

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

AMBASSADOR ROBERT M. SMALLEY

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INTERVIEW

[Note: This transcript was not edited by Ambassador Smalley]

Q: Today is March 21, 1991 and this is an interview with Ambassador Robert M. Smalley. This interview is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Mr. Ambassador, I wonder if you would give me something about your background--where you grew up and your education and all?

SMALLEY: I was born and raised in Los Angeles and went into the Navy a few months after I got out of high school. Spent two years in the Navy--a year and a half in the South Pacific during World War II. When I came back I took a few months to recover physically and then went to UCLA. I went to Australia just because I wanted to go. I had been there briefly during the war. I lived there for a better part of a year in 1949. Came back and got serious going into the radio news business. Was editor for a station broadcasting out of Los Angeles for five years. I had a strong interest in politics--Republican by birth and inclination--and became active politically on a voluntary basis.

In the mid-50s I moved up to San Francisco on a professional basis. From there I went into municipal government as the confidential secretary to the mayor of San Francisco,

then George Christopher. I served with him for three years. In that time we signed the contract for the Republican National Convention to be held in San Francisco in 1964.

Following the end of Christopher's tour in January, 1964 I went to Washington with the Republican National Committee as a result of that connection. I was with the National Committee as an assistant director of public relations and then as press secretary to William E. Miller who ran for Vice President. After the election was lost I became director of public relations at the National Committee for about a year.

I returned to San Francisco with a professional campaign management firm Whittier and Baxter. We did a lot of Washington work in those days. We were hired by Senator Dirksen to run a campaign that dealt with apportionment and State legislatures. He was seeking an amendment to the Constitution which over a two-year period we came close to achieving, but didn't. I interrupted that to take on an account of running the campaign for Senator Robert Griffin of Michigan who had been appointed to the Senate by Governor Romney. Senator Griffin won and he and I became and remained close friends to this day. I worked for him in his office for a time and switched to private enterprise here in Washington which was not terribly satisfactory to me. I went back into government when the Nixon White House asked me if I wanted to go Paris as the US Representative to the Development Assistance Committee at the OECD. I did that for two years from 1975-77. This actually was in the Ford years, but the process that led to my appointment started in the Nixon period.

I guess I overlooked that in 1969 I served as special assistant to the Secretary of Commerce, Maurice Stans. Traveled all over the world with him, including the Soviet Union. I don't know how many countries we visited, but there were many. He was heavily involved in trade negotiations.

Q: Before we move to the Washington side of things, while you were moving up in the business of being a political consultant, how did you view foreign affairs as issues? Was this something that you really would just as soon stay away from?

SMALLEY: No, I think among professional politicians generally, at least today, and perhaps it was less so in my youth, there is a feeling that you can lose on foreign affairs, but you can't very often win on them. Now that didn't apply to the Presidency but it did apply to House members particularly and to an extent to candidates to the Senate. I was always extremely interested in foreign policy and foreign affairs. We used them quite successfully in Senator Griffin's campaign in Michigan.

Q: What were the issues and how did you use them?

SMALLEY: Of course Michigan is the number one producer of automobiles in the United States and was at that time a prominent producer of automobiles in the world, but it was becoming apparent that the Japanese, in particular, and other foreign producers, generally, were affecting the market. So there was an economic dimension to political

discussion of the Japanese threat and to a lesser degree a German threat. There were other issues we used as time went on. I worked in all three of Senator Griffin's campaigns. At one point he had been the floor manager of the opposition to the Panama Canal Treaty and we used that extensively in his political campaign. There were often times, as I recall, broad comparisons of the United States to the Soviet Union baring in mind that the 50s, 60s, and 70s, were the Cold War period. There was always something in the newspaper to take a stand on. Some US government policy to respond to either critically or in support of. So foreign policy was always there. I don't know if I would ever say it was a determining factor in any of the Griffin elections which are the ones I was most conversant with.

But I think it is safe to say that it has been a determining factor in many Presidential elections going back to the period since World War II. Almost every Presidential campaign has been heavily laced with foreign policy issues. Eisenhower made a big play out of his statement that he would go to Korea, and he did. Kennedy made a big play out of his comparison of US and Soviet standings in the missile race. Lyndon Johnson was driven from office by the Vietnam affair and it became an albatross for Hubert Humphrey, etc. It certainly was a prominent factor in Carter's loss in 1980.

Q: The Iranian hostages.

SMALLEY: Exactly. Even without that, President Reagan pressed very hard on selected issues such as the Panama Canal and the Iran issues. The whole Soviet issue was very ably focused. So I think for Presidential candidates, including incumbents, foreign policy can be a good deal more decisive, but, my guess is--those who read this 20 years from now will know whether I'm right or not--that the Gulf War politics might be a major factor in the election or defeat of a lot of people in 1992.

Q: Michigan is a state with a lot of minorities in it. I think it has the largest Arab community in the United States. When you were working on campaigns, how much did ethnic politics get involved?

SMALLEY: You always make an effort to appeal to your ethnic strengths and certainly Senator Griffin did that in a number of ways--in personal appearances, selective advertisements, radio interviews, all sorts of traditional means. I think it probably influenced, I have to qualified this because I don't know what went on in his own mind, but I think it made him a little less enthusiastic in his support of Israeli interests than he might have been. I don't mean to say that his views were governed by political concerns, but he was aware of the Arab interests and emotional ties that existed between the Michigan Arabs and Middle East countries. I think he was sympathetic to those ties. I don't think he was ever regarded as a strong Israeli supporter.

Q: But he saw there was another side...?

SMALLEY: He had a kind of "show me" attitude toward the Israelis.

Q: When you were a special assistant to Maurice Stans, the Secretary of Commerce, what was your impression of how the Department of State was responding or not responding to American commercial interests and also how did you feel about the Department of Commerce and how quick were they to respond?

SMALLEY: The reason Maurice Stans had a strong interest in overseas activity was two fold. One, he felt that America needed to cultivate export markets in a broad range of things. All the way from high tech to agricultural. Two, there were certain industries that were being hurt rather badly, principally textiles, by principally the Japanese. So, almost immediately after he took office in April 1969, he became the first cabinet member to go overseas. He dealt initially with the textile problem. The first lap we went to several countries in Europe, the second lap, almost immediately afterward, we went to a variety of countries in the Far East. And then over the years we went to Central America, Europe a number of times, and finally towards the end of his first term we went to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

In the course of that he developed a strong feeling that the commercial counselors in our embassies overseas ought to be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce. He proposed this to Secretary of State, William Rogers, in a letter. The issues were joined and went up to the Hill. He was not successful up to the time he left the Commerce Department in early 1972 to become Nixon's fund raiser. But in later years that issue was again picked up by one of his successors and the commercial counselors were moved from State and put under Commerce jurisdiction.

In the last ten years I have done an enormous amount of traveling around the world and have encountered these people in embassies everywhere and find them very well fixed in the embassies. I think it is no longer resented that they are not State Department people, except possibly by some back here in the State Department, and I think they are doing a first class job. One or two of them have said to me that when the change first occurred, they were miserable about it. But over time that has passed, I think. I think Commerce is where they belong because the Commerce Department does have a more solid realistic attitude of trade policies than does the Economic Bureau in the Department of State. In State it is not, for the most part, a front burner issue. In Commerce, international trade is half the reason for its existence and they are very well equipped to deal with it.

Q: Can you think of any particular problems that were inhibiting our trade overseas during this time? You mentioned the textile negotiations.

