?

So I dickered with a good British friend of mine who ran an import-export business. He was putting up a new building for his business, and there was going to be sizable space on the second floor--good space, airy, light. So I said, "You know, if you had the American consulate general in your building this would give it prestige. You wouldn't have to

charge us a lot in view of the prestige we would bring." He agreed so we were able to get much better quarters without an increase in rent.

I got a Portuguese avant garde architect with whom I had friendly relations to help me lay out the space so it would be nice looking, and got him to suggest the colors of paint to use. Then I got the representative in Lourenço Marques of the South African Railways to blow up some pictures of Africa. I had seen them in their calendar and they were magnificent photographs. He blew them up to wall size. We hung those, persuaded USIA to send us pictures of the United States and the combination provided an atmosphere of both the United States and Africa.

The political problem we had at the time was the Portuguese treatment of American missionaries. It was an unusual situation because Salazar had persuaded Rome to appoint a cardinal in Mozambique. The church usually didn't appoint cardinals in places like Mozambique. But Salazar got a cardinal, and he was the source of the harassment of missionaries. As it happened, the missionaries were Protestant, which made it particularly difficult. As a gesture of good will I broke consular ranks and paid a courtesy call on the cardinal. This helped.

I traveled around a good deal--I was the only consular officer stationed in Mozambique who did--and I did it with the governor general's acquiescence. (One has to remember that the Salazar regime was a dictatorship sensitive to foreigners' traveling around their African territories.) I didn't ask the governor general for approval, but on extended trips I told him where I would go asking him for the names of governors and administrators on whom I could pay courtesy calls. Some of them invited me to stay with them. They were very hospitable, happy to have a visitor for they were all pretty isolated. This further cemented my relationships. This had the advantage of letting them know there was an American consul general around and interested in American citizens. It worked out very well. The pressure of the cardinal diminished and we were able to iron out many sources of friction.

I took a great interest in the health programs of the government. I visited clinics it was establishing here and there in the bush for the blacks. When I'd come back from these trips, I'd tell the governor general the good things he was doing, adding: "You ought to publicize these. People outside of Mozambique don't know about them. Even people in Mozambique are not aware of all the things you are doing. You ought to get yourself a news photographer and have a program of Mozambique news, broadcast over Radio Mozambique. It could be re-broadcast in Portugal. Depending on how well it's done, we might even be able to use it elsewhere." He did this, but too late in my tour of duty for me to be able to do anything about it myself.

In these ways I hoped to get across the idea to the governor general that he was not really cut off from the rest of the world but doing things the rest of the world was doing. This gave me an opportunity to suggest what other things might be done in the hope of easing him along into accepting the winds of change. He was very appreciative of all this.

I inaugurated an exchange program to send Portuguese from Mozambique to the U.S. hoping that, once we got that established, maybe we could send blacks over. I knew it wouldn't work unless I got the governor general over first. If he agreed to go and went, then I would have no problems about anybody else going. So he did agree, but this got worked out only towards the end of my tour.

I left Mozambique the end of '57. The governor general came over in the spring of '58, when I was back in the States. I was his escort officer and I took him to see the Jefferson Memorial, with Jefferson's words about swearing eternal opposition to tyranny. Then we visited Monticello and the University of Virginia. The president of the University hosted a lunch. I had accumulated some materials on Mozambique, which I had donated to the University library, and these were on display. The governor general was quite impressed. He had had no idea that Mozambique was of any interest to the rest of the world. This was a good thing for him to know. Then I took him to visit Williamsburg from which he left for the rest of his trip.

Q: What about your contacts? I've talked to other people who are dealing particularly in the Portuguese territories and saying that contacts with blacks in Portuguese territory was just about impossible. I mean, you know, significant contacts with black leaders just weren't around.

SIMPSON: Contacts with blacks were impossible in Lourenço Marques. For one thing, they wouldn't dare to talk to you. So the way I solved that problem was to travel away from Lourenço Marques, and got the missionaries to set up meetings. They were in touch with the blacks, of course, knew who the black leaders were and among them, who were the most informative. So I would meet blacks in the homes of missionaries and in black villages. This kept me in touch with what the blacks were thinking. Otherwise, you couldn't do it. With a little ingenuity one could convert a missionary problem into an opportunity to meet blacks.

