

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
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**AMBASSADOR JOHN T. SPROTT**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*  
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with John T. Sprott. Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 1998 and we are in Washington DC. This interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. John can you give us some personal background, where you were born and something about your family.*

SPROTT: Certainly. I was born in April 1933 in Phoenix, Arizona. My mother went to Phoenix to be with family and give birth to me. She then brought me back to Prescott Arizona, which is where she was living, and working and where I then grew up. Prescott was a fairly small community in those days, about 10,000 people, serving a fairly large northern Arizona ranching area. My mother was head nurse of the county hospital which was, in those days, the only hospital in the county, maybe even additional counties of northern Arizona. I believe Flagstaff was the next nearest—close to 100 miles away. Our home was across the street from the hospital. She essentially ran that hospital for quite a few years. That's back in the days when there were few doctors, so the nurses did a lot of the things that today we would never associate with them doing. I grew up in a hospital-farm environment because the county hospital also had a large farm that they used to produce a lot of their food.

*Q: Dairy cattle and—*

SPROTT: Dairy and some beef cattle for the beef, hogs, sheep, chickens, etc., as well as regular farming. It was quite large, probably, if my memory serves me right, probably about 300 acres of land that was used to support the hospital. So it was really a quite interesting environment in which to be raised.

*Q: How about your early education there.*

SPROTT: I went to elementary school and high school in Prescott. The elementary school was some distance out of town, probably about seven, eight miles out of town, and the intermediate and high schools were downtown, to which we were bused: I quit high school after the eleventh grade. Later, while in the Navy I received the high school diploma in San Diego.

*Q: Before we get too far, in elementary school how were you as a student? Did you have any favorite courses?*

SPROTT: Elementary school. I was a problem reader, so school was a problem for me, and basically I had a number of problems when I was young. I was held back a year. I think I was out more than I was in. My memory of elementary school is not one that leads me to remember very much: geography a little bit, and I think that was really kind of the extent of it.

*Q: You mention being sickly. This is a period of time where a considerable number of Americans with weak chests, as it was called, with TB or anything else, were coming to Arizona for the climate. I mean, was this noticeable, I mean, being in a hospital environment and all that?*

SPROTT: The County Hospital actually had a TB ward there, which was isolated from the rest of the hospital, and there were a number of TB patients. Prescott was also well known for its dry high climate, and a lot of people showed up there with allergies; asthma particularly. It wasn't that I was sickly. I had yellow jaundice and whooping cough, and the combination, at that age, was enough to really put me down.

But the area was interesting. In fact, about two cornfields from where I was living was a Yavapai Indian reservation, so I grew up with the Yavapai Indians, going to school with them, and playing with them in the hills. So it was a fascinating diverse area. The lady, who raised me, because my mother was working, was one of the pioneers of Arizona, and her home had been about a mile from where we lived--the barn was still standing. We used to pick arrowheads on the barn and she used to tell stories of the Indians running the cattle off the farms. And across the valley from where we lived there was an old military graveyard, not far from us. So the area was just rich in history.

*Q: Was your mother a native of the area?*

SPROTT: No, she was a native of Nebraska. She and her twin sister and their youngest brother drove out in 1923, if I'm not mistaken, from Lincoln Nebraska. My mother had gotten a teaching degree, and her twin sister had gotten a nursing degree and then talked my mother into getting a nurse's degree also. So she went back to school and got a nursing degree, and then they went out to Arizona and started nursing in Phoenix. Imagine traveling out there in those days, the three of them, three young people—it had to be a really fascinating? I look at some of those pictures. What an adventure they must have had. My uncle was a self-taught engineer, radio engineer and was one of the engineers that built a radio station in Arizona, KTAR. I am told by the family that he built the first radio in the state of Nebraska. I have no way of confirming that. It's a great story whether it's true or not. He was a "free thinker" in many ways. He was a good artist and produced some wonderful pieces of art, in watercolors, as well as carvings and that sort of thing. He also wrote some poetry. He went into World War II, the South Pacific and it, I think, affected him as it did many returning veterans. It certainly changed his life dramatically.

*Q: Your younger years spanned a good six or seven years, anyway, of the Depression. Was this a factor or, for a kid, just sort of passed over your head?*

SPROTT: No, it was very real there. I mean, we were lucky that we lived in the country I can remember going out periodically and collecting wood to stockpile. In that area we had well water. We had a well in our back yard. We had no gas for heating. We did have electricity, and I can remember a period when either we were just getting it or something. There was a period of time I can remember when we didn't have electricity.

*Q: This was probably part of Roosevelt's New Deal Rural Electrification Program.*

SPROTT: WPA (Works Progress Administration) and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) did a lot of work in that area, and it really made some fundamental differences, checking erosion, flash flooding, small dams and parks. It improved things. We were able to get firewood and produce from local farms. Hunting was a lot easier there, and you could always find a way to get meat that way. We learned how to privately can food and when World War II came along, the city set up a canning center, I'm sure other cities around the country did that, and we would can for ourselves, and then a certain proportion of that was given over and sent to the military. But I don't think people were hurting in quite the same way as they might have been had they lived in the city, where you didn't have the ability to grow things or pick things up, as we did. We never thought of ourselves as being poor.

*Q: You also didn't have the dust bowl problem and all that.*

SPROTT: Nothing. Now for the south and Phoenix, if you remember, this was a period when there were orange groves in the area, but you didn't have any large-scale farming like you subsequently had following the development of canals and irrigation systems that begin to come on line in the late '30's, early '40's, that began to change that area

dramatically. *Q: When you got to high school, you say you didn't finish it, but when you started high school, were there any particular things you were interested in?*

SPROTT: I loved math, actually, and it was very frustrating for me. I really enjoyed math, and I enjoyed science. They were frustrating because I—. I'll tell a story that may help explain some of the frustration. You can edit it out. I was sent to a Catholic school. And somewhere toward the end of the first grade they let mother know that I wasn't welcome back. I constantly asked questions and while waiting to be picked up would often wonder and have to be found. Catholic Schools at that time didn't allow for a lot of questions such as "how do we know something (to be true) that was based on faith" the nuns didn't take kindly to that, particularly if the question was asked more than once in different ways. And that got me into trouble periodically because I was unwilling to take very often a pat answer. I wasn't being silly or smart; I just was curious. I wanted to know the reasoning. That's why I think I liked math and science, what frustrated me as I went along in both of those subjects was that very often it was a set pattern for teaching, if you were trying to find out the why of something; you didn't always get to that. You had to follow a pattern, and I just wound up frustrated. I got A's and B's throughout school. I got F's very often in self-control, in the elementary school particularly.

One of the teachers that I remember the most probably was more effective than anyone else in high school or intermediate school, was a teacher who had come back from World War II. He taught seventh-grade English. He taught in a way that helped you make sense of why you were learning; where it was leading. He made reading interesting. And in the kind of environment I was in, people weren't big readers.

That teacher had an impact because he had, as I look back, a desire to get people to come out rather than to teach at, to try to pull things from people, to get them to do things, to participate in their own way, but to learn in the process. So that teacher counted more than the others for me. The math teachers not so much, they probably were what you have described, more limited in their knowledge, but nice people.

You know, I look back on that period, my questioning would get me periodically into trouble, but for example, I can remember counting the elements, and then asking the question, well, how do know there are only—I can't remember what it was—99 or something like that at that point, not nearly as many as we now know there are. Well, by the time I had gotten into college the number of known elements had already increased. The point is that so many of the teachers were teaching strictly from a textbook. Textbook said  $X$ , they taught  $X$ , if you said why can't it be  $X$  plus  $Y$ ? That was unacceptable, partially because they didn't have an answer and it was frightening perhaps, I don't know.

I chose to leave high school at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and go into the navy.

*Q: This must have been in what?*

SPROTT: 1951 and the Korean War was on.

*Q: Why join the service?*

SPROTT: I think that's a little complex. Remember we were coming out of World War II, a period in which patriotism had been pitched up to a peak in many ways. I was at that age where my uncles returning, and others that I knew returning, were people that I thought highly of. They would tell stories—not gory stories, but of seeing the world and doing things—that were fascinating and enlightening to me. I began to see a world outside of where I had grown up. So that's one part of it. Also I've had a desire to roam. I was held back a year, as I told you, when I was in the fourth grade. So I was 18 at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, when normally one would be 18 at the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade. So in some ways I was older than my classmates, although I can't say that made a difference they recognized, but I think in my own mind it gave me freedoms that I wouldn't otherwise have.

I favored the Navy. My uncle had served as a radio man on the United Fruit ships and he'd sailed on one of the last sailing ships, fishing ships, which went up to Alaska and he used to talk about the ships and sailing. I'd hardly seen the sea at this point. So I thought I'd join the Navy, that's it. So I talked to a local recruiter, joined, and quit high school. I have to say that it was probably the best decision I ever made in my life, and it was probably the biggest four years, in terms of learning and maturity. I grew up. I learned about discipline and the kind (of discipline) that you learn only, I think, in those circumstances.

*Q: Where did you go to boot camp?*

SPROTT: San Diego. I can't remember how many weeks that was. I joined in June 1951, and I think boot camp had to be something like four months. I was fortunate enough to score well enough on tests to be assigned to electronics training, aviation electronics, which is what I wanted, and I wanted the aviation part, because I'd always liked the idea of flying. I used to walk or ride horses to watch the aircraft at the local airport. Emory Riddle University now has one of its campuses at the airport. I went to pre-flight training in Jacksonville, Florida, which if I remember correctly, was something like eight or ten weeks for training you to be a flight crew man. This was kind of basic, what I would call today, "ground school," and a little bit more than that. And then I spent ten months in electronics training, very intensive electronics training in Memphis, Tennessee.

*Q: When you say electronics, what does that mean?*

SPROTT: Well, it was aviation electronics. This was learning how to analyze problems with, and repair the aircraft electronics equipment on, from radio direction finding equipment, the simplest, to UHF, ultra-high frequency, radio equipment to radar equipment, but all aircraft equipment, as opposed to shipboard or land-based equipment. And it was fascinating. I loved it. It was a culmination in many ways, as I look and back, of both the mathematics, the analysis, the question-asking and getting wrong answers—because they weren't pat answers always; there definitely wasn't always a

given answer. And it was science based. By the end of the four years in the Navy I had become very frustrated, because the Navy quite logically and properly had moved, or was well in the process of moving, from repairing the equipment to isolating the module within which the problem existed, taking the module out, putting a new module in and sending the old one back to some repair center. This is the period just before transistors, 1954-55, and even at that, things were getting miniaturized tremendously. I think that now I would have become even more frustrated. In other words, it was the searching, it was trying to solve the problems, it was looking for what was wrong and how to tweak it and make it better and last that was what interested me .

*Q: Once you finished your training, what sort of duty did you have?*

SPROTT: I initially was assigned temporarily to an antisubmarine squadron at North Island Naval Base in San Diego, after traveling from Memphis to San Diego. P2V's were what they were flying, if I remember correctly. [Editor's Note: From 1945 to 1950 the Navy the propeller driven anti-submarine airplane was the AF-2S built by Grumman.] I was there probably about two weeks, and they didn't have enough electronics technicians in a carrier air group that was being readied for assignment in 1952. I was transferred to a fighter squadron at Miramar Air Station, which was out of San Diego quite a ways in those days. They were just changing over to the first Navy jets, the F9F Grumman Panther. Of course, they still had some of the earlier WWII (World War Two) planes, Wildcats [F4F]. Corsairs [F4U] were still the main aircraft within the carrier air group (CVG), which I believed was CVG-5. Let's see, there was VF-50, 51, 53, 54, and 55 [Editor's Note: in Navy terminology "VF" means fighter squadron]. So we had one squadron of Corsairs. We had two squadrons, if I remember correctly, of what we called AD-4s, the Sky Raiders. That's what I used to fly in periodically as crew. In the back there was a little port on one side.

*Q: My brother flew me in one once.*

SPROTT: You can't have claustrophobia.

*Q: I have claustrophobia.*

SPROTT: Try landing aboard ship under those conditions. Actually, that wasn't bad because you couldn't see a lot, which was just as well, but it wasn't necessarily fun flying around Korea, and sometimes coming back seeing bullet holes in your tail and things.

*Q: Oh, you served in Korea?*

SPROTT: Yes, my squadron, VF-53, which I joined in 1952, was on two aircraft carriers during my service, first the USS Valley Forge [CV-45] and then the USS Philippine Sea [CV-47]. Let's see, they were about nine months each tour, two years and a bit in total. [Editor's Note: When the Korea War broke out the USS Valley Forge was in Hong Kong, steamed to Korean waters and launched the first carrier air strikes of the war on 3 July 1950. It served four deployments in Korean waters: 1 May to 1 December 1950, 6



December 1950 to 7 April 1951, 15 October to 3 July 1952, and 20 November 1952 to 25 June 1953. Ambassador Sprott's unit, VF-53 was on the USS Valley Forge's November 1952 to June 1953 deployment. The USS Philippine Sea arrived off Korea in August 1950 and served until 7 April 1951. It served three more Korean War deployments: 28 March to 9 June 1951, 31 December 1951 to 8 August 1952, and 15 December 1952 to 14 August 1953. Ambassador Sprott's unit was stationed on the USS Philippine Sea from 12 March 1954 to 19 November 1954. For research material see: F4U Corsair Units of the Korean War, by Warren Thompson, Osprey Press, .]

*Q: When you were off to Korea and flying in a Sky Raider, I assume you were bombing?*

SPROTT: They bombed and strafed. I wasn't a regular crewman. VF-53 was a jet fighter squadron, but you maintained your flight time to qualify for flight pay.

*Q: What type of work were you doing while you were doing that?*

SPROTT: Fly as the radar man, that's all. In that aircraft there were two crewmen, and radio and radar were what you were working. Navigation, we do some of that, obviously, but the pilot was also quite capable of doing all of those things.

Well, at any rate, those were a great four years. I went to night school and got my high school degree from San Diego Evening High School. At that point I had a chief petty officer who encouraged those in his crew to study for promotions and for me to finish my high school work. Some officers and senior enlisted people who I got to know encouraged me to work on my education. A lot of the officers in my squadron, up until at least the last year, had been in World War II, left, and then been called back. So their attitude toward you as an individual, enlisted or otherwise, was significantly different I think from the attitude of later officers, or perhaps than had been the case before. They appreciated the importance of education and gave me a new perspective on education.

*Q: Sometimes you're ready for it or you're not ready for it.*

SPROTT: I wasn't ready for it earlier on. That's why I think it was wisest for me not to... well.

*Q: You got out when, would it be '55?*

SPROTT: Got out in June of '55. Enlisted in June of '51, got out in June of '55.

*Q: When your initial enlistment was up did you think of staying in, Vietnam was in the news in the mid-1950s?*

SPROTT: I can remember being asked as part of the discharge processing if I wanted to re-enlist? And so on, and they offered you various assignment options. One of those options was going to Vietnam to teach, in my case, aviation electronics. By that time, I had gotten a certificate as an electronics instructor. My rate at the time was Petty Officer Second (PO2). I know at my discharge from the Navy Reserves I was Petty Officer

First-Class [pay scale E6]. I joined the reserved later when I was in undergraduate school, actually for the money.

*Q: Did you have a chance to visit any of the countries in Asia, Korea, Japan, anything like that?*

SPROTT: Korea, Japan — Korea, I can't say I was in Korea. I mean, I wouldn't count landing in an emergency air base and flying over the place really much. My memory of it is that of looking out of a porthole rather than anything up close. I do remember treeless hills.

*Q: Denuded them. During World War II and the Korean War. There was a big reforestation program later on.*

SPROTT: We sailed out of, Yokohama. When we were docked for work on the ship, they flew the air groups off to Atsugi, to maintain pilot capabilities. We got to Hong Kong and the Philippines. In fact, Magsaysay was elected at one of my stops in the Philippines [Editor's Note: The presidential election was held on November 10, 1953 and Ramon Magsaysay was inaugurated on December 30 1953]. The Huks were still active in the first times I went to the Philippines.

*Q: The Huks were a communist insurgency in the Philippines.*

SPROTT: Yes. I served shore patrol in actually every one of those places. In retrospect, I'm really glad I did. At the time it was a pain, because you thought it took away your free time. But actually, I realized that it taught me something. I had more freedom after I had served patrolling those places because I knew what I was doing. But it was fascinating to then be able to go into areas observe, be briefed by knowledgeable people about what was going on, what you could expect, what the people were doing, why they were doing it, who they were, where they came from—this sort of thing—as part of your job. Then when you went back on your own time, it made it a much more interesting trip than it would have been otherwise.

*Q: I must say, I don't know about you, but as an enlisted man, I was struck by the young ladies—America was still pretty puritanical, and Japan and Philippines were, you might say, just the opposite.*

SPROTT: And Japan, when I first went there were still—this is something I was told—brothels that were still being run by the military. And so there was access to these places. Outside of Atsugi. You couldn't walk a half-mile without being accosted by ladies of the night.

*Q: Anyway, for culturalization, for someone looking at this, this is a great eye-opener to the American youth who went through there. They never were the same when they came back.*

SPROTT: No, no. You're right, they weren't. I must say that I was fearful in the Philippines. The Huks were still active and often we would have to travel by bus from Subic Bay Naval Base to Manila.

It was the first time that I had ever run into—we called it, I don't know if they're still called that or not, but they were called "Benny boys," they were transvestites. The first time I ran into them I was on shore patrol, and they were more beautiful than the women. I'd never seen, nor had described or could I have ever imagined, a large group of people doing what would outwardly be fairly normal things, but once you knew who they were, they weren't any longer normal. Well, they were to them, but not to me. That was something that affected me, and it was a really telling experience.

Another kind of experience which I will never, ever forget because it went so totally contrary to anything I had ever been raised with—even now having been in the Navy and seeing lots of things at that point. On shore patrol, I think my second time in Hong Kong, there were three of us, an officer, who if I remember correctly was stationed in Hong Kong, and another enlisted man and we were walking down the street. I remember there was a mechanic's shop and then an entrance to a large apartment building—there were a lot of apartments, people hanging out and laundry hanging out—If you've been to Hong Kong you know exactly—and about 30 feet in front of us suddenly this baby drops down, from where, I mean, I didn't see where it came from. When it hit it made a noise and everything else that indicated it had fallen. It couldn't have been more than six feet from the mechanic that was working on a car, who glanced over and then went back to work. And I started, of course, perhaps the other enlisted man started to go to do something, and the officer held us back and said, "Don't do anything. Go, and walk by." Because if you do anything you end up creating an obligation; and it isn't your business. You're here on shore patrol for other reasons. We did eventually report it, but it had already been reported at that point. But I think, because it bothered us so much we talked to the officer about it, and he said, well, it could have been an accident, it could have even been deliberate, and if you said it was a girl, it may well have been deliberate, and that life was just that, and cheap there. I think that had a tremendous impact on me, I can't tell you what it did to me, but I have obviously not forgotten it, probably never will forget, in spite of the fact that I've forgotten a lot of other things that, if you were to describe them might seem far worse a horror than that.

*Q: Obviously it would be traumatic at any age, but particularly at your impressionable age. Given this early experience, you know, here you are, a retired Foreign Service officer, did anything get to you at all?*

SPROTT: Yes, I think I probably would have been naive, maybe, at that point. But I loved the overseas experience. I should point out that I'm not a retired Foreign Service officer, though.

*Q: Oh, you're not?*

SPROTT: No. Maybe I should go back and tell you what I am—all right?—as a parenthetical comment. I was brought into the Department of State to help create the economics program (at the Foreign Service Institute), I was brought in as a reserve officer at that point, from the university, and converted eventually to a FSRU (rank of Foreign Service Reserve Unlimited), in those days. In 1981, with the new Foreign Service Act, the 1980 Foreign Service Act, there was the conversion of a whole group of people. Some had a choice of converting to Foreign Service or to Civil Service. For Foreign Service you had to commit, and properly so, to worldwide service, my family and I were at the stage in life where that was not the way to go, so I chose the Civil Service, and was ultimately promoted into the Senior Executive Service. So while I retired on a Foreign Service retirement and spent most of my career with the Foreign Service, I am actually Senior Executive Service, but it makes me a peculiar animal in some ways, I think.

*Q: That's one of the things in this program. We like to talk to peculiar animals. Did this experience in the Navy set up any interest in international affairs?*

SPROTT: Well, it did in the sense of keeping track of things and being more aware of the wider world. It didn't in the sense of making me desire to go into international politics or something of that nature. The dominant thing of my life at that point was electronics and engineering, so when I set out to go to college, the first thing I did was to try to put myself into a pre-engineering program, because at this point I'd been away from school for four years, except for the night school and the training I got in the Navy, which was, while very good and very intense and certainly had a fair amount of applied mathematics to it, was a long way from being anything terribly cerebral or highly intellectual. Therefore, I needed to get into a small college. I chose one that was known for pre-engineering programs. I will tell you that while I ended up with a math major in college, I failed calculus the first time through. It was the failing of calculus that moved me from engineering to economics, which is how I ended up getting a fellowship to get my graduate degree in economics.

*Q: Where did you go to college when you got out of the Navy?*

SPROTT: When I got out of the Navy, I went to what is now known as Northern Arizona University, which was then Flagstaff College, a small state school at that point. When I started there were about 900 students, I think. But it was known for good pre-engineering programs, had a good math department. In fact I still look back on that math department, and science, both. . . . In fact, a few years back the University honored me with the "most valuable citizen" award, I think it was, and Dr. Adel, the professor who gave me the award, was the one who failed me in calculus but who became, in many ways, my mentor. He was a physicist, a well-known physicist, who had done a lot of work at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, and the Naval Observatory, also in Flagstaff. He spent probably more time in the Naval Observatory than in the Lowell. I found him a fascinating man. He was a very demanding teacher, but a fair one and honest. At any rate, that math and science department was very strong, very good. I heard of that reputation from others, as I researched it, and that's why I went there.

My major was mathematics, by this time I'd gotten married, so to be safe, I also got a teacher's degree in the process, which in those days was fairly easy—you just simply added 15 credits to the time. I had to do a semester of practice teaching, which turned me off of high school teaching. That is a story the reverse side of what I described to you of my high school, whenever you want to get to that.

*Q: How quickly did you switch over to economics?*

SPROTT: During my second year the first semester course was calculus and physics with the same instructor, so that for many of those days we had that instructor for five hours in a day—small classes—and he was extremely demanding, as I said. He would get up and you would have assigned problems, and you would say, “Now my problem. . . .” and he would say, “Oh, Mr. Sprott, *your* problem—isn't that wonderful. How did you invent this problem? How is it that you call this your problem? We thought you got it from the book?” What he was doing was trying to teach us how to present and how to use good English in presenting—or at least reasonable English—so people could understand you. And he was very demanding in that sense, but he was also very demanding analytically. I was always good, I would have said, on the math but terrible on the arithmetic. And it's true. There are lots of times I have trouble balancing checkbooks, but the equations don't bother me. But he demanded that you do both. That was wise and proper, and it was really helpful.

At the same time I was also taking applied mechanics and statics, and mechanical engineering drawing. When you add all those together, plus I was working, something had to give, and what gave was I didn't do the proper study in calculus, because I thought I was going to be all right in calculus and I was worried about the other courses. Long story. Dr. Adel called me in, and he said, “Mr. Sprott,” because that's the way he addressed most of us, “what is it that you are trying to do?” I said, “I want to be an engineer.” “What kind of engineer did you have in mind?” He knew a lot of my expectations, frankly, because we'd talked from time to time in the course of my studies. And I said, “Well, I want to be a mechanical engineer.” “That's nice. Do you want to be a great mechanical engineer? Supposing I told you you were only going to be a mediocre engineer? Would you be happy with that?” “Oh,” I said, “I'm not sure about that.” He says, “Well, I'm going to tell you, that's all you will be. You will be a good, mediocre engineer.” Well, you talk about popping somebody's balloon, that really did it, but it was one of the best things that happened to me. It made me sit down and really think things through, so I went back and retook calculus the next semester and pursuing the Bachelor of Science with a major in mathematics. So that meant that I had to take a course in economics, which I would have eventually had to take anyhow, but it would have been much later. And that would have been my junior year.

I fell in love with the subject. It was the first time in my life that I had ever run into subject matter where you could ask any question you wanted to ask, and you could get lots of different answers. It all depended upon the assumptions you made, presuming that we all use the same form of logic. That made sense to me. At last I found a subject that I

could play with; that my mind could run free with, but always with some consistency and you could be able to transfer it. I did very well, and I guess I impressed the faculty in the business school, where economics was taught. They put me in for a fellowship. The National Defense Education Act was in its then second year, and I was—

*Q: Which came out of Eisenhower and the Sputnik and all of that.*

SPROTT: Exactly, yes. Well, and I was fortunate enough to get an offer from two schools, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and University of Colorado in Boulder. At that point I thought, given my background, where I come from, ranching, knowledge of and sensitivity to environment, and I liked learning about rock formations and things of that nature, I thought that resource economics was probably something that I should study. So I chose the University of Colorado, because it had a good resource economics program and it was near Golden, Colorado, which has a first-rate mining school [Colorado School of Mines], and the combination with geology and everything I thought would fit very well. And so that's why I went there. And it was there that I got engaged in international affairs.

*Q: You were at the University of Colorado from when to when, actually?*

SPROTT: I graduated from undergraduate school in 1959, and started that summer at Boulder, so let's call it the academic year 1959-60 would have been my first year. I didn't stop and get a master's degree; I went straight from the bachelor's to the Ph.D. I finished my requirements and was awarded the degree finally in 1965.

At any rate, there was a standard curriculum, obviously. I mean, you didn't get choices until basically your second year in the curriculum, and by this time—because I still had to work, I had a family and three children—I got engaged in a summer program teaching foreign students coming to this country to go to graduate school in economics. I taught mathematics and beginning economics. This program had people from all over the world, many of them funded by AID.

*Q: Were they on their way to the Colorado School of Mining, or was this just a stopover for economics?*

SPROTT: Just for economics. They were on their way to graduate schools in economics—Chicago, Berkeley, Michigan, Southern Colorado—a lot of big schools, a lot of good schools, a lot of those schools that were taking foreign students under AID auspices. They were fascinating students. I was also at this point a teaching assistant and, as a result, teaching a lot of undergraduate students that were also foreign students—some were in engineering—in fact I had a class of nearly all engineers. There were 200 people in it, an ungodly number of people to be teaching.

At any rate, you got to know students that way. And it began to make the connection with my military, in the sense of what goes on, of how people do things and why, and so on, and it began to increase my interest.

*Q: In economics at the time when you first started tasting it, up through your Ph.D., who were the gods in economics in those times? I took the Samuelson book in college—*

SPROTT: Well, (Paul A.) Samuelson was certainly a big one. And Johnson—not Harry Johnson—died young. Joan Clark. Haberler, Gottfried von Haberler, whom I later met here a number of times. Raul Prebisch in the development area, whom I later met in my days in Latin America and who served on the UN Economic Commission for Latin America. Kindleberger, who was one of those people who provided advice to the Department on the development of FSI's economics program, and one of the people that recommended they get the names from the American Economic Association, which is how I got involved. Martin Bronfenbrenner, a man whom I grew to greatly respect for his wide-ranging thought in subjects, not just in his field of economics. I'm trying to think of others—of course, I couldn't leave out Milton Friedman, who played a role later in my life too.

*Q: Now, you were saying your focus was resource economics.*

SPROTT: It started out to be resource economics which was what I was initially interested in, but as I moved into the curriculum, as these other things begin to happen to me, I began to focus more and more on international trade and development. Ultimately my dissertation was on debt servicing and the external accounts in the development of a country. I started out in that research using Argentina, Brazil, and Chile as three case studies, for both their differences, as well as their similarities in the issues and problems. I ended up narrowing it down, as everybody does in this kind of research, to Brazil only. I looked at the period of Brazil from 1950 to 1960, more or less, and analyzed it and spent a good deal of my time developing the data, actually organizing it and creating it at the World Bank and working with people doing this kind of analysis. And while I then ultimately came into the Department, there was a man by the name of Joel Sachs. Do you remember Joel Sachs? Joel and others were beginning to work on how to deal with countries facing debt crises and where their trigger stages are, and so I actually spent time working with him in addition to my regular duties, designing trigger mechanisms, trying to figure out how to deal with countries that were facing debt-servicing issues. So, anyway, it was just kind of like an interesting sideline—but that's how I went into it, that way, just because of the people that I'd begun to run into and that created the interest, along with course work, they all built around my earlier experience overseas, and it just came together.

*Q: You say you finished in '64 and...*

SPROTT: and went to work—actually '64 is when I left. I finished my comprehensives and got a job with Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. I picked Pittsburgh because I had a son at that point who'd had an accident in dental surgery and was for about six months or more literally a vegetable. And I was looking for a place that we could go where there were some proper medical facilities at which we could treat him. There were several places. Philadelphia was one. Pittsburgh was one. And I chose Pittsburgh, Duquesne U.

Well, all right, that's where I went. I taught basic theory, and at the graduate level taught international trade and development, at the master's level there; and then we ran joint programs in those days—I don't know whether they still do it or not—in those days, the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon, and Duquesne were doing simulation gaming. This is the days when we were trying to develop simulation exercises of the economy for teaching and analysis. The business schools and the economics departments got together and were each allocated portions of this large model to work on and then to work with students to run parts of these models. There was some joint lecturing and work between those three schools, which made a fascinating experience in lots of different ways.

The teaching salary was not enough, I still needed money. By this time I had five children, and the son who was the oldest still had this medical problem; so I also started doing some consulting work. The dean of the School of Business Administration, who later became the president of the American Management Association, started a consulting organization to try to build Duquesne's name up with the businesses and academics. It was a way of contributing, on one hand, to the community and, on the other hand, a way of encouraging them to participate in Duquesne, I'm sure in more ways than one, and it seemed to work. This gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with businesses and other groups. My pitch was capital budgeting and that sort of investment decision making, which was built on my mathematics and economics background, rather than tell people how to manage. I wasn't doing that.

It was great, because I learned so much in that process, and got very much involved in the Hill District, which in Pittsburgh was then literally a hill, a residential/business area, which was almost all African-American. It had been at one point Jewish. Every immigrant group that had come through had probably been on that hill at one point, but then it was all black. They were trying to upgrade the level of the businesses, the ability of the people in those businesses to run them, and we were trying to also—this is 1963-64, the beginning of the Kennedy Era; this is the period when we're trying to get people off the welfare rolls and into jobs—so we were also spending time with people helping them learn how to work, go to work on time, to work full time, where all the benefits were greater than standing on the street corner, sleeping late, and so on. I can't say that I was involved in it long enough to have seen any results. It too was a learning experience. It was very useful. It later became very important in terms of doing development work overseas. I learned there not to expect too much from people who had to move from one way of thinking to another way of thinking; that there was no reason for them to move all as quickly as you would like them to—nor were they always equipped to do so—so I think that was a very helpful—

*Q: Did you find, was there a change in sort of the atmosphere with the advent of the Kennedy Administration?*

SPROTT: Oh, dramatic. This is kind of an interesting story. 1955, the first year of undergraduate school for me, was the year, of course, of one of the premier legal changes in our country with a large—



*Q: Brown versus Board of Education.*

SPROTT: Right, and what an impact that had in a little, tiny, small school in Northern Arizona, where the concept of work and the concept of life, where I grew up, was, if you didn't sweat, you didn't work. Bankers didn't work. Teachers don't work. Faced with you as a teacher, I would never say that, but the fact. . . . I'm going to college and I'm taking economics? "Oh, home economics?" "No. What is he doing that for? Oh, you're going to be one of these government bureaucrats that we're all taxed for." The concept of life outside that environment—the first time I ran into racial discrimination was when I went to Jacksonville, Florida. I say, the first time I ran into racial discrimination, but that really is a fib, because I grew up, as I told you, right next door to an Indian reservation, and the Mexican-American community in Prescott was very large also. It was a mining community, farming community, ranching community, so you had, for years, all kinds of people coming in and out—no immigrants particularly, but still they were discriminated against, as a matter of fact. Not as bad as in some places, perhaps, but they were. I didn't know that as much, because growing up with them, the kids never talked about it to me. My mother didn't talk about it that way. I didn't really see it until I grew up, and in fact I began to see how it was, that they weren't white. If there was an Indian, there was a certain expectation about their alcohol consumption and their laziness and various other things, but I knew when I was growing up that they weren't lazy at all. They worked their tails off. I mean, I used to go out and pick piñon nuts with these people, and try doing that sometime. This wasn't an easy job, you know.

But the first time I ran into discrimination against blacks, the way it was practiced in the south, as in Jacksonville, Florida—

*Q: This was when you were in the Navy.*

SPROTT: When I was in the Navy. I didn't know what to do with it. I really did not know how to deal with it. I can remember being stopped, or pushed ahead when I had stopped for a lady that might be black to come in front of me, that I wasn't allowed to necessarily do that, by people behind me. Things like that were silly things, maybe. I didn't understand the black/white fountains. I mean, I'd never seen something like this. I can only tell you that it didn't really have a way to register in my mind against the way I was raised.

I'd never seen discrimination against Jews until I got in the Navy. I'd never heard somebody say, "You can tell they're Jewish by looking at them." I couldn't. Still can't. But that kind of thing, and it was from people who clearly were living in environments totally unlike mine, where a small town. . . . I mean we had a synagogue in our town. Those people were like the rest of us. And I don't remember any religious thing, and maybe there was a little bit against Mormons, but that was very slight, if anything. That kind of discrimination really hit me, so when in 1955 was happening, I had a lot more experience with it than probably a lot of the kids that were in college at that point. It was fascinating to try to enter into conversations with them, because I had known people who were black,

white, or purple and who performed at the level of anybody else. If you were talking to somebody who was against this, which a large number of them were, they were basically very isolated conservative people. It was an anti-union area, still is an anti-union state, practically. Flagstaff, where Bruce Babbitt, the Secretary of the Interior is from, that area was totally against unions in the forestry business and the other businesses. As far as I know, the unions were never accepted.

The point is there was a lot of that stuff that began to come out during that period that for me, and I think for others, because of these landmark decisions and because of Kennedy a few years later in the 1960's. When I went to Colorado and Kennedy began running, a lot of the graduate students were the ones who went out and did a lot of legwork, we all did. I mean, I didn't do as much as some, but certainly did some and we would attend rallies. I can remember the discussions of where he wanted to go. Well, even people who were against him probably didn't vote for Kennedy were excited by the period, because the discussion at that time was one of a future that was positive. We were looking toward what we could do in that future, whether it was with Kennedy or not. I think a lot of people were there. It wasn't a negative environment, as it had been in 1955-56 period. Somehow it had changed at this period. The Birch Society was still very strong.

*Q: The John Birch Society.*

SPROTT: The John Birch Society was still very strong. They were very odd people, made lots of noise during this period, but it's interesting to me that they had less of a role afterward. But it was that period probably did more for political awakening in me, around the Kennedy period, and I'm sure it did for lots of people—I know it did for lots of other people in our nation. And it created in me positiveness toward the possibility for political and social change, that I don't think I fully comprehended before, and so it reinforced this idea of working in the international field. International economics, and economic development in particular. I had by this time become involved with others in doing research in supporting arguments for improving the lot of the migrant worker in Colorado. I was not responsible for it but participated in research that tracked their movement, the kind of support they had and what happened to a lot of them. It was pretty clear that here was a group of people, characterized as, quote, "wetbacks," unquote, who were regular people. This was a real life for a lot of them. Some of them chose it; some of them didn't choose it. There were things that we could do and do a lot better to make their lives better and not harm things. This was the time when you begin to get the farm workers, Chavez and that group, working for change. The philosopher that came out of that time, Eric Hoffer, wrote The Ordeal of Change. He describes what it's like moving from the picking of apples and peaches in the northern part of California or Oregon area, to moving south and having to pick peas—the whole mindset, the physiological change, and the miserable physical pain as well as mental pain that was involved in making these changes.

*Q: Where were you as an economist looking at the early part of the Alliance for Progress and what we were doing in Africa, I mean, both with a positive with this or a critical eye, I mean, were these topics of conversation, or were you more America-centered?*

SPROTT: Oh, well, America-centered, but I was beginning to get more engaged in the international side, and I did that more in these summer programs with the foreign students when I was at Colorado, and then as I moved to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. I completed my dissertation in 1965, while working, between 1962 and '65, at Duquesne. The only time I had to devote to anything much outside of getting the dissertation done was when I was down here at the World Bank and I talked with people in the World Bank. I can't remember the names of the other people who were very active in debt servicing and that sort of thing. We had long conversations on the developmental process and managing the process, both the politics of the economics of it as well as the social side of it. It was increasingly interesting, and increasingly obvious that it was not enough to look at one part of the total of a nation's problems and think that by solving that one part you could solve the whole set of problems for that country. You really needed to begin to address some underlying foundation issues and to do all the things. And it wasn't until I left—because it was 1965, in the summer (I had just finished my dissertation), and received my degree in '65—August, that my advisor from Colorado called me and asked if I would be interested in a job offer from the Department of State. I said I didn't know anything about the Department of State. I didn't know whether I would be interested or not. He said, "Well, I'm not sure, but your name has been put forward. My understanding is that the Department of State may be calling" in this case Jacques Reinstein—I don't know if you've had an interview with Jacques—

*Q: Yes, he's been interviewed, yes.*

SPROTT: Jacques Reinstein at some point had been put in charge of developing, finding a way to get more economists or more people trained in economics in the Department. He had a range of interviews with all kinds of people in the Department, other departments of the government and with a number of academic people, [Charles P.] Kindleberger—I know he talked to Kindleberger—I'm sure he talked to people like Samuelson and [Robert L.] Heilbroner and others. Somewhere along the line, I am told by Jacques Reinstein, that they went to the American Economic Association and asked if there was anyone who'd had any experience in developing a program that might be suitable for them, because the universities had said, look, you can't send them to us, we can't do what you want; we've got rules dictating courses of study. I was told by Jacques Reinstein and Warrick Elrod, who is by this time working with him on this, that three names came up. My name was one of them. They ended up offering me the job. The kind of program we ultimately put together was probably, at least that that I contributed to and the parts that I put together, were based on my own experience and the kind of hands-on learning that I had developed or worked on at the University of Colorado at the summer Economics Institute teaching foreign students these same subjects in a very short-order period of time, cutting out, overlaps. Most universities teach in such a way that if I teach course A and you teach course B and you, in order to understand B have to know A, never assume that I've taught all of A. So you overlap A by several weeks. We eliminated all that and focused on what was necessary. The course work was also changed from being largely theory-oriented to being much more applied-oriented. And anyway, I was offered the job to come in as a consultant, and I did in September, if I remember correctly, of 1965, and

then in February of 1966 came on full time. So I joined the Department in February of 1966 having been a consultant creating this program during the period just before.

*Q: What was Reinstein's background and how did he operate?*

SPROTT: Well, his background, as I understand it, I don't know if it was—he had an economics background, but it was more of a pre-World War II kind of economics, which was much more what I think people would call institutional or historically based economics rather than nowadays, which would be more mathematically based economics, a lot more statistical analysis, a lot more data on which to deal with things, and then bringing in the work of institutions. His forte, I think one would argue, was toward the organizations. He understood how the international organizations worked, all the Bretons Woods organizations that were put together and what they meant in terms of processes and policies and how the governments worked with each other in order to solve problems—not necessarily understanding all the theory that went behind it all, though he did understand some theory. But he was wise enough to see that the times were changing and moving in such a way that this package of information that was more institutionally and historically based was insufficient to provide a foundation for the kind of analysis and interaction that would be involved between institutions, governments, and mechanisms in the future. And so that's what he was trying to do.

How did he operate? It's interesting. I don't think this program would have ever gotten off the ground had it not been for his tenacity, his ability to articulate all the kind of things that were needed and then to keep after people to do it, to get their support. And he would worm his way in, he would work his way in, wherever he had to, usually at the higher levels, to get support. And he'd convinced Frances Wilson. If you've ever—

*Q: Frances Wilson, I mean she's a name one readily associates, as the Executive Director, with the Economic Bureau. She ran that place.*

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SPROTT: If you ever want a case study on how you want to get something done right in human resource development in the Department of State, that's the case study. We have never followed since her time, never. The program was originally designed to be five years long, to only last five years, but because the rest of the system never lived up to what it was supposed to do [bring in more entry level economists], it's continued to this day. We can get into another story there.

Well, Jack and Warrick worked well with Frances. They understood each other. They didn't always get along, I'm sure, because they were different kinds of personalities, but they had one common theme and one common interest, and they were willing to work with each other to get that done. That was to develop people who could work in the new economics milieu, if you will, of development economics, of financial economics, and the other new things that were going to come that they couldn't even imagine but knew were going to happen. And Frances had the discipline and the ability to make sure that the rest of the people making decisions in the Department followed her and went along with her and supported him. And he was able to get other people like Bill Crockett—I

don't know what his title would have been—he would now be the undersecretary for management, but I guess that would have been a deputy undersecretary for management in those days.

*Q: At any rate, he was the chief administrative management officer in the Department of State.*

SPROTT: Well, I have to say it, Bill Crockett to this day, I remember that man for the kinds of things he did that demonstrated senior management's commitment, not oral statements, but real physical and personal commitment, to getting things done. And I don't think he ever ran a cocktail party on the Eighth Floor that he didn't have junior officers, civil service employees, members of the economic program, senior seminar—he would have some of those people intermingled. His argument was, it's not the business I'm doing now that counts; it's the business of the future that I'm also doing. These people are part of that. We bring them here and they begin to get an understanding and they begin to participate. They also develop a commitment. There aren't many Crocketts. Well, there were a lot of people who didn't like him, and a lot of people did like him. But Jacques Reinstein was able to do that.

The second thing Jacques did was he was able to pick people. This is my opinion. Jacques wasn't always appreciated, but he picked Warrick Elrod. Warrick would be what I would call a "facilitator." Warrick Elrod had a talent for getting things done. So Jacques could think about it, Jacques could worry over it and Warrick could get it done. He would go out and find other people. And between the two of them, they took a fairly free hand in getting people. They hired me; they got other people to come in, either on a part-time basis, and fairly prominent local economists—Herbert Fierst stands out in my mind as a person who is the first foreign-born officer of the Federal Reserve, a man of, I guess, partially Jewish descent, but anyway he had to leave Austria, like a lot of economists, about 1936-ish, in that time frame, and came to this country. And Gottfried von Haberler, who was his brother-in-law, who I was able to meet a number of times with him. Those people were able to come in on a casual basis and participate and help this, and Herbert was the person who had written all—I mean, he was responsible really for our financial regulations out of the Federal Reserve and with a lot of the Treasury. What better kind of a person could you have?

