

JORDAN

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WELLS STABLER
American Representative - Chargé d'Affaires
Amman (1948-1949)

Ambassador Wells Stabler was born in Massachusetts in 1919. His Foreign Service career included positions in Palestine, Jordan, Italy, and France, and an ambassadorship to Spain. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

STABLER: Finally in mid-June 1948 the UN was able to arrange a 30-day cease-fire and Count Bernadotte, the UN Mediator, came to Jerusalem. The guns were silenced and people began to go out in the streets. I made a quick trip to Amman, using a rather circuitous route around behind the Old City. During the month of cease-fire, Washington finally decided that the US should have some form of representation stationed in Amman. Even though I had been in Jerusalem going on to four years, it was clear that I was the only person who had the contacts in Jordan, starting with Abdullah. Consequently, I was detailed to Amman. Since we had not recognized Jordan, I could not go as a US diplomat. The Department came up with a ridiculously long and complicated title "The Liaison Officer to the American Member of the Security Council Truce Commission". I only used the title once in Amman, and after that I was always known as "The American Representative".

In any event, in mid-July I packed myself and my dachshund into my car and headed off to Amman. Again I had to take a long route because the Allenby Bridge over the Jordan had been closed. After a long drive I arrived in Amman and immediately went to the Palace to see the King and to report to him that I would be in Amman permanently. I told him what my title would be. As it turned out, when I arrived at the Palace, Abdullah was in conference with the Prince Regent of Iraq, Emir Abdulillah, and with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri Said Pasha. These gentlemen had just returned from Cairo where the Arab League had decided to resume the war with Israel that very day. Abdullah was distraught. He implored me to inform Washington that it must do everything to stop the fighting, since, as he put it, if the Arab Legion should be mauled and defeated by the Israelis, his position in Jordan and the Arab world would be destroyed. I promised that I would transmit his views, although at that moment I had neither codes nor any form of communication with Washington. As I recall, a US plane, either Air Force or Navy, came to Amman the next day, and I was able to get them to take my message to Cairo to be repeated.

Incidentally, the next morning after my arrival, I went to see Sir Alec Kirkbride, the British Minister, whom I had got to know well, along with his family, during my many previous trips to Jordan. I told him that I would be living permanently in Amman and mentioned my title. Yes, said Kirkbride, he had seen the King a few hours earlier who had told him of my visit the previous evening and that, yes, I had mentioned some sort of title. The King said he could not possibly remember what it was, but that he was glad that I, as the American Representative, had come to Amman for good. My position there used to irritate some of the accredited diplomatic

representatives, particularly when I would show up for official functions. Some of them complained, but were sharply told that the King would have whomever he wanted at Palace functions and that I was welcome.

And so began a thirteen month tour in Amman. For the first months I was all alone, living in the Philadelphia Hotel. Ultimately, I was able to get a house which also served as an office, and a male clerk was detailed from Jerusalem. It was a most interesting period for me, since, in effect, I was, at a fairly young age, a Chief of Mission. I saw a great deal of Abdullah and his Government, and formed a close friendship with the Crown Prince, Emir Talal. I also met Talal's son, the present King Hussein, who was then about eleven.

Q: Abdullah hadn't been around a lot but seemed to have more of a world view than many. Did he use you as a sounding board to find out what this peculiar place, the United States was? Because America really had very little influence in that area, the Middle East, at that time.

STABLER: There wasn't a great deal. We began to have a good deal more. We had some degree of influence, but not north because obviously Iraq was the British sphere, and Lebanon and Syria were more or less the French sphere. Very shortly after I got to Jerusalem there was the uprising in Syria and the French were eventually pushed out.

Abdullah was interested, of course, in the political views of the United States. I don't think he ever quite understood why he wasn't regarded more favorably by the States. The fact there was no recognition obviously galled him. He assumed, in a way - as he regarded the American President as an important figure that the American President by like token regarded him Abdullah as an important figure, which of course obviously wasn't the case. He had that sort of a vision of the world where he saw himself in a larger role than he really had. This also was somewhat likened to what he regarded as his role vis-a-vis the British Queen. The British did look upon Jordan in their way as an important element and he looked at the Queen as a fellow monarch.

Q: Actually it would have been the King.

STABLER: Yes, you are right. I was flying across the Channel in 1950 when I got word that the King had died. So it was the King.

He had very little idea of what made our country tick. I think that he was well aware of the rather strong domestic political influence of the American Jewish community which, of course, distressed him.

Q: Did he talk to you about this?

STABLER: He never really took me to task about the general Arab view that our policy in the Middle East was dictated by domestic considerations. I don't ever remember him talking a great deal about that. He was apt to talk about the larger picture of how he viewed and looked towards the future and some peaceful arrangement where Jordan would be a bigger state and Israel would

be there, etc. He obviously very much wanted to have a formal relationship with the United States.

In January 30, 1949, I went down to the Cable Wireless office, near the central Post Office, where I had to go to pick up my messages--by this time I was alone again, I didn't have any clerk--and found a USINFO message in the clear put out by USIA which declared that the United States had recognized Jordan and Israel de jure. Then there was a coded message. I had to go back to the house and get my one time pad out and laboriously decode the message which said exactly what the message had said that was in the clear. I was to inform the King that Jordan was recognized de jure. Then I had to sit down and type the message out, sign it, get into my car and drive to the Palace, see the King and hand him the note. This was about 11:00 in the morning. He said, "Yes. Where have you been? I have been waiting for you since 8:00 this morning." It had been on the BBC. Yet, the Department had seen fit to give me no warning or opportunity to have at least the advantage of appearing to be on the inside. It had all been made public--yet I had to go through this business of decoding this stupid message which said all the same things as the public message.

The King was pleased but I think he would have been more pleased if I had been able to go in the night before and say, "Your Majesty, I just have come to inform you that we are announcing tomorrow morning that we are extending de jure recognition."

Q: When you went back to Washington afterwards, did you ever find out why this happened?

STABLER: I am afraid it is just our system which never really functions terribly well with these things. Part of it comes from the White House which sometimes doesn't tell the State Department when it is going to do something. The State Department is frightened to death of sending any message ahead of the White House. Nobody in the White House stops to think about the other side - that maybe some foreign policy advantage could be gained by doing some of these things in a slightly different way.

Q: I might add that I have had some interviews with people who were in the middle of a civil war where we recognized one side or the other in Africa leaving our embassy extremely exposed because they were under the power of the group not accorded the recognition.

STABLER: I think, as a general rule, we have been extremely lacking in using our information sometimes to our best advantage. We don't tell our people in the field sometimes what they ought to know. We don't tell them in a timely enough fashion. We generally view the ambassador as someone who is there but not really considered as a priority matter. The British are much better than this. They consider the ambassador an important person and a priority member of the team. He is told what he has to know in plenty of time. I don't mean to make a capital case of it that our relations with Jordan were forever compromised by that. All I am saying is that it would have been a good gesture to have told the King in advance, but we didn't do it.

He was pleased and we set up the Legation in Amman. The British Royal Air Force sent an honor guard to the Legation the morning I raised the flag, which was in February, - a month later

- because I think it took Washington a month to get all the staff out and formally set up the Legation.

That year, the Fourth of July, the first one where we had formal relations, the Arab Legion sent a brass band to play at the reception that I gave that afternoon. It was all done with good humor. The King was obviously pleased to have the United States finally a member of the diplomatic corps in Jordan. It didn't change a great deal because I had already worked as a Mission.

Nothing really spectacular happened during that period. A lot of it was dealing with the question of the future and how to settle the problem with Israel. What to do, etc. Then, internally, the King spent some time trying to decide...I spend a certain amount of time with him. We discussed and debated what we should call Transjordan. It was called the Kingdom of Transjordan and he wanted to change it. The discussion was whether we call it the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, or Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Ultimately it was decided to call it Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. While I was with him we would spend time trying to design a new decoration. Things of that sort. Just sort of amusing household details.

Q: I take it much of the relationship you are talking about. You were there more because of the long term visiting and all as a friend...although there was quite a difference not only obviously in rank but also in age. Do you think he was reaching out to you in some of these ways either as a counter or just a difference than with the British, because the British had been there so long?

STABLER: I don't think as a counter force. I think he obviously enjoyed the idea that he had a "special relationship," if you want to call it that although it really wasn't, with representatives of the great powers. To him the French were not very important and they had all been involved in the business of denying him the Kingdom of Syria; the fourth Republic was a mess and were not to be taken very seriously. Obviously he had nothing to do with the Russians; they weren't there and they were bad. While he had had all these years of close relationship with the British, now suddenly the United States had become a friend too. I am sure that going back to what I mentioned very early on when I first went over to Amman in early 1945, with Pinkerton who had been criticized for not taking an interest in the Emir, and took an interest, and although I was only a vice consul that seemed to appeal to him too and for some reason we struck it off quite well personally. But certainly there was no question that I represented his contact with the other great power. It was never a counterbalance to the British because there was nothing we did. The British provided arms for him, they provided military officers, and trade, etc. And we provided nothing.

We did, however, recognize that he was a force for stability in that part of the world and that view is still held today. In spite of the fact that King Hussein, for his own good reasons, did what he did at the outset of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, he remains an asset.

Q: To put this in context, we are talking about just after what was called the Gulf War between the United States and its Allies and Iraq in which Jordan and King Hussein were at least verbally giving a great deal of support to the Iraqi side which was not appreciated by the United States at all.

STABLER: One has to remember that King Hussein has a great many Palestinians in his Kingdom and at that time Saddam Hussein was trying to use the Palestine ploy to garner support and Hussein has to be somewhat a survivor. The fact is that Jordan does represent an element of basic stability and we are not just about to abandon them, and certainly in the period I am talking about, 1948, Jordan was the only country that showed at least some degree of sensitivity and rationality when it came to Israel.

During that period I saw a lot of the King. He gave me a horse that I used to ride. I used to play polo in Amman with Arab Legion officers which was fun but dangerous. One had really an interesting time with not only the Jordanians and Palestinians but with the foreign community. It was a very small town. Everybody knew what everybody else was doing. There was a lot of intrigue and things of that sort. But it was a wonderful experience. King Abdullah was really a very nice person and I was very fond of him.

I remember one episode when I thought my career might come to an abrupt end. While I was in Amman, I had with me my small dachshund. One evening I went up to see Abdullah and left the dog in the car (which I drove, not having a driver), with one window slightly open - I thought. As I sat with the King, I heard a yelping and was horrified to see my dachshund, which had escaped from my car, chasing the King's cat through the room where we sat. Fortunately, the cat escaped, and every time I saw Abdullah after that, he inquired as to the welfare of my dachshund. It might have been disastrous.

I was amused at one point when Stanton Griffis, US Ambassador in Cairo, came over to Amman. I showed him around and took him down to the Winter Quarters in Shuneh to have dinner with the King. He was quite taken with all this performance and apparently wrote to Bob Lovett who was then the Under Secretary of State, recommending that I be made the first US Minister to Jordan. Well, I was only 28 or 29. That fell, as you can imagine, not only on deaf but scandalized ears in Washington...the idea that someone at the lowest grade in the Foreign Service should suddenly become a Minister. Of course some of my colleagues in the Middle East like Keeley, who was US Minister in Damascus, didn't think it was a very good idea either. Anyway, it didn't get very far. So I became the first Chargé d'Affaires in Amman and then in August, 1949 I was transferred. David Fritzlan came out as the Chargé d'Affaires.

A. DAVID FRITZLAN
Chargé d'Affaires
Amman (1949-1952)

A. David Fritzlan was born in India in 1914. He moved to the United States in 1932, and received a B.A. degree at Northwest Nazarene College in 1934 and an M.A. degree in at the University of Kentucky in 1936. He joined the Foreign Service in 1938, serving in Italy, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, Jordan, Spain, and Greece in addition to Egypt. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: It proved out. Your first posting as an Arabist was to Amman. You were there from '49 to '52. This must have been fascinating. Could you describe what the situation was, and what you were doing?

FRITZLAN: We recognized Jordan as an independent state in 1948 and a Legation was established in March or April of '49. Wells Stabler was the first Chargé d'Affaires. He had a staff of one American, and about three locals. I'd been to Princeton for a year pursuing my Arabic and related studies, and I arrived in August of that year to take over from him. He came to the Department. The war between the Arabs and the Jews was over the summer before and they had signed armistice agreements. The war wasn't over technically but there was an armistice so the fighting had ceased. Amman was then a small village-like place, everybody knew everybody. I immediately met King Abdullah, his ministers. I had access to any of them almost anytime. My Arabic was sufficient to carry on a normal, not technical, conversation. The King expected me to come and join him in a group that rotated, once a week for dinner; there were always two or three foreign representatives, three or four ministers; and then members of the court.

Q: The King was reaching out then. He was not a recluse?

FRITZLAN: Oh, certainly not, and in addition to this he liked me to appear about every ten days at his dewan for even 15 minutes just to have a chat--talk about nothing but the weather, maybe. He didn't want an interpreter because if we had an interpreter, then whatever we talked about, however trivial or insignificant, would be all over the town, and he preferred to have a few confidences away from his immediate entourage.

Q: Was he using you to offset the British to some extent?

FRITZLAN: That was certainly a calculation that must have been in his mind. He relied very heavily on the British, Sir Alec Kirkbride was Minister and he was really the mainstay of the throne and the government. At the beginning the British didn't like us being there. Kirkbride, of course, I called on him; he returned the call in a normal way, but he wasn't about to tell me anything. However, I did have access to the various government ministers. The Prime Minister at the time was Tawfig Abul Huda. He and I met occasionally formally and only on business. We spoke French because he didn't have any English, and my Arabic was insufficient. I remember soon after I arrived the King had been traveling in the Arab world--not to Syria--but he made some remarks about Syria. His remarks related to the idea of a Greater Syria. I was told by the Department to seek an early opportunity to meet the Prime Minister and tell him that we regarded the King's remarks on the question of Greater Syria, as unfortunate, and not helpful in a complex situation.

Q: What did Greater Syria mean?

FRITZLAN: It would be Syria, plus Transjordan, and in a still greater context, you could put in Lebanon, or parts of Lebanon, and he would be the ruler of Greater Syria with his capital in Damascus. Well, it was rather a ticklish assignment. So the Prime Minister listened to my best effort in French to suggest that perhaps he could help put a damper on the King's outspokenness. He listened to me in total silence, and after I'd said my piece, I got up and departed. Now

interestingly enough, when we got a Minister within a year, Gerald Drew, again the King was making similar statements and all his Arab neighbors became aroused. After Drew's being there a few months, we had a visit from Burton Yost Berry, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the area. Just before he arrived, we got a telegram from the Department which greatly perturbed Drew because the Department asked him to go and see the King and let him know that we were not pleased with these remarks, and that they didn't help at all. Drew didn't like the idea at all. He wasn't about to do anything. Later he was having a barbecue, quite a few people; we had our Minister in Damascus, people from Jerusalem, and Burton Berry. So Drew, standing over the barbecue, began to relate this matter to a small audience and said it would be stupid for him to carry out his instruction, unless he wanted to be moved to another post which he did not want. Burton Berry was listening, and after a bit he said quietly, "Gerry, you better do as the Department told you, or else you might be moved." That really put the fat in the fire. So Gerry had hours of soul searching, and he and I discussed it backwards and forwards, and forwards and backwards, and finally we met with Burton Berry and together we worked out a formula whereby all would be satisfied if he went to the Prime Minister--a different man--and talked to him explaining the Department's position; and asking him to say something to the King. I have to say that, though I had some sympathy with Drew's feelings, he could have handled things better.

Alec Kirkbride, as I said a moment ago, whose previous experience had been in the British Colonial, not Foreign Service, was inclined to be very reserved toward us Americans whom he regarded, doubtless, with a touch of suspicion. Eventually, it became clear to the Department (and to us) that we were learning more about important happenings in Amman from the British Foreign Office than from our Legation. (We had, as now, an FSO who specialized in Near Eastern affairs and he, naturally had close relations with the Foreign Office.) The Department quite properly complained to the British and eventually Kirkbride became considerably more forthcoming. There had been occasions when Kirkbride would come and see me, saying that he had a message or two to relay to me, either to or from the Foreign Office, which he did. He made it clear that he was acting under instructions and I surmised that he did so grudgingly.

Q: Trying to recapture here, how did you feel--I mean this new thing called an Arabist, and Israel was just coming, it had not reached you might say super power status within the Middle East. How did you feel towards it, and how about the other officers you were around? How did you feel about this?

FRITZLAN: I have to say that at the beginning I was opposed to our policy of introducing a Jewish state into the area; bringing it about by force, which is what happened. We got the partition resolution through the UN Assembly in '47 by devious and, I think, unprincipled means. This is well known, this is history. One could have said, "All right, the Arabs behave badly because they were given an opportunity to come to terms. They were made offers at the time that in hindsight might seem generous. They said 'no thank you.'" Why on earth anybody would suppose that the Arabs would accept terms which meant their moving out of their homes, and leaving their land, for a bunch of European Jews, I can't imagine. But this is what they were meant to do. Why? Because seemingly the world, or we anyway, thought that the Jews were just coming back. That they were coming back to their homes, although there was an interval of about 2000 years, they're still coming back to their homes. Well, this doesn't wash in my mind.

And the Arabs, seen in the minds of a lot of Americans, to be nothing but a bunch of Bedouin shepherds, camel drivers, drovers.

How did I feel? Ambivalent. I was impressed in the early days of this noble experiment by the fine sounding speeches certain Jewish leaders like Abba Eban, and Ben Gurion made. I was prepared to believe that something could be worked out, some kind of a solution under which they could live side by side if not exactly in the same bit of land. Now our policy was totally weighted in favor of the Jews--I say Jews because Israel was hardly a state then. I mean having got the partition through, the war more or less out of the way--the UN passed resolutions, on the right to return of those refugees who wished to return to their homes, or something comparable. And remember, this was a case of something like a million Palestinian Arabs who were forced to leave either by implied threats, or physical coercion. And the idea that was spread abroad by the Jews, that they were encouraged to do this by outside Arab broadcasts, Syrian, and so on, to leave because they were going to come back in triumph in no time, has been proven false. This was just Jewish propaganda. There is no record anywhere of any such broadcasts. So these people were not leaving of their own accord or because of encouragement from the outside.

Q: There had been some really rather nasty...

FRITZLAN: There was the case of Deir Yasin, the village where they massacred every man, woman and child, to frighten the Arabs. Of course they were frightened. Wouldn't you be frightened? But to say that they left of their own accord is pure nonsense. So we supported this resolution, those who wanted to return, should be allowed to return. Otherwise there should be compensation. We supported a resolution that, I think, if they got the Negev, which was not in the original partition plan, they should give up some land somewhere else. There were several other resolutions, but principally, this one about the right to return or compensation, and we were naive enough to believe that these Jews would carry out the terms of a resolution that we favored, that we voted for. Not at all. They had no intention of carrying it out, and although we were in a perfect position to exercise coercion over them, we totally abdicated any such responsibility.

Q: How about the officers such as yourself and others who were intimately concerned with this? Were you sending screams of anguish?

FRITZLAN: Of course we were. A few people came out to see things first hand, but not very many. If they did they rarely went to the refugee camps. Of course we were sending all kinds of alarm signals and stressed the awful conditions these refugees were living in. So then the Department had a brilliant idea. We would set up a UN agency after a survey group had come out, the UN agency would have as its mission--first of all the relief of the refugees, rehabilitation, but above all we were going to encourage them to settle in other Arab countries. Of course, it was doomed to failure. First of all to imagine Palestinians want to be settled in Jordan, or in Syria, or any part of Lebanon, much less Iraq, was absurd. To imagine that these countries would say, "Yes, of course we'll take them," was again absurd because this was in their mind one way essentially of solving this "iniquitous" campaign against Palestinian Arabs, and they weren't about to have that solved in that way. We were terribly frustrated because we could see the injustice, the abrogation of human rights, the one-sidedness of our policy, and we didn't

like it. And, of course, we raised arguments against it; we protested, we could see all kinds of trouble being stored up ahead for us. Because we reported to the Department objectively, some people at Foggy Bottom would automatically brand a Foreign Service Arabist as being anti-semitic- -just like that.

Q: I know. This has been a canard that has been thrown out again and again. Were you ever getting any orders or instructions saying, "Stop reporting all the negative things. Face up to what amounts to domestic political realities."

FRITZLAN: Not in those words. But we used to get policy planning drafts and be asked to comment on them. Of course, at the head of the agenda was what to do about this festering Palestinian problem. I made some proposals, the gist of which were that to get what we wanted, which was clear, and that was acceptance by Israel of UN resolutions and mandates, and in an effort to get the parties together, my proposal was simply that we cease funding unconditionally the state of Israel, and tell them that this assistance involved a two-way proposition. They cannot count on getting indefinitely unconditional help from us without taking seriously into account our regional concerns. I knew, of course, in making such a recommendation that it would likely fall on deaf ears, and that is what happened.

Q: How about our relations with the Legation or Embassy in Tel Aviv?

FRITZLAN: Our first Ambassador to Tel Aviv was James McDonald. He had been on the Anglo American Committee set up right after the war to look into the matter. He was a well-known, ardent Zionist, though not a Jew, who could never see anything but the Jewish and Israeli side of things, who was completely and utterly sold out. I don't say that he was literally bought, but sold out in his principles, his thinking, and everything to the benefit of the Zionist cause. So our relations with the Embassy in Tel Aviv under his stewardship were nothing, didn't exist, just pro forma. Then we had another man come out as Ambassador.

Q: You say you had another person come out?

FRITZLAN: Yes. We had Monnett Davis, a career man who was, of course, a totally different type of man, much more objective and all together reasonable. We had good relations under his tenure there. And then, of course, we had constant contacts with our Consulate General in Jerusalem, which was on the Arab side at the time--probably still is, a fine building on a beautiful site.

Q: We had an Ambassador who was really from outside the Service, but supposedly Foreign Service Officers are trained to be relatively objective in observing foreigners, and all. Were you able to go sort of below the Ambassador level and talk to people to find out what was going on in Israel to your professional capacity?

FRITZLAN: We didn't really go to Tel Aviv. They didn't come to Amman; it wasn't easy. During my three years there, I got to Tel Aviv just before we left on a two or three day visit. Yes, there was Francis Russell, and others, and occasionally we'd meet mainly in Jerusalem, but rarely if at all did they come to Amman. I don't remember any of them coming to Amman. It was pretty

clear what was happening in Israel. We didn't have to have it interpreted for us. Every day something would happen which made life harder for the Palestinians.

Perhaps I'll take just a few minutes to mention a situation where very considerable hopes were raised, and suggested some kind of a settlement could be achieved. This was at the end of '49, and January of '50. The King's Minister of Court at the time was Samir Rifai, and he kept me very well briefed on what was happening. The Israelis were taking the initiative, I believe, in trying to sound out King Abdullah on various matters that they felt could be settled between them and him in relation to Jerusalem particularly. So they sent Dayan, and I think several people in the Israeli foreign office who were Arabists, to talk to the King with Samir present. They had several meetings, and it seemed as if there was a framework whereby some kind of a settlement could be achieved. It involved the question of property restitution, slight modifications in the armistice line, Israeli access to the Wailing Wall and Mount Scopus, possibly a corridor from Hebron to the sea which would give Jordan access to the Mediterranean. The King used to say he wouldn't be happy until he could bathe his feet in the Mediterranean. There were a number of relatively minor irritating points between Israel and Jordan which could have been worked out. The Israelis at this point seemed really serious about making an agreement, particularly as regards Jerusalem, that might have stood the test of time, but there were several things on which they simply refused to budge, e.g. sovereign rights over the Wailing Wall and the Jewish Quarter in the Old City. It didn't seem to me that these were insuperable obstacles, nor did it seem so to Kirkbride.