SMALLEY: Well, yes. The reason the Japanese were able to cut so heavily into our production and into our industry, and they have done so to the extent that several hundred American manufacturers had had to close, the reason was basically their low labor costs. Now the Japanese, I think it can be said generally, did things in decades as they began to get back on their feet after the war. They first went to labor intensive, low skill enterprises first focusing on agriculture. Then they gave themselves the decade of the 60s to develop

a textile industry. It was a sort of cottage affair. There were all these little places that were weaving away like mad. They went into artificial fibers as well as natural. Then in the 70s they moved into automobiles and in the 80s into high technology. So there has been this progression over the last 40-50 years now since the end of the war. We just happened to come along during the time of the textile intervention and they were enormously successful. But by the end of that decade they had made their decision to move on into automobiles and other comparable products, because their labor costs were beginning to rise and they in turn were hiring mills and textile producers in out of the way places like Ethiopia, Tanzania, etc. We were paying in our industry, as I recall, something around \$8.50 an hour and they were paying \$3.20 and they were getting people in Africa and other third world areas for a matter of a few cents an hour. They were farming out their textile business. Obviously it is wide spread now. Every country in the world first tries to get into the textile business.

Q: To move ahead, from 1975-77 you went with the rank of Minister-Counselor to the OECD. That is the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development.

SMALLEY: The United States, and most other countries, has an ambassador to the OECD, as well as a DCM, an economic officer who came from State, a trade officer who came from Commerce, a labor Officer who came from the Department of Labor, a finance expert who came from Treasury, and a few more. The US Representative to the Development Assistance Committee, which I held, comes from State, actually AID. The DAC is a committee to try and coordinate and discuss the aid policies of something like 17 different donor countries of which, of course, the United States is the largest in dollar terms, but in terms of percentage of GNP it is in the bottom half somewhere. I was there for two years.

The thrust at that time of US aid policies had moved away from infrastructures and factories of previous years and was focusing on basic human needs--agriculture, water, and things of that nature. The other countries were trying to do the same, although not every country has the same aid policies by any means. Not every country counts its aid dollars in the same way. The French, for example, counted every schoolteacher who was in Africa teaching the French language as an aid component. There were a lot of different conflicting policies. The Swedes were very politically liberal in their attitude towards what they wanted to achieve and we were probably more practical and conservative in what we wanted to achieve.

I think AID has gone through various lives in its intent over the years and may be going through another metamorphosis now. It is going more now into "we will help those who are willing to make the turn towards democracy." That message has gotten through loud and clear and I think it is a good one because it certainly has tended to moderate the rigidity of some of the military regimes, particularly in Africa and in some of the incompetent regimes. You look at a man like Kenneth Kaunda in Zaire who has just about run his country on the rocks economically, but has stayed alive by beating the West and frequently the United States over the head philosophically. He is beginning to loosen

up and talk about a multi-party system. So I think the aid lever has been wisely utilized. I think Congress just came to the point of saying "Well, why should we keep giving money to our enemies or to those who have no intention of being our friends and supporters."

Q: Did you get into debates with the Swedes over the use of funds?

SMALLEY: Quite often we would have strong differences of opinion at the table. The OECD, as I mentioned, has 17 donor countries, and we would have philosophical disagreements with them on various subjects. Once a year, each country that was represented at the table underwent what was called its annual aid review and it would send its senior aid official to Paris for usually a two-day review of that country's aid program. You would go around the table and each country would have an opportunity to ask questions of the senior minister or to voice opinions on their programs trying to elicit more information on what they were doing. So often times you would find totally different viewpoints of country A, say the United States, from country B, say Sweden, on country C, which might be Japan. There were numerous incidences where we and the Swedes expressed ourselves on opposite sides of an issue.

Q: Not to over focus on Sweden, but to give some idea of how these things were viewed, could you give any examples of the thrust of the Swedes and the thrust of the Americans in their aid programs in any particular areas?

SMALLEY: At that time, I can only speak in generalities, I can't recall the specific issues, I think generally the Swedes were more strongly in favor of state control of aid efforts in recipient countries whereas we were more strongly in favor of developing entrepreneurs and bringing in individuals into programs and finding ways to let them express their views on how programs could be most effectively implemented. And there were some other countries who had the same general philosophical bent as the Swedes, but I think the Swedes were the furthest out on the one hand and we were probably the furthest out on the other. But in those days I think the Brits tended to side with the Swedes quite a bit. The French tended not to side with anybody. They had their own attitudes and were going to pursue them and it didn't much matter what anyone else thought or said.

Q: How did it work? Say some planners in Washington decide that they are going to make a program for X country which is controversial--may be good or may be bad--and this is presented before this council and all of a sudden you think this is a poor idea....

SMALLEY: Well, it didn't quite follow that track. What happens is the Ambassador, AID director and the AID mission members in a given embassy decide what they want their program to be for the next fiscal year or two or three years down the road. They would then make an extensive submission back to AID Washington for approval of that plan. Usually it would be massaged by the various desks that had a hand in it. Once it was agreed upon, and I should say that in the initial formative stage it was all worked out not only by the AID mission and the embassy, but in concert with the government that is involved.

In Lesotho, for example, we never proposed anything that didn't have the full concurrence of the government of Lesotho. We never implemented anything that they didn't approve and participate in. So it was completely a cooperative thing. You send the program back to Washington. They would massage it, return it to the mission and say here is the way it is going to be provided Congress approves. They would put it in a package with a hundred or so other countries who were receiving assistance and send it up to the Hill and Congress would then massage it. You really didn't know what you were coming up with until Congress got through with it.

A lot of the money always stays here in the United States, which is something I think most people don't realize. I think over 75 percent of the money stays here to purchase materials, to pay for contractors, etc. It is money that is given to country X but only a relatively small portion is actually spent in country X.

What the Development Assistance Committee did was to serve as a clearinghouse for information and views. We would see what the French were doing, or what the Japanese were doing in the Philippines, or what the British were doing in Kenya, or what the Swedes were doing, etc. We would report it back to Washington for whatever value it had for Washington. We would make recommendations and comments. Washington would often then propose things that we should ask the Swedes or Japanese. So it was an important clearinghouse. It was not really a policy making body. We didn't decide how we were going to go. But we would say to the Swedes, "Well, we think you are wrong to do this for these reasons." They would then in turn report that back to their government. Often times we would have conversations on a single subject such as the development of small water projects, so that we could convey what we knew. It was helpful to other countries.

Q: You left that in 1977 and there was a hiatus corresponding with the Carter years.

SMALLEY: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was probably the first, and as far as I know, the last, political appointee to hold that position. It had always gone to AID professionals. In that instance, I don't think it makes a whole lot of difference one way or another. There is almost always a political appointee as chairman of the DAC and it is always an American. But in 1977, I think I was the last Republican appointee in the Ford Administration to leave Europe which I did in the mid summer of '77. Almost immediately when I came back I went to work for Senator Griffin again. Worked with him through his 1978 campaign which he lost and early in '79 I became one of the first ten or eleven staff members of the Reagan for President Committee.

Q: Where were you located in the Reagan for President Committee? What were you doing?

SMALLEY: The Committee could not be formed legally under the law until it had some money and the candidate had to indicate clearly that he would not object to the formation

of a committee. He didn't have to declare that he was going to be a candidate. We started in late January of '79 to put the Committee elements together. We didn't announce the formation of the Committee until the first week in March of '79, by which time Senator Laxalt had opened a line of credit for well over a million dollars to pay the staff. So for the first six weeks or so we worked for nothing.