Jacques himself knew a lot about NATO and the Western European organizations, and they were able to bring in these people who were the thinkers of the time and that's the kind of program we were able to put together initially. So Jacques, to my mind, if you were looking for somebody who had a management style in an operational sense, you might not pick Jacques. If you were looking for somebody who didn't write hordes of stuff, he would write and write and write. He was the most verbose person I've ever met in writing. But beautiful stuff he wrote, too. But he had notes on everything he'd ever done. If you've interviewed him—you did say you'd interviewed him—

*Q: Somebody did. I didn't interview him. Somebody else did.*

SPROTT: I'd be willing to bet you he brought his notes or studied them or something. He took copious notes on everything and worked them up, and they stood in good stead. The only thing that we were I think at that time blessed with—Crockett and Frances Wilson—we also had good leadership in the (Foreign Service) Institute. I'm sorry to say I lose the name at this point of. . . . Now, Parker T. Hart, I think, was the Director at FSI after the course had started. I'm trying to think who it was . . .

Anyway, we had a dean of the School of Professional Studies at that time by the name of Jim Cortada. Jim Cortada was cut from whole cloth. There's only one Jim (James N.) Cortada, as far as I can see. A Foreign Service officer, he retired after having served as consul general in Barcelona [1967-1970], exquisite speaker of Spanish, in fact, ended up writing a text on Catalan, after he retired. But he had a style of management that kind of pushed things forward and found ways to get the budgets for things but let the imagination work, and encouraged things rather than discouraged things. And we had a pretty lousy physical environment, if you remember the old Arlington Towers. We were down in the basement there. We were alone in the basement, but we had a fair amount of space, and for a program that was six months long, 22 weeks at that time, long, with the kind of intensive study—

*Q: No windows. I took Serbian there for a year. It was originally built as an underground garage.*

SPROTT: Yes, it sure was. It affects you. They weren't the best quarters, but he helped let us fix them up enough so that at least it was a somewhat agreeable environment for doing things, and so when we finally moved and they gave us good quarters in the new facility in 1966, I think, in April-May-June of 1966.

*Q: This course got off, unlike almost any other course I can think of in the Department of State, got off to a very good start. It was considered prestigious; it was considered to deliver the goods, and you didn't find people being dragged reluctantly into it. It was seen as important for defining oneself as an economic officer. It was a hard course, but it's a damn good one. I mean, did you find—the spirit must have been quite good.*

SPROTT: Still is. Fabulous. And again the key people to making sure that happened, aside from delivery of the content and making sure you had good people, because selection of the people was also key, and the second key thing was that you had to be able to fail. And one of the conditions of that course was that if you failed it, it was the same as failing Chinese—as opposed to Spanish. Nobody expects one hundred per cent of the people to be able to pass Chinese. It doesn't happen. Even if you've got the best selection process, it isn't. But if you've got a faulty selection process, that is, if it's not perfect, then you're going to have somebody fail, and it should not ruin their career. So those two things were important. And the people who made sure that worked were. . . . Frances Wilson was absolutely key in this because she would pick people and she made sure that she helped in the selection process in such a way that you didn't get people who you know weren't going to make it. And there are people that just, well, they're just not gifted in that direction. I was never going to be a good mechanical engineer, darn it. And-

*Q: I've heard that as part of this course, your old favorite course, calculus, was the thing that knocked a lot of people, or at least they struggled with, was calculus.*

SPROTT: Yes, they did, and a lot of people initially wondered why we were even teaching calculus. But we ran them through—I have yet to meet a Foreign Service officer (or a lot of other people, for that matter, but let's just focus on the Department in this case) who isn't weak on fractions and who doesn't confuse—well, I have met a number who don't confuse percentages, but there are a large number who get very confused on percentages. So one of the things you had to do was teach basic fractions and percentages.

But the calculus was needed in order to ingrain, at the same time we were teaching the economics, the concept of change, and differential, a way to focus on change, because that's what the economics was about. And if you could get these two together, what we were after was a change in the mindset. What we were after was to get people not to have the right answers, but to ask the right questions, the good questions, consistently, so they could come up with, more often, good solid answers. And if you could get that across to them, you would have achieved something, because if you taught them—oh, let's just take the subject. I taught national income accounts. National income accounts today are not the same as they were the last time I taught them in 1975. They weren't, in fact, in 1978 the same, because they'd made major changes. If you only teach so that they don't understand how to make the changes in it, they're going to get lost. So the whole idea here was to teach people how to think in the field of economics. The thing that really intrigued me into coming into it to begin with was that it was wonderful, you could ask any question you wanted, and you would get lots of different answers. It all depends on your assumptions and the logic system. Assuming we are all using the same logic system, then we should come up with the same answers with the same assumptions.

I think the key here is that management was convinced. I saw Frances Wilson personally beat down Personnel, the Director General, and others in Personnel, who were trying to penalize somebody for failing the course. And I saw her personally get engaged in making sure that people who did well in the course got good assignments. I saw her personally making sure in Personnel that people who completed the course, who graduated from the course weren't wasted, at least if she could help it. That wasn't always 100 per cent, but people knew in the class that if they did very well there was a payoff. And if it didn't pay off, it wasn't because of the course. The course should have done them well. So that was number one.

Number two, I think, was it was a good course, frankly, and I think we were very lucky to have been able to do one other thing during that period. The politically appointed ambassador to Ireland (April 1965 to June 1968), Raymond R. Guest, a wealthy Virginia landholder and polo enthusiast, granted to the Department his salary. He gave his salary to FSI to use for the purpose of increasing the ability of the Department to manage and to deal in the field of economics. So we used that money, the amount of that money we got, and we created, Warrick Elrod and I, created a two-week economics course, which we

took around the world. It was taught in I don't know how many posts abroad. We would bring in people from various countries, not economists, not the economic section, but the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), the chief of the Political Section, the Consular Section—those people—and give them two weeks. . . .

*Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1, with John Sprott. You were saying on this course—*

SPROTT: Well, I think this two-week course in basic economics, management of economics issues, did a lot for people who later became senior managers in the Department in getting their support for a continuation of the program and supporting the assignment of people in the economic field. It gave them an awareness of the need for sound economic analysis. It gave them awareness of the usefulness, as a political officer or as a DCM or an ambassador, of the input from the Embassy's Economic Section, and it gave them a basis for weighing the information of the Economic Section, say, against the Political Section, the latter of which they may have been far more familiar with. Again, many of these officers may not have had an econ course while in college, or if they did it was very institutional economics and it wasn't the modern economics. So I think that the combination of these things made a lot of difference.

*Q: Now you are coming from academia. When you came to the State Department and started this, did you find that the basic Foreign Service officer was really, I won't say economically illiterate, but I mean was there a problem, was there a real deficiency?*

SPROTT: Yes. Fundamentally yes. There were always a few in the course in any given class who had a fair amount of economics in their undergraduate college work, and for many it was good economics background; but the backgrounds of a lot of others not so much. In those days, in the early days especially, many officers were primarily from Ivy League schools, where there were good top economists. So they had been at least exposed to some economics in the normal course of their studies, but I would say the majority of classes, especially early on, the majority of people had only the minimal requirements for getting a Bachelor of Arts degree. Therefore they really were not up in the field in a way that would permit them to deal effectively with comparable people in other embassies; the business and financial sectors of the countries, to which they might be assigned, let alone our own Treasury Department or AID, which were important in those days because of their increasing involvement overseas. State officers needed to understand, work with and sometimes argue over analyses and reporting. It was our own people that had to understand economic principles as well as foreign interlocutors understood it. So yes, the course was definitely needed.

*Q: As you moved into this, was there any support or lack of support, opposition, or anything like that from Congress, or did you find that this just wasn't on their radar at all?*

SPROTT: It wasn't a lot on their radar, but it was enough in the key congressional committees that we got the support we had to have. Whenever issues of money or anything like that came up, it was there.



*Q: I have the impression that at the top levels of the Department of State there is often a great deal of “What’s on our plate today? Let’s deal with it,” and that long term issues don’t rate very high with the top echelon. These are people who are driven by what’s in The Washington Post or The New York Times that day. I mean, they’re hard chargers, but would this focus on the short term have been a problem?*

SPROTT: Well, it was a problem. I think that’s where, again, it was important to have the Frances Wilsons and the people like that around to keep reminding people that we’re dealing with the longer term. It remains a problem today. I said that people, as a result of that, become today-oriented. And they also become, as a result, much more form-versus substance-oriented, and therein lay some real dangers, in the economics area as well as in general in the policy area. But that is a problem; it’s a constant problem. When we lost the Frances Wilsons and the Bill Crockett’s and people like this, it was a constant battle to maintain support for training in general, let alone an economics program. Some of the stories I can tell you at some point about maintaining the support—of all places—in the Department of State for training are horrendous, absolutely horrendous, and sometimes our biggest supporters were on the outside, not inside.

*Q: I’ve found this ADST oral history program fascinating, but was appalled when we began that the Department of State has no interest in this side of its own history. So we’re having to create this from outside with our own money. Compare this to the military which under General S. L. A. Marshall and other oral historians does this as a matter of course, but not the Department of State.*

SPROTT: I’ll give you a perfect example. This campus that we’re sitting in right now should be, by all rights, the place to which the Department invites the outside to visit. It would seem to me that the ideal thing for recruiting people would be to have high school students and teachers, as they come to visit Washington, stop here and see how people are trained and what they’re learning—create ways to make that happen. This is John Sprott, who probably had too much imagination for the creation of this place, but why not use it for recruiting, we have a great, big, beautiful potential amphitheater? Why don’t we have concerts out there that bring home the international affairs side? If we were in the military at West Point or at the Naval Academy, you’d have comparable activities to that. If we really want to sell foreign affairs, the Foreign Service why not?

I’ll give you a second example. There is a problem today, I think, in getting support for foreign affairs efforts. (From the UN budget—and I spent the last two years trying to get people to understand—to just the basic delivery of diplomacy overseas in maintaining the security of people in those environments) How do we help people in, say, Arizona understand the importance of these things? In my opinion, the fault for not having that support lies very much at the feet of all of us who’ve been in the foreign affairs community for the last number of years because we’ve never thought of educating and training. I used to use the term that we looked upon the service as being composed of “Jeffersonian gentlemen”—all they need to be is anointed as “gentlemen,” and they automatically, as Jefferson said, “Anything I need to learn, I can learn when it comes

time to learn it.” And we’re not that kind of world any more. This is not that time and worse yet, we don’t build the support for the systems that we need.

That happens very much in the economics area, and among the fights that we’ve had in maintaining the economics area was to keep people in the Economics Bureau, the primary bureau, interested in the economics course and committed to the program. If they were, they took the kinds of actions, as opposed to the statements, necessary to make subordinate officers see that the course was important and made a difference. And as soon as they lost interest in it, whenever you had an assistant secretary who couldn’t care less about it, then you began to see the support waver.

In training itself, another example of the lack of support here is, if you nit-pick a reason why—and I think this is provable—go back, let’s say, 40 years ago and look at how people were assigned, on the one hand, and why they took languages, on the other, and then today why they take languages and how they are assigned, and you’ll see a dramatic difference, I think. Before, people took languages because they were interested in them and in the country or region. That was a view. It wasn’t because they were going to get extra pay; it wasn’t because they were going to get promoted. It was because this was interesting; it was part of their career and a part of their profession. Today, I would argue, people take language training because they perceive the assignment that they can get with the language training will lead to promotion, so their motivation is much more related to promotion. The danger in something like the economics program is that when that begins to happen there, then you’ve got a real. . . . It’s bad enough in the language training, but it becomes a real problem if it happens in something like the economics training, because then you can’t fail people, for example—it would become very difficult to do that—and then you would have a whole different kind of set of assignments issues, and you begin to have the course begin to lose its importance and role, I think.

*Q: Let’s stop today’s session here.*

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*Q: Today is the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1998.*

*Q: John, looking at the economics course, were you sort of keeping a watching brief on it as time went on as you moved in and out of the Foreign Service Institute?*

SPROTT: Let’s see, I was in the course, left, and went to Chile for three years [1968-1971], then came back and headed up the whole division at that point. I guess I left the Economics Division in 1975 and became dean of FSI’s School of Professional Studies, so the economic course remained under my umbrella. I’ve always been one to believe that when you leave a job, even when it might be near you, you don’t go back and try to mess with the soup you’ve created or try to make sure people maintain that soup. So I gave them perhaps more freedom than I would in a lot of cases, to act independently. But we had good people. We’d hired good people to run the program. We’d hired, some years earlier, Bruce Duncan, who, I might add, subsequently went into the Foreign Service and performed with some distinction in the Department. I think he just recently

retired. He took over and ran the program, and because we had worked together before, it was easy for me to maintain the kind of loose oversight of the program, if you will.

*Q: Did you see any change? I mean, was it still playing a role it was meant to play?*

SPROTT: Yes, I think so. You know, you can always quibble about that. Part of what's happened is that needs changed within the Department. I think as you got more and more economists, the number of people who went to, let's say, immediately high-level jobs—early on, I think a lot of the people had higher-level jobs than they might have ten years later—now defined in terms of economic analysis and policy responsibilities—I think later they may have done more analysis and a little less policy contributions immediately out of the course; but that was because of the fewer number of economists earlier. Now as the course graduated more people, and as we got more people into university training following that course, I think that the cadre of economists built up and so the jobs changed a little bit.

The Department's need also began to change a little bit in terms of the relationship with AID, the World Bank, IMF and these kinds of institutions and the roles that they played in the respective countries, so as you get into the '80's, that relationship was changing. In some ways it became more analytical; in others, it became somewhat more distant and more difficult for the embassy staffs to maintain the kind of relationship that, let's say, early in the '60's or early '70's might have been fairly natural and much more easy. So the jobs changed a little bit in terms of needing more interpersonal skills perhaps, a little bit more ability to be outgoing and network a little bit more within the economics area.

Another change that I think took place was an increasing emphasis on the commercial side, export promotion or support to US exports and investment became increasingly important issue. We could argue it should have been important all along, and it was, I think, in many people's minds, but it wasn't in terms of the way in which people were used. But as we moved into the '80's, this became, really, a very clear area, and as a result, new courses were created to reinforce that need and to develop even special skills and knowledge on the part of our officers to meet the needs of U.S. businesses abroad.

*Q: I would think that there would be almost two different types of people in the field: one doing economics reporting analysis, and another doing export promotion.*

SPROTT: Well, certainly if you take the latter literally, I think, true, the latter type of person, in the trade promotion area, might be, in very simplistic terms, much more of a sales person, whereas the person doing the economic reporting might be, in the same simplistic sense, much more of a scholar and analyst and less people oriented. But I think the way it should work, and I think increasingly does in lot embassies, is that those become increasingly close together so that it's not quite that literally different. But I think it remains true; that's why the Department of Commerce now has the commercial function under it, because they were dissatisfied.

I think another area that changed, and I believe the economics course can take a fair amount of credit for this, is the introduction of computers for analysis. We, I know, were the first ones to use computers for any meaningful purpose. By that I mean anything other than any fairly mundane tracking of numbers, listing and historical accumulation and regurgitating them in some fashion. And I think the embassy economic sections, certainly in EB and elsewhere, was very early in some sections in attempting to use the computers for massaging large amounts of data and trying to arrive at more dynamic kinds of analyses of economic trends and the impact of policies on trends. And I think the economics course changed in a way to meet that demand.

Another way it changed, and that began to happen fairly early on, even before I left the course, I think, and that was we tried to move. . . . The program was always practically oriented. It was always aimed not at creating a bunch of theorists, but at creating or developing people who were able to ask questions, who were able to analyze situations, and who were able then to report on those in a way that made sense to policy makers back in Washington. What we wanted to try to do more of is give people practice in those skills by using that knowledge in the classroom, so we developed an increasing number of practical exercises to get the students increasingly involved in the learning process itself, as opposed to simply having a whole series of lectures.

The first course that we did was probably 90 per cent lecture. The second, I think, probably was 85 per cent lecture. I had developed, from my days in teaching in the university, a series of exercises, and we introduced those, which very simple and not terribly effective (but at least it was a step in the right direction). The method moved them through an exercise and, in a kind of programmed learning sense, live with decisions that they made. They would find at the end that they'd taken themselves down the wrong track or they had got the right answers, or whatever. We built, with that kind of an idea, around the various parts of the course. Application of mathematics or statistics became more than just the learning of the mathematics or statistics; it became much more applied as time went on.

I think we eventually reached pretty close to a limit on what you can do with that, short of actually putting people in the situation of an Economic Section overseas; but that certainly led to the concept of the application of similar approaches to other areas, so that when we talked about, let's say, commercial training, we tried very hard to replicate some of those areas by actually trying to get people involved, getting them around the country to meet the various businesses, and to try to deal with some of the issues in the United States that they would have to deal with overseas in the commercial section or in the trade development area. And then finally, the Department of Commerce, in fact, took that course over *in toto* and then made changes in it, which I think is an indication that it worked pretty well.

Later, as I moved from economic training into the role as a dean, a man by the name of John Kaufman became the head of consular training, he had had some eye operations after which he had to sit very still and stay out of the light for a long period of time. If my memory serves me correctly, it was probably somewhere in the neighborhood of a month

he found himself having to be very still and in a very quiet place, and in this position, he dreamt up a way of to do consular training differently. So when he came into the institute—I was then dean—he quickly sold me on the idea of what we now know as ConGen (Consulate General) Rosslyn. And went to work developing it. It was a really fun to go through that process and work on the development of it with him. He picked some other consular officers to work with him and that too was interesting process since he knew what he was looking for, in those he chose, to complement his own skills and knowledge.

*Q: That program has been very successful.*

SPROTT: Oh, you know, it's a story that probably needs to be told. I tell it every chance I get, but when you consider that the average consular officer trained in—you probably took the old course—

*Q: I took the old course, yes.*

SPROTT: And I did as well, largely to see what it was like in order to get a sense for what was involved in that kind of training, but it was all lectures. And then, if you were like everybody else, at the very end toward the time for taking the test, you crammed everything you could because you couldn't possibly remember all the boring lectures. Even if they were interesting, they were boring after the sixth hour of the day. Well, most people then went off overseas and served in the average consulate, and it was probably in the neighborhood—depending on the complexity of the issues that the consular officer had to face—it could be 12 months before a chief of section would put them on the visa line by themselves. Well, it wasn't long after this new course was started that people were within days being trusted on the line to serve fully as a consular officer. Now, just look at the productivity change. Say we were way off, by double, so that it was only six months that it took to get somebody so they could be trusted to act effectively on the line: that's six months of salary for a junior officer, nonetheless, as compared to, let's say, it's a week or two weeks or call it a month—you've still got a gain of five months of salary at the very least, plus, I think, you had much more effective people over time, much more competent people.

*Q: Would you explain the concept of the ConGen Rosslyn system.*

SPROTT: The concept was that people should learn by doing, and that consular law and regulation are the kinds of things that are best dealt with by experience, and that in many cases, while there is the law that one must follow and the regulations that one must use in making consular decisions, there's tremendous room for judgment. And you, at the same time, have to make your judgments in a fairly short period of time. It's hard to teach judgment by itself, what you can do is give people experience in using the materials that they will have to draw on to help them make the decision, so that when they're faced with a situation, they know how to apply the rules, the law, and they know how to make the judgments that are necessary. They were getting that experience out in the field, but it

was taking months to do this, because supervisors had to watch them and stand over their shoulders and so on.

What we did was to create an actual consular section with actual case studies from real life, so that the officers would actually go through and live the work. And if they had to read the regulations, they were reading them because they were engaged in a case at hand. Somebody they'd just interviewed has asked for an American passport, claiming they're an American. Well, what are the rules? What are the regulations? How do I know this person is telling the truth? How do I know they're American? All these kinds of issues then get dealt with. And they were critiqued afterwards. They would make a decision in one part of the course and might have to live with the decision they'd made in a subsequent part of the course. Or they might find that an ambassador or DCM would turn the case around. What do they do in those situations, and how do they deal with the DCM or the ambassador who wants to do that kind of thing?

So the idea was to try to create a real-world situation. They needed to interview people in jails, American citizens in jails, so we created a jail that had bars and graffiti on the walls and all that sort of thing, and they would go in and it was amazing how realistic some of those students, acting as incarcerated person, could act out their roles. And we are told, were told very early on, by the graduates of the program that it was very successful.

Another indication of the success of the program is that within the first six months, the degree of difficulty of the exams that were given in the course had to be increased three times. The test that I took—you took, probably, too—after, I think it was the seven-week course initially when I took it in the lecture format, was just simply not hard enough. It didn't really tell you what people knew, and that was another kind of change that took place. It's easy to find out what people don't know. But we were trying to make sure that people knew what they needed to know, and under the old course and the testing system, you were really very limited in pursuing just exactly how much people had learned. We still required that they had to pass all of the elements, and they do, very successfully.

*Q: One of the things, too, it was ideally suited for the Foreign Service cycle, in that you didn't have to wait to gather a class. You could feed them in on a weekly basis.*

SPROTT: Every other workday there was a new group of four people, if I remember correctly. Initially it was four people, and then I think eventually we raised it to eight, six or eight people could come in every other workday, so that you could fit people into the program. And you're right. Most of the year this worked out beautifully because you could then have a kind of constant flow of people that made it easier to plan their times in many respects, although there were still problems, obviously, with the way in which that worked out in relation to other programs.

One of the things we tried to do at this stage, too, at least in the school of professional studies, where I was at this point dean, was to try to move this whole concept to other specialties. We now had economic training taking place increasingly in a realistic environment, or at least the lessons were applied in increasingly realistic environment.

We had some history of political training, having done some of that but never gone very far. There was an officer by the name of Paul Kattenburg and another by the name of John Bowling, who, in the late '60s, were assigned to FSI for reasons having to do with their prior assignments. Both of them were Ph.D. political scientists, both of them had taught before, both of them had a number of years' service in Vietnam and in East Asia and Southeast Asia—Kattenburg in East Asia and Bowling in Southeast Asia. They pushed the idea of teaching political work in a much more practical, pragmatic way. So the first course of political reporting was created under them back in the late 60's.

At any rate, the idea was to try to move toward an Embassy Rosslyn, FSI was then in Rosslyn. We had ConGen Rosslyn, why not an Embassy Rosslyn? And have the various sections doing their own work, but interacting with one another at the same time. So we moved next to try to do what we had done in the consular training in the admin area. At that time, Tom Tracy was still in the Department as Assistant Secretary for Administration, and after lots of discussions, tremendous amount of support from him, we moved to start the admin Rosslyn training first in the budget area. What you see today in the training of budget officers is to a degree a result of what was created back then. Our initial attempt was to use a particular embassy budgeting system as the model and adopted Ireland. We brought Foreign Service nationals from Ireland over to help us set up the accounts structure and the system just as it was in Ireland. The budget was run as it was run in Ireland except we cut it short so that everybody went through the full budget cycle in the time period. We continued to try to push this into other areas of admin training—GSO (General Services Operations) work, general admin—thence breaking down into specific areas like contracting and so on. It's progressed over time, but we've never quite got that integrated embassy, never really got the same kind of training that we could see in consular training applied across the board to the admin area.

It certainly didn't move very far on political training. And there are a lot of reasons for it. Part of it is one of the problems we have in the Department of changing personnel. It's hard, when you're doing a development program like this with limited funds—and we don't want to do it too fast, so I wouldn't argue for unlimited funds by any means—but when you're trying to develop something like this, you don't develop it in six months. You don't develop fully even in a year. Some of these things will take several years, and with the change in personnel, you never really have enough people who stayed with the program long enough to get it going and then keep it going, and it goes back again to there not being the senior management support. Tom—not Tom, but John—Tom was there, but who was his predecessor? Tom Tracy was very supportive, but his predecessor was the one that really started it: John. . . John Thomas.

John Thomas was the one who really gave it the financial support and made sure that there was support amongst people that he knew. And if you remember, John Thomas was one of those people who developed a fairly large number of admin officers, there was a lot of loyalty to him personally, and when he said, you know, "Pay attention to this course," people did. Tom Tracy was able to carry that, but then he left, leaving no one in the admin area with the same kind of commitment to supporting this kind of a program.

You still had it in economics, however, and we did have it still in consular training. People became sold on the consular training program, all the way across the board.

*Q: That's encased in concrete now, I would think.*

SPROTT: Very much so. But Barbara Watson, for example, at the time, was the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs. We had to fight like mad. John Kaufman and others really had a battle on our hands to convince people to give up that old program, which was a certainty, one that everybody knew, to go into something totally experimental, never been done before. But when it was done, Barbara Watson and others who were in the consular field just fully supported it, and it really ran. And they supported it with money as well. The Consular Bureau was always positive in its approach to working with FSI, and also very supportive in our budget hearings in the Department. If we had a problem, the Consular Bureau would be one on whom we could call for support with the undersecretary for management or with others, even though the regional bureaus, you would argue, should have been ones in there fighting to ensure that there was support for training. It was very difficult to get them to support us with anything that wasn't very specifically tailored to their own particular needs, and even there, as in the case of area studies, they were not as supportive as they should have been.

*Q: Were you able, as you were developing these programs, particularly in economics and consular, to call on the outside educational community to come up with ideas, or were we giving them ideas?*

SPROTT: I think that in the case of the economics program, the academic economists on whom we called were in every case highly supportive and helpful in providing us with insights if we needed that or assistance in lectures or giving us names of people who could help us in some way. And so the academic world was very helpful there. On consular training, there isn't much on the outside, and I have to say, even with the help on the economic side, putting things together and making them work was something that we had to figure out on our own. There just is nothing—or was at that time—nothing like what we were doing anywhere else in the world, frankly. Even what I had been doing in the Economics Institute in Colorado, while it had some similarities, was not at all like what we were doing in the Institute.

*Q: I would have thought the military might have. I mean, they were the closest ones to. . . . I mean, they've got a variety of jobs, and I can see where they would, you know, have classes how to be a battalion adjutant or something like that.*

SPROTT: They did, and they do have those kinds of courses, but they didn't have courses like that in economics, so that you couldn't quite... What we were after was people who were analysts, who had judgment, who could write, who could present what they did; and what the military would be after in many of those cases would be much more carefully defined, much more carefully restricted, and probably in some ways it would be more . . . skill-oriented—that's not the right word I'm trying to think of—*mundane* is what comes really to mind.



*Q: Yes, well, I mean, much more . . . I mean, after all, the consular training is really to develop a mindset of how to work out a problem, where the other ones would be more “This is the way you do it.”*

SPROTT: Exactly, precisely. There’s the right way, wrong way, and the Army way.

*Q: And consular training—as a long-term consular officer—is an art, I mean, it involves judgment.*

SPROTT: Exactly right. And so therefore, we didn’t want something that would have been like the training of the adjutant general, where this is the way it’s done and this is the answer you have to give, because the way in which we would deal with a given case in China in Beijing might be totally different from the way you would deal with it in Shanghai, and yet totally different again in Hong Kong.

And that’s just doing those three cultures. And that was the kind of thing you wanted to get across. So yes, there were things out there that might have led you in that direction, but nothing exactly similar to what we were doing.

I would say that was even true in some of the other areas that we tried to pick up on. Negotiations—we created a whole new program in negotiations, and I think in that case, in fact, one of the people that got us moving in that direction was John MacDonald, who was some time earlier—in fact, in those days, it was in the IO (International Organization Affairs) division. He had become very much engaged with the problems that arise in dealing with the United Nations and multilateral diplomacy, as opposed to bilateral diplomacy. And around that time, he and others encouraged the institute to create some programs in negotiations. Well, how do you do those? Those, at that time, were mostly lecture format or lecture/reading, and relied heavily on some prominent individual who had lots of experience in negotiating of one type or another. And yet the kind of negotiations that very often our officers find themselves in vary from arbitration to actual negotiations between two parties to get them to come together, not in the arbitrating sense but actually negotiating with them in the literal sense of getting them to take positions of one sort or another, or the bilateral type, and so on. So you needed to prepare people to be able to deal with all of those instead of just one of them. So we developed a negotiations course that was very real, or tried to be very real in the way in which it was handled as well.

There were other programs that got developed the same way. Management courses changed dramatically during this period, and here we did follow some of the things that the military and that were done on the outside. We tried to create courses in management and leadership training that, on one hand, provided people with the contexts that are common to the Foreign Service, at the same time, that built the skills that were needed, ranging from negotiations and so on to actual management of people and time and resources; and tried to do that in some sort of a format that had people leading, not with a bunch of notes that they may have had but also from practice that they would have

carried out [in training]. At about this time, in the School of Professional Studies, it was becoming clear. . . . I think we're getting probably somewhere in the late 1970's, and in, what, '78-79, it was the period of the Director General at that time was Carol Lace, because that's when we were beginning to work on the new Foreign Service Act. There was a whole set of discussions about what's the Foreign Service to be? About this time, we began looking at the mishmash of courses that had built up in the Institute to meet individual demands or needs—contracting, procurement, communications (not just written and oral communications, but also working with communicators, because the computer was beginning to come in so we were beginning to see a meshing of those activities), security. All of these individual courses began arise, and then the question became how do we deal with this? So that's when the idea of a mid-level course came in. So about 1980, I guess it was, Paul Boeker became the director of the Institute, and we started a mid-level program after a very lengthy and a very intensive and extensive set of meetings and surveys that were done within the Department at all levels and of a cross-section of jobs that people were doing, and arrived at a new approach to organizing the training in the Institute of moving it from what appeared to be a bunch of *ad hoc query* into a much more planned approach to insuring that people gained or had access to the training that they need for the level at which they happen to be for the activity they're going to be carrying out through their career. The idea was to manage careers against some concept of the needs of the service. Parenthetically, I will say it never really... The courses came into being, and the management of the courses came into being, but the system never managed either the personnel or the process against that. It was a goal never really achieved.

*Q: Well, John, as you're working on this, did you find you were up against some types of people who really were almost impervious to what we were trying to teach, or had problems? I mean, I think of my consular officer days. There seemed to be two types of difficult people in consular work. One is somebody who comes through legal training, yes there's a law, but then how you administer requires context, flexibility. The other one is often someone who looks at the regulations in a rather rigid manner. The one says, "What should I do in this context?" the other says, "What's the rule for this?" Did you find that?*

SPROTT: No, but I think we did find that there were different types of people that were being brought in that in some case were . . .

I might say that not only was this a characteristic that I saw in the School of Professional Studies, but the language school also saw these characteristics. The languages school, I should point out, was going through a period of change while I'm describing the changes that were taking in the School of Professional Studies, some of which I got involved in because of the activities that I was involved in developing management and leadership courses. But one of the things that we finally stumbled into, and I know there are pros and cons and some people who believe in this and some who don't, but one of the things that we began to try to do was to find out why there were these differences in people. You've described the kind of person in terms of personality-type, and we thought that there might be a different way of describing this that would enable us to get at those

differences and treat them—that is, address them directly in the context of the owner’s needs.

There was a group of us that went down to the Center for Applied Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, a very strange place at that time. They had been doing all kinds of experimentation, and they were known for some of the training that they did for management. So we went down and, among others, we talked to them, and they used something called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator [Editor’s Note: Wikipedia article on Myers-Briggs is at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myers-Briggs\\_Type\\_Indicator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myers-Briggs_Type_Indicator)]. At least we had never heard of it. I’m sure that there were people in the Institute that had heard of it, but none of us had really done much work with it. And so we began to use the test. The School of Language Studies had also picked up on it. In fact, one of the senior linguists in the School of Language Studies had begun to work on that as part of her dissertation and she, and a number of universities combined, did some very extensive work across the country. What we found were several things, that there are several types of people and that—forget whether or not these are good types or bad types because they’re neither—those types of people have preferences for the way in which they learn things. They also have preferences for the way in which they apply whatever it is they do. When we began to think in these terms, we began to see that some individuals that we found that we might personally find it very difficult to feel free in the way in which they applied a rule or a law in, let’s say, consular work. Their problem was that they were so particular in the way in which they thought that we had to first deal with that, and having dealt with that, we could very often then get them to be more relaxed. But they had to first get comfortable with each of the individual elements that made up the whole. To be very simplistic, that was the person who falls under the S category, and an SJ-type, I guess, if I remember correctly. And that kind of person tends to be, as compared to the average Foreign Service officer, who is more intuitive, this person tends not to be very intuitive and, as a result, can be very frustrating to the intuitive person. I guess you may be intuitive, and you may have been running into a bunch of the S’s, who are “sensors,” and therefore an intuitive person can get very frustrated.

But the reverse is also true. May I tell you stories? I’ll tell you a story of one of the executive directors after I had become FSI’s deputy director. I think he must have been my second or third executive director, a senior civil servant, in fact, I think, now that I remember, he was the first Senior Executive Service Officer to ever become an executive director of the Institute, a very experienced, very highly thought-of officer by the name of Bill Camp.

One day, after we had sent him off to the Federal Executive Institute for a month of training, he walked into my office and he plopped down on a chair, and he said, “I figured out what it is that frustrates me about you.” And I said, “What in the world can this be?” And he said, “Well, you’re an N and I’m an S.” And I wondered why I can’t ever figure out what it is you want me to do. And of course, he needed to have the instructions. I want you to do *X* in the following fashion, have it completed by such and such a time, and I would like it on my desk in the following way. Whereas I would simply say, “Look, I think this needs to be done. It falls within your area.” And then I’d

just let it get done; thinking, of course, he knows when I have the meeting [it's for] when it's going to have to be used and so on.

In the Language School, they found that this meant that there were preferences in the way in which people learned the languages, that there were people who were far more visually oriented and also people who actually had to work through the language by using it in various forms and formats and that those people, if you could give them that, could learn very much more rapidly than in the kind of standard set ways. Today, when you look at language training, it is a very much different animal than it was 15-, 20-years ago and for largely that reason, the attempt to try to figure out how we can help people learn in their context and most optimal way.

*Q: One of the things I've realized early on in the Foreign Service was just what you were saying about the, I guess, S and N, but that normally, unlike the military, in the Foreign Service they'll say, "I'd like to have this done, and here's kind of the idea and we'll work on it," and yet that's an order. And I've found some young people don't understand that's an order, and then later I'll say, "Well, where is this?" and they'll look at you blankly, and they don't realize they've been ordered. And it's a trap, often, for somebody who doesn't understand how the Foreign Service works.*

SPROTT: Well, I think there are two things that happen, two hearers. One is the S and J kind of idea, where that's a real communications breakdown in that sense, and given that, I think the numbers are something like 80 per cent of the Foreign Service officers are IN and TJ's, not S's. Then you really run into this problem in the breakdown between those who aren't and are. But the other thing that I think you were also describing is a change that I've seen, and my guess is you would have heard this from others: There is, in my opinion, a dramatic change in the attitude and the nature or character of the officer that you see coming in from about, let's say, they late '70's, early '80's, from the officer that you saw coming in before that.

One part of it is, of course, age. Following the 1980 Foreign Service Act, the age limitations changed, and so you had officers coming in whose average age was older. Also the Vietnam War changed that, because I think before that you had a lot of people who stayed in school in order to avoid the Vietnam War, at least people who would be potential candidates, at least, for the Foreign Service. And you saw, I think, back then a change in people with little experience and very little exposure to the kinds of cultural context that you had associated with the immediate post-World War II officer entrant.

Later I think you begin to get to see people who really had no commitment to the Service as in the past because this is their second or in some cases third career. You have people coming in at age—I think you only have to be tenured—so what would that be? You can come in at 59 I think is the oldest age. Well, I have nothing against age, except that when you get people who have already had more than one career, the kind of commitment they give is different from what you saw earlier, and I think the younger people don't see the career quite the same way.

Now there are other reasons that have developed since then. I think the 1994 or 95 shutdown of the government, as you and I have talked on the side personally, did have its impact on the morale and commitment of people too, and there have been certainly enough reason given to us by enough presidents now who've said or public that have said that foreign affairs isn't important, that makes a lot of people feel that way. Of course, that all gets combined with the fact that you've got lots of opportunities in the private sector today that you didn't have 30 years ago for people to perform and enjoy their ability to participate in international affairs and get paid much better, frankly—not only get paid better, but they have more latitude in the way their own personal careers move and shape.

*Q: Did you ever find the FSI providing feedback to the Board of Examiners? I mean, the Board recruits, but FSI is the one place where officers can be kind of measured for how they do or whether they're suited for the Foreign Service, and so pass on this information to the recruiting process, saying, you know, ease up on this type of person, work on that type.*

SPROTT: It's very interesting. I'll tell you two stories with that. I think one has to do with the economics function, and the other has to do with the junior officer intake. Let me do the junior officer intake first. When I first came into the Department full time in 1966, the person who was head of the Junior Officer Program was a man by the name of Alex Davit, there were lots of people before him, obviously, and people afterwards, but I remember him very well. I used to ride to and from work with him, and we used to talk about these things. He had to write a report on all the junior officers as they were graduated from the Junior Officer Program. It was a matter of record in their files. He assessed them in terms of their skills and abilities and their performance and their attitude and so on. People did get that word in BEX, the examiners did, and there was a lot of communication between him and the dean of the School of Professional Studies, because those two people saw all the officers as they came in, and they saw officers doing different things in various parts of their career afterwards, and they did talk to each other.

Sometime after that they stopped writing the evaluation reports for the junior officers. As near as I can tell, from that time on, as near as the Institute ever got to contributing to the Bureau of Examiners' approaches to recruitment was when we occasionally would be asked to contribute questions for the Princeton Testing Service or when one or another of us would volunteer to be one of the guinea pigs to take one of the tests, but that was as near as we ever got to formal feedback. I personally think it's a shame, for while FSI should clearly not be in the position of being a determinant of who should be brought in, FSI certainly has a viewpoint on the performance of those people, and that feedback ought to be of use to Personnel and, therefore, to the Bureau of Examiners and Recruitment (BEX). But then my own opinion is that the Department has never taken the recruitment process terribly seriously. It is always assumed that the right people would want to come into the Foreign Service and pretty much has left it up to that and happenstance, and therefore, there's no reason for them to feel that they need to make that connection. If that sounds nasty, it's meant to be.

*Q: Let's stick to the FSI for a while—and then we'll move to some of your other postings—during much of this time what about both minorities and women, you were there during a great push to recruit both of these categories, to make the Foreign Service more representative. Did this effort pose problems?*

SPROTT: No, no, not at all. In fact, I will tell you that the women in the economics program consistently, over all the years I was there, performed significantly better than the men in that course.

*Q: I have to say that last month I went to Bosnia to monitor an election, and I was strolling around the campus of the University of Banja Luka and there posted on the door of the economics department, I went down the list of names in rank, and I had to get down to around, I think, the 14<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup> before I saw a man's name on the list.*

SPROTT: The women, if they were able to get in to the Foreign Service, during all of the period during I've been here, have just basically consistently performed better than the men on most of those kinds of issues, from the point of view of training. They tended to be much more serious, tended to be much more concerned about performing well within their personal contexts, that is to say, not performing well for show purposes but for honest reasons. Even when they were ambitious, they tended to be less negatively ambitious; that is, they tended to be less harmful in that ambition. In the economics program, if you had the wrong kind of competition taking place, it was deadly, because people can't learn in that kind of environment—and if it was created, it was invariably created by men, not by the women, and the women would, if anything, be the ones who overcame that, resisted it, and then got the men to change. So that would have been one thing.

In the case of the minorities, most of the minorities that were able to get through the exam that I'm aware of, with a few exceptions, were again quite good. In fact, looked at as a whole, some of the most superior people were minorities. If there was a problem in the area of the minorities, it was the inability with English. In some cases, English for a minority was a second language, and it was not a powerful second language. And as a result they were not able to effectively compete because their comprehension, even if adequate, was slower than it was with a first-language-English person. I think that had its impact. In the cases where their English was poor even though it was not their second language, that became most notable in language training. There is the failure to realize, on the part of a large number of people, including people in Personnel and the Examiners' office; Recruitment in particular, that in order to get a 3/3 in any foreign language, you have to have a 3/3 in English, and a number of people did not have a 3/3 in English[Editor's Note: The FSI language grading system is for speaking/reading. The notation 3 means some college education, so 3/3 means speaking at the level of native with a college education and reading at that level. At FSI 5/5 would be a grade for fully competent native speaker] and as a result, the Institute did have special classes in English for people and developed an ability to send people, quietly, to English classes in various universities or programs around town, and did so probably on the average of seven a year for a number of years. I don't know how much of that they're doing now.

Unfortunately, it was virtually also at a time when it was problematic for the officer. It was at a stage when the officer was at a crisis point or near a crisis point in their career. What the Department should have done, in my opinion, instead, was to identify those people who were likely to have those kinds of communication problems and bring them in the service, sure, but instead of sending them out after six months or eight months or nine months, whatever that case may be, give them another few more months that didn't count against TIC [Editor's Note: Time In Class. An officer only has so many years to be promoted to the next level and being assigned to an English enhancement class would appear to detract from work which would qualify one for promotion] or anything else, but run them through the English training or something of that nature, get those skills up very early on in their career so that when they went to their first post, they had the knowledge and the skill that they needed to carry out these functions.

*Q: During the time that you were involved with the FSI, either running a course or particularly when you moved up in Dean of Professional Studies, did you find if a student was having problems, particularly a minority but not necessarily a minority, that you had enough ability to sit down sort of with Personnel and with everyone else and treat the person as "so we've got a problem here, let's talk about it, let's see what we can do and work on it," or was it pretty much of an assembly line process?*

SPROTT: No, I can never think of an occasion when we weren't able to sit down with them when we were able to identify a problem. My only issue here is that somebody else knew that problem was going to arise when the person was selected, but they didn't pay attention to that part, and that was because, in some cases, that we were so interested in getting the minority that we failed to look at the skill levels of those people and the problems that that was going to present later and there was a way of overcoming that. That's all. We should have had a separate program.