My predecessors had never traveled. I got through the whole province, eventually. The governor general and other officials in Lourenço Marques were saying that there was a lot of Communist activity along the border of Mozambique with Tanganyika, and they thought this came from Julius Nyerere. I didn't view Julius Nyerere as a Communist, so I was very skeptical of these reports. Anyway, I thought I should find out what was going on, so on one of my trips, I went up to the country bordering Tanganyika. In my talks with the governor of the district and the administrators in the towns, I found no evidence of any Communist activity. This was just a lot of hooey that was being propagated in Lourenço Marques.

Q: How about your instructions from Washington? Because '54 to '57, the real, you might say, explosion of African independence came somewhat later. It was just starting then. We had our bases in the Azores and we didn't want to upset Portugal. You were under the EUR Bureau, were you? Or the NEA?

SIMPSON: The consulate general was under the African Bureau of the Department and I reported directly to it. The embassy in Lisbon was a little nervous about what I was doing in Mozambique, thinking I was being unduly protective of the missionaries, and this might be disturbing to Salazar. So take it easy, the embassy suggested, don't rock the boat.

Q: This was very definitely the don't-rock-the-boat period, wasn't it, as far as Africa was concerned?

SIMPSON: Yes, one had to be a little subtle about the way one operated so as to avoid the impression that he was rocking the boat, but at the same time protect American citizens and American interests, and also to insinuate to the Portuguese that they had better wake up and begin living in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. Required was a little political psychology.

Q: Well then, why don't we move to your last assignment, and this would be yours, Jack.

QC: It looks like the department finally discovered that you had been overseas for an exceptionally long period of time and had you come back.

SIMPSON: Yes, they discovered they were violating a congressional statute, so I better have a Washington tour. Then the question was: Where would I be put? I was offered a position under Andrew Berding, who was the assistant secretary for public affairs. If I remember correctly, he had a section under him dealing with United Nations affairs, and I was offered a position there under Allen Lightner. But this didn't interest me. I wanted, if possible, to retain my connections with Africa, because I felt this was something which was moving along and was going to move pretty fast when it did gather momentum.

The Labor Department was looking for an advisor on African affairs, so they talked to me about it. This was under Leo Wirtz.

QC: Wasn't he secretary of labor?

SIMPSON: Oh, no, you're thinking of Willard Wirtz. This was Leo Wirtz.

QC: Was he head of the Bureau of International Labor Affairs?

SIMPSON: Yes, that was it. That's where Arnold Zempel was, and Jim Taylor. Were you then with Arnold?

QC: In Belgium. When Arnold went to Belgium, I was his assistant.

SIMPSON: That's right, but where were you in 1958 when they signed me on?

QC: I was in Lima, Peru, as the labor reporting officer.

SIMPSON: Oh, were you?

This turned out to be really very instructive, because I represented the Labor Department on the African Committee of the Planning Board, which was under the National Security Council. So we were developing American policy with reference to Africa to go up to the National Security Council.

This was a part of the Operations Coordinating Board, which Eisenhower had created. He had the military mentality, where you don't adopt a policy without staffing if out. Don't come to the Security Council with just a general policy proposal. You staff it out and show what is involved, what should be done in order to carry the policy out.

So this is what we were doing with reference to Africa, recommending policy and then showing what the different options would require in the way of diplomatic steps. So this turned out to be a fascinating assignment.

QC: You worked with Dan Lazorchek?

SIMPSON: Dan Lazorchek was in the Labor Department, but Dan was under Arnold Steinbach.

QC: Ah, I remember Arnold, yes.

SIMPSON: You remember that operation?

QC: Did you have much to do with the AFL/CIO, like with Jay Lovestone, for example, in foreign affairs?

SIMPSON: Not with Lovestone. I dealt with Mike Ross. As a matter of fact, I would have Mike come over to talk to my staff in the Labor Department, to tell us what they were thinking and to provide an opportunity for us to tell him and the AFL/CIO what we were thinking. This was a very instructive experience, all in all.