The Laxsaw announcement of the formation of the Committee was made here in Washington and I wrote his remarks for that. It got off with a good start. Early on I had called about a half dozen prominent people, including Cap Weinberger and Walter Hickel, who was again the governor of Alaska, John Davis Lodge who had been the governor of Connecticut and ambassador to a couple of countries, and asked if they would publicly support Ronald Reagan and they said "Yes." They had me write statements for them which we substantially released after the Laxsaw statement. I stayed here in Washington immediately after the Committee was formed, but with John Sayres who was the campaign manager. But the rest of the campaign moved out to Los Angeles and had a headquarters down near the LA International Airport.

My job, my title was assistant to the campaign manager, was to go up to the Hill and try to see every Republican member of both Houses of Congress and get them to come on board the Reagan campaign. I think we started with a fairly substantial number of Senators and a good representation out of the House, but we were trying to enlarge that number because we felt it would prevent them from being absorbed by other candidates as the race went on. I don't know how far you want me to get into the political aspects...

Q: In doing this did you use the foreign affairs card at all?

SMALLEY: I did on occasion, but it really wasn't necessary. There was interest in Reagan's views on the Panama Canal treaties, for example, which was then pretty prominent, but generally it was not an issues oriented thing. Everybody knew where Reagan stood on everything. I will make just one political observation that relates to your question. The answer is no, foreign affairs did not have much of an impact on it. But politically, Reagan had been a known quantity since the '64 campaign. He went into the 1979-80 campaign with a very solid base of about 35-42 percent Republican electorate. They were already Reagan people. The rest of them were down at 3%, 2% or 0. We were trying to say to these Congressmen and Senators, "Look, this guy has got the nomination, and is going to be elected. He has the base and it is really something we hope you will be able to participate in." We did pick up a lot of additional endorsements. Obviously we didn't get everybody, but we did get a lot of people. I can remember talking to people who were a little nervous about Reagan who later took appointments from him. One was Millicent Fenwick from New Jersey. A very charming and long time Congresswoman. She had reservations about Reagan, but in the end she went to the FAO in Rome for several years and served very well.

Q: You didn't go to the State Department after the election did you?

SMALLEY: No. I went up to New York. There was a big split in the Reagan camp in 1980, although before that I had been offered a chance of a salary I thought I couldn't refuse to go to IBM in New York. I won't say it was a mistake, but I wasn't happy there. It was a fine company and there were fine people there, but, frankly, I missed the political life and atmosphere. I stayed up there for a couple of years and felt I would be there throughout the Reagan Administration, although I had let people know down in Washington that I was certainly hopeful that I could come back.

I had a call one day from the State Department, someone in the Bureau of Public Affairs, who asked me if I wanted to be Deputy Assistant Secretary. I said, "Yes." Apparently my name had been on a small list that had gone over from the White House.

So I came down and was interviewed by Ray Seitz, who certainly has had a distinguished career and it isn't over yet, and to make a long story short, Ray selected me and I was hired right away. I was in the State Department for the next seven years.

Q: What was your job in the State Department from 1982-87?

SMALLEY: There were three deputy assistant secretaries in the Bureau of Public Affairs. Two of those traditionally were filled by career Foreign Service officers, the third one traditionally was a political appointee. As far as I know that still is how it stands. I served under four Assistant Secretaries in the five years I was at PA. Dean Fisher, Al Haig's assistant secretary was there for only about a month--I came in the same week George Shultz came. John Hughes was there for about two years; Bernie Kalb was there for about a year and a half; and the rest of the time Chuck Redman was the assistant secretary. Each of those assistant secretaries could ask his deputies to do whatever he wanted them to do. But the way it seemed to work was that one became the deputy spokesman and that is the case today with Margaret Tutwiler. John Hughes had Alan Romberg; Bernie Kalb had first Ed Djerejian who is now our ambassador in Damascus; Chuck Redman had Bernie until he left and was replaced by Phyllis Oakley [ph].

Then there was a second Foreign Service officer serving as a deputy who sort of ran the program. He was the overseer for the functioning of the Office for Information, public programs, etc.--a variety of offices within PA.

My job was to focus really on special things. That involved a lot of liaison with the White House. Almost immediately, even before Dean Fisher left, I was thrown in to preparations for the nuclear arms control efforts that would become so major in 1983 when we were pursuing the two track decision and there were elections in Germany and in the UK. That was continued...

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Q: You were saying that you were in charge of special projects.

SMALLEY: Well, it just worked out that way. It wasn't a designation that I would be in charge of special projects, but the arms control effort certainly became a major part of my existence in that I was frequently attending interagency meetings at the White House. Early in 1983, I started to do just a massive and continuing amount of public speaking both in this country and abroad. I made at least three trips to Europe because of the political implication of the two track decision.

Q: Would you explain what the two track decision was?

SMALLEY: The United States was seeking to accomplish the achievement of agreements which would bring down the levels of nuclear weapons held by both East and West, but at the same time we were pursuing with our Allies a continuing buildup of weapons until such agreements had been reached, to make sure that the imbalance that existed did not continue to get worse. I said the United States, but this was a fully aired and approved Allied policy of the NATO countries.

The questions in Germany and the UK where elections were held in 1983, was whether they would elect governments which agreed with that approach or not. If they had elected governments which did not agree with it then I think we never would have had the INF agreement that was subsequently achieved and wouldn't be on the road to an agreement today on intercontinental ballistic missiles. So I think history has borne out the wisdom of what we were doing. But it was so scantily understood in those days that we were trying to achieve a buildup at the same time that we were trying to get agreements to bring them down. Well, in the end that is what happened at least with regard to intermediate missiles. We are still seeking agreement to bring down the number of ICBMs.

Q: I recall this is the time when the Labor Party was particularly under the control of basically a rather pacifist group which was its undoing.

SMALLEY: Oh, yeah. It hasn't recovered from it yet. In 1983, Margaret Thatcher defeated Michael Foote, who was really soft on defense issues. In Germany Chancellor Kohl was elected against Franz Vogel, who was similarly quite soft. The political left in Germany hasn't quite recovered from that one either, although they are now a little stronger.

Q: You dealt a lot with the White House. It seemed to me that there was a number of little fiefdoms warring with each other in White House, particularly in those earlier days. Did you find that this was true? If so, how did you deal with it?

SMALLEY: Well, of course, as the nuclear negotiations extended over a matter of years and the people who we dealt with over there were pretty much the same and I think the interagency meetings that transpired there were quite harmonious as a rule. In fact at one point some State Department people were moved over to the White House and took increasingly strong roles in some of the interagency meetings. I don't know if you want names?

Q: Sure, go ahead.

SMALLEY: Well, like Steve Steiner, who had been in EUR for a long time, and is now back at State and I am not sure what he is doing now. I know he would like to be an ambassador and he may make it some day. He is younger than I am by quite a bit. Steve spent a couple of years, at least, over there working on the NSC staff. Those interagency meetings were chaired by the NSC. Sometimes they were on a little higher level than others, but the players who you would often see at those meetings included Bud McFarlane, Jack Matlock, senior people who were from the NSC. And as I say generally they were pretty harmonious. We would talk about what issues were going to be discussed, how we were going to do publications, and they always came to us for publications and speeches. We prepared long calendars of speaking events, recruited people to take part and sent them out across the country. In fact, we actually caught some flack because of the money we were spending to send people out around the country early on in 1983 to talk about these things. But we had a responsibility which was given to us by Congress and the money to do so to explain public issues. The fact that they happened to be controversial didn't mean that they were off limits. So we proceeded. That was really the thrust for the next three, three and a half years. I gave my last arms control speech before I went to Africa in January, 1987. So I was at it for all of '83, '84, '85, and '86--four solid years.