*Q: There was a period, I can remember, when I was supervising consular officers and we had eager minority officers, but in language skills and all they were struggling a bit to keep up. I mean an overseas visa office really wasn't a place where you could bring people up to snuff.*

SPROTT: And it's interesting because if there was a problem with some of the programs, the Mustang Program [Editor's Note: the Mustang Program sought to convert Foreign Service support personnel into mid-level Foreign Service Officers, especially in the consular cone], for example, people used to talk about being problematical, and very often it was because there was never any preparation for people. People were thrown into that environment with no preparation and expected to survive in the same kind of milieu as people who had been prepared. In this case, we're talking not just general preparation, which they did get, but in particular, the specific skill development that they did not have, that others at their grade did have. If we were going to have them come in, we should have committed this other effort to them, and we didn't. I don't think the Department does yet.

*Q: Was there a consultation about who we should do this, or it was just more or less these people arrive, you train them, they go out?*

SPROTT: That's it, exactly. And if there was any variation in that at all, intervention was based solely on a personal interest on the part of the head of the Bureau of Examiners or personal knowledge probably something to do with FSI. But other than that there was no vehicle, no automatic tendency for them to do it. This is more from the point of view of, well, this is our job, and this is what we're going to do and full speed ahead.

*Q: Well, let's move sort of back. After you left the economics course, you went to Chile.*

SPROTT: I went to Chile from September 1968 to August 1971.

*Q: What were you doing in Chile?*

SPROTT: I was head of what was called then a Joint Economic Section; those were the days of the Alliance for Progress, in which we had economic missions to the various countries in Latin America. Chile had an economic mission. I was, on the one hand, the senior economic advisor to the economic mission, and on the other hand, because you have this administrative role, the head of the joint State/AID Economic Section. When I was originally hired for that job, if I remember I had got into a little bit of a discussion at one of, I think, Bill Crockett's or somebody's cocktail party on the eighth floor about the role of development and the financing of development and so on. At that same time, unbeknownst to me, they [Latin American Bureau] had decided that they needed in Chile somebody with more of an academic background in economics to deal with the kinds of issues they were facing in the program and sector lending activities of the country and the involvement of the universities—one, the Universidad Católica, which was basically being supported by the University of Chicago economists, and the other one, the University of Chile, which was basically being supported by Berkeley faculty and had been for a number of years. Graduates from these universities had now risen to senior responsibilities in Chile, and were spread throughout the government. They were very effective leaders and managers at least we thought at the time that they were. So, it was thought somebody with more of an academic background was needed to run the section. Somehow, that discussion that I had in that cocktail party, which was somewhat of an argument over the right way to do things, led them to ask me if I'd be interested in taking that job. And I was.

Now under the rules of the game in those days, if the director of the AID Mission was a Foreign Service officer—Department of State—then the head of that Joint Economic Section had to be an AID officer. If the AID director was a USAID officer, then the head of the Joint Section had to be an FSO, or State Department. Well, initially, I guess when I was being talked about for this, it was going to be a Foreign Service officer heading up AID. By the time I got down there, Sid Weintraub, a Foreign Service officer, a wonderful, first-rate officer, was the director of the AID Mission, and so I had to switch. If you look at my record, you'll see that there's a period from 1968 to 1971 where I was assigned to AID. In fact, in some bio registers I didn't exist before 1971 in the



Department of State, which is kind of fascinating. But at any rate, I went down there under AID auspices.

*Q: Well, what was the economic-political situation in Chile when you got down there in 1968?*

SPROTT: In '68 it was really, I would have to describe it as optimistic. The environment, both in terms of business and politics, was a positive, a positive attitude toward the future. There was the kind of energetic discussion, intellectual as well as practical and pragmatic discussions that took place, so that you had a sense of dynamism in the country, a real interest in whipping and dealing with their problems, and a concern over the maintenance of their democracy. And pride in the fact that they were an elected government, that they intended to remain that way, and that they were going to solve their problems. They had a significant amount of inflation in those days, and they wanted to solve those economics issues in thoughtful judicious way, but without destroying the economy.

Then, as we all know, Allende was elected largely because, I think, the Christian Democrats—which had as their head, the person running for president, [Radomiro] Tomic—kind of basically thought he was going win. He thought he was a shoo-in. Nobody thought that Allende and the left could win. The Socialists there were even further left than the Communists in those times. Nobody thought that the right—I've lost the name of the far right for some reason—but nobody thought they would win or that the election would be close. So Tomic really didn't do the kind of campaign, or present himself the way, he probably should have. Also I don't think President Frei really provided the kind of open support that needed for Tomic.

The result of it is that, as we all know, Allende won the election, and from almost the day he won the election, the country began to change and change dramatically. It's something my children remember even more dramatically than I do, because as time progressed they saw the change in the people, the changes on TV and even the freedom of movement around them on the part of their Chilean friends dramatically changing. I can personally remember going to friends who were Socialists—I had friends who were Socialists, or Communists, and I went to their homes as much as I did the Christian Democrats—and before dinner you'd have your drinks and standing around talking, women, as well as the men, would be arguing vociferously over – you-name-the-issue. They could be taking any position—a Communist position, a Socialist position, although, frankly, fewer Socialists mixed with Christian Democrats and others. They tended to be always a little further out, but nonetheless, they would argue, and then when it was time for dinner, everybody sat down and were friends. It was the kind of discussion that was sane and thoughtful, and nobody held any of the prior discussion against anyone subsequently. The election was September 1970. Allende was actually sworn in, I think, in—I want to say September, but I think it was October. Shortly thereafter, my family and I happened to have been visiting some friends out on a farm at one point, when a group of the far-left Socialists came in and took over the farm next to us, just walked in and kicked everybody out and took over the farm.

Not long after Allende was elected, at any rate, within days if not weeks, you would go to a comparable dinner party that I described earlier, and if the Socialists and the Communists were there—if—there was no discussion like you had before, and in most cases they simply did not come. But if they did come, the discussion was much more serious, much more heated, and much more difficult. I believe for the whole time I was there probably, what, six months or more, seven months, eight months after Allende's election, things just deteriorated very rapidly on the political side in terms of the nature of freedom, and I think things deteriorated rapidly in terms of the outlook.

Now, true, I would have associated far more at that point with the right and the center than I would have with the far left, but even the people that I knew on the far left were worried. My children were very friendly with some of the families of the far left, so you didn't cut those kinds of relations off. I could remember having discussions with some of the people who were Communists or Socialists that we had gotten to know, and they were worried. They were worried whether or not they were going to be able to control the process in a sane and thoughtful way. They didn't want a bloody revolution and they didn't want some of the things that they knew had gone on in other countries. But they turned out, I think, to be wrong in their optimism.

As a part of the optimism—now back to the optimism just before the election—one of the things that I take a fair amount of pride in having accomplished there, was knowing enough of the people in the academic and policy areas. I think I've described to you earlier, one of the characteristics among the economists was that, while they had been trained in, let's say, Berkeley or Chicago, they were also applying practically their learning. The vice-president of the Central Bank, now the president of the Central Bank, is a graduate of the University of Chicago. The head of the Ministry of Finance was Berkeley. The head of economic planning was Berkeley, if I remember. These people were all highly trained economists, well trained economists, and the people in the University of Chile and the Universidad Católica were also good people and interested in doing research and finding ways to get their country from where they were into the kind of direction that they felt they wanted it to be economically—that is, getting rid of the inflation, having a stable economy, having an economy that was not so highly protected that it couldn't competitively survive in an open, global economy. Even in those days they were looking at the idea of free trade associations and moving out and becoming worldwide competitors, which in many areas they had every right to believe they could be and have subsequently proven.

But the real issue is, okay, if we had everything we needed to do that, how do we move from where we are today, not theoretically but actually, into a future that yields that kind of economy. So we [the Economic Mission] engaged a study of that, and I was able to get enough money together to convince Ambassador Ed Korry. In addition, by the fall of 1969 we'd had a new director of the AID Mission by the name of Deane Hinton. I loved Directors, Sidney Weintraub as well as Deane Hinton, Deane agreed with putting together a series of studies for each of the sectors of the Chilean economy. Each would be a study that would describe the actual situation within that sector and then lay out

alternative routes for moving that sector forward into a kind of coherent whole of all of the sectors at some future date, let's say 10 years. We did those studies. They were completed before the elections. The idea was that they would then be available as backing for whatever government came in. Our presumption at that point was that it would be the Christian Democrats, and the Christians Democrats would adopt these as policy. Well, they were produced, but they weren't used until Pinochet took over [September 1973]. A large number of the policies that were followed after Pinochet can be read right out of those documents that were produced in those days.

So that says, it seems to me, two things in answer to your question. One, it was that positive outlook toward the future, a desire to move in the direction of improving their society through improvements in their economy without affecting negatively or debilitating the political system that they were very proud of—which, then, when they lost the political system they were proud of, and later had an opportunity to work on the economy, they did that.

It's interesting to me that I can remember discussions with Chileans before the Allende election, again going back to that positive period. They used to point to the Brazilians, and they would say, you know, the Brazilians have conquered this system because what they've done is they've let the technocrats roam free and run the economy, and they're getting everything under control and getting it right while they control the political side with the military and a strong arm. They said, well, you know, it looks good, but we're not sure we want to do that. It's interesting, though, that subsequently with Pinochet, that's exactly what they did. He provided the strong political—I mean a very highly managed, dictatorial almost, political system, but allowed the economy to kind of range freely, so that it got itself in shape.

*Q: When Allende came in, one, who was our ambassador and what was the reaction of the Embassy to Allende?*

SPROTT: Well, Ed Korry was Ambassador at that time [Editor's Note: Ambassador Korry presented his credential in October 1967 and departed post in October 1971]. Harry Shlaudeman was the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), a wonderful, wonderful DCM, a very quiet, thoughtful man, but really great and served to support Ed Korry very positively, because Ed Korry was what I would call an activist, a person who had to be doing things, and he certainly was very active, and he was very active in the copper negotiations. I can remember going with him a couple of times for late-night discussions amongst people on the copper negotiations.

If I remember correctly, I do not believe that anyone in the Embassy forecast an Allende win. I don't think that anyone, including the (Central intelligence) Agency, thought that Allende would win. My memory of his winning is, however, a fair amount of shock that it happened. I do remember discussions as elections drew near that there was concern about Christians Democrats being too cocky or a little too sure of their position. But I still don't think I remember anyone saying that Allende would win, or thinking that he would win. We had some good people there. John Karkashian was the head of the Political

Section. Tony Friedman, who bless his soul died just a couple of years ago, was a special assistant to the Ambassador—and both of those people, as I remember them, were pretty astute. And certainly the Political Section was a good section and listened pretty carefully to what was going on, and I don't remember anyone saying anything about an Allende win.

Coming back to the topic of copper, I think more than anything else what I would like to say about that is that prior to the 1970 election, there was a move, for probably a year before that or perhaps more, there were ongoing negotiations between Kennecott Copper and Anaconda Copper, the details of which I wasn't really involved in, and the Government of Chile for sharing of ownership, I guess is one way of putting it. Ultimately that ended up being a little bit different, but Ed Korry, the then ambassador to Chile, was very involved as a mediator in that process. From all that I could see and from the two occasions that I was with him in negotiations or discussions, I should say, with the leadership of Kennecott Copper, in this case, one of whom had come from the United States, so it was not only local management but management of the company itself, in both those negotiations. He [Korry] played, I thought, a very positive role in trying to seek ways to achieve a win-win situation—that is, the copper companies would not lose, well, they're losing some management control, Even to working out in some detail, or trying to work out in some detail with the company various financial scenarios that they could work on to get a return on capital, how to get payment for investments, and how to maintain the plant equipment that had already been invested. I never participated in any other discussions than those two and occasionally being briefed in either country team meetings or by the Ambassador himself occasionally, but I understood from that process that he did a nice job with Anaconda and another company whose name I can't remember at this point. But the point of all that is that before Allende, there was move to have a greater ownership by the Chileans of the copper mines and greater control, and Korry was playing a positive role.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the response of the Chilean Government at that particular time?*

SPROTT: They were positively inclined toward Ed Korry, I think, at least from every indication I had of their attitudes toward him. And I think the principals of both business and government were appreciative of the role he was trying to play, which was to help them see each other's sides, while trying to help them come to a conclusion that was going to work for both. You did have a popular opinion toward the outside ownership of the natural resources in the country.

*Q: Well, now, how about prior to the election? Part of the reason you were there was to establish good relations with the universities out there. How did you find dealing with the faculties at the universities?*

SPROTT: First rate, both the University of Chile and the Universidad Católica. I lectured at both, not often, but I did, both on U.S. policy kinds of things, as well as about economic issues. And other members of the embassy staff, both on the AID side as well

as USIA (U.S. Information Agency) and the Political Section in the Embassy all had, I think, casual, reasonable contacts with all of the institutions in the country. They were really very open; they were very positive. We had a lot of money in that country. My memory is that we had program loans of over \$100 million; we had sector loans, the education sector loan was, I think, \$40 million; the agriculture sector loan was somewhere in that same neighborhood. So there was a lot of money in the country, in the sense of activities. We had a lot of investment in Chile as well. The business community was active and fairly positively thought of, so there was no reason for there to be anything but good, positive, and often casual, but good, relations with institutions in the country, both academic, as well as the others.

*Q: Well, in this pre-election period, were you running into the equivalent of columnists or theoreticians who represented the Allende wing of the political spectrum?*

SPROTT: Sure, we would run into the people who represented that side, the far-left side, often, and frankly and honestly, they were the ones, I found it not only true in Chile but very often elsewhere, who were the least willing to listen to reason. They tended to be less analytical and more emotional, less analytical and more pedantic, more certain of their views and sure that the only solution to the economy's problems was to eliminate things, and particularly the capitalist system as we know it, at least. So they were hard to talk to, but you know, Chile was a hard place for a North American or North American economist, trained in our tradition, to deal with. Everything was upside-down, as an economist. For example, we would, in this country, say you don't want a lot of money in inventory; you want to maintain a cash flow to deal with things. You go to a high-inflation country and it isn't true. You don't want to hold any money; you want to get it all into the inventory. The role of an economist there was much different. The way to solve some of their problems between the industrial sector and particularly the urban area versus the rural and the agricultural sector was to tax the agricultural sector. Then, there was every reason not to develop the agricultural sector and take all your profits and move them into the city, which is exactly what they were doing.

*Q: This is Tape 3, Side A, with John Sprott.*

SPROTT: Can I just finish a thought with regard to my perception of the way the interaction between the various elements of the Embassy's country team and members of the right and left and middle in Chile.

My sense is that the younger officers in USIA and our younger officers in the Political Section really did a very good job in those days, because it was a lot of the younger people that were more accessible as the change took place into the Allende period. They were being, for a while at least; more accessible than some of the older people that the others of us might have had more contact with. Also, fairly early on, a lot of people left the country. They were scared. I think that had its impact on our contacts in the Embassy, too.

*Q: Were we looking at the military at that time, wondering whether they would take over? The military had not been a particularly active political force as, say, in Brazil.*

SPROTT: They weren't, in that sense, politically active, although I gather that there was a period in the history when they had been, and that was always something they didn't want to have happen again, at least the Christians Democrats and the right, the Nationalist Party, didn't want it to happen. And the Socialists, I guess. But, you know, I can't say. I'd have to honestly say I don't know whether or not there was any anticipation or expectation of that on the part of others in the Embassy. I think that would have been an area that I just wouldn't have been as privy to. I didn't get involved very much in the military. We certainly had an active military program.

*Q: When Allende came in, did you see a change in the economic orientation?*

SPROTT: Oh, absolutely. Oh, it was dramatic. And it was also fascinating to watch how they worked, in terms of inserting people, members of the Communist Party, at low levels within the various institutions that they took over or, let's say, the Central Bank. They worried less about changing the president of the Central Bank, than they worried about making sure that they had the clerks who actually did the work with the books and things of that nature who were Communist Party members. It was very fascinating to watch that process as they came in and made the changes. They made it from the mid-levels and low levels much more rapidly in many respects, in terms of the overall view of the changes, than at the top. They even left, in some cases I remember, some of the positions open at the top while they were doing some of this. So that's kind of one change you saw. Another change you saw was almost a complete absence of a concern over a lot of these issues. I think there may have been a presumption on the part of some of the members—and I have to say it was harder to deal with the government at that point; it was almost impossible, in fact, to deal with the government at that point. As an economist, to go over and talk with people in the Ministry of Finance or Ministry of Planning—in fact, I don't think we were able to. My memory kind of halfway makes me believe that it was almost impossible for us to get into those agencies and talk to anybody, even those that we might have talked to before, sometimes because they were afraid to talk to us and other cases they weren't there or weren't permitted to talk to us.

So the Ministry of Foreign Affairs became increasingly a key institution for us to deal with, whereas before they had been, in terms of economics, relatively less important.

*Q: Well, what about our aid projects and all? Were you under a brief to take a look and say, look, this place is not going to be friendly to us—let's disengage?*

SPROTT: Well, it's interesting. We were in the process of disengaging anyhow if there had been no election or if the Christians Democrats had won, the days of the program and sector loans were practically over with. We weren't making any more in Chile. We may well have maintained some form of an aid program, but it was going to be dramatically reduced, even without that kind of election outcome, simply because they were at a stage where they didn't need us anymore. The program loans were done for balance of

payments purposes. And they were beginning to get that in shape. Had Tomic taken over, it would only have improved, and under the Allende Administration there was no way we were going to give him program loans for balance of payments reasons. So the answer is there was already a process in place, and we didn't make any more loans. At the same time I don't remember us doing anything precipitous that would have created a more serious problem than they were already having. They were having a problem with capital not coming in already. I don't know that for sure, for example, the Japanese, didn't come in with some investment money that everyone thought they were going to come in with after Allende was elected. Because of Allende's election, that's what we all thought, and it's certainly what I would remember reporting back. I don't know what the Japanese reason for that decision was. We do know that their [Chile's] credit rating changed not long after Allende was elected.

So I think all those things played into an automatic reaction on our part with regard to policy, because they were triggered by those circumstances. Does that answer that question?

*Q: Were you at country-team meetings and things of this nature?*

SPROTT: That varied. We had fewer country team meetings, and the AID director tended to go more. Deane Hinton or Sid Weintraub tended to go to the small ones, and I would go to the larger ones.

*Q: I was just wondering what was the atmospherics surrounding embassy reporting when Allende came in? Were we thinking, well, give them time, and they're going to work this out and we'll be back, it's not as bad as it seems. What did we understand about where this government was going and Allende himself?*

SPROTT: Well, I think that people fairly quickly began to differentiate Allende and what he was about from the Socialists and their leadership and what they were about. The question became one of whether Allende and his group would be able to manage the process, inclusive of that far-left group. A lot of the things that I can remember taking place that were unseemly or, what we would say, inappropriate in terms of the takeover or change—a lot other expropriation of some of the farms and other land that took place in country—was done by the far left. I don't think it was done under Allende's direction at all. I think it may well have even been done without his knowledge. I don't think he was able to manage or control that process, so I think my memory of discussions with people during that initial period was that there was hope that Allende would get control, and that the process would be less traumatic, that the basic democratic principles of the country and those doors would stand and come back. Then I think that almost as every week went by, people became less certain and more concerned, and then I think there was suddenly at some point, probably six months or so down the line, just a coalescence of feeling that we're in for some bad times.

*Q: Towards the end of your tour, in 1971, to your mind was Chile still a democratic country?*

SPROTT: The rule of law was still being used. It's interesting, I think it's true, that Allende simply used the laws of the country as they existed to do what he wanted to do when he did expropriate or take actions, so the rule of law at one level was still being followed. There had been elections that were free and open and lots of participation, so another democratic quality. There was still freedom of movement within the country. There was still a fair amount of freedom of movement out of the country. Capital still moved. One of the problems was a fair amount of capital outflow. So by all of those criteria, I think, it was still a democratic country, but what was happening was the society was becoming much more fearful. People were withdrawing. People were leaving. People were converting physical assets into hard cash. You could see it in the exchange rate for the dollar. People were moving into any kind of a hard currency they could or into diamonds and gold in order to be ready to move quickly. These are Chileans. These are long-time, born and multi-generation Chileans, so insofar as you saw that kind of thing happening, I think you were losing some of the important elements that support a democracy.

I think as time went on more and more elements of the government failed to follow, necessarily, the laws so carefully. I think that's why you had some people who were killed. There were people that were killed in that period. Well, was that better or worse than when Pinochet took over, and you had a lot of people who disappeared? I wasn't there then, so I can't speak to that.

*Q: I want to sort of stick to when you were there. Were you seeing sort of bad economic decisions being made?*

SPROTT: My memory of that period, more than active decisions, was lack of decisions. There were decisions obviously being made, but the absence of decision-making at levels where you needed to have them made wasn't there. The kinds of decisions that were being made were wrong in many cases, and eventually there were decisions with regard to capital flight, controlling capital movements, and stuff like that that I would disagree with; but by the same token, the government had to begin to manage that process too, and I suppose that they had no choice. So that while they might be bad decisions, they may have been the only decisions available to them, under the conditions that they had made for themselves. The decisions they were making with regard to nationalization of industry, manufacturing, and farms were patently wrong in almost 100 per cent of the cases. There was really no justification for it. There was no basis on which they should have been seized. If anything, I think it had been well enough substantiated that such kinds of farms and firms [expropriated] don't produce efficiently and effectively, and Chile already had a problem with inefficient, high-cost production.

*Q: Were you seeing any influence of Soviets there at that point?*

SPROTT: Soviets? Yes. You began to see them, where you hadn't seen them before, come into the country, but I didn't have much to do with that side of things. I don't remember them in any of the areas that I dealt with.



*Q: Was this, by the time you left, a little too early for the Allende government to attract the show business types and the Americans who were enamored with the left and all, guitar players and all that?*

SPROTT: There were a few of those I think that probably came, but I have to be honest with you. I'm not so sure but what some of them didn't come down there before Allende anyhow. It was a fairly open, pretty broad-based kind of country, and so you kind of had all those. So there was one prominent socialist or communist singer, guitar player, who came, when Frei was still president. It may have increased, but I didn't notice any change.

*Q: What about media or demonstrations against the United States? Was there an anti-United States tone to what happened, or were we just sort of left to one side.*

SPROTT: No, we weren't off to one side. There was definite taking it out on Uncle Sam where there was an opportunity. It was opportunistic, I think. This is most obvious in the case of the Consular Section. The Embassy itself was several floors up and across the street from a hotel, and I think a lot of people didn't realize the Embassy was there, but even if they did, it wouldn't make as good a picture to go throwing stones at this great big office building. The Consular Section which was on a nice park-lined...there was a park that ran down the center of this nice big boulevard, and the Consular Section was right there and very obvious. It was a great place to throw rocks at, paint, and stand outside and jeer at or picket. So we did find an increasing number of those actions. I believe that some of the people, including some of the people from the station, were threatened or felt they actually had been. And I think USIA people who got around town might have felt some of it a little bit also. But no, it wasn't... Well, perhaps others would say differently, because I can remember discussions of whether or not Americans should be allowed to carry weapons. I have to be one who disagrees with that on grounds that if somebody wants to stop you they're going to do it, and if you're carrying a weapon that becomes *prima facie* evidence that you would have been willing to shoot them, so they have every right to shoot you. But I can remember that discussion taking place, so we must have felt somewhat more threatened, or some in the community must have felt threatened.

I can remember on at least two occasions driving into town from where I lived and having to detour because I sensed the collection of large numbers of people up ahead and diverted early enough and subsequently found out that it was a demonstration against somebody. In one case it was in front of the consulate, in fact, and had I gone on down, I would have been stopped. Some cars were, but diplomatic and international organization plates were ones that were certainly open for... You know, people certainly looked at those and were more apt to pester them in some cases than other cars.

*Q: By the time you left, in '71, Allende was well into power.*

SPROTT: He was into power, yes, and the place had really, I think, looking back on it and even at the time, I was convinced it was going to take years for them to correct what had already been done, the damage that had been done to the economy already.

*Q: Were you picking up any of the ire which apparently began to develop in Washington from the highest levels of the Nixon-Kissinger administration about Chile and do you feel that was, to use diplomatic terms, becoming more and more a target of our ire?*

SPROTT: Well, that was very much there, and I think Korry was trying to deal with that. I wasn't privy to a lot of that, but no, I can remember some of the discussions and maybe even some of the cable traffic with Washington. There was a sense, I think, on the part of the leadership here that if that's the way they want to play the game then screw 'em, you know, to hell with them. We'll let them play that game, and they can suffer the consequences. No, that was very clearly there, and if there was anything that, let's say, the AID Mission might have asked for that would have required any kind of interagency discussion, with regard to a loan or a change in loan activities or something of that nature, it didn't happen.

*Q: You left in '71. Where did you go?*

SPROTT: I came back to FSI and was made the head of the economics program at that point, or the deputy of the division. Then Warrick Elrod left about 10 months later, and I was made the head of the division.

*Q: How long did you keep that up?*

SPROTT: Well, I came back at the end of '71 and was made Dean of FSI's School of Professional Studies in 1975, probably spring of 1975, so I was there four years heading up the economic section.

*Q: We talked quite a bit about the economic section, but did you feel that this was an established product by this time, or were you feeling any problems at that time?*

SPROTT: Well, let me go back to the purpose of that six month course. It was only meant to be [needed for] five years. Our thought was that if we could produce 25 officers twice a year, 50 officers a year, for five years, that's 250 officers, plus the university training that we were doing, which was running, if I remember correctly, around 10 people a year or so (we had ups and downs in that; I don't remember the exact number), in addition to those, that that was enough to meet the Service's needs *if* the Department did the job on recruitment they were supposed to do in terms of bringing in people with good economics background.

But they never did anything different in recruitment, as far as I could remember or tell, and as a result, the course continued to go on. So it was established in the sense that it continued on, and we tried to meet any growing or changing demands – the institutional relationships that were taking place, and changes that were happening at the multilateral level as well as the bilateral level. We incorporated those things. We brought in computers. And so on. But there was always, at least in my mind, the sense that someday this course ought to quit. It shouldn't go on forever. So even the hiring that we would do,

I never wanted to hire somebody on a permanent basis, so I always hired on a GG (contract) basis, because the idea was there's not going to be a permanent. . . . You shouldn't look at this as a career. We went on to establish other courses. As I said, we created a two week course in economics that we took around the world and offered at least twice a year. It was another, I think, useful program particularly in its early stages. Later as we took it to Africa where it was very useful in helping a lot of the embassies better understand the regional institutions that were being created in Africa, or had been created in Africa, and how they might work as well as what the embassies were doing. Then sometime later on we added a discussion of international law and multilateral work.

We had created a new commercial course at that point, too, that was running very well, we created a course on science because science now became, in the '80's particularly in the Department—should have been earlier, but we all of a sudden became aware of the fact in the '70's and '80's that we needed to do something about science. People didn't know anything about it. We created a science program; -- you remember there were resource officers and the whole issue of the development of a resource officer cadre--so we were also doing work there. The economics division moved from just doing the economics course, a pre-university program, overseeing the studies of officers that went to universities, to doing things to in other areas that were thought to be more closely related to economics than they were to consular training or admin training or political training. So the division, as a division, gathered, if you will, additional duties, responsibilities and moved on and forward for those reasons.

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*Q: Today is November 6, 1998. John, let's start with your deanship, you came back to be dean, what was the title, actually and how long were you in that office?*

SPROTT: I was Dean of the School of Professional Studies from 1975 to 1981

*Q: What does dean of professional studies encompass at that time?*

SPROTT: At that time the dean had all of the professional training fields of the Foreign Service, political, economic, political, and admin training, plus the basic office skills for secretaries, clerical personnel and junior officer training [A-100 course]. A little bit later we added the computer—information management—but just basic computer skills. All of the management courses—I'm not talking about admin training, but management courses as such, supervisory skills, management skills, leadership skills, and university training—fell under the dean.

*Q: I would think that the secretarial skills are so prevalent—I mean secretarial colleges and the like—that these would be fairly common skills. Unlike economics, or political, consular training, which are really unique to the Foreign Service, and so you almost have to create this training; you can't take something off the shelf for these courses.*

SPROTT: True, but it was also true for the clerical training. Don't forget that there's nobody else who does démarches. Nobody else does aide memoirs. Nobody else does the other kinds of instruments that are the vehicles for a lot of our communications, cable traffic, and so on. Particularly, going back to this time frame, we didn't have the computers and even the word processors that people could put forms on and then do things. A cable had to be almost letter perfect to go out, if you remember, and so on, and they were still using cable-ese in those days, so it was a language that was involved for a secretary, so a good competent, well trained, professional secretary coming into the service in those days still needed a few weeks to bring themselves up to—not skills particularly, in terms of typing and that sort of thing—but developing the knowledge they needed to work with the instruments that are peculiar to the government and the Foreign Service.

That was one side. The other side was that there were and still are a number of people who are brought into the government with inadequate personal skills: language, like English, office courtesies, use of the telephone—things of that nature were not common in the environment in which these people were raised and they had no business experience, so they came in, fresh from high school in many cases. They may have had typing. And so the whole idea was to bring their skill levels up to a point where they could be functional within the average office at the clerical level. It became necessary because there was nowhere else to do that.

*Q: It's something I hadn't thought about till you raised it ,but the idea of having somebody know how to work in an office or to be good on the telephone and all that. I mean, this is something you found you really had to teach.*

SPROTT: Yes, very definitely, and I believe they're probably still to this day teaching it. But one of the things that we began to do when I became dean was to move that program, as we did with consular training, away from being a lecture kind of program, where people were lectured at, or typing courses, although we maintained some typing. We were still teaching shorthand at that point as well, because that was still required as a part of the promotion process among Foreign Service secretaries. We trained both Foreign Service secretaries and Civil Service secretaries in clerical work. But we tried to move it from being a lecture, theoretical kind of discussion, to one in which the person taking the course actually did the kind of work they were going to have to do in the office, ranging from filing things, getting some sense for filing systems and the requirements for filing systems. Doing cables, both from the Washington point of view as well as from overseas, getting the sense for what clearances were and how to go about doing some of those, and you had to learn how to use the reproduction systems then that were still not at all what we have today. So they had to go through and learn how to use those things and become fairly proficient in their use. And we wanted to do that so that it wasn't boring and terrible but as a part of another exercise, and so we began developing them [programmed learning activities].

Hattie Colton, at that time, was the head of that division. She brought a large amount of imagination to this, and we spent a lot of time. We found ways to get her money and develop really some first-rate programs.

*Q: Talking about clerical help, do you have a sense of where people were coming from? I'm told at one time that the State Department was getting quite a few people, say, from West Virginia. Later, staff recruiting was much more Washington, DC, and you had, frankly, a difference in work ethic. Was there this sort of shift and did any problems from this?*

SPROTT: Well, I have to differentiate between the Foreign Service and the civil service in this case. I'm not sure that I noticed any major change in the kinds of people that were brought in, that is from where they were brought in, regions or cities, that were brought in on the Foreign Service side. On the civil service side, the competition locally, or in this region, for clerical help was such that the government just simply didn't pay what the private sector was paying, and as a result of that, we very often—because we weren't competitive on that level—we weren't necessarily getting the most competent of people coming into the government, in at least the Department of State.

*Q: Well, let's take a walk sort of through each one of these. During this six-year period, '75 to '81, on the clerical side, how did you move with the changing of times and bringing people up to—*

SPROTT: That's why; first of all, we became much more hands-on. We got people involved in actually doing the work with a purpose, so you didn't have separate subjects; you brought the subjects together, so that if you were doing cables you were also teaching people how to correct, edit, and to proofread, and if we were asking somebody to write something, you also taught them to make sure that they had the English part of it, and when they didn't, you tried to bring their attention to that. Those people from those areas, DC, that I don't mind saying has had very poor records of producing competent, competitive people, for the most part, on average, out of their schools. So that if you were getting—

*Q: The school system's been a disaster, unfortunately, for some years.*

SPROTT: Right, and about 1975, OPM stopped giving the test, the typing test and the other tests that were required for entry into the government service, which we had relied on for years. Well, I'm not sure that it did much good because a lot of the schools knew that test and gave it to people in the classroom so that they had it practically memorized when they would come in to take it from someplace, so I'm not sure it did any good anyhow.

But the point here is that you had a lot of competition for the highly skilled people. We weren't competitive as the government in general and as the Department of State in particular, and as a result of that we were not getting the best of secretarial and clerical personnel in those days. I don't know about today.

*Q: Well, were you sort of tasked with the idea of trying to bring people of lesser caliber—I mean as far as what their competitiveness—up to the proper skills?*

SPROTT: I think what we were trying to do, without judging their qualities, that is, their intelligence or their ability to learn, was to try to bring their skill level up to one in which they could be competitive within the Department of State and function effectively within the Department. There are some great success stories: so far as Hattie Colson was able, she did for a while, taught people how to dress, because there was even a period where people would not know how to properly dress for an office. I'm not sure that that would go over very well today, but in those days that was very important. We thought a lot of that in those days. But that was the purpose, to bring that skill level up, where those skills were weak, and in the case of shorthand that was obvious, you do that, but in the case of typing, basic office manners and office skills, telephone techniques and customer services—that was something in some cases you had to do more work than in other cases. Foreign Service tended to get more experienced people, generally speaking better educated people, and that, for the most part, was less of a problem. But, there was still some room for improvement there in some cases.

*Q: On the consular side, how was that going?*

SPROTT: Okay, consular training I think we may have talked a little bit about in one of our earlier sessions, but I think what we tried to do, and did do, very successfully there was create a whole new approach to consular training which was, again, hands-on, very much trying to create an environment not dissimilar to what they would be finding when they went overseas, based upon actual cases that drew upon the laws and regulations—and I think that's ConGen Rosslyn. And it's proven to be immensely successful and highly supported, and I think, as I pointed out earlier, it was because of the imagination of John Kaufmann. His imagination is what conceptualized that, and I think together then we were able to convince people and find the money to create it, and then Consular Affairs, Assistant Secretary Barbara Watson and others, had the daring to let us drop the old system of teaching consular training and phase in this new one, which had promise but nobody had ever done anything like it, so they had no sense for sure of just how well it would work. Right off the bat, the first time around, it worked better than anything we'd had before.

*Q: On economic training, we've talked about this somewhat, how was that going?*

SPROTT: Well, economics training had then moved. It was at this point now a 26-week course and incorporated some specific training on doing commercial work as a separate area, and we were beginning then to introduce computers as a part of the process, of supporting the analytical process, I should say, in an economic section, especially back here in Washington. So those were kind of the major changes. There were some changes in direction and some of content. There was a little bit more emphasis on some of the institutional arrangements that were then beginning to play more of a role—a little more emphasis, for example, on the World Bank and the IMF and some of those institutions

and some of the international organizations, including GATT at that time, now WTO, and so on. So there was a little bit more institutional stuff in it, but basically that course remained essentially the same. It was tinkering more than major substantive change.

*Q: I've read some books that university economics was highly theoretical, I mean lots of statistics and analysis and all, but little pertinence to somebody in the field. Did you find that there was a growing separation between your practical training and some of the universities?*

SPROTT: Well, as an economist, now speaking as an economist, there has always been and remains today a big difference between theoretical economics instruction, or economics instruction in the theory in the university, and applied economics, as it's taught in, let's say, a business school or even some economics department which are less concerned about the theory. But in the government side, there's always, too, been a big difference between the theoreticians on the outside, generally speaking in the academic world, and the people who apply economics to policy matters. So that distinction has kind of always been there, and there's always been a problem with people even talking to each other, in many cases.

It's not dissimilar, oddly enough, I think, to what you find to a degree in the political science area. You get some major differences. Part of it is language; part of it is focus. You have to be somewhat more pragmatic in the field when you're trying to implement policy and trying to meld the theoretical structures that you think and believe strongly should work, but you've got to mold them to reality to implement the policy, and things just don't always fit that way. As a result of that, I think the practitioner becomes more pragmatic, less theoretical, at least in appearance, even though there's a strong theory base. So, no, the short answer is I don't think it grew. I think it's always been there. I don't think that's changed.

*Q: I'm aware that there are various schools of economics, for example, the Chicago School and other sort of schools and theories associated with them which would have pertinence on how one would recommend we approach certain problems and countries. Did we tend in this time to fall within, would you say, one of the schools or approaches?*

SPROTT: We tried to present all of those approaches for the simple reason, without trying to get mired down into the correctness of one over the other or even into great depth of one or the other. But, you have to go back to what the basic purpose of the course was. It was not to make theoreticians out of the people. It was to instead make sure that they were able to grasp basic economic principles, to ask questions in a way that could yield answers that they could then act on in an economics environment or on economic policy issues. So the questions, with regard to, let's say, a Chicago School-type issue, which might be finance, wouldn't be any different than it would be to, say, Berkeley School, which would be considered to be more liberal and less market-oriented, more control or management of the economy-oriented. But the answer might be different between those two schools, so that if the question is how do you stabilize the monetary system or growth within an economy. Well, the monetarists in the Chicago School would

focus, relatively speaking, more on the money side or the financial side and the market system being open and functioning, and the Berkeley School would focus more on the controls and management of the instruments that could be used to ensure that that happened. So the question might be the same, but the answers would be different. They needed to understand the two differences and to be able to apply those. That's what we were after, more than "Were they of the Chicago School or of another school?"

*Q: Our economic officers are so closely entwined with aid efforts and often they're in the same section in embassies. Were we trying to teach any way to judge whether projects worked or not, or was that not part of our approach?*

SPROTT: Well, I think whether or not a particular project worked or not is one issue; whether or not a set of projects would meet the need for the economy might have been something the two of them would discuss; but the details of the project itself would have been something they would have left to AID. Part of the problem with the Foreign Service, the Department of State, is not project oriented. On the policy side, they certainly would have had discussions about direction, kinds of instruments that might have been the most useful kinds of projects that could support those instruments, and so on. I think there could be some good positive give and take, and very often was, and we certainly tried to help. Remember, there were AID people who were in this economics course as well as State people, so they were learning this subject matter together. When they went to the field, they would have certainly a good basis for talking to each other and for dealing with each other on projects and programs. But I think where AID and State would move apart and have less to talk about with each other was when you got into the details and the evaluation or assessment of the projects themselves.

*Q: Some pundits, and maybe even people in State, suggest that an awful lot of our AID efforts in the long run have not proved very successful. I was wondering whether there was an attempt to build up a template—which is always a policy thing, which maybe means a State Department thing—of coming up with an overlay of saying this is how we judge how a country's coming along, by looking at it, you know, ten years ago and where it's gone now and where it seems to be going and all that. Was there any effort to do that?*

SPROTT: There certainly was, not only by us but AID had a major program that they laid out during this same time frame, that is, the late '70's and into the '80's, trying to do the same thing. Part of the problem was that nobody really has the answers as to how to go about effectively managing the growth and development of a country, and they're two different issues today, although back in this time, as a group, a lot of people didn't differentiate between growth and development. They tended to presume that the two were one and the same, and they're not.

We tended in those days not to differentiate as carefully and as clearly as we do today the institutional arrangements for the development of a society that can provide the foundation for the stable growth of an economy, and I think that led to some of the problems. We tended to be capital-intensive, we tended to do things that were



obvious—dams and roads are the most obvious things that I can think of offhand. There was a lot of that going on. How much of that took place for political reasons? That is, the Cold War was on, and how much of it was, therefore, display, and for the reasons that had more to do with the competition between nations in the Cold War context, versus how much of it was economics—really based on some sound economic thinking—is another issue. I think it's a little of both, and I think in some countries it was more one than the other.

In some countries, I think there was a clear unquestioned need for capital base that needed to be developed. There was a need for an infrastructure of highways and communications systems, of medical facilities and educational systems—and I say educational systems, because if you've got different levels. There are different kinds, the academic as well as the technical which would create your technical people, blue-collar workers and so on that were needed to support manufacturing and distribution systems. Clearly that was needed and nobody could really argue about it. Just putting a road or communications system in or building the dams didn't guarantee that businesses would follow as quickly as needed nor be as well managed as they needed to be or as profitable, in order to maintain and grow the economy as one presumed would develop automatically if the roads [other capital investments] were created.

I think part of that is our fault, that is, the theoreticians' fault, the people who thought they knew a lot about development and it turns out they didn't know a lot. It's interesting today, 1998, that one of the Nobel Prize winners is an Indian from India whose contribution was the identification of the barriers to taking people from poverty into viable living conditions and just identifying those barriers. This is 1998. He did this work over the last, let's say, 20 years. That would take us back to 1970. We're talking about a period earlier, then, and the bulk of our major investments in aid took place in these earlier years, from the post-World War II to the 1970's, we probably spent more money during that period on development than in any other period.

The one thing that I think that we might have more usefully taken advantage of during this period, and we tried to introduce a little bit of that in the economics course—I'm never sure whether we did it right or not—that is anthropology. We didn't in a lot of cases really understand the cultures within which we were working. We tended to presume that our Western culture--our marketing system, our concept of markets, and our concepts of transportation, communication-- in many cases minus the cultural context that go with that, in the countries that we were dealing with. . . . But those had a big bearing on the success of projects and the way in which people would act or function. We tended to presume that if we created a legal system that was similar to ours or to the Western system, that it would be followed. I think that has been proven not true in a lot of cases, and part of that's for cultural reasons. We didn't look at those issues and try to bring them into the equation or our analysis of what should be done and at what speed and in what way.

*Q: I'm struck by the idea as a training organization FSI is just a small cog. The people who are doing economic policy in the main building of the Department of State are very*

*busy doing it. The only place where you can have people free to question and say maybe we ought to add a little something or look over here at anthropology or something like that—about the only place you could do this would be in Policy Planning, which has really not been a viable organization for that; so it's kind of you or nobody. Did you feel this burden?*

SPROTT: Yes, well, I think we did. Whether we addressed it well or properly is another issue. I'm not sure we did, frankly. I think the Department tried to address part of this when it set up some of economic offices within the regional bureaus and tried at one point to try to use that as a vehicle for combining the analysis of aid, financial or other institutional issues, and trying to get the political and cultural in there too. But I'm not sure that ever worked well either. It perhaps worked better in some regional bureaus than in others and at some times better than others. But we're still making these mistakes. You just look at Somalia and Yugoslavia, or what used to be Yugoslavia, and so on, and we still have these issues that are out there.