You know, it showed me how inadequately the State Department and the Foreign Service were staffed on Africa. I had long heard that many officers who had been sent to Africa had not been really first-class, but until serving in Mozambique I had had nothing to do with Africa so that all I knew was what I had heard. This OCB experience showed me that this was true. The State Department's representatives who attended meetings of the OCB had little or nothing to offer. They were unimaginative and not well informed. They were not really first class intellectually.

I found that leadership flows from ideas and initiative. So it was the Labor Department that spearheaded our African policy on labor matters. We had ideas. We didn't hesitate to

advance them, explain them, press for them. So we began to get ideas all the way up, through the OCB to the Planning Board and on up.

QC: Among the agencies that were involved with overseas labor, did you have anything to do with the labor attaché program then?

SIMPSON: Not then, no, except peripherally. I made it a point that in order to carry out the policies that we were advocating, we had to strengthen the labor attaché program and have more attachés in Africa. But on this, I worked with Jim Taylor. Jim was the one who had that responsibility.

QC: I'll ask you a tricky question here and now. In this period, did you ever see any interest of the CIA in the labor attaché program?

SIMPSON: I didn't see any, no. The CIA wanted to post somebody in Lourenço Marques, and the department sounded me out: Would I be agreeable to having a CIA man on my staff? And my reply in substance was: It wouldn't be disagreeable, but I saw no need of it. My staff and I were traveling around, developing sources of information all over the territory. We were getting as much information as could be obtained. A CIA man there would actually make it embarrassing, because he would be spotted by the Portuguese and it would give them the impression we were spying on them. That would have set back everything I was trying to do. So no CIA officer ever came to Mozambique.

Were you ever aware of any CIA influence in the labor attaché program?

QC: Uh...yes.

SIMPSON: Were you! Were you really?

QC: For a certain period of time, and then afterwards, the one aspect that I knew of later was abolished. They had a position and then it was abolished.

SIMPSON: A position of labor attaché?

QC: Assistant labor attaché.

SIMPSON: Earmarked for them.

QC: Yes.

SIMPSON: What period was this in? The late 1950s or later?

QC: This was the late 1950s, yes.

SIMPSON: So that was under Eisenhower and Dulles.

QC: Right. And I'll tell you who knew about it--Jim Taylor, but he didn't tell anybody of course.

SIMPSON: Did he? That's interesting. What part of the world was it in?

QC: Europe.

SIMPSON: I'm glad Jim scotched that.

QC: So to sum up your time in the Labor Department, you felt that it was worthwhile...

SIMPSON: Oh, it was. Distinctly so.

QC: And that you made a contribution to African policy.

SIMPSON: Yes, very much so. It was one of the most interesting and policy-creating assignments I had. It also taught me a lot about the inadequacies of the State Department and Foreign Service and sparked my book, Anatomy of the State Department.

I had had government experience before, in Washington with the NRA, with war shipping and the State Department during World War II, so I knew the mentality of government people during those two exciting periods. But it took the experience in the Labor Department for me to grasp the difference between the mentality of the State Department and other departments of the government. This really hit me forcibly, that the State Department has a very special mentality. It thinks it knows everything. There has never been much humility in the State Department.

In the Labor Department, there was no such top- loftiness. Its officers were simply interested in getting at problems--in knowing what the problems were, defining them, understanding them and resolving them. And it made no difference who got at the problems or how, except that what was done was done properly. There was no pretense, no conceit, no insistence upon prerogative turf.

This explained to me why the State Department has the problem it has with Congress and the public. Because neither Congress nor the public goes for pretentiousness.

So I learned a lot along that line and, as I say, it clarified the thinking that went into *Anatomy*.

QC: I read your book on this subject, and it's ironic to think that, right at the end of the war, the State Department, if it had been energetic and had an imagination, could have taken over the foreign policy establishment. It had an opportunity and it could have taken over intelligence and so on, and it rejected it for what it thought was its own role, and then ever since, it's had to deal with all these agencies that are separate.

SIMPSON: Ever since, it's had to play catch up.

