

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

**AMBASSADOR LANNON WALKER**

*Interviewed by: Mark Tauber  
Initial interview date: August 31, 2022  
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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: This oral history is part of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)'s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary series with top leaders of the organization. Ambassador Walker let's begin with your first connections with AFSA. When did you first hear about AFSA? Was it in your orientation for the Foreign Service?*

WALKER: No, it was after I returned from overseas. Back then, the first tours of all officers were rotational. We spent six months on each of the four specialties, or “cones,” over two years. These were: political, economic, administrative (later changed to management), and consular. The public affairs cone was part of what was then a separate agency – the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). After this introduction, we had a real assignment, after which we returned to Washington. Everyone went through a course that was designed to show us how Washington works and how to work within the system. That's where we met each other and that's where we began to understand that the problems and impressions that we'd experienced were widely shared among us: The problems (family life, culture, the old toads, for example), and the opportunities as well. I didn't learn about AFSA until we began to wonder what we could do about these issues.

In 1967 an election was scheduled for leaders of AFSA. I had joined the organization as had everybody else when they first came in. But I paid no attention to the election because it was obviously an old boys' club. Leadership was passed from one old boy's group to another. There had been a career principles group earlier on, but it was completely inactive.

We had been meeting in different groups of unhappy officers of various ranks, mainly junior officers—of which I was one—and mid-career officers led by Charlie Bray. Each of us had an angle. My angle concerned what I believed was the failure of the State Department to exercise leadership as the leading department for framing U.S. foreign policy, based on the goals of the administration. The situation we all saw overseas in any given embassy was the number of federal government agency representatives, anywhere from 15-20. It was a country team concept, which did not exist in Washington. There was no country team manager, and no ambassador to pull it all together. President Johnson was quite unhappy with that situation, so he asked General Maxwell Taylor, who was just coming back from an assignment as ambassador to Vietnam, to look at the situation in

Washington and to make recommendations. Ambassador Taylor recommended that a senior interdepartmental group, led by the State Department, should manage the direction of foreign policy based on how it was done in an embassy, in a country team model.

*Q: In this country's team model, did all federal agency reps report to the ambassador as the president's representative?*

WALKER: A new ambassador would arrive at the embassy with a letter from the President of the United States stating that he (the ambassador) was in charge, except for certain military things. But these agencies all have their own budget, and even though the ambassador is writing about them, their real efficiency reports are back home at the Defense Department, or wherever. The only real power the ambassador had was the threat of curtailment – of sending the representative back to Washington for cause, something that should happen rarely.

Each ambassador had a different approach. For example, I would just sit down and say, "Look, let's identify our goals for each one of our programs and see how we're going to contribute to those goals. We won't be getting into your programs, to change them, but to have you tell us how you are going to reach your goals." How well it works depends a lot on the ambassador and the team, but it works a lot better than the Washington interagency process.

This was not the case in Washington in 1967 when my colleagues and I began comparing notes on our complaints. Some of us were frustrated by the lack of coordination in Washington, others were focused on bread-and-butter issues. Charlie Bray and his group wanted to create a single foreign service employee organization that would include USIA [United States Information Agency], but the USIA members chose to be represented by AFGE, the American Federation of Government Employees. We realized that sharing complaints was a great idea, but we were not going to be successful talking only to each other. We had no power, no base, no leverage.

About this time, and as I mentioned in the beginning of the interview, I saw the notice saying there is an election scheduled in the American Foreign Service Association. So, I asked a few of the older guys what the association was, how many people did it have, and what kind of budget did it have? I got the bylaws, read them carefully, and saw that write-in ballots were approved. The system in place was that eighteen electors chose the board. We put together a group of eighteen people and ran as a slate. The banner of our group of eighteen was three words in French, *Un Peu de Zèle* (A Little Zeal). Why did we say that? The famous diplomat, Talleyrand, in his instructions to diplomats, said, "*Surtout pas trop de zèle*," ("Above all, not too much zeal"). In those days, everybody got it, but I am not sure they would get it today. But back then everybody did, and we were able to run as a slate. We focused on how we would stand up for the foreign service instead of big picture issues, and we won overwhelmingly. One reason for this big win was that we sat down as a team of 18 and asked, "Who do we know in these posts?" It turned out that between eighteen of us knew somebody in every post, and in Washington. The eighteen people were not all young junior officers like me, or mid-career like Charlie

Bray. Charlie, at the time, worked for Foy Kohler, who was the number three in the department, and Foy Kohler agreed to join; he was part of our slate.