*Q: Yes, and some of them aren't really open to real answers.*

SPROTT: Yes, exactly, certainly not answers that could be achieved within the normal context of the expectations of the typical AID mission, which is five to ten years. I don't know whether I've used this example when we talked about Chile or not, but Chile, to me, had one of the perfect experiments in AID, perfect in the sense that it demonstrated the viability of certain kinds of programs, it demonstrated the effectiveness of them, and it demonstrated the very positive results that could come from the assistance—but it was one of the most negative, in the sense that it also told you how long it took to do some of these—and this was a program set up by AID, funded by AID, that was over a 15-year period, at least 15 years to the time I got there, by the time I left there certainly, 1970-71. The University of California at Berkeley and the University of Chicago both had teams that spent time in Chile working with groups of economists and the universities there. The Universidad Católica was teamed with University of Chicago, and the University of Chile with the University of California at Berkeley. There is no question they developed a large number of very competent and effective economists and people for the business sector—no doubts about that whatsoever—but it took that long for them to begin to have an impact on the government, to begin getting into the government itself and to have an effect.

*Q: And there, of course, you speak of that time, and Chile was probably the most European—it and Argentina were the most European of the whole Latin American—*

SPROTT: Exactly, and they had the highest literacy rate; they had very good infrastructure, relatively speaking. They had everything going for them, and it still took that long, and their motivation would have been a positive factor.

*Q: Over on the political side, I suspect nobody would be trying to train the equivalent to political officers.*

SPROTT: It's interesting, because I think some of the most interesting courses that were done in the political area were done by two characters—I may have mentioned them earlier—two characters I call them now; I mean that in the most positive sense; I would count them both as friends—Paul Kattenburg and John Bowling. My understanding is that John Bowling came to the Institute because of some memos he had written, strictly internal and appropriate, encouraging a different approach to the population policy in India; that was not considered politically correct thing to do at that point, in other words, arguing with policy. At that time, about the same time, Paul Kattenburg was arguing against—again, strictly in-house, no openness, nothing outside the proper guidelines at all—some of our policies in Vietnam. And both of them were placed in FSI at that time. They took the move very positively and did something very good with it. Both of them, at least Paul already had his Ph.D.; John may have gotten it subsequent to that but had already done a lot of work on his Ph.D. if I'm wrong on that, or he came with it. Anyway, they both great imaginations and volubility argued with each other, over how to develop political officers, how to develop political reporting officers with analytical capability—and that's the word they put in the program: we need good, solid political reporting, but it needs to be analytically based. So they set out to try to create courses that were that way, and that's where you got some of the programs that are, I'll bet, still being used at the Institute today in the Junior Officer Program and some of the others—the creation of some simulation exercises based on hypothetical countries, in which officers were asked in teams or individually within the environment of the classroom to act as political reporting officers. They did some of that. I think that tradition they set—that would have been back in . . . probably they were doing this '68-69-70, somewhere in that time frame. I think that pattern, then, followed on with others who ran the political division afterwards. To that was added negotiations, because it became eminently clear that there weren't enough officers who understood the process of negotiations; that it's a continuous process, and not just a snapshot kind of thing that you do whenever somebody calls for a negotiation time and you start at 9 o'clock on Thursday morning and you end at 11 o'clock. There's a whole process that's involved here.

That's when we began also to develop a greater concern about and began to teach courses in multilateral diplomacy, because, if you remember, back in this period is when multilateral diplomacy became increasingly important. It may have been important before, but for whatever the reason, the Department didn't see it as being the critical issue for its officers to have some knowledge of these things. Part of that may have been that a lot of the officers who helped create the multilateral institutions were by then, in the '70's and the '80's, beginning to retire and they weren't around anymore and so you lacked the historical perspective that they had. That may have been part of the issue. It may have been that we had, by this time, begun to expand our role in a lot of these institutions. They were themselves growing, and the relationship they had with others, including ourselves, was changing and we felt the need for that.

I think we were at this point beginning to get more involved in the creation of more international agreements that we were going to have to live with. Certainly arms control issues and trade issues were on the front burner a good part of this time frame. So those were all reasons for wanting to get more into multilateral diplomacy. But having said all

that, the problem with political training all along is that the typical political officer does not believe they need training. In many ways, political officers are kind of loners and certainly in the early part of their career, most of the work they do is almost scholastic in its nature, and for them to think that they need to have special training for doing the kind of research or meeting the people and the networking that they do just was totally out of their normal range of thinking. And I think that was true of those who managed political officers, including deputy secretaries and –

*Q: I never was really a political officer, but I found myself acting as one from time to time, and it was just there you are, you figure out what to do.*

SPROTT: Well, I may have said this before, too, but they are almost the epitome of the Jeffersonian gentleman in the sense that Jefferson maintained that supposedly a gentleman was able to learn whatever was necessary at the time that it was needed; you didn't have to spend lots of time learning much more than the basic framework that would permit you to do that. And I think they saw themselves as that kind of a person. The problem is—that may have worked in a much more simple world, but in this world in which things are moving much more rapidly, technologically as well as sociologically, in terms of communications, interaction with each other—reliance on the past isn't sufficient, any more. So you needed to learn more about it. But we had great trouble getting people into political training courses until a problem arose-- every once in a while some ambassador, some prominent ambassador, would note to the Secretary or the Secretary would for some reason focus in on the bad reporting that had been done on some particular issue—then a message would come down saying we need to train political officers on this or that kind of reporting issues. So we would have a drive to train a large number of officers, and that would kind of die out after a period of time.

*Q: The normal place, one would think, that you would turn to for political training would be university political science. But my sampling of political science during this time and up to this day, suggests that it is often highly theoretical, and I find, incomprehensible. I've found that if I pick up a book and it's got a lot of charts in it, I throw it away because I know that the language is not the one I understand.*

SPROTT: Well, for the most part, political science during that time—and I can't speak for today's academic world—for the most part wasn't dealing with institutions. Again, it was institutions that were driving a lot of these issues. Mind you, economists weren't either, but we're talking now about political scientists, and I think the theoretical side in the academic world of political science was even more distant from the pragmatic world of political reporting, and the political reporting officers' needs, than the economics was. At least the questions were the same in economics, but not so much so in the political field. They were going way out into fields that were totally unrelated to what a practitioner [academic political scientist] would be doing. Historians probably would have had more to say and been of more value to the political officer than the political science departments during this period.

*Q: Did you have any contact? I read a book which I thought was very important, and I notice Richard Holbrooke makes reference to it, and that's called Thinking in Time, by Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, which was how to approach a problem—in other words, learn the history of the problem and really in a step-by-step way of looking at problems so that you're not, as we say, reinventing the wheel but also understanding what are similarities to the present situation and what are the differences and how to tell them apart. Were you able to tap into things of that nature?*

SPROTT: Yes, there was certainly an attempt to do that, and it was done well or not so well depending on who was running the courses, frankly. If you were able to get people who understood this concept and the need for that kind of an approach then you had good courses. Certainly John Bowling and Paul Kattenburg would fall under that category, and there are others that one could name that did that. In later times, when we created the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs we began running games—one of the purposes of the Center was to run games and to do simulation exercises around policy issues—one of the primary purposes of which was to do exactly what you're describing -- to take the given issue, but looking at it as it is imbedded in the history of that situation, to determine how you can move from where you are in that situation to some future that you're seeking to or would like to see come as a result.

I think trying to develop the anatomy of that, if you will, both the processes as well as the structure itself, was something the Center was trying to do initially. It may still be. I'm not up with what they're doing now, but that certainly was part of the focus. In that way make both that process of doing these games and simulations of practical useful to policy makers but also of value to the student who was learning how to go about doing the reporting and analysis, because it gave them both a context and a structure for doing the analysis. Many cases were generalizable to different regions and countries and even in some case to different kinds of problems. So I think, yes, the answer is that there was an attempt to do that, but I don't think we had—I don't remember people having—the kind of academic support for that kind of approach that you would have had, let's say, in the economics area or might have had even in the legal area, frankly.

*Q: Well, I mean the profession of political officer was pretty damn close to being unique—a newspaper reporter to a certain extent, and that's not quite it, but there is a certain similarity between the two occupations.*

SPROTT: Yes, but even if that might have been more valuable then than it is today, the problem today is that what's really telling in the political analysis field within the Foreign Service is that very often it's not just CNN—the CNN effect, we keep saying this—but others.

*Q: CNN is television up-to-date news report.*

SPROTT: Right, and they're right on the spot, and they've got people doing all kinds of analysis. Well, how accurate is that analysis? In a lot of cases, we're not getting or doing that kind of analysis at all, and is that the only viewpoint? Now just as a parenthetical

comment, to me, one of the biggest mistakes we've made as a government is not making full utilization of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS. I thought, I still think, FBIS plays or could play an absolutely critical role because here you can have, today in almost soft copy—that is you can almost get it on your computer—instantaneously the copy from television, radio, and newsprint, and not only one point of view but several points of view on a given happening, and you can get that all at once. What I saw—I happened to have a FBIS operation in Swaziland when I was there, which I thought was a wonderful operation—but I very often would see reports coming in the cable traffic out of one or another of the southern African countries that FBIS was doing work on, that were almost straight copy out of the FBIS reports. They weren't FBIS reports but FBIS was transmitting what was in the newspaper or on the TV and the radio, and if you read the FBIS report and then read some of these analytical political reports that were done, for which the embassy took credit, they were really reports out of one of those other sources. And that's a waste of time and it demonstrates, I think, the bankruptcy of the analytical process in the political reporting field.

I could say the same thing about economics now, mind you, because I think in many cases we spend time analyzing information that is provided digitally, certainly in Western Europe, and you can be very sure of that in, say, London, almost simultaneously as it is to everyone in England; and we spend time taking that in the mission in London, analyzing it, and then sending the analysis over, when it could be just as easily analyzed here, maybe less costly, too, because it costs \$150,000 at least for every employee we have overseas.

*Q: What about the administrative side, being the other sort of four-legged stool or fifth-legged stool—clerical, consular, administrative, economic, and political?*

SPROTT: Administrative training is driven by law, to a degree, like consular training, and therefore it was easier to get people into that training. The difficulty with admin training was finding a way to make the training interesting, and along the lines of what we did finally with consular work, we wanted to try to do the same thing in admin, because, for example, contracting or procurement or the budget and fiscal aspects, to just read the regulations and to follow them was inadequate and terribly boring and difficult. So the idea was to try to get away from that approach and to move it into doing the actual work. So beginning around 1976—well, let's see, maybe a little later than that—about 1977-78, somewhere in that time frame I'd guess. Let's see, we opened ConGen Rosslyn in 1978. It took us about two years to really get that going and up—a little less, give or take a little time—but about that same time we were beginning to do the same thing in admin training, but with greater difficulty because it was harder to get people who could conceptualize the admin field and who could then translate that conception into practical courses. And the problem with the field is that so much of it is unique to government—it's not something you teach in the university. We didn't teach accounting. They still don't teach accounting, nor really do they teach bookkeeping. What they teach is government books and how to maintain those books and how to follow government procedures. So the idea was to try to find some way to do that, so we spent a fair amount of time on that and with some support from people like John Thomas, who was assistant

secretary for administration, and followed by him various other assistant secretaries with more or less attention to it and concern about training. What did, kind of every year, drive that is the annual inspection reports around the world that would invariably come up with a problem in the admin area—improper contracting, somebody goes to jail because they stole money or somebody stole money from the embassy coffers, or some kind of activity that was illegal or incorrect, which would be called to our attention and cause us to develop a course for that. So we did get driven in the admin training, and the attempt, as I think I pointed out earlier, was to try to move admin training into the same kind of training as for consular to have an Admin Rosslyn like ConGen Rosslyn simulation, and eventually to have them work together. For example, a consular officer carrying out his responsibilities will very often need to set up trust funds to support prisoners and to provide food and clothing to those prisoners, and it's the admin section on which they would have to draw in order to do those things. And the admin section had to understand the kinds of constraints a consular section was going to have to work under in carrying out their responsibilities required by law. So there is some interaction; there were two sides of the coin, and the idea was to try to develop those. I'm sorry to say in the years I was there, we were really never successful in getting that completed, but I think that was the direction we moved and we did accomplish quite a bit of it. I think budget and fiscal training now, procurement, general admin, general services are all very much interactive learning—the people are actually doing the work—the only thing is that they're not all pulled together in to one large admin section where they're interacting amongst each nor interacting with ConGen.

*Q: Well, the last one of these was the basic officer course, which is the A-100.*

SPROTT: The A-100 course.

*Q: This is the initial recruitment, basic training if you will. We've spent a great deal of trouble getting this corps of young officers in, at the time what were some of your ideas?*

SPROTT: We tried to do several things there and to, again, start the people off on the right foot by, first of all, helping them see what the whole environment in which they were going to be working was like. And this was more or less successful depending on the interagency functioning because when we had USIA as an integral part of that course, and where you had proper support both in USIA and in the junior officer side of the Department of State, you had the two sets of officers learning well together, learning about each other well, and I think you created an environment, a situation, in which those officers left the orientation program and went to the field and worked well with each other subsequently. During those periods—and it varied, again, for the reasons I've already pointed out—when we didn't have a USIA officer in the junior officer program the course was lessened because the officers ended up getting only a view of State from State by State for State, and it left them, I think, wanting, no matter what we tried to do within the program itself because we were still State.

But we tried, nonetheless, to make that course a more practical course. There were exercises that were introduced so that they began to engage in doing things that were

related to what they would be doing subsequently, such as reporting exercises and so on, and those were changed, and some of them were built upon the programs I mentioned earlier in political training and economic training. There was an attempt to get them more knowledgeable about how to manage their relationship upward with their superiors as well as horizontally with other agencies and with peers, a kind of beginning or introduction to management, in a way, but in this sense trying to get them to grasp it themselves. And some introduction of negotiations so they begin to see a context or a process within which they, as junior officers, would be working, so they didn't get the near-sightedness or tunnel vision. We try to help them not get that at any rate by giving them this larger context. There are probably some other changes that I can't think of right now, but that was basically it.

*Q: One of the things that I've been concerned with, and it's what we're doing with this program, is developing a sense of history for the Foreign Service. We'd probably get the history from the scholars without too much trouble, but to impart a Foreign Service esprit de corps, a feeling of professionalism and all that. Were you able to offer the idea that, you know, fellows, girls, you're now in a really fine profession, a lot of people have given their lives, worked hard, made the United States what it is today in the world?*

SPROTT: That was certainly done, and I would argue that it was done, again, better or worse depending upon the individual presenters, and we tried to make sure there was more than one presenter that would do these things. As you well know, some people will come in with a perspective that is so self-oriented that it really defeats the purpose, even though they have the knowledge that if they conveyed it could be very useful. I'm not sure we were always successful, but the answer is we tried to do that and tried to do it by people coming in. Later, as I became deputy director and worked with others, what we did was begin the process of having mentors for each of the classes, which I believe is still going on—I know is still going on—and was, I think, also very successful, at least initially, as I watched it, because you had a well-chosen person who had been an ambassador but who could communicate and who *volunteered* to work with these officers, sometimes more than one of them, depending on the size of the class, in a way that that person not only personally conveyed by their own presence and experience a lot of that tradition, but were able to convey to them the history that had impacted on them, with some pride, and what they might do to pursue that.

But, you know, part of the problem is that you have a large number of officers coming into the Service today who don't have the same kind of commitment to a career, whether it's Foreign Service or any other career, that we would have seen coming into the Service in the decades of the '40's, the '50's, or even the '60's. Their commitment is totally different. In many cases, they view this as a job. They may be professional in a sense, but they see this as only one of many jobs they're going to hold over a period of a larger career. And therefore, their commitment, their sense of loyalty, is a lot different. So this doesn't work quite the same in certainly the late '80's and '90's.

*Q: I don't know what the figures are—I think I heard our Director General of the Foreign Service say not too long ago that actually the drop-out rate was not much higher*



*now than it was earlier, I mean, several decades ago. The people come in without the commitment, but once they get hooked in the business, they don't leave as easily as, you know, they thought they would.*

SPROTT: But you also have a different promotion system that lets them, once they are tenured, to spend 20 years in the Service, whereas 30 years ago you didn't have that system, and the nature of that competition was much different, I think. So I'm not sure how valid that really is. It also may be a statement about maybe the breakdown of the efficiency report system, too, which is really a promotion report rather than a performance report.

*Q: Well, during this time, as you were dealing across the board, this was also—*

SPROTT: Could I just say one more thing about the Junior Officer Program that we might want to talk about later when we talk about the construction of the new campus—this concept of history and the impact of history on what we do today as well as a lot of our other cultural variables or indicators. We try to have a way to introduce those in the campus, too, and we can talk about that later.

*Q: All right, let's keep this in mind. During this '75 to '81 period, we're talking about, really, the Carter years for the most part, too, and there was great emphasis on racial, gender equality and not only equality but a little extra boost for people who were of an ethnic minority or female. Did this impact on your training in that you had to take this into consideration at all?*

SPROTT: The place it would have been most noticeable... was probably language training. Some of the clerical training we did take that into consideration, because in the clerical field there were some noticeable differences. Junior officers, in some cases there were minority junior officers who did not have adequate English.

*Q: They were brought in on a special program.*

SPROTT: That's right, and in which case we tried to provide them, either at the institute or through some outside source, with separate English instruction, and I believe, I can't speak for personnel, but my memory is that personnel sometimes delayed their movement overseas in order to give them some additional training during that period. But we're not talking large numbers. It was fairly small numbers of people that were ever involved in that in that sense, so that I can't say that those specific changes impacted that dramatically on what we did, but it did affect it and it did change our direction. It did make us more sensitive to the needs of people and try to find ways to adjust our courses so that we took those things into consideration rather than having a pat, you know, one presentation for all, we tried to find ways in which we could support people who needed the additional help in some cases.

*Q: University training. We put our people out for university training, which had been going on for years. It was a well-established program, but did we have any problems?*

*There was a different atmosphere on university campuses during the Vietnam War, pretty anti-Department of State particularly as well as military—did we have any particular problems in finding places to put people, or when they were there were there any difficulties or were there concerns about the thrust of some of the education people were getting on campuses?*

SPROTT: No, in fact, quite the contrary. The universities, I believe, or those that I worked with as dean and before that when I was managing the economics people who were going to university training, the universities that we dealt with were anxious to have our officers, in the first instance because they were going to be good students, with some few exceptions; secondly, they wanted them because they were excellent resources. They were more mature, though they were still young; they were in government and had a perspective on what was taking place there; and they were articulate and able to support positions and provide information to students. So they were a great resource, for the most part, in the universities to which we were sending people. Now, frankly, we didn't send people to a lot of universities. They tended to go to Harvard, Princeton, Cornell, a few to Stanford, University of California at Berkeley (very few, but a few). Those are the major places they went to, so these weren't places that were going to be seen as problems anyhow. In the Diplomats in Residence Program, that I later had under me when I became deputy director, we sent people to a larger number of schools, but again, I think that the officers themselves found it challenging, of great value and that they were looked upon as a resource. No, I wouldn't say there was an issue there.

Now, curriculum. Curriculum was always a problem, because universities were very unwilling to change their criteria for allowing officers into courses, that could sometimes be a problem, but we usually got around that in some fashion.

*Q: Who was the head of the FSI during the '75 to '81 period.*

SPROTT: Let's see. Bill Broderick was acting director, and Howard Sollenberger was director, certainly in '75, if I remember correctly [Editor's Note: Sollenberger retired as Director of FSI in 1976]. And then George Springsteen. I've just remembered him. George Springsteen must have been director in 1975. Yes, George Springsteen was director in 1975 [Editor's Note: George S Springsteen held the position of Director, Executive Secretariat, Office of the Secretary of State (S/S) from January 31, 1974 until July 14, 1976. He would have taken the FSI Directorship in 1976]. He was the one who made me dean of the School for Professional Studies. One of the reasons I'm now remembering is that he had to argue rather vociferously that I should be made dean even though I wasn't "pure" Foreign Service. I was then a Foreign Service reserve officer, and there has been a tradition that only FSOs, and very often that meant, even though people have forgotten it that not all FSOs took the exam, but that's what they really meant by it—only those people should be dean. Springsteen argued that I had demonstrated enough knowledge and ability to work in the other functions that he felt, with my overseas experience, that I should be dean. So that's who was director at that point, and then he was followed—it would have been in 1979-80 (Let's see, Carter went out in 1981, so it must have been 1980 he left)—and Paul Boeker was made director, and that was the

period when the 1980 Foreign Service Act was put into effect. Ben Reed was the undersecretary for management, and the drive was to try to create a new curriculum, a human resource development program we would call it today, for the Foreign Service and the Department of State that would match the Foreign Service Act. Given the character of the Foreign Service Act, which said that you're up or out, you make a selection into the Senior Foreign Service, and we had to prepare people to make that decision, and they had to get both experience in terms of assignments as well as training and so on. And so Paul Boeker came to the Institute, and that's what we spent his—I think he lasted. . . .

*Q: This is Tape 4, Side 1, with John Sprott.*

SPROTT: We were saying who was director of the Institute. I was saying Paul Boeker left in, I believe, early '81, April or so of '81. I was then deputy director of the Institute at that point, having made deputy director in, I think, December of 1981 or January of 1982, and then I became acting director until Steve Low came on board in April or May or June, somewhere in that time frame, of 1982, and he was there, again, until 1985.

*Q: What was your impression of how Springsteen and then Boeker dealt with the powers that be in the Department of State, because this is a battle for resources, you're talking about an institution that for the most part there isn't an awful lot of interest at the top level? I mean, I think George Shultz was probably the only one of any Secretary of State I can even think of who paid much attention to it, so it was a battle for resources and support and attitude. What was your feeling looking at them from a somewhat remove?*

SPROTT: Well, when George Springsteen came on board, he was appointed by Secretary Cyrus Vance, had the total support of the Secretary and the undersecretary for management, as near as I could tell the Deputy Secretary. He was very much in tune and very highly thought of. I think people also knew George as being a very honest, cantankerous at times, difficult person to deal with, but never somebody who would play games, so that if George said, "We need 10," we need 10. And you could bet your bottom dollar that the budget had been scrubbed to be sure it was only 10 that we needed. And I can remember very well going up against George for budget money for the School of Professional Studies. I remember doing it of the economics and commercial division, but then later when he made me dean going up to him for resources, he knew his numbers, and he knew also the relationship between the training activity and the operations in the Department and the people that were involved. He would question whether or not the right connections had been made and whether or not there was, therefore, the right support for the direction you were trying to go and ultimately whether there were going to be the students to meet what you were after. He knew enough about content, both reporting as well as policies, so that he could discuss that; and he brought it to the table so that when you were having a budget meeting or a planning meeting, it wasn't strictly numbers and budgets but it was the full context of the budget.

I think he was able to carry that back—I know that he was able to carry that back—to the leadership in the Department and successfully argue there for resources and he was able to carry that to the Hill, because on at least a couple of occasions I was with him when he presented on the Hill. But people changed, and I think Springsteen was not seen as

somebody that they wanted to head up the Institute, for whatever reason. I've never really known that full story, but something happened when, I think it was, Ben Reed came in and the new Director General of the Foreign Service at that time was Harry Barnes.

At any rate, something happened and Springsteen clearly was not in tune at that point, 1980-81-- not only did we get a new Foreign Service Act, but there was a new Civil Service Act as well. And that created the Senior Executive Service. George Springsteen was part of the Senior Executive Service, and he was given *x* number of days to take an assignment that they offered him and leave the FSI or retire from the Senior Executive Service. He chose to retire. He was old enough to retire, and he retired at that point.

So that was it. When Paul Boeker came in, he quite the contrary, came in with the support of those people, plus we had the new act, which carried with it some momentum for resources. So we had a good honeymoon with Paul. Paul was also more suave, or more able to negotiate or more able to work around issues and get people to accept his position. He was less the pusher in the direct way and much more a person who managed the process, much more patient, and I think Paul was able to get lots of resources started into the Institute, and that's how we were able to get things done. By the same token, while Springsteen was there, we got a lot done.

At some point when we want to talk about that and talk about language training, maybe at some point, it was George Springsteen with his deputy Carl Coon, that began to make the fundamental changes in the rest of the Institute that really begin to make it a much more viable institution and much more lively institution, one with a lot more imagination and a lot more concern for the students. And so we did a lot with him, and what he did bring was discipline that others had not done. George, with a lot of his failings, was a good manager; he was an excellent leader. He was a screamer, but I'd worked for Deane Hinton already at this point, and Deane Hinton was a screamer of screamers, if you will, but never mean in any way.

*Q: What about these, again in the time when you were doing Professional Studies, what about other foreign services and also American outfits like AT&T or other things that were sending people abroad—I mean, were we looked upon as somebody to go look at and was there an influence that was either from these other outfits that were sending people abroad either on us, or were we having an influence on those that went out during this period?*

SPROTT: About this period, I don't. . . . Later I think we were, very much, but not during this period while I was dean. Now none of the areas, other than the substantive areas we've described, there were no areas that I would have had direct impact on, except the commercial area. But they weren't particularly interested in ours, in learning what we knew about commerce. They felt we didn't know enough, so they were quite willing to teach us, but they didn't see that we had anything, including language training. Many of them didn't really understand language training, didn't want it to begin with, and if they did they thought they had Berlitz or something like that.

*Q: What about the foreign governments? Were they looking at us?*

SPROTT: There was always a request from foreign governments for training in the Institute in every field, some more intensely than others, as you can imagine. It's been a fairly common request over the years for the Chinese, the Taiwanese, as well as Mainland China, and a few others, to ask to take our consular course, the full consular course. We have consistently refused to do that. We have not allowed foreign people to take our programs as they stand, at least while I was there, with one exception, two exceptions perhaps, where there was an agreement made with the queen of Holland, I think, and another later with the Germans that was made by the secretaries of State for some reason, and that agreement led to our having an individual, where we exchanged Foreign Service officers, and we would send one there and they would let him work in the ministry and stuff like that, and we were supposed to receive one in our country. And that worked for a few years and then did kind of finally, I think, died. And the part of the problem was that we couldn't allow people into some of the secure areas or into some of the subjects in some of the instruction that would have involved discussions of our policy that would have been treated as secure information. And so it didn't turn out probably as well as some would have liked it to turn out.

But other than that, during that period, while I was the dean of the School of Professional Studies, there was no actual training of foreigners other than Foreign Service nationals, which we did develop some programs for Foreign Service nationals during this period in consular training and admin training, in economics, and in the commercial area, and a little bit for clerical, which didn't get very far because we didn't have the money to fund it. And I'm missing somebody. But those programs we created both to take overseas for Foreign Service national as well as to bring Foreign Service nationals to this country for instruction. Those were very successful and, I think, had a good positive impact on Foreign Service nationals. Consular training has always gotten good support on that, and very often the regional conferences overseas either included Foreign Service national or a separate session was held for Foreign Service nationals from the region.

*Q: Did you find, I would suspect, more support from the Consular Bureau for what you were doing and very strong support, and then sort of modest support from the Economic Bureau, and I don't know about administrative. And there isn't really a political bureau equivalent to the Consular Bureau.*

SPROTT: I would say, as long as Frances Wilson was Executive Director in the Economics Bureau, we had strong support from the Economics Bureau. The strong support of consular training varied with the assistant secretary, but for the most part we had good assistant secretaries and good support. Those below the assistant secretary for the Consular Bureau have always supported the training at FSI and have always provided funding, in some cases without questioning—

*Q: As a professional consular officer, we know you have to have it. I mean, there's no ifs, ands, and buts.*

SPROTT: And you appreciate it, and you're willing to take lots of different kinds of training, including management training. In admin, I think when John Thomas was there we got good support, and it fell down thereafter. It has varied, from time to time, depending on problems or issues that arose in the field. It was problem oriented more than anything else. But you're probably right; it was sporadic. Economic training, though, I have to say, there was almost no support for it if the assistant secretary was not behind it, and there have been years in which the assistant secretary lacked any knowledge at all about the course—all too many years. And as a result of that I think you end up with both a recruitment process as well as a support for the program that is weakened over the long haul.

Okay, I think that's probably true of secretarial training and clerical training. We've had to argue for the support for that on a fairly consistent basis, but fortunately, it's not expensive, so it's pretty hard to not give a little bit in that direction. Fortunately, secretaries are well enough placed that they can argue with their superiors.

Who are we missing? Political. No support. There is no political program. Nobody even believes in it. In fact, I've had senior managers in the Department argue that any political officer that needed training didn't belong in the Foreign Service—say that, out loud. And at least one of them is still in the Service. I think as long as you have that attitude it's not going to go. Now the exception would be language training, but then they would say that obviously the officer knows that. But you're right. The other area where we need training desperately and need it in my opinion in a coherent way throughout the Service, throughout the careers of the officers, is general management training, but unfortunately, until the Department decides that it wants to reward good management, which it doesn't do today, I'm not sure that the training is as effective as it could be—but it's still better than nothing if we required people to do it, but we don't, sadly. As a result you end up with too many bureaus and too many missions that are poorly managed. You've got people who absolutely couldn't manage their way out of a paper bag who are put in management positions. You've seen them, I'm sure you have. Consular officers probably have a better record of being good managers than almost anybody else. GSOs maybe come next. And then you begin to go right downhill after that. Economic officers I would put almost uniformly with the political officers as, generally speaking, not good managers.

*Q: And these are, of course, the ones who end up in the major management positions.*

SPROTT: Exactly, and they're the ones who perpetuate all the problems we've just talked about or we've mentioned throughout these interviews.

*Q: Well, in '81 or early '82 you moved to be deputy director.*

SPROTT: What happened was Carlton Coon was deputy director of the Institute under George Springsteen. Carl Coon left the Institute, I will say, probably sometime 1980, I guess, and Jack Matlock, later ambassador to Russia became the deputy director of the Institute still under Springsteen at that point. Okay, now and we're going into . . .

(Springsteen leaves, Boeker becomes the new director, Matlock is still there. I think I have the sequence just about right. Matlock then leaves to become appointed as ambassador to Czechoslovakia [September 1981] And at the same time—I'm still dean—we had the national presidential election in November 1980 and Haig later became the new Secretary of State, when Reagan took office [January 1981].)

Carlton Coon was made head of the Department's transition team to face off with the political transition team of the incoming administration. Carl picked myself, Mark Grossman, the current assistant secretary for European Affairs [August 1997-May 2000] — he earlier was ambassador to Turkey [January 1995-June 1997 and Tony Wayne. Anyhow, they were both young officers. Mark coming out of NSC, there was a desire to try to make him look good and clean and didn't get tarred by the Carter Administration. A junior officer you didn't want that done to. Those two, myself, and a person (Jeanne Ronchetti) who about five years later becomes my wife. But we became the transition team from about the beginning of December 1980 through probably mid-February, to the end of February. And at that point Matlock had gone, and Brian Atwood was sent to the Institute to try to keep him from being tarnished. He was in H (Bureau of Legislative Affairs) [Editor's Note: Atwood was Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs from August 1979 to January 1981] from at that point. At any rate, what they decided to do, Paul Boeker decided to do, was to make Brian dean of the School of Professional Studies and move me up to be Deputy Director. So that's how I became Deputy Director, and it provided a means by which Brian could get, if you will, frankly, saved. And they needed a deputy anyhow. I was continuity. There had long been the opinion that there needed to be, given the rate at which directors of the Institute change and the lack of knowledge that the average director has of training or education processes, there was the long-held belief that the deputy ought to be somebody who had those qualifications. I certainly had them, I guess, and so that reinforced that opinion. So that's one of the reasons I was made deputy. And there were probably others that I was not aware of, but at any rate the Department approved that. It would have been January-February 1982.

*Q: How long did you have that job?*

SPROTT: How long did I have that Deputy Director job? Until I left at the end of 1993, so through 1993 or the beginning of 1994.

*Q: How did the new Reagan Administration impact on the FSI?*

SPROTT: Actually, it was positive for reasons that first of all we had some good under secretaries for management. There was one undersecretary for management, who may well turn out to be one of the best we've had in recent history, by the name of Ronald Spiers [Editor's Note: Ambassador Spiers was Under Secretary for Management from November 1983-May 1989]. Ron, had a good sense for the need for training, even though he probably, I think he's a political cone officer by background. He understood the need for management and I think he is one who saw the need to ensure that officers of the future had that mix, and so he was supportive. Secretary Haig was supportive, when you could get his attention.

*Q: But he was from West Point, which is, you know, the military, of any part of the government, believes in training.*

SPROTT: Other than Shultz, Haig spent more time at the Institute, and even including Shultz, probably spent more time at the Institute talking to people, than any other Secretary of State since I've been in the Department.

*Q: In history.*

SPROTT: Because he was interested, because we could get his attention on some of these issues, he talked to the Senior Seminar on several occasions. Junior officers and senior officers together on one occasion, junior officers by themselves, and then to a group of mid-level officers. We had to try and run the mid-level course at that time, which we'd started under Boeker. And he spoke to them, and he gave good presentations. Haig—like him or dislike him—one of the qualities I thought he had—I haven't heard him speak to the subject recently, and he may still have it—was an ability to make history relevant to the present and to identify places where you could draw strings from the present into the future based on that history. Now you could disagree with them, but he could put that together in a way that you could see and did that for people, so when he talked about current policy, he talked about it also in terms of the historical context. I thought that was very useful for people. For him to talk to the junior officers, I think that—even those that didn't like him—I think the fact that he took that interest was very important to them, very important. So Haig was helpful.

Now where we didn't have all what we needed was all the money. This was also the beginning of periods when we were not getting the kind of support to the government in general, and the Department of State in particular, for money that we might have needed, except for security. And security was getting lots of money, and that's one place we did build up. We began to do the counter-terrorism course during this period as well. That's what I guess I did partially as a dean, too, now I think about it. So I guess that was true, and then, of course, under Shultz we had lots of support, but the under secretaries for management were catastrophes.

I don't mind saying that somebody like (Ivan) Selin, a non-career appointee who came in as Undersecretary for Management [under the Bush Administration, May 1989 to June 1991], had an attitude toward training which was as negative as any I've ever heard, based upon his own experience. He clearly is a brilliant man and one of those people who are able to do lots of things on their own, but completely unable to understand why the average person or even the above-average person couldn't do the same thing. And as a result of that never really kind of understood the purpose of a lot of training or the rationale of how we did it.

An interesting story. He came to FSI one day and he was so proud of his Russian, which he'd supposedly learned on his own, and he made the comment somewhere along the line the only thing a GSA (General Services Administration) officer needed to know in



Russian was “pick up this” or “put that down” or something like that. At any rate, he didn’t think deeply of what was needed. During this visit at one point he demonstrated his proficiency to the Russian staff. They rated him after he left at the best as 1/1 [Editor’s Note: the lowest level of speaking/reading competency]. And he thought he was much higher. He thought he was pretty hot. That doesn’t mean anything except that it indicates an attitude, a condescending attitude. As a result, we didn’t get the kind of support I thought we needed at the time for a lot of training that was needed. And this may not have been so much money that was needed, mind you, at this point; it was the kind of leadership support you need to ensure the training continues. Remember now, we’re still trying to fulfill the Foreign Service Act. We’re still trying to do this new curriculum that was required to meet the Foreign Service Act’s expectations of individuals going through their careers, and that required leadership support more, frankly, than it needed money. And while we could get Shultz to support it, if you can’t get their subordinates to do the same thing, then you don’t do a lot of good. And then, of course, later we got lots of others.

I mean, I think of another undersecretary for management. That was John Rogers [a non-career appointee who served from October 1991 to January 1993], who ended up being very positive toward training, but started out with one of the most negative attitudes I think I’ve seen, other than Selin’s, and perhaps with even less knowledge about what he was doing than others. And again, I don’t know what it was, whether it was political that started off—I have a suspicion in some cases that in both Selin’s, well, less in Selin’s case, but maybe Rogers’s case, it may well have been political. Admittedly, that’s the Bush administration, not Reagan. But I think under Haig it was safe to say, and in my first stage then as deputy director, we had good support from the Secretary, good support from an undersecretary who was career Foreign Service, and that we were running into money problems, as was everybody.

*Q: Now you had responsibility for languages. What were the issues that you had to deal with during this more than a decade?*

SPROTT: Well, first of all, I have to go back a little bit and say that my last year or two as dean, I had gotten drawn into a process started by Springsteen and Coon, Carlton Coon, in that they wanted to change the approach to language instruction. They felt that it had become too rote. Training was too set in its ways and not relevant enough to the needs of the people in the missions abroad, and there needed to be a change. That was one statement. The second statement was they felt there needed to be a greater sensitivity to the cultural context in which the language was used, that there was a difference for a GSO using language on the dock or with the customs officials than there was for a political officer dealing with the language amongst the foreign ministry personnel or the presidency or prime ministers or something of that nature versus the consular officer who was on a line and dealing with a wide variation of language requirements, and so on, or going to a jail or something of that nature. There was a need, therefore, to make language training more relevant and useful. To a degree, almost kind of building on what we had done in ConGen Rosslyn and some of the others, but not totally. This was really new. And as a result of that, Carl, Carlton Coon, brought in some people from the outside in a

management group that I identified, for whether good, bad, or indifferent, and they did some studies on FSI, both the structure of the language school and the way in which they deliver things in the language school and the content of the subject matter and its relation to say area studies, to the cultural studies, to the practical application of the language—that is, the actual use of the language—and so on. So you begin now to think about redoing texts that no longer talk about auntie visiting or something like that, as some of the old FSI texts did, but now getting down into nitty-gritty, actually having a consular interview and things like that. In fact, even maybe beginning to draw on ConGen Rosslyn and getting some of the instructors to actually be participants in the visa line with some of the students. Now that's still not going quite as far as it should have, but one of the ideas was an integration of some of the language school exercises into ConGen Rosslyn, so that the students actually got some experience dealing in the language of the country to which they were going to be assigned. And so that was part of the context. Now, having said that, there was a lot of work then that was being done, led by, among others, Gary Crawford, who was brought in—he had been teaching with the Peace Corps in the South Pacific and had several languages—and was looked upon by a number of people as somebody who would be able to assist in repackaging a lot of the language school content. So the idea was to try to find a way to get the language school linguists and instructors on board for this. So there was a lot of selling and repackaging the language school.

When I came in as deputy director, with Paul Boeker still as director at this point, this was still going on, and the issues then that one had to face were, in some cases people who were in key position in the language school either didn't want to change or were changing too slowly or had no incentive to change from their point of view. So we had to find a way to manage that process, and one of the things that we did very quickly, which I must say, started earlier than what we actually achieved it, but when I became, I guess just as I was becoming deputy director, just thereafter, the first dean of the school of language studies became a Foreign Service officer, and the reason for that—our argument at the time—was that that doesn't necessarily always have to be a Foreign Service officer, but at least for this period over which we want to make the changes in the language instruction and make it more user-friendly, more relevant to the on-the-job experience, we wanted a Foreign Service presence in the hierarchy of the school in order to provide both the support for that change as well as giving people the ideas for that change. So you wanted somebody who had been successful in the language training, who has also been successful in the Service, who could come in and help manage the language school, and that the language instructors and linguists could look up to that person as somebody who had been a successful language learner in this system, so they had done it. They had also been one who successfully used it in the Foreign Service context and had been successful in the Service, so that when they say, "This is what is needed," then it could carry some weight, and that the person didn't have to say, well, linguistically this doesn't work or does work—that didn't become the argument, which was the problem before.

*Q: Who was the person you got? Which FSO?*

SPROTT: The first one. I have to think of the name. We'll have to remember that. I want to say it was... There were some really quite good ones, really excellent ones.

That was one set of issues. The next set of issues was we had to change the staffing of the language school, and there are two issues here. Let's just take French as an example. French was being taught essentially by metropolitan French people. If you looked at the racial breakdown of the French faculty, they were all white, and they were almost all from Western Europe. Yet where were we sending most of our French speakers? It wasn't to France; it was to Africa!

If we wanted people to go back now—and remember we wanted people to do a better job on analysis, better job of networking, better job of getting into the field and using the language and so on, better involved in the cultures—well if you're doing Metropolitan French, it doesn't fit in Senegal, for example. It especially doesn't fit out in the field as well, and so we needed to get some people in that were good instructors from Western African countries. Similarly, in Portuguese you had a comparable problem in Portuguese and countries it influenced. So that was one step.

The second step was to get a new group of linguists in, in particularly French, but in some of the other languages, too, people with new ideas, a sense for how to use computers as part of an instructional base, so that the instructors, who very often were very imaginative but not linguists in charge, right? How could we empower those instructors to use their imagination in the classroom to make the classroom better? So this became another management issue.

The third issue, then, that we had to deal with was testing. So we're successful in changing the curriculum. So we're successful in changing the process of the way in which we deliver the curriculum, because we've got the instructors more involved, we're using new methods, and so on. Well, now if we've done that and they actually use the language but they use it primarily with customs officials as a GSO or something else, and they come back to years later and they're a 3/3 instead of a 3+/3+ that they left with, has their language capability really gone down, when they were proven to be more effective a year after with those customs officials than they were? The answer is no, they aren't less effective, they're differently effective. And so we needed to get people interested in and willing to think differently about testing as well, and we began at that point we were around (what years would we be in now? We're probably around 1986 maybe, 87, somewhere in that time frame) and we finally were getting enough people together and we were also. . . .

The other problem that we were having was that the FSI had an attitude problem, in my opinion, not just the language school but a lot of other places maybe too. Our attitude problem was "We've got the right way to do things. Our test is the only way to test." And as a result of that you had CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) didn't agree, NSA (National Security Agency) didn't agree, and if there were two groups that had a reason for teaching the language in a way that was similar to ours it was them and maybe DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency). The military way of instruction, because of very often

they're interrogators or they're listeners—NSA has even got that problem to a degree, listeners—maybe not, but for those who are actually going to be using it for people who are going to get out in the field, like our officers, those people have a natural reason for being concerned about the way in which we test it, and that the legitimacy of that test would not be questioned, because you didn't want to send somebody out, having given them, let's say, a 3 or a 4, and then only to find out that that really wasn't a 3 or a 4 in the context of the culture in which they are going to be using the language.