QC: Yes, exactly.

SIMPSON: And it's never caught up. I could see in this OCB Committee on Africa, that they just didn't have ideas. They weren't using their heads, they didn't have the imagination demanded of them. Their attitude was, we don't need all of this committee stuff, this is taking up our time. Well, this was a wonderful opportunity for them to take hold and lead. Instead of that, they hung back and complained. They viewed it as just an unnecessary expenditure of their time and effort. This was a great mistake.

QC: Can we pass on then to the Board of Examiners?

SIMPSON: I asked for that assignment, because by this time I felt that there were broad reforms that ought to be made in the Foreign Service and the department. I realized that I didn't have the fulcrum on which to rest a lever of reform. So I thought the thing to do was to take an early retirement, think more about what needed to be changed and write a book, then follow the book up with articles to reinforce it.

There was one part of this jigsaw puzzle that I felt I didn't understand, viz. who we recruited and how we recruited; how effectively we examined candidates; how good was our preparation of officers for service (what we call `orientation' in the Foreign Service Institute); and how we could improve the quality of officers. Over the years I had encountered enough officers who, to me, were substandard, to raise a question in my mind: How did they get into the Foreign Service? If our written examination was as hard as we claimed it was, and if our standards of recruitment and oral screening were as high as we said they were, how did these fellows get in?

QC: Did you discover the answer?

SIMPSON: I did indeed, indeed.

It was unheard of for an officer to request an assignment to the Board of Examiners. Nobody ever did that. Officers were drafted. So I had no difficulty getting the assignment.

What I found was this: the Department each year decided how many officers it wanted to commission (and it was running two hundred in those years). It had discovered by experience (there was no explanation for it, just experience told them) that oral panels passed one out of five candidates. So if you want two hundred, what do you do? You tell the Educational Testing Service: "Pass us one thousand."

QC: And then you take a fifth of the...

SIMPSON: Yes, pass us one thousand. So when I discovered this, I said, "Who is ETS passing?" I asked to look at the raw scores, and I found that in order to get that one thousand, the ETS was having to go down to as low as a grade of 40 on the written examination. This told me that the claim of the Department and the service that we must be getting the cream of college graduates, because so many thousands are taking the written exam, and we pass only one thousand and induct only two hundred--is just so much nonsense.

Then I volunteered to go on a recruiting trip, because I wanted to know what the universities and colleges were saying about their people who were taking the Foreign Service exam. Were these their best people? So I went on a recruiting swing through the midwest and the south, and talked to the political science departments. I asked those departments, "Who of your students are taking the Foreign Service exam? Are they the best?"

And time after time after time I was told, "No, they are not our best."

So I asked, "Where are your best going?"

"They're going into law or they're going into the CIA."

I said, "The CIA?"

"Yes," they said, "the CIA sends us their top people to recruit. They really put on a show. And they answer the students' questions, probing questions. You State Department people come out and you won't answer probing questions. You reply with evasive generalities. So you are not appealing to the best of our young people."

This gave me the answers I was looking for, that we had to improve our recruitment as well as revamp our examining procedure. We should not just channel into recruitment anybody who happened to be around with no assignment for awhile, and send them out without training. In the written examination, we were passing, allegedly passing, people who didn't actually pass. All this told me a lot about the improvisational character of the Foreign Service.

QC: From that you developed your general interest in improving education in diplomacy.

SIMPSON: That's right. While I was with the Board of Examiners, I thought that we are taking people in who are unprepared, but maybe we are filling their gaps when they come to the Foreign Service Institute for the basic officers' course. So I felt I didn't have an airtight case unless I audited that course. So I got permission to do that.

The course did not fill the gaps; and the course conductors weren't trying to. They were just putting people through a six-week, what I called `exposure,' exposing the newly-commissioned officers to various things--smatteringly to foreign policy, but not to

diplomacy, not to international law, not to international organization except for a one-day trip to the UN (What can you learn on a one-day trip to the UN?) I sat through the briefings of the other departments and agencies, including the CIA's. They were almost uniformly poor. Sometimes the briefer had even forgot he was scheduled to do the briefing and had to be found and brought to the meeting to talk off the top of his head. The CIA's was absurd. They didn't attempt to deal with any controversial question or any issue between the Foreign Service and the CIA. It was dreadful. It was just pure, evasive gush.