*Q: Now, this is interesting because he is part of management. And eventually, you wouldn't be able to be a member of the AFSA board and a member of management.*

WALKER: AFSA, at the time, was not a union. Therein lies the story. It was a professional organization, and we were looking at how you could use a professional organization to achieve certain goals, shy of being a union.

The last thing that ever occurred to any of us at the time was becoming a union. So, still, as a professional organization, we won the election. We had Foy Kohler; I had John Reinhardt, who was a senior ambassadorial-level African American from USIA; we had a senior officer for USAID; and we had Dean Brown, who would become undersecretary for management. Dean Brown was my first boss and my mentor at my first post. Finally, we had several other entry level officers. We had a program, and we decided on the things we wanted to do.

Now, 1967 was the time of the Vietnam War, and everybody in the country wanted things to change, except for the people in charge. We were part of that, and it occurred to us all, regardless of our perspective, that the State Department was too narrowly focused, and we wanted to open it. We had a broad program of openness. We talked to other foreign services, notably the Canadians, French, and the Brits. We talked to the private sector. And, for example—I'll just digress here for a moment— but when we talked to the private sector, we learned that in many respects, people, when given a chance to say what they'd like to do, did not want to come to New York and be in the silver tower. They were happy in Biloxi, running a good show, and so we came up with the idea of asking for people's opinion on their assignments, which led to the open assignments process. The last thing in the world that we had in mind is what was ultimately right. We just thought it might be a good idea if you ask people where they would like to be assigned. That was revolutionary at the time. But it took off. So, next we broached the idea of the scholar diplomat program. We convinced the State Department to bring in scholars who were studying African Affairs to sit down with our desk officers. At first, the reaction was, "and read our secrets, my God." What secrets? It worked. One of those fellows was Chet Crocker, who became Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Next, we recommended the dissent channel, which allowed grievances to be aired confidentially. Awards were given for constructive dissent, called the Herter Award, and there were other awards as well. We were determined to open the space.

*Q: An interesting aspect of your outreach was to approach some of the older diplomats and their families for donations to create the awards, for example, the dissent award. Did you also use this approach for other things as well? You know, the purchase of the office for AFSA.*

WALKER: Yes, that was another decision. At the time, I was assigned to the State Department's executive secretariat, a reasonably busy job. And a young White House

fellow named Peter Crowe, who was the Associate Dean from The Fletcher School at Tufts University was assigned to Dean Rusk, and Dean Rusk said, "Walker, show him what the State Department's all about." Well, Peter Crowe was a fundraiser par excellence. He saw what else I was doing and he said, "Where are you going to get the money to do these things?" And I said, "I don't know" and he said, "Well, come with me to New York." I said, "What for?" He said, "Well, we're going to get you some money. I'm going to take you to the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and others." I said, "Well, what will I tell them?" He said, "Just tell him your secret." I said, "Well, that's silly." But we went, and we got the money. It could have been Rockefeller or Ford that paid for Charlie Bray; I don't recall the details there. We were called "The Young Turks." I had published an article in Foreign Affairs titled, "Our Foreign Affairs Machinery: Time for an Overhaul." George Kennan supported it. We had a surprising number of older fellows who told us we were headed in the right direction.