Q: You say you and Shultz arrived there at the same time. What was the feeling in Public Affairs with the arrival of Shultz and the departure of Haig? I would have thought from Public Affairs point of view, Haig would have been a problem since he seemed rather volatile and didn't give that feeling of solidity that Shultz did.

SMALLEY: I think you are absolutely right. I wasn't there at the time Haig was there so I can't really say what the attitudes were towards him during his incumbency. But I can say that I was sent up to the University of Michigan where the Gerald Ford library is for a meeting that President Ford was putting on in November, 1982, very shortly after I had arrived. It was attended by a couple of hundred people and discussed the relationship between the White House and Congress in the formation of foreign policy. Al Haig was there and I was introduced to him. He kind of looked at me with a grin and said, "How are things down at State these days?" Before I could say a word he went on to answer his own question, "I bet they are a lot quieter than when I was there." I said, "I think that is probably true."

Q: How did you find Shultz, particularly in your field of arms control? Was he solidly behind it?

SMALLEY: Absolutely. I don't think he went in to it with any more knowledge of the issue than I did, but as the key issues and arguments crystallized he became a very forceful advocate and spoke innumerable times on the issues to major audiences. His speeches were a gold mine to me because I could just lift things right out of them. And

the President the same. They were setting the tone and Shultz was by all odds the most prominent strong proponent of the Reagan policies from State's point of view.

Q: What was your impression of the State Department press corps and the people assigned there?

SMALLEY: Well, I did the briefings for a while in '85 and sort of kept an eye on it before then and after then. I guess I would say that there are probably 70-75 correspondents accredited to the Department and of those, perhaps, 15 or 18 at the most are really serious international correspondents. Bernie Gershman of the New York Times, for example, went on to become and is now the foreign editor of the New York Times. Ralph Begleiter of CNN is a very bright young guy. Very competent serious reporter. The AP and the UP always had good people there. And so did the other networks. Some of them who were there at the time of my stay are still around, but they change. CBS has changed its people, NBC has changed its people. But since 1982 I think there has only been one change in the ABC person covering. It used to be Barry Dunsmore [ph] who is now roving around Europe and the Middle East. Now it is John McQuesthie. So you have a high respect for those. There are others who are just there for whatever they can get out of it. There are some gadflies who ask frivolous questions or some who ask questions from a particular point of view.

With all due respect there were some Arabs there who didn't have any interest in anything but Middle East issues and they were always trying to get the spokesman, whoever it was, to say something critical of Israel. And there were times we had to do that. There were others from Israel who were working the other side of the street. They were good reporters I suppose but it was the more slanted point of view than our reporters and a much more focused one. Ours were all over the globe. Basically, I think, it continued to be a pretty good press corps and I think it still is. It might even be a little better now than it was then.

Q: Although you weren't dealing with this per se, particularly with your trips to Europe and speeches and all, I rather imagine our policy in Central America around Nicaragua and all would come at you because this was sort of the cause of, you might say, the socialist factions and the left from the moderate to the far left in Europe. This must have been a constant theme.

SMALLEY: I had to tell myself and I am sure others did as well that almost wherever you went you had to be ready to answer questions on US policy in Central America. I sat in on any number of interagency meetings on Central America so I would be able to deal with it and it did come up. I can remember occasions in Europe where USIA would schedule me to meet, say for a luncheon, with four, six, ten local reporters and while they knew I was there to talk about arms control and they did talk about that, nevertheless this would come up. It would come up in conversations with academics. So we had to deal with it. But my experience was that if you knew what the Administration's line was and what the reasons were you could surprise a lot of people in what you had to say. I never felt that I

had a hostile audience--never felt it ended on a hostile note. I don't think I swayed any minds, but I did send people out saying, "Well, I guess I can see why they are doing what they are doing. I don't like it, but I can understand it."

But I have to say on the other side of that coin, most of the things that I did I managed to keep focused very tightly on the whole nuclear scene. You ran into a lot of buzz saws there too, but it didn't bother me because I knew what the arguments were.

Q: I would think on the nuclear strategy you would probably find the intellectual to a man or a woman opposed to our policies on Central America but more ambivalent on the nuclear policy because the other side, being the Soviet side, had theirs and they were literally under the gun. How did you find dealing on this issue with the European intellectuals?

SMALLEY: Tough, frankly. It certainly was always civil. I remember a night in Hamburg, Germany where there was a blizzard of the first order and I made my way out to this place where I was supposed to meet with a whole group of military and intellectual people and some press leaders, about 20 of them in this house. We all sat around in the living room and talked for three hours. Some of them were quite hostile to the American position at that time and sometimes I was a little worried that maybe I didn't have the right answers, but when it was all over I was told that I couldn't have done better.

It was an issued that I enjoyed talking about because I felt thoroughly confident that I knew what our positions were. There were other occasions like that. I remember there was a think tank in Paris run by a man whose last name is Moisee [ph]. He is very prominent and gets his picture in American magazines from time to time. He is a good friend of John Kelly who is Assistant Secretary for Middle East Affairs. He had a luncheon at which they had 12 or 14 people in Paris and I came. It was just about the time of the burning question of the world, "Who shot JR?"

Q: You had better put it into context. "Who shot JR?" refers to a television series called "Dallas," which for some ungodly reason was although popular in the United States was almost a cult among the intellectuals abroad.

SMALLEY: Here are these men who were just staggering in their intellectual capability talking about this American television show which I had never watched. The conversation went on for fully half an hour. It was a little hard for me to get started, but anyway it was all great fun.

One of the hardest times that I had didn't involve Central America affairs. But as fate would have it I was the first American speaker scheduled into Western Europe after the US raid on Libya.

Q: Could you explain what the US raid on Libya was?

SMALLEY: Muammar Qadhafi, the man who then and still ran Libya, was becoming increasingly involved in anti-American terrorist acts. He had been found, through communication intercepts as having instigated one in a night club in Berlin patronized by American soldiers and several were killed. President Reagan said that is it, that is enough. We flew planes out of the UK and off carriers in the Mediterranean. The British people reacted very negatively to this. The British government was very supportive of the Reagan decision and made it possible for the planes to take off from US bases in Britain. On the other hand, the French people were wonderfully enthusiastic about it, but the French government was opposed to it. The bombing was successful enough so that Qadhafi got out of the terrorist business and has stayed out since then as far as we know.

The raid was controversial and I spoke first in Ireland and then went over to Nottingham in England, spoke twice at the University of Nottingham, did a long interview on the BBC and then came down to London and did a couple of things there. It was the first and only time that police protection was provided for my presence, particularly at the University of Nottingham. I felt real hostility in some of the questions--although the British have a tradition in being sharp tongued in their questioning and they didn't throw their worst barbs at me, but there were all sorts of doubts about the wisdom of what we had done, and the rightness of what we had done. Once again, I was absolutely certain of what the Administration's reasons were. I think history has made that operation look right, as well. I got a lot more heat on that than I did on Central America.

Q: Before turning to your appointment to Lesotho as ambassador, how did you see the role of public affairs within the Department?