Thus we begin to develop an interagency approach to some of these things, and I think the attitude began to change in the Institute as well. And at that time, we developed a very close working relationship with NSA and CIA and DIA, even on the administration side, that the director and myself attended interagency meetings and we co-funded some products and we, the Institute, managed to talk them into giving us equipment and even software, and we'd begin to progress slowly in changing a lot of attitudes and, I think, did, in fact, quite successfully, to the point where one of the things that we were going to do across the highway here at the Institute, one of the concepts was to create a center for language testing that would be a national language testing center, so that we began to hit colleges, because one of the things we were also doing was working with universities to create language programs that reinforced ours. Why should we have to teach people how to use the language after they've spent four years studying Russian in college? And we demonstrated this often enough, that the universities were concerned about finding ways to enhance their language instruction so that it was more functional. Rather than being research and literature based.

So we had an increasing amount of interaction with the universities on this, doing research as well as developing methods, common methods, and we were moving in the direction of the testing, too, and had set up a center, in fact, with CIA. The CIA funded, basically, the center. What was it called? There's a special name for it, but I'll have to think of it. It was a center created kind of like technology centers that the government can set up around the country, and it's one of the places that people working in those centers, if they create something, they can get royalties from it, but also the private sector can participate in those same centers, but what they create has to be available to everyone in the center. That was created, and we actually had the facilities over on Fairfax Drive in Arlington, Virginia. It was about four floors of a building that was rented by the CIA and then various of our agencies, including FSI, provided people to go over there and work on common materials and on testing, and so that we began to move very well on.

The second thing we then moved on was... Oh, second thing. One of the other areas that we moved on, and the year I left here, in 1993-94, they were getting ready to experiment with in Western Africa—it would have been '94-95 they would have experimented with it—and that's to move language training into the field to a degree, so that you shouldn't have to do all of the language training here at FSI. There are ways in which we could reduce costs, and so on. But this was going to be dependent upon an interactive instructional base between FSI and the field. There was no reason why we couldn't have a language class being taught here—let's make it an advanced or an intermediate language class in Chinese being taught here—and have that class open to people in

China. Now time frames are going to be, obviously, a problem, but if you can work out, say, maybe your class is from eight in the evening till 10 at night. There's no reason why instruction has to take place between 7:30 and 3:30 or between nine and five. So one of the things I made sure we had done back not long after the first labor negotiations we had after I became deputy director, I made sure that the terms of reference for the time of day that is considered normal for the workday and the days of the week that were considered normal for the workweek were determined by management, as was the place of work. And the whole idea here was to set us up under our labor agreement so that we could have shifts of instruction, so that you could have people coming in at six o'clock in the morning and having their classes over at such-and-such a time, maybe eight hours later, and then you could have people coming in at 4 o'clock in the afternoon or two o'clock in the afternoon and going to 10 o'clock at night, or some other variation, so that you could have interaction overseas at the same time you were having this, and this would enrich the language instruction, and you could get feedback from the overseas side. That's one of the reasons, when we designed this campus, then, the basic core structure of it is susceptible to immediate changes in the electronic transfer of information. All the rooms are set up so that you can easily "electronify" them, you could make them so that you can send a picture from that room to anywhere else in the world by just changing some of the wires in some cases and bringing your cameras in. So it's easily done, or should be easily done, and I think a lot of the rooms are that way now, and a lot of the equipment—at least my last visit—is around here. Whether it's being used is another issue. But the concept was to begin to bring the field into the training of the classroom here, so that there was greater integration, and then people could begin to look at training as a continuum, from the time they came into the service, no matter where they were, so that it was both classroom formal instruction at FSI, on the job training within the context of some particular issue or problem they had, or less formal but active training with the FSI overseas, and so on.

*Q: How does this idea of making it a more practical and unified approach to language testing and use of it work between the universities, the FSI, and government agencies.*

SPROTT: Well, it was basically done with the groups of committees of people who were interested in doing this, among the linguists and instructors in the various schools. Obviously, some people were more active in this than others, and, you know, there are language organizations that universities belong to, and that led to individuals finding common interests between them—let's say, University of Illinois having an interest in their language departments or Georgetown University or one of the others where there was a particular interest in doing something in a particular language or in some aspect of the instruction in some language, or in the testing.

A lot of the universities became interested in the testing side—not all, by any means, probably not anywhere near a majority of them—because, from the language school's point of view, it was a way of getting more people interested in taking a language course, because they could demonstrate that it was practical, that it was useful in the end. And if people aren't taking languages for professional purposes, why are they taking them? Well, it's a requirement for their degree. Well, okay, then if it's a requirement, I'm not

going to put my heart in it, either. And so their interest was, well, okay, we can give people foreign language and we give them a test that the language instruction and the test is more functional in that sense.

*Q: Of course the academic focus is research oriented, you know, how to read Spanish in order to do another dissertation on Don Quixote. You're proposing that the student be able to use it to speak it, and this was almost—I mean a lot of the language teachers couldn't really speak it.*

SPROTT: That was a problem, and it still is a problem. I'll just give you an example. One of my hopes at one point was that we would be able to work an arrangement with George Mason University, with its Arlington campus, so that we could share some of the early morning language instruction. They had instructors that could teach some of the early morning language instruction and use our method and our testing, then they would benefit because—at this point we were getting business people who wanted to take some of our courses—they could teach the business people as well and we could even incorporate some of our area studies into that and so on. They would come off better. We had an advantage because early morning language instruction was also interfering; I mean it was costly to us. And we could get more language instruction done that way. Well, while I had a deal worked out with the vice-provost and the president, it never went anywhere because the University language department basically didn't want it to go anywhere. It was a threat. Incidentally, that's my interpretation, that it was a threat to them.

*Q: But I'm sure one has to say that this is sort of the preeminent—along with Monterey and a few other places—schools turning out people who are going to be using it in a practical way, and other ones the whole system is quite different. I mean, it's how well do you pass a written exam.*

SPROTT: Or even if it's oral, it's rather constrained by comparison. That's right. And personally, I think a lot of our linguists here at the Institute would agree. This is a handicap for a language instruction in this country for years. What is interesting to me, that there is not a relationship that's picked up by those language instructors and this whole issue of bilingual education and how to overcome some of the problem of bilingual education. One of the things that you find out in bilingual education is that if you don't have any time where you instruct the person in their first language in the subject matter of the second language that they're trying to learn, that they don't do as well, but if you can find a way to give them some instruction in their first language on subject matter that will be in their second language—in English, in this case—they can build a foundation on which they can then learn the other. That's one option.

The other option is that they need to learn the English fairly early on in many ways. Well, we could be doing the same thing with our foreign language, because what I'm saying here is that it's practical, it's functional, teaching English in the abstract is not as useful or viable as teaching English in the context of the subject matter. And so in this case, the foreign language case, the subject matter becomes a bridge into the English language. But

this is not something that I've been able to understand. I've heard the arguments, but I would have thought by now there's been enough substantiation of the usefulness of learning a language first for use in the everyday sense, and that that then allows a person to develop the interest to get into the literature and so on of the language. Even somebody like Jack Matlock—here's Jack Matlock, language learner *par excellence*, somebody who is so good in Russian that even Russians were surprised at his capacity for not only the level of his ability to use the language but the variability, his ability to vary that language to the audience that he's dealing with. Here's a man who's hugely capable of doing this, and learned language the old way, in that sense. But he would argue, or at least then did argue, that it's the functional approach that the university should be using at that point, and that's the one that would lead more people into developing a capacity in the foreign language and interest in foreign languages. Not a threat.

*Q: During the Bush Administration with new the Secretary James Baker and all. I would have thought that it would be not as interested in training.*

SPROTT: No, no interest whatsoever. It didn't even appear on the map as far as I could see, and in fact, it was under Secretary Baker that we had under secretaries for management that, if they could have, would have eliminated the FSI entirely. Selin is an example of that. John Rogers, both of them really, wanted to stop the process of building the new campus, and John Rogers quite frankly admitted that he would have if it hadn't been so far along.

*Q: Today is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, 13 November 1998. Back at FSI, weren't you involved in setting up the Senior Seminar or at least keeping it going?*

SPROTT: Well, as I became the deputy director of the Institute, that course, of course, fell under me then, along with the rest of the schools, and just as I was becoming the deputy director, as I think I mentioned at an earlier part of our conversation, Brian Atwood had been brought from H over to FSI and the duty he was given by Paul Boeker at that point was to take a look at the Senior Seminar and see if there wasn't a way to begin to bring it a little bit more into current methodologies for instruction, make it a little bit more active kind of learning experience than it had been, because it was up to this point almost strictly lecture. The Senior Seminar started in the late 1950s and was what I call "talking heads" kind of presentation, and people did papers that, you know, to what end was a lot of this done, and clearly we were dealing with a very expensive milieu for all parties that are involved, and one ought to be able to assume that you're going to get some return on that investment, and so the idea was to review the course or the program and see if there were possible changes that could be made to improve its purpose, and even including the changing of its goals and objectives, if that became necessary.

Brian finished that paper sometime I think in the spring of 1982, and it was then agreed to be implemented by the Director General and by Paul Boeker, before he left. He made sure that he made everybody aware of what he was going to be doing from the undersecretary for management, to whom he reported and obviously needed to be aware

of it, but the Director General because it had implications for the selection process as well—and the alumni of the seminar, who felt they were stakeholders in its current and future constructions. So that was done about 1982.

So starting with the 25<sup>th</sup> seminar in 1982 we were going to begin to make the changes, and the first director of the seminar, which I think came through, I believe came on board in 1983, was Jim Bullington. [Editor's Note: James Bullington served as Ambassador to Burundi from April 1983 to July 1986 and subsequently became Dean of the Senior Seminar. See article in State Magazine, July 1988, pp 24-26.] But at any rate, he came in and made huge changes in the seminar, restructured it, made it a truly participatory kind of experience, where the seminarians participated in the development of certain parts of the program so that they could make it fit not only their interests, which were of some importance, but also to make those goals and objectives of the seminar fit those interests, skills, and experience of the class. And this included off-site experience, which continues to this day, the purpose of which was to build a team, get the people more engaged themselves, to make some of the trips that were involved in the seminar historically, where they'd go and visit each region as well as to make visits to all of the military organizations—to make those more meaningful in terms of the substance of foreign policy and the issues facing the American public and our society. And so you found the seminar getting more involved in an off-site, for example, in environmental issues, which had never been raised to speak of, except maybe by a casual lecturer in the seminar at that point, and how environmental issues impacted on foreign policy implementation as well as the policies themselves. And as that grew during the period, it became, obviously, increasingly important. Immigration issues became important, so that when we visited the Southwest or went to Mexico, for example, as a part of the seminar trip, those kinds of issues were not only dealt with in the abstract but seen in reality and brought home. The point of it was not only for them to see and hear and try to understand, but to try to link that back to the policy issues that were facing Customs, Immigration, the Department of State, intelligence agencies, the military, and so on. So the way in which the seminar began to be put together was one of greater integration of subject matter, greater clarity of the goals and objectives. We were still after leadership as the primary objective or primary goal, but we also wanted people to be more sensitive managers of the processes that they were charged with as well as the people that they were charged with, which meant more on affirmative action, more concern about being able to talk about issues in the classroom, amongst each other as well as with speakers; women's issues, racial issues, religious issues, and so on. So instead of just reading about or listening to a lecture on these subjects, they now were getting involved in these issues themselves. We began to require instead of a research paper, which had been done up to that point, we also required some time spent in a voluntary activity during the Thanksgiving-Christmas period so the seminarians would begin to become engaged with a lot of people in this country that they would not otherwise have ever met. So you would find them in hospitals which were treating HIV/AIDS people and finding out the problems and issues that are involved in that, actually getting to know some of these people and finding out some of the things that could be done to help them and help the community that they found themselves in.



You would find people working in bread lines, distributing food, assisting in the development of housing, and what was interesting to me is that very often these people continue these voluntary activities beyond, and a number of the officers will tell you that when they came to the United States and were assigned back here, very often they never participated in any of the activities or voluntary activities to speak of, maybe through their own church, but probably not that. But as a result of their experience in the seminar, they now were and saw a great value in the kind of voluntary activities that were started there. So the seminar became increasingly, as we progressed through finding ways to make it better, to the point where the seminar in the early '90's was being run in many ways on a day-to-day basis by the students through a process of their being given a certain amount of budget and they then had to determine how that budget was going to be spent.

Another thing that Bullington was able to do, and he really did it pretty much on his own, was to convince the National Guard to participate in the seminar, and as a result of that participation, we were able to get National Guard aircraft for travel in parts of the country that we were not able to get Navy or Air Force aircraft for, and this permitted us, for example, to get into Alaska in ways that we could never possibly have gotten into it otherwise, not to speak of some of the other trips that were done. For example, some overseas trips which were subsequently cut out because (a) they cost money, but (b) they didn't give a good appearance when people would go to Russia or to some country overseas and you had a group of senior officers of government traveling around in military craft and so on. For appearance's sake, it wasn't the thing for us to be doing at that time, so that was cut out, but we continued the trips around the country and we were able to, from the seminar's point of view, save some money by having this military aircraft provide it in many cases such as Alaska.

*Q: What was the quid pro quo for the National Guard?*

SPROTT: They got free, as with the other uniformed military, they had the possibility of coming into the seminar without paying the tuition, so there was a *quid pro quo* at that time. It may still exist for all I know, but at that time we were able to get people in the National War College, for example, without paying tuition because they came to certain of our program, such as the Senior Seminar and so on.

*Q: I participated in the Senior Seminar Class 17, September 1974 to June 1975, and it seemed at that time that the military candidates were all very nice people, but obviously this assignment was kind of a last hurrah for them. I don't think it was treated as seriously as, say, an assignment to the National War College. These were people who were probably not going to move further in their career*

SPROTT: That was a problem. There was a problem with military, but frankly, there also was a problem with the Department of State at this point. You would find that there was an increasing number of people who were placed in the seminar who were not going to be promoted very far. And one of the changes that we got agreement to make at that point was, first of all, a change in the structure of the seminar itself. Before the 1980 Act,

instead of its just being FSO-1's, that would be a career minister or minister counselor, now that we would accept newly promoted OCs into the seminar, which would have been in those old days, the old FSO-3. More of those would have been permitted into the class. The idea was to take the top 10 per cent of that class in any given year and those people should be assigned to the seminar in the FSO-3 or at the newly promoted OC. Those people should go right into the seminar as quickly as you can get them in. Obviously, if they 're promoted overseas and they've still got two years left in the assignment, you can't get them in, but that was the pool from which you should be drawing the OC group, so that you were dealing with clearly people who are promotable, clearly people that were going to move within the Service. You weren't dealing with a lower quartile of the population on whom you were drawing. At the more senior levels, again, you were supposed to be drawing on people who were not going to be retiring imminently. That is, the Service saw that there was a future for these individuals. Frankly, that worked pretty well, because the director of the Institute, myself on occasion but the director of the Institute and the director of the seminar, participated in the selection process—not in the sense that they made the selections but they were party to that process with the senior personnel in the Department and the Director General. As long as those parties were all of the same mind and agreed to the list of people that would go forward, we were in great shape. And it worked for a few years pretty well, but then it began to break down. For example, you were not supposed to have deputy assistant secretaries (DAS) in that seminar. It would have been one of those groups of people who would have been considered already beyond that. And we all of a sudden found on occasion that there were DAS's who were put into that because they didn't have anywhere else to put them. We began to find that there were people who might have been out of favor, and they were put in the seminar. We also found that some of the good OC's that were put into the seminar, started getting pulled from the seminar by the system, and the reason that was happening was that it began to happen when you lost the concern by the Director General and the ability or the willingness of the Director General and the undersecretary for management to hold the line and say no, that training is more important, that this year for this officer, who we admit is a high flier and is going to move in the Service, it is more important that they get this time now, even though they're needed, because they're going to be a better officer when they come out of here. And unfortunately, what happened, and it's typical of our system, very often they put the officer between FSI or between the Personnel people and the bureau that was demanding them, and so the officers found themselves at a loss as to what to do. They couldn't really choose the thing they wanted, because if they did and it didn't go the way the bureau wanted it, then they lost favor in the bureau. If they went against personnel in some fashion, they weren't sure what would happen to them. Certainly they knew that FSI was the least important in the minds of those other two, so they got caught, and that's wrong. The system shouldn't have operated that way, but as soon as it began to fall down and the Director General's office and the undersecretary for management, that's exactly what happened.

Now, having said that long story, it's the same kind of thing in the military and the other agencies. And so what we did was to try to go to them and show them that we had a good selection process now and we expected them to live up to that process in doing the same thing for themselves and that we wouldn't accept people that couldn't make it. Well, that

also worked pretty well, but I can give you at least one example in the case of a USTR (United States Trade Representative) person—there have been enough of them that I don't have to name somebody—but one of those individuals who was placed over here was not placeable in USTR, but the head of USTR went to the Secretary of State and demanded that that person be permitted to come into the seminary. Well, that had a significant impact on the seminarians in that year, and it had a significant impact on future selections, because it became known very quickly that if you worked the system right, you could get somebody in there. And sure as God made green apples, we began to get the same kind of thing from other agencies in later years. We got it all the time anyhow because there was always a testing of the system, but you really began to get that afterwards.

So the point here is, and I think I've said this on the economics program and some of the others, that unless you've got backbone, unless you've got a management that's willing to not only make the initial decision but to follow it up, no matter who's in the position, with the same kind of effort and the same kind of seriousness, it doesn't last.

*Q: In the history of FSI the idea of a mid-career program repeatedly crops up. Can you talk about that?*

SPROTT: You're right. The mid-career programs, there probably have been a dozen of them I think at the time, the most recent major effort at mid-career training would have been in the '80s. It was initiated, I think, under Paul Boeker and, I think I mentioned earlier, in response to the 1980 Foreign Service Act. So there was a logic to the thing, and we would try to take our set of *ad hoc* training programs, or if you want to call it in today's lingo, "human resource development efforts," and organize them in a coherent way so that officers through their career in the Service were prepared for each of the successive levels of responsibility that they were going to be asked to take on. So a mid-career program, approximately 10 years into the service—a person's spent 10 years now after a maximum of four years or 48 months or whatever the number is, 36 to 48, months, and they now have another six years in the Service, it's not time they're going to be moving into the more senior responsibilities, now is the time to bring them back and to reacquaint them with each other, in one sense and in the same sense that we had done this at the junior officer entry level, to make them more sensitive to and knowledgeable about the activities in the various other cones because during this period they would have been very specialized, and while they may have been generally aware of what was taking place in the other cones, frankly, they would not have known it in the kind of detail that might be necessary if they were going to find themselves as a DCM or as a principal officer someplace where they were going to have responsibility for all of these functions and needed to be able to manage them effectively in the context of good management principle.

It was also clear that about 10 years into the Service there's a need for people to come kind of more up to date in a whole series of issues. If you go back into the 1980s, you remember there was a turmoil in, I think, foreign affairs. There was a lot of change. We hadn't even gotten to the decline of the Cold War yet, but now technology was a real

issue that one had to address in foreign affairs; you had public diplomacy, very much and very real in what we were doing overseas; you had science as an issue independent of technology now that was increasingly important, not only for commercial and industrial reasons but now also for armament reasons and so on. And all of these issues, not to mention others, I suppose, that you could very quickly come up with, meant that people needed to be brought up to date, because the typical officer, frankly, was not up to even the New York Times science page and very often unable to make the translation from that to its implications for ongoing activities in an embassy or a mission abroad, even in some of the developed areas or in some of the countries such as, say, China where these issues were important because of theft or piracy of some of our technology or something like that.

So these were some of the reasons that one thought that we ought to have a mid-career course, in addition to which it was clear then—it's been clear in all of the previous studies that led to a mid-career course—that this was the time when people were moving truly in to management positions and you needed to give them some good management training because most don't know how to manage, but up to this point they've been acting in many cases, except for the consular or admin area, certainly the political and economic people, have been really scholastic in a lot of ways and the way in which they went about their business, and managing something was not something they really got engaged in. So this was another reason.

The third reason is that we felt we needed to provide people with more of a sense of what leadership meant and how to engage in that. Leading by managing up as well as leading by managing down and by giving people a better sense for how they can have an impact on the system and its direction.

So the mid-career course was created around many of these same kinds of ideas. It was meant to be for officers who were around 10 year into the system, and the idea was to bring relatively equal numbers of economic, political, consular, and admin officers so that you had a mixed bag. And we were going to have cross-training within the course itself, so that people became more aware of political work if they were in consular or admin and political and economic would become more familiar with some of the problems and issues of consular work or admin work and so on.

The first problem that arose in the course, as far as I can see, is the wrong people came to the course. Initially, the first time around, we had a pretty good class made up in terms of people, but the natural structure of it was not ideal in terms of numbers of political, economic, consular, and administrative. We were short on administrative cone officers and short, if I remember, on the political and heavier on economic and consular. But the rank was about right, and you had to adjust. And the first time around it was a lot of adjusting the basic course content, methodology (because we were also experimenting now with a different approach) . . . if you go back to this time-frame, we were changing the way in which we were carrying out the instruction process at FSI from a largely lecture approach to one in which we try to engage people in the learning process itself. So we were experimenting in this course on how to go about doing this. We were hiring new

staff at the institute; we were searching out new people to do contract work with us. So there was a lot of adjustment we all had to make in this first course, which if I remember correctly was five months long.

The second time around, the rank became much more of a serious problem. We ended up with people who were well beyond the 10 years. These people were much older than that and well beyond the point where they needed to get some of the things that we were giving them and which would have been relevant for the person who was just 10 years into the Service. As a result you'd begin to get reactions to that, so we had a rank problem.

*Q: When you're talking about that, you're really talking about placement problems within the system, I mean, people who are relatively senior in years but weren't particularly sought after.*

SPROTT: Well, no, some of these people were good officers and going to go somewhere. Certainly there were people who were placement problems that were put into the course, because it was easy and convenient. Again, it was not the kind of coherent, consistent application in the appointment of people to this course that is required to maintain that course by Personnel and the DG, primarily in this case. I think bureaus and others fought it. I mean, frankly, if it's a good officer, we don't want to lose them. We don't want them to go for 5 months of training. Come on, they're too good. They don't need that kind of training; anything they need, they're bright enough they can get it on their own. That would be the argument of the bureau. And Personnel, unfortunately, a lot of the people in Personnel believed the same thing and maybe agreed completely with the bureau. So it fell down very quickly because there was no way of forcing it. Again, the selection process should have been based upon when you went through your promotion boards and so on, it should be fairly sure who's going to be coming into that course. Ultimately, every officer should have passed through it so that when you got to 10 everybody would have been taking it and it wouldn't have been an issue; it would only have been timing issue. But people believing that it wasn't going to last, and after the second time around, that was very clearly in the minds of people— out of people appointed this time, and it probably wasn't going to run in the future—it won't be running the next time you're up, is the attitude that I think some people developed. And as a result, the first thing you got was more and more of the incorrect people.

Now the course needed improvement, but I think the course was getting that improvement with each stage too, and getting better and better. In fact, what's interesting to me, and I've run into people who've taken the mid-career course, including the first course, to this day, who are senior officers now, and every one of them will tell me the complaints they had, but every one of them still tells me it was one of the better courses they ever took and they were really glad it went on and they wish they had continued something like this. Now it isn't, obviously, something they argued at that time, because like a lot of students in colleges and high schools, as students, you don't see the way in which a lot of things are going to be, but I think that was the problem with the mid-career course.

So then there was the switch from having a course itself to saying, okay, let's try to move from having a course to having a group of courses that people will pick from. For example, anyone assigned back to Washington will take a Washington tradecraft course, which was kind of being developed back at this point anyhow, but now that became the thing. Now that still exists and I believe is short enough, to begin with, that people don't shy too much away from taking it, but most officers that I know of who take that course are quite pleased that they took it because it teaches them how to operate in Washington when they know how to operate very often, and there's a lot of help in operating, overseas. Very often, coming back to Washington, there's almost no help, and nobody tells you the ropes of how to get to your Congressman or to the hill or deal with H or the bureaucraties of actually functioning in Washington. There was a political reporting course, an economic and commercial reporting course, and the consular program was still going on, the advanced consular course, and there was an advanced admin training course. Most of these are ongoing even today, but, you see, one of the problems here is all these people are taking these courses as functional people, not as leaders of an organized bureaucracy which encompasses all four, so that they're still losing out in this process on both the leadership side as well as the management side, I think. But I think that's where your mid-career course is, and I'm willing to bet that the Service will at some point in the future decide again that it needs a mid-career course. And let's see, I guess the last one was run about 1985, so I would give it no more than 20 years until we run another one.

*Q: What about the attitude of both the Foreign Service officer corps in general and the State Department towards training, particularly—let's not talk about language or economic training per se, but other training?*

SPROTT: I think unless that training is required for some specific purpose, and I guess consular training would be included in that, unless that training is required for some specific purpose, there's no desire to take it; there's no impetus within the system to engage in training; and there's very few managers, senior or otherwise, in the Department who think about developing their people enough that they would actually allocate time and money in their office—or civil service people—to take training unless, again, it's very clearly required for a purpose. So the attitude is not positive. It goes back, I think, to a discussion we had earlier, which I called the Jeffersonian gentleman kind of approach to the world, which is "We've proven to be the brightest and the ablest—after all we have to deal with all kinds of strange things abroad all on our own, and there's no reason we can't pick up anything that's necessary when we need it." Well, when you now have to deal with science and technology issues, communications issues, environmental issues, they all get wrapped up together, not even counting terrorism and narcotics and all these other issues—you can't keep up with those, you do need training in these things. And we need leadership more today than we've ever needed it. When we can't rely on the Cold War or that kind of situation to provide you with positions in a lot of communities, you need to have leadership of your staff and your employees in order to give them a sense of purpose and direction so you can maintain the arguments over time that are beneficial to the United States position.

*Q: What about, let's say, the intellectual environment. I had an interview with Dick Jackson not too long ago, and he talked about what he considered a sad state of affairs with the Foreign Service Institute. He argued that it has a potential, because of the caliber of people at it, the people who come into it, of playing an intellectual role in the development of approaches to foreign affairs and he includes academic institutions, , such as Georgetown, the Fletcher School, other schools, but he feels efforts like the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, have died almost aborning, because it's basically a trade school approach.*

SPROTT: I think that's right, and I would agree with him totally. And there's probably no part of the institute that better represents that problem than the School of Area Studies, of which he was the dean for a number of years. Because the attitude toward area studies, I think, bespeaks the attitude of a large number of people; everyone will try to avoid it. People who needed it very often, I mean really needed it, would never get it. The people who didn't need it—and I can't think of anyone who didn't need it—would find a way into it. If they took language training it was automatic, but we also had an attitude problem there very often toward area studies, but I think that's a perfect example of the lack of understanding of how history, how the knowledge of history, of cultural as well as social and economic and political history of a country or set of countries played a role in the implementation of our policies. If I say that to somebody out loud, they would say, "Of course it does," but following up with getting training in that or developing some intellectual understanding of that, very often people did not do. Now one of the things that we tried to do in creating the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs was to try to get a bridge between the academic look at things and the pragmatist, the people who actually had to practice this.

*Q: This is Tape 5, Side 1, with John Sprott. You were saying you thought that if you could get practitioners...*

SPROTT: Well, the idea was that what we wanted to do was to find a way to bridge the academic approach to things, if you will, to the practitioners of the policy, the implementers, if you will, and to a degree also affect the policy determination of things, if for no other reason than allowing people to have greater insight into the processes themselves. So if you could get practitioners to then do monographs or small books all on subjects that were relative to foreign policy or implementation or foreign policy itself in more general terms, in a way that described how a practitioner goes about doing things but had the substantive content that an academic might recognize, that would be helpful to people. It would be helpful both to the Service, because it would give people something substantive, but with process as a part of it that they could read on things from environmental issues to multilateral negotiations to mediation and arbitration and so on—well, the whole range of topics—to even more narrowly defined subjects like "what to do if . . ." in regions of the world, the Middle East under different scenarios, or the Far East or the Korean Peninsula under several scenarios, and so on. So publications became the outlook of one aspect of the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs.

The second aspect of that was to try to develop seminars but really turned more into interactive seminars—some people called them “games”—but they were efforts to take an issue that was identified by senior people in the Department of State and, let’s say, the intelligence agencies as well as a critical issue down the road someplace, not tomorrow necessarily, but down the road, that’s going to happen. You’re going to have a nuclear facility developed in North Korea, or we see it coming. How to deal with that? And then bring participants from all the agencies that might be involved in that at the senior level together and actually run some scenarios that say, okay, this is the kind of development activity that’s taking place, this is how it’s taking place, this is the kind of support system it has—that’s one scenario, let’s review that against another scenario, and then what could our various reactions be to this? So that was another direction that the Center was trying to do, and we had good support for that. Policy Planning was initially in the Department a little bit afraid of it in a way but also came around eventually to this, and we had good support for it, particularly when we got a head of the Center called Hans Binnendijk, who ran the Center very well and got lots of active interest in the Center from around the community.

The third aspect of the Center was to try to bring people in from the outside, people who were scholars in foreign affairs, and bring them to the Center so that we had the use of them as assets to the community here but we could also give them the kind of information they, in turn, could take back to the academic community where they were from. And our hope was that we could have room for several of those people in the Center itself. As a subordinate element of that, we also wanted to bring in fellows from various agencies, including State Department obviously, as fellows to the Center to let them both, on the one hand, do research in an area that was of relevance to them and their agency, but also to us in that broader sense of either producing a pamphlet or a monograph or a book. But they would also then chair or be supportive of the development of these scenarios or games or seminars to run through problems and issues. That was the kind of approach that we were looking at for the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, and it worked pretty well in some respects. In some respects it didn’t, but we produced a number of publications that were, I think, to this day in many cases considered very good—and inexpensively—and we were able to get some good, we got a couple of scholars in who were also able to run courses in the Department, early morning, to bring people up to date on the history of diplomacy, for example. A lot of our officers have no real knowledge of the history of diplomacy at all.

*Q: I understand that today there’s been a tremendous increase in the amount of time spent on diplomacy. When I came into the Foreign Service in 1955 we had none. Last time I checked we had four hours of instruction.*

SPROTT: And yet history does have an impact, and knowing that history in a given country, let alone in general, can make a difference.

*Q: That’s what we’re doing right here with this Oral History program, passing on the torch.*



SPROTT: Precisely. All right, that was the thing. Parenthetically, we also—Steve Low is director at this point—we also set in motion at this point because it was very clear one of the other things that we needed to do was to find a way to generate money for the use of some of these activities that we wanted to do. Now the Center could do some of them, but we needed to find an outside source. At this time we were also looking at building a new campus, and even if we didn't get the new campus it was clear we needed to do things in FSI as FSI that we couldn't fund on our own. So we looked around for a model. I think we've at least personally talked about Walter Smith being brought on, an FSO at that point who subsequently retired.

*Q: And he has contributed an oral history to this ADST series.*

SPROTT: Okay. We brought him on board, and he researched out the various possibilities for the structure and the legal framework for what we now know to be the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), that was then just to be called the Association for Diplomatic Studies. The idea was to use that vehicle to not only enhance the role of foreign affairs in the larger sense of that term in the community, and by this we mean the larger community in the U.S., but also find ways for it to help FSI do things that were not possible under normal government regulations—I mean trivial things like making sure that if you had a conference of senior diplomats, including senior members of the Department of State, that there was a way to provide coffee and maybe lunch for these people in the same way that they would be treated in some other country without having to dig into or beg for (if it was even available) some representational funds.

Other things that make an institution a real institution, such as physical aspects to tradition—things like ties and tee shirts and things like that which may seem trivial at one level; but at another level, they represent an existing institution that's ongoing and that has a culture and has traditions – it's a way of advertising, frankly. So the thought was that the Association could do that, but it was also seen, you see, alongside the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, as both being kind of outside of our normal activities as a training institution but at the same time, by enhancing what we were able to do and what we did, they were also increasing the knowledge of foreign affairs, spreading it out into the larger community, which would make more people aware of it, ultimately making our recruiting easier. Getting people who are more aware of foreign affairs in general means maybe we would even have people who are knowledgeable about the votes they make that have an impact on foreign affairs and on and on and on. This was the concept, both of the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs and the Associations of Diplomatic Studies—two different stories there, and you probably have information on both of them.

*Q: I understand. Years ago I had started along with a colleague, Victor Wolf, an oral history program at George Washington University. Just as we were getting started, I noticed, almost as a footnote to the ADS (Association of Diplomatic Studies) that it might do oral history. And I thought, Oh my God, we're dead, because our little thing would be swallowed. But eventually we joined up and we became almost the tail that's wagging the dog right now. I do hope that eventually there will be more of a balance, more equivalent*

*to a museum and enhance the Foreign Service Institute with the equivalent of putting up exhibits and statues and things to let people know that other things are going on and that it's a proud institution.*

SPROTT: Maybe at some point when we talk about the actual building of the campus and the design of the facility, one of the things that I wanted to make sure—I'm not alone in this—but one of the things that I wanted to make sure that we did was that every aspect of the Institute should provide support to a learning environment, and the learning should not just be that which was related to a particular course or aspect of a course that people were engaged in at that point but should be broader. So for example, today there are posters in all the halls, and one of the reasons for those posters is to make people conscious of the art of the United States in general, but also of poster art, which is also a demonstration of our culture. And it's interesting that people, when they're engaged in language training—for example, if you're taking Chinese—the Chinese instructional staff will tell you that one of the ways you learn about what's happening very often in ways that you can't learn in newspapers or perhaps from individuals is to watch what's happening in the scrolls on the walls and the posters and things like that. And yet, in our country, we tend to treat posters as a throwaway, and yet it's a very important aspect. It's also an inexpensive way for us to decorate. But if you look at these posters through the institute, you'll find that there is a rhyme and reason to them.

The corners at every hall intersection has a place for something to happen. In some places, a clear display area could be put in. Right now, in most cases, you'll only see a raised part of the floor, but some of them were meant to be eventually glassed in so that you could have a statue with a uniform. In fact, we've collected at this point, early on, I believe, it was probably the first year Steve Low was head. He had since retired, gone to Bologna, and come back, and the first year he was head or the president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, I believe he was able to get the uniform of a deceased Foreign Service officer from the family, and that uniform, I don't know where it is, I think it's probably over in the Department at this point. There is a whole part of the hallway, the entrance to the main building, the E Building, a long section that was meant to be a continuous display of just the history of foreign affairs, not just the Foreign Service by itself, but to show that foreign affairs is a large group of institutions working together for the benefit of the American people and our goals and objectives. And therefore you had AID and you had the intelligence community and on and on and on. So you might have a kind of timeline at the bottom of this arrangement that the actual depictions of history could vary or be mixed, so you would have different happenings—treaties that were made and so on—so people would begin to get this sense of history inculcated into them. And that was the purpose of that, and in a way it goes back again to the Center, to the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and frankly, it goes back, in a way, to our discussion of the mid-career course and to the way in which we were trying to teach in a number of the courses, including the Senior Seminar, the idea being that things aren't stand-alone, they've got to be integrated and people have got to have a better understanding of how to go about doing this.

*Q: As you worked on these things, were you looking at really our oldest institutions, West Point and the Naval Academy in Annapolis to see what they did? Diplomacy is as old as the country, but in some ways the State Department is new to public consciousness. Even the Air Force Academy is building its own traditions*

SPROTT: Well, I can remember discussions with Paul Boeker at one point and even Charlie Bray, at one point, the idea that if you have a junior officer program you create a very tightly knit group of people who remember each other, that communicate with each other, that have class reunions and so on, and the hope was that at some point if you could find a way to do that with the entry level, mid-career level, and senior level and then expand these programs so that they would include not just Foreign Service Department of State but also AID, USIA (in those days we didn't include ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency), but today we would include ACTA), and perhaps other agencies as well—CIA, as an example, was beginning to now be included in a number of training programs that they had not wanted to be included in before—but the idea here was maybe this is a way in which we can create a sense, first, of connection with each other at given grade levels and in doing that create, through the closer personal ties, create closer professional ties and more of that tradition that you described. The problem and one of the major differences between the military schools or the academies and ourselves is that they've got four years to create that environment. We at most have six to 13 months in the junior officer—if they go through language training it may be upwards to 13 months before they go to the post. With others we don't get anything but a few weeks. And at that time we were not including civil service people in very much training at all. That began to increase too, but they are obviously a part of this process as well.

So the issue was how can you begin to create that, and I think the hope was that a new FSI could begin to do that. A new FSI that was seen as a magnet for activities within the foreign affairs community—that is, the official community, especially the Department of State in the first instance—but then was seen also as a place to which others in the larger community, academic and otherwise, could come and discuss to learn about, to feel more a part of, foreign affairs. This combination of things would begin also to lend to that development of a sense of institutional belonging, a sense of institutional purpose, and a sense of an institution with a positive force that people could recognize and associate with, rather than something that's abstract. When you mentioned Foreign Service in many cases or Department of State or diplomacy, this was an abstraction to most people.

It doesn't have the connection to them personally that you need to have in order to have others feel that there's a tradition here as well, which, after all, tradition is not physical—yes, you have the tee shirts and you have the gopher and whatever the animal may be that's the mascot, but that's all nothing but representing something that's more spiritual, it's more psychic, and it's because lots of people believe or feel that—and we need to do that. We have not done that, still, to this day, and I think if I were to point out a loss in the Institute's creation—that is, the new construction—it is that here was are in 1998, five years down the line from the day we opened it, and as far as I can see, we've done no more in the direction of outreach to the larger communities—and in fact, have

backtracked in some ways—than we had done before when we were in rented office buildings. I think losing a lot of the real force of leverage that the Center could create.

It's interesting, Secretary Shultz is responsible for our name, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, and he named it that, or it was given that name, as a result of a conversation I'm told he had with a member of Congress whose name I don't remember even at this point, who said, "Well, you're not going to call the new facility FSI," or something like that. So the new name came up, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, which has a large context to it. In fact, we all kind of didn't like it initially, but the more we thought about it, it actually became an opportunity, because FSI could become a part of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. The concept of National meant that it could begin to invite others into it, it could be more inclusive and less exclusive, and we could, using the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, the Association for Diplomatic Studies, the concept was we would eventually a building for the Association for Diplomatic Studies to which you would have scholars who would want to come here and visit and do diplomatic history, to do other kinds of work, because we could provide not only a working environment but we could provide them with a place that would enable them to have the kind of contact they would need with current diplomacy.

We were going to have in conjunction with the intelligence community and support at that time—now we're talking in the early '90s—we were working on an agreement to create a national foreign language testing center that would have been across the highway here, across George Mason Drive, in that open grassed or parking area now. The idea was that would be a national testing center. Why would we care about that? Well, we cared about it because if you could begin to get people in the private sector to teach the academic community particularly to teach languages for use as opposed to for a literature based training, that we would have more people who were foreign language literate and interested in foreign languages. Part of that is the testing system. If you could come up with a testing system that everyone could accept and that could be easily managed, then it might be a part of that process in addition to developing material that would support that. We were also trying to press and encourage universities and others to draw more heavily on the local communities for instructional staff in this case, so that it could be cheaper for them to teach more people the foreign languages. The idea was we would even here use some of our foreign language students to assist in local grade schools and high schools in parent-teachers' meetings or in other kinds of situations where they could practice their, let's say, Spanish with a Spanish-as-a-first-language family who was meeting with school officials, or other kinds of things—in other words, ways in which we could as an institution become more integrated into the local community as well as the larger community represented either both through universities as well as the larger agencies that have a need for these issues.

And I think that's not happened. It hasn't happened probably for lots of reasons, but I can cite a couple. Let's go back to the fate of the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs. There came a time when one of our under secretaries for management, who had not real great interest in the Institute to begin with—I think I've mentioned him—

*Q: Selin?*

SPROTT: —Selin—decided that the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs was even worse, and he tried to eliminate it. A man by the name of John Rogers came in eventually, and he put a time limit on it and said, “I want it out, done, finished.” So what we did was we eliminated the Center but we kept some of the staff and we kept some of the activities, but it meant we couldn’t fund it in the same way. But there is still a demand for that activity. It perhaps should have been integrated, and in fact, Dick Jackson, whom you talk about, makes the point, and I think he’s correct, that if we were looking at this process correctly, one outreach element in the Department, the historian’s office, which was never been fully utilized either, probably should have been pulled together in this new institute and brought together along with Area Studies, as a possibility certainly, and created a more dynamic kind of area. In fact, Dick Jackson was willing. He was working with the Department of the Army and I think Congressional research people to get the country specific Army handbooks produced at the Institute. I think that fell by the wayside, not because of his efforts, but because of others and a lack of interest on our management in the Department of State, who don’t have an outreach outlook. They tend to be tied to the current issue of today, and instead of looking at the institution in the same sense that we just described for the military academies—name me a secretary of the Army or Navy or Air Force who does not consider an important aspect of their job and all of their subordinates’ jobs to maintain those institutions as viable institutions but as highly respected institutions, and they make sure they have the right people heading up those institutions.

You’ve got to do that, and you’ve got to support them. And the research that’s done at those institutions, for example, is clearly supported, as it is at the War College, and it’s done for a purpose. They see the road they’re following. They’re looking down the road, and they’re willing to pay a price in the short run in order to have something and make people think about the long run. Are we successful? I think that’s what’s missing in the Department of State that had been missing for a long time. It was certainly there with Marshall. I think Shultz tried to be engaged in this. But frankly, I don’t think I can remember a Secretary of State. I think I talk about one undersecretary for management, Crockett, who was somewhat interested in this and looked down the line, and Ron Spiers tried to look down the line as much as he could, but he was limited both because of his own efforts and times as well as a lot of the other issues, but he gave it the support he could. But it takes more than that, and you’ve got to have it all the way up to the top.

*Q: How about some of the leadership that you’ve noticed? I mentioned Paul Boeker. He seemed to be a forward-looking person.*

SPROTT: Paul Boeker was very forward-looking and, I think, concerned about the future of foreign affairs in general and the practice of foreign affairs and the Foreign Service in particular. But he was also broad in his vision, so that he saw a number of things coming down the pike. He clearly recognized, more than anyone else during that period that I can remember, the nature of the revolution that the computer could bring to the Department and could bring to foreign affairs.