The first board meeting was memorable. I had planned and had organized what I thought were the votes to have Dean Brown made chair of the board. Well, he outfoxed me, and I made chair. The then manager said, "Well, you've got one big decision right away, fellas. The old board has organized a big party on a boat in the Potomac for themselves. Do you approve of that?" We looked at each other, and said, "Sure, why not?" He then said, "Okay, who's going to represent you?" It was decided that I would go on this boat, where I found myself pinned to the guardrail. The older foreign service officers and their wives just gave me a bedeviling that you cannot believe. Dean Brown showed up, and manfully tried to ward off some of the more vicious blows. People there said, "You have made a fundamental mistake because once you start to tinker with our elite system, Lord knows where we'll go." There is some truth to that as I look at some of the results, but you couldn't talk to us; we thought we knew what we were doing.

*Q: At this time, when you're beginning to argue and debate with an older generational authority, did you begin to point out to them how the State Department had been diminished in policy making since World War Two simply because it failed to assert itself in the interagency?*

WALKER: When the president approved the Sigurd system and gave us the keys to the kingdom, Dean Rusk assigned Senior Officer Art Hartman to implement Sigurd. We were in close touch with Art, who was having a difficult time because there was no backing from the Secretary of State. Take, for example, the fact that I, in three different posts as ambassador, found a way to buy land so that we could have a place to have a decent embassy, although I never thought we'd ever build. And we never did until a military guy came through, named Colin Powell, who looked around and said, "What are these dumps we're working in?" He then went to the Hill and made an issue of our working conditions. No secretary of state ever did that.

But this was part of the problem. We were handed the keys to the game, but how it *actually* worked was that at about six or seven o'clock in the evening, the real power centers moved up to the secretary's office, poured themselves drinks, and decided the world's issues— we were not included.

*Q: I interrupted you while you were recounting the events on the boat. How did that play out?*

WALKER: Well, what I told you was that it was a miserable evening. My wife asked me what I had gotten her into. She said they accused me of being behind it all.

Regardless, this was an exhilarating time because each one of us, in different ways, was testifying on the hill. Since I had a full-time job, Charlie would organize things. They would say, "We need you to be on the hill, we need you to go to New York, we need you to do this, etc." And then I would talk to my boss, Ben Reed, who was quite open, and he supported me. So here I am, an entry level officer, just back to Washington for a second tour, and there I am testifying on the Hill. There I was in New York, fundraising. I was meeting with potential private sector donors, trying to figure out what you can learn from them, meeting new people. So it was, for all of us, probably the most exhilarating time in our entire careers, including the ambassadorships.

The biggest issue we had concerned power, obviously, because as a professional organization with a bunch of newcomers having a lot of ideas that were making some progress was not received well. The Secretary of State did not care. Luckily, my boss, the head of the Executive Secretariat, supported us. But the undersecretary for management, Idar Rimestad, did not. He summoned me to his office. I walked over, and there he had every executive director in the State Department around a table, with me at the end and him at the other end. He looked down the table and he said, "You see that certificate on the wall? When I signed and swore an oath, nowhere does it say I have to listen to you, you understand that?" He chewed me out and told me to get back to work. I never said a word, I just walked out. I called the troops together. We met over at the now AFSA headquarters—we had bought the building—and I said, "We've got a problem. We're making some progress, but this guy is challenging us, and we have no legal authority whatsoever." They asked, "What do you recommend?" I recommended that we hold an open meeting in the State Department auditorium. Ben Reed got me into the State Department auditorium, we publicized the event, and everybody showed up. We laid into Mr. Rimestad, and the cheers were resounding. In that audience were three guys from AFGE [American Federation of Government Employees]. This is the civil service union that attacked me because they wanted to take over. One of our eighteen said to me, "Let's get out of here." I said, "No, no, no, we're not getting out of here." This was our first run-in with AFGE, which taught us a lesson. But after a while, Richard Nixon became president.

I do not know why or how it happened, but President Nixon tipped the balance toward government unions. Now, among other things, professional organizations have no say in anything but now we find ourselves in a new situation. To have a say, you must be a union. That's when it started. We knew at this point we had to do something. It took place after I left AFSA that we woke up between the pictures of those three guys in the audience, which was overwhelming for us, and you can tell that was trouble. And we were going to have to deal with it.