SMALLEY: The cooperation generally is very good. Well, almost every geographic bureau has its own public affairs activity and I think there is some problem from time to time with some of those running off the reservation without clearing it with the P area or PA not knowing what they were doing. It is not that PA had any kind of censorship role, we didn't. But still we needed our own interoffice coordinating procedures and for the most part they worked. I can't think of any major flare ups. There was a lot of good cooperation. For example, there was a NATO ministerial meeting held in the building at one point, along about '85. All of the press responsibility got turned over to PA and John Hughes turned it all over to me to run the press end of the thing. And I was glad to do that. That is the kind of special activity, for example, that John did a lot of.

We began as early as 1983 to put together the list of ships that would participate in Operation Sail on July 4, 1986 in New York Harbor, which was the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty. Big, big thing. John told me it was all mine. I didn't particularly want it, but I enjoyed it. I worked very closely with the Ops Sail people in getting the ships, that was the main role that I had. We had to deal with the various governments to get them to participate. Most of them we managed to get. So there was a wide variety of things. But PA was looked upon to do some of those special things that no one else could do.

The thing I liked about Public Affairs was that it was the one bureau in the building that has to know what everybody is doing. I mean, you have to know a little bit about the Economic Bureau, the Africa Bureau, European and Canadian Affairs, etc. Your work will put you in touch with the Legal people as well with diplomatic security or whoever it is at one time or another you are going to deal with them. I don't think you can necessarily say that of any other bureau in the building.

Q: Also you are very much aware if all of a sudden there is a flash bulletin on the news in the morning about a crisis, that it is your crisis too.

SMALLEY: Yes.

Q: If something happens in the Far East the people in the Near Eastern Bureau can sit back and relax.

SMALLEY: The role of spokesman is a very, very difficult one. Let me describe the procedure, if I may. You get up extremely early, number one, because you have to be in by 6:00 at the latest. You spend the first hour and a half before anyone else arrives going over the night's cable traffic from our embassies, going over newspapers from around the country and what you can get from around the world, going through intelligence reports, going through wire service copy. Out of all that you have to make some decisions as to what you and others who help you think is going to become the subjects of questioning at the daily briefing. When you decide those things you farm out to each Bureau a request to come up with questions and answers on that issue.

At the time I was briefing, for example, there were two issues that were front and center. It was right in the wake of a hijacking of a TWA plane in Lebanon in which passengers and crew had been kept hostage for a prolonged period. It was on TV every day. Then there was an effort at that time, as there have been many efforts since and as there is today, to find some kind of formula for Palestinians to negotiate with Israel that Israel would find acceptable without going through the PLO. We were really working on that at the time. There were also a couple of terrorism issues that came along at that time too. So you had to make a decision as to what issues you thought you might be confronted with. The individual bureaus that have responsibility for those Q&As had to get back to you by a fixed time, around 10:30 in the morning.

That would be followed by a conference telephone call between State, Defense, the White House press office and the CIA. You would go over what you had and what they had and the White House would tell you what they were going to focus on. Defense did not have a briefing every day, at least not in those days. State was the only one other than the White House that did one every day. Anyway, you would be told what they were going to handle and what they wanted you to handle.

Q: In the pecking order obviously the State Department would say, "You lay off this, we will take care of that."

SMALLEY: Well, really it was the White House that got first crack at what they wanted to handle and what they didn't. You will notice that often the White House spokesman will say, "I will refer you to the State Department on that."

So you go over your agenda with them and then around 11:30 you would take your papers in hand and go up and meet with the senior officer in the building. If it was the Secretary, you met with him. If it was one of the Under Secretaries you met with him. In my case it was Mike Armacost a good deal of the time. He was then the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. They would kind of fine tune it. They would say, "Well you have to remember this," or "Don't say that because it is not right," or whatever the fine tuning was.

Then you went down and did the briefing. It was for a long time a briefing that didn't get started on time. It was supposed to be at 12:00 and it wouldn't get started until 12:30 or 12:50. Everybody was unhappy about that scheduling. John Hughes finally said, "Look, we are going to do this thing as closely to 12:00 as possible and he really cracked down on the scheduling of it and we did bring it around to not later than 12:15.

Then you spend the afternoon answering thoughtful questions from those 15-20 correspondents I was talking about earlier. They would call and ask for information off the record. You soon got to know who the really thoughtful ones were. You would find out who you could trust to report accurately. So, that was the procedure.

Q: The Foreign Service retirement gossip is that Public Affairs has, unlike any other time, become sort of a tool of the Secretary of State, which is really much more political [we are talking about under the James Baker regime headed by Margaret Tutwiler] and is designed to make James Baker look good in order for him to run for President. Would you care to comment on that?

SMALLEY: Yes, I have heard that. I don't know that we have ever had a previous Secretary of State who was accused of running for President. It was kind of whispered about Al Haig, but he had big liabilities, politically speaking and he really wasn't there all that long. Baker is kind of an exception in his political interests and perhaps his personal ambitions. The question was raised about George Shultz once, but he just brushed it off as though it was absolute insanity--he really is a nonpolitical person. I can't comment on where the Bureau is being used as a political instrument now more than it was, but it always has had political leadership. By the very nature of it the Assistant Secretary, at least, should be close to the Secretary. I was talking to Ralph Bakelighter not too long ago about this relationship. He said Margaret Tutwiler came over from Treasury with Baker and her first opening comments as spokesman admitted she was not experienced in foreign affairs at all. But he said she has made herself well informed. She certainly is in on the loop and it shows. Her office is right on the top floor with the Secretary's. I said, "Well, what about Richard Boucher, the deputy spokesman?" And he said, "He is very good, but he admits he is not in on the loop."

Q: Being "in on the loop" means very close to the policy making, the Secretary and his immediate senior officers.

SMALLEY: You don't go down and say what you know is under consideration, but on the other hand, it certainly gives you a lot more ease and confidence if you are dealing with questions that are front burner issues up stairs. John Hughes had to say it once and I had to say it once--"Look, I am not up here to give you my opinions, I am up here to tell you what US policy is and what we are doing to implement those policies." People would try to corner you and say, "I know this is what you say, but what do you think personally." And, you know, you just can't falter and you can't go for a speculative question, or intelligence question. So there are a lot of restraints on you. They may think you are ducking, but you have to, you simply can't answer.

Q: You were then Ambassador to Lesotho from 1987-89. How did this appointment come about?

SMALLEY: Sometime in 1986 the Administration made a decision that it would start looking to deputy assistant secretaries who had been with them for some time and who had worked well for ambassadorships in the concluding couple of years of the Reagan Administration. I said to one or two people that I certainly would be interested and had an interest in Africa which I had developed not only as a DAS, but in my work on the Development Assistance Committee at OECD. I learned late in '86 that I was being seriously considered, but I did not know for what. A couple of countries were mentioned to me as possibilities but they went to others, so I just waited to see what would happen. I did have some political support, but don't think it was decisive necessarily. I did have the advantage of having a very good record with President Reagan in that I had been one of the original people in '79. Those things help and by that time I had a lot of years in the State Department which also helped. I had gone out, as Mike Armacost had said at my swearing in, that Bob has been out doing the Lord's work, and I had. I had been out front and enjoyed the work. I guess I did a good job of it.

So in December of '86, just before Christmas, I was told that I was going to be appointed as ambassador to Lesotho. You know how long the process is. It is interminable, or so it seems, and you have to keep it under your hat for a long time, or at least you did in that era. Then I got my telephone call from the President on April 9. He asked me and I said, "You bet." So we chatted for a few minutes. Then I went through the Senate hearings; my wife and I had a personal meeting with the President at the White House in mid-June and we were sent on our way with his blessings. We arrived in Lesotho on the July 1. So it was really from the December 18 until July 1.