*Q: What were his dates approximately?*

SPROTT: Paul was here late 1980/81 and part of '82. I think he was director for about just under two years.

*Q: Who was his predecessor?*

SPROTT: His predecessor was George Springsteen.

*Q: When did Charlie Bray come in?*

SPROTT: Charlie Bray came in after Steve Low. There was not very much after that, actually.

*Q: We have a very long interview with Steve Low, he's worked on this whole Association for Diplomatic Studies thing, and he's often referred to as somebody who had a vision of where to go.*

SPROTT: Oh, very definitely. Steve was prophetic. I mean, frankly, a lot of people, the powers—what's that old thing? "Success has many fathers. But it's probably accurate to say that there are few people that are clearly responsible for our having achieved something that we have achieved. Without George Springsteen we never would have gotten the kind of curriculum changes that were needed that took place in the late '70's and in early '80's that really made the Institute worthwhile and actually enabled it to survive. I frankly don't think the Institute would have survived nearly as well had it not changed the way in which it did business, and I think George Springsteen was able to do that, and one has to give him credit for that.

Steve Low came in, and I think that Steve was able to do—because you're right: he saw some things—and I think the story of him, and I don't know whether he told you this in his history—I'm sure he must have—but what really motivated him to push for a new campus was—certainly, we were all frustrated by the elevators, and everybody could remember the delays. The old FSI was a horrible building. I'm speaking of the most recent old FSI on Key Boulevard. That was frustrating, and the fact that we were in two buildings was frustrating. And it was beginning to be a real serious problem because try to manage personnel in two different buildings where you had activities going on that had to be integrated between the two of them. For example, junior officers were down several blocks away from the main part of FSI, and consular training and a lot of the other training was taking place within the main building, and yet there was a need to have more interaction between junior officers and these other activities, even if they were not yet engaged in those courses. That was a frustrating thing. It was hard to manage, hard to administer, costly, and so on.

And we all, Steve included, were trying to find a way to consolidate. Should we rent the building next door? Should we do something like that? Well, one day, he walked in for a

meeting—I believe it was a meeting of the under secretaries, one of their weekly meetings—and he parked himself downstairs in the garage [in the department] and walked up the stairs, and he happened to go through the area just outside the conference rooms down there where we have displays very often, and he walked by—this was on the first floor—and here is a great big layout—one of these four feet by four feet or so cardboard put-together of prospective building down around Maine Avenue in the District, and there was a little flag there, and it said FSI on top of one of these buildings. And he looked at that, and it said, “Proposed new construction for national cultural center,” or trade and cultural center—something like that—something we now know was ultimately built as a part of the Ronald Reagan Building downtown, but in those days they were looking at that space to build several high-rise buildings. And Steve blew his stack. He went into the meeting and said, “What is this? We’re already in a high-rise building which doesn’t work, and you’re trying to put us down in another rented high-rise building? This doesn’t make sense.” So that was the beginning of our search for a new facility. Fortunately he had the support of the undersecretary for management at that point, which was Ron Spiers, and we got that kind of support, so we began looking for people. He put me in charge of a committee, and we went to GSA. I happened to know somebody at GSA. We went to GSA and got GSA senior people involved and supporting us and looking for a site. And we must have looked over I don’t know how many we looked at. People were coming up with possibilities all over the place. Steve found a place up on Foxhall Road—in fact, it was a girls’ school up on Foxhall at one point. He talked seriously about—

*Q: I think that the Mt. Vernon School which closed because it went broke.*

SPROTT: Yes. That was looked at, and then it became increasingly clear that we needed a place that was going to be easy to get to and from, to the Department, and this site here at Arlington Hall Station had been looked some years earlier, and we’d been turned down. It didn’t work, at any rate. But just on a chance, Steve asked the then executive director of the Institute, who just passed away, I noticed in the *State Magazine*, and I’ve just lost his name. At any rate, he was engaged with the county in talking about trying to find different places in the county, because we were also looking at the north parking lot outside of the Pentagon and there was another space. And the person he was working with at the county said, “You know, I just heard some rumors that the Arlington Hall Station might be up again, and we can’t do anything because we don’t have the money to buy it”—something like that. And so Steve told him to see what he could do about finding more about this, and that led us ultimately to negotiating for and getting the 90-plus acres—actually it was originally 97 acres here—and then finally having to give up 15 acres to the National Guard in order to get it all free from the Army. And that’s what did it. It was pure luck, but a lot of effort. But you go back, you talk about vision, Steve said, “We can’t continue to stay in these buildings. We’ve got to move, and we’ve got to really do the work.” And then he set out to do it and that’s how we ended up then moving in these other directions at the same time.

*Q: You know, as you and Dick have talked, and we’re only five years into this new building, I get a sense of sadness that the potential of this new building hasn’t come out. I*

*mean it's sort of slipped back to being a better building for a trade school. I mean, do I get that from you?*

SPROTT: Yes, very definitely. It's a better facility for the same thing. I mean, we wired this facility so that it could be easily used to transmit around the world and receive around the world. We're in a world in which that is an everyday occurrence. I know people when I was in the Bureau of International Organizations, we used the TV constantly to have meetings with New York and with other agencies around town. We had interagency meetings at least once a week on the TV, and they worked very well, thank you. There is no reason why that kind of thing—I know it takes place elsewhere all the time, and those rooms in the Department are used constantly—that kind of thing should be happening here, and the FSI should be in the lead in that. There is a lot of work that could be done to support Foreign Service nationals overseas. If you're talking about integrating people, they're ones that need that. And yes, it's costly initially, but eventually you get those costs down, and there's no reason why we can't be doing more of that. This facility was designed for that. That would increase your student intake. Surely, they might be overseas, but that's part of your student intake. And I think I may have mentioned earlier, I continue to think that the fact that we're stuck with essentially a nine-to-four day for an instructional facility for teaching is just crazy. In this day and age we ought to be using this facility from early in the morning till late at night.

*Q: Sure, there's no reason why not to have night courses here.*

SPROTT: Exactly.

*Q: This is Washington par excellence. It's geared for night courses.*

SPROTT: Exactly, and people take them all the time. We pay for people to go to evening courses in some places. This facility was also designed to accept other people. Again, I may have mentioned this, but I think that every high school that comes to visit Washington ought to make one of its stops here at the Foreign Service Institute, and there are a lot of reasons—one, to learn something about foreign affairs, two, to see some of these people who are actually foreign affairs practitioners, and three, to see that life is filled with learning opportunities, that you don't finish learning once you leave high school, and here are these supposedly bright people (maybe not so bright people) doing all kinds of things from communications to secretarial work to political analysis and so on. Here are these people continuing to learn in order to better prepare themselves to carry out responsibilities in their next job. So I think you'll begin to get that. There's every reason to believe that the community here could use this facility, if not directly, indirectly, by having greater participation by people here in the community and having the community come here.

Now, you've got to manage this, and you can't manage it if the attitude toward the Institute is one of trying to keep it as small and as unobtrusive and as cost-free as possible. You have to begin to look at the Institute not as a narrowly defined technical training facility, but begin to look at the Institute as an opportunity for leveraging into the



community in the larger sense. Until you get an Secretary of State and subordinate under secretaries who believe that and believe it long enough to support it and make sure that it's protected with the kinds of resources it needs to carry these things out, you're not going to have it. That's where a lot of it fell down. You've also got to make sure that you've got staffing that supports that kind of vision. You have to have more Paul Bookers and Steve Lows and Charlie Brays and George Springsteens. You've got to have people who are knowledgeable about, committed to not only a narrowly defined job but a broader job. This says nothing about the good people who've been directors otherwise. I'm not trying to cast aspersions on anybody. But it's important to make that choice in the same way that you decide that you need an activist ambassador in country *A* versus a passive ambassador in country *B*, that you need an ambassador that speaks the language and is able to deal culturally with somebody in country *Z* versus somebody who you deliberately want to send in and you don't care if they know anything about it because that's the kind of message you want to send.

Those kind of choices we make. We're not making that choice here. There should be a greater connection between the Institute and the recruitment process because they are connected. Now, I'm not saying that the Institute should dictate recruitment—I'm not saying that at all—but there are resources at the Institute that could be used by recruitment, and FSI could learn from that recruitment process as well. I could keep going on this whole issue. To me, it takes little imagination to see how you could form the Department around a newly defined set of goals for a National Foreign Affairs Training Center that would lead to an enhancement of the understanding of foreign affairs in the United States by citizens around the country that would lead to greater interaction between the foreign affairs community and citizens around the country and that would lead to a greater number of people wanting and choosing and being knowledgeable in order to make that choice coming into the foreign affairs community.

I think that would have its obvious implications in terms of resources, but that shouldn't be there reason, but people would have a better understanding of the implications of engaging in treaty negotiations or the failure of diplomacy or why it fails—maybe because we didn't have the resources to put into ensuring that it wouldn't fail. People would be able better to see the trade-offs between military action and quiet diplomacy. They don't even understand that now. They don't even know that it exists in many cases. And that is the fault of the foreign affairs community, and that's the fault of the leadership in the official foreign affairs community, and it falls first, I think, on the Department of State and its leadership. And while we often take blame, until we get that at the top and it's consistently applied, it won't work, it won't happen. Just go and look at the statements that are made by every DG (Director General) in recent history and every undersecretary for management in recent history and then compare it also with statements by Secretaries and deputy secretaries. If there's anything at all, any attention at all, given to the concept of training, outreach, and development of understanding of foreign affairs in the larger community in order to ensure that we have the support for our agenda, for what we're called upon to do, it's short shrift and it is not long-lasting, and you'll find that DG after DG and Secretary after Secretary will make a statement but never follow through. And if they did, you wouldn't have the next Secretary or DG making essentially

the same statement. And it's, I think, a fault of the system, partially because we're policy-oriented, we are form-oriented, and not substantive-oriented.

*Q: Well, John, I'm thinking this might be a good time to stop at this point. Do you think so? Because I'd like to move to your ambassadorship. Is there anything else we should go over?*

SPROTT: Well, let's see. I could talk more about the new campus. The whole design process was, I think, an interesting process. First of all, to justify the new campus we got in people to do studies, to look at the Institute and see what it was actually doing and to assess whether or not the space that we had available currently was adequate to carry out the responsibilities that were right on the table already, not some imaginary set of responsibilities, not new levels of course offerings or anything like that—just what are we doing now and what is the relationship between that, the space we have, and the student body and staff? We did that, and in the process we got a number of recommendations. It clearly came out, every study that was done—I think there were three altogether that were done—demonstrated without a doubt that we had inadequate space for the kind of responsibilities we'd been asked to carry out at that point, inadequate in terms of amount but also inadequate in terms of type. It did not allow the kind of interaction that was needed in order to ensure a greater level of success of even existing programs, such as traditional language training. But if you were trying to then take traditional language training and convert it, as we were trying to do at the point so that you have greater integration... End of Tape 5, Side A

What I was saying was, if we wanted to have the kind of integration that I've described in terms of language training, area studies, consular, political, and so on, then you needed to have spaces that reinforced and supported that kind of integration, made it easy for the student, as opposed to anyone else, to carry out these kinds of classroom activities. So the outside studies demonstrated we needed to have new space, different space. The studies also demonstrated that a vertical high-rise system for the program would not work, was not the appropriate way to go, that we needed a horizontal layout in some fashion. So that was a first step in design. It was the first step in justification, too, frankly, and we used that to estimate costs along with working with GSA to get some estimates of costs of construction and so on.

Then GSA virtually decided to go out for national bids for design of the campus. To my understanding, this was the first time in a number of years that the GSA had gone out for national bids for the design of a government building. So that was really quite a thing to be a part of that. And a number—if I remember correctly there were something like 20-some firms, joint architectural and engineering firms, joined together and put in bids to get the design, and then a committee was formed from the Department of State admin people, FSI, and GSA to weed out those 20 and bring it down to, if I remember correctly, three or four companies; and they then were required to go back and build little models and have more detailed design characteristics for the thing. And then on that final committee, Steve Low was a representative from the FSI. Comparable representation from the Department and GSA were there, and the company was picked, which was

Mitchell/Giurgola, which was just completing the construction of the Australian Parliament Buildings, and Giurgola really participated initially kind of with us but then he later stayed in Australia, and Allen Greenberger was the primary architect that we finally got. I go through that because that architectural firm had as part of its approach to things trying to understand the role of an institution and the character of the processes that took place within the institution in order to design the building. And if you look at Mitchell/Giurgola buildings, wherever they may be—and we looked at a lot of them, ultimately, after they were chosen—some of the characteristics are that even though they've been 30 years or 25 years or 20 years or 15 years earlier, they were as fresh today when you looked at them as they were probably when they were built. Part of that was color schemes, part of it was lighting, part of it was a sense that the building itself lent itself to its purpose, so that rather than having a construction of a building that you didn't find a purpose for kind of thing.

That was important because we then spent in the neighborhood of a little over six months with a team of engineers and architectural staff people from Mitchell/Giurgola, which was the architectural firms, and a firm called DVKR, which was the engineering firm that they had the joint venture with. DVKR eventually sold out to a Sasaki Associates, which became then Sasaki and Mitchell/Giurgola were the two final firms. Those two put together a team of people, and they came and sat in classes, sat in meetings, watched the people wander around. We did survey work. We went out and asked people what it was they were doing, what it was they wanted, what they needed, who it was they worked with most closely, what kind of physical linkages there were between different parts of the institute and themselves, what were some of the linkages that were missing that were needed, both physical as well as other kinds of linkages. We did real survey work about the kinds of materials that people used, how they used those materials, so that we got in one sense a reference point for what people were doing, we got a reference point for how people were doing it, we got a reference point for what people thought they needed that was missing there or that they had to work hard to get to.

So that gave us one level of the thing. We then did survey work with this team again of what they would like to see, within reason, where did they see themselves going in the future with different aspects of the program. Now this was not being dictated by Steve or myself, the director or the deputy director of the institute, nor did we allow the deans to dictate to the staff; these people would talk to the staff independent of us because the whole idea was to come up with the real kind of thing, not what somebody said it should be. They then, the architectural team and the engineering people, went back, and they came up with some preliminary kinds of conclusions and the kind of design they thought fit that.

And just a parenthetical comment. There was at one point a round, circular, doughnut-looking building that was proposed as a construction for the institute that had a lot of sense to it. Because it was circular and round, it housed a lot of people—it had a lot of square space—but it meant everybody had to meet everybody at one point, because one of our major complaints was that because of the kind of structures we had, two buildings and verticalness, people didn't get the integration. But we also didn't want to

lose the sense that you get on the elevators because you did get to meet a lot of people on the elevators. There were a lot of conversations. It's interesting what stuff goes on in elevators. So it was logical that they would come up with that circular doughnut kind of thing, and Secretary Shultz said "No way, You will not have that doughnut." I'm not sure in the end how serious that really would have been, but it was one certainly we liked, kind of. We thought it had some unique characteristics. Frankly, given the lay of the land [terrain] here, I'm not sure in the end that it would have been really very feasible to build it that way.

But anyhow, after that they sat down and began the designing of the facility. And the first temptation on the part of the architects and the engineers was to do things against that reference point in such a way that they became fixed, and one of the arguments that I made very early on, and was supported by everybody, was that you can't assume that what we will be doing when we move into the campus, let alone five years later, is the same thing we will be doing now. Therefore, the facility has to be built for change. Secondly, it's clear that if you walked around the institute, air was a problem. Fresh air was a problem. Temperature of the air was a problem. And air in general, getting it in some case, was a problem. And we had to have a way that people could feel free on that. So whatever you did in terms of permitting the facility to be changeable, responsive to change in methodology, in content, in direction and so on, you had to be able to also change the infrastructure to support that. So the heating and air conditioning, the lighting, the air flow, and the electronic support system all had to be changeable with that, and that created a little bit of a quandary for a while as to how we could have supposedly permanent walls but not have permanent walls. They came up with a design so that if you—not in old Main and not in the new gymnasium, of course—but in a new facility, you could change any of those rooms around pretty much the way you want to, including reconfiguring halls if you had to, and move the heating and the air flow and the lighting and the electronics of it. You could also get into the electronics without going into the classroom and so on.

That design process was a lengthy one, probably approaching a year, because it also encompassed a problem of proximity of people to other people. Where do you put area studies in relation to language studies? And within that context, where do you put Latin American area studies in conjunction with Spanish, Portuguese language—Brazilian Portuguese at any rate—language training? How do you treat instructors versus linguists? How do you deal with this issue? One of the things that I think I mentioned before was that I argued that we'd already negotiated the union contract so that we could change the hours of the day, the normal hours of the day, to anything we wanted them to be and the days of the week, a normal workweek, so that we could run classes into the evening, start them early in the morning and run them early in the evening, run shifts, run them even on the weekend if we chose to.

That meant that we were also going to have to change the way we staffed the institute. Now that might in turn mean that we would have more contract faculty, and not less contract faculty, and we began to move in that direction, so that we had more flexibility in the management of that staffing. Now that made some enemies. Some people didn't

like that, but I think, at least as long as—I can't speak for after I left—but certainly as long as I was here, I felt that we were on very good terms with the union, the fact that the union leadership since I've been back has on a couple of occasions made it a point to see me and it's always been very positive and supportive, and mutually so. I think we could have succeeded in that. We unfortunately didn't move to do the shift work early on. But the point here is that the campus then got designed from that point of view, so that you designed it from the classroom and the staffing point of view and shift work, that meant you couldn't give people and promise them all these permanent desks, so that that meant your concept of the office had to change somewhat, and it had already changed, frankly, but it was hard in the facility that we were at to make that change really a permanent sense of change, whereas we had that opportunity here to do that. So office configurations became more temporary in that sense, so that you could have shifts. We could have two Spanish instructors sitting at the same desk, for example, and just give them different drawers to lock up or whatever you wanted, but if they were in shifts that would work. Same thing with area studies and in the other training programs as well.

In the end it meant that we had to do something about security, so the facility had to be safe enough so that people could feel comfortable being here at night and feel safe at night. Now we couldn't have ten million police people walking around or patrols walking around the campus, and the more we designed the facility, the more difficult that became. So the security system became one that we see a lot of now. The outside perimeter became a security system. We got cameras around the campus that provide another level of security. You do have some rovers, more at night than you do in the day, but we're able to keep that down to—actually, my memory is that we ended up with no more people on security than we had in the two buildings before, but with a much larger campus and facility, and that is thanks to electronics and the way in which that can be used to support the system.

Parking was also an issue here because it was going to be clear that we were going to have more people driving than we had at the old institute's facility, simply because (a) it would be available, but (b) the kind of public transportation that was accessible here at the new institute, the new facility, would not be the same as what was available at Rosslyn.

We're off the Metro system, although at one point the Metro people said they would be willing to run special buses. But by the time we built the campus and got here, they were less willing to do that, and it's a shame, because it, I think, could have helped a lot. We also, of course, changed the Department's buses. The Department runs its own bus system, and that compensates somewhat for that.

But that design process then continued on as we began to talk about, well, some of the what ifs. It was clear that the technology changes that had taken place just in the period during which we were investigating the new site were dramatic enough that it warranted us thinking big. It was thinking well into the future, in electronic terms, about how we should harness. . . . well, I should say both electrical and electronic terms, because it was clear that one of the reasons we had to move out of the Rosslyn building that we were in

is that at that point, frankly, if we were to use any more computers they would have to go in with a whole new electrical system in the building.

It was wholly inadequate. We'd already had to put in separate systems for the air conditioning units on the tenth floor of that building for the computers that we put in and had to put another new system in down on C level of that building when we put in a whole new computer system to support admin training down there. If we were going to have any more, we were going to still build more. So it was clear we needed to have an electrical system that was going to be able to support that kind of change, and we had to have an electronic support system that would do the same. Basically the design was that you ended up with trunk system on a vertical line that (to kind of shortcut the whole thing if you will), . . . I'm trying to think of the word . . . not coaxial, but it's the like . . . I can't think of the term. At any rate, the trunk line was created so that it could take the maximum you could easily feed through it if you had to, but the cabling there would facilitate even more telephones and more televisions and more communications than the lines that would go out horizontally. So you could go out horizontally from that trunk line and only get what you needed down that hallway and the individual offices, classrooms, or conference centers. So that became the way in which we could facilitate the future, if you will, by taking into account the fact that there were bound to be changes in technology, there was going to be an increased use of electronic systems, and that needed to be supported.

Another design was that we needed to be able to make sure that there was greater interactivity within the Institute itself, not only for Internet and e-mail and that sort of thing, which is at kind of the trivial level, but for interactive classes, so that if, for example, the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs is running a simulation exercise in the C Building, the cafeteria building, and that had to be set up so that they could run those exercises and both tape them audio or video, however they wanted to, but those exercise could be used in other classrooms at the same time. People could be learning from those exercises in, say, political training if that was a desire or an interest. And so we wanted to be able to have that kind of facility too, so that was why we created the kind of audiovisual center with the kind of control systems that you've got between those buildings, so that that could be used, it was accessible and could be changed and led into it, if it was needed.

That was all part of the design, and it was not something that was automatic. Today we think of it as being very obvious, but at the time we had to work through this and talk about it. We spent hours. I had a meeting every week with the architects and very often GSA and our own people, the relevant people. When Steve was there, he would come to either every other one or for periods every one of those meetings, but one of us was always there and both of us were, essentially, very often there. Subsequently, as time went on, when Charlie Bray took over, he participated maybe once a month at those meetings, but that kind of set a tone, because we were at a different stage at that period, though that's when we began to get into a lot more detail on some of the issues.

Then when Brandon Grove came in, we were at yet another stage of that design process, and that's where we were beginning to look at chairs, for example. And one of the things that we were insisting upon was that we have ergonomic chairs in all the classrooms so that the people who are going to be sitting there are going to be sitting in something that's reasonably healthy and not some of the chairs that we were sitting in at FSI that had been purchased just after World War II practically, and no kidding aside, and people suffered from that process—they can't listen, they can't scribble, they can't do those things you need to do when you're learning.

I'd like to go on in that design process, but the point here that is important to me is that we put lots and lots and lots of time into design, even down to details of color of stairwells, the way in which stairs would be used or wouldn't be used, and we could make them more usable. You see windows now in the stairwells, and that was in order to make those stairwells more inviting and not something that distanced people. It also is a way of bringing the outside into the inside. As I think I mentioned earlier, we wanted to make hallways meaningful places so you actually could have classrooms in the corner of some of those things. There's no reason why all the classroom activity has to take place in a box. It could take place out in those round circles out in the area. You could even have them outside, for that matter. The point here was that this was a learning environment, not just a building of bricks.

Another thing in the design was how it should look from the outside, and I give the architects a huge amount of credit here for an imaginative approach. The bricks that are used in the building are not standard link bricks. They are 15 inches long, I think, and if you'd used the standard length bricks, the standard eight-by-two brick, or something like that, you would have ended up with a sense of an institutional building, and you could see this in some of the drawings they did. But by putting the longer brick in, you get longer lines, and the building became softened by that. And they put the curves in around various points of the building not only because we wanted learning places; we wanted places for people to meet. Students didn't have any places to meet in the old campus. We wanted to encourage that meeting of people. Now so they put the curves there for that reason, but they also did it as a vehicle for softening the lines, even though you were still going down a hill, sort of, or you were having a fairly long building in this case. So that was all again part of the design. How do you work these in so that you maximize the space you have for learning and minimize the space you have for simply administrative space or walking space, because we wanted to maximize the learning space, not only because it's flexible and can be responsive to needs but because all of it could be used.

That design process was critical. Okay, I say it's critical. How was it critical? Well, first of all, it creates a facility which is really usable over time, but secondly, it cut down on the cost after the fact when we actually started building. If you look at the fact that we finished this campus essentially on time and under budget, it says a lot about that original design process and the degree of agreement there was on what everything meant and how it was to proceed. Throughout the building process, we met, again, weekly, and in some cases I would meet more than weekly with the construction people and the architects and GSA, when appropriate, and others, and watched that process and took care of problems

and took care of questions of interpretation where there was a design question. What was the interpretation to be given to this? Fortunately, we could in almost every case refer back to that set of design documents and the lengthy discussions that had taken place there. So if I wasn't there, for example, or if the director wasn't there, somebody could refer back to that very easily, and the architects by now had it very much in their own mind as to what we were after here, so that the spirit of what we were after was always the decision maker on a particular issue. As a result, we didn't have any overruns, and we didn't have the kind of changes that got called for.

Now where we had some overruns was in this old main building and in the gymnasium, because it was so hard to estimate what the cost of redoing these buildings was going to be. Originally, we felt we'd get rid of them, but because they had historical significance the decision was to make this a corridor, this access from the gymnasium through Old Main and up through the [main gate] area and the old Sears kit home: that became the axis of historic significance on the campus, and those things all, we'd agreed, have to be maintained. I can remember the whole committee went down – Brandon Grove at this point, myself, Frank Ravenaugh, who was the deputy director of the institute when we found this facility under Steve Low – we went down to Richmond to talk to the State Historian's Office and try to convince them that we were really serious people, that we were honest, and that we wanted to do the best and the right thing, and that we had serious questions about our ability to use these buildings. But as you can see, we found a way, thanks to our architects, the willingness of the State Historian's Office, the willingness of GSA, and the willingness of Arlington Country people to work with us, we found a way to restore these two buildings, and they're very functional and usable, though they're not as flexible as we would like them, but they're still darn nice buildings and, I think, provide optimal opportunities that the Department of State and the foreign affairs community could use, although they currently don't take full advantage of. I mean, why don't we have more NATO (North Atlantic Treaty organization) meetings here, or some of those other regional conferences?

*Q: I have a little question, John. Where did the design come for these pillars that are around the entrance to the Visitors' Center? I almost have fun pointing them out because they resemble, if you look at them, a rather modernistic phalli, and they have a sort of a red glow. When it gets wet it brings out the red more, sort of rosy phalli. What's the story behind the pillars?*

SPROTT: Actually you are looking at some incomplete projects. Security is an issue that we had some real battles on. If you remember, and it still, I think, remains true, at the visitors' center if you walk up the stairs and come out at the top and face west there, there is in effect what looks like to be a leveled area. That area is prepared ready to accept a new building, and that building was to be Diplomatic Security. The thought was to move diplomatic security training from wherever it was out in Virginia, and put it there. That never happened, largely because Diplomatic Security fought it. I have to think personally that it was a mistake for a lot of reasons. One of the biggest reasons is that if anything you need to make people more positively conscious and sensitive to and willing to take



advantage of diplomatic security, and by keeping them separately you do just the opposite.

But anyway, security was an important issue then and probably has become more important since in this age of terrorism. One of the things they wanted to do was to put things—I think it was what they called these security “teeth”—in all the entrances so that they’d be raised and lowered. You had to have crash barriers; you had to have something you could plant, and those pylons, or whatever you call them—Phalli. Well, they successfully, I would say, fought hard not to have that. First of all, mobile barriers were awfully expensive, and they were going to run us even further over budget and detract from other things that we were going to need to do. If you look around the town, security barriers are in a number of places, so what happened was our pillars became the natural result.

Besides I couldn’t see us spending money on that when we needed that money for other projects. We’d already cut out a number of things. For example, above the cafeteria there’s a round circular area. That was supposed to be a patio that could be used for outdoor events. You could have functions up there and so on. You could still do that, but we took off all of those things that would have permitted that to happen—the door and lots of other things—in order to save some money. We were going to have a pond down in that meadow there because there is an active spring that we’d have to pipe through, but that was going to be a pond down there. I tried to talk DACOR (Diplomats and Consular Officers, Retired) into making that the DACOR pond.

*Q: I’m told George Shultz, who has an engineering background, too, said no water, no fountains, no ponds. He’d seen what happens when you try to maintain those things.*

SPROTT: Well, it wasn’t only for that reason, I think, he said that. He was also concerned and very sensitive to Congress’ attitude toward that kind of thing. And I have to tell you, thank God we didn’t do it, because by the time we got to John Rogers, that would have been one of the straws that might well have broken the camel’s back.

*Q: Were there any other activities that were supposed to have been located at NFACT? Diplomatic security you were thinking about, national language testing—*

SPROTT: The idea of a national testing center was something pursued later, not during the planning for the campus. We did think that at some point USIA might move its training in the E Buildings. Those are all constructed so you can add to them. It’s done so you can just add to the end of it, and on the last two you can add up on it as well. These buildings are already designed and constructed so that that is a feasible thing. It’s planned on being done. That would have been the extent of that space. We were trying to avoid the idea that we would build anymore and fill in a lot of what appears to be open space because we were trying not to detract from this institution that we were trying to create, this place to which people would go that would be considered a magnet. It would be then fill up with all kinds of building. You’d lose that. As you point out, the military academies have got the sense of a campus, of a learning environment, of an environment

that reinforces those traditions. That's the kind of thing that we were trying to create there as well. So we would substitute shrubbery for that kind of thing.

The place that was between the Old Main Building and the Sears kit house, there's a bridge and there's an area there that basically used to have some old benches there was a perfect amphitheater, and one concept was that there was no reason at all why we couldn't be having lectures down there and even music and things of that nature in the evening and invite outsiders, the whole idea being that the whole campus ought to be something that's functional and usable and supports the goals of the place. But I guess that's pretty much it on design. I guess the big point I was trying to make is that the initial heavy, heavy, intensive work that lasted a long period of time, several years really, paid off in the end because it was that that determined the ability to move fairly rapidly, that identified materials, for example, pretty early on, and it enabled us to finish on time and within budget.

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*Q: The 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1999. John, you were appointed as Ambassador to Swaziland and arrived at post in February 1994. How did that appointment come about?*

SPROTT: Well, that's kind of interesting. I was originally asked by Ed Perkins, the Director General of the Foreign Service, if I would be willing to become an ambassador, and if so, he noted I would be one of the first civil service employees, Senior Executive Service employees that would have been nominated for an ambassadorship. I said, "Of course." You can't turn that down. He said, "Well, there are three countries we are considering you for: Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. Would you accept those?" And I said, "Yes, without talking to my wife, I would accept them, but I think I need to talk to her." This, incidentally, was in April of 1992, and if you remember, there were elections that were beginning at that point with President Bush. And so the nomination went forward. I did my papers, and nomination went through, if I remember correctly, the President's office, President Bush. He was not elected, so all of those nominations went by the board, and it was over with, and I thought, "Well, you know, it will never happen again." Well, lo and behold, April of 1993, I was again asked by the Department, in this case, to do the same thing for Swaziland, and reapplied and went through the same process and that's how it happened.

I have no idea what kinds of discussions and thoughts went into that on the part of the Department. I am one who believes in not questioning a gift horse, so at any rate, I don't know what went into it, but it was certainly an honor. I'm told—I don't know this for sure, but I'm told—that I was only the second civil service employee at the Senior Executive Service rank to be made an ambassador, so it makes it even a greater honor, I think. I think Jim Michel may have been the first, who, I think, was a DAS in Latin American affairs. {Editor's Note: James H. Michel was a Civil Service Employee of the Department who became Ambassador to Guatemala from October 1987 to September 1989. He was Principal DAS for the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs from 1983 to 1987. From 1973 to 1977 he served as Assistant Legal Adviser and from 1977 to 1983

was the Deputy Legal Adviser.] At any rate, that's how it happened. My criteria for going, however, were that I would not leave until we moved the Institute into the new facility. So I made sure that I was able to stay through that part.

*Q: Just to cover that, was there any problem in moving the Institute over to the new facilities?*

SPROTT: We started planning for the move about a year and a half before the actual move, and with greater and greater intensity as we got closer to the move itself, starting with making sure we had a good inventory system that would enable us to account for whatever it was we had in terms of materials. Even before that in assessing not only inventory but assessing all of the equipment to determine what equipment could be taken with us and what should be gotten rid of because it was too old or it was dilapidated or it was being used but would be totally inappropriate for the new facility and such. We used that also as a basis for confirming the final purchases of furniture and tables and shelving and things like that in the new facility. So the process of actually moving people, first the materials and then secondly the people and then third the personal things that belonged to them, actually was a process that began very early on, and so I thought and feel that it was a very orderly process that took place in stages—we moved people out there in stages so that we didn't try it suddenly over a weekend—end in one place and start in another, and that let us clean up the building we were leaving to make sure that we were not losing things in the process.

*Q: Was there any particular problem in moving away from the previous FSI location which was almost right on top of the Rosslyn Metro station?*

SPROTT: That posed problems. Originally we had understood when we talked to the Metro subway people that they eyed our new facility and the number of people that would be here as well as the National Guard facility that would be there—their feeling was that they would be able to run special bus service, but they did not do that, and I don't believe they're doing it yet, but that was one of the ideas, that we would be able to have some special bus service that would be providing people with easier access than they now have. But the problem is it did pose a problem. Getting into Rosslyn, while Rosslyn posed difficulties for students, especially, and visitors in particular, for parking reasons, the faculty and administrative staff and others were able to find parking or use the Metro system and had become accustomed to that pattern of work; so moving here where they, in some cases, didn't have the same or couldn't use the same ride-sharing approach, where they didn't have immediate access to the subway and the bus transportation meant changing buses at least one more time if not two more times for them, did pose some difficulties, although parking was very much more available and much less expensive, obviously. But getting to job at the new facility was a big concern.

The second big concern was that there were not near the array of restaurants and eating facilities around the immediate area of the new facility, and everyone had become accustomed to access to the variety of types of foods and different levels of costs of food and things like that within the Rosslyn area, and moving here they were initially almost

totally dependent upon the cafeteria. So we worked very hard to have a good cafeteria contract and a good contractor who would provide good food and some variation. I don't know how that's worked out, but initially they were very conscious of this issue and the problem it raised. Eventually, I suppose, and there are, I notice already, one or two more restaurants in the vicinity here. The trouble is there's no easy walking. You can't walk to those restaurants very easily. You almost have to drive to them, and that poses a problem.

The third thing that made this difficult was getting people from the Department, even though you could actually get here in no greater amount—it doesn't take you any longer to get here than it did to get to the old Rosslyn office, primarily because of traffic patterns—people perceived this distance as a barrier, and so psychologically, in fact, this became a barrier to getting people here as speakers and so on.

Finally, the last thing I think was bothersome to people was that in the Rosslyn area there was access to office supply stores and things so that they could personally get, you know, greeting cards and the kind of stuff that you don't think of all the time but is, over a period of time in the work environment, important, and that just simply is not available out here in the same way that it was in Rosslyn, so those were all negatives or downsides and ones that we were aware of when we originally got the site to begin with. But we thought that the positives overcame those negatives.

*Q: I understand one of the factors that Steve Low initially wanted was a place where students coming to the FSI were not too close to the Department of State. He didn't want them easily running back to their offices, which would have detracted from a real student environment. I mean, you really had to have certain separation, rather than some of the earlier plans were to put it up in apartment offices near the Department.*

SPROTT: Well, there was that Surgeon General area that was talked about, and then Columbia Plaza, and then there were some other buildings, but that's correct—there were discussions on the part of the Department and others to try to get the Institute close to the Department, the argument being it would be easier for people to get to and from. Well, of course, that's true, but that would have become the bane, because you could already see, when we were in Rosslyn, the number of people who . . . it's about an hour and a half lunch break . . . often dashed back to the Department. Maintaining that separation was one of the reasons we have always argued we needed to have a nurse who was able to give vaccinations and we needed some access to travel people, and we finally were able to talk people into allowing us to provide some form of passport services. Even before we left Rosslyn we were doing this, and the argument was this allowed us to keep the students in the environment and help them keep their minds on that job while they were in that job until they could leave on their assignments. That was certainly a criterion.

*Q: Because we are talking about a workaholic atmosphere, and it's very difficult to get people to concentrate on their studies if they have to deal with an in-box in another office.*

SPROTT: That's right, and that especially would happen in the Senior Seminar—we had problems there, believe it or not—and in a number of other courses—the economics course it had begun to happen. I remember it happened toward the end of the economics course especially, people leaving at the end of the course and some skipped the beginning as well. But in any case, in those types of courses the students weren't going to be tested in the same way as language courses. The language training tended to be a little bit different, especially in the hard languages.

*Q: This is Tape 6, Side 1, with John Sprott. In Swaziland you were there from when to when?*

SPROTT: I arrived there in January of 1994 and left in August of 1996.

*Q: When you went out there, what were you getting from the country desk. You know, you read in and all that, were there any issues, problems, concerns?*

SPROTT: Well, there were several issues, I guess. Remember that 1995 was the year scheduled for the elections in South Africa, so there was a focus on that. Swaziland was and remains to a degree still, but was especially then, a country to which a lot of South Africans went for relaxation away from some of the tensions that existed in South Africa. It is also a country in which there were a fair number of Coloreds and mixed-marriage people who worked in South Africa and lived in Swaziland because they wouldn't have been able to live in South Africa. The nature of the country itself provided an ideal kind of location to listen and watch what was going on and get a slightly different dimension on some of the things that were taking place in South Africa. At the same time, you had the civil war going on in Mozambique, and the relations between the Swazis and the Mozambicans was such that this also was a useful place in which to have some insight—not very much, but some—there as well, and there was some interplay between the two countries with us able to use some of the people from Swaziland to apply pressure or at least to make some of our messages or our allies' messages, reinforce them to the Mozambicans and do the same thing in Angola and South Africa.

*Q: Does Swaziland abut on Mozambique?*

SPROTT: Swaziland is surrounded basically on three sides by South Africa and on one side by Mozambique. The Swazis claim land that runs along the border of Mozambique and South Africa from Swaziland. They claim the land that kind of goes along that border. At one level they're probably correct in their claim because the British basically, when they acted as the protectorate of Swaziland, simply gave it up to the South Africans. It was originally very lightly populated, but the population, at least for a good portion of it, was probably Swazis initially. Now you finally find it very difficult to get a foreign speakers in that area to agree to come under Swaziland because the conditions of living in South Africa are so much better than they are in Swaziland in terms of what the government is able and willing to do for people in terms of schooling and other sorts of things, plus (Mangosuthu) Buthelezi, who's not particularly a friend of the Swazis, made sure that there are people more in tune with him that are living in that area now than there

used to be. In fact, according to the Swazis, this was a deliberately move to colonize or place people in that region.

*Q: Buthelezi being—*

SPROTT: Buthelezi a tribal chief from South Africa, who could be called the prime minister of the Zulu group, and the king of the Zulus is related to the Swazis, so the Swazis are related to him. There's so much kind of intermarriage and kinship there. The king is very friendly with the king in Swaziland but Buthelezi, of course, feels that he really is, in fact is, much more the leader of the Zulus than the king is, but still, there's that infighting. That's only relevant because the Swazis, there is this kind of claim, and it has been a bone of some contention, at some times more serious than at others, for a number of years, and has recently arisen again. It did a couple of times while I was there. But some issues involved South Africa and Mozambique primarily with Swaziland kind of sitting right there in the path of movement of people back and forth, if not able to participate itself. I think the Swazis also participated in some of the activities.

*Q: How was South Africa represented in Mbabane?*

SPROTT: Let's see, 1996, I guess, or late 1995. The new DCM of the South African High Commission representing the new régime in South Africa was a young ANC (African National Congress), who had been running guns from Mozambique through Swaziland as well as people, and it was very interesting talking to him. At any rate, things did obviously change. But, there was the political situation in both Mozambique and South Africa that was an issue and was one that we tried to support from our point of view and provide information on for Washington as we could from the mission. The Foreign Broadcasting Information Service was there, and we had another agency there as well, and we provided a fair amount of information that was usable on the part of those in the Department of State who had an interest in that region. That would have been perhaps somewhat more difficult to obtain in other areas.

The next thing that we were concerned about internally was to move the country into what we would call more into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the sense of having a democracy. But in order to do that one of the things I felt was necessary was a set of laws, commercial and other kinds of laws, that provide the basis for any democracy to work. It's one thing to say you want a democracy; it's another thing to have the institutions that will ensure the functioning of that institution, the institutions that are necessary for democracy. So they needed, for example, laws on labor, laws on just normal commercial transactions and contracts. They needed a general industrial relations act. They needed taxation laws, not only internally but taxation laws that were better for imports and exports—tariffs, if you want to call them that—as well as fair and clear administered policies on the import and export of goods and services. So the idea was to work on the commercial side on the one hand and try to not only raise the awareness of the Swazis to the need to have laws and regulations that were in conformance with the region and in turn with the rest of the world so that they were on an even footing and could rely on trade; to encourage policies and laws and regulation on investment that would do the same, so that they could be

withdrawn from aid, because we were at this point contemplating, when I went there, the drawdown of aid activities, because we really had reached in many respects a point in the aid life of the country where what they needed was less of aid of the kind that we had been giving them, and more, probably, technical assistance or the kinds of assistance that they could get in other ways. So building up the business sector, building up foreign investment in the country was critical, so I saw as one of my jobs the idea of trying to get more U.S. investment in the country and more U.S. trade. I think all the other ambassadors were concerned about most of these issues as well.

The democratization process was a lot more difficult and involved, I think, not only the laws and regulations that we were trying to push along, which I think I spent an enormous amount of time with, people trying to mediate or encourage them to think along lines that would ultimately lead them to developing laws or regulations that would support a more evenhanded and certain judicial approach or legal approach to contracts and business activities and such, on the one hand, and trying to get them to develop a coherent, clear, and consistent policy on outside workers, immigration, and so on, because it was unclear whether as a foreign worker coming into a country as a part of a foreign investment you were ever going to get a work permit, and that handicapped the country considerably, because it meant that, well, Coca-Cola's there, and they had somebody in the country as a manager, they don't want the uncertainty of having that manager there today and then told to leave tomorrow because he didn't have a work permit. That seems magnificently obvious, but it wasn't to them, and so we found ourselves constantly trying to show them that they needed to have this kind of. . . . We got to the point where we were talking about a "one-stop window," which is a common thing in most countries, and trying to get them to develop that for investment and trade issues.

The next thing that we were working very actively on while AID was there was to try to set up a system whereby they were more conscious of the HIV/AIDS issue and doing something about it.