*Q: Let's explore a little more about you and the Young Turks -- all eighteen of you -- began to change the work environment at the State Department and the other agencies AFSA represented at that time. Some were more focused on how policymaking is conducted. Others were more interested in improving professional training and outreach. And still, others were taking on questions of benefits, trying to get equivalency of benefits for the foreign service that were granted to other federal agencies and civilian employees. How did you balance those issues altogether as a group?*

WALKER: We took the people that were interested, for example, in personnel reform, and we went back to some of the old toads who had gotten into career principles. I went to Ambassador Graham Martin, who is the epitome of a strong ambassador, and asked him to write the chapter on the role of the ambassador. We published a book, Toward a Modern Diplomacy, putting that group on that track that involved a lot of personnel reform. Others who were focused on the bread-and-butter issues were feeding us things that we could get involved with. But we were still not a union - we had to persuade them.

Now, back to Nixon. There was a fellow named Butts McComber, on the seventh floor in a special assistant role. He was a Republican that they brought in as part of the team. I ran across him when I worked in the Executive Secretariat, the office that runs support and staffing for the Secretary. Someone I knew told me to keep him abreast of things, so I kept briefing him on what we were doing. When Nixon won, Macomber became undersecretary for management. He took our thrust and brought together a larger group of people of his choosing, including some of our people, and sat down with study groups, including the bread-and-butter issues. We had to be persuasive. We had no legal authorities, but we made some progress. Charlie Gray took over when I left. One of the group of eighteen, Bob Codecs, recommended Bill Harrop to replace me." Bill Harrop was a bit old school. He didn't mind if you asked for a chat on short notice. So I walked in to see him, as sophisticated as I could be. I was making the pitch that he should run for the position and he nearly threw me out of the office. His wife threatened divorce if he'd even consider it. But I stayed after him, and slowly he considered the job more positively.

Make no mistake about the Young Turks. This group of eighteen were elitists. Yes, we believed in a strong up-or-out system based upon the Navy personnel system. That was a common belief that we all had. Some parted ways over the years because of their own personal histories. I am still a member of the group of former presidents that periodically gets together, and we are sometimes asked for our views on aspects of current AFSA activities. At the last session, I was quite distraught. The issues that we are now facing are so far away from those halcyon days. We found out that a director general, behind the backs of the senior officers, instituted a system basically eliminating the foreign service exam as a barrier to entry. And the secretary of state didn't know about it.

I asked Derek, "Well, now that he knows about it, is he going to do something?" And the answer was, "No. No, because it's already done." Following this, there were scandals concerning the choices of people. Outsiders were being brought in to sit on our promotion board. As I listened to the issues, it was like reading the newspaper, where

there rarely is good news. If I compare our experience to the experience today, there is really no comparison. We were full beings, we were exhilarated, we thought we were accomplishing important things.

But by this time, we were doing pretty well. We got a major law firm to work for us pro bono, so our outreach was more than just getting the State Department out of its confines. We, ourselves, were out there. Certainly, we relied on dues, but we went to one of the major donor organizations and said, "We thought we'd reform the foreign service. Would you like to contribute to that?" I didn't think we'd get a lot of money, but in the late '60s, the overall atmosphere in the United States was good.

*Q: It's a fascinating fact that I think a lot of people don't realize. The political context of considering reforms that you were advocating. You were able to seize the moment when there was a desire for reform. Another form of outreach was going to Congress to talk to either staff or members of Congress. Can you elaborate a little bit more on how you did that? What were the reactions in Congress about your recommendations?*

WALKER: First, we did our homework. We had people who were working without the formal AFSA legislative branch that AFSA has now. But we had people focusing on that. We did work with the staff. We were invited to go up and tell our story. Various issues arose such as language training. Later, as I moved up, after returning from my tenure as Ambassador in Senegal, I tried to institute the model language post that we had initiated in Senegal, where everybody had to speak at a given level. It was the first ever such post. Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois), who was in charge of this initiative wanted to keep it going, but the State Department said it cost too much money. And so there I was, an ambassador now, testifying effectively in opposition to the Undersecretary for Management, Ron Speirs, and others. We said it was a hell of a program. We urged that we keep it going. And we were successful.