That showed me that I did have a case on the Department's inadequacy in preparing officers for the Foreign Service, because these people are coming in unprepared, ignorant of large areas like geography and diplomacy, and we're not making any effort to fill those gaps when we bring them in and commission them.

In this excursion of mine on a recruiting trip, I asked the political science departments, "Are you teaching diplomacy?"

They said, "No."

I said, "You're leaving this to the history department?"

"Yes."

"Why is that?"

They replied, "The problem is" (here, again, their words) "it's too amorphous."

"Well," I said, "why not get a Foreign Service officer in to teach it for you?"

"Oh, we've had them in to talk to our international relations classes, but they don't have anything except personal anecdotes. We've got to have a definition of diplomacy, so we know what we're supposed to be aiming to teach. We've got to have a textbook or some other suitable basic material. Without those two things we can't handle it."

So after I got my book out of my system, I began a campaign for university instruction in diplomacy, because I thought that was basic. How can a world power ever hope to master diplomacy and put on a good, effective diplomatic performance if its diplomatic representatives and the general public do not know what diplomacy is? If you're not teaching it in your schools, then how does anyone get to know what it is?

Before that, as a matter of fact before my book came out, Bill Crockett, who was then deputy under secretary for administration,... Do you remember Bill?

QC: I remember him, certainly.

SIMPSON: Bill was a reformer from the word "go." He was bright and a quick learner. He had a perception of where things were going wrong and what was weak and what had to be done.

Kennedy had made two unsuccessful tries to fill that post. He first appointed John Macy, who was chairman of the Civil Service Commission. Well, you know, anybody would assume that a chairman of the Civil Service Commission could come into the State Department and put things right without fuss or delay. He didn't. He knew nothing of foreign policy and diplomacy and was completely bewildered by the Department's mentality and procedures. He couldn't get anything done. So he quit after one year.

Then Bobby Kennedy told his brother, "I have just the person for you in the Justice Department. He's William P. Orrick. He's an assistant attorney general, a real go-getter. He's the man for you." So Jack appointed William P. Orrick. Orrick also lasted a year. He didn't know anything about foreign affairs or what the State Department was supposed to do and how it was supposed to do it and therefore what it needed. He took some trips abroad, at taxpayers' expense, to learn what embassies do. But he gave up after one year, a completely frustrated man.

So Kennedy got in touch with Congressman John Rooney. They're both Irish. He said, "John, I'm in a pickle, what shall I do?"

Rooney replied, "I know just the man for you. He's a career man. He is assistant secretary of state for administration. You appoint him and you're out of trouble."

This was how Bill Crockett came to be appointed deputy under secretary. He took charge of administration in '63, and in two years he was in full form as a reformer, converting the concept of administration into one of management. For the first time in thirty years, the Department and the Service had a manager.

I don't know how he ever got time to read any of the articles I was publishing, but he did. He was an omnivorous reader. Perhaps it was the result of a procedure I adopted of submitting my articles to the Department in draft form to let them catch any errors of fact, or what they considered errors of evaluation with which I could agree or not. That protected me, assuring me I was on sound ground, so that nobody could say, "Smith Simpson doesn't really know what he's talking about. If he is wrong about this, that I know something about, he could well be wrong about a lot of other things that I don't know about." The procedure also made sure that some people in the Department were reading my think pieces. There was no censorship involved. I was not seeking approval and the Department never attempted to dissuade me from publishing anything I wrote. I was completely on my own.

Some of my writing may well have reached Bill through this route. I didn't know him, and didn't submit my drafts to him.

QC: Were you still with the Department then, or was this after you had retired?

SIMPSON: I had retired and I was bringing my book to its final manuscript form.

So Bill called me up and said, "I want you to come in and have lunch with me."

He made me a proposal at that lunch that I come back to the Department and work on some of the reforms I was advocating.