Q: Did you go through the ambassadorial seminar?

SMALLEY: Indeed I did. It was immensely helpful and I understand it has since been expanded from one week when I was there to two weeks. Normally in that period it was

conducted by three people: Shirley Temple Black, Charlie Bray, and Tony Motley. Motley was a political appointee who really knew Central and Latin America. He had been born in Brazil and had served as Ambassador to Brazil. Shirley Temple Black's history is well known. Beyond being a movie star she had served as Ambassador to Ghana and is now Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. Charlie was Ambassador to Senegal, and maybe one other post in Africa. It was extremely interesting. However, she was not able to participate because she was off on an international trip some place. So it was just the two men. But extremely valuable. It was both political and nonpolitical appointees. Jack Matlock, who was on his way to becoming Ambassador to Moscow was in the same class with me. He had already been an ambassador a couple of times but he wanted to take it again. I think it is that valuable to everyone.

Q: When you arrived how did you find the staff at the embassy?

SMALLEY: Well, I think for the most part very good. One thing I was told in the ambassadorial training course was that there were two people you will never have good things to say about. One is your predecessor and the other is your successor. I don't know my successor and I don't want to speak ill of my predecessor, but he had spent a lot of time in South Africa and had made a lot of friends across the border and I think the embassy had been run by the DCM who hadn't been there very long himself. So it was kind of a loose ship. I didn't try to tighten things up in a disciplinary sense, but I did feel I had been told by the President and by the Secretary personally as well as by letter that you have certain things to do. So I think we kind of got it going as a unit on track better than it had been. I think we repaired a relationship with the government of Lesotho that had been kind of neglected. At least it hadn't been a close relationship.

The AID facility which had a large number of contractors, around 80, I found was functioning very well. The embassy staff, itself, was quite good. The one real problem I had was the admin officer. I learned later that it is very hard to get good experienced admin officers to go to Africa. Usually they are first or second tour officers and quite often, in the Department's view, kind of the bottom of the barrel. They are people who just can't get a posting anywhere else. At any event, the admin officer left a lot to be desired and caused a variety of problems.

Q: This often can be the real key position because he takes care of the running of the post.

SMALLEY: That is right. But fortunately both the outgoing and the incoming DCMs were very good experienced guys and were able to help correct a lot of wrongs. The man who came in as DCM--I had been fortunate to be able to select him before I went there. He arrived about six weeks after I did. He was the Chargé after I left and I like to think that some intercession by me was influential in getting him the position of first DCM at the new American embassy in Namibia where he is now. A fellow by the name Harold Cheatter [ph]. The communications staff was solid. The consular representative was solid.

Q: What was the political environment in Lesotho when you arrived and with which you were dealing?

SMALLEY: Short and quick history. Lesotho had been a British Protectorate for a hundred years or so up until 1966 when it got its independence. It had a king and a prime minister and a constitution. The first election to be held under that constitution was in 1970. The Prime Minister did not like the apparent outcome of the election so he threw out the election results and the constitution and ruled autocratically until 1986, with the king in a ceremonial role. At one time the king was sent into exile in Holland. Early 1986, the Prime Minister was overthrown by a military coup. The military set up a kind of bifurcated government in which the king was given executive authority and a Council of Ministers, and the military formed a Military Council of six members which in effect advised the king, but more significantly had veto power over whatever the king and the ministers wanted to do. So the ultimate power was in the military's hands. They worked reasonably well together for the first year or so, but then in 1987 began to have differences over some things. I arrived in mid '87 when the differences were beginning to show. Rumors of conflicts were beginning to be heard. Principally between the chairman of the Military Council, General Lekhanya and King Moshoeshoe II. Their differences became pronounced in 1988 and there were rumors that the king had tried to fire Lekhanya. There were rumors that Lekhanya was trying to run a coup against the king and that one member in particular of the Military Council was siding with the king. It came to a crisis point three times in 1988. You never knew in the morning who was going to be on the top of the pile that night. Somehow it was held together and there were some very tense times throughout all this.

I came in mid '87 and I watched this thing become more and more charged with apparent hostilities. I think what was really at stake was a division within the country's leadership, and in a small country like that the leadership circle is limited, between commoners on the one hand, i.e. the military in this case, and royalists on the other who were supported by the system of chiefs and who wanted to continue to maintain power. Throughout the two years that I was there, there was a growing agitation to develop some kind of representative government under the title of democracy. The king said he wanted it, but there was a common feeling, and I think this was right, probably the king didn't want to go too far in democracy because he liked being an executive monarch and was afraid giving power to an elected parliament would diminish his own authority. He denied that, but never very effectively. General Lekhanya said he was all for going for democracy, but he didn't want political parties in the sense they had had parties in the past because he said political parties were able to concentrate power within themselves and that was what had led to the long twenty year span of the initial Prime Minister.

In '89 things kind of quieted down a little bit during the first few months. But as I was getting ready to leave along about May, 1989, it came to light that the previous Christmas General Lekhanya, who is a rancher in his own right owning a dairy farm and having horses, had been at the agricultural college just on the outskirts of Maseru, the capital

city, one night late, about 10:30, with his bodyguard, who was with him virtually everywhere, and somehow had shot and killed a male student. Questions quickly arose as to what was he doing there and why did he shoot this kid? His story was that he caught this young man in the act of raping a 23 year old woman on the college campus and that he fired two warning shots into the air and then a third one which ricocheted off a rock and hit the boy and killed him. As to the question of what he was doing there, he said he had a milk cow that needed the immediate attention of the best veterinarian in the country who was located there on the campus and he was there trying to get the vet and take him back to his dairy, which is on the other side of Maseru. Subsequently he was tried for this in effect and exonerated.

But before the trial and the immediate aftermath of the revelation of this thing, the king called upon him to step down until it was decided by the courts. He was supported in this by one member of the Military Council who had been rumored right along to be in league with the king against Lekhanya. This man's name was, he was a colonel in the army, a young man, well-educated, a good soldier, Sekhobe Letsie. Sekhobe became a pretty good friend of mine. He called me up one night about 10:15 or so and said [this was back in '88], "I would like to see you urgently tomorrow." So we set a time and I went up to his office. He wanted to know what our rules were for applying for asylum if he had to do that. This was during the tense period of '88 when apparently he was fearful of what could happen in the event of one of these splits actually occurring. Well it didn't, and he didn't, but I had to get guidance from the Department and we were all living on tender hooks for a while.

To come back to '89, in the course of being kind of cornered on this murder charge, General Lekhanya implied that he knew where some bodies were buried and if he got strung up, so to speak, he could point a few fingers at others and they should think carefully. Well, it turns out that shortly after, within two or three months after the 1986 coup, two ministers of the previous autocratic government and their wives had been found murdered. Their murders have never been solved. It was claimed that no one knew who initiated the murders, although I heard rumors while I was there as to who it might have been.

In any event, to make a long story short, after his own exoneration, Lekhanya in late February, 1990 came to a breaking point with the king. At the end of about a two week strained period between them he escorted the king down to the bridge and gave him an airplane ticket to London where he moved into the residence of the Lesotho High Commissioner. He lived there for several months although in the interim most of his staff came back to Lesotho.

Lekhanya at the same time arrested two members of the Military Council, one of whom was Colonel Sekhobe Letsie. He was charged with complicity in the murder of these two ministers in 1986. Sekhobe has been on trial for that crime and it is now before the judge for review and we are waiting for a verdict.