*Q: Another interesting moment in your outreach was attending the Republican Convention in Miami. You might not have been able to predict Nixon was going to be elected, but you certainly reached out for the possibility to describe what your goals were. And again, how was that taken among these soon-to-be leaders in the Nixon administration?*

WALKER: Well, I told you the story about McComber. That was our inside work. I just had a hunch that if McComber were important enough to the Democrats to appoint him to the State Department, the Republicans would appoint a similarly well-connected undersecretary. We talked to the Democrats too. We decided that we had no power, so we had to be persuasive. We had to have friends, to enable us to remind people. Brzezinski was up on the seventh floor in a kind of counselor role. I was even able to brief him.

*Q: Now, you departed the AFSA executive group in 1969, if I'm not mistaken.*

WALKER: Yes.

*Q: But afterwards, I imagine you remained in contact with them, or at least followed events. As you look back on that, what were the immediate consequences?*

WALKER: Well, the major focus of AFSA quickly became the forming of a union. They didn't abandon the professionalization of the role, but they realized that if they didn't become a union, they wouldn't have adequate influence to push forward even modest requests and proposals. I must admit, though, that a lot of foreign service officers, including some of us, were not certain that this was the smartest thing to do. But that's what the AFSA board did. The aspiration to become a union became a major focus.

However, it turned into a situation where what power you have is in writing. For example, the State Department did not have to inform AFSA that they were going to do away with or remove the Foreign Service exam. They worked on that ahead of time. Then, you know, in the Reagan years, of course, I mean, we toyed with the idea of sprites. But there was a time of demonstrations and all that, we really just talked about it. But, we were glad we didn't because later Reagan, you'll recall when the air traffic controllers went on strike, he fired every damn one of them and put a stop to it right there.

I remember once when the mall in front of the State Department was full of young protesters, camps of hippies and such. They said they wanted to see the Secretary of State, but they just wanted to get into the building. I was told, "Walker, these are your kind of guys; you go out there and talk to them. And let's see if you can talk them into getting just two or three people." So, I slogged out into the muddy mall and found the leaders, which wasn't hard. I mistakenly thought I could negotiate with them, but then as we started walking with the two or three towards the building, I looked over my shoulder, and I saw crowds rolling. I went back inside, and I said, "You don't want to see these guys. They just want to get into the building".

*Q: And of course, once they went in, a sit-in would almost certainly occur.*

WALKER: That's right. That's all it is. They didn't have anything to say, they didn't have a reform program.

*Q: Since you mention that this era began to see more work toward turning AFSA into a union, are there individuals who stand out in your memory who were leaders of this movement?*

WALKER: Well, you know, in my recollection there were key people who stood out. Charlie Bray was critical. Charlie stood up, ran the shop, allowed me to come in when I needed. Tex Harris was a young man on the outside and was advising on some of the legal aspects. Tom Boyatt was someone who I could immediately see was one of us and someone who was going to carry forward, and Harrop. These original names have persisted throughout the whole AFSA experience. This is not to denigrate Blakely and the other presidents in any way. The current president strikes me as extraordinarily good. He is important to the process. One of our fellows was from the administrative cone. And he



is the guy who advanced the goal of buying our own building. So those kinds of things are quite important, just as they are in an embassy. We also had the help of pro bono lawyers.

*Q: As you enter this era of reform and change, how would you describe what the rank-and-file membership felt about it?*

WALKER: One of the things that struck me the most, as I'd be sitting in my seat in the Executive Secretariat, before I was appointed as Ambassador to Senegal, a newly appointed ambassador would come and see me to complain that the post he wanted, Tunis, had gone to someone else while he was going to some ratty African place. There was a guy-may he rest in peace- Richard Holbrooke - came to see me and said, "When are we going to get promoted faster?"