My response was "Thanks, but no thanks. I value my freedom too highly to come back and work in the Department."

"Well now, wait a minute," he replied. "If you are advocating certain things to be done and somebody offers you an opportunity to come back and work on those things to see if they can be done, I don't really think you can say no, can you?"

I could only reply, "If you put it that way, I guess I can't."

So I went back for a year, very reluctantly.

We didn't have the support of Dean Rusk. He wasn't a bit interested, which is one of the mystifying things about him. He was an educator and as head of the Rockefeller Foundation, an effective administrator. So he must have known that you had to pay attention to education, organization and management. He didn't. His attitude was, "The heck with those things. I'm advisor on foreign affairs to the president."

And George Ball wasn't interested. He was Rusk's number two, what we then called the under secretary of state. He was so little interested in what we were trying to do to up-date the diplomatic establishment and strengthen it that at one point he proposed that the State Department library be abolished! His position was, "If anybody wants anything, he can get it from the Library of Congress." Well, the Library of Congress is way at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

QC: What about Rooney? Was Rooney able to do anything about it?

SIMPSON: Rooney was, of course, very favorable to what Bill was doing, but he couldn't intervene. He could help to get Bill money for the things he was doing. But even there we were constricted, because you can ask Congress only for things that the OMB is willing to approve. But Rooney wasn't inhibited by the OMB, so he could insert things into the appropriations bill. The real weakness was at the top of the Department. We just didn't have its support.

QC: Over the years, in the training at the Institute, did you see any improvement? Have you seen any improvement over the decades since?

SIMPSON: Not for incoming officers. But we've had good directors of FSI who have done something here and there, to the extent they could get funds. But rotation erodes all improvements. George Morgan wanted a seminar on the impact of science on foreign policy and diplomacy. He couldn't get any funds from the department, so he went out and scrounged up funds from foundations. He got the seminar going, but then after he left, it disappeared. This is the problem we're up against.

QC: As you look back on your career, particularly in the State Department and the Foreign Service, what would you say was the most significant experience you had?

SIMPSON: It was a very educational experience. I learned a lot with each assignment. But the most significant discovery I made was on this recruitment trip, discovering that diplomacy was not being taught in this country except in two universities, Pittsburgh and Notre Dame. So after I got my first book out, I turned to that because I felt this was fundamental. If I could get diplomacy taught in our universities, then we would be bringing people into the Foreign Service who had some knowledge of it. I wouldn't have to persuade a bureaucratic Foreign Service Institute to teach it. But, you know, academic communities are just as resistant to new ideas as bureaucrats are. So it's been an uphill fight.

But I shamed a former colleague of mine at the University of Pennsylvania, who was president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in the late 1960s, to staking me to a two-day conference on diplomacy, addressing the issues which the political scientists had raised:

* How do you define it for instructional purposes?

* Can it be taught?

* If it can be taught, how do you teach it?

* Are there sufficient materials available for teaching it?

* If not, how can they be produced?

I had papers on these issues drawn up in advance and commentaries written on them. I invited both political scientists and practitioners to the conference to participate, so as to fuse the two. The Academy published these papers and transcript of our discussion as a monograph, distributing it gratis all over the country, not just to universities and colleges, but to libraries. How much it was read by political scientists, whether they even knew it was in their library, I don't know. The impact was not exactly shattering.

From those who participated, I formed a national committee for the study of diplomacy, one of the members of which was Peter Krogh. Peter was then associate dean at Fletcher. Although Fletcher had diplomacy in its title, it wasn't teaching diplomacy, and Peter didn't know what it was. Georgetown was not teaching it either, in spite of the fact it had

its School of Foreign Service. In other words, it just was not a subject which had caught on in the academic community.

So at one of the meetings of our committee, sponsored by the acting dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, Peter learned that the School was looking for a permanent dean. He applied for the position and got it. This was great. Peter knew what I was talking about. So he said, "Smith, we've got to put on a demonstration. We've got to show that diplomacy can be taught. I want you to teach it."

I agreed to teach it for a year--three times, a one- semester course three times--and then, I said, "I have to go back to my work of propagating the idea generally. I can't be pinned down to one course in one university."