*Q: Could you explain what that is?*

SPROTT: What, HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)? Well, it's the infection of the immune system, where the immune system doesn't work. Anyway, in Swaziland we were calculating when I got there that the rate of infection and the number of people with the HIV or AIDS—I guess you call them HIV-infected and AIDS patients—was running around 22 per cent of the population. I've since seen numbers that are now claiming that it's closer to 25 and perhaps 30 per cent, which is kind of where a plateau is reached, I gather, in the epidemic of this sort. At any rate, there was almost no recognition of this at all, and yet you could go to a hospital, which I did in several cases, and you see these huge wards of TB (tuberculosis) patients, and TB is one of the outcomes of HIV infection in many of these countries—even doctors got TB. I can remember two hospitals I went into. The room was probably 20 feet wide, something of that nature, and had rows of these beds, those little cots that you probably would associate with the military, and they had people sleeping on

top of those cots and below the cots on the floor, and you couldn't walk, hardly, between the beds, they were so close. This was jam-packed with people, all with TB.

In fact, a doctor admitted to me privately that a good portion of these people were in fact HIV or AIDS patients, but they were not so recognized publicly because the system didn't want to. We finally were able to get the Swazis, the king, to mention this in his annual opening of parliament, and that was like a floodgate in permitting people to talk about it openly, and we got the royal family to do some family planning, led by the queen mother, and this, too, began to have its impact. So the whole idea was that until the king and the royal family recognized this, the average Swazi either chose not to believe it, couldn't believe it openly, because that would be going against the beliefs of the royal family, the king and queen mother—which is the way they think on many issues—so we couldn't do as much. You would have to rely upon the monarchists.

So HIV/AIDS was one issue. The next issue was family planning which we were doing through AID in this case, but other sources as well. The family planning program was as much about HIV/AIDS as it was anything, although it sought to educate families on ways in which they could better plan, the traditional reason for family planning. But the impetus, I think, in many respects, was the HIV/AIDS infection, to try to help reduce that, although, frankly, one of the causes of it, the spread of that infection, was the large number of Swazis who were miners in South Africa, and the infection rate amongst those miners is quite high, largely because they work in the mine area for fairly long periods of time, and the use of prostitution is very high.

The families were not permitted to accompany them, and so they would go off. Sometimes they didn't ever come back, but in many cases they did come back. They would come back for short periods of time and infect the family and then leave again. The miners were unaware of the infection, so it wasn't something that they did deliberately. Studies have now shown also that truckers have been responsible for a fair amount of this, too, and there was a fair amount of truck traffic that went through from Swaziland into South Africa and vice versa and through other countries, into Botswana, for example, and ultimately also from Mozambique over and back and forth.

So that was another set of issues. Probably one of the things that I set out to do when I was there was to move the Peace Corps. We had about 70 Peace Corps volunteers in country when I arrived, and they were almost all in the teaching area. I looked at the data before I left, and Swaziland had a fairly good university, from all accounts that I could read, and it was producing a fair number of teachers every year. And those teachers were going to South Africa to teach, not Swaziland. And our argument was that why should we be providing Peace Corps teachers to teach when there was now an adequate number of teachers being produced by the country but who were going to South Africa. That would have been one indication of their value and worth, and therefore something was wrong within the system of Swaziland that needed to be corrected. And so we would be pulling the Peace Corps out of teaching and putting them into other areas. The two areas that we hit were the environmental area and trying to get small farmers to develop an attitude toward marketing. So we worked the environmental issue and the small farm



farm-to-market issue together, and the idea was to teach dry farming techniques in the southern low veldt area particularly, which was the poor area, and to try to get those people to be more market oriented and to help them develop a means for marketing. In the middle veldt and the upper veldt area, where it was a lot easier to work on some of these issues because of access to transportation—water was less of a problem and so on—to develop small plots on which people could grow products for the market.

I'll give you just an example of the potential in the country. There are a lot of tomatoes consumed in Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Durban, for example, and of the 500,000 tons of tomatoes that were consumed in the Durban market alone, Swaziland contributed well over half of that tonnage, and they were producing plum tomatoes for Pretoria, Johannesburg, and so on. So there was a lot of vegetables and fruit leaving Swaziland to go to South Africa. Even during the war they were going there, so the potential was great for producing these kind so of products. The problem was the marketing system wasn't functioning correctly, and part of that, in turn, was the way in which the regulations for commerce and such took place and the system of ownership of land and the use of land. For example, of the total land area available for agriculture, a fairly large portion of that—I don't remember my numbers right now, but my memory is that it's something like 60 or 70 per cent of that land area—actually was under the jurisdiction of a chief, and the chief determined what took place in that land area, not anyone else. So that you didn't even own your home. You may have built it with your own money and your own materials, but you didn't own that home. Everything there belonged to the chief, so the only ownership people had, really, was their livestock. And that made it very difficult to convince somebody to move into the production, let's say, of tomatoes, to continue that example, when if it was profitable, they weren't sure they would be able to keep the profits, or if the chief would decide to take over the land or give it somebody else after they got started. So we generated a number of projects that we tried to get the chiefs to go along with. Very often these projects were with women and women's groups. And in fact, I would have to say that the most successful projects that we had were in almost every case—in 90 per cent of the cases—were run by and maintained by women. In a few cases, we had to approach the agriculture minister or one of the other ministries, to encourage them to provide assistance to the women to make sure that the chief didn't maltreat them, as was being rumored. But this is the kind of thing that we were doing, and that's where we tried to get our Peace Corps volunteers moved into, and we were very successful.

*Q: I would think in doing this sort of thing, I mean, you really are changing the culture tremendously. I mean, you're cutting away the power of the chief. I mean, was this of concern? I mean, here are these Americans from way over the horizon coming in and messing around with the African culture.*

SPROTT: Well, it was a concern. Fortunately, the king supported it, and the king was also—and remains, as far as I know—trying to slowly change the relationship between the chief and the management of the land. So he was not opposed to it, so whenever I started anything or when we started something like this, we made sure he was on board. I briefed him, I let him know what was going on, and I tried to use his authority to support

that project, tried to get him, did successfully get him to sign the project so that his imprimatur was on this, which made it more difficult for the chiefs to object to it. But in a lot of the cases, the volunteers were so good at co-opting the chiefs, that is, getting them to see that this was to their benefit, and in many cases it was. And so the chiefs learned how to use this to their own benefit and not see it as a complete threat.

But the fact of the matter is the culture was changing, and it was going to change anyhow, because what was happening during this period, a major drought had hit southern Africa. It had been going on now, by the time I got there, for a couple of years and continued, for the most part, while I was there. It was becoming almost impossible to eke out a living in the lower veldt, basically the southern part of the country, which is where the heavy population was. A lot of that population, frankly, had moved there, many of them had moved there, to support the 30,000 or so Mozambican refugees who had been placed in the south. So they were down there raising vegetables and doing other things and selling them. I should point out that the movement of those Mozambican refugees from Swaziland back to Mozambique, about a third to a half of that process was taking place in my first year, was completed in probably the first six to nine months of my being there, very smoothly and very well, incidentally. But it also meant that there were large numbers of Swazis who had before been supporting this large 30,000-person encampment, basically, now with no income. They had some products perhaps, and now they needed marketing, too, so there was some logic there. But you also had what was your traditional high-population growth rate area, and they just weren't able to sustain those populations. So any kind of food that they could generate, whether they marketed it or not, was going to be a valuable contribution.

Now I'll point out also that one of the impacts of this drought over such an extensive period of time and the inability to generate income, even subsistence level income production, out of this land area led to an increasing number of people moving to the city areas and ultimately to an increase the number of street children, in both the capital city of Mbabane and the major business center of Manzini, which is in the middle veldt area. That became another social issue we tried to get them to recognize this. The Swazis, however, saw street children as a family problem, that it was the failure of the family, and therefore these people were not good people if the children were in the streets in the capital, or somewhere else. But in fact, as some of the people who were working with these young people found in Manzini, particularly how we were able to start the Fulbright program up again while I was there, and one of the Fulbrighters we had was a specialist on abused children and children who've suffered from war and so on, and he became very interested in the street children, and what he found out, along with a priest who was running a school, a shelter, for homeless children, was that a lot of these children left their homes voluntarily, with the support of their mother and grandparents (the father was not around in many cases), to go into the city, and that they were sharing whatever income they could get with the family so that, while they were street children at one level, and increasingly problematical in some cases, there was a reason for this and basically an economic reason, and these parents weren't bad, after all, maybe.

At any rate, social change was taking place no matter what, so what we were trying to do with the Peace Corps was to recognize that change and try to do things that were helpful in the process of change and would facilitate people making that change and enable them to eke out livings. It was an uphill battle. I don't think it's going to be one that will be won in a very short period of time, but you start someplace and end.

I was saddened in my last nine months or almost a year in Swaziland because there was a unilateral decision in Washington by the director of the Peace Corps to close Swaziland down. I was able to argue for extending it almost by about eight months, but we needed actually another year to a year and a half of Peace Corps in the country, and we then could have honestly turned the programs over to them, and I think we would have had the completion of the very good program. But there was a decision to send 95, I believe the number was, Peace Corps volunteers to South Africa at that moment, and so they decided to cut Swaziland. I still continue to think that was a mistake that was made that was nearsighted, particularly since we had decided to put the Regional Center for AID in Botswana, at that point, instead of Swaziland, where it had *de facto* been, because Swaziland had been doing the regional contract work, doing regional computer-based finance work for the area. But the decision was to move it to Botswana. So losing both of those within a short period, almost simultaneously, was a fair blow on the relationship with the Swazis. I can't say that the Swazis thoroughly appreciated it, however. It was very difficult to get them to battle in favor of, for example, maintaining the Regional Center. I knew of that possibility of the Regional Center moving to outside of Swaziland when I left here in late 1993 and did some work with people here, but it wasn't till about then that they sent somebody from Swaziland to this country to try to argue to keep the AID in Swaziland and make it the Regional Center, and then they sent, relatively speaking, a fairly low-level person, one of the ministers, in this case, for central planning, which is an important person, but to give you an example—as I understand it—Swaziland was the first choice initially and there was no one else open for consideration. Then Zimbabwe got itself included because of the arguments of the then AID director in Zimbabwe, and the decision was made to reduce or perhaps even eliminate AID in Botswana, and when the president of Botswana heard that and that Swaziland and Zimbabwe were under consideration to be the Regional Center, the president of Botswana got on a plane and came to Washington. It turns out he had known Brian Atwood from before and vice versa and they had a good relationship, Brian Atwood being the director of AID at that point (and still is, about to be, however, ambassador to Brazil). But the point here is not anything other than the degree of seriousness with which the Swazis dealt with this issue and the level at which they dealt with that issue was such that it was hard for me to fight that battle successfully. While I was saddened that we lost these things because of the contribution they would have made, I can't argue very hard because the Swazis didn't argue very hard on their own, either. Part of that is the Swazi character, also they are not likely to make big waves on a lot of issues, yet they want the things to happen.

*Q: The king was obviously the center of things. Would you talk about the king, how you saw him, how he operated, and our relationship with him?*

SPROTT: Well, first, I think, our relationship with the king was very good, certainly by all external accounts, that is accounts by people who knew him and knew about relations with various countries, including the U.S.

King Mswati III. He's a young man. At that point he was 25 or had just turned 26 when I arrived. At that point he had been king since he was 18, and at that point he had six wives, had six and reputedly has gained a new one in 1998, which would give him seven wives. But he had been king then long enough to have a fair number of ideas of his own, to have established himself within the royal family in certain policy areas, and to have developed some kinds of dependable power relationships within the royal family. The royal family is very large, and it's fairly powerful. There are really kind of, I think, two sides. There is the queen mother, who rules with the king, and they are equal in terms of ruling, but she tends to be more on the traditional side than he. Her public is on tradition and those things that make a difference on the traditional side, which is not to say he is not traditional, that he isn't interested—it's just that that's her area of prime interest. In that way, she would control things that he would do, or the others, who were the traditionals, would through her impact on him and his decision making if they saw a decision that he might make that would affect the tradition.

For example, what we were just talking about in terms of commerce. If there was a threat to the area of the chiefs or the chieftainships, that would show up first in the traditional area, and the queen mother and others would put pressure on him not to move quickly or not to dramatically change, because that's where they got their support and their power. So there was this playing of different political positions generated from the traditional side of the society as well as those from the more modern side of society that the king found himself having to manage. I think by the time I got there, he had positioned himself so that he had much more ability to manage that set of relationships than he had certainly when he first was king at age 18. This made things much easier, but it also made him more thoughtful about the speed with which he would be able to make change.

I was able to develop a relationship fairly quickly for reasons that are not entirely clear to me. I think he was comfortable with me, we were able to at the very outset have long solitary (that is, no one around us) discussions ranging from raising cattle. . . . Remember having come from northern Arizona. . . . Incidentally, the land area around Swaziland, particularly the middle veldt and the upper veldt—well, I guess the southern veldt a little bit, too—was very much like my home area, and cattle raising was also very much what took place where I came from, as was high country farming. So I was not totally ignorant of a lot of the things that people were dealing with there; and perhaps that gave me something to talk to him about. So we dealt with environmental issues, I was able to make a connection between the cattle or the sheep or the pigs or chickens, or whatever it may have been, in ways that were less academic and more practical in terms of the dirt farmer. Maybe that was part of it.

Maybe a part of it was that, I guess, having been a teacher for enough years I was able to talk with him in a way that wasn't talking down to him on the one hand and wasn't using, from his point of view, "diplomatic-speak." I was able to be straightforward, and I very

often used examples to explain things rather than jumping right into something and saying, “This is the way it has to be.” So I generated the discussion around and moved it in a direction, and it was helpful to him, I think, to have those discussions and have that interchange, and he would very often say, “I can’t do it that way. Don’t you see? This will interfere with the chiefs in that area who are very strong, and at this point I can’t get them to do this,” or “This will affect the way the agreement with the sugar companies had been set up, and if I change that, then I have to change something else, and this impacts on . . .” “and that’s the kind of discussion we were able to have in many cases. But some of that was generated by him to kind of try in his own way to work out what was possible. So that relationship, I think, started almost—I think I’d been there only about a month, and he called me down to the palace, the main palace, and I went there and after waiting a few minutes, noticing a large number of senators and parliamentarians and others sitting around, I was called, and we went and sat under a big tree out in the palace grounds, which was a very fascinating thing to do with probably 20 people off maybe 20 yards from us—he shooed them all off. Some of them tried to sit down around him, and he said, “No, no, go away.” And so that was the beginning. We talked for almost two hours under that tree, and it was a wide-ranging discussion. I didn’t try to impose on him in any way. What I try to do is use that opportunity to get to know him and for him to get to know me.

People (and I think all people who didn’t know him) had said that he was not very bright and felt that he was being pushed around by others and so on. When I went there, I found him a wonderful conversationalist, and I do not believe you can be a conversationalist and be dumb. He was very bright; he was curious; he was interested; and he remembered and followed up on issues and thoughts. I, frankly, just felt, and still do, that there was a good feeling between us, not only because of our countries, which I think was very real, but I think personally, there was a good personal relationship that we developed fairly quickly. After that, if I needed to talk to him, was able to get to him fairly quickly and have a private conversation with him if I needed it. In fact, almost all of our conversations were just the two of us. It was rare when it wasn’t, and when it was it was usually when it was a topic that was going to involve others and he needed to have somebody there, which I understood. I had hours of conversations with him. In fact, I began to play, at the end of the first year, squash with him, so there would be just the two of us and his guards and a couple of his young children around, and we would get out on the squash court and play good hard squash. I’m not a believer that one should lose in favor of somebody else; I didn’t. On the other hand, I must say in the end he won more than I would, but the first ones I won, and then after that he got himself in better shape and he began to win the sessions. But those, too, were important because I think it kept our relationship on a kind of plane that meant that I wasn’t asking for something every time I met him or I wasn’t trying to tell him something every time I met him. We were able to have a kind of relationship—

*Q: You weren’t nagging.*

SPROTT: Exactly.

*Q: What about the queen mother?*

SPROTT: The queen mother I really only met twice. I was never able to have a private conversation with her. But we did try to set things up, and I must say, my wife, when she got there, was instrumental in developing a program with the wives of the king. My wife works for the Department of State. Then she was in Personnel; she's now in Passport. But she came down for about seven weeks when we first got there, got me set up and started the process and things like that, and then came back once a year after that. During that first seven weeks or so, she set up a program and had a lunch for all the wives of the king and, I think, made them feel very comfortable and then set up the following July a program for them in which she had them doing things and just a comfortable kind of setting in which she had different wives coming in, American wives or women that we had working in the Embassy, to sit and talk to them, so that they weren't just this dead—eating—and sitting off—because they could not mingle with the crowd; they had to be separate, so we had to do something separate for the spouses. I go through this because this had to be approved by the king, of course, and the queen mother, and the queen mother, I think, condoned this and appreciated that kind of involvement by the spouses. I suspect our efforts coincided with an increasing pressure from the spouses, the king's wives, to do other things, and indeed, while I was there, one spouse had already created a kind of charity, and others began to do the same kind of thing and began to do more things in the community and also get engaged in a little bit more travel.

But that had to be approved by the queen mother, and that's where the point is. So when I met the queen mother a couple of times in public, I would say things to her, you know, to encourage her, "It was wonderful the thing you did in having family planning sessions in your palace for all the royal family, and what a great gift that was to them and the Swazi people," and similar kinds of a comment to her to encourage to get her to meet with us. But she wouldn't meet with any of us. But as soon as I left, I don't think there was any correlation between my departing, because there had been rumors that she was opening up, she began to see members of the diplomatic community and their spouses. I think this was just all part of the process. She had to get more comfortable. I think the king was encouraging her to talk to people. We certainly were making requests to see her. The British High Commissioner, both the two that I served with there, made requests to see her, but were unable to see her, either. But I think it was also the rise of the king, who had an impact on her as well. They were coming back with kinds of stories and such that made her feel more comfortable. She didn't speak English, or if she does, she doesn't speak it very well. End of Tape 6, Side A

I was saying that I think meeting with the queen mother given her shyness and her traditional approach to the world would have made it difficult to meet with foreigners, so this easing by that rise of the king and others would make her feel more comfortable ultimately in meeting them. Indeed, my successor has now, I think, met with her once during the period he's been there, I guess now two years or just under a year, and hoped to meet with her again, and they had a nice conversation, and she apparently has met with other members of the diplomatic community. So I think this is another sign of change along the lines we talked about at the beginning of this session, of social change, her

willingness to talk to other people, to listen, and get a sense for their character as you see it through conversation and see them in person and therefore better understand the way in which the king is perhaps taking advice or hearing some presentation from these people. All of this contributes and lessens the superstition that is very easily generated in that country amongst the traditionalists, who would have the greatest impact on her. It would lessen that because she would now know these people and be able to talk to them as well.

I could point out that I think I was one of the first, at least in the diplomatic community, I was told, to see one of the king's wives alone, which is kind of an interesting story. I was quite put out by it, but I was called, I was beckoned to the royal palace by this one spouse of the king, the senior spouse of the king, the one who he married by tradition, as opposed to necessarily other reasons, and so I went. I took along with me the woman USIA (U.S. Information Agency) officer—I stress *woman* because I didn't want to be alone with this person, and I thought it important that it be a woman as opposed to a man—and so I arrived there and I was shown into the place and I had the USIA person there, who was quickly told she wasn't needed. So I sit down with the spouse of the king and a little boy, who was only some little boy, not necessarily her child or his child (there was always a little young person and usually an older person that accompanies them for traditional reasons). They sat down in a corner, and we proceeded to talk. What she wanted, after some discussion, was that her car that she shared with one of the other wives of the king had been in an accident about two months earlier, and one of the drivers, who were all army people, had, on a sandy dirt road, skidded and injured the car, and it hadn't been repaired yet, and they were seemingly slow in getting this done, and she wondered if I could give her enough money to buy a new car. This was the purpose of the visit. So I told her that I couldn't do that, personally, and couldn't do it as a government, we didn't have programs for doing that, but that what I would do, if she approved, was to talk to the head of Tibiyo (TakaNgwane), which is kind of the investment arm of the royal family and see if he had the money to do this. And she said, okay, do that. Which I subsequently did. But I thought that was funny, and then I brought the USIA person in, and we probably had a total of two and a half mutual hours of discussion, just about general things.

*Q: I was wondering, could you talk about what, when you arrived, '94 to '96, what was the situation in South Africa and its influence on Swaziland?*

SPROTT: First of all, there's always a tremendous influence because of economics, if nothing else, between Swaziland and South Africa. In fact, South Africa is dominant within that region even when it doesn't want to be. The president of South Africa said, "I don't want to be dominant," and economically they would have to be, because the ports and all of the rest of the facilities that are so much available and so modern in South Africa have their impact on all of those countries, including Botswana and Namibia, Angola, and Swaziland. And Lesotho is even worse, I think. So economically, when you consider that almost, initially while I was there, because you still had the war going on in Mozambique, a hundred per cent of their exports and imports—legal exports and imports—went through South Africa, had to. Either Durban or Cape Town were your ports, and the airports were Johannesburg—Durban, but Johannesburg for international

stuff—and your highway system and your railway system. And Swaziland, just incidentally, when I left there, thanks to AID, had, I believe, the only profitable railway in Africa. I'm not sure how accurate that is, but it certainly was profitable, and it was all because of the way in which AID went about changing the railroad system and the management of it, and it was very effective, and a very low-cost railway system.

But at any rate, Swaziland, on the economic side was dependent, but did have lower-priced sugar production. But sugar production in Swaziland ranges, depending on where it's produced, from 10 to 20 per cent lower price than in South Africa, as a rule, so Swazi sugar is in demand. Cotton, a certain amount of cotton was grown there, sadly, because it's not a very viable crop, but almost all of that cotton was sold to South Africa. The corn, a fair amount of corn is grown in Swaziland, but they import tons of corn from South Africa and around the world.

We were supplying corn because of the drought under the relief program that we had there, lots of tons of corn during the period I was there. Sadly, we in the United States sent them some lousy corn at one point, too, which was a shame. It was old and poorly inspected, but periodically we were shipping corn there in fairly large amounts. So those kinds of basic products.

Any mining that took place, there was a lot of coal produced in Swaziland, and a lot of that produced and shipped to South Africa to run various electrical plants there. At one level, there was a tremendous amount of investment from South Africans in Swaziland. Your mines were owned by South Africans or conglomerates of South Africans and others. The forest system, one of the largest commercial forests in the world, is largely owned by South Africans or conglomerates. So that was the kind of investment there. The pulp industry, obviously, would be a result of that as well. Talking about the trains, the railway system, the diesel engines that were used were all leased from South Africa, and you could kind of go on and on in terms of the dependence on South Africa or the relationship that existed for sales of something or the importation of things. So at that level, great relationship. Politically, Swaziland, the first year I was there, remained the place where South Africans went, some would argue, to play, others just for relief from the onerous conditions, in their minds at least, in South Africa. This would have been especially true—because there was no racial issue in Swaziland—

*Q: I mean, in South Africa at the time, the white nationalists were still in control.*

SPROTT: Yes, that's right. They still had not had the elections. The white nationalists were still in control, and you still had all the laws that applied under apartheid at that point. So it was very difficult for colored people or people of color, mixed marriage—

*Q: Colored people being the South African term for people of mixed marriage, is that right?*

SPROTT: Mixed marriage or Indian, and I suppose others fall into that category. The Indians and mixed-race people would all fall into that category, and that's the ones that



you'd see most. Those people either lived in Swaziland or they would come to Swaziland for rest, for vacation, and I think that's one of the reason that you'll find that you find the fine hotels that you had and casinos, which incidentally—you also had casinos in Swaziland, and you didn't have any casinos in South Africa, so you also came to gamble. There were three fairly good-size casinos—well, two good-size casinos—in Swaziland, and they were all convenient to the South Africans. The one in the middle veldt also had an international-quality golf course, so that they held major golfing competitions there as well—and still do—and I think that was something that everybody could participate in Swaziland that would have been much more difficult in South Africa in those times.

So politically you have that kind of thing going on at the obvious open level. At the less obvious level, you had meetings taking place in Swaziland, where they could take place, amongst various groups from the ANC to the nationalists, perhaps, and the labor, and various other people—they could meet in Swaziland and talk fairly freely with each other whereas it would have been more difficult, maybe even in some cases impossible to have done the same thing, to have had the same kinds of conversations as openly, in South Africa. So that kind of thing took place, too, so there was a kind of another level at which Swaziland kind of facilitated civil society in South Africa. Swaziland had been long—in fact, the previous king's mother, I guess, was the one (I forget her name, but she was thought of very highly still in Swaziland) who contributed great sums of money to the early start of the ANC and to the newspaper that they produced, and they take great pride today, at least while I was there and earlier, to have been early and important supporters of the creation of the ANC. So there was a close relationship there.

I pointed out that there was this young man that I'm talking about who subsequently became the [South African] DCM who talked about running guns and people back and forth across Swaziland. There certainly was a certain amount of that that did take place that may well have taken place a little bit with the eyes closed on the part of the Swazis. Not the guns, I don't think that would have been true, but I think they did provide a safe haven, in some cases even putting people in jail to protect them from the South Africans. There are some interesting stories that were told about that. So that kind of political level played out, and it was a very important role between them.

My personal sense of the attitude of the Pik Bothas and others who were running South Africa at that time is that they probably looked upon Swaziland as a third-world kind of country and as a kind of clown, you know, run by people who really didn't count that much or know that much what they were doing, but they wanted to remain friendly with them and did support them on occasion and so on, but didn't take them all that seriously, I don't think. If they had, I think, over the years there would have been a different kind of consideration of the use, for example, of water in the area, which the way South Africans built dams and diverted water or used water has significantly upset the way in which the water flows and that which is available in Swaziland and in Mozambique even to a degree, on the one hand. On the other hand, they would have also, I think, looked a little differently at the way in which the run certain railroads and roads and without cooperation with Swaziland. I think with a little bit more cooperation, with a little bit different rail system that would have been little more direct to Mozambique, there were

costs to. . . . So that may yet come. One of the things that we were trying to support while we were there was a new look at the way the railway system made connections into the ports of Mozambique.

Other than that, I think certainly after the elections of April 1995, if I remember correctly, Mandela and others, but certainly Mandela [Editor's Note: who himself was elected president by the South African National Assembly on May 9, 1994], played an important role, I think, in trying to help the members of the southern states—in this case Swaziland as well—look toward a future in which they were more the managers of that future, as opposed to recipients of something some others might have developed. I think, in a sense, there was a joy and a happiness toward that. Toward the end, one of the things that Mandela is able to do is just his presence could bring calm to a difficult situation. But the Swazis and I think the Botswanas and others, all of these looked with a little suspicion at the South Africans whenever they wanted to do something because they are so powerful. Is this action, whatever it may be, being done to the benefit of South Africa, to the benefit of the region, or to the benefit of the recipient country? And as Mandela became more involved in more things, I think even he became. . . . Swazis and others may have become a little suspicious of some of his interests and whether or not he was really interested in them so much as maybe in his own country more, or something.

*Q: Was there concern at the time you were there, both in Swaziland and in Lesotho, about these being sort of areas that the South African white governments had kind of allowed to develop to relieve them of native pressures and all that? Was there concern that South Africa might, now that it had its own black government, begin to reassert its sovereignty over these areas?*

SPROTT: Well, it never had sovereignty over Swaziland. Never. So that was never an issue. Lesotho, that may have been a problem because, in fact, it's almost *de facto* anyway, particularly with a major water project that's there. But there's always the discussion and always the idea in the back of the minds of people, can Swaziland survive on its own as an independent state economically and politically, or would it in the end become a state of South Africa? And that was discussed. It's an issue. There are those who claim, and it has a fair basis in argument, that in time the economics of the world and that region will simply make it a fact of life that Swaziland is so much a part of South Africa that its independence politically will be irrelevant. Now if that was to happen, it would take a long time, frankly. I don't see it happening that quickly. There are a larger number of Swazis in South Africa and along the borders of Swaziland than there are in Swaziland proper. In fact, most Swazis live outside of Swaziland. Those Swazis don't particularly want to move and become part of Swaziland right now, as compared to South Africa, but they are nonetheless very loyal to their king in Swaziland. Some people use that as an argument for inclusion, and other people use it as an argument for continued exclusion from South Africa as a political state. Personally, I think the economics will dictate eventually that there is such integration that it's going to be difficult to differentiate, but politically it's going to take a long time because the rate at which South Africa is changing is so much greater than the rate at which Swaziland can change, in the traditional sense. It won't move that quickly from a traditional-based society to a modern

commercially or capitalist-based society with democracy. It just simply isn't going to do it. I'd like to say that it would be something that could be done over the next five years, but frankly I don't think it can be. But I think there's going to be some dramatic changes that will have to take place there because the simple fact of economics are such—and I told the king that before I left. You've got a growth rate in population in the cities of around 10 per cent. The net population growth is somewhere around five to six per cent, if I remember that number correctly. The growth rate in jobs—and they're graduating from high school and college around 3,000 to 5,000 a year (I think it's 3,000 from high school and 2,000 from the colleges, so you have about 5,000 coming into the market, probably netting that out somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 to 4,000 young people coming into the job market every year), and they're only creating, for the last two years I was there, nil to 100 jobs. I mean, 100 jobs is nil, really, right? And with the growth of the city I just described, with population growth, and that kind of job creation, you've got problems. And those problems, I think, are going to, in fact we already see it—they've had three bombings in the last few months. Before I left, weapons were being used in robberies—unheard of before. There is a slow but certain movement toward greater violence in order to achieve ends that people see themselves unable to achieve in any quiet political process. The king remains adamant in maintaining early laws that do not permit political parties—they do exist, but they're not legal, and they have difficulty meeting, and they have difficulty campaigning for representatives to run for elections, which they now are having for parliament and at the city level and so on, which we supported and pushed while I was there and were successful in achieving.

*Q: Did you get any feel, when you were there about the level of the Clinton Administration's interest in Africa? I mean, what were you getting from Washington?*

SPROTT: Not a great deal of interest, except with regard to South Africa and to a degree in Mozambique and Angola because there was a war—even there, not all that great an interest. That's my impression. I believe George Moose was quoted (he may have been incorrectly quoted), who was then assistant secretary for African Affairs, but whether it was accurate or not it was certainly widespread in terms of the use of it, this term, and that is he was in front of a group of students—I thought it was Howard University [in Washington, D.C.]—but argued that if they thought there was any great interest in Africa, then they were mistaken, on the part of the U.S. Government, because there wasn't. I think certainly in Congress there wasn't. The year I went there, if I remember correctly, Congress cut the budget that was available. Certainly the next year they were interested in doing that. There were many who were arguing that we had no business in those countries. If you remember, this was also the time when Christopher was pushing very hard to attain universality in our missions abroad, that is, have missions in all of the countries rather than reducing them, because the pressure was to eliminate embassies and that would have meant a large number of embassies in Africa would close. It may have meant somewhere else, too, but Africa would have been the primary focus. And indeed, I think that's where people were looking to make savings.

*Q: How about Mozambique? What was going on in Mozambique, just sort of briefly, and did it have much impact?*

SPROTT: Yes, because the negotiations were going on for peace between the two factions and moving toward and trying ultimately, then did have elections. Elections were late '95 or early '96, I forget which, and Dennis Jett, was the ambassador there [Editor's Note: Ambassador Jett presented his credential in November 1993 and departed post in July 1996]. We got to post at the same time, or almost the same time, and he worked very hard under a lot of difficulty to push the regular elections and to make sure that they were as fair as one could make them and as open as one could make them and as unthreatening to people as one could make them. I think he was very successful personally doing a lot of this, and I saw this because a lot of Mozambicans would come to Swaziland to shop on weekends because this was a way we could get money after the roads were opened up. Even before we were opened up, people were running, sometimes you could call it, the gamut because there were bandits on the road in the area of low population density between the border of Swaziland and the next major towns in Mozambique. But people wanted to get out, so we could talk to them and see what was going from that point of view in addition to our cable traffic that we would get. But that was what was taking place. It was a winding down of the fighting, elimination of the fighting, negotiations for elections, the setting up of the election process, then finally the elections, and then moving forward, and it moved very well—and as a part of that process, roads being repaved so that you had transportation and communication systems setting up so that you could support an elected government. And I would have to say, overall, that given the kind of change that was taking place and the number of years you had the civil war, things were moving quite well, from our perspective in Swaziland. Swaziland quickly agreed with the Mozambicans to export sugar out of Mozambique ports instead of out of Durban, which it had been using. So transportation was a lot cheaper, bringing a positive economic impact for Swaziland, though the security around the port facilities in Mozambique, you had to be really strict, because pilferage was a serious problem. The reason they originally shifted to Durban was that they could lose as much as 50 per cent of their cargo. It was just ridiculous what was happening in the port. But then again, you get truck traffic going between cities and that was very positive and very helpful.

Can I go back a second, because there was a key element that I should have probably talked about with regard to the king and our relationship with the king and the royal family. The British, when Mswati was made king at age 18, because he was not yet finished with schooling that one would have calculated he should have, the Swazi traditional committee, the executive committee (we'll call it that), the traditional side of the Swazi government, if you want, in terms of the royal family, decided that the king should have a tutor, and they asked the Brits to provide him with a tutor, which they did. And the second tutor that they provided was there and had been there several years when I got there. He was an ex-Gurkha, a young man, about the same age as the king, a little older than the king but quite bright and very able, and a good manner, and he was a "tutor" but he was also an advisor to the king. He was an objective reference point for the king.

*Q: When you say he was a Gurkha, do you mean he was an officer in the Gurkhas—*

SPROTT: Yes.

*Q: —rather than an ethnic Gurkha per se.*

SPROTT: Yes, he was an officer in the Gurkhas and left then to become . . . yes. And by almost, I don't know, whether tradition or what, but he was, in addition to being obviously very friendly with and in some ways even reporting to the British High Commissioner, was friendly with the U.S. ambassador, whoever that might have been. And that was certainly the case with me, and this provided us with another route to, first of all, better understanding what was taking place in the palace with the king and others, which was helpful to us in terms of knowing how to weigh some of the pronouncements that came out and in judging also the way in which we were looked upon by the king or by the members of the royal family, the queen mother included in this case, which was very helpful because otherwise we would have been very much in the dark as to how to take some of the pronouncements and how to take some of the issues that were presented. We might have taken them incorrectly, frankly. And he was also very helpful in translating for us things that we were trying to deliver or give to the king but may not have had time to do in the proper way personally or may not have had an opportunity to do at all but we could get him to do that.

And there were circumstances where, for example, the parliament might have been considering doing something or might have sent him a bill for him to sign, and this bill might have been very difficult to live with and might have created problems, for example, in the most-favored-nations area, just to name one, and we could very quickly get to him and say somebody's got to stop that before it goes any further because if it becomes law then you become susceptible to retaliation, and you don't want to get yourself into this thing, it's not worth it, find another thing. And we could help them find solutions to these things and so on. Their parliament was like a lot of parliaments, and what you have to expect in any democracy, witness our own Congress. They have people who are very brilliant and very able and very thoughtful and true statesmen or stateswomen, but they have a large number of people who are more interested in themselves or some idea of their own rather than being true to the interests of the nation or the people they represent and some, frankly, who are kind of where the other got off by something. And it was helpful to have somebody who could point this out without it being us doing it directly.

So you ask me how that relationship existed. It was important to have this other person, I think, in this case, where we were dealing with a very traditional society, difficult for us under the best of circumstances to understand fully, and where we didn't always know what was happening behind the curtains, if you will. So I think it's important to kind of know that as a way. I think it was important also to use some of the expatriate community, expatriate community, although I admit that I made a conscious decision not to become deeply involved in the expatriate community and to instead try to get out into the countryside and deal with and know more about the Swazis. So I spent at least one day, very often more, but at least one day, out in the countryside, in areas sometimes I had to walk to, very often, almost always had to have a four-wheel vehicle to get to. Sometimes I would go with Peace Corps volunteers. I visited every Peace Corps volunteer wherever

they were in their site while I was there, and I used that as an opportunity to get to know people.

That may be a partial explanation for why the king and I had so many opportunities to have some lengthy talks, because I would see parts of the community or the country that, frankly, people in his government hadn't seen, he hadn't seen; and I could give him stories that people would tell me, in some cases I would get out there alone and would be only with my driver and there was no English that could be spoken, but you could with drawing on the ground (because we very often sat on the ground) or you find ways to communicate. You can get across a lot of ideas if you're willing to get a little bit dirty and get out there and talk to people. So I would pick up things that you just wouldn't get if you were in the city. I think that was helpful in building a relationship not only with the king, but also with some of the ministers, the minister of agriculture, the minister of planning, the minister of finance, and some of the others, who were helpful.

The third group of people that were important in that community were...I don't know what you would call them. To use South African terminology, they would have been the colored or white Swazis. The expatriate community I would treat as a group of people who, let's say, for the most part came to Swaziland when Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. They were a very large number of people who lived in Rhodesia and whose families moved out of Rhodesia and moved to Mozambique, South Africa, and Swaziland, I think. But there was a group of white Swazis who are maybe third, fourth generation, that they were English perhaps or may have been some other nationality, but primarily British, but they were really Swazi. They were born and raised there; their fathers and mothers were born and raised there; their grandfathers were born and raised there—so they were really Swazis, clearly Swazi citizenship. Those people I did try to get to know, as well as what the South Africans would call Coloreds, whom you and I probably wouldn't differentiate, but they did. That group of people were, I think, very important also. They were less traditionalist in their thinking because they weren't Swazi in the tribal sense, if I may put it that way, but they understood the tradition, so I was able to get yet another perspective on why the parliament might want to pass a law restricting the way in which the voting takes place in the areas covered by chiefs, for example. How do you have a mayor in a town that's within a chieftainship? That's a conflict of interest. How do you get around some of these issues and so on? These people were very helpful also in playing this process. So I think a fuller answer still to your initial question on how one got along with the king and the government in that country is to have as wide an array of good, solid contacts with people that you could talk to and listen and learn from, which played two ways: one, it helped you understand, but secondly it gave you a voice into a different part of the system, I think, in this case.

*Q: When you left in '96, what did you do?*

SPROTT: I left, and Princeton Lyman, who had been ambassador to South Africa [September 1992 to December 1995] and whom I've known for a fair number of years, had been made Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Affairs [March 1997 to October 1998] in the Department, and so there was a job opening up there, and I took

that job. At the time I took it, it was going to be a combined job, an oddly described job, of half-time deputy assistant secretary, half-time office director. It ended up being about that, but for different reasons. They were about to have elections for a committee in the UN, and the person who was to be the US representative on that committee, which would engage that person in New York about 35 to 40 weeks out of the year, was the deputy assistant secretary in International Organizations Affairs, and so they were going to organize themselves so that I would take on that position while that person was up at the UN. Well, I was also director of the office of UN Systems Administration, which is the office in the International Organizations Bureau that oversees the budgets for all of the international organizations, minus the international financial institutions, so that all the budgets for those organizations—that is, our budgets for paying our bills to these organizations—is covered under this office, as is the budgetary reform process in all of those organizations, that is the identification of how the reforms should take place, which included things like the institution of the inspector general's office or its equivalent in all of the international organizations, the setting up of budgets with goals and objectives against plans which then could be assessed at the end of each year, the improvement in the human resource development, of management people, looking down the line at what happens to an organization as the population in the organization retires. In many of these international organizations formed just after World War II, you're running as high as 50-plus per cent of the people at a retirement stage right now of the employment. Now how do you, on the one hand, manage this transition into a new era with new people and so on, and we had to encourage them to move positively in the direction of the use of modern electronic equipment and so on. . . .

*Q: This is Tape 7, Side 1, with John Sprott. John, we've come back, you've left Swaziland, and you've come back to do what?*

SPROTT: Okay, I left at the beginning of August of 1996 and I came back to the Department as the office director in the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs (IO) for UN systems administration, an office that, in effect, monitors the budgets of all of the international organizations except the IFI's ["iffies"], the international financial institutions, and it prepares the Department's presentations or requests for budgets for our participation in those organizations. When I first got there that included the peacekeeping operations, which I subsequently moved to another office to put it closer to the policy decision-making office. For some reason, people decided everything with budgets had to be in one office, and it got separated out, and it made absolutely no sense, in my opinion. That created some heart attacks on the part of some people on the staff, but I think in the end, witness that it has grown and gotten stronger, and I think we have a much better policy implementation process now. I think it worked out well. At any rate, that office was charged with that. That was my primary focus.

Princeton Lyman, whom I had known for many years and who served as ambassador to South Africa [Editor's Note: Ambassador Lyman presented his credentials to South Africa in July 1992 and departed post in December 1995] while I was ambassador to Swaziland—had been appointed, or named at least, as assistant secretary for International Organizations Affairs, and he wanted me for this position because he anticipated a

change in the structure of the bureau. We were at this point in time attempting to have the then deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau, one of the three DASs, elected to a position on one of the oversight committees of the UN, and that would have involved that person spending in the neighborhood of 35 to 40 weeks in New York a year. The concept that Princeton had was to split this job,—this deputy assistant secretary job—and have me serve in that position with the title of acting DAS for the period of time that that person was serving in New York, and then when that person came back, I would fall back to my duties as office director. That was the concept. What happened then was that in November of 1996, if I remember correctly, when the election for this person took place, we lost, and we lost big, mainly because voting members at the UN were rather angered at the United States for not having paid its dues.

*Q: The diplomatic term is “pissed off.”*

SPROTT: Well, there’s an interesting story for that. I made my first trip to the UN to meet my counterparts up there and to, in turn, meet with the respective members that we worked with from other countries in the various committees, particularly the Fifth Committee, which is the one that deals with most of the budget issues and administrative issues and stuff for the UN and UN-affiliated agencies. And a luncheon was arranged with the respective delegations, and it was pointed out that I would be meeting with our quote “friends” unquote, and therefore I shouldn’t expect, necessarily, the kindest of treatments. In fact, it was also pointed out that the fact that these were our friends might give me an indication of the nature of the attitude of those who did not consider us their friends. It was a very kind, very nice lunch. The representative from the UK, from France, from Japan, from Italy, Canada, and one other I’ll have to think of in a second. . . . Germany was there. No, the Netherlands wasn’t there. Germany was there. Those were the representatives that were there who supposedly were somewhat inclined in our direction or somehow acted favorably toward us.