So, you know, there were these friends, you know, people that you'd never expected, who would come to see me because they figured something was going on, and maybe I could make it happen. As for the rest, we did not change the day-to-day life of people overseas or in the State Department. All the things that make it so difficult for wives and children, we did not change them. We had ideas, but there was no change on that front. If we did anything, it was to show that if you open up, it doesn't hurt; it might even help a little bit.

*Q: Now you also mentioned that you had made recommendations on additional training professionalization and so on. Could you go back and elucidate a little bit more on what some of those were?*

WALKER: We took a page out of the military's playbook and pointed out, as it is being pointed out today, that if you want to be in a foreign affairs profession, then training must be integrated into your career path. We were arguing that we should have a system like the military, where training often comes between deployments. In my entire career I had only two training sessions, the first one at the first post where we had some exposure to other sections of the embassy. You spent six months doing admin work, six months doing econ work, six months Consulate, six months political. So at least, I had real-life training.

The second training experience took place in the military's Capstone Program, which was designed for full bird colonels who were selected to be considered for their first star. Every door was open, and they would begin to broaden their world. A guy may have been doing tanks all his life, and suddenly, he would start to see the big picture. But we were arguing for language competence and broad-based training at both the entry level and senior level.

*Q: Another form of outreach is with the media. How do you get their attention and craft your story in a way that the media would cover it in a positive way?*

WALKER: Yes, we were very good at getting coverage for the Young Turks. It was the press that called us the young Turks. It was a press article, on the Washington Post's front page, with my picture. And that is where young \_\_\_\_\_ sells Young Turks.

Remember \_\_\_\_\_ not too much. No. And so it was quite good. There was a reporter that focused on the State Department and did a lot of deep background stuff. We worked on him repeatedly. We had excellent contacts in the press. This helped us with fundraising and helped us to be persuasive inside the building.

*Q: Internally in the period you were there, did you begin to change the way AFSA was organized and how it responded to the membership?*

WALKER: I think so. This started with Charlton. Before you had the officers on the board, and you had a full-time manager from the same generation who ran it. When Charlie went in there, he ran it as the CEO, the way we wanted. We started to use the Association the way we wanted. For example, we bought the building. We decided to have a restaurant that was big enough to host events. Then we hired the staff, acquired legal assistance, worked on the hill, etc., All of that began with us. The difference between that management approach and ours was like night and day.

*Q: Did you also have a vision for changing the Foreign Service Journal or making it a better voice for the Foreign Service?*

WALKER: We had people working on that. We argued for more substantive articles but left it up to our team for the heavy lifting in evolving the *Journal* into what it is today.

*Q: Looking back on your period of most intense activity, how would you evaluate the changes in AFSA and its ability to carry out its mission?*

WALKER: Well, as AFSA became a union and accrued some degree of authority, according to the legislation, you entered a new realm, a bureaucratic realm, and ran into a series of problems that are not easy. There is no problem for a scholar diplomat. We did not have problems; we had opportunities. Today 's problems are much more difficult.

You must accept that you are working uphill to correct the misimpression on the part of the American public that the Foreign Service enjoys a high life on the public dime, or, as it is now, that it is disloyal and works to undermine administration policy. Trump and others have taken a heavy toll on the Foreign Service. Exhilaration is no longer the first word that comes to mind. It is more of a slog to find champions in congress and in the executive.

*Q: Those are all the questions that I have for you. But often, people have recollections of experiences working with colleagues or management officials that are still in their minds as particularly salient, or even amusing. Are there any of these you 'd like to share?*

WALKER: Well, as I said, there were elements in the State Department that did not want what we wanted, and Senator Jim Runstead of Michigan was one of those. At one point, the assistant went to the Undersecretary for Management, I believe, and said, "We think Walker needs to be transferred to a nice place in Europe." He refused.