So I gave it three times. The enrollment was very enheartening.

QC: You devised the course yourself, the structure and the readings and all the lectures?

SIMPSON: Yes. I had a providential inspiration: I called it "The Dynamics of Diplomacy," so as to give the idea that diplomacy is something dynamic, it's not something routine or wishy-washy. I was urged to call it "The Implementation of Foreign Policy," but I refused, "No, I won't do that. That would be ducking the issue. We're going to put diplomacy in the title. Anyway, implementation is only one part of diplomacy. Another part is its contribution to the formulation of foreign policy."

So I gave the course and then resumed and organizing panels in the annual conventions of the professional societies: political science, international studies.

Then I began to work on Peter to establish a center for the study of diplomacy. I felt it ought to be in Washington. I dreamed of it at first as being at the Smithsonian, but I had no leverage there. But I had Peter at Georgetown, so we got going eventually what we called an institute. Peter insisted on calling it an institute instead of a center, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

After one failure with a director, we appointed David Newsom. David at first was a little bothered by our focus on diplomacy. He wanted foreign policy, but we said no, it has to be diplomacy. So David, with the flexibility of a diplomat, put his shoulder behind the wheel of diplomacy. He proved good at raising funds. He went to foundations, which we had not been able up to that point to interest, nor had I in earlier efforts. They just were not interested-- "Diplomacy? what's that?" they asked. With David's fund raising, we got underway. We are getting out studies and holding symposia, little by little filtering the idea into universities that this is something they ought to be teaching.

We're still having hard going. It's partly a question of mentality. If a political scientist is teaching in a university and diplomacy has never been anything that he has ever studied, nor was he ever required to know anything about it to get his Ph.D., it can't be that

important. There's a mental roadblock that has to be overcome. There is also the problem of a conventional political science curriculum. Habit and convention are unbelievably strong in the academic community.

But a prophet is not without honor save in his own country. The Institute is getting to be known in other countries. Apparently we're the only institute that exists anywhere devoted to the study of diplomacy. We have all these wonderful think tanks devoted to foreign policy, domestic policy and all of that. I hadn't been able to get the American Assembly to discuss diplomacy. It wants to discuss the big policy things. So, too, the Council on Foreign Relations is not interested. We've been fortunate that David has been able to reach a foundation here and there which has been sensitive to our appeal. The Pew Trust in particular has made substantial funds available to us...

QC: Do some of these people look on diplomacy as something that's too mechanical, or they can't understand the value?

SIMPSON: It may be viewed by some people as mechanical, but I think it's partly a frontier psychology. The geographic frontier has disappeared, but not the psychology it bred. The frontier psychology is force: if you want to get your way, then you must be militarily strong, you must be well armed. Diplomacy is talk.

This was Andrew Jackson's attitude: That diplomatic stuff is talk. If you want to do something, do it. Go ahead and do it, don't just talk about it. If the Seminole Indians on the Florida border are making life difficult for Americans, then go down there, get hold of the two British agents who are stirring them up, and hang them. Neither diplomacy nor international law have much of an appeal to such a mentality.

I think it's partly that. I've been very sensitive to this factor. In every presidential campaign candidates talk of power in terms of military power and economic power.

I'm going to be immodest enough to tell you something. I got out a book early in 1980 called The Crisis in American Diplomacy, and my publisher signaled me that he had received an order for a copy from the White House. Then I noticed that President Carter, in giving a speech subsequently in Boston before the American Legion, mentioned diplomacy as an ingredient of power. How did that ever get in? I have various connections which I can call on and I found that the President's speechwriter in the White House had read this book and had put this little paragraph in.

That's the only time I know a presidential candidate has referred to diplomacy as an ingredient of power, the only time I know. Otherwise, it's military power/economic power. You have to be militarily strong and you have to be economically strong. If you have those, then you've got it made.

That's absurd, as you and I know. You have to have a way of getting that power translated into results. And you don't do it by banging people over the head or by squeezing them economically. You do it through the rational and persuasive process of diplomacy.

Q: Well, I thank you very much.

End of interview