I, in reporting all this, said that I thought this was a golden opportunity for the Department to take some sort of a lead and push the Israelis forward. I had every reason to believe that the British and Kirkbride were doing much the same in respect to Abdullah. And I got a reply back saying in effect that "the Department doesn't wish to get involved in this matter. It is one to be settled strictly between the two parties." Can you imagine anything more negative? And so, nothing came of it. I don't know if Abdullah could have signed any kind of comprehensive settlement of Ben Gurion that would have stood the test of time but there was a possibility. The net result of these talks was that a year or so later Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian acting under Egyptian influence. He might have signed something and still been assassinated, but it might have held up just as the treaty between Egypt and Israel held up despite Sadat's assassination.

But here again these were the frustrations from which one suffered in trying to work out something constructive in the field.

Q: How were your relations with the equivalent to the Near Eastern desk bureau?

FRITZLAN: I must say that Stuart Rockwell, who was the desk officer then, tended to see things much more in the Israeli light than the Arab light. He had never served in the Arab world.

Q: He was in Morocco, but maybe later on.

FRITZLAN: He was in Morocco later, much later. I think Stuart was playing his cards very carefully, and you could say that of most of those in the NEA area. It was easier for someone in

the field to take a position such as I took than for someone in the Department who would be well aware of the risk of being labeled an Arabist which was almost the kiss of death. I do think though, without offending the Jewish community in this country, the Department could have taken measures to let them know we favored these negotiations, and could they use their influence on Ben Gurion, and we were going to do the same. I don't think it would have seemed offensive. I don't think at that point the Jewish feeling was so engaged on the question of "how far can we go in this settlement?"

Q: The Jewish lobby really wasn't that powerful until some years later. Were you there during the assassination of Abdullah?

FRITZLAN: Yes, I was. I saw him the day before he was assassinated.

Q: What happened, and what effect did it have on what you were doing?

FRITZLAN: It was terrible, it upset everything because even though these peace negotiations--or let's call them that--these negotiations failed. But Abdullah made it clear that he hadn't given up, that he was going to return to the charge, and the assassination occurred about a year after the negotiations were broken off. He was, of course, handicapped, I will say this, in having some Palestinian ministers who didn't like it. They would have said, "We accept nothing short of return to our homes in areas occupied by the Jews." So this was a handicap. I don't know in the long run whether they could have prevailed. Supposing they'd resigned? Okay, he could have got in some other Palestinians who would have done his bidding, I think. However, everything was spoiled by the assassination. Abdullah was succeeded by Talal, the Crown Prince, who was useless, a schizophrenic. The assassination, of course, did mean that any successor of Abdullah's was vulnerable. He would have to be very careful about exposing himself in the way the old King did.

Q: There were a series of assassinations, not of the King, but of others.

FRITZLAN: There was the case of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Riad al-Solh. This was a purely Lebanese feud, nothing to do really with Israel. Yes, there were assassinations. There had been attempts on Abdullah long before this over the years. Talal was deposed as incompetent in 1952 and his son Hussein came to the throne. Over the years there were attempts to assassinate him. They may have been instigated by Nasser, but still...

Q: You were still there when Abdullah was assassinated?

FRITZLAN: Yes, in July of '51. I didn't leave until the end of '52.

Q: Did things just stop really in a way?

FRITZLAN: Pretty well, things just stopped, and there was no progress. After he was assassinated Talal, who was in Switzerland undergoing treatment for schizophrenia, came back eventually. But briefly there was a regency, then he came back and showed himself to be totally unbalanced. And this went on for about a year; a totally unstable situation. And then they

declared that he was unfit to rule. The constitution provided for this, so he was deposed. His son, Hussein, was still at Harrow--or was it Sandhurst? I think he'd left Harrow and he'd gone to Sandhurst for about six months. So he was left there and in the interim there was a regency council. Hussein came back in September of '52 and, although only 17, they declared that he was 18 under the terms of the lunar calendar which made him eligible to assume the throne, which he did. I left about two months later.

Q: The demise of Abdullah, any real working with the government was just put on hold.

FRITZLAN: There was no government virtually. There was a kind of caretaking government without any direction really. By this time Kirkbride had left. He'd been gone a year, and a new British Ambassador, Furlonge, was there, and he couldn't possibly step into Kirkbride's shoes. Glubb was still there. Glubb was the one stabilizing force.

Q: He was head of the Arab Legion.

FRITZLAN: Yes. As long as Glubb was there, you felt, "it's okay." But nothing could happen in a forward direction.

Q: At that point was there any threat to Israel, or from Israel?

FRITZLAN: The only threats were night time raiding parties, from the Arab side. Dispossessed farmers used to go and collect their oranges, or something. I don't recall that there were any serious violent attacks. It's extraordinary how relatively peaceful that armistice line border was. The Jews would retaliate by coming over and blowing up something or other and then they'd go back. There was one potentially serious confrontation to the south in the Wadi Araba about '51 or so, when Israeli armored vehicles were maneuvering and were getting on to the Jordanian side of the line. This was all desert. I don't know why they'd want to do that except maybe as a provocation. So the Arab Legion sent in some armored vehicles under British officers, of course. They were opposing each other and things got to a pretty touchy point where any little incident could have produced an explosion. Eventually nothing happened and the Israelis withdrew. But that was the kind of thing that happened, nothing more than that. There were never any aerial excursions, violations of air space, that I knew of.

There was a rather amusing little incident in '50--the spring of '50. There was a regional meeting in Cairo under Caffery's direction...

Q: American Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery.

FRITZLAN: So I went down representing Amman, and how did I go? There were four little Rapides, they were called, single propellered planes that would take about four passengers-- and these flew two or three times a week to Beirut and back, and two or three times a week to Cairo and back. And how did they fly to Cairo? Right over southern Israel without permission or anything. That's how I went and came. Shortly after that one of these planes was intercepted by an Israeli air force plane, taken to some air field, forced to land and impounded. In this way travel between Amman and Cairo became possible only via Beirut.

GERALD A. DREW
United States Minister
Jordan (1950-1952)

Gerald A. Drew was born in San Francisco, California in 1903. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley. He toured in Iraq, Jordan, Bolivia, and Haiti.

The following are excerpts from correspondence and journal entries.

Correspondence and Early Journal Entries of Gerald A. Drew

At the time he was ambassador to Jordan [actually he was the first U.S. minister to Jordan, 1950-52], Mr. Drew to the best of his ability protected Jewish people residing at that time in Arab countries. He cautioned the Arabs that the Arab nations have much to gain by having a Jewish nation among them, and if at peace with each other, Arabs and Jews would grow together culturally, industrially and economically, not needing any great power to assist them. He reminded the Arabs that Arabs and Jews were of common ancestry, similar to Americans and Canadians; and if both were to adopt the Latin alphabet, they would be able to understand each other just like the U.S. and Canada. While he was U.S. minister in Amman, he influenced other Arab nations to relax their anti-Jewish laws enacted in 1948 during the establishment of the state of Israel.

Jerry was very popular with the Jordanians and Palestinians, and didn't make too much of a secret about where his sympathies lay in the Arab-Israeli dispute—which Israel had just won. We were surrounded by encampments of Palestinian refugees, and many of the people our parents became friendly with had been dispossessed by the creation of the Israeli state. Dodo once explained to us how difficult it was for Papa to have any influence or close rapport with King Abdullah (grandfather of the recently deceased Hussein) because of the British connection. The British minister, Sir Alec Kirkbride, had fought with Lawrence of Arabia and the young (then Emir) Abdullah and his brother Feisal against the Ottoman Turks during World War I. The King's agricultural advisor, Mr. Walpole, was also a great favorite, and "Glubb Pasha," John Bagot Glubb, had founded Jordan's respected Army, the Arab Legion. Jerry was lonely for male companionship in Jordan, although he got along well with David Fritzlan, his second-in-command, and the other staffers. He also made friends with Brother Anthony, who headed an orphanage in Amman; Papa always felt at home with Irish priests and monks.

In early 1952, after two years in Jordan, Jerry was offered a job at the State Department as Director General of the Foreign Service. As can be seen in the letters, the job was made to sound very important (it also included heading the Foreign Service Inspection Corps), but Jerry soon learned that he was only a figurehead with no real power, at a time when Joseph McCarthy was on his rampage that ruined the careers of many fine Foreign Service officers. However, one good thing about being in Washington was that we could all live together under one roof again and go

to the George Washington University nearby—so nearby that Papa could often drop us off on his way to work. It was a big money saver for Papa, especially getting me out of Stanford.

TALCOTT W. SEELYE
Political Officer
Amman (1952-1955)

Ambassador Talcott W. Seelye born in Lebanon to American parents on March 22, 1922 and lived there until the age of 11. He joined the U.S. Army during World War II. He received a bachelor's degree from Amherst College in 1947 and joined the Foreign Service in 1948. Ambassador Seelye's career included positions in Frankfurt, Germany; Amman, Jordan; Beirut, Lebanon; Kuwait, Kuwait; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and an ambassadorship to Tunisia. He was interviewed in 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Yes. It was a little bit old boyish.

SEELYE: Well, it was old boyish because another one of my Foreign Service friends who went to Princeton told me that Green called him aside before the oral exam to give him some tips.

So anyway, I passed the exam. I mention this in connection with Jordan because after he was appointed as ambassador somebody in personnel said to me, "Green is looking for a political officer, so why don't you go see him?" So I went to see him and he remembered me from the orals panel. That is how I went to Amman.

It was while I was there that I started studying Arabic. I don't know why I did it this way, but there was a nice Palestinian who ran the French language institute. I got him to come to my house twice a week in the evenings. He would give me a phrase in French (he didn't know English) and then recite it in phonetic Arabic. So I started learning Arabic in a half-baked way. While in Amman I requested further training at the FSI Arabic language school.

Q: What was the situation in Amman? You were there from 1952-55.

SEELYE: The situation in what way?

Q: The political structural situation.

SEELYE: In September, 1952, the government was run by a Sovereignty Council which consisted of a triumvirate of three elder statesmen. King Abdullah had been assassinated in 1950 by a Palestinian who resented his collaboration with Israel. His son, Prince Talal was a schizo... There is a schizophrenic syndrome in the Hashemite family that pops up every now and then and it popped up with him. So figuring that he was unfit to rule, the authorities packed Talal off to Turkey. But Talal's eldest son, Hussein, was too young to take over. He was 14 in 1950. So they created the Sovereignty Council consisting of distinguished men in their seventies to run the

show. Protocol in those days was terribly formal. On national days and religious holidays, foreign diplomats would go to the palace garbed either in white tie or in morning coat, believe it or not. Fortunately, my father, who was roughly my same size, had both types of garb which I inherited from him. He used them when he was president at St. Lawrence.

In 1953, King Hussein assumed the throne at the age of 17.

Jordan was pretty much a back water then. But on the other hand every now and then it was front and center when incidents involving Israel would occur. At the end of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war Israel annexed territory that separated Palestinian villages from their lands. These were towns like Janin and Galquilya where the municipality was on the Jordanian side of the border but all the town's orchards and cultivated fields spread for miles on the Israeli side. The Palestinian farms could not get used to the idea that they could not go ahead and cultivate their crops and pick their fruit when it was ripe. The land had been in their families for centuries. So this marked the beginning of major incidents. The Israelis would deploy a constabulary along the border to shoot at these farmers when they came across. The farmers would then arm themselves in self-defense and you would begin to have exchange of fire. This was when the Israelis began launching retaliatory raids on the Palestinian villages. The Arab Legion, headed by Glubb was reluctant to become involved because all the senior officers were British. Glubb spoke fluent Arabic and had married a Bedouin woman. He was very popular in Jordan.

These incidents were beginning to escalate and get worse. In 1953, about a year after I got there, Ambassador Green was fired even though his Princeton classmate, Dulles, was Secretary of State. The Chargé in October had gone on leave and I, the political officer and third secretary and still an FSO-6 because of my security problem, became Chargé. There was an economic officer and a station chief at the Embassy.

Q: Station chief being CIA.

SEELYE: And there was also a USIA officer. It was in October that a young Israeli captain by the name of Ariel Sharon, led a cross-border attack against the village of Qibya, wiping out the men, women and children, and demolishing the homes. This was intended as a warning to villagers living along the border to stop going across. Qibya was a cold-blooded massacre. There were other incidents like this while I was in Amman but this was the worst one.

Meanwhile, there was a water problem between Jordan and Israel. The Jordan River ran right between the two. And you had the tributaries and disputes over how to divide up the water. An AID official by the name Miles Bunger proposed building a dam on the Yarmuk River, which is a tributary that runs between Syria and Jordan, for storing water for Jordan. The Israelis were upset at this because it would have deprived them of some water. So this was the beginning of a controversy.

Secretary Dulles came to the region in 1953 to push for some kind of Arab-Israeli settlement, but got nowhere. Then later, the White House in its wisdom decided that the best way to solve the Arab-Israeli problem was to resolve the water problem between Israel and its neighbors. The theory was that if there was agreement regarding sharing the water, everything would fall into

place. Of course that was the height of naivete. Anybody knowledgeable about the Arab-Israeli problem knew that it was a political issue and could not be resolved by economic understanding.

The White House appointed Eric Johnston, who was the flamboyant head of the Motion Picture Association to get agreement on water sharing. Obviously he knew that his task wasn't going to be easy because in Amman he convened a private meeting with the embassy officers before going to the Jordanians. Our Chargé that time was Andy Lynch. Johnston asked us for our unvarnished opinions as to what chances we thought he had of selling the plan to the Jordanians. Since he asked for our unvarnished opinions, we gave them. We told him that he didn't have any chance of success but that was a political issue. We noted that while the Jordanians would like to have a fair share of the Jordan water, this wouldn't induce them to make peace. There are other more critical issues. But we added that in our contacts with the Jordanians we would support his effort.

After visiting the concerned countries without success and returning to the U.S. Johnston announced that "the door was still open." Then he went to the White House...another digression, I don't know if you want me to do this or not...

Q: Go ahead.

SEELYE: ...and said, "The staff in the embassy in Jordan is disloyal. Get rid of them. There are four people I want you to get rid of. [I learned this later.] Lynch (Chargé), Seelye (political officer), Bunker (who conceived of the Yarmuk dam project), and a young CIA clerk who happened to be sitting in on the session we had with Johnston.

Well, the new ambassador to Jordan, who had just been appointed, didn't know any of us. He said, "Look, I need some continuity." The first thing they did was to pull Lynch out and assign him as Consul General in Newfoundland (to cool off). Bunker was pulled out immediately and transferred somewhere else. This young CIA clerk, being very junior, was ignored. And then I was left. The new ambassador evidently said, "Look, I don't know Seelye, but I have to have somebody who can provide some continuity." So he saved me. That would have been my second setback in the Foreign Service.

Q: The new ambassador was Lester Mallory?

SEELYE: That's right.

Q: When you were dealing with the Jordanians on this and making your approach, what were you getting as a response?

SEELYE: Well, they were saying, "Look, this is not an economic problem. We would be happy to have the water problem solved, but we have bigger issues than that. We have all these Palestinian refugees sitting in our country. We want them to go back. They should not only be repatriated, but recompensed. We are still resentful of the fact that Israel has taken so much territory because the original partition plan in 1947 gave Israel much less territory. So we think the borders ought to be moved back." Those were some of the key issues.

Q: Going back to Green. How did he get fired?

SEELYE: Incidentally, when I finally got to know him as an ambassador, I asked him why he asked such mundane questions at the start of the Foreign Service oral exam. I said, "After all, why did you ask me if I dated?" He said, "Don't you know? We want red-blooded officers. One time I interviewed a candidate and I asked him that question and he thought and thought and finally said, 'I think that the last date I had was about a year ago.'" I said, "What happened?" He replied, "I turned him down immediately."

The main thing that got him fired I think was that every morning between 10:00 and 12:00 he would dictate to his secretary a daily letter to members of his family relating the various events of the day before, what he had done, what Jordanian officials have told him, etc. Instead of sending those letters to the Department, he would send them in unclassified fashion to members of his family. We had a code clerk in Amman who doubled as security officer. He decided that this was a terrible violation of security and so reported to Washington, D.C. The security people decided that this was too much.

Also Green had alienated the Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs, Hank Byroade, by opposing Byroade's earlier request to become an FSO-1. Byroade had a hand in getting Green the Ambassadorship to Jordan to get him out of the way. Once in Jordan Green no longer had the power to keep Byroade from becoming a FSO-1. Then Byroade presumably helped "axe" Green from Amman in his Assistant Secretary role.

So those were the two things, I think, that got Green canned. This occurred even though John Foster Dulles had visited Amman just three months before and had assured Green, I think, that we would be staying on.

Q: Speaking of ambassadors, Lester Mallory was a regular Foreign Service Officer wasn't he?

SEELYE: He had been an agricultural attaché who lateraled in.

Q: How did he operate?

SEELYE: Well, he was kind of folksy in his approach. I think having come out of the agricultural service he probably felt he wanted to do things a little differently. He didn't want to act like the elegant, somewhat arrogant Foreign Service Officer of the past, the caricature of Foreign Service officer pre World War II. So I think he leaned over backwards to show that he was down to earth and a democratic American, so to speak. So that was the way he operated in style. I think he was a good ambassador. I think the Jordanians liked him. He got along well with the King, as far as I recall.

Q: First you had this very formal council to deal with. How did you do that as political officer?

SEELYE: First I had Joe Green, who was very formal, to work under and then I had Andy Lynch who was the counselor and then the Chargé, who was also from the old school. Andy Lynch sort

of looked like the old type Foreign Service Officer. I got along very well with both Green and Andy Lynch and I think Mallory felt in some respects that I was of the old regime and maybe not totally in sync with his *modus operandi*. But I did my best by him. He didn't give me the greatest rating, but those things happen.

Q: You were the political officer.

SEELYE: Before I got there there was no political officer. What they did first after the war between Israel and the Arabs in 1948 was to establish a consulate in Amman and Wells Stabler went up there from Jerusalem.

Q: Actually he was an attaché. It wasn't even a consulate, I don't think.

SEELYE: Maybe it wasn't a consulate, but it became a legation. They sent over as minister Gerald Drew, who then took over from Wells. Drew was back in Washington before I went to Amman. I went to see him there. And Drew's deputy was David Fritzlan, who was *chargé* during the period between Drew's departure and Green's arrival. Fritzlan was political officer in effect as well as counselor of embassy. Joe Green was looking for another body so they gave me the title of political officer. I did political reporting, although I also did other work as well. In fact when the inspector came over he discovered that I had the additional duty of disbursing officer--without any disbursing experience. We had a very, very able disbursing clerk who guided me. In effect, I signed on the basis of his guidance. The inspector decided that I should spend some time in the disbursing office to get the feel for fiscal affairs, which I did.

Q: What would you do as political officer in Jordan during this period?

SEELYE: Well, what I did was, I would visit Jordanian officials and talk to them. I would develop key contacts in certain Arab embassies. I remember the Egyptians had a very able third or second secretary who I kept in touch with because he had his ear to the ground. The British have always had good Middle East specialists and the French Embassy had an excellent one, so I compared notes with them. Of course I couldn't read the Arab newspapers at that point, but we had translations and I followed the papers very closely. I did what a political officer normally does. I tried to figure out what was going on. We did a lot of reporting on the border crossings. I would go down to Glubb Pasha's headquarters and get the latest information on the latest Israel cross-border attack. I would get their analysis and then we would put in our analysis. And there were times that we would make comments on the Arab-Israeli picture and how we saw things moving or not moving. That sort of thing.

Q: Was there much of a Jordanian administrative apparatus...a foreign ministry, etc.?

SEELYE: There was a foreign ministry. I did develop a particularly good contact with one man in the foreign ministry. In fact, I remember one time I asked him if he was going to be representing the foreign ministry there at a national day affair. He said, "No, I am representing my family." He happened to come from a Christian family. We all know that it is the extended family that is the nucleus of politics and social life in the Middle East and that statement from him really struck home.

Q: What was the view of King Hussein at that young age?

SEELYE: Well, he was wet behind the ears and I am not sure what his views were at that point. I don't recall that at first we had any real clue as to how he operated or how he really felt. He was just learning the ropes. You could tell that he was a plucky young man. He seemed impressive even then. He had a maturity that seventeen year olds generally don't have. Of course, he had been standing right next to his grandfather when his grandfather was assassinated, so he had gone through quite a bit. I just don't recall any clear feel about how the King operated at that point. I am trying to think. When the Qibyan crisis came I can't recall what he did or what he said. I am sure he must have made some statements, but I just don't remember that.

Q: I'll come back to this from time to time, but what were you getting from your Foreign Service colleagues, their feelings towards Israel?

SEELYE: I felt very strongly that one should get to Israel as much as possible, so I did. In those days it was not hard to do. I would go to the foreign ministry and say, "I would like to go over to Israel." They said, "Fine. Just tell us what it is like." The first time I went I went with my father who was a visiting a former student living in Haifa. You went to the Mandelbaum Gate, which was the separation point between the two countries, and somebody from the Consulate General on the Israeli side would meet your car. You would take off your Jordanian plates and put on Israeli plates. So as soon as you entered Israel nobody knew that you were from Jordan. It was a great way to get a feel for Israel because every soldier hitchhikes.

Now in Israel, certainly since then and maybe then too, if you had diplomatic plates nobody would accept rides. I experienced that later once. But we didn't have diplomatic plates. So you could pick up a young Israeli and talk to him for 20 minutes, half an hour, and get a feel for what things were like and what he thought.

We spent the night with my father's former student in Haifa. We arrived about tea time and his wife was awfully late. She apologized when she arrived and her husband asked her why she was so late. This was 1953. She replied, "Well, because you know I just couldn't bring myself to get on the bus so I walked." He said, "Why?" "Because of all those dark skinned people." She was a South African who couldn't bear to sit with Yemen Jews.

So that was the first time I went to Israel. I went over with my wife another time to visit friends at the consulate in Haifa. Another time my wife and I went to take a little three-day vacation in Askkelon, south of Haifa. We did the same thing. We got permission from the foreign ministry, went over and changed plates, and drove around. So at the time I felt it was necessary for us to visit Israel because of the risk of getting a one-sided perspective.

How the other officers felt? I didn't sense any anti-Israeli feelings or anything like that. I remember being upset at what the Israelis were doing to the Jordanian villagers. That probably started to color our views about Israel, I am sure. Before that I think our views toward Israel were a little more favorable.

Q: What was the view of Iraq and Syria at that time, from the Jordanian perspective?