There were all sorts of things going on in the background. You always had to keep an eye out. When the Republicans came in, as I said, McComber was sane, but he would never forget that Nixon, in the Saturday Night Massacre, fired his Attorney General, Elliot Richardson, who came to State as the number two. He came with a very open mind; he had been briefed and he had read the press. He knew all about the issues. He had a special assistant from the outside that was equally open. One day, I was asked to walk over, so I went into his office, and he said, "So well, Lann, who would you like to have as Director General?" I said, "Excuse me?" He replied "You see, guys have all these ideas, Director General \_\_\_\_\_ and Director \_\_\_\_\_ important - \_\_\_\_\_." "Well, who would you like to have?" I said, "I'm going to have to consult on this." I called a meeting, got everybody together, and said, "Okay, we're being offered the chance to name the next Director General. I'm going to give them a name on the condition that they don't talk to the government, and they don't talk to these other guys, they just do it." They asked, "Okay, who is the guy?" I told them it was Dean Brown. I went back and presented the plan and, they agreed, talked to Dean, but it didn't work out. However, this showed that they were open, and this was a result of our work. This was a result of the press. This was the result of the Hillt, the result of briefing people, just taking the chance that someday they may end up in the right place. And so, did we change the world? No. Did we name the Director General? No. But there were all sorts of examples.

*Q: Thinking back on your time in the Executive Secretariat, only one door from the Secretary, were things that you could do from that unusually powerful perch that assisted AFSA?*

WALKER: Well, I guess I can tell now it's too late. Well, yes, of course. When we decided to run for the election, I had the biggest Xerox operation west and east of the Mississippi, right there! All the communications that you could want, all the reproductive facilities that you could possibly ask for. We swept the field with our propaganda and our pitches. You couldn't move in the State Department without finding one of our election flyers staring you in the face. We had many meetings and worked many long hours. My wife used to come down and pick me up at midnight, in her pajamas. The secretariat was a crazy place in those days. I don't know how it is now, but when I came in, the head, Gene Davis, a woman, said, "Here's the deal. You're going to work all day, and then you are going to be on duty in the evening until eight, nine, ten o'clock, depending upon when the principals go home. You have to clean up." She also said, "Now. If you are very good, and I mean, very good, not only can you do that, but you could have weekend duty. And on weekend duty, after they all go home at noon on Saturday, you're in charge of the world from Saturday noon until Monday morning."

To be more specific, I remember once during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Israelis laid in front of Johnson several signed documents between the two countries that essentially told President Johnson what he had to agree to do. Johnson was furious. He said, "By tomorrow morning, I want on my desk every single thing we've ever signed with these Israelis. "I was on duty that weekend. George London called and told me what needed to be done. I opened the library. I called in the troops. We worked day and night. On Monday morning, he had it on his desk. In those days, we controlled presidential

correspondence. We managed all the Presidential trips. The Secretary oversaw a lot of White House staff. In any event, it was a good time. AFSA is an important thing. You know, I think it's going well. I just feel sorry for them now.

*Q: As we conclude, are there recommendations you would give AFSA, having had the benefit of all this experience?*

WALKER: I would be brave. I would forget what we said in the beginning. And I would use a lot of zeal. I would go back to the fundamentals. I would say the issue of the policy process is critical. Foreign Service, unless it is working on a policy process, gives us the levers that we require; whatever our experience and talents, we must go back to them. Every time we turn around, certainly at every major presidential election, there is another attempt to reform; get into it! Personnel issues, the training, making the LCE (Limited Career Extension) work the way it was designed so that we could save people. I will never forget the time I chaired that board. They gave me one promotion, one. So we can just look at the people that we're going to take out. Of course, they were our top men. I would make that a priority. I think we are doing as well as we can, frankly, given the requirements and the constrictions of the labor unions' power on bread-and-butter issues. If we don't have the power to be informed about the Foreign Service exam, then it shows you what the limits are to this. Of course, good leadership in the State Department would have seen to it that regardless of what our legal authorities were, we would have been informed and consulted. And that needs to be reminded, you know, repeatedly.

*Q: We will conclude the interview with thanks from ADST and AFSA for your participation in this AFSA 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary interview series.*

*End of interview*