I guess we had gotten through the preliminaries and had eaten the main part of our meal with, you know, the kind of typical give and take that you have at any of these diplomatic lunches, and we were then getting down around coffee and serious business and discussing things, and the Brit, who was to my right, reached over and put his hand on my forearm, and he said, “John, we love you Americans. We really enjoy working with you, and we would like very much to work with you in the UN, but you have to understand that we have difficulty working with people who can’t live up to their agreements. We do.” And of course, he was talking about the fact that we had signed treaties, treaties that indicated that we should be making payments of certain amounts, and while everyone agreed that we might quibble about the percentage at certain times, the way we were going about pressing everyone into accepting change was not something that they appreciated very much. The Japanese were going to have to pay more, for example, than they had been paying, and they were already—now we, of course, know how serious a trouble they were in—and they were getting ready to face a declining budget in their government anyhow, just to name one. There were others who were perturbed anyhow. But they also didn’t like our unilateralism and the way we approached the just “We’re not going to pay.” And we tended to shift often the blame for that



non-payment, in their eyes, to our Congress, which is, of course, the correct place in this case to have shifted it, because they are the ones who failed to provide the funding for it—and I make no excuse whatsoever. In my opinion, the Congress, and particularly the staff of the Congress, both the House and the Senate, were seriously negligent, in my opinion. I think they were following so strongly their narrow attitudes toward the UN—and in a couple of cases, I think even perpetuating the fear mongering of domestic American groups that covert UN Black Helicopters were positioned to take over the U.S.. These sort of renegeing created a lot of dismay toward the U.S.. Kofi Annan made that very clear himself. But there was just this whole attitude, and that was there before I arrived on the scene in August of '96, but it became even more prevalent and even worse, I think, in the ensuing two years that I was in this position. So it was very difficult—I have to tell you—to try to defend our position and not allow them to say it was Congress's fault and to point out that we had a different system than the parliamentary system and that the way in which our budgets got done was different and so on.

*Q: Of course, they knew all this. They'd heard it for years.*

SPROTT: Of course they did, and they just, you know, used all of our good points against us in many cases. The Cubans, for example, were so expert. In fact, if you wanted a wonderful case study on what it means to have continuity in positions and with people who have a clear focus on what it is they're attempting to achieve in an organization, one need only study the Cuban delegation in New York. They do an absolutely wonderful job, from the point of view of the Cubans, wonderful job. They were able in the cases that I saw, where I saw them working in the Fifth Committee and various other elements up there, they were very successful in either achieving something by their deep and detailed knowledge of the regulations and the laws governing the institution and its relationships with the various governments, as well as just being very adept at the emotional side of getting things worked up and working the politics in the hallway and so on. We have a tendency to change our staffing in the UN, in our UN representation. As a result, we don't have the same kind of in-depth knowledge of multilateral diplomacy that we really should have, probably, as a nation and, therefore, and ability to quite work some of the hallways like many of these less-developed countries do.

At any rate, it was truly an uphill battle, but this was one aspect of the job, and Princeton's position this particular year, 1996, going into the calendar year 1997, was to try to put together, working with OMB, a package that we could get through the Congress to pay off the full amount of our arrearages. The first problem that, of course, arose was what are our arrearages? Because the UN had one number, which was their number, that was absolutely correct from their point of view. We had another number, which was different because we had passed laws which said we would not pay in the case of payments of our dues for peacekeeping purposes. The Congress passed a law earlier that said that we would not pay more than 25 per cent of peacekeeping operations, and so the difference between something in the neighborhood of 31 per cent and 25 per cent was an annual accumulation in our arrears on the peacekeeping side, which is where, frankly, most of our arrears were anyhow, on the peacekeeping side. But by the same token, we weren't paying our regular dues by the full amount either, and we should have been

doing that, and that, of course, now at this point became much worse because the Secretary of State Albright [Editor's Note: Albright was Ambassador to the United Nations from 1993 to 1997 and Secretary of State from January 1997 to January 2001], in I think something like 1995 or early 1996, was giving a speech at a university someplace in the United States and made the statement that one of her goals would be to reduce the U.S. contribution to the UN to 25 per cent. There was a formula which all members in the UN had agreed to the . . . it was a formula by which you set out these payments, and the U.S., by that formula that had been up to that point agreed to, was to pay somewhere around 31 per cent. The UN was due to reevaluate that formula and did so in 1996 and kept it the same. We were successful in getting the UN membership to reconsider the formula in 1997 by going through normal sequence of committee meetings and such that would enable that to be a part of the agenda and to enable that to be reviewed again. The quid pro quo that arose in these discussions was that if the U.S. would make a sufficient payment on its arrears, key nations would go along with a change in the formula that would have led to a reduction in our actual payment to somewhere closer to 25 per cent. The Brits' calculation would have had us around 27 per cent or something like this. Now mind you, even according to the formula, our contributions would have been dropping at a percentage over time, and others rising over time, just simply because of the dynamics of income generation in the various countries around the world, particularly in the Far East. Now that's excluding the kind of recession that they're in right now in the late 1990s, which changes these numbers again. But the trend is still in that same direction. I have no doubt but what the Asian tigers and Japan will come out of this and perhaps even be stronger, but it will take a couple more years.

The point is that the U.S. was going to be declining relative to others anyhow, and there were many in the UN who were saying, look, this is going to happen, why are you all trying to push this so quickly? Well, of course, one of the reasons is that our position, and it was one that I made very strongly to a number of the independent as well as the UN-related agencies as I went around to visit them, particularly the ILO (International Labor Organization), which was one of those that we targeted first to try to get a change in our contribution level. One of the problems that we were facing was a very real problem. Put Congress aside, Congress in this case we'll just say was irrelevant for the moment because the dynamics within the world, I think, were such that it was becoming increasingly clear that countries could simply no longer afford to have—at the same rate especially—a rising bill for multilateral kinds of activities. And it was rising constantly. Some would argue—and I tried at one point to put together the kind of data and was, frankly, not successful, largely because of the time it took to do it—but some were arguing in the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) that in their opinion, the rate at which the bill for international organizations—that is, those budgets for international organizations—was rising was faster than the rate at which the revenues to the governments that were paying the dues were rising and that this was a position that simply could not be maintained over the long run. While that may not be exactly accurate, the trends were certainly close enough to that that it became very clear that even if Congress had been willing to pay everything immediately and out of hand without any question, we still would have had to have begun to have made some of these changes. Now it wouldn't have been so much of an emphasis on our part on the rate at which we

were paying, but it would have been addressed more at the budget levels of these organizations, because they were simply each year, in the aggregate, asking for a percentage increase in their budgets—and, in some cases, even in their staffing—without regard to a focused prioritization of the goals and objectives of the organization and without any means for measuring the success or the results of the activities that they were paying for.

*Q: These are the regular line organizations, as opposed to the special things like peacekeeping and there's a crisis in X country and all. I mean, you might say it was an increase on the administrative costs of running the United Nations under its regular budget .*

SPROTT: Actually it was both regular budget and peacekeeping budget and both regular budget in the UN as well in the subsidiary and non-related international organizations. Almost every one of them was operating in the same kind of fashion. The UN Secretariat in New York began to get its act more and more in order, but thanks to the appointment of an undersecretary for management who happened to be an American and quite good person—

*Q: Who's that?*

SPROTT: We'll have to get that name later. I was about to say it and then lost it. Good man, had been with Merrill Lynch, if I remember correctly, for a number of years, highly respected within the U.S., but highly respected there, reformed the financial system, really knew the finances and how to go about doing it, really did a good job of pulling that together and, with the Secretary General, making sure we had good people appointed. [Editor's Note: Joseph E. Connor was the Under Secretary for Administration and Management of the United Nations from May 1994 through 2002. Earlier he was a professor at the Georgetown University's (Washington, D.C.) School of Business and was Chairman of Price Waterhouse World Firm until 1993, after serving as chairman and senior partner of PW's U.S. firm.]

We were successful in pressing the UN to establish an office of inspector generals, which would go around and investigate many of these issues. In fact, that led to pressure being put on a number of organizations to get the financial act in it together and to begin to develop budgets and processes for expenditure that related more closely to the revenues that they were getting, to the goals and objectives, and to some kind of an assessment as to whether or not the resources has been used correctly, if not always effectively, at least they had been used correctly. So that process was beginning.

But we chose to work kind of at two levels here, at least in discussions in which Princeton would weigh in, which he sought to have me, at least, and others that worked either alongside me or took lead in other areas, that the UN Secretariat would be one focus and that that would have its impact leading out from it with the organizations with which it had much more direct and clear kinds of management responsibilities, either very clearly established or (because the organizations were so small) dependent on the

UN Secretariat for direction or at least for guidance. And then there was a set of organizations which would be the large ones like the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which were fully a third of our budget or probably a third or more of our total budget and were organizations that really functioned very independently in many respects from anything the UN was doing. Some even said that the UN didn't really have anything to do with them at all. For that group of organizations we sought very directly to affect their policies and the way in which they organized and managed themselves in a customized fashion. The WHO is a different kind of organization from the ILO and has a different set of responsibilities, is managed totally differently. In ILO you have a tripartite kind of constituency with which the management or the leadership has to deal, that is labor, business, and then your government representatives, and so that's one kind of organization. The World Health Organization is another one. But to give you an example, the World Health Organization, the first time I went there to try to lay out the plan for management reform, which they'd heard about but just to give that more emphasis because they were going into their budget cycle again and to try to make it clear to them that we had a problem with the way in which they were setting out both their budget as well as the way in which they were managing. One of the arguments they made is that you cannot prioritize activities in health; they're all of equal importance. Smallpox is just as important as polio, as malaria, as any of the other diseases that might arise. Just because we put smallpox money in one country, we can't take that money out of that country and put it into smallpox in another country, because that country has another high priority after they've gotten rid of smallpox, which is maybe polio or AIDS whatever.

Our argument was, look, we cannot any longer afford to have everything in health be the number one priority. We just can't do that. You've got to put some priorities on things and distribute your resources in a common fashion. Well, herein lies yet another problem with the way in which organizations are run in this country—well, the way in which the U.S. manages its relationship with these organizations—particularly WHO and to a degree some of the others that we can mention. The policy issues—that is, the day-to-day working with WHO on health issues—is under the jurisdiction, in effect, of our Department of Health and Human Services, that is, HHS, and they drive what takes place in WHO on a day-to-day basis. We're stuck with paying the bill—the Department of State is. So the Department of State has to find a way to cooperate, coordinate, or follow, at least, what WHO is doing. If HHS decides it doesn't agree with State's position of having the prioritization of the activities in the WHO, or happens to agree with what WHO is doing, even though it will lead to a higher cost to the Department of State out of its budget for paying WHO, they don't care, because from their point of view, if you've got a billion dollars to allocate for payment of international organization activities, they consider theirs, WHO, the most important, and we should just take the money from somebody else. Clearly, from their point of view, WHO is number one, and all other institutions are number two and below; and therefore, they should get paid first.

Now the problem is that a U.S. department feels the same way about its UN organization counterpart. Agriculture can feel that way about FAO, and perhaps Congress and the Department of Labor can feel the same way about ILO, and so on down the line. The

result of which is, when you get to some of these activities, including, let's say, the WTO, the World Trade Organization, it's even worse. You have within our own government institutions a lack of clarity as to how that gets managed unless you can have a very strong either National Security Council that will help drive and coordinate that, or a very strong Secretary of State who is able to pull those other Secretaries together and get them to agree.

*Q: How about OMB, the Office of Management and Budget?*

SPROTT: OMB does not play that coordination role. They are strictly on the budget side, and it's up to us, from their point of view, to work that out with the other organizations. Now they weren't always helpful in supporting us and getting the additional monies in the face of these kinds of problems; on the other hand, you know, that's not their job, either. But that became a real serious problem. Just to give one other example of a case, which I think is going to come back to haunt the respective agencies in the future: the World Trade Organization came into being, as you well know, when GATT went out of business as a result of agreements amongst the nations to move GATT from being a temporary institution to a permanent World Trade Organization that would monitor and coordinate and mitigate international trade and investment issues—simple, straightforward. The staffing for that organization, moving from GATT to WTO, was the same, the same people. All they did was change the name on the front gate. But with that there was pressure from the staff to increase their salaries and enable them to receive the same salary or the same compensation level that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund people (in other words, the IFI's, the international financial institutions) received, who happened to be, because they're not part of the UN in the literal sense, never were, and were able to organize themselves in a way originally that gave them a separate salary and benefit system from everybody else. But there were a lot of other small organizations that couldn't set up their own system because they were too small to have that, so they became part of an international organization or copied a UN system of salaries and benefits, which set out a structure, a basis for making different kinds of payments at different grade levels for different kinds of professional and other kinds of activities. That was lower than the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund salaries and benefit packages; and the WTO wanted to switch this. What this would ultimately mean on the average is that the salaries and benefits for the WTO would increase in the neighborhood of 45 per cent. We were against this, because it had budgetary implications and there was no justification, none given, as a matter of fact. The justification that was given would not hold water. It was even less of a case than some have argued, that Democrats have argued, because the House was focused on the impeachment of the President at the time.

But the Department of Commerce was, at one point, in favor of it, and the President's Special Trade Representative (STR) was all in favor of it. It didn't make any difference about the analysis. Proponents ignored the facts. When Eizenstat left Commerce and came to State, we were finally able to get it to him and present to him the case, which he had not really seen. [Editor's Note: Stuart E. Eizenstat served as the Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade from 1996 to 1997 and Under Secretary of State for

Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs from 1997 to 1999]. He had only gotten the story from (Renato) Ruggiero, who was the Director General of WTO, and who, incidentally, one of the reasons he was pushing for it was that he had promised that he would do this if elected, and that was one of the ways in which he was able to get himself some additional insurance, some additional votes. But at any rate, State found itself fighting a position that is, in fact, going to ultimately cost U.S. taxpayers lots of money in the future for an organization for which there is no basis, simply because we didn't have the coherence of a position within our own government. I never was able to get cleared through the Trade Rep, for example, cables that we were sending with instructions. We ended up agreeing that we would fax instructions, but it would be very clear that they were not cleared by the Trade Representative. They were approved by Commerce and State and even, in one case, by Treasury, but not by the Trade Rep. And yet it's the Trade Rep that represents us in the WTO, so we never felt like we had a unified presentation. And that was one of the frustrations, but we still had to pay that bill. You see, that was the frustrating part of this – State was going to have to pay that bill. So we found ourselves with this kind of a problem in number of these organizations, trying to get them to, you know, do what would be the correct thing, in terms of organizing their budgets.

*Q: Well, John, as you know, one of the complaints often heard these days is that the United Nation is overstaffed, with the corollary that some these jobs are considered perks for the small countries. And that as international employees they don't pay U.S. taxes. Were you looking at both the staffing and the salary issues, too, or were we able to get to that?*

SPROTT: We did both. In fact, it was largely as a result of our efforts—obviously backed up by the U.S. Mission to the UN (USUN) (I say “our efforts” meaning the US), but my office is the one that drove a lot of this because we had the kind of information that was needed to do it and we had the expertise, we had the people who were experts in these areas. But we were able to keep the salary increases down in the UN across the board by having very good justifications. In fact, we made sure that the U.S. representative on the Compensation Board at the UN was a top expert, in fact it happens to be a lady who may have just retired perhaps from the Office of Personnel Management, but she was a wonderful person and extremely brilliant and able and knowledgeable about compensation systems and stuff. And she was able to have a great influence on the activities on that committee, and she, with us, we were able to present in such a way we kept the increases down.

Secondly, we were able to work with the undersecretary for management and others and with other countries. The Brits were very helpful in this. The Canadians were very helpful in this, especially; the French less so, the Belgians not at all, the Italians a little bit, the Germans to a degree. The Japanese were helpful to a degree, but they were always trying to look for more Japanese representation, so not as helpful as we would have liked them to have been. But we were able to put together a group of people who were interested in seeing a reduction in the unnecessary staffing, and we were able to get them to reduce staff.

And Congress was helpful in this. Congress did put pressure on us to press for reductions in the staffing, and that was very helpful to us because it was a hammer that we could use. Now my faulting of Congress in this case, and we would have encouraged them to do this anyhow, but my fault with them is that then they wouldn't go by the numbers. They kept changing the numbers that they used as a reference, and creating sometimes confusion where there was enough confusion already, we didn't need any more. The issue here was what is the actual staffing of the UN? What are the numbers? Never mind. We don't know what that is for the U.S. Government on a given day, and I'd almost be willing to bet that Congress couldn't tell us what theirs is on a given day, because you start talking about full-time permanent employees, part-time employees, and you have different kinds of part-time employees, and you have contract people, and so on. What's the employment schedule for these people?

At any rate, we finally arrived at and agreed upon a number that we would use as the reference point for the staffing level, and then that the UN Secretariat would move in reducing their staffing from that number on a biannual basis, that is, over every two years it would reduce it. And the first year we got a 10 per cent reduction of the staff. There was, I think, a little over a thousand people dropped. I think that's the right number in the first year. And then there would be more that were dropped in addition to that—that is, the positions were eliminated, and the people then subsequently left. There would be more of that would take place over some time. The trouble is that that began to increase the political pressure on us because the people that were being affected were guess who: all of those who were going to vote for reductions in the budget, who were going to vote for or not for improved management principles and who were going to vote for us or not vote for us to be on committees that were key for these things, and so on down the line. So we found ourselves fighting several battles, and they were also the same ones who were saying, what are you talking about proper management for and effective management? You're not even paying your bills. So this kept coming back at us again. Now the sad part of this is that a lot of these countries, if you look at the amount they pay annually into the UN as their dues, it's less than the salaries that are being earned by, in a couple of cases, citizens from countries represented in the UN. So we're talking here about countries that have representation in the UN, either hired representation in the UN or otherwise, who are actually earning more money. If they tax these people at all, they're probably getting more money than they're paying into the UN, and of course, that's very frustrating, but how do you do it? I mean, the formula that was set years ago was on an ability-to-pay calculation. That's the way in which the formula got set, and we've been trying to change that a little bit. But there is a hook for the U.S in supporting the ability-to-pay formula: the U.S. should be paying more.

*Q: Yes. Well, could you talk a little bit about your impression of Ambassador Madeleine Albright at the UN and wasn't there a change in the Secretary General? Did that make any difference during your time?*

SPROTT: Yes. The change in the UN Secretary General was really taking place when I got on board, because Kofi Annan really was in—I mean, not physically in yet but was coming in within a month or something like that.

*Q: You're talking about your problems, resentment and all. Was that the fact that we would not accept Boutros-Ghali to a new term? Did that leave a lot of broken crockery in the UN?*

SPROTT: It did in some places, but I don't think that overall I found that to be much more than an excuse on the part of some countries, in other words, one more example of how we run roughshod over the UN system and that we demand all sorts of things and don't want to pay for them. It was more an element along those lines. I think most people that I ran into were very comfortable with the change from Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Kofi Annan and saw that, as I think we did, and do probably, as a sign of a change of the times and of a new approach to a whole series of issues. I must say that from my point of view, from my office's point of view, Kofi Annan's attempt to lay out clearly the goals and objectives and a plan for taking action was refreshing and was a lot clearer than most of the UN-speak that I'd seen up to that point, really. I mean, I still think that dealing with international organizations and the UN in particular, largely because of the different cultures and the different languages and the need to have compromise in the way in which you write things in order for it to have the clearest and the most acceptable understanding in all the language and cultures that it's got to deal with—that creates a language and a format that is very difficult for as typical American to try to put up with. It's arcane in some ways. But he was very clear, and he attempted to remain clear throughout his first year that I was with him, or almost two years that he was there that I was there. I think that he gave not just verbal but personal attention and action, to the initiatives that he set out and initiatives that we were seeking. Initiatives not from just the U.S. but also as a result of studies that had been done on the UN. In other words, he took those, saw them as legitimate, and made them a part of his agenda and then not only stated it, wrote it, but sought to make sure that actions were taken to carry them out. As a result of that, I think we did see a much better approach to the budget, a much wider acceptance on the part of the administration that he represented, at least, on that budget and the way in which it was done than you would have seen under Boutros Boutros-Ghali, where there was a lot of bickering.

I think the other thing the new Secretary General was doing was trying to find a way to bring these other agencies around to understanding the new world and what we were going to have to be living with in terms of budgets and the need for priority setting and so on. So I think he was providing leadership here that needed desperately to be brought to bear.

On the peacekeeping side, I think I feel a little less able to address that, because I moved, as I said, the peacekeeping operation in my office out after I was there about six months, so I feel a little less willing to talk about that, but my impression is that he was seeking to improve the way in which that operates and the way in which resources were used and the accounting for those resources. The people that I know that worked closely on that



felt somewhat more comfortable with him than they had before, largely because they saw what he was trying to do as moving in a direction that was going to be supportive of what it is we needed.

Again, we were hamstrung by the fact that we were not providing things. We were also hamstrung, frankly, a little bit because on occasion Congress would take positions that our military shouldn't be, that we weren't accounting for the military's activities—for example, just its presence in the Middle East. The military off to the side didn't want us doing it. They wanted to use those as opportunities for training, if nothing else, and in many cases argued they'd be there anyhow so it's inappropriate for us to charge them. Nobody's ever said we would charge for that, but that was another little thorn that periodically got stuck in our sides or the sides of the UN when we were dealing with a costing out of the peacekeeping operations, which created some problems for Kofi Annan because he had to settle it, he had to deal with it. It created pressures from other countries, because, if you remember, the peacekeeping payments, the UN doesn't really get those. They go through the UN to the countries that contribute to the peacekeeping operations. So the people who were not getting paid was not the UN, because they didn't have any forces in that literal sense that you paid for; it was the Brits, the French, the Indians, the Indonesians, the Japanese—people like this weren't getting paid, and those were the ones that were very aggravated. Now when you look at the Brits, they too have an armada out in the seas, and they're not charging for those. They would say, come on, what are you all talking about? We have the same thing you do. And the French would say, we're doing the same thing. Now the French didn't do as much, frankly, but they are out there. So this created another tempest, I suppose, in this crisis.

*Q: You've come back to problems with congressional staff on UN issues. Can you give some cases or names of both principals and staff that you found particularly unhelpful during the time you were there?*

SPROTT: Well, Senator (Jessie) Helms's [Republican – North Carolina] staff, as a group, was unhelpful.

*Q: Where were they coming from? I mean, was it just Helms, or was it the staff, too, that was a monkey wrench, from your perspective?*

SPROTT: From my perspective, obviously I never talked to Helms, so I can only go by that, but in watching over two years and listening to these people, I am left to believe that they developed their opinions perhaps in a context provided by him, but they developed their own opinions and then extended them, even reinforced them, and then feed them back to him reinforcing his position.

My comment here, that I think we need to start with, is there is a legitimate position that people like Helms and Helms's staff took—and there are others—not just Republicans, but also Democrats, that's of the U.S. Constitution and the rights of the U.S. as a nation. They were concerned that we not engage in activities that would lead to the inappropriate intrusion on the U.S., on the rights of U.S. citizens and the right of the U.S. as a nation to

function according to its interest and under our Constitution. So they would see activities that would take place, where they were fearful that activities undertaken by the UN were infringements on the rights of U.S. citizens. Now, having said that, unfortunately what I think some thought—and I don't believe Helms because Helms is a very bright man and clearly understands this very well, so I don't believe it's Helms in this case—but what you would hear them doing is arguing as if, well, we voted for a treaty, but we don't believe in that treaty any more. That treaty, just to give you an example, is an agreement that leads to our agreement to pay the UN dues, or for peacekeeping operations. I mean, that was approved by the Senate—it was proposed by the Administration, approved by the Senate. I mean, it is, in effect, a treaty. It's a legal obligation. They would argue then that we could pick and choose what we want to engage in, but the mere signing of a treaty is a reduction of some degree of freedom within any nation's constitution. You can always say, okay, it's gone too far and we want to stop it, and so on, but what they were doing was saying, well, we no longer can trust the UN, we don't know but that the UN isn't seeking to undermine us and weaken us so that they could take us over. An extreme right's position, which was in newspapers during this period there was a group of Congressmen, one of which is from my old home state, Arizona, arguing that the UN had black helicopters—literally used the term *black helicopters*—and were going to attack the United States.

*Q: We're talking about an interesting thing of this era, which is paranoia—rightist militia groups, conspiracies, bombings in the United States such as Oklahoma City, to people hiding out in the hills; and fear of the UN is part of this.*

SPROTT: That's right, exactly, and there were staffers, who if they did not believe this clearly used the emotion and the political fallout from those kinds of activities as a basis of a part of their arguments to us. As a result, took the position that we should withdraw from the UN. We don't even need it. Forget it. Let it go on its own. I've heard that position within staff meetings. I have to say that, as a group, it was the Republicans who took this position, albeit I have to admit there isn't an awful lot of interest on the Hill in UN or multilateral affairs, period. I mean, if you were to go up there and throw just a list, unnumbered and un-prioritized list of things, and you had UN administration or the UN as one of them and just threw it up there, it would not be probably amongst the first 10 items that Congressmen or Senators would pick out as being the most important thing for them. It falls pretty far down the line, and maybe it should. But the trouble is that it falls so far down the line that what happens when an issue like this grows and becomes important, you don't have the kind of interest that's needed to support, a thoughtful, reasonable, long-term-viable position. Taking the position of not paying our dues is not long-term viable. It simply doesn't work that way, and is not the way to approach leadership by this nation in world affairs.

So what happened was that you had a large number of Republicans who remained silent or outside the issue and, therefore, left it to be focused on by, basically, the American political right, I would say. The Democrats as a group remained silent, in general, even those that had some interest or might have had some interest. Either they were so traumatized by the 1994 elections, or they just didn't know how to operate as a minority,

or they simply were just not interested. But they were unhelpful, I would argue from my point of view. Now I am sure that the leadership of the Department would never make that statement, but as I sat in on our meetings, and I sat in on a lot of them up there on the Hill with assistant secretaries and others, with Richardson and even with Albright. You'd see the staffers around there, there were all these staffers and they would be, you know, out of 20 staffers there would be five Democrats, let's say, if we were lucky, and they would sit on their hands; and I don't know what they did with their lips and mouth, but they didn't say anything. It would be the Republicans—and very often it was just of handful of them, but they were making all the points. You know, Helms's staff was clearly that way on a very consistent basis. Graham's was that way.

*Q: Phil Graham of Texas.*

SPROTT: Yes, and he had a good staff, I mean, and I actually grew to respect his staffers, but mainly because they did their homework. But by the same token, they took very hard positions in a way that made it very difficult. It was an untrusting kind of situation and, all too often, right on the borderline of being uncivil. With the Helms staffers it was, in my opinion, as a rule of thumb, uncivil. It was not a kind of discussion that you could have where you could assume that people were absorbing and listening as well as giving and enabling you to understand as well. You didn't have this give and take that allowed you to better understand their position and where they were coming from. I could go on. I probably should get together a list—I'll do that—and give you a list of some of the other names of the people that were key in this. But for some reason it just doesn't come to me this morning.

*Q: This is what we need. I mean, we don't really need names; we need the feeling. How did you find, during this period, the support of Warren Christopher. I mean, was this low on his priorities, would you say?*

SPROTT: Yes. Yes. And of course, at this point, we were getting close to the end of his term. We were talking about election time – 1966.

*Q: When Clinton was reelected president and Albright came in as Secretary of State.*

SPROTT: That's right. So we had a period there where you really wouldn't expect a lot of dynamic activity, but the dynamic activity was very much there in the National Security Council. The National Security Council used this very often, and in my opinion, I think sometime when you interview Princeton Lyman you might see what his opinion is of this, but my impression, talking to lower-level people than he talked to, was that the National Security Council was driving of a lot of these activities and taking their own positions and presenting them upwards to either (Vice President) Gore or the President, or the President's immediate staff, without regard to the full flavor that we were trying to present on our side. The OMB, I think, when we finally got to the top, where the leadership of OMB was receptive and helpful, that by the same token, they also had to deal with other matters, and I don't think this was seen as the highest priority. Partly as a result of that, Princeton, in negotiating out the kind of budget and staffing levels that we

would present and the way in which that would be presented as an administrative position supporting our budget request on the Hill was less than the kind of first position we should have gone in with. We started out at a lower level than we should ever have to start with, largely because we didn't have the kind of support between OMB, the NSC, and ourselves. We were at a period in which Christopher was leaving, Albright was coming in, we didn't have the kind of leadership support that you needed to have. Frankly, the Department of State, once again, is not a Department that has been traditionally run with knowledgeable people at the management levels on issues of resources. With all due respect to all of those people that you can name as well as I can, very often the resource issues have not been as coherently dealt with as they have been in other agencies, particularly, let's say, Defense, that we can all point to, because we've not had the kind of long-term planning. Now Craig Johnstone, who was trying to play a role—and did, in fact, play an excellent role in coordinating those issues—did help as much as he could, but by the same token I'm not so sure you the whole Department pulling together on that. I think he may have even had an uphill battle in this regard, but I must say this was probably one of the saving graces of that whole period, was that that office, of Craig Johnstone's, which had—

*Q: Which office was it?*

SPROTT: You know, I don't even know what the name of it is, but he reported essentially to the Secretary, and his role was one of coordinating the 150 Account of the Department's budget and making sure that it coordinated our position, no matter what the Department's Office of Finance and others might have put together and other bureaus put together. [Editor's Note: During this period Ambassador L. Craig Johnstone was Director of the Office of Resources, Plans and Policy in the Office of the Secretary of State (S/RPP).] He was the one that kind of oversaw the presentation that went forward to OMB and to the President and so on, and made sure that there was a better correlation between the policy goals and objectives of the Administration and the budgets as they were laid down on a region and functional basis, and didn't allow an organization, for example, like the International Organizations Bureau, which is a weaker bureau. I mean, it's a regional bureau on one level; it's a functional bureau on another level; and it doesn't have the kind of constituents that you get with EUR (Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs) and ARA (Bureau of Inter-American Affairs) and some of the others—and as a result it's kind of a weaker bureau. Its issues are not sexy, unless you've got a Bosnia or something like that, and then its issues will come up. As a result, it was easy for others to say, "Well, look, the squeaky wheels are somewhere else. The power positions on the Seventh Floor are really between EUR or the Soviet Sector and the Seventh Floor. You all down in IO and your puny UN budgets issues are not important. Okay?" At one level, that's true, but Craig Johnstone tried to bring proportionality, to use a current term, to this argument, and I think was very helpful, but we still had to get through OMB and we still had to get through the NSC on this. And that's where I think some of the changes took place.

In my opinion, again, during this period, what began to happen, and I think Secretary Albright came in and, I think we all would agree, did a profoundly wonderful job

initially, but my sense is that the NSC began to take over a lot of the role on a lot of these issues that I saw and dealt with, including peacekeeping issues. You begin to see that the policy making—though there was a façade of interaction with various departments and particularly the Department of State and its various bureaus, my sense is that they did a lot of what they wanted to do and took the lead role and filtered the information or managed the information in such a way that *their* positions were the ones that got dealt with. And I say this based upon the fact that there would an agreement amongst the various parties that we would take a position, let's say, on how the President was going to deal with the budget issue in the UN in his speech—say, the speech at the UN or maybe in the State of the Union Speech or someplace else—and the way in which the things actually turned out was significantly different, often times from the way in which the agreement went, and not because it got changed around the President's level so much as that it never got from the NSC to the President in a form that would have led to that.

Now I don't have the papers. I can't prove that. I had the papers and I could have proved that, but they're classified; you can't take those out. But I think if one were to look at this 10 years from now, you would see that there was a clear shift in the policy-making process in favor of the NSC during this period and away from the State Department.

*Q: This is when, after Sandy Berger took over the NSC—*

SPROTT: That's right.

*Q: —and then when Albright moved to the State Department.*

SPROTT: That's right. Yes, that's right. It's interesting to me in some respects—from the IO point of view, not from the Department of State's point of view—in some respects, there was a stronger role that she was able to play and one that was, from the UN point of view, more helpful, and I think that was because she had a presence that was ideal. Remember (William B. "Bill") Richardson didn't come on board until what? I don't think he got to the Department until the summer of '97 maybe, huh? Something like that, I want to say. I think the summer of '97 was when he finally got . . . let's see, you got a hiatus of no representative in the UN for a fair amount of time, too. [Editor's Note: Richardson, Ambassador to the UN, served from February 18, 1997 to September 10, 1998.]

When he did come on board, his focus—he was helpful on a number of these issues and worked his Congressional friends on the Hill, but he was also taken up with a lot of other issues. If you remember, the President was sending him off to different places to trouble-shoot on a number of issues, so the kind of focus that we were accustomed to having with Secretary Albright, when she was at the UN, got lost when Richardson came because, while he was very effective at one level with the Hill and so on, he was off doing other issues. Also, Richardson would probably tell you, he's not a detail man. A lot of the issues you're dealing with on UN budgets and administration involve your remembering numbers. Now Secretary Albright would also tell you she's not a budget person, so remembering these numbers is not something she likes to do, and so you kind

of try to make those numbers fairly straightforward for her. But she would, if you could get them to her, remember them and not lose them and knew how to use them when she got them. Richardson was a little bit different. He was a little bit more of a freelancer with some of these things, but very effective with his Congressional friends.

That's kind of, I think, the way I saw that play, and I think, much to my surprise, the newspapers like The Washington Post and The New York Times were not as knowledgeable about, nor as concerned about the plight of the international organizations systems and didn't always get it into perspective. The Los Angeles Times did, which kind of surprised me, although I've always kind of respected the L. A. Times in a lot of ways. I would have thought that The New York Times would have had a better perspective and had better reporting on these issues and would have had ways in which they could tie some of these issues together better than they did, but they didn't. They allowed other things to take front page or editorial page space instead of this, where I think they missed out on some opportunities that in the long run are going to make a difference.

The next issue that I would make very clear is a fault of the foreign affairs community, especially the official foreign affairs community in its broadest sense, or even, if you prefer, in the narrow sense of the Department of State, USIA, and AID. We have not, over the years, done the job we should have done or should be doing to increase the knowledge and understanding and awareness of the importance of foreign affairs. We have simply neglected this. I'm an economist originally by background, and economists are guilty of exactly the same thing. They get lost in the language of their profession or of their field, and neglect the consumers of the information that they're producing. As a result, people ignore it or don't think it's important or laugh at it. You could see this with this UN issue so clearly, that you go out and give a talk at a Rotary Club or a union meeting or a group of fish and wildlife administrators or places like this, and they would have not the slightest idea about why foreign affairs would be important to them. But as soon as you would point out one of the issues that was important to them—importation of endangered species, or importation of illegal animals, the introduction of seeds or plant life that is inimical to something else we've got here—then immediately they would understand the foreign affairs content, but they very often did not take that knowledge or understanding that you even developed there, if they didn't have it before, and they were not so able to spread that out and see how it affected their daily lives in communication, transportation, food consumption, and health and so on. That's where we've made the mistake. The Foreign Service, because we're all part of that system, I will hold the largest to blame because that should be the leadership. And part of the reason there is that we've so focused on form that we forgot the function and the substance, and we've failed to, I think, generate the kind of interest that there should be (and historically used to be) in these issues and make the connections between them and Joe Blow in Peoria or John in Podunk.

*Q: John, I've got to move you back. When did you leave this job?*

SPROTT: Okay, I left at the end of April of 1998.

*Q: When Albright came in—you alluded a little bit to this, but—was there any particular change, because she'd just been to the United Nations and had this U.S. financial arrears thrown in her face every time? Did she make any effort to try to do something about it?*

SPROTT: Well, there was a confluence of events, I think, at this point. The arrears in the UN were reaching another peak. We were going to keep losing voting rights. So again it was reaching a peak. That's the second time around, in fact, the second year in a row that it would have done that, but this time even more serious. So that was number one. That was what was happening. Princeton Lyman now was clearly pushing to get some kind of an agreement going with OMB, so OMB was working with State to try to come up with a solution to this process. Ambassador Albright comes down and becomes Secretary. She had the knowledge and concern about this from first hand. So she agreed with Claude Rains, who was then head of OMB, that they and the head of NSC, Berger, would get together and meet on this and try to figure out a plan. So that meant that Princeton and his staff, me and others, and comparable people in the OMB and so on and in NSC generated papers and developed a program and plan for moving forward.

The idea then that came out of this, because the Congressional staffs were just impossible to deal with at this point. . . . they didn't listen and it got to the point of trying to get them to make a decision, and they'd say, well, we have to go to the principal, and then we never knew whether the principal actually got the story or not. I think we could have demonstrated a few times where the staffers did not give the principals the information that they needed to have to make a correct decision. But let's put that aside. The right way to have done this at this point, because it was such a crisis, was to have it at the principal level, so there was an agreement, and then Secretary Albright worked with key members of the Hill to set up a principals-only kind of set of meetings in which they would go through and develop a plan for dealing with the UN problem and getting it out of the way. So she initiated that process, and they actually had three meetings, if I remember correctly, and indeed we did hammer out a kind of plan out of that which was not too far—well, it was quite a ways off from where we started out with Princeton and Orv Ebach a number of months earlier, but it was one that was going to be an uphill (a very steep hill) to sell to the UN and its membership, particularly the membership because they were going to have to... We came up with a budget, this principals set of meetings, the budget was all approved. But Congress was imposing conditions on the payment of the dues such that members of the UN were going to have to vote for an increase in the amount they were going to pay in order to give us a reduction, and they were going to have to do a number of other things to go along with this. And I have to tell you, they were not inclined to do this until we put up our money. They said, we listened to you (and I think they said) twice before, and you said, "Do this and we will do that." "And we did this, and you didn't do that, and so we're not going to do this, we're not going to vote for anything like this until you come up with the money." All right. The deadline for coming up with that money in order to achieve it really should have been like January of '98. We pushed it off until the last minute, like April of '98. We didn't get the money. That was the last time, for two years, when we could have gotten changes in the formula for making payments to the UN and other organizations, and, you know, we're back again to square one. Why are we back there? Because of Congress. Because

the meeting of the principals just simply didn't work well enough because you couldn't get them (Congress) off this conditionality. They were insisting on conditions so strongly that they wouldn't give us the money to make the payments unless the conditions were met, even assuming we could have met them, and I'm not sure, to be honest with you, that we would have been able to get those conditions even if we had been able to give them the money. And I think some of the staffers knew that.

*Q: Well, John, that was—ha. And you left at that point.*

SPROTT: I left at the end of April, at that stage.

*Q: It must have been with a certain amount of relief—I mean personally.*

SPROTT: Yes, I think because we were probably just going to go through the same cycle again in another year, although frankly it would be two years—it would be next year—before there was another opportunity to get at the payment levels that are involved, that is, the rate and scale of payments. And I think, with the state of Japan and the East Asian countries, I'm not so sure that's going to be as easy. I have to say also that there are conditions with the EU (European Union) that their strengthening, become stronger and acting more and more as a group, it's going to be harder and harder for us to manage this process, and we've simply got to learn how to be leaders and stop being the kind of bullies on the block that, sadly, we are playing the role of more often than not, or at least seem that way.

There is another set of issues that are very bothersome. In fact, there was an article in the newspaper this week, like the 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> of January this year, 1999, in The Washington Post that was dealing with pensions. One of the problems that we're going to be facing, that Europe is facing right now, is that pensions are paid primarily out of current income in those countries, and in the case of the international organizations, almost all of which were formed or certainly grew, during the immediate post-World War II period—those people are now retiring. The UN Secretariat stood to lose, a year ago or within five years from that point, about 45 to 50 per cent of its staff would be up for retirement or actually retired. Now fortunately, they have a pension plan that's funded very much like a pension plan, but there are many other organizations—OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), for example, funds its pension totally out of current income. That means that as people retire, and you hire new people to replace them, the budget increases by the amount of the retirement payments, at the very least. And if you have, let's say, 50 per cent of your staff retired, you've increased your budget for non-productivity purposes by 50 per cent. That is, you've increased the budget 50 per cent, and your productivity has not increased at all. We've got a problem there that's got to be dealt with, and they're not dealing with it. They're not dealing with it because we're not forcing them to.

*Q: I'm going to cut you off a bit here because I think, you know, you've raised the issue, but this one that's not being dealt with at this point, at any rate. So when you retired, what did you do?*



SPROTT: Oh, I promised myself six months of not worrying about doing anything, actually, which meant that I have a shelf of books that have yet to be read that I wanted to read, but I wanted to get myself physically in shape, which I'm doing. I've long been a drawer—I would never call myself an artist—but I've for years done little drawing, sketches and things like this, but never felt like I knew how to use the tools, so I've taken an art class and will be taking another one, mainly just to learn the tools. In this case I'm really, at this stage of my life, only interested in using charcoals and pencils and pens, which is my preference, so I'm doing my artwork.

I have a contract to put together a program on international affairs, which I am doing. I have until July to do that. There are some businesses that I worked with overseas which, I guess, appreciated the way in which I dealt with some of the issues, and at some point I will probably do some consulting work with them, not in the country that I left, because I don't have any desire to do that, but in their area of interest I think I have some knowledge and expertise that they could use, so that I would be doing some of that.

A good deal of writing. I've, of course, been doing this oral history and have agreed to write up the part of the oral histories for Swaziland. I've been a lot more active in my local (homeowners') association where we live. And that's, I guess, more or less it, trying to put those things together.

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FSI Staffing in the years covered by this interview  
(researched from the Department of State telephone books)

Directors

Carl Strom	1961-1962
George Morgan	1962-1965
Howard Sollenberger (Acting)	1965-1966
George Allen	1966-1968
Parker Hart	1969
Howard Sollenberger (Acting)	1969-1971
Howard Sollenberger	1971-1976
William Broderick (Acting)	1976
George S. Springsteen	1976-1980
Paul H. Boeker	1980-1982
Steven Low	1982-1987
Charles Bray	1987-198
Brandon Grove	1988-1992
Lawrence Taylor	1992-1995

Deputy Directors

George Abbot	1961-1962
John Moore	1962-1965
James Barnes	1965-1966

(no listing)	1966-1972
Donald Bergus	1973-1975
William Broderick	1975-1977
Carleton Coon	1977-1979
Jack Matlock	1979-1981
<b>John Sprott</b>	<b>1981-1993</b>
Douglas Langan	1994-

*End of interview*