Now the king went to London on the basis that he was going to be there for only six months, they called it a sabbatical rather than exile. General Lekhanya came to the United States in October of last year and I saw him a couple of times--had dinner with him. He was very upbeat as he always is, although he can be as tough as nails. On his way back from Washington he stopped in London and met with the king and asked if he was ready to come back--meaning on his terms. The king apparently said, "Yes." And I guess they talked about what those terms were and what the limitations on the king would be. So Lekhanya went back and reported this in Maseru.

Now immediately, after the king had gone in March, he had convened a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution to result in a democratic system of government with the first elections to be held and the first popularly elected government to be in place by June, 1992. That Constituent Assembly is still in session. The conditions were that the Assembly would start with the 1966 constitution as its starting point and that the monarchy would be maintained.

The long road towards democracy had begun to unfold by the time he had returned from the US and meeting with the king in London. So it was to the Constituent Assembly that he went and said the king was coming back. So they sent the king an airplane ticket. The flight time came and the king wasn't there. He wanted all sorts of guarantees about his perks, prerogatives, salary, etc. So these were all unacceptable to Lekhanya and to the Constituent Assembly so they asked the chiefs to elect a new king declaring the old king out. They chose his son, the Crown Prince, as the new king and he was sworn in right away and his official coronation will be later this year.

So there is the situation. They are trying to move toward democracy. I don't know if they have decided what is going to happen with the military--what the military's role in a new government will be. What the role of the chiefs will be, and they are a bit of a thorn in everybody's side because they still give advise in their villages, but basically they are turning out to be a lot of drunks. The third thing I guess they have to decide is what the structure of the monarchy is going to be. Now they may have decided all those question, I just haven't been able to stay in touch with them.

Q: What was our policy while you were there, outside of having friendly relations with the country? Did we stay aloof from this political turmoil?

SMALLEY: I tried not to get involved with the turmoil, but two things: One of my specific instructions from the President and underscored by Secretary Shultz was to work for the development of democracy in Lesotho. That wasn't just an abstract as far as I was concerned. I kept talking about it with them individually and collectively and publicly, at every opportunity. I think it was fortunate that 1988 was an election year in the United States and I seized every opportunity I could to talk about the political process in the United States. I did so several times at the university. I was constantly meeting with the full range of press people who where there. There weren't many, but there were more than I thought there would have been. I talked to the government leaders about it. I went out

and talked at various civic clubs like the Rotary, Lions, etc. I went as broadly as I could go, including some things in South Africa--a couple of radio and one television interview on it, which fed back into Lesotho. There was a constant thinking about democracy. And here was this big country saying we function well under this system. It was during that period that agitation in Lesotho really began to get noticeable. In fact, I had one of the senior government ministers say to me that they can't go on with this kind of structure of government much longer, because there is simply too much growing pressure to move towards representational government of some kind, which is what they are now doing.

How did you phrase your question?

Q: I was wondering what our interests were, what role were we playing in this?

SMALLEY: We were after the development of democracy. Did we have a role in it? Yes. I haven't even mentioned that in the course of the long autocratic government that preceded 1986, there had been a resistance movement formed called the Lesotho Liberation Army and it had gone outside of Lesotho into South Africa. The South African government was largely its sponsor. The LLA remained outside of Lesotho even after the military took over because their leadership felt that their leader having once rid the country of the old prime minister should have been part of the government. He, Moekehle, finally was induced to come back into the country while I was there. Sekhobe Letsie was the principal agent although it was done at Lekhanya's behest. And all of Moekehle's people came back. The terms were fairly simple. They could not bring their arms, they could not come back all at once, they could not engage in political activity.

Not very long after Moekehle came back, this was in '88, he sent word that he would like to talk to me. So the DCM and I had him over as a guest at my residence one morning. He stayed, and stayed and we talked for about three hours. We listened, he talked about what he wanted from Lesotho and how he saw it. And he asked me to convey all of this to General Lekhanya. So I asked General Lekhanya if I could meet with him privately and he said, "Yes"--we had met privately on a couple of other things. I heard of an assassination attempt against him once. I didn't know whether it was valid or not, but I felt I had to tell him so I went to his house one Sunday morning and told him. He was very appreciative. So, anyway, I sort of became a go between with Lekhanya on the one hand and Moekehle on the other. I was definitely the first non-Basotho to meet with Moekehle, there is no question about that.

Q: I assume you were reporting this to Washington. Were you reporting that if not given specific instructions you were going to continue to do this?

SMALLEY: Well, I was acting on my own, but I felt and they quickly confirmed, that it was okay for me to continue to do this because I think what we wanted was not only the end result called democracy, but we wanted to create an atmosphere of political stability and anything we could do contributing to that without getting involved in the process was desirable.

The role I played was in effect a messenger between the two, but they sought me out and I went to Lekhanya and told him what Moekehle had said in great detail and his reaction was some positive and some negative, but he said he would be glad to meet with him any time. He said that I should go back and tell him such and so. So I said, "Okay I will go back and tell him that but this was the last time I was running your messages." He laughed. In the event, he and Moekehle finally did meet for the first time in years. Moekehle is not a member of the Constituent Assembly.

However this thing is finally resolved, I like to think that I had a small part in it. Moekehle was kind of anti-king as well as Lekhanya being anti-king. Look, I have to say that Lekhanya was very faithful to the monarchy as an institution. Never was there a whisper that would lead anyone to think otherwise. And he respected the king because he was the instrument of the monarchy. But it was with the king as a person that their differences arose. The young man who is now the king I think is willing to work more closely with the General than his father and willing to accept the limitations or whatever role is designed for him in the new constitution.

So it was a fascinating time to be there.

Q: Lesotho is in the middle of South Africa. We were having what turned out to be a very effective, but controversial policy at the beginning, run by Chester Crockett of constructive engagement.

SMALLEY: That was the phrase that he used. It was a phrase that a lot of people decided they didn't like and they attacked him, George Shultz and even the President. It was enormously unpopular in Southern Africa, mainly by people who interpreted it to mean we were going to continue to do business with the P. W. Botha government, which, of course, was what we were trying to get away from and in the end did. I think Chet should have gotten some marvelous recognition for that but he never did. I guess he got a medal from the President, but I am not sure. I will tell you that there would not be a free Namibia sitting there today, nor would South Africa be in the process it is in without him.

Q: What I gather from professional ranks is that people are certainly appreciative of how it worked out, I mean it was successful.

SMALLEY: And it was very, very complex and very difficult. It involved trips into Angola at a time when we had no representation there and they were torn by civil war. It was carried out under enormous problems.

Q: Was there a Lesotho card at all within this whole element, or were you mainly to try to keep this as a stable place?

SMALLEY: Lesotho has, and always will have, a very close relationship with South Africa. The economy is almost completely dependent on South Africa, although Lesotho

is trying to develop an export business of textile and other things. When the P.W. Botha government was still in office, they had a long running feud with the king because he would make trips up to Botswana or over to Swaziland, or some place and talk about apartheid and what an evil thing it was. Finally he had a meeting with President Botha, I guess which he instigated thinking he could say let's be friends, and Botha whipped out a dossier, so I'm told, and said, "On such and such a date you said this about me, and on such and such a date you said this about South Africa and you can't be a friend of South Africa and you can't be a friend of mine." It was not a good meeting from all I learned about it.