SEELYE: In those days, of course, Iraq had a monarchy, a cousin of King Hussein. So relations were close. I don't recall many exchanges of visits, but I am sure there were some. But the relations with Syria were not so close, even though Jordan and Syria historically and sociologically and ethnically were one and the same. The whole eastern region that we call the Levant, which is now Lebanon, Israel, Syria, and Jordan, was known geographically as Bilad as-Sham, which means the area evolving around Damascus, around Syria. Syrian families are related to Jordanian families and Palestinian families. So there was a lot of commonality there. But there was the political angle. You had a succession of coup d'etats in Syria. While I was in Jordan the Syrian President was Shishakli, but he was a dictator and the Jordanians were apprehensive about him. Then he was followed by a couple of others while I was there. I felt that relations were correct, but not terribly warm. I think there was the lingering hope expressed by King Abdullah for the creation of a greater Syria. As you know the King of Syria at one point had been Faisal. He was later deposed and the British put him on the throne in Baghdad...Abdullah wanted to take his place in Damascus. The reason he settled for Transjordan was that he saw this as a stepping stone to taking over Damascus as well and creating a greater Syria. So from the Syrian vantage point there was a lot of suspicion about the monarchy in Jordan.

Q: What were American interests in Jordan at the time?

SEELYE: As time went on American interests in Jordan became more acute. The U.S. saw Jordan as kind of a linchpin on Israel's border. It was a stable country, a conservative country, a country that the U.S. felt could eventually work with Israel in a peace settlement. This, of course, became much more applicable later as radical socialist regimes came to power in Syria and contrasted with a more stable Jordan government. Therefore, our interests in Jordan became more evident, I guess. But at the time, I don't think we felt we had a great national interest in Jordan. It was a small place. At that point the British were supplying the subsidies and not us. So I didn't sense any great U.S. national interest and I don't think Washington did, at that point. The U.S. national interest has developed over time with tensions in the area and the solid, pro-American role the King played.

Q: Was there much of an attempt to settle the large number of Palestinians who had left Israel?

SEELYE: Jordan was the only Arab country that automatically gave every Palestinian Jordanian citizenship, as you know. Lebanon gave Lebanese citizenship only to the Christian Palestinians because the Lebanese were afraid of disrupting the balance between Moslems and Christians by having too many Moslems. Most of the Palestinians were Moslem. Other countries were selective. Even Egypt was selective. Jordan gave all Palestinians citizenship. Now this doesn't mean necessarily that they were all immediately treated equal. A lot of them came into the government, because the Palestinians are very bright and able and qualified. In fact, I saw a report recently that indicated that there are more Palestinians per capita with graduate degrees than Israelis. The Israelis being a small minority discriminated against, have developed the urge to excel. The Palestinians have developed that same kind of bent. If the Palestinians were to tap their own best people, they would do very well in running their own country. Of course, there are

quite a few Palestinians in refugee camps (that we serviced by UNRWA). Educated Palestinians have become doctors and lawyers and have been integrated into the societies in which they live. They also serve in governments. At first Palestinians serving in state government were slightly discriminated against. The same thing is true of groups who do not come from the right part of a country, or right tribe. But as time has gone on Palestinians have become integral to such governments as in Jordan. But in my day most of the key people in the Jordan government were Jordanians, and the Palestinians were just beginning to move into key positions. The head of the foreign ministry, however, was a Palestinian. He was from a very distinguished family from Jerusalem. We found the Palestinians quite congenial because they were in general better educated than the Jordanians.

Q: The West Bank was part of Jordan at that time?

SEELYE: Yes. When the war broke out between the Arabs and Israel, King Abdullah ordered the Arab Legion to move onto the West Bank, which had been part of Palestine. So they did and they established a line of defense under Glubb Pasha. It was a sensitive position for the British to be in because Glubb Pasha and his key officers were English. But the Arab Legion retreated from two places called Lydda and Ramle because Haganah, the Jewish militia, wanted to obtain more territory and have more space inland from the sea. The Arab Legion agreed to withdraw. So even after the cease-fire and the war was over, the Arab Legion pulled back several miles, for which the Jordanians have never been forgiven by many Palestinians. But Jordan did hang on to one half of Jerusalem, known as the Arab sector. Abdullah then annexed the West Bank, but there were only two countries that ever formally endorsed that annexation--one was Pakistan. Nobody else formally recognized it. Nevertheless, Jordan, as a country including the West Bank, was recognized diplomatically. So in a sense we did de facto recognize Jordan's acquisition of the West Bank.

Q: Were the Palestinian refugees under pressure from agitators to get out?

SEELYE: In those days not very much. Their conditions were not very good. I don't recall Palestinian demonstrations while I was there. My memory may fail me. I do recall, however, a demonstration by a militant, fundamentalist group, which is interesting in light of events of today. It shows that Islamic fundamentalism goes back quite a ways. The demonstration happened when I went out to the airport to meet one of the few congressional delegations that visited Jordan during my tour. We rode in cars with embassy diplomatic plates and happened to pass by a mosque just after Friday prayers. The Imam had apparently been giving a political diatribe and as these people poured out of the mosque they suddenly saw Americans. So they picked up some stones and started throwing them at us. We managed to get away. One congressman sitting in the car said to me, "By the time these stones get back to the States they will be big rocks." This was an organization that was called the Ikhwan, a hard-line, militant Islamic organization. So I became aware of that way back then, but I don't remember anything else of that nature. In those days the Palestinians were not that political. You could talk to any educated Palestinian and he would gripe about having lost his lands, etc., but I didn't sense then that there was a political Palestinian movement. That movement really developed in an active way with Arafat.

Q: Two days ago the Israelis and the PLO signed a peace accord, an historic piece of paper, a major stride.

SEELYE: So the politicization of the Palestinians didn't really occur until after I left Jordan. Arafat was the one in the sixties who really built up the political movement. I don't recall that there was Palestinian militancy in my days.

LESTER MALLORY
Ambassador
Jordan (1953-1958)

Ambassador Lester Mallory entered the Foreign Agricultural Service in 1931 and became a Foreign Service officer in 1939. His career included assignments in France, Mexico, Cuba, and Argentina, and ambassadorships to Jordan and Guatemala in 1959. Ambassador Mallory was interviewed by Hank Zivetz in 1988.

MALLORY: Now, after four years, I was proposed for Jordan. We went to Washington for a few days. Got a ship to Beirut, where we arrived on Thanksgiving Day, in 1953. Took a car down, and arrived in the late evening, in Amman. This whole appointment was a surprise; I never thought about the Near East, and knew virtually nothing about it. Fortunately, there are certain similarities, between Latin America and the Near East. I was quite struck. One day when I left the office of the then-prime minister, which was upstairs, I turned around to wave goodbye, and the remark was made, "How do you know about our customs?"

I said, "Well, it's because I've been in Latin America, and many of the little gestures are the same. The Spaniards picked up a lot of their customs on the way." One thing that was easy was a custom, apparently among the Arabs, of not forcing a conversation. You'd be talking a while, and then silence would ensue. You might sit there quietly for a little while, without saying a word, but then go on. This whole aura of personal relationships was quite different, but still there was enough similarity that I had no problems.

I had no problems with the language, because when I arrived I asked how long it would take to learn Arabic, and they told me five years. I told them I didn't expect to be there five years, and I didn't learn the language. But, there were enough Palestinians in the government, with British training, and they spoke English. And those that didn't, had been trained in Syria or Turkey, and they spoke French, with which I was familiar. So there were not problems on the language.

The King had only been in office about six months; quite young.

Q: How old was Hussein at that time?

MALLORY: At that time, officially, he was 18; but I'm not sure he was really 18, because the Arabs count age from conception, so you've got to take nine months off.

When his father had been removed from office, the boy was sent to Sandhurst Military Academy, in England, for six months; which I think was a marvelous thing for him. He learned a great deal about behavior, comportment, and so on. And it didn't hurt his English any, which was quite good. He had been to school previously, in Egypt.

He had a lot of very good help around, principally from his mother, Queen Zein. She has been seldom given credit for what she did for this young man over the years. I was there four years, and saw this thing develop. Also, Hussein got a great deal from his grandfather, who was Abdullah -- originally Emir Abdullah -- who was less a king than he was a sheik--a great sheik. He loved nothing better than to go down to the floor of the Jordan Valley, get in a goat-haired tent, and see the people around him. He behaved like a Bedouin from the desert. But he had a lot of good philosophy, and he passed it on to the boy. And I think Hussein himself probably got more from his grandfather than from anybody else.

At the time, as I recall, when we got to Amman there were only 12,000 people there; it was a village. It had bilateral cultures; strongly from the Bedouins of the desert, and also strongly from the Palestinians who had come from what is now Israel. The King knew enough, or felt enough--probably from the grandfather--to know how to handle the Bedouin people. I'd been out in the desert with him, visiting some of the desert sheiks, and it was a delight just to watch the smoothness with which he operated.

He had some senior advisors, in the government, who stood him in good stead. In the first couple of years this young fellow didn't know what it was all about, and what was going on. It took time.

Q: Who, in your view, was the real power then, in Jordan, in the first couple of years of Hussein's rule?

MALLORY: In the first couple of years I would say Queen Zein behind the scenes, and the senior ministers of cabinet.

Q: Were they mainly Bedouins, or Palestinians?

MALLORY: Both. Well, I wouldn't call them Bedouins, but the old prime minister, who had been Turkish trained, was of old stock from the area from Saudi Arabia all the way up. His heritage went back practically to the Great Deliverer.

The King has developed over the years; he's had quite a few attempts on his life. He's had four marriages, I think.

Q: When we talked earlier, you indicated that he was a lonely young man, and that there were some efforts made to assuage this loneliness, and bring him over to the Western view.

MALLORY: Well, he was alone; and as a young man I don't think there were many areas of entertainment which he could enter. Part of this was assuaged by the head of the Air Force, Colonel Jock Dalglish.

Q: Who was a Brit?

MALLORY: Yes. This started early, because when Abdullah was assassinated in Jerusalem, Dalglish was over there with his plane, and he found Hussein sort of abandoned, lost, he didn't know what to do. Dalglish went to him and said, "Come on, I'll take care of you." He put him in his plane, and flew him back to Amman. From then on he taught Hussein how to fly, was with him a great deal. Jock was a very descent, honorable man--a very personable person. And I understand that whenever you're taught to fly you have a great deal of attachment to the person that taught you. So he was close to Dalglish.

But Dalglish and his wife, who was just as Scotch as they come, would have a little entertainment in their rather humble house--for example, an evening of Scotch dancing, and some food. Well, the British ambassador had an evening on, and the American ambassador had one, and the head of the Italian hospital also had one and so on. This didn't occur often, but from time to time, there was an opportunity to mix with other people. There were women present. Everything was very decorous. Generally the food was pretty good. We didn't have any outsiders; it was all music by records. So we tried to provide an atmosphere that might be a little different, and a little more friendly. This worked out pretty well, because his relationships with the Americans, and the British, were very good.

We did have change later.

Q: At this point, what was the relationship of the British military group that was in Jordan?

MALLORY: I'll come to that. We had a big role to play in Jordan, because the British were pulling out of the whole area. Palestine first. They wanted to pull their assistance out of Jordan, and out of the gulf states. The result was that we were taking over the economic aid, which we did increasingly. The aid program was the big part of it, and before we finish today I'd like to talk about aid in general.

I think my most important job was in taking care of this aid thing. We didn't have much to do about throwing our weight around otherwise. We had a policy eye on the Russians, primarily because Secretary Dulles had this great program of containment of the Russians. When there was a threat from Syria: one morning I was told there was a lot of material arriving by plane, and I got the whole cabinet out on the airfield, and we received this stuff. I had never asked for it, and didn't know about it. But there wasn't any more Syrian threat from that point.

Q: You got the Jordanian cabinet out? And what was in the shipment?

MALLORY: We had a lot of artillery; it was military. But primarily, they were jeeps with 106 mm recoilless cannon on them. I was able to say in the loud voice, to the prime minister, that these would knock out any Russian tanks that the Syrians might have.

Q: What prompted the Syrian threat?

MALLORY: They had a period there of what they called "Bathi."

Q: The Bathi political party?

MALLORY: Yes, and at that time they were trying to throw their weight around. One time later on, when Hussein was flying with Dalglish from Beirut to Amman, they tried to gun him down. Things weren't very friendly there for some time.

As to the Syrian threat, I don't know how it came up. It may have been intelligence out of Syria to Washington; it may have been our military attaché to Washington, describing what the situation was. But I never asked for it, and I was never told how it came about, except that it arrived. And I always give credit to Secretary Dulles for this. That was pretty direct aid, at a time when it apparently was needed.

We had a lot of violence, particularly from Nasser, in Egypt, in Jordan.

Q: Directed at the King?

MALLORY: No, just wait. We had a long series of what I called nuisance bombs. We never had one at our residence, but a number of the cabinet ministers had bombs. I might say, amusingly enough our counselor had an apartment above the apartment of the Egyptian counselor, and he was thunderstruck and very distressed when he learned that the Egyptian had a box of grenades in the bedroom underneath him. He said, "Can you imagine, the threat to his own children?" He was as upset about the Egyptian children as himself. But the stuff was getting out all right; it was being used.

I think if you go back in history, and read--it's Eisenhower--the time that Ben Gurion went over and whacked the Egyptians, really set Nasser off. Before that he'd been all right. From then on it was all wrong.

Q: That was the '56 invasion of Suez?

MALLORY: No, long before that, before my time.

Q: The only war before that was the 1948, for independence.

MALLORY: It wasn't a war; it was an attack by Ben Gurion's group, and it was down toward the Gaza Strip. I've forgotten the reference to this, but it's been published; I read it.

Now you asked about the army. The army was built up by Glubb Pasha, who'd had experience, up from the Mesopotamia area, and became the head of the army, and trained these veterans. He was excellent. He spoke the language fluently; he had a feeling for the Arabs and the Bedouin types. He developed a first-class military machine; it wasn't big, but it was good.

It was often said that they didn't stand out in the 1947 war. I'll explain something of that. We had a visit of a War College group. I think they split up each year into a couple of groups; one goes

to the West, and one to the East, or something. One came through and we arranged for a briefing of this War College group, and there must have been about 40 or 50 of them. The briefing was done by Glubb Pasha.

Q: This was in '53, '54?

MALLORY: About '55. The King was invited and he came. He sat there and he listened; and I don't think he listened enough. Glubb explained what had happened in the '47 war. The important thing, to me, was his account of the way the sectors were divided. The Jordanians were along the Jordan River, about the middle sector. And on the right were the Iraqis. According to what I gathered from Glubb, the Iraqis were very quiescent; were not at all war-like, and didn't stand up to things. But Glubb said he was stopped cold, because they got down to 14 cartridges per man, and they couldn't expend those and still be defensive. And they couldn't attack with that little. They begged the British to give them supplies, and the British refused. He said, "There we were, stuck, in the middle sector. We couldn't advance against the Israelis, because we didn't have the ammunition."

This was quite a surprise to me. Now, the King heard this. As time went on we began to get outside influences, and one day--abruptly--Glubb was told to get out, and leave that night or the next morning, which he did. The British ambassador intervened, but no soap. I knew all this because I was at dinner with the British ambassador when we got the news that this had happened. In a way it was a great shame, because here was a good outfit, and a good commander.

But there'd been increasing influences from an outside group of Arabs, particularly Abu Nuwar, who became the new chief of staff. His relationships were with Egypt. Well, as time went on, after a year or so, we began to see that the Bedouins were being moved out of the legion, and the Palestinians moved in. The Bedouins were thoroughly loyal to the King.

I'll tell you a story now, which I haven't told before, and which I didn't report myself, because I didn't want my own action to be known in it. But it can be told now, I think.

One night I was in bed when a young fellow came to the door, and woke me up, and said the approaches on every road to Amman was being blocked by personnel carriers. Now this young man had been very carefully chosen on the staff.

Q: He's an American?

MALLORY: An American, on my staff. He had become friendly with the King--personally friendly; they were both young, the same age, and so on. So I said, "Look, you get to the palace, and get in, and tell the King."

I couldn't do this; if I did, it would have been broadcast everywhere that the Americans were into it. But he went, and he was so well known that nobody paid any attention. The King looked at him, and said, "I'll take action at once." And he started walking away, and characteristic of him, he turned around and said, "Thank you very much."

He got hold of Abu Nuwar, and put him in the car, and they drove out to the army base. He got up on top of a tank, and told them of the uprising. And the Bedouin troops began to scream, and said, "Let us at them; we've got to get him." And apparently Abu Nuwar was shaking in his boots.

Q: Because Abu Nuwar had been behind this?

MALLORY: Abdul Nuwar didn't last very long; he ended up in Egypt. I think if Hussein had paid more attention, to Glubb, none of this could have happened. But, also here was the business; the British were here, running us. It was time for them to do their own thing. It got around, and it got to the King. Anyway, he overcame that, and did it beautifully.

Q: Perhaps you will get to this, but it relates to what you just said, with the British pushing membership in the Baghdad pact. What was the Jordanian position on this?

MALLORY: Frankly, I don't remember.

Q: From what I understand, this was just about the time that the British, and the French, and the Israelis--'56. And there seemed to have been some reaction on the part of the most of the Arab states, against the Baghdad pact, because of the action of the British and French in the Suez.

MALLORY: That I don't know. I don't know about the Baghdad pact; it was just sort of foreign to us, as it were. The '56 war; Eisenhower gave me credit for waiting for an attack from Israel, but I didn't know about it ahead of time. It's in one of his books. All I know is on a Friday, for the first time we received two men who were going to make an inspection of the embassy. I'd been four years in Argentina, without any inspection; I was in Jordan without any inspection. And they said they'd see the man about consular stuff on Saturday, and come do the rest of it on Monday.

Well, on Monday morning, I called them over and said I had a car leaving for Beirut in about an hour, and you'd better get in it. They were very surprised. I said, "We are evacuating." I had a telegram that morning, "Evacuate."

Well, fortunately we had very considerable plans for evacuation, in the event of trouble. Most of them were based on the idea that we might be attacked by Syria, and we'd have to escape across the desert, to Iraq. But it didn't happen that way. We were able to go up through Syria, and I could send most of the men by car. I wouldn't allow the women to go through Syria under these circumstances, so I had a plane come in, and by dusk that evening we had everybody out. I didn't see my family for nine months.

Q: You did retain a skeleton force?

MALLORY: Yes.

Q: Was this because there was a concern that the invasion of the Suez would also turn on Amman?

MALLORY: We didn't know what would happen. Because until the Americans were able to get the others to stop, we didn't know where this war might go. We had a skeleton staff. We lived through it quietly. I still had some aid personnel, and the thing worked. We did our jobs and got along. But it was a pretty lonesome time, as it were.

Q: What was the reaction of the Jordanians, toward the Americans, as a result of the war? Was it a positive reaction because of Eisenhower's intervention?

MALLORY: Yes. We were sitting very well. Of course, there was a certain amount of sympathy for the Egyptians, who'd taken a beating, but as it was against the Israelis, they were all for that. But we weren't much affected, one way or the other; it was sort of another world, as it were, out there. It didn't bother us. We just went on with our business, and lived through it.

Q: One of the reactions, as I understand it, of the Suez War--in Jordan--was a move leftward; as a reaction against the British, who were considered part of the West.

MALLORY: Well, moderately yes; but it didn't change anything very much fundamentally.

Q: Weren't there changes in the government--some of the ministers were shifted?

MALLORY: Well, they were shifted from time to time. Nothing much happened, really.

Q: In the years that you were there, was there an appreciable increase in Palestinian influence in Jordan--in the governmental levels?

MALLORY: Well, there'd always been a strong Palestinian--less influence, than capacity. We had quite a number of Palestinians, or West Bankers if you will, who were in the senior councils of the government. And there weren't very many old-line Jordanians to run the government; they just weren't trained that way, and didn't have the capacity. But I wouldn't call it influence, because there was a period of quiet there, and you couldn't do anything about it. Israel had it, and what could you do?

Q: But in terms of Hussein; was he always in charge? Did people know this was the guy that was running the country? Or was there a sense that they were tolerating his continuance?

MALLORY: Well, in the beginning that was true. He was young, new, and he didn't know his way around. He just somewhat did what he was told. But as time went on, his importance increased; but it wasn't great, even up to the time I left, after four years. And I would say it took probably ten years of his reign before he really began to conduct things very much; not as he does now, where he comes out and makes policy statements with typical frequency. He didn't make any policy statements in the beginning, at all.

We had a possible coup, as I told you, by Abu Nuwar; and Nasser was behind that.

Q: Wasn't there also another Syrian threat?

MALLORY: No, not really; there was always a little poking and picking.

Q: In physical terms, in your tenure in Jordan, did our embassy grow?

MALLORY: Very much. Not the embassy per se. The embassy per se was small. There was an ambassador, a counselor, about three secretaries, and that was it. But we had an increasingly large aid group. The aid program was big. It took care of a lot of operations there, to the extent that one of the Arab wives told my wife that they'd like to have this American ambassador Santa Claus, because he was bringing them so much.

Well, I didn't ask for all this; the thing kind of grew like topsy. Mostly it was a pretty good program.

I must tell you a story, which I think ought to be in the record someplace, although it's pretty touchy. It's about Ezra Benson, now president of the Church of Latter Day Saints, then Secretary of Agriculture.

I received a telegram saying that Ezra Benson, accompanied by his wife and two daughters, was taking a trip around the world in a DC-4. And they would arrive in Jordan, but because the airfield in Jerusalem was too small for a DC-4, they wanted to land in Amman and immediately take off for Jerusalem. I had a knock down drag out fight half-way across the world with that. I said, "You can't do it. A secretary of the American government can not come in and lightly pass the King by. It just isn't done."

Q: He was Secretary of Agriculture at the time?

MALLORY: Yes. Apparently, somebody along the line backed me up, and said, "You better do this." Anyway, Ezra arrived. My wife took the females out to the residence to freshen up, and I took Ezra to meet the King. Ezra talked a while--nothing of importance. The King was very polite--non-committal.

Then Ezra said, "I'd like to give you two books. This is the book of Mormon. You understand that we believe we are descended from one of the last tribes of Israel." The King didn't turn a hair. I can imagine somebody like Nasser would have had him thrown out of the office, but the King was very polite. Then I took Ezra and his family out to the desert; he was kicking it like a steer all the way, because the Minister of Agriculture--of Jordan--was a son of the paramount sheik of the Beni Sacr tribe. And he was giving a lunch for the Minister of Agriculture of the United States.

So we arrive at their goat-haired tent. They bring in this tremendous tray with about three sheep on it. My wife teaches them how to eat with their right hand, and so on. First he wasn't going to go at all; he said, "We don't eat on Sunday."

We said, "Well, this isn't going to cost you anything. You've got to go." Anyway, they went out and really had a good time. They I said, "All right, you take my car. Our counselor, who has been writing a book about the history of this area, will show you every hill, every iron-age thing, everything from the Bronze Age, all the places of historic interest of the bible. And he'll drive you to Jerusalem."

Anyway, what I want to say is this; how in the world Ezra Benson could command what is virtually a private airplane for his family, clear around the world, I never did understand.

Eugene H. Bird
Israel-Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1955)

Eugene H. Bird was born in Spokane, Washington in 1925. He was in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1948. He attended the University of Washington, receiving a B.S. degree in 1948 and a M.A. degree in 1952. Mr. Bird's overseas career included posts in Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and India. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1994.

BIRD: Yes. I worked as part of that program. We supplied papers to the Wriston Commission.

So I was with Charles Manning at this time, 1954. I stayed there for eight or nine months. Manning came to me one day. I think that he had figured out that I wasn't really ideal management material. He knew that I was going to become a regular Foreign Service Officer. I had taken the Foreign Service examination in 1953 and had to wait about two and one-half years before I was brought in. Manning knew that I was entering the Foreign Service. He put me on the political desk covering Israel and Jordan.

Q: *This was about 1954 or thereabouts?*

BIRD: Actually, it was 1955 before I was assigned to the Israel-Jordan desk. I remember the date: it was February 18, 1955, because the Israelis had just run a massive retaliation operation against the Egyptian Army in Rafah, in the Gaza Strip. They killed 47 Egyptians. Immediately, Nasser was on the telephone to the American Ambassador [in Cairo], saying, "I cannot stand this any more. One or two people are killed inside Israel, and the Israelis run an operation against the very forces which are trying to prevent this from happening. I've got to have arms for my Army. They are the key to Egypt, politically, and here's a list" [of what I need]. For the first time he asked for jet aircraft, which didn't have much to do with defending Gaza from the Israelis. However, as you know, it's a "one upmanship game" in many ways.

So that request ended up on my desk because the Egyptian desk officer hadn't had much experience in munitions control, whereas I had. So we bounced this request back and forth in early 1955. By June, 1955, the Egyptians were back [in touch with us], insisting that they had to have an answer. Henry Byroade was the U. S. Ambassador to Egypt at that time, and he wrote

the longest telegram I had ever seen. Maybe it's the longest telegram ever sent. It was a long analysis of what the Egyptians might do and should do. Simultaneously, we were being asked to support an Egyptian request to the World Bank to finance the construction of the Aswan high dam. There were problems with this.

Looking back on this, I think that Nasser had decided that he was going to let the West "have" the economy of Egypt and obtain his military equipment from the Soviet Union, if necessary. He would accept military material from the West if the Western countries agreed to it but he probably had already decided that it wasn't going to be possible to rearm Egypt with the West, and particularly the United States, providing the equipment.

Secretary Dulles had visited Egypt in 1954. Naguib was still alive and still the nominal head of the [Egyptian] government. He had presented to Naguib, I believe it was, not Nasser, a six-shooter, because he was a military man. There was a famous picture of Dulles presenting this six-shooter to Naguib. Later on--several years later--Dulles was asked whether he would agree to go to the ceremony at which the King of Morocco was recognized as the sovereign of an independent country. It was suggested that he take a Winchester repeater. He said, "Oh, no, you're not going to do that to me again." [Laughter]

That was the atmosphere in which the Egyptian request for arms arrived. The Israelis, of course, were beating on the door, saying that they needed defensive arms.

Q: We were not supplying the Israelis with arms at that time?

BIRD: We didn't supply anything to anybody [in the Middle East]. We had the Tripartite Agreement [of 1950 with the British and the French], which said that the British, French, and the Americans, who were the only real arms suppliers at that time, agreed not to sell arms to the Middle East. [Supplying arms to Egypt] would have been a violation of that agreement. At that time no one thought of arms as being an important part of trade. It was only later on that pressure was applied to policymakers to see to it that [their respective country] got a "fair share"--and usually a dominating share, if it was the United States, Britain, or France--of the market for arms in any particular country or region, whether it be Saudi Arabia or wherever. [Approving arms sales] became almost an economic consideration, rather than a political or military matter.

At this point this was not quite true. It was quite the opposite, in fact. We were quite "moral" about our arms sales. [The view was that] the more arms in a given area, the greater the chance that there would be a "little war." And we didn't want a "little war."

We knew that, in fact, the Aswan high dam would have an impact. We knew that Nasser wanted that, above anything else. He wanted Western economic contacts, even though they talked about socialism, Arab socialism, and so forth. Nasser really wanted the West to be involved [in the Egyptian economy].

I was in the Department on the Israel-Jordan desk on the day that [Egyptian] Ambassador Hussein, I think it was, came in, expecting to [be told that the U. S. would support construction] of the [Aswan] high dam. I can't remember the exact date, though it would be easy to find out. It

would have been in the summer of 1955. The reporters caught [Ambassador Hussein] on the way in [to the State Department]. He expressed great optimism that [an agreement] would be signed. Then he walked into the Department, where Secretary Dulles told him--and this was under pressure, I think, from pro-Israeli Senators, Congressmen, and so on. Dulles knew that he would have a difficult time getting it [legislation approving an arms supply for Egypt] through Congress. I think that another reason was probably also connected with the arms list which Nasser had presented. Dulles told Ambassador Hussein that we were not going to support the construction of the Aswan high dam and that we thought that it would be an ecological disaster. So [Secretary Dulles] gave [Ambassador Hussein] a complete turn down. I remember Ambassador Hussein coming out of that meeting [with Secretary Dulles] absolutely astonished and depressed. He didn't have anything to say and didn't know what to say. He went back to Cairo and was never heard from again.

Nasser took that [the turn down on American support for the construction of the Aswan high dam] as a direct insult and humiliation, because they [the Egyptian Government] had been putting out the line that the West would support the construction of the high dam, that they had good relations with the West, and so forth. I think that this was the moment when Nasser decided really to confront the West and obtain military aid from the Soviet Union.

Q: Technically, the equipment was from Czechoslovakia.

BIRD: But the Czechs didn't have any ships, so the ships came from Odessa [in the Soviet Union]. They were sitting there [in Odessa] for several weeks. Within 48 hours after the decision [to supply the arms was made] they were unloading in Alexandria. All of that has been written about, but I saw it from this side back here.

I remember a little incident at one point just after the arms deal with the Russians [became known]. There had been an exchange of fire [in the Middle East]. The Israeli [Embassy] came in and exerted a great deal of pressure on Secretary Dulles. I was asked to come up with something that George Allen [then Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs] could say to the [Israeli] Ambassador. I went back and found an [Israeli] request made in 1951 or 1952 for radar-guided, 90 mm antiaircraft guns. These things were great against B-17 "Flying Fortresses" [of World War II vintage] but would be useless against low flying aircraft. The Israelis had asked for a whole bunch of these, so I suggested that we approve selling these guns to them. I remember the look on the Israeli Ambassador's face when he came out of that meeting. I wasn't at the meeting itself but I [escorted] him immediately afterwards to the door [of the State Department] downstairs. He was furious. He was really mad, because, of course, he wanted F-84 jets [fighter aircraft] which we had a lot of, left over from the Korean War. He wanted a real statement. Instead, he got a propaganda, press announcement from the White House that we had decided to give defensive arms to Israel to defend herself against the MiG aircraft that were being provided to Egypt. That was the sort of thing that we had to do to try to slow down [the arms race] and get off that slippery slope.

I dealt with a lot of different things on the [Israel] desk. Don Bergus, [the Officer in Charge], was a great boss in that regard. He let you handle various matters. [For example], he'd tell me to make representations to the French on their proposal to internationalize Jerusalem at this time.

They had agreed with the Vatican that the internationalization of Jerusalem should go ahead. We didn't feel that there would be any successful negotiation on this matter at all. I had to give [a French Embassy officer] the news. He looked on this as a training exercise. It [the Israel desk] was small but very active. Don was highly regarded. He always had good access to Secretary Dulles. He was a fast drafter of memoranda. I learned that that [kind of skill] was a very necessary attribute [in a desk officer]. Of course, I was trained as a journalist, so that kind of work was fairly easy for me, [although] I probably wasn't the greatest drafter in the world by any means.

I remember Don coming back [to the office] after we had sent a paper for presentation to Secretary Dulles on what he might do regarding the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the Egyptians. This was the response that Nasser had come up with. Don brought back our paper that we had worked on for two weeks. It had said that we ought to do this and this and this. We had a fairly elaborate scenario on how to defuse this issue so that it wouldn't go to the point where the British and the French, who were outraged by this action, would do something unexpected. Don threw the memorandum on my desk and said, "Well, I guess there's only one thing left. In the end in the Middle East there's always only one thing left--a nice, little war." I was a little astonished at this.

Within a month or two the "Baghdad Pact" riots took place in Jerusalem. One of my predecessors in Jerusalem, a vice consul there, got involved in a shooting incident. He had a hunting rifle and a shotgun, with heavy slugs in it. [In the course of the incident] three people killed in the garden [of his house in East Jerusalem], as I recall, and 16 or 17 wounded. The Jordanian Army [then occupying Jerusalem] had to defend him, but he was seen as also taking part in the defense [of his garden] with a weapon. His life was threatened immediately after this incident. So the Department had to transfer him, and I was sent to replace him.

Q: Before we get to that, let's go back to [your service] on the Jordan-Israeli desk. While you were there, how would you describe what later was called the Jewish or the Israeli Lobby?

BIRD: We certainly had a lot to do with it. I was viewed as being a fresh, new face on the scene when I went to work on the desk. I had no background in the Middle East. As a matter of fact my favorite story concerns Parker ["Pete"] Hart. I was told to go in and call on Pete, who had just been appointed the director of NE [the Office of Near Eastern Affairs]. So I walked in by myself. He said that he was happy to have me aboard but wanted to know about my background. Did I have any background in the Near East. I said, "No, I'm sorry, I'm a Swedish expert." He said, "Well, have you read anything on the Middle East?" I said, "I'm afraid I haven't." I said that I read the newspapers and other things, but nothing serious. I said that I had been in management training for the previous couple of years. He said, "Well, have you ever traveled there?" I said, "No, I haven't been close to the Mediterranean or the Middle East." He sighed and said, "Well, maybe that's what we need around here--fresh, new minds." [Laughter]

The people in the Israeli Embassy felt the same way. I had very good relations [with them]. Abba Eban was the Israeli Ambassador. Of course, there were a couple of junior Israeli Embassy officers who became great buddies of mine. Just before I was assigned to the Israeli desk, the

Israelis had run what I presume was a "sod" [sodomy?] operation--I don't really know--against Don Bergus' predecessor. This had happened about 18 months previously.

Q: *Who was that?*

BIRD: I don't remember his name, though I remember his face very well. He was forced out of the Department completely. He was a regular Foreign Service Officer who had been on the desk and had been engaged in some negotiations. There was a party one evening at which he'd made a remark to the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] at the Israeli Embassy concerning the status of those negotiations, which the Israelis then proceeded to use in the negotiations. He'd given them some insight. I don't know what this was all about. There was nothing in the files on the desk, but what made a deep impression on me was that only a month or two after I came onto the desk in 1955 this officer, who'd gone up to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, had been brought back to the Department as a result of a case he had brought against the Department because he had been fired. The Department brought him back for one day. He came in to see us during that day. He didn't tell me anything but he had a long conversation with Don Bergus as to the circumstances. Don had been hurriedly brought to the desk as a result [of this situation]. So with the Israelis you always felt that you had to watch your back.

The Jordanians were always very charming. They had a wonderful Ambassador and a tiny staff. They couldn't compete [with the Israelis]. We had a lot to do, both with the anti-Zionists, such as Elmer Berger, who used to come in and talk to us and so on, and people like Don Peretz. And we had a lot to do with some of the Zionists, who would come in and have long conversations with [Assistant Secretary] Allen. Either Don Bergus or I would attend and take notes. Don would attend if the visitor was a very important person. Secretary Dulles saw many of them. Of course, Dulles was viewed within the Department--at least on the NEA side--as a person who had been defeated in his bid for election.

Q: *Election as a Senator from New York [in 1950], wasn't it?*

BIRD: From New York. He claimed to have been defeated by Jewish money and influence in New York. He supposedly never forgave them for that. I don't know directly. I have no idea. However, stories were told that Dulles would occasionally fulminate against them and refer to them as "those damned New Yorkers" and so on. Still, he had very close relations with Senator Javits...

Q: *[Republican] Senator from New York.*

BIRD: It was Javits' staff that "carried the water" for Israel more than any other group on the Hill. Of course, I was in touch with Senator Morse, although not necessarily with anyone else up there. But in the case of each of the issues that we had to deal with we would always consider it in terms of what impact it was going to have on domestic politics.

I remember having to answer some of the letters which Secretary Dulles was receiving from politically important people in Philadelphia and various other places. As the lowest man on the totem pole on the desk, this was my job. The [letter writers] would say, "If you don't change your

policy on the Middle East, [the Republicans] are going to lose the next Congressional elections here." The Governor of Maryland at that time was also a person who weighed in strongly. I can't remember his name.

Q: I think it was Theodore McKelvin.

BIRD: He would weigh in strongly with Dulles. We would get the "flak" from that and would have to provide [a draft reply]. So it was similar to a situation of having Mme Sun Yat-sen and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek on the Hill on the same day when you're trying to open somewhat better relations with Beijing. It was very similar to that.

Q: You were new to the scene as you dealt with Israeli affairs but you had a fresher eye on this sort of thing. Were you keeping American domestic politics in mind? Normally, in the Foreign Service we are supposed to call things as we see them in American geopolitical or international terms and let the domestic politicians sort it out. But you couldn't do that in this case. Is that right?

BIRD: We would try, but it's like the old adage that "War is an extension of diplomacy." Or you can look at it in the opposite way, that "Diplomacy is an extension of war." It seems to me that in our foreign policy we'll always have a certain tension on this subject. How much influence should ethnic groups--and after all America is nothing but a collection of ethnic groups--have on our foreign policy? How much influence should Russians [in the United States] now have on our policy towards Yeltsin? How much influence should Swedes have on our policy toward Sweden? Obviously, it is very modest. At one point it was clearly very important in United States foreign policy. The Mexican community or the Japanese on the West Coast--how much influence should they have had on preventing the internment of [racial Japanese] in 1941-42 [just after Pearl Harbor]? Well, the answer is that, because of the open nature of American politics and the American debate on American domestic politics, the Poles should have their say on our relations with Poland. Polish Americans should have their say. Jewish-Americans should have their say on our relations with Israel. But the [political] tactics may get to the point where there is real fear in people's minds and voices and so on, as there has been in only two instances that I know of.

One such case is Taiwan and China policy. The second concerns Israel and [United States] policy toward the Arab world. In those two cases the line [which should exist between domestic politics and foreign policy] is being crossed and has been crossed.

Q: How did you find dealing with Israeli diplomats?

BIRD: I found them quite charming. I was always very welcome in Ambassador Abba Eban's embassy. Some years after I left Washington [in 1956], friends told me that I was viewed as being very pro-Israeli when I went to [the Consulate General in] Jerusalem. And I was "courted" there. I was assigned a young Israeli who would call me at [various] times from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So I was viewed as potentially a very useful person to them in many ways, because I'd worked on so many different problems and projects affecting them, including the Johnston Plan [for the division of the waters of the Jordan River between Arabs and Israelis]. [On my way to] Jerusalem, I went via London. It was kind of unusual and, perhaps, kind of

"bumptious" of me to do this. I arranged my travel so that I went to London, where I received a briefing. Dayton Mak took me to the [British] Foreign Ministry.

Then I flew to Beirut. I'd never seen these places before. Of course, I'd been briefing people on them. Fraser Wilkins once said to me, after a briefing I had given on Jerusalem, "How long has it been since you've been in Jerusalem?" [I had never been there and told him so.] It was very embarrassing. I could read and brief fairly easily. I went to Beirut and met the Ambassador and his staff and spent a day or two there.

Q: Was this Ambassador Robert McClintock at the time?

BIRD: No, it was before McClintock. I've forgotten the Ambassador's name now. Actually, I didn't meet the Ambassador because he was out of the office, but I met the DCM.

I went to Damascus. When I went into Jimmy Moose's office [in the Embassy in Damascus], I stumbled over the first Middle East style high door I had encountered. You know how they build their doors. I almost fell flat on my face. [Laughter] I remember his saying when I did that, "Can you tell me if there's anybody in Washington that reads the dispatches we've sent in and keeps up with them?" He was mad as hell and of course retired about a year or so after that. He was a real curmudgeon.

Then I went down and had a good meeting with the Ambassador to Jordan. I spent two days in Amman and then crossed over to East Jerusalem. I had a kind of "anointment" all the way along, of course, and the Israelis knew this. So I had a lot of doors open to me in the Knesset [Israeli parliament].

Q: Bringing our discussion back from Secretary Dulles to Gene Bird, here you were, straddling Arab and Jewish nations. What did all of you do during the Suez Crisis [of 1956]?

BIRD: I suppose we survived. The first thing we did was to evacuate everyone. We were told to get everyone off the West Bank area that we could. I called in [the heads of] the Mennonite and other missionary groups. There weren't a lot of Americans on the West Bank, but there was a sufficient number for us to have a problem getting them out. I tried to arrange for an aerial evacuation, because we didn't seem to be able to get permission to drive in our cars all the way to Beirut. A lot of people didn't want to leave their cars in Amman, [Jordan]. We made a disastrous attempt to bring in a DC-3 [aircraft], which we managed to lease from Air Jordan. We got about 30 people and all of their luggage out at the airport. At the last moment the Jordanians said that their plane could not fly because there were too many risks involved for an Air Jordan plane in the air. There had been a "shoot down" in 1948 of a plane from Air Jordan, or, rather, the predecessor to Air Jordan. We knew one of the survivors of this crash, the head of the American School for Oriental Research. Here he was, being evacuated on an Air Jordan plane. He survived the 1948 shoot down by a "Yak" [Soviet built] fighter, an Israeli fighter from Russia, which always intrigued me. So evacuation was a major issue.

And then there were demonstrations, which went on for about six months, during which time we kept our people out [of Jordan]. My wife and our two little children, both pre-schoolers and very

young, boarded an aircraft, perhaps the morning after the [Israeli] invasion [of Sinai] and got out. It was one of the last aircraft out.

We had a lot of [American] tourists, of course. The tourists didn't see anything happening. It was a very calm period in Jerusalem itself. There were some troops up close to the line, but there was a prohibition written into the armistice agreement on having tanks near the line. Both sides respected that in 1956, unlike in 1967. So we had no incidents. I remember our emergency radio. I was trying to go from the Consulate on one side to the other. I turned the radio on but all I could receive was people talking back and forth in Hebrew.

They had the same kind of radios that we did. We had provided [the Israelis] with communications equipment. [When I was on the Israeli desk], I had helped to get that radio equipment [for them] in substitution for jet aircraft. They had very good U. S. Army communications gear, which had been integrated into the Israeli Army. They used it throughout the Suez Crisis.

So we were a kind of lonely group of [temporary] bachelors, sitting there in Jerusalem for almost six months. The rumor mill was always active, saying that it [the prohibition on having our families there] was going to be off next week and so on. But the official description of the policy was that, "We wanted to teach both sides a lesson." I remember the puzzlement of the Egyptian who invited me over, shortly after Secretary Dulles had made a very pro-Egyptian statement of sympathy. I said that we were taking the whole issue to the [UN] Security Council and were trying to get the British and French to pull out [of the Suez Canal area]. Really, Israel was a sideshow in this whole thing, even though she had gone almost all the way to the Suez Canal. Israel had been prevented from going all the way by the British, who told them, "Don't go any farther. You're not to take the Canal. We're going to take it." In fact, the Israeli Army probably could have taken the Canal all the way down [to Suez]. There probably weren't that many Egyptian troops left in the Sinai Desert area.

This didn't happen, so the situation became a matter of arranging for the evacuation of British and French troops [from the Suez Canal area]. We [in the Consulate General in Jerusalem] weren't directly involved with that, except that we were in contact with people like [British Consul General] Wilson and with the French [in Jerusalem] and so on. At the Consulate General we talked a lot [about the situation]. We tried to come up with ideas. One of the ideas we came up with was letting the Israelis keep the Gaza Strip at that point, because Gaza was not an area which the Egyptians had been remarkably good at governing. It would have given the Israelis a reason to return all of the 400,000 [Arab refugees] to within the 1956 borders. Our expression was, "This will break the back of the refugee problem if you bring all of these people back into Israel." Let them go back to Ashkelon and the villages and so forth. We knew the villages had been largely destroyed, but we thought that we could find a way to reintegrate them into Israeli society.

I remember raising this idea at a very low level, just to test it with my contact in the Israeli Foreign Ministry. He looked at me as if I were really mad. It was a new idea to him. He said, "You don't understand anything about Israel, do you?" He meant [to say], "We don't want those people back. We want the land but we don't want them back." He said, "Why don't you take them

instead to Brazil?" Years later Assistant Secretary George Allen told me that he had suggested the same thing to Secretary Dulles at the White House during the same period. They had been briefing President Eisenhower. Allen told me that both Dulles brothers were there--Allan Dulles from the CIA and John Foster Dulles from the Department of State. Allan said that maybe it would be a good idea to leave Israel with Gaza. John Foster Dulles went absolutely ballistic and said, "No, that would be rewarding aggression. We can't reward aggression. Forget that idea completely." So this was unacceptable from both sides. It's interesting to look back and see what's happening now.

Q: How was life for you in the Consulate General in Jerusalem? How were your contacts with people on the West Bank of the Jordan and how did they respond to the events of 1956?

BIRD: They were in a state of shock, of course, and then the situation turned into a state of concern about whether Israel intended to take the West Bank. The actual crisis itself only lasted about four or five days before [hostilities stopped], and about three days after the Egyptians lost Port Said. During that period the Mahafiz of Jerusalem, an East Banker who was very close to King Hussein, though not a Palestinian, was in very close touch with the Consulate General and with me, because the Consul General wasn't always in East Jerusalem. So sometimes in the evening I would go over there and talk with the Mahafiz or some of his friends and attend some of his majelis [conversation] meetings. There was constant political talk about Israeli intentions. There was real fear that the Israelis intended to take the West Bank at that time. They feared that it could easily be done and that it would happen. We were watching any buildup of the Jordan Arab Army--the Arab Legion.

I remember sitting with the head of the American Colony Hotel [in East Jerusalem on the Damascus Road] and other people who were quite well known and long term residents of the area. I had also gone down to Jericho and had watched a very long line of [Jordanian] military vehicles which had come down the very road which Yasser Arafat is now trying to get control of. My friend, British Deputy Consul General Wilson, was also with me. We watched through binoculars to see whether they were going to turn up toward Jerusalem, which would be an indication of war, or turn and go across the [Allenby] Bridge and go back into Jordan. In fact, they turned and went across the bridge and into the main part of Jordan.

It was a strange time as far as our relations with the West Bank are concerned. Our Deputy Consul General had completed his tour [of duty in Jerusalem] and left. Andrew Killgore, the new Deputy Consul General, had not yet arrived, so I was more or less left alone. I roamed up and down the West Bank of the Jordan. There wasn't a lot of consular work to do. I ran the office. By then we had a couple of CIA types on the West Bank, working under the cover of the Consulate General. We were trying to report on what was happening in terms of the relationship between the West Bank and Jordan, because there wasn't much of a relationship between the West Bankers and Israel. The only place that they ever met was at the meetings of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, or the IMAC, as they called it. That was just a few hundred feet from the Consulate office [in East Jerusalem]. I used to go over and talk with the Norwegian [UN officer] who was there at the time. We had very close relations with the UN. They had a very high level UN civil servant, a Frenchman. His efforts were to keep the two parties from militarizing the area close to the line of demarcation and keep the peace as well as he could. The

effect that the UN had in terms of creating the conditions for peace were pretty minimal, in reality. This UN civil servant had a deputy, always a U. S. military officer, a colonel or lieutenant colonel, usually a Marine Corps officer. We became very close friends with him--his name was Barney. He was there during the Suez crisis in 1956.

Those military people in the UNTSO [UN Truce Supervision Office] really had more insight because they were operating on the Syrian front, and on the Egyptian front, too, through Gaza. And then, of course, there were the representatives of the UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Administration]. Henry Labouisse was ahead of UNRWA by that time.

Q: Henry Labouisse was former [U. S.] Ambassador to Greece, a professional Foreign Service Officer.

BIRD: A very fine person. I'd seen him just before I went out [to Jerusalem] at the annual pledge giving session at the UN Security Council in New York. What struck me then, of course, was that the Arabs, who had lots of money--Saudi Arabia and others--were still trying to push the problem of the Palestinian refugees back on the West as much as possible because they didn't want to take responsibility by giving substantial amounts of money to UNRWA. In reality, they never did [give much support to UNRWA]. At that point [1956] we were giving 28 cents per refugee per year, an incredibly small amount. The same thing is true now with the Palestine funds. They're trying to get together our contribution, which is going to be relatively minor in comparison to what we give to Israel every year.

Q: What was your impression of Jordanian officials and the Jordanian Government at this time? What did we think of their rule over the West Bank?

BIRD: We heard from Palestinians that they didn't like the "little King" [King Hussein]. I knew the widow of a Husseini who had been executed for participation in the plot to assassinate King Abdullah [King Hussein's grandfather]. He was known as "the East German spy." I don't think that he had any relationship with the Communists at all, but, of course, in those days anybody from East Germany was very suspect. He was originally from East Germany. I never knew him, of course. He had been executed three years or so before. She was still there, very much accepted in Arab society, which was surprising. She eventually married a United Nations official but, of course, she had been very much a part of the strained relations between the West Bankers and King Hussein.

When we were there, King Hussein made his first, official visit to the West Bank since his accession to the throne. I remember my little son standing, along with thousands of other kids, on the road from Kalandria Airport, waving a Jordanian flag. The Jordanians had pretty effective control, of course, but the attitudes expressed by the Palestinians were very derisive. Shortly after we got there, the first, free election in Jordan's history was held. It went pretty well but it went pretty much against the king on the West Bank. I remember Sari Nusseibeh, who is now involved in the peace process at the present time. His father, Anwar, was running for the Jordanian Parliament. He received 1,400 votes from the West Bank. But I think that that was partly because he was identified as an Anglican, as a very Anglicized person. He had gone to college in Britain, was a very elegant personality, and later became Minister of Defense under

King Hussein. I must say that relationships between the King and West Bankers were not good. I stood for two hours on the pavement waiting for the King to fly his own plane in, which he did. I still have some pictures from that period. All of the correct things were done for the King, but there were lots and lots of comments in the crowd while we were waiting, which we could overhear. They were saying something like, "He isn't my king"--that sort of thing.

Q: What about your relationships with the Israelis in Jerusalem after the United States came down rather heavily and stopped the fighting in 1956? What happened to you?

BIRD: My contact in the Foreign Ministry of Israel and I met almost every other day during this period. We had breakfast or lunch and sometimes met later. We talked a lot. I think that at one point--it was probably one day after the war started--I speculated that the Russians might threaten something in the way of retaliation. After all, it was "their" army that was being defeated. I speculated that perhaps they would threaten to fire their missiles. And sure enough that night, the Russians did threaten to fire missiles. He called me the next morning and said, "You must have had information." Of course, I didn't have any such thing. It was pure speculation. I think that the Israelis were quite astonished at the extent of the political defeat that they had suffered from this. It took them a good many years to come back from it. It wasn't until 1967, in fact. I think that the "old man," [David] Ben Gurion, probably expected a severe reaction, but all the signals had been strangely absent that we would be terribly displeased.

Q: The British, of course, who were so much closer to us than anybody else, at least at Prime Minister Eden's level, were astounded at what happened.

BIRD: They had come up against a Puritan Secretary of State.

Q: Well, it wasn't so much a Puritan Secretary of State. There was also President Eisenhower, who obviously was calling the shots.

BIRD: That always intrigued me. Why did he do this? I've asked [Ambassador] Dick Parker about this and so on. But if the [U. S.] really intended to come down on the side of Nasser, why didn't we do something to prevent [the British action], because this was the way it was viewed--coming down on the side of Nasser? Of course, I realize that it wasn't viewed by President Eisenhower that way.

Q: It just may be that some people in Washington think in long range terms. Then, all of a sudden we get to the point where somebody [in the White House] essentially says, "No, this is wrong." [We often tend to be] fairly passive until a certain point where we say, "To hell with this!"

BIRD: I think that, in spite of everything, we were probably a little surprised at the Consulate General [in Jerusalem] at the extent of the cooperation between Israel and the Paris-London axis. However, I wonder if we could have prevented that war. This always intrigues me. It seems to me that we could have used our "clout" to have prevented it.

Q: At this time you were sort of a new boy on the block [in Jerusalem]. Did you get any feel of what the views of the Arabists were? I mean our Foreign Service Officers who were specialists in the area.

BIRD: I got to know some of the Arabists because they had come on their annual tour from [the language school] in Beirut. There must have been about 20 of them in training at that time. I was the "control officer" for their visit [to Jerusalem]. I set up their meeting with [Prime Minister] Ben Gurion on the Israeli side and with the Mahafiz on the Jordanian side of the city. We traveled around Israel with them. Really, it was the first opportunity I had had to see a lot of things in Israel, and I accompanied them down to the Embassy [in Tel Aviv], too. I remember only one, remarkable meeting. That was with Prime Minister [David] Ben Gurion. The "guru" or one of the "gurus" of the Arabists was Edwin Wright, who came along with them. It was the first time I had met him--well, maybe I met him back here in Washington. It's possible. He was not a person that I knew well, if I knew him at all in the period before 1956. A number of the really well known State Department Arabists were there. Dick Parker wasn't there--he was already in Amman in the Political Section. But Andrew Killgore was there, as were Bill Crawford and Lucien Kinsolving, among others. I met all of these people for the first time.

We went up to the Knesset [Parliament]--the old building--and we were ushered into a kind of amphitheater, probably the place where the Knesset met at that time. I don't recall that it was all of that large. We were seated in the bottom row of seats. The old man, Ben Gurion, came in, a remarkable looking person--someone that you wouldn't forget. And that's part of the story. He sat there and gave us a description of the 1956 War and where they were. This was perhaps six months after that war. He took questions. Ed Wright finally put up his hand. Ben Gurion recognized him. Ed started to ask a question, but Ben Gurion interrupted him. He said, "I know you. We've met before, haven't we?" Before we went in, Ed Wright said that this was his first opportunity to meet the Prime Minister. Ed was very flustered, but he said, "I don't believe so, Mr. Prime Minister." Ben Gurion replied, "Yes, in fact, it was in the fall of 1943, on the lower level of the old State Department building" (now the West Executive Building) "in one of the corridors there, on the second floor, as I recall." Ben Gurion was very exact. He had obviously been carefully briefed or had an excellent memory, one or the other. Ben Gurion continued: "I led a delegation of people interested in getting Jews out of the [concentration] camps and out of Germany and, perhaps, bombing the camps. I made the representations to you." Ed Wright looked at him for a moment and he said, "Yes, I remember the delegation." He had forgotten that Ben Gurion was a part of that delegation.

We all shook our heads afterwards. It was a simple thing. Any assistant could have looked at the [list of visitors] and seen the name of Ed Wright, known who Ed Wright was, and mentioned it to Ben Gurion. But I still don't know, to this day, whether Ben Gurion was told that Ed Wright was there or whether his memory was really that impressive. He was very impressive. We talked about his retirement--what he wanted to do, to retire to the Negev Desert, to Stabokur. I guess that this meeting with Ben Gurion was one of the most memorable things that happened during this period. I would go to the Knesset from time to time but, of course, I didn't speak Hebrew, so there wasn't a lot of point to sitting there and listening to the flavor of the discussions.

The flavor of the debates hasn't changed. I was there in May, 1993. They still shout at each other in a way I have not seen in any other parliament except in Lebanon. They absolutely are the most aggressive group of people that I have ever seen in a parliamentary situation--maybe a little like the early sessions of the U. S. Senate when they used to have fistfights on the floor of the Senate. [Laughter]

RICHARD B. PARKER
Political Officer
Amman (1955-1956)

Jordan, Israel, Iraq Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1957-1959)

Ambassador Richard B. Parker was born in the Philippines in 1923. He received his BS from Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences in 1947 and received his Master's of Science in 1948. He served as a First Lieutenant overseas from 1943 to 1947. Ambassador Richard B. Parker was posted in Algeria, Australia, Israel, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, and Egypt. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed him in 1989.

Q: Well, now, turning to your first assignment in the Arab world, you went to Amman from 1955 to 1956. Could you explain a little of what your job was and what the situation was there at that time?

PARKER: I was the political officer. That is, the political officer. We had a one-man political section. Myself and two local employees who did the press translation and functioned as general translators. We had one economic officer, a DCM and ambassador. We had two secretaries and a code clerk in the pool in the back of the building. We had a small CIA shop. And that was it. Plus a consular section with one officer, and an administrative section with three officers. We didn't really feel we were particularly short of staff.

It turned out to be a very critical time in the history of Jordan. While we were there, things erupted in a way not unlike what's happened this last week in Jordan, with the demonstrations against the price increases imposed by the Prime Minister. This was at the time of great Arab nationalist agitation. The leader of which was Gamal Abdul Nasser in Egypt.

The United States at the same time was pushing the Baghdad Pact, which started out as the, I think, Iran-Turkey Pact. Then it was a Pakistan-Iran-Turkey Pact, and then Iraq joined it. Well, Iraq joining it was regarded as an effort to split the Arab world and to distract the Arabs from the real problem which was Israel and try to realign them against the Soviets. This is a recurring theme in our efforts in this area as seen by the Arabs. An attempt to distract the Arabs from the real problem.

This came at a time when King Hussein was still a very young man. He ascended the throne in 1953 when he came of age, I think at age eighteen. In 1955, he was twenty-one. He had just married his first wife. He was anxious to do something about the state of his army which was then called the Arab Legion. It had been British-formed and British-trained and British-financed. The British subsidy to Jordan for the Arab Legion was ten million pounds sterling a year which is, you know, absolutely nothing today.

We did not belong to the Baghdad Pact, but the British did. They joined it. They were anxious to get the Jordanians to come along in order to lessen Iraq's isolation. They sent General Templar, who had been the hero of Malaya, to Amman. He had subdued the leftist insurrection in Malaya. He came with an offer to the king of something like equipping an armored brigade. The king was very tempted by this. He was seriously considering joining the Baghdad pact.

Well, the Egyptians got wind of this, and they got everybody agitated, and before we knew it, people were out in the street rioting. We had two series of riots about a month apart. Jordan almost came apart in the second series. The mobs were down in the main streets of Amman about to start looting and breaking into stores when the army finally intervened and stopped them.

I think the king learned certain lessons from that that he's been applying recently. And that is to respond quickly with overwhelming force when you've got a civil disturbance.

The follow-on to this was that Hussein sacked Glubb, the British brigadier, John Bagot Glubb, who had been the organizer and the commander of the Arab Legion. He sacked him, sent him off on twenty-four-hours notice. We all thought it was ironic. Glubb was getting on the plane, and the Royal Chamberlain, Bahjat Talhuni arrived, carrying a present from the king. It was an autographed photograph in a silver frame. We thought, you know, he just sacked Glubb without a pension or anything else, and he was going off into exile. We thought it was a little cruel of the king to send him that picture.

There followed a period of considerable political agitation, and then came the Suez crisis. I didn't get to see the end of the Suez crisis because I came down with hepatitis in July of '56. There was no decent doctor in Amman. The first couple of weeks, nobody was able to diagnose me. Suddenly, we got a new doctor, a Circassian, who had just been to medical school in the United States and England, and was very competent. He diagnosed me. He was there for about two weeks, and then was going off to a medical conference somewhere, and he said, "I can't leave you here with all these quacks." He shipped me off to Beirut to the American University Hospital where I spent another month. My family, again, joined me. We got on a ship and came home.

Q: How did you operate in Amman while you were there? I mean, could you describe how one goes about getting the information for the reporting that you did?

PARKER: Well, I don't know. Nobody ever told me how to do the political reporting.

Q: Well, I'm asking you so you could--

PARKER: I never had any--well, I am going to tell you--I never had any lessons or exposure to this. In Jerusalem I had done a weekly press review which nobody read. And I got to Amman. We had as an ambassador, Lester Mallory, who was an old agricultural attaché, a very down to earth fellow, who had a good feeling for the political atmosphere of third world countries. He pushed me out and made me, you know, feel that he had confidence in me. And whatever I wanted to do was all right with him, within reason.

The requirements of the job, I think of any political officer job, almost immediately impel you into a certain involvement with the government and the people of the country in which you are located.

The first weekend I was there, we got a urgent telegram from the Department regarding the Eric Johnston mission, which was the mission to develop the waters of the Jordan River basin. This telegram had to be delivered to the Prime Minister immediately, and there was nobody else in Amman but me. Everybody was off somewhere. So I had the job of finding the Prime Minister, Said Pasha al-Mufti, who recently died - to find him and deliver this message, which had come in in telegram form, in English. And Said Pasha didn't speak any English. So I called on him at his home and explained to him in Arabic that I had this message to deliver. He sat me down on the porch, and I started going through it in the colloquial which I had been taught. I got about three lines through it, and was reading it quite competently, translating as I went. He stopped me and said, "Wait a minute. That's too important for us to do it this way, i.e in colloquial." He brought his son out and had his son do the translating. Anyway, from that point on, I had a friendship with the Said Pasha. I had entrée to him.

There were similar things that came up all the time requiring you to go see the governor, the mayor or somebody and ask him a specific question, "What are you going to do about this or do you want that?" Or to go to the Foreign Ministry. You also find yourself thrown into contact with the press.

I think the most important thing you have to do is to be open to the idea of contact. And be willing to sit and talk with anybody. Sometimes to suffer fools gladly. Particularly in the third world, and the I think the rules are quite different from what they are in Paris - but in the third world, to let people realize that you are not looking down on them, that you are interested in them and their culture and their language, and you are interested in what they have to say, and you are open to their ideas. As soon as they feel that you are talking down to them, they will shut up, and you won't hear anything from them. But if you are sympathetic, I think you can get a lot out of people. And that you have a much better understanding of what is going on in the country.

Q: Well, what sort of things were you trying to get out, reporting on Jordan?

PARKER: Well, we were interested in, first of all, the general question of political attitudes, attitudes towards the king. We were interested in trying to change perceptions of the United States and perceptions of our role in the Baghdad Pact and so forth. We are always interested anywhere, I think, in any country, in knowing what does the man on the street really think about the government. What are the risks that something is going to happen to turn the situation upside down.

Q: Where there any concerns about talking to Palestinian leaders at that time, or were the Palestinians sort of an open group to deal with?

PARKER: Well, in the first place, I would say at least fifty percent of the elite in Amman were Palestinians even including the Prime Minister, Rifai. The Rifais, including the Prime Minister who has just resigned, are Palestinians from Safad.

We had very good relations with the British. When I arrived there in 1955, the British were running internal security. The chief of the internal security was a British brigadier named Sir Patrick Coghill. He was one of the first people I called on, and we had a very good liaison relationship with them. They didn't mind our going to see anybody. There was no restriction from their point of view on my seeing more radical people as long as they weren't in jail. The problem was that these radicals really didn't want to be seen talking to the Americans. That was rather difficult. The people I have in mind were all Palestinians with one exception.

I don't think I did a particularly good job of talking to those people. I had one conversation with a man named Suleiman Nabulsi who was supposed to be the leading nationalist in Amman. By his name, he comes from Nablus in Palestine. Suleiman - I think we called him Suleiman Pasha-- pasha was a Turkish title that was held over and given to certain leading figures when they became Prime Minister, and he had been Prime Minister once. Nabulsi turned out to be a very weak character, but he was very personable. But I never got much out of him.

And I never got much out of any other political figures. There were no political parties in Amman. I could go and talk to the speaker of the parliament. I could go and talk to any government official, but they would all give me the government line.

Q: How did we view Nasser? I'm talking about you and the embassy in Amman view Nasser, who was a major figure at that time in the Arab world.

PARKER: Well, I think we undoubtedly were influenced by the reporting from other places such as Libya where it was perceived that Nasser was working away to undermine American interests there. Certainly his attitude towards Baghdad and the Baghdad Pact was very unhelpful. We had good personal relations with the personnel of the Egyptian Embassy, but we had no illusions that their attitude towards us was particularly benevolent. They saw themselves as engaged in a struggle for the soul of Jordan.

And we saw the Egyptians, we saw Nasser, I think generally, as something of the villain. A villain that was an honest villain. He was somebody that you could do business with. You had to count your fingers carefully after you shook hands and so forth, but it was somebody who represented an important and valid stream of Arab nationalist thought and with whom we would have to get along whether we liked it or not.

Q: Now, how about the Soviet Union? This is the height of the Cold War and looking at it, again, from our embassy in Jordan, did the Soviet Union and the threat of international communism play any role in our concerns there?

PARKER: We were always concerned that social inequalities and the lack of political freedoms would encourage communist agitation in Jordan. And there were a few local communists who were apparently very hard core. The leaders were in prison most of the time.

My recollection is that the Soviets did not yet have an embassy in Amman at that point. They were not major players on the board. There was no question of the king getting arms from the Soviets. We didn't see the Soviets as somebody who was at the door waiting to get in into Jordan. You must remember that until 1955 and the arms deal with Egypt, the Soviets had not really been involved in the Middle East. It had not been an area of priority for them. They had looked with great suspicion on Arab nationalist movements as being antithetical to communism.

Q: Now how did you, again, from the Amman point of view, our embassy, view Israel and how about, on a more personal side, how did you view the reporting that was coming out of Tel Aviv? Did you feel you were reporting on the same climate or was there a difference?

PARKER: Tel Aviv naturally tended to report things from an Israeli perspective. That was the perspective that they saw down there. Just as I think we tended to report things from a Jordanian perspective. We always thought they were terribly pro-Israeli, and they always thought we were terribly pro-Arab.

What was the first part of the question?

Q: How did we view Israel? One was the reporting and the other was the--

PARKER: Yes. I think we saw Israel as a considerable liability in the area. We realized that it was no escaping our identification with it given the political realities at that point. But we were concerned that this friend of ours was something that was really out of control in terms of its activities towards its neighbors. I arrived in Amman just after the Gaza raids in 1955 in which the Israelis went over in force in Gaza and killed a large number of people, attacking Egyptian police posts and so forth. A well-documented story and something that Israelis are still arguing about and something that led directly to the Egyptian press for arms from the Soviets. After the Gaza raid, they turned to us for arms, and we imposed conditions which they thought were unacceptable, and so they turned to the Soviets. And that became the Soviet entry into the area. Well, we saw this sort of action by the Israelis as the vector of Soviet penetration in the area.

Q: Is there anything else you think we should cover then, or should we move on?

PARKER: Well, I can tell you a lot of stories about Amman, but--

Q: Are there any ones that maybe bring some things to life? How ambassador dealt with things, or how you dealt, in any of these stories?

PARKER: Oh, I don't think anything that is worth taking the time to do now.

Q: Okay. We can always add. You then came back to Washington to the Department in 1957 where you were the Jordanian, Israeli and Iraqi desk officer?

PARKER: Yes. I came back. As I said earlier, I was evacuated with hepatitis. My home leave was due. I had come home for home leave, and a vacancy opened up on the Israel- Jordan desk. They asked me if I would like to take it, and I said, "Yes." So we stayed in Washington, and I didn't go back to Amman.

Every one of my Foreign Service moves up to this one had been screwed up somehow. We had been separated from our effects and somebody else had had to pack them and so forth.

At that time the Office of Near Eastern Affairs was organized along the lines of an Iraq-Arabian Peninsula desk, which in those days was under Dave Newsom, an Egyptian-Sudan desk, a Lebanon-Syria desk, and an Israel-Jordan desk. I was on Israel-Jordan desk under Don Bergus. There were two of us on the desk, and we dealt with both sides of the line. I did that until somewhere in 1958.

After the formation of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria and the Arab union between Iraq and Jordan, we reorganized to have a UAR desk--the United Arab Republic desk, Egypt and Syria; an Iraq-Jordan desk--the Arab Union desk; and-- let's see what did we do with, I forget what we did now with Lebanon. I guess we put Lebanon together with Israel. And we had an Arabian Peninsula desk.

Q: What were your prime concerns?

PARKER: Well, let me go back and finish this story. In 1959, I left after two years in NEA into the newly-formed Africa Bureau to be the Libyan desk officer in the Office of North African Affairs. I did that for two years. So that explains why I served on all three of those countries, actually four.

Q: Looking at it, did you find the perspective different in looking at, particularly you had been in Amman but all of a sudden you had responsibility or joint responsibility for Israel, too. In your eyes, did you see or have a different perspective?

PARKER: Well, obviously. I mean, instead of just having Arabs calling--of course, the Arabs were not really represented very effectively in Washington at that time; you didn't hear much from them--but you did hear a lot from American Jews and from Israelis. They were all over the place, and you had to respond to them, and you had to take into account their view of the universe. So, yes, I think it's obviously a balancing experience.

We had a division of labor where Bergus handled most of the Israeli side, and I handled the Jordanian side.

Q: This is, again, the relatively early years after the creation of Israel. Did anybody ever sit down with you in the higher reaches of the State Department to talk about what was our real interest in Israel, or in the Arab world, other than political considerations in the United States?

PARKER: Well, certainly nobody higher up did. This was something we talked about among ourselves in the Office of Near Eastern Affairs. We had pretty full and frank discussions about it, but it was always understood that in the upper reaches, this was a political issue. And whatever the area experts or specialists might think of it, that in the final analysis, the political reaction was going to be decisive. This was not to say that the government was not prepared, particularly under Eisenhower, to confront the Israelis because we did - over Suez and over the evacuation of Sinai.

I was there in this bureau at a very interesting time in terms of our relationships with the Israelis. They were very unhappy with the pressures we were talking about putting on them to get them to withdraw from Sinai in 1957. The Israeli invasion occurred just as I got to Washington in the fall of 1956, and I lived with the consequences of that pretty intensively for two years.

Q: How did this play out? What were you doing and what were your impressions of the situation?

PARKER: I was doing the sort of things that all desk officers do. It is just like being a political officer with all these things that suddenly turn up. Anything the Department of State does, actually does I mean, as opposed to talking about it, comes down to the desk officer. He is the only person in the Department of State as far as I'm concerned who really does any work. There are a lot of people who sit around and talk about what's got to be done, but the desk officer is just like the platoon or maybe the company commander. He is the man who has to go out and do the actual digging and writing and putting of things together. Somebody else clears it or changes it or disapproves his draft, but then it comes back to him to redo. Except on such occasions as when you've got somebody like Foster Dulles deciding that he is the desk officer, and he's doing the work, and he's writing it, it's the desk officer who does it. There isn't anybody in between. None of the assistant secretaries or office directors do any writing of their own if they can avoid it. And the work of the Department is largely writing. You've got to formulate things in a memorandum that people approve and that becomes the document that authorizes expenditure of money and so forth.

I think the most important thing I did there and one of the few positive accomplishments I can record in my career was that I was the action officer for something called the East Ghor, G-H-O-R, project. To make a very long story short, the Eric Johnston effort to have a unified development of the Jordan Valley failed. The Arabs agreed technically, but they did not agree politically. And so as a substitute, in an effort to do something to help Jordan which was in desperate state--after having kicked out Glubb and lost the British subsidy in exchange for a promised subsidy from the Egyptians, Syrians, and Saudis which they didn't pay, and after the activities of nationalists like this man Suleiman Nabulsi and others were obviously leading Jordan into a situation where the king was going to be sacrificed, the king called on us and asked for help. This was in the spring of 1957. We then began a program of aiding Jordan. And our present involvement in that country dates back to that point. A serious involvement.

We were searching desperately for something to do to help Jordan. Jordan had no resources except phosphates. There is a little water in the Jordan Valley, not a great deal. And water in the Yarmuk, one of the tributaries of the Jordan. And an idea that had been floated some ten years before but then been abandoned because of the Johnston plan was to dam the Yarmuk and use that water to irrigate upper terraces of the Jordan Valley, the so-called East Ghor.

I had responsibility for fighting this project through the bureaucracy which took me a long time. I can't remember how many signatures. The last signature I got was that of the then Under Secretary Douglas Dillon. I can't tell you what a feeling of accomplishment that was for me to have this paper with his initials on it in my hand, authorizing us to go ahead and give the Jordanians--I think the initial sum was ten million dollars--to start this project, this diversion project.

It has really transformed that area of Jordan which was a howling desert into a fertile, well-watered oasis. To see the water gushing down that central conduit and going out into the fields is really very rewarding. It's about the only material thing that I can point to.

SLATOR CLAY BLACKISTON, JR.

**Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1956-1957)**

Slator Clay Blackiston, Jr. was born in 1918 in Richmond, Virginia. He graduated with an A.B. degree from the University of Virginia. During World War II, he was an aviator in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Blackiston joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served in Amsterdam, Stuttgart, Port-au-Prince, Jerusalem, Tunis, Jeddah, Cairo, Amman, and Calcutta. He was a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations in 1971. Mr. Blackiston retired from the Foreign Service in 1975. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: Could you explain what the situation was like at that time?

BLACKISTON: The situation was this: the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 had left a situation in which there was no peace, just Armistice Agreements between Israel and the four surrounding countries, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. The Lebanese border was the same border it had been, but on the Syrian border there were three demilitarized zones (DZs), where, when the fighting ended, Arab villagers were still living. The terms of the Armistice Agreement were that life in the villages should go on as before; they shouldn't be interfered with. The Israelis, practically from the beginning, started encroaching the DZs and ultimately drove the Arab residents from the Hula area DZ and the two up at the headwaters of the Jordan. They also would fire on Syrian fishermen; there was a section of DZ that was only about 30 feet wide between the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee and Syrian territory and the Golan Heights. The Syrian fishermen would drag their boats across this strip of land and fish as they had been doing for centuries and this would cause trouble.

On the Jordan border the Armistice Agreements were negotiated by the Arab Legion, as it was then called. It was officered by British officers; Glubb Pasha was head of it, and the brigades were headed by British officers. And when the Armistice Agreements were signed they were negotiated by British officers who really didn't know the terrain that well or the geography, so the Armistice border was drawn in such a way that villages were cut off from their land, instead of drawing the border so that it would encompass these communal lands. So many of the villagers would come over into what had been their lands to harvest crops, graze their sheep and so on. This would lead the Israeli border police to fire and sometimes kill them. Occasionally infiltrators from Jordan would cross into Israel and attack Israeli settlers. While I was there there was a famous attack on a town called Qibya led by Arik Sharon; it was a village at the end of a road projecting into Israel. In retaliation for some infiltration from Jordan, the Israelis made a massive night attack on this village of Qibya blowing up houses and killing some 60 people. The Israelis followed the same tactics--there were a whole series of these things, Qibya is one of the best known--they would encircle the town, mine the road (there would just be one road) on the Jordan side and then put these satchel dynamite charges against the buildings with the people inside. I think fifty-six people were killed. Then when the Arab Legion would come down the road, they had no other way to go as it was rocky terrain, the trucks would hit these mines. I was there the morning after with another FSO, Cleve Fuller; there is a picture in Life taken of us standing amid the bodies and describing us as UN observers. So this was the pattern of things and there were many of these places. My job included liaison with the UNTSO observers. Well, I lived on the Jordan side. Shall I describe all this?

Q: Yes, please do.

BLACKISTON: Is this getting too long?

Q: No, No. This is what I want, particularly this Jerusalem bit.

BLACKISTON: Let me describe the situation in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was also divided by the armistice line. There was the old city, which was the walled city, plus an eastern part of Jerusalem that was in Jordan; the new city was in Israel. The people of Jerusalem during the Arab-Israel war had defended the old city themselves, just the local inhabitants, but they were going to be overwhelmed so they called for help from TransJordan's King Abdullah. The Arab Legion came and did defend the old city so that it was not captured by Israel. We had one consulate general because the United States supported the UN partition plan which called for an Arab and Jewish state--with a *corpus separatum*, which included Jerusalem and Bethlehem, an area that was to be internationally administered because of its significance for the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Of course this never came to pass but we still, as we do today, support the legal fiction of it. At that time US passports in Jerusalem said Jerusalem, Palestine; neither Jordan nor Israel. Now that has been changed, I believe. So we had the Consulate General; the main office of the Consul General was on the Israel side on Mamillah Road; across from us was a Muslim cemetery that the Israelis bulldozed. There was an office on the Jordan side and that is the one that I headed. We could cross back and forth during the daytime, and we did; the general public could not. Consular personnel could cross at night but you had to ask for special permission; sometimes we did go for a reception or something on the Israel side.

We had UN observers who were assigned to ensure that there were not violations of the armistice agreement, or if there were to investigate who was responsible. It was called the UN Truce Supervisory Organization, and they were on all four borders. We had what is known as Mixed Armistice Commissions for each of these borders; there was what they called the HKJIMAC which meant Hashemite Kingdom Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission--there were similar MACs on all the other borders. The observers came from the United States, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and maybe Norway, I've forgotten. My job was to get to know these officers and to report on incidents, so I got to know them very, very well. The MAC met in a building that was in a no-man's land between one part of Jerusalem and the other. There was some cooperation between the Israelis and the Jordanians with regard to mosquito control, because water would sit there and if they didn't do something about it it would affect both sides so they did do that much.

There was a firing incident in Jerusalem while I was there and the Jordanians--this is on Nablus Road which comes out of Damascus gate going towards Nablus and would have gone on toward Damascus if there had not been a division between the countries. The Jordanians erected a wall which was about eight feet high, I guess, maybe more, so that in any firing from the Israel side the passerby would be protected. They were not using artillery but mortar shells. I am rambling a little here, but I might cite one case. We would get these Americans there, I guess you would call them hippies today--they were going to make peace. I remember one day some guy had been in to the consulate to see me, then he'd gone over--you could with permission cross over to the Israel side. One morning, there were loopholes in this wall, this guy walked into no-man's land and an Arab Legion man shot him dead right out in front of the consulate. Of course he should not have been there but he was a harmless guy. I remember my son calling me, and I looked outside and there was the guy dead.

I may jump a little bit; there is so much that happened there. You remember the Eisenhower Doctrine?

Q: The Eisenhower Doctrine was essentially what?

BLACKISTON: The idea was you would sign up the countries of the Middle East; if they adhered to this doctrine of objection to communism then they would get support, military assistance, from the United States. Lebanon signed up for it but nobody else. Also there was an attempt to get Jordan; well we even tried to get Egypt, into the Baghdad Pact-- which of course we never joined. We joined the political committee and the military committee, I have sort of forgotten about that. But there was an attempt to get Jordan into the Baghdad Pact in 1955 and this really blew their stack. There was a farm near Jericho run by Musa Alami & Project, it was quite famous; it used to get a lot of publicity in *Reader's Digest*. Musa Alami was a Jordanian who got money from Iraq for the farm which trained Palestinian youth in agriculture. It did a good job. That was at the time that Iraq was still more or less under British influence with King Faisal II on the throne.

Q: The King was assassinated.

BLACKISTON: That was later, when Abd al-Karim Qasim overthrew him in 1958. That was later, Nuri Said was the Prime Minister of Iraq who was pro-British. The Jordanians, the mass of the people, particularly the Palestinians, reacted very unfavorably to this attempt to get them into the Baghdad Pact. There was a big refugee camp down in Jericho which is in the Jordan Valley. The refugees came out of the camp and were attacking and tearing apart this Musa project, which was doing good work, actually. They trained students in agriculture, raising chickens and such, and they would sell their turkeys and so forth; but they were getting money from Iraq, Iraq being considered as opposed to Palestinian interests. So they tore the place apart. There were also some Mennonite Missionaries down in the refugee camp, and these missionaries--well I think they accused them of trying to distribute Bibles. Whether they did or not I don't know but we got a call and I had to go down there in a jeep. These people were barricaded in their house and I brought them up to Jerusalem. Then one thing led to another and by the next year, early January, we heard rumors of an attack.

Q: In your time on the Jordan-Israel desk who was the head of it?

BLACKISTON: Don Bergus.

Q: You were there during the Suez war weren't you? How were we treating that?

BLACKISTON: Yes, and I remember Bergus coming back from a meeting when the Egyptian Ambassador met with Dulles--you remember the financing of the High Dam? You know what happened there was that we had initially offered to help finance it; Dulles initially tried to be evenhanded. Then he began to see Nasser as a real problem in the area, that he was playing footsie with the Communists. So he changed his tune and told the Egyptian Ambassador on that day that we were not going to finance the High Dam and of course that is what led them to go to the Soviets. I remember Bergus coming back and telling me, he had taken the notes, about this. May I make a comment of my own?

Q: Yes, please do.

BLACKISTON: I think it was a mistake to refuse, in one sense. On the other hand, two things: One is that there is an environmental problem with the High Dam and the second is that this would have required annual increments of aid and given the makeup of the US Congress I don't think that a subsequent administration could have withstood the pressure. It probably would have been worse to say you are going to go ahead and start and then have to withdraw someplace along the line. That's the way it was.

Q: Did the Suez war get to the desk or were things on too high a level at that point?

BLACKISTON: No, I knew quite a bit about this because Dulles had this really crazy idea, you may remember. He concocted this idea when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company. When I first heard about it everybody thought it was really wild. You remember the Suez Canal Users Association? Well he cranked up this Dane who was supposed to be the head of it and all these people, I didn't quite understand it, we're supposed to run the Suez Canal. Well the

likelihood of Nasser accepting this was--well, it died aborning. So there were a lot of things going on that were interesting at that time.

Q: At that time, obviously things have changed a great deal, on the Jordan-Israel desk did you feel an obviously heavy Jewish lobby pressure?

BLACKISTON: It was terrible. I remember...was that then or later? Well anyway it doesn't matter; I'll give you an example. Maybe when I was back in the State Department later. Bob Strong was the Director of Near East Affairs, he was later Ambassador to Baghdad. He was going to have a briefing for members of the American press on developments in the Near East, only Americans. Now there was a guy named Cy Kennan--have you ever heard the name?--who is the founder of IPAC.

Q: IPAC is the Israel Public Affairs Committee, which is the preeminent...

BLACKISTON: It is an agent of the Israel government. Strong denied Kennan, who is an American citizen, the right to attend this briefing, and as they say, "stuff really hit the fan." Poor Bob, I think he was right, but he had to back down. Yes, there was constant pressure.

Q: How were your reports from Tel Aviv and our reports from the Embassy in Amman treated? And from the consul general in Jerusalem? Did people like Don Bergus who were supervising, in any of these disputed matters view the Embassy in Tel Aviv as being...Did you find that there was an Israeli advocate in Tel Aviv?

BLACKISTON: Yes.

Q: And Arab advocates in the other places where the Arabists were?

BLACKISTON: Well this is the thing, that these are Arab advocates. We who are Arabists deny this. We are not Arab advocates, we are US advocates. We see American interests other than just the complete subordination to the wishes of Israel and the Israel lobby. That's where these people get labeled anti-Semitic and so on; either you are one hundred percent for them or you are anti-Semitic. Well I guess I have answered your question.

RAY E. JONES
Israel - Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1956-1958)

Ray E. Jones attended the Lafayette Business College. After a year in Washington, DC working for the Department of Interior, he entered the U.S. Army. He served overseas as a court reporter in 1945. In 1946, Mr. Jones went to Berlin, Germany with the Department of the Army. His Foreign Service career included positions in Korea, Germany, Switzerland, Vietnam, Liberia, the Netherlands, Sudan, and China. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on August 23, 1994.

Q: *I see. Well, after your years with Willis you were transferred to the Department?*

JONES: I had illness in the family and I was transferred back to the Department. 1956 to 1958 I was on the Israel/Jordan desk. I think we had the 1957 war.

Q: *The '56 war, yes.*

JONES: Yes. It was a lot of work. Much, much overtime, but very interesting period.

Q: *Yes, of course. You were there approximately two years.*

JONES: Two years. Almost two years to the time.

ANDREW I. KILLGORE
Political Officer
Amman (1957-1961)

Andrew I. Killgore was born on a farm in Alabama, and graduated from a small teacher's training college in Livingston, Alabama. He entered the Foreign Service as a Wristonee, initially working as a service staff officer. He has served in Jordan, Baghdad, Iran, and Qatar. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 15, 1988.

Q: *Going back to what you were reporting, you say you received all sorts of kudos. Was there any problem in reporting? Did you feel you were under any constraints from reporting on what was going on in the West Bank?*

KILLGORE: No. The '67 War hadn't happened. Things changed fundamentally after the 1967 War, because in the '67 War, Israel lost most of its international friends, at least it aroused a great deal of resistance and resentment in the Western world after grabbing the West Bank, particularly as it became clear that they weren't going to relinquish it.

There was one occasion, particularly, which happened in probably the fall of 1958 or a bit later. It would have been mid-winter of 1958. I was still consul in Jerusalem, living right there by the Mandelbaum Gate. A fellow came through and talked to me, a journalist, a big guy. I can't remember his name. I don't know whether he was Jewish or whether he was Christian. But we talked at great length. I wish, in view of what happened subsequently, that I had been able to remember his name. But I said, of course, that no state or no country in between the great population centers of Egypt and the Tigris Euphrates, Iran centers, or if you go back to the Hittites, from the Turkish plateau, no country in between had been able to maintain independence for very long, and thus, unless Israel made some sort of a peace deal with the Palestinians, her days were numbered, some decades.

I moved up to Amman, the capital of Jordan, in September 1959. After I'd been up there just a few weeks, I got an official informal letter, as it's called, via the diplomatic pouch from Murat Williams, who was the deputy chief of mission in Tel Aviv at our U.S. Embassy at Tel Aviv, Israel, at that time. Murat said in that letter that, "I hate to send you this letter, but a man who talked to you several months ago apparently talked to the Israeli foreign ministry about a conversation you had in your office, in which you talked quite dispassionately about great historical trends and history of the area, and that you thought that Israel, unless it made a deal with the Arabs, would have a limited life span out in the Middle East." This man, according to what the Israeli foreign ministry told Murat Williams, what this man who interviewed me some months earlier had said to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he said, "While you spoke with great dispassion, he sensed (that's the term he used) that the demise of Israel wouldn't upset you unduly," or something to that effect.

Well, I wrote back to Murat Williams. This was a shot across my bow, because it was based on the fact that I was an Arabist and I was getting pretty popular and I was well known and I was beginning to get promoted. I was coming in to be a figure of some consequence in the system. I wrote back and I told Murat Williams, "Tell the fellow in the foreign ministry who spoke to you about this that I said, 'Go to hell.'" That's the way I handled that. But I recognized it for what it was.

Q: You are saying that in beginning to deal in this world, that objectivity could be suspect within the system.

KILLGORE: Stuart, objectivity will kill you, literally. You are not going to get anywhere. If you tell it as you see it, now—

Q: We're talking about the China hands, too.

KILLGORE: About the China hands. And don't forget all Foreign Service officers remember the old China hands very well, too, and they remember Joe McCarthy, and they remember Scott McLeod. But that incident happened.

Q: Before letting that incident go, did you feel Murat Williams was doing this more or less under instructions?

KILLGORE: No.

Q: Or was he doing this, you could say, protecting his bailiwick, which happened to be Israel at that time?

KILLGORE: I rather liked Murat Williams and had respect for him. He later became ambassador of one of the Central American countries. I just thought that Murat had been asked to do that, and he did it. I'm not sure he'd been asked to do it, but it was mentioned to him, and I think he felt, as a friend, he ought to tell me.

Q: So this was being sort of, "Here I am, and you might watch it, because somebody has got their eye on you."

KILLGORE: That's right. I went a little bit into the background. I said it, as I have in a thousand conversations. Because it makes a point that you can't dodge. The great Arab empire based on Damascus lasted 90 years, 660 to 750, and it went over to the big population center in Baghdad. The crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted 89 years. And United Israel, old Israel in Judah lasted 70 years. That was under David and Solomon. Later, Assyria started pinching off Israel, which was to the north. At least if they didn't actually pluck it off, they had to pay tribute to Assyria.

So you can't be independent. There aren't enough resources in that area to hold yourself off without having bigger population centers and bigger resources with you, and those were the three periods, those periods in history. I don't know of any other where any country lasted longer. Of course, Rome ruled it longer, but that wasn't where the center was. Alexander, when he died, some of his people ruled there for a long time. The Egyptians ruled it for a long time. Cyrus and his guys ruled it for at least a century and a half, two centuries. But it wasn't based in that little-- after all, along that eastern Mediterranean coast, Stuart, you don't have any resources.

The desert starts as soon as you go 20 miles to the east of Amman. Hell, the Jordan Valley is a desert, and the Judean hills are desert. You get down a little bit down in the Negev desert of Israel, that's all desert. You just don't have the resources.

Q: But when you were in Amman? Did you have a different perspective on that particular area of the Middle East, not only the West Bank, but of relations with Israel and also Syria and Saudi Arabia and all?

KILLGORE: It's a little different working in a capital of a country as opposed to a province, as the West Bank was, the province of Jordan then, though the most populous, probably. Well, you were dealing, of course, with other embassies. You had probably 50 or 60 or 70 embassies there. Of course, you had a consular corps in Jerusalem, but you were dealing with ambassadors and with political officers and with a central government and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, with the King and with his family, and you were trying to please your ambassador.

Q: How did you feel? You came from this society which, from talking with you, you obviously enjoyed.

KILLGORE: I loved it.

Q: The Palestinians and all, particularly in those days, were not really under siege, but rather unhappy with being under King Hussein. All of a sudden, you are plunked down in the capital of King Hussein, you have an ambassador. Who was your ambassador?

KILLGORE: It was Ambassador Sheldon T. Mills, the first one, and then the last, about the three last months I was in Amman, it was William B. Macomber. Did you meet him?

Q: Yes.

KILLGORE: We used to say about Bill, people that had worked for Bill had been "Macomberized," due to his propensity to shout. (Laughs) Actually, he was a sweet guy, but he was kind of a bully boy, too, very odd.

Q: He later became Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

KILLGORE: I'm very fond of him.

Q: Did you find yourself somewhat in conflict? You were the boy from the provinces, with a provincial eye, and all of a sudden in the capital. There's a tendency for localitis to set in. In other words, if you're in Amman, you look towards Hussein and think about, "Here are these people trying to do something about these difficult people on the West Bank," but you came from the other side. Did you find yourself in any conflict?

KILLGORE: No, I don't really think so, Stuart. In the first place, Amman is a mainly Palestinians city. You know it's 1 million now? It's a beautiful city, made of stone. No, I realized that King Hussein and the Army were, in effect, maintaining a trouble-free border. A trouble-free border for Israel and the West Bank, that's what it amounted to. That's the basis of King Hussein being regarded as moderate. He always fits into the moderate category. I don't think Hussein and the Jordan Army used, really, an undue repression. They excited a lot of criticism on the part of the Palestinians. The King would get off on an anti-Communist kick sometimes, and he'd throw Palestinians in jail for what they called communism. But his regime was not tyrannical. In fact, oddly enough, there is no tyrannical regime in the Middle East. I'm not saying that regimes are democratic; Hussein was the boss. But someone would get thrown into prison--well, they had a concentration camp down south of Amman called Ma'an. There's a town and a concentration camp called Ma'an. Such a fellow might receive a long sentence, maybe five years, but the way it worked out in practice was, someone who knew someone who knew the Minister of Internal Security would say, "Mohammed, he's a good guy. He's got a big family. It's terrible for them if you keep him in jail. Terrible." And very soon, someone would be talking to the minister, and very soon someone would be talking to the palace. Generally, within three or four months, the person who was up for five years would be released with some sort of a warning--"Don't talk so much. Keep your mouth shut."

Actually, I became very fond of King Hussein. I thought he was a man of very considerable good sense, and he was quite an intelligent fellow, not in any intellectual sense--he's not remotely interested in intellectual pursuits--but he's a fine pilot, he's a fine racing-car driver, he's a good sportsman, he is a first-class speaker, first-class, in both Arabic and English. He is personally brave. That's been exaggerated a bit. I don't think he did anything that he didn't have to do, and I don't think he used any excess cruelty or tyranny in doing it. After all, he's holding a country there with some forces pulling awful hard in different directions. So, no, I didn't have any trouble.

Q: How were relations with Jordan in those days? We're talking about from '57 to '61.

KILLGORE: Our relations had become peculiarly close about that time. You see, in the 1956 Suez War, Britain, France, and Israel had attacked Egypt, as you recall, because Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt, had nationalized the Suez Canal Company. Theretofore, the British had been giving a big subsidy of \$20 million or \$25 million a year to King Hussein, essentially which went to support the Jordan Army and budget support.

After Britain joined up in what was a clear-cut aggression against Egypt, it was not politically possible any longer for Hussein to accept his main outside support from a country that had been an aggressor against a fellow Arab country. So the British subsidy had to stop. General Glubb Pasha, John Bagot Glubb, who had been Commander in Chief, had to go, and he did.

That year, in 1957, is the year when we started picking up the subsidy that the British had been supplying to King Hussein and to Jordan for years and years. So our relations became close. We gave money to help with economic development projects, and we gave something called budget support. The budget support mainly went to, obviously, support the Jordan Army, and we started supplying some military equipment, not enough to get us in trouble with the Israel lobby here, which wasn't so terribly powerful at that time, because, as I say, '67 was the cutoff date. 1967 was when Israel really had to cling to us with all force.

Q: Because we were the only major friend.

KILLGORE: Essentially the only friend left with money. That's what it got down to. As you remember, the Israeli forces got out of the Sinai by the U.S. threatening to cut off the support.

As a matter of fact, the assignment in Amman was a satisfying assignment. I continued to do political reporting. Ambassador Mills relied on me heavily, because I had a very, very detailed knowledge of personalities and institutions and parties and interrelationships in Jordan and the West Bank by that time. I drafted many, many of his telegrams. He relied on me and trusted me implicitly, and relied on me for advice. As a matter of fact, we became close friends. We were quite different personalities. He's an American Gothic, and I was sort of a--what would you say?--passionate southerner. (Laughs)

LAMBERT HEYNIGER
Consular Officer
Amman (1958-1960)

Lambert Heyniger was born in New York in 1930. He graduated from Princeton University in 1953 and served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1953-1955. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956 and served in numerous posts abroad, including Jordan, Netherlands, Congo, Tanzania, and Algeria. He was interviewed on May 19, 1996 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: In '58 where did you go?

HEYNIGER: In '58 all of us got our assignments. Mine was to Amman. I had just gotten married a couple of months before to a young lady who was quite well-traveled herself. I came back and said guess what, we're going to Amman. She said where's that? When she found out and spoke with her parents who were Washingtonians of long standing, they were really quite concerned. At that time, 1958, Amman, the capital of Jordan, was really a distant hardship post. I remember when we got organized, we not only took our clothes and furniture and soap and canned goods and all that kind of stuff, we were advised by the Embassy we should bring space heaters. We said what are they?

Q: I like to get this at the beginning of each post. You were there from '58 to...

HEYNIGER: To '60.

Q: When you got there what was the situation politically and economically in Jordan?

HEYNIGER: When I got there, the situation in Jordan was very difficult. In fact my wife was held up in Paris and never got to join me for the first six months. I was sent on to Cairo, and stayed there for about a week until they could figure out what to do with me. They got me on a plane for Beirut. The situation in the Middle East was in flames because young King Faisal in Iraq had just been assassinated July 14, 1958. At that time Jordan was preparing to join with Iraq. King Faisal and King Hussein were going to rule both countries together. This was particularly a great shock for Jordan. The American Marines were in Lebanon. There was a British paratroop brigade in Jordan. Lebanon was somewhat in a state of civil war, and here I am arriving at the airport in Beirut. The Embassy driver who was a local employee said Mr. Heyniger, I'm going to drive you into the Embassy, but would you mind lying on the floor of the car. I said sure but why? He said, well they have been firing from the apartment buildings along the highway just across the road. So I did, and I got there. I was held up in Beirut for about a week and then was put on a plane to Jerusalem. I got as far as Jerusalem and that was it. There were no aircraft going as far as Amman, so the Consulate General phoned up the Embassy in Amman and said we've got your new Consular Officer, but the only way we can get him to you is by taxicab. Will you pay for it? I remember the administrative officer who was a wonderful guy named Fred Cook growled back, "He better be worth it." So, I arrived in Amman in July or August of 1958 where I joined two other young officers. There were three of us arriving at the post; this is a fairly small post, at the same time. One of them was Bob Keeley who went on to have a very distinguished career in the Foreign Service. He was the Political Officer. Charlie O'Hara was the GSO, General Services Officer, and myself as the new Consular Officer. I remember one particular vignette. I had a superb staff working for me of Foreign Service local employees. They were wonderful; I'll tell you about them later. The first day I showed up at the Consular Section, my chief clerk Nadia Khoury, who had joined the Foreign Service as a local employee in 1928 in Jerusalem, and she looked at me and said, "If I had ever thought that when I joined the American Foreign Service that someday I would be working for somebody who wasn't even born yet, I would have given the whole thing up."

Q: Who was the Ambassador then?

HEYNIGER: We had no Ambassador. We were between Ambassadors. The Chargé, a very nice officer but one who had no previous experience in the Arab world and no previous experience in running an Embassy, was having a tough time. He had staff meetings daily. Everybody in the Embassy was supposed to be out in the souk, that is the market, with their contacts in their particular operational field looking for information because it was a very dicey situation.

Q: What was the evaluation when you arrived there and talked to the other officers about the survivability of King Hussein?

HEYNIGER: I would have to say that most of the senior officers at the Embassy were not particularly sanguine that the King was going to be around a long time. There were many problems that he faced, critical situations. In the first place he was a Bedouin Arab trying to rule a country in which the majority of the population were Palestinians. His father had been committed to an insane asylum. He was very young, younger than I was. He was married and divorced. The same type of political threat that had overcome Faisal in Iraq was facing him in Amman.

There is a wonderful story. It brings tears to my eyes every time I remember it. I think some time about a year or so before I arrived, Hussein had learned that there was a revolt brewing at the main army base outside of Amman. He quickly made up his mind what he was going to do. He went out to this army base, drove himself out. When he got out there, he drove into the middle of the camp and climbed on top of a tank, and the soldiers and officers and everybody else came and gathered around this tank. There were thousands of these Bedouin tribesmen, many of them had been in Glubb Pasha's Arab Legion, who were the rank and file of the Jordanian army. Hussein, who is a very short man, got up on top of this tank and looked around at all of these soldiers and he said, "I am your king, either shoot me or follow me." To a Bedouin Arab, this is an incredible act of courage. The soldiers themselves ended the incipient revolt from these junior grade officers. That was the end of that. He secured his position within Jordan with that act at that time.

Economically, Jordan was in extremely difficult shape. You can imagine as Ambassador Richard Parker, who was the desk officer for Jordan at the time, told me. He said, "Nick, Amman lies between the desert and the sown." I sure saw that when I got there. It really is on the edge of the desert. They don't really produce anything. They were exporting a little phosphate and some other minerals, but it was a desperately poor country with sociologically speaking a number of different, powerful tribes. I don't think that most Americans are aware that deserts, while they can be extremely hot places, they can also be extremely cold places. Every year a number of these Bedouin tribesmen froze to death. It was a very tough life.

Q: Well now, what was sort of the spirit of the Embassy?

HEYNIGER: The spirit in the Embassy was very good I must say. Here we were, all of our wives and children were either stopped from coming to post or evacuated. It was just us men; there were no ladies in the Embassy at all. We probably worked all of us about 12 hours a day. We relaxed together, did a lot of things together socially. We were a very tight unit. We got along very well. I think in part because of the security pressures. It was very interesting service. I

could bore you terminally with stories about being a Consular Officer there. In terms of what a Consular Officer does and what I was doing in a small far flung post like American Embassy Amman, Jordan, it was a fantastic experience because during my two year tour, I think that almost everything that can happen to a young Consular Officer happened to me. For example, not only were there lines outside my office every working day for the two years that I was there of young Jordanians and Palestinians who were desperate to get away and further their education in the United States and to try to make a new life for themselves, with endless possibilities for evading the quite strict visa regulations of the time. There were hundreds of thousands of refugees who were desperate to get to America to Canada or Australia or somewhere.

Q: You are talking about Palestinian refugees from Israel.

HEYNIGER: That's right. There were no immigrant visas being issued in Jerusalem so I was the Immigrant visa issuing officer for that region as well. The quota at that time, I think the regular quota for Israel was 100, then there was a quota for Palestine of 100, and a quota for Jordan of 100. We in the Embassy in Amman were issuing most of the visas for all three of those countries including Israel. The visas on the Israeli quota were being issued in Amman. Tremendous pressure as well on issuing refugee visas, so endless lines and endless efforts of people to bribe me or to do whatever they could to get a visa. That was kind of tough to deal with.

There was an American airline that crashed. Air Jordan at that time advertised itself to the world as the airline that flies below sea level because en route from Jerusalem or Damascus or Beirut to Amman, they would go down and fly by the Dead Sea, and actually fly below sea level. One of these flights did not make it back up over the mountains on the eastern edge of the Dead Sea. That was a plane with an American pilot and co-pilot and many of the passengers on the plane. It was my first experience as a young officer of going to an Arab Legion Quonset hut and seeing these people, this was in the wintertime, there was no heat in this hut, and here were the few survivors of this plane crash. I think there were about 40 people on the plane and about eight or nine of them survived, lying there in a Quonset hut with no heat. It was really tough.

Lots of times young Jewish boys and girls would go over from the United States to Israel to work in a kibbutz for the summer, and on their day off they would go out to walk around. Some of them sort of lost their direction and ended up walking over the demilitarized zone between Israel and Jordan and were promptly scarfed up by the Jordanian Army and transported to a Foreign Legion type of stockade out in the middle of the Arabian desert. I would be asked to go out there 70 miles into the Arabian Desert and arrive at one of these forts and try to comfort and provide assurance for one of these young American kids who was really pretty shook up in that situation. I remember the officers who served at these posts were all officers who had served under Glubb Pasha in the Arab Legion. They were big chunky guys with mustaches. They said don't worry Mr. Consul; we have no bad intentions. Two or three days and your citizen will be back. That was fascinating.

Terrible automobile accidents out in the desert of tourists going back and forth along the circuit from Beirut to Damascus to Amman to Petra and other tourists sites. One time my Consular clerk came in and said Mr. Heyniger, we have a ship captain here. I said "good heavens. We are in the middle of the Jordanian desert. Show him in," and he came in. It was an American merchant

vessel that docked at Aqaba with a sailor who wanted to get off the ship. American sailors abroad must be discharged before an American Consul, so we quickly got out that section of the manual.

Oh it was great; we had the full complement of stuff. I was issued a Consular Commission for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan which arrived and was sent over to the Royal Palace. In due course I got back an Exequatur signed by King Hussein authorizing me to administer oaths in his kingdom. I remember such wonderful stories. One time the Anglican Archbishop came over because he was going to the States and he needed a visa. We had a pleasant chat and issued him his visa. We looked as he signed his name on the visa application. He signed it Campbell of Jerusalem. That was his signature.

Q: While you were there, what was the attitude of the Embassy in Amman toward Israel and our Embassy in Tel Aviv too?

HEYNIGER: Well, it was difficult because the regulations of the time were that if you went to Israel and got an Israeli entry stamp in your passport, you would not be readmitted into Jordan. There wasn't much travel between the Embassy in Amman and Tel Aviv or Damascus or Beirut or Cairo or anywhere else. It was fun to go to Jerusalem and we all did from time to time and wander around the holy places and talk with our counterparts serving in the Consulate General there which at that time was both in the old and new city. There were many people living in Amman at that time who had lived in Israel prior to '48. I suppose that serving so close to Israel, we got a lot of opinions from local people about Israel which we tried to take with a grain of salt. It was not until our last two months at the post that I and another officer were permitted to go. I took my family car, and we drove over to Israel, and we had a wonderful time in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv driving around to all of the holy places up there. You got a bit of a different impression. This was back in the mid 50's, so the creation of the State of Israel and the trauma of the wars and the displacement of refugees, all of the problems and the challenges and the difficulties for everybody were still pretty fresh.

Q: Well did you feel an almost anti-Israeli bias in a way? You all in the Embassy looked at Israel here Israel was responsible for a lot of the problems you were having. Were you getting it from the other people at the Embassy?

HEYNIGER: Not particularly, no. We got a wonderful Ambassador when he finally arrived, Ambassador Sheldon Tibbetts Mills who was an old time, old line career Ambassador. I remember when his appointment was announced, Fred Cook the administrative officer sent a telegram to Washington saying, "Mr. Ambassador, who would you like to bring with you when you present your credentials?" He sent this telegram back saying, "I've always thought it was a beneficial experience, particularly for junior officers, to take part in these occasions. Therefore, I plan for every commissioned officer in the Embassy to accompany me when I present my credentials." We all had to run out to the souk in Amman and have morning clothes tailored for us. But, he was a career Ambassador with several ambassadorships under his belt. He was coming from Afghanistan. Our DCM was a former labor attaché. Our political officer was an Arabist, I think quite balanced. It's just that I think in many instances there is a problem for Foreign Service people that you, after all, have to live in a society. When that society has been

traumatized, as people in both Jordan and Israel were, after awhile I suppose some of this begins to rub off on you. As a professional, you try to do your best to represent the United States and know what you are there for.

Q: All right, we'll pick this up the next time in 1960. You were off to go to The Hague.

Today is May 21, 1997. Nick, you were saying there was something you had left out about Jordan. Could you go off on that?

HEYNIGER: Okay. There is one thing that I wanted to mention because I thought it would be of interest to both people who are interested in the Middle East and people who are interested in how Foreign Service work is done. Oftentimes I think that we Americans tend to think of the Arabs as "the Arabs." I wanted to point out that as a young consular officer in Jordan, I had five employees working for me in the Consular Section. The first one, as I mentioned, was a Russian Orthodox lady, born in Jerusalem, who began working in the Foreign Service in 1928 before I was born. My number two was a Maronite Christian from Lebanon. My number three was an Armenian young woman from Palestine. My number four was a Greek Orthodox woman. My number five, my runner, was a pure blooded Bedouin Arab. The five of us got along like clams, but we were all culturally different, and only one of us was a real Arab.

ROBERT V. KEELEY
Political Officer
Amman (1958-1960)

Ambassador Robert V. Keeley was born in Lebanon of American parents in 1929. He joined the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Jordan, Mali, Uganda, Cambodia, and ambassadorships to Greece, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe. Ambassador Keeley was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1991.

KEELEY: Correct. It was to an English speaking country--obviously: Amman, Jordan.

Q: Had you been given the opportunity to express some preferences for assignments?

KEELEY: I guess that we had. I recall that I had asked for Cuba, a country which I have never seen in my life; in fact, I have never served in Latin America. My wife and I went to Mexico on our honeymoon in 1951 and that is as far south as I have ever gotten in this hemisphere. It was probably a good thing that we didn't go to Cuba. My wife is part Cuban in origin; her maternal grandfather was a Cuban-American. I thought an assignment to Havana would be interesting; I had a desire to learn Spanish; it was in a part of the world entirely unknown to me. That part of the world is still a complete blank to me. I put Greece on my list of preferences for about eleven years in a row until I finally got there. In those days, Personnel didn't pay much attention to junior officers' assignment preferences. In any case, I am pretty sure that Amman was not on my list.

But I was pleased when I received the assignment because it was in a part of the world that had interested me. I didn't object to the fact that it wasn't French-speaking. All I am trying to point out is that we were studying languages for reasons other than our next assignments, which in most cases had no connection with an officer's language skills.

I went to Amman as a political officer. I was the junior officer in a two-man section. Carl Walstrom was the chief; the deputy was Duke Merriam. I replaced Duke and served in Amman two years and three or four months.

I don't remember having any briefing about Jordan before leaving the States. I did meet the desk officer. During my Jordan tour, there were several Jordan desk officers. One was Talcott Seelye, one was Dick Parker, one was Roy Atherton; Hermann Eilts was running the Near East Division. All of course went on to have distinguished careers. I met most of them, some before my assignment to Jordan, having been brought up in the Middle East through my family. But I don't remember getting a specific briefing before leaving for Amman. I was probably considered too junior to spend much time on; the attitude was probably that I would be told all I needed to know about U.S. policy when I got to the post. I did pick up some books. I had asked for some advice on reading material and I picked up about ten books. One was Glubb Pasha's memoirs, Lawrence's *Seven Pillars*, George Antonius' *The Arab Awakening*, one was on archaeology, and an area studies book on Jordan. I took all of them with me. We usually traveled between posts by ship in those days so there was supposed to be a long period of leisure which would give me the opportunity to read. That was one of the great benefits of the slow journeys of those days. It permitted you to ease into a post by reading about your new country of assignment while traveling at a leisurely pace. Later in my career, I went to a post without having the opportunity to read anything about it. If I had known a little bit about it, I would not have arrived completely ignorant of my new surroundings. That is not good. But in the case of Amman, the post wanted me there immediately if not sooner, because Walstrom was going on home leave as soon as I arrived. So we traveled by plane, one of the old Lockheed Constellations that took about 24 hours to reach Cairo. (My wife recalls the plane trip took 56 hours.) So most of my ten books about Jordan were unread when I arrived at the post.

Q: When you arrived in Amman, what were you told of U.S.-Jordanian relations?

KEELEY: I am not sure that I received any briefing whatsoever. It was an unusual situation; the post had a serious staffing problem because--as I said--Carl Walstrom, the head of the Political Section, left for home leave just as I arrived. We had no Ambassador; we had a Chargé--Thomas K. Wright (known as "Ken")--who was the Deputy Chief of Mission. He had been Chargé for a while and remained so for a good part of my tour. This situation had been caused by the creation of the United Arab Republic (Syria and Egypt) and the counter-part Arab Union (Iraq and Jordan). In the latter case, there was supposed to be one capital--Baghdad--one embassy with two branches, one Ambassador. Amman was supposed to be a constituent post in this new Embassy. So the Ambassadorial position in Amman was not filled. At one time, Pete Hart was the candidate; at another time, it was Charles Yost. In any case, I literally became the acting DCM as soon as Duke Merriam left, which was about a month after my arrival. Six days after my arrival in Amman, the King was assassinated in Baghdad, the Iraqi revolution began; we went into a period of terrible turmoil. The American Marines landed in Lebanon; the British "Red Devils"

commandos came from Cyprus to Amman to help save the throne, which was considered threatened. Jordan was completely isolated in the Arab world; the border with Syria was closed; the border with Iraq was closed; the Saudis were not being at all friendly because of the long-standing enmity between the Saudi and Hashemite royal families. The Israeli border was closed for all practical purposes; you could cross over at the Mandelbaum Gate if you had permission. We evacuated all of our dependents in that summer. They crossed over into Israel, went to Haifa to board a ship for Italy; it was a tremendous embarrassment, not so much to us, but to the Jordanian government, that the only way our families could leave that country was through Israel, which was the "enemy." When my family returned from the exile to Italy shortly before Christmas, I was given permission to go to Haifa to meet them and bring them back. That gave me the only opportunity I had while serving in Amman to visit Israel and look around a bit there, in west Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

The answer to the question of why I did not get a briefing upon arriving in Amman is that we were immediately thrown into a crisis. We--my wife and I and our two children--were living in a hotel in downtown Amman--the "Philadelphia"--(that was the old Greco-Roman name of Amman). When the coup in Baghdad occurred, we were immediately moved into an AID house which was vacant in order to get us out of the center of town. There was considerable fear of riots, uprisings, and civil disturbances. I therefore was plunged immediately into work; I didn't have time to listen to and no one had time to tell me what we were supposed to be doing in Jordan.

We arrived in Amman on July 8, six days before the coup. My family was evacuated in September. It was a "great" beginning for them in the Foreign Service. They went to Italy and didn't return until around Christmas. The ship from Haifa took them to Naples, where they were looked after by Consul General and Mrs. James Henderson, and then on to Palermo, where my father was the Consul General. I was so busy that I didn't really have a lot of time to think about my new career. It was a bit unusual to be thrown into such a key position as a first tour officer; I looked at it as a challenge to show what I could do. I got along very well with Ken Wright. I always had good drafting ability; after all, that is what I was trained in, both in journalism and so-called "creative writing." There was a lot of writing to do--a lot of drafting, a lot of reporting. It was all crisis driven; it is the most interesting activity one can get involved in in a Foreign Service career. It certainly was not contemplative. We were very busy; kept long hours. It was a very small Embassy; we had one economic officer--Paul Hughes; two political officers when both were there; a single consular officer--Nick Heyniger; Charlie O'Hara was the general services officer. The latter two were contemporaries of mine; that is, on their first overseas tours. There was an administrative officer--Fred Cook. Then there was an aid mission, directed by Norman Burns, who had been my father's professor at AUB. The aid mission was somewhat larger than the Embassy, but not by very much. We had a number of technicians working in agriculture and infrastructure--animal husbandry, the East Ghor canal. We had an Army military attache, a Colonel, and an assistant Army attache. There were a few CIA people. That was about it. It was a very small embassy and we were all heavily taxed. That is the reason why I didn't get briefed upon arrival.

As I mentioned, I became the second ranking officer--the acting DCM in function but certainly not in rank--because of the way an embassy is organized with the head of the Political Section

usually being the senior section chief. I tried to function as such; I tried to run the Embassy, although there were many people much more senior to me. I didn't get involved in administrative matters; the administrative officer was twice my age and much more experienced. But I was the right hand of the Chargé, carrying out his orders to get people to do things that he wanted done. I also did all of the political reporting that the Chargé wasn't doing. Walstrom didn't return for many months from home leave because of the evacuation. When he returned and when he was replaced a year later by Andy Killgore--who had been in Jerusalem--I functioned more normally as the junior in a two-man political section. Eventually, an Ambassador--Sheldon Mills--arrived, then a new DCM--Eric Kocher--and then everyone fell back into their normal positions in the hierarchy. But when I first arrived and for several months thereafter, I was working at a level far beyond what might be expected given my grade level, experience, and abilities.

Q: The American press was filled at the time with stories about the dangers of living in Amman. Did you feel threatened?

KEELEY: No, I didn't feel in any particular danger. I felt that the Department was more concerned than we were and I used to argue with the Chargé about the extent of the danger. I thought that he exaggerated it, but of course, in his shoes--he was the man in charge--and therefore, as I have learned subsequently, he had to have a different attitude than an employee lower in the ranks. The junior official is not held responsible if the embassy is over-run and burned; the Ambassador or Chargé is. So you tend to be more cautious when in charge. But I didn't feel in particular danger in Amman. There was a feeling that the most dangerous element was the large number of Palestinian refugees. Many of them lived in camps at the edge of the city. Just over the hill from my house, which was rented by me, not the Embassy, there was a large refugee camp. People had visions of these refugees rising up and blaming all their miseries on the Americans and attacking the Americans, injuring and killing us. My personal experience was quite the opposite. The refugees showed no hostility to me or my family or even our dog. In fact, when our household effects arrived in two large wooden crates--in those days you had to travel with everything you owned because embassies did not provide anything--and were being unpacked, the refugees watched the unloading of items much more valuable than anything which they owned. They waited until the last item had been taken into the house; then they sent one of their members as an emissary who asked whether they could have the cardboard boxes, the packing straw, and the wrapping paper--all material that was just lying around, because they could make good use of all of it in their camp. I gladly gave that to them; it was gone within three minutes; just disappeared, because it was valuable stuff for them. That showed me, in my mind at least, how respectful they were of other people's property. In light of that experience, I had no fear of the refugees.

The King, as he has done so often, was skating on thin ice during this time. He was threatened domestically primarily by the Baath Party. We did not have any direct contacts with this suppressed, underground movement, but were kept current by our CIA people. This is the party that eventually came to power in Syria--where it is still the dominant party under Asad--and in Iraq with Saddam Hussein. There was a Jordanian branch of the overall Arab nationalist socialist party which had been founded by Michel Aflaq, a Syrian Christian. He has since died, but he was the ideological father of the movement. That was the most dangerous and subversive element, as far as King Hussein was concerned; it was socialist, nationalist, it was anti-monarchist, and as

has developed subsequently, it was anything but democratic. There was a Communist party in Jordan and it had certain outside links, but we didn't consider it to be the main threat to stability.

The real danger to King Hussein came more from his fellow Arabs than from domestic movements. There were several assassination attempts; he was a particular target of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Everybody listened to the Voice of Cairo, which filled the airwaves with tirades constantly calling for the King's overthrow. The Syrians were allied with the Egyptians; the Iraqis had just overthrown their Hashemite monarchy and were therefore extremely hostile to the remaining branch in Amman. And, as I mentioned before, there was considerable tension between Saudi Arabia and Jordan stemming from the feud of the two royal families. So the threat was not so much from the Palestinians, although they were considered as the ultimate threat to the monarchy because Palestinians made up an ever-growing proportion of the population. In fact, they had been granted citizenship, they had greater freedom and economic opportunity in Jordan than in any other country where they might be living; many still lived in refugee camps, although they were not required to do so. Many became wealthy and did extremely well in Jordan. Hussein's grandfather had annexed the West Bank, so that the Palestinian people were a large percentage of the total Jordanian population. The mere fact that Hussein has survived these many years is a clear indication that he has handled the internal threats with great skill.

The British had left a vacuum in Jordan when they left it. We consciously stepped in to fill it. The analogy that has struck me was the Truman Doctrine in Greece (and Turkey) in 1947 when the British in effect came to us and told us that they were not able to carry the burden of supporting Greece in light of their own post-war economic difficulties. Greece was at the time threatened by a Communist insurgency; it was devastated. The British in effect dumped Greece in our laps and we accepted the burden. Truman and General Marshall obtained funds from Congress--probably around 400 million dollars, three quarters of it for Greece--which doesn't sound like much today, but was enormous in those days. Then came the Marshall Plan. Our experience in Jordan was not dissimilar; the British also came to us a few years later and said that they couldn't carry that financial burden either and told us that we would have to pick up the tab. When it came to the military involvement, we sent our Marines into Lebanon at the request of Chamoun and his Christian faction; the British accepted the military responsibility for Jordan. They had a historic relationship through Glubb Pasha, they had created the Arab Legion, and they had provided officers to it and had made it into a British force with British equipment, British trained troops, but they couldn't pay the bills. So the United States paid for the Army--which at the time cost us about \$40.5 million per year. We purchased a whole army for that. And a very fine army it was. We literally were the paymasters.

I remember once complimenting Ken Wright on the ease and profound depth of his access to the leadership, not so much to the King but to Samir Pasha, the Prime Minister. Wright looked at me, a brand new recruit, and said: "Young man, if you were taking a ten million dollar check in cash every quarter to give to the Prime Minister, don't you think he would see you when you called for an appointment?" However, as the cost of that Army escalated, our contributions became slightly inadequate. So in the third month of every quarter, the Jordanians would run out of money and couldn't meet their army payroll. We had long discussions about the situation; I suggested that we give our money only on a monthly basis. I thought that was an intelligent approach, but the obvious answer from the Chargé was that the financial crisis would then arise

every four weeks instead of every three months. It was he after all who got the calls about an empty treasury, and he preferred to delay the problem as long as possible, to keep it a quarterly problem instead of a monthly problem, which is what I was apparently proposing. Essentially, that became our role: to support and pay for the Jordanian Army, which was considered loyal to King Hussein and the single most important prop of the whole system. Our policy was successful, although it caused a serious dent in the assistance budget, leaving precious little for development efforts. However, our financial assistance was considered absolutely crucial; it was politically essential and we didn't have any choice once the British could not contribute any longer.

Q: Why did we consider Hussein's survival to be so important?

KEELEY: It was the elementary geopolitical situation. Hussein was a force for moderation and stability with a pro-Western attitude in the area, not only vis-a-vis Israel, but this was in a period--post-1956 after the Suez war going into 1960--when we were very concerned about Arab nationalism, as represented by Nasser. Our interest in Jordan was also generated by the long border it had with Israel. It was in the interest of both the U.S. and Israel that the Jordanian border be kept peaceful, which it was by and large. The Arab world seemed to be crumbling and going in directions inimical to the West. The Iraqi coup was seen in that context; it was not necessarily pro-communist, but it was seen as hostile to Western interests. The regime overthrown in Iraq had been thoroughly pro-Western. Jordan was a beleaguered small country--1.5 million people--with practically no resources--no oil. We were very concerned that if Jordan were to fall under a different leadership--for example, a pro-Nasser, strongly Arab nationalist, strongly hostile to Israel regime--it would cause us considerable grief. That is stating the rationale for our policy in very simple terms, but that is essentially what its foundation was.

Q: Although a junior officer, did you have the opportunity to become acquainted with the Jordanian leadership?

KEELEY: I did. My wife and I got to know the King quite well. There was a small social entourage made up of a few, very few Palestinians and several young foreign diplomats--British and Americans, who became quite well acquainted with the King. We used to socialize with him a good deal. One reason for this situation was that the King was then between marriages. He had divorced Queen Dina; he had a small daughter, Alia. This was before he married the British woman, Tony Gardner, who became his second wife. He was quite lonely; I would guess he was 23 or 24, maybe younger. He was restless by nature; he loved danger, dangerous sports--e.g., racing cars and motorcycles. He also flew airplanes, helicopters, and he water skied; he had to be active. He preferred athletics, particularly those with an element of danger. He was quite lonely. He couldn't socialize with his subjects; he was a King after all. There wasn't an aristocracy in Jordan as you might find in a country like Britain. I doubt that Prince Charles has ever needed to be lonely, unless he wanted to be, which he apparently does. He can associate with lots of people; he went to schools. Hussein, on the other hand, went to Sandhurst. He didn't have a real college experience. He became King at the age of seventeen--there has always been a dispute over whether he was 16 or 17 since birthdays are counted differently in Arab culture. The British and American Ambassadors, among others, thought it would be nice to find some companionship for His Majesty. The Keeleys fitted in more or less by circumstance because we

were closer to his age than other Americans. So we saw a great deal of him. We had square dancing parties--known as Scottish dancing in Amman--together. He liked "parlor" games and all sorts of games; he liked to dance. Sometimes we would go to his home in the Jordan Valley and stay up until all hours of the morning--four or five o'clock. I found it sometimes difficult to go to work the next day, but Ambassador Sheldon Mills said that it was part of the job and that if I needed to sleep late, to go ahead. If I needed an afternoon nap, that was all right too. He even offered me his car to go home for my nap. Of course, he did that himself and he would just drop me off at my house on the way to his.

Eventually, we started a go-cart club (as far as I know this has never been recorded). My wife and I were in Boston just a few days ago with another member of the "go-cart" club, Bill Bromell and his wife; he showed me a photograph of the key members. The club idea came out of a discussion we had with a Mr. Dalglish, who was a Scot-British Air Force officer, who had taught the King to fly; he flew co-pilot most of the time when the King was at the controls. He had been sent back to Jordan in the summer of 1958 by the British after the crisis.

Once a week there were sports car races; the King had a number of cars, including a gull-winged Mercedes and an Aston-Martin; several governments had given him racing cars because they knew of his passion. Of course these cars were faster than anyone else's; he was also the best driver as well as the gutsiest. He loved speed and therefore the races were never a contest; he always won regardless of who and what else was in the race. I participated in these races a few times, but I didn't show much speed or agility in my nine-passenger Ford station wagon. So that kind of racing became boring to the King and to others. So we were discussing the situation with Dalglish one day; I don't remember whose idea it was. In any case, we agreed that go-carts were worth trying. They are small, close to the ground, so that when you went 70 kilometers per hour, it really felt like 200 with the wind blowing in your face and the ground passing along so rapidly. Those races were not terribly dangerous; the carts tend to spin rather than turnover, and even if they turnover, they have a sort of roll bar; you wear a helmet; in any case, you are not going that fast when you make your turns. If you are a skillful driver, an accident will probably not be fatal, but you can certainly break some bones.

The proposal was discussed with the King; he was quite disdainful initially because the go-carts were described as children's toys. We ended up getting the "Rolls Royce" of go-carts; they were quite expensive--about \$450, which was a lot of money for a go-cart in those days--made in Britain, with very large motorcycle engines with considerable horse-power. We procured about ten or twelve of them, each of us paying for our own. Fortunately, there was a Royal Jordanian Air Force plane in Britain being serviced; we found out when it was returning and we got the go-carts loaded on it so that the transportation at least was free. We built a track out at the airport in a figure eight configuration; it was all very professional; we even had a small reviewing stand for spectators and a large stop watch, a flag for starting purposes and a blackboard to keep track of events on the track. The races ran on Thursday or Friday (which was a holiday) afternoons; we were all supposed to show up at the royal garage the day before the races and work on our go-carts to be sure they were in racing shape. It was all supposed to be very educational, learning to be our own mechanics.

We did this for quite a while, for at least a year--during my second year in Amman. Of course, the King almost always won because he was a very good driver and had more nerve than the rest of us; he took more chances. He also had another advantage which none of us dared to complain about: he had two go-carts, so that if he wrecked one, he always had a back-up to keep him in the action. The rest of us had only one and therefore had to be a little more careful going around the turns lest we do something horrible and wreck our carts and ourselves. We did have crack-ups; spinning out, if you took a turn too rapidly and too sharply, was quite an adventure. I think in all the races I participated in--and there were eight or ten each racing day--I beat the King once, probably because he had a spin-out which would have taken him out of the race. That was indicative of his record. He didn't like being beaten, he liked to win. But most of all, he liked the competition. Some of our wives also participated, but usually in women-only races; we practiced segregation in those days. Young Prince Hassan, now the Crown Prince but then a pre-teenager, got to participate in the women's races.

This is just illustrative of the kinds of things we did; these were not good opportunities to discuss politics or current events or the future of Jordan or the Hashemite monarchy. So there weren't many substantive discussions, but it was useful from our point of view because it helped his morale and kept him from getting depressed and feeling morose, although, as I said, he was very lonely--between marriages, no other social life with people of his own age. There were a couple of Palestinians who had been pals of his in school or even earlier and had therefore known him for quite a while.

I was the first to leave the go-cart club and then some rules had to be made up. We decided you could sell your cart only to another member or to someone who had to be approved by the King and the others to be admitted to the club. I didn't know quite what to do, but Dalglish, as usual, took care of it, and told me that Colonel Gardner wanted to purchase my go-cart. Gardner was our time keeper; his daughter, Tony, was the flag waver. The cart was really being bought for her and I should have noticed the clue that some romance might be budding, which in fact it was. Gardner became the club member, but his daughter did the driving. Not only did she drive in the women's races, but she ended up marrying the King.

I should add a couple of interesting notes about my Amman tour. I did a lot of biographic reporting, presumably because I was supposed to have time to do that. Throughout my career, I always found that assignment very valuable. I did a lot of it myself, whenever I could; I was much less successful in getting other people to do it. As I rose to more senior positions, and presumably had a little more clout, I actually tried to require my staff, just prior to their departure from the post, to do some bio sketches on the people they had gotten to know best during their tour--whether diplomats, members of the government, bureaucrats, business people, etc. I have always tried to do that. I tried to get AID people to do that, with even less success, because they thought it inappropriate to write about their foreign colleagues with whom they had worked. Later on, I heard from some people that my biographic reporting from Amman was still being used to brief newcomers coming to the post, who didn't know my former contacts. That convinced me that biographic reporting was indeed a valuable tool and I wished that this practice would be more widespread in the Service.

At the end of my tour in Jordan, I wrote a piece on the King. It was interesting in a couple of respects. I tended perhaps to over-rate the King, although in retrospect, in view of his survivability, I might not have been too far wrong. I had predicted that the King had a future, not only in Jordan, but as a leader in the Arab world. That was very much against the conventional wisdom of the time; the Department people in NEA, in a rather disdainful way, used to refer to Hussein as the "BYK"--the brave young king--mocking all the publicity about his having faced down his opponents in 1956 when he jumped up on a tank and harangued the Army in Zarqa. The Department tended to make fun of these histrionics and doubted his leadership capacities. I was convinced that this was a man of tremendous leadership and native abilities and charisma. All of that went against the conventional wisdom, which assumed that the King had only weeks or months at best to live because he had so many enemies eager to assassinate him. Furthermore, he was supposed to be out of the mainstream in the Arab world. He was not "Arab nationalist" enough, or at worst a puppet of the West. I tried to deal with that argument by making what was a ridiculous suggestion. I suggested that one of his advisors should urge on the King that he abdicate and run for President of Jordan; he would then be the elected leader of a democratic regime which would give him stature in the Arab world as someone who had been popularly elected, rather than someone who had inherited his position. The response from people who knew Arab culture well was that this was a foolish idea because he would be sacrificing the added benefits that a person has just by being a monarch. My counter-argument was to emphasize that he was still a descendent of the Prophet, which conferred great legitimacy, regardless of what his title was; he could, for example, be called Sharif Hussein, rather than "President." Our Ambassador, Sheldon Mills, sent my analysis of the King's prospects in to Washington with a covering note which he wrote himself, dismissing the whole idea of a Hussein "presidency" as absolutely ridiculous because the King might have been defeated in a popular election or, if he assured himself of victory, that was hardly democratic.

I mention this episode because Mills at least took the trouble to send my piece in. Later in my career, I had other experiences, later on in Greece, when that was not done and it caused me a lot of grief. I have always thought that Mills' approach was correct; when a young officer has an idea, even if a bit outlandish, on which he or she has worked and which he or she has considered at some length, even if the conclusions are not viewed sympathetically, the decent and correct action to take is to forward it to the Department with a disclaimer, if necessary, that this is not the Embassy's policy, but it is an idea that might be considered; it could stimulate some other approach more acceptable to the U.S. government. Such a process is good for the officer and the Service as a whole.

Q: Did you see King Hussein at any time after your tour in Amman?

KEELEY: I saw him a couple of times when he visited the United States, but now I have not seen him in many, many years. I have never returned to Amman.

ALFRED L. ATHERTON, JR.
Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC, (1959-1962)

Ambassador Alfred Leroy Atherton, Jr. was born in Pennsylvania in 1921. He received a A.B. and an M.A. from Harvard University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1946. In addition to Egypt, Ambassador Atherton's Foreign Service career included tours in Germany and India, and many positions in Washington, DC involving Middle East affairs. Ambassador Atherton was interviewed by Dayton Mak in the summer of 1990.

Q: Had we become a major supplier of arms to Jordan by then?

ATHERTON: I don't think major. I can't really honestly remember when that happened. This was a period when the British were still, I think, very much in evidence, and very much trying to preserve their position, to the extent that they could, though we had begun to replace them so far as economic support was concerned. We had largely taken over (maybe by that time, totally; I can't be entirely sure without checking the record) the annual subsidy of the Jordanian budget, which the British used to carry. And we had become the principal foreign financier of Jordan's perennial deficit, which was seen as a way of trying to stabilize Jordan. Of course, when you think about it today, the sums of money concerned seem insignificant. I think we were talking in terms of, could it have been \$20 million a year? That seems high, almost, even for then.

Q: I don't remember.

ATHERTON: But, anyway, they were certainly not, by later standards, enormous sums of money. And we were trying not to become the sole supporter. We encouraged the British to continue to play a role in the area, particularly in the areas where they had had traditional relationships, and Jordan was certainly one of them. But, inevitably, we were drawn more and more in. And we did have, by then, an economic assistance program, an AID mission, whatever it was called. I can't remember whether it was called AID in those days or whether it had an earlier name.

Q: Was it Point Four still then?

ATHERTON: I frankly don't remember what the bureaucratic structure was then. But it was a time of more or less focusing on the bilateral relationship, and on trying to keep our friends in the region, and our Arab friends in particular, insulated, to the extent we could, from the shocks emanating from Cairo.

There were occasional incidents on the borders, along that long frontier between Jordan and Israel. There were constant tensions within Jerusalem, because the city was divided right down the middle, with Jordanians on one side of the No Man's Land and Israelis on the other, staring down the gun barrels at each other. There were occasional outbreaks of shooting, and incidents would occur.

It was the time when the job of handling and trying to adjudicate these incidents was in the hands of the United Nations. The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, UNTSO, and its Chief of Staff, and its Mixed Armistice Commissions had the main responsibility for preserving

the armistice agreements. It wasn't a peace, it was an armistice, but trying to keep hostilities from breaking out again.

Q: Jordan was still administering the land up to the divided part of Jordan...?

ATHERTON: Oh, yes. East Jerusalem was under Jordanian administration, and West Jerusalem was under Israeli administration.

Q: And the West Bank?

ATHERTON: The West Bank was entirely under Jordan, of course. There was a long, long armistice line, and occasionally it was penetrated by commandos trying to raid across the border into Israel. This was before the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO was not established until 1964. You didn't have the large, well-organized, armed guerrilla movements that grew up later, and in particular, after the 1967 War. It was a time when there was relative quiet on the Arab-Israeli front.

My recollection was that after the '56 War, the United Nations Emergency Force was in place in Sinai on the Egyptian front, the U.N. truce supervision observers were in place on the other fronts, the other armistice lines: Syria and Lebanon and Jordan.

There was an apparatus and a system for dealing with these incidents, through meetings of the Mixed Armistice Commissions. It was the one place where Israeli and Arab military people used to meet, under the auspices of the Chairman, who was a U.N. officer, and they used to convene periodically.

Some had more relaxed relations than others. I think the Israeli-Lebanese Mixed Armistice Commission tended to be the most relaxed. The Syrian-Israeli meetings tended to be pretty stiff and formal. And I think the Jordanian-Israeli came somewhere in between. They were proper and correct, but not exactly collegial.

But it was a time when the Arab-Israeli conflict was not on the front burner to a large extent. It was there. There was no basis, at that stage, for trying to find a solution to it, because there was no disposition on the part of any Arabs to really accept Israel as a permanent part of the Middle East. Their maps never showed it. It was simply shown as occupied Palestine. And the Israelis, for their part, were busy nation-building internally absorbing immigrants and watching their borders. Remember, Israel had only been a state for just over a decade.

And so it was a time, as I look back on it, compared to later years, of relative tranquility in the Arab-Israeli conflict, except for the occasional border incident. The fact that I hardly remember any great deal of focus during that time on the Arab-Israeli problem I think means that probably it wasn't a major preoccupation. These were the final years of the Eisenhower Administration, whose preoccupation was with the defense of the region against the perceived Soviet threat.

Q: It was certainly not a matter of national concern politically or...

ATHERTON: In any case, my time on the Jordan Desk was shorter than I had anticipated it would be. I went back the very end of 1958, and my recollection was that about a year and a few months later, sometime in early or perhaps mid-1960, there were some personnel changes in the Office of Near Eastern Affairs. I was not an Arabist, I was not one of the group who had committed themselves to the Middle East by learning the language, partly because nobody had ever suggested I take time off to learn it--although, to be honest if I had been asked, I'm not sure what I would have said. I guess I still wanted to keep the European option open.

I was informed one day that the Bureau was going to make a few internal changes. They had an officer coming back whom they wanted to get into the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, and the job they wanted to get him into was the job I was in. I was going to be moved over and assigned to a different office within the Bureau: GTI, Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs, which, in those days, was part of NEA, part of the Bureau. And, specifically, I was to be assigned as the new Officer in Charge of Cyprus Affairs. My first reaction was to be a bit put out. I felt that I had committed the last four and a half years to learning about the Arab-Israeli problem, and I had just begun to feel that I really knew enough about it to be productive. I knew nothing at all about the Cyprus problem. But I learned quickly, and the move was made.

BROOKS WRAMPELMEIER

Political Officer

Amman (1960-1964)

Brooks Wrampelmeier was born in Ohio in 1934. He received his bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1956. His career has included positions in Beirut, Amman, Jeddah, Lusaka, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and Dhahran. Mr. Wrampelmeier was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 2000.

Q: You were in Amman from 1960 to when?

WRAMPELMEIER: To the summer of 1964. I was there almost four years.

Q: A good solid tour.

WRAMPELMEIER: I replaced Bob Keeley once again. I was working directly for Andy Killgore. The late Eric Kocher was the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and initially Sheldon Mills was ambassador. Bill Macomber came out early in 1961 to replace Mills. The way this was handled by the new Kennedy Administration was unfortunate. Mills was a career officer who had held several ambassadorships. (Ann's Uncle Art has been his DCM when Mills was ambassador in Ecuador.) When the Kennedy Administration came in, Mill's *pro forma* resignation was accepted with no other explanation. There wasn't any "we have something else in mind for you." It was just "please go in and get *agrément* for this fellow Macomber," who had been the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs in the Eisenhower Administration. President Kennedy apparently liked Macomber but wanted to replace him with a congressman

from Arkansas who had lost his seat. Mills was later offered the embassy in Uruguay but he declined and retired from the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, Macomber had also been a favorite of Rooney's and Rooney was the appropriations man for the department of state.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, Macomber was brought into State by John Foster Dulles. His family and the Dulles family came from Rochester. Macomber came out in January 1961, a bachelor just 40 years old. Mills was in his sixties. I think the idea was that having an ambassador in Amman closer in age to King Hussein would be an advantage. The British also sent a relatively young ambassador named John Henniker-Major. So you had two relatively young ambassadors with a king who was at that time in his late 20s or early 30s.

I arrived in Amman a few days after the Prime Minister, Hazza al-Majali, had been blown up in his office. So Jordan was tense at that point. The embassy was very much concerned about what was going on in terms of the popular reaction to that. Things quieted down after a bit. It was a very interesting period in a sense because Macomber was willing to try new things. I was, *inter alia*, post labor reporting officer. I wasn't getting anywhere with local labor until Harold Snell, our regional labor attaché in Beirut, came to visit. Harold grew up in Dayton, Ohio and had worked initially as a cook and a waiter on Pullman dining cars. Then he got into the labor movement and had been an organizer of red caps, skycaps and Pullman workers other than the Pullman porters. He had moved up in the old CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations). The AID (Agency for International Development) sent him out to Nigeria to do some things and then he became labor attaché in Beirut. He was very, very effective. He would go in and talk with these guys in the Jordanian labor movement. Most of them didn't speak English and Harold didn't speak Arabic, but he would say, "I know the problems you are facing. Look, I got this scar organizing workers in Tennessee in the 1930s." These men thought he was tough, a real labor man. From then on I had entrée into the Jordanian labor movement.

Q: I'm surprised there was an equivalent to a labor movement in an absolute monarchy.

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, there was a labor movement. It was legal. There were really two federations. One was full of communists, Nasserists, and Arab nationalists. This was the main labor federation. And then there was another smaller federation that included drivers and petroleum workers. It was headed by a man who had been a chauffeur for King Abdullah. It was regarded as the government's trade union movement. It was never very strong. But I would visit both groups. Finally, I was able to get USIS to send five labor leaders to the States. We sent three from the larger group and two from the smaller one. I don't know if this trip had any long-term impact on the Jordanian labor movement but it was something. Macomber took an interest. I once got him to hold a Labor Day reception at his residence for labor union leaders and government labor officials.

One unusual thing about the Jordanian labor movement was that many of the union leaders were really frustrated entrepreneurs. Almost every union has its own little business. The idea was that if a member lost his job he could come to work in the union's business. The tailors' union had a tailor shop. I once had a suit made there because the tailors' union at that time was regarded as

communist-linked and it gave me an excuse to go by to see who was there. The tile workers had a little tile factory. The customs clearance workers had a customs clearance brokerage down in Aqaba. They all had their little enterprises. But it was not a strong labor movement. The government tolerated it but also, I think, kept a firm handle on it. The movement didn't do very much. They were always complaining about the fact that they had very little leverage with employers.

Q: Were these people in the labor movement Palestinian?

WRAMPELMEIER: Mostly Palestinian, although some were Jordanians.

Q: The Palestinians were essentially the entrepreneurs and workers at that point.

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes. Many East Jordanians, except for the elite, were still pretty much tribal types and lived in their villages. This was changing. A lot of them, of course, were now in the army and the police. I would say that a great number of people in and out of the government whom I knew were Palestinians. One thing that always struck me about Jordan, and I didn't see it in Saudi Arabia, was that most of these people were not shy about inviting me to their homes. My cook, my gardener, my maid would invite us to have coffee in their homes. There wasn't a feeling that their homes were too humble for the likes of us. It was very nice. Some of the union people would invite me over for a dinner in their home. My wife got to know a Circassian family around the