South Africa almost always had police within Lesotho. Certainly they controlled the borders, Lesotho does not. In the mid-80s they staged a couple of raids into Lesotho to whip out the ANC, the African National Congress, and in one of those raids more than 40 people were killed. When Lekhanya and king came into power in 1986, Lekhanya had a closer relationship by far than any other official in Lesotho with South Africa. When he came into power he struck a deal apparently with South Africa. He said, "If you will build for us this big water project we want up in the mountains, we will keep the ANC out of here." It was probably the South Africans who proposed it. They said, "Look, we don't want you to be harboring the ANC so if you will keep them out of Lesotho we will put in with you on this water project." It is now the largest water project in the world--an enormous thing. Lesotho has vast mountains, most of it is mountains, most of it is very high mountains--10, 11 thousand feet. There are tremendous basins where they are going to be catching water building five dams, building tunnels through the mountains to carry the water down into the Orange Free State and the Transvaal all the way up to Johannesburg. So it is the first time that Lesotho will have an exportable commodity. It will be ready in six or seven years.

Q: On this, when the police would raid were we protesting or anything--sort of joining in with other countries about the violation of the border?

SMALLEY: Not really. If we had been able to prove conclusively that it had been South Africa we would have. The big raid that I described took place before I got there and I don't know what we did at that point. I think there was an official US protest because there was no doubt about it in that case. They came over in force and shot up people in a lot of places and then went back. Although it was never really clear whether it was South African police or military, or paramilitary units, or who it was, but it was South African.

The incidents that occurred when I was there were more or less individuals. I remember one case of a man who was shot in a hospital. He was a suspected ANC type. His assassin was never found, but it was widely believed by everybody that it was South Africans. So there were those kinds of things going on. As far as the police being in the country, I think the Basotho wanted them there for some things because there were a lot of problems about rustling cattle back and forth across the river. Stolen cars going one way or another. A negligible, but nevertheless noticeable narcotic traffic. So they had a lot of common things and they did work together.

Q: Did we have the Peace Corps there?

SMALLEY: Yes, about a hundred volunteers.

Q: This seemed to work well?

SMALLEY: It seemed to be working very well. There was a politically appointed Peace Corps director while I was there for about the first year and a half. I thought he was a very good director. There were some of the volunteers who were a little beyond the ambassador's reach. You know you can't run them. I think the Peace Corps is at fault in not making clear to some of its volunteers how much of a really working proposition this is. I think there were some down there who felt that this was a good opportunity of two years for backpacking and a chance to see the region. That is overstated, but there was some of that and doing what they weren't supposed to do, like going into South Africa without the director's approval and that sort of thing. I think Peace Corps Washington should run a tighter ship as far as the volunteers are concerned. After all it is a taxpayers' organization.

Q: We are obviously interested in things that were happening in that area because our policy was highly involved in problems in Namibia, Angola and all this. Do you want to make any comments about whether this was a good center for intelligence or not?

SMALLEY: Yes, it certainly was. If you look at the politics involving the Soviet Union, certainly up to the time at the end of '88 when they concluded the agreement on Angola and Namibia, they were really of an aggressive state of mind as far as Africa was concerned. They were giving tremendous amounts of aid into Angola. They were giving aid to the ANC, to the government in Mozambique. But all that began to recede in late '88 and certainly in '89 to the point that today they have pretty much withdrawn from the African venture.

But the long 20-year government in Lesotho became very friendly towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, generally. In the late 70s, early 80s they invited the Soviets to open an embassy and PRC to open an embassy, the North Koreans to open an embassy and others began to show up ad hoc. The reason the Soviets were particularly, and I suppose the PRC too, interested in going in there was that it was a listening post they could monitor communications in South Africa. They could much easier keep an eye on South Africa's military capabilities.

Q: We are talking about radio listening.

SMALLEY: Yeah, radio, telephone and military communications. I am sure they had very sophisticated stuff in there. Furthermore they were probably sending people across the border illegally. I have never heard that said, but I never doubted for a minute that it was happening. Almost everyone who came to the Soviet embassy in the first year and a half I

was there either had a GRU (military) background or a KGB (political) background. The embassy in Maseru was their furthest south embassy in Africa. The PRC the same. They were unable to get into South Africa legally, but it was sort of a place for them to have an intelligence outpost. So I think that is basically why they were there.

And, I am sure that our intelligence people, if we had any there, were looking at that. Probably trying to monitor what the Soviets were up to. Our people were, no doubt, interested in finding out what the South Africans were up to too. There were military bases in the nearby areas. If there was a threat to Lesotho from South Africa, we had to be aware of it. In fact, after the 1985 raid in which 40 people were killed, the United Nations had sent a watchdog type fellow down there to keep an eye on the borders. There are 14 border crossings and he had to constantly keep an eye on them to see that there was no danger of incursions and I am sure we were interested in that same sort of thing. So the intelligence game I am sure was being played all the time, with good results.

Q: You left there before the end of the Cold War, but did you feel any changes or changes because of the Namibia solution?

SMALLEY: Yes, you knew it was going to change. I was there in the period that de Klerk was serving as Minister of Education, he is now President of South Africa, and I remember very clearly in January of 1989 when President P.W. Botha had a stroke, which effectively terminated his career although he continued in office for a few more months. De Klerk was the logical successor, although he was a bit of a surprise because his father was one of the chief architects of apartheid and his uncle was the man who coined the word apartheid. Along about the late 70s some of the younger members of the party, including de Klerk, began to see that maintaining the system was absolutely too costly in every way. In terms of money, in terms of internal security, in terms of resources devoted to police and military facilities that were badly needed elsewhere, international isolation and disapproval. It was just becoming a burden that South Africa could not endure indefinitely. So when he became the head of the national party in South Africa, which in effect made him the ruler of the government, de Klerk made it clear that the time had come for South Africa to change its ways. You could see this coming and it was almost too much to believe. But still you could sense it.

But also in the period when I was there was when this terrible violence began in the province of Natal between the ANC followers of Nelson Mandela and the Inkatha followers.

They started not very far from Lesotho. The word we were getting was that it was in effect ANC people who provoked the initial violence by going into Inkatha territory in Natal and trying to recruit. That is where the initial fighting began and it went on from there. I am not saying that the Inkathas have been blameless, because clearly they have not, but the fighting that has become so ghastly over the last four years has its roots in Natal which in some places is right up against Lesotho.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover on this that I may have missed?

SMALLEY: I don't think so. You raised South Africa so let's end it there. I will just say that I have kept very current with events that are continuing on down there. It has been a long time since de Klerk said, "We are changing course." They still have a long way to go to what is being called a new South Africa, but I guess I think in time they will get there. But the clock is running on that situation. He has a five-year term and he is well into the second year now, so he has only really about three and a half years left to get the negotiations going, get them completed, have an election and have it all wrapped up. In the meantime he is fighting off the extreme right wing elements that are opposing him every step of the way. And they are certainly going to continue to oppose him.

On the other hand, Mandela has been crippled by divisions within the ANC. He has had all sorts of unforeseen problems of weakness of the organization to cope with that he didn't foresee. He found that his own economic policies are 30 years out of date. So it hasn't been a cake walk for him either. Certainly this trial involving his wife on complicity charges of beating and killing of a small boy has been hurtful to him.

So, I don't see any quick resolution of this problem and I suspect the longer it goes on the more violent it is going to get.

Q: You left in the summer of '89. What have you been doing since that time?

SMALLEY: Well, I am doing a lot of public speaking. I just recently completed a period aboard the Queen Elizabeth II as a guest lecturer, where I talked about South Africa, among other things, the Middle East and the Soviet Union. I am doing a book on Lesotho. I do a lot of traveling. I am about to take off for a month in France.

Q: Well great. Thank you very much.

SMALLEY: You are welcome.

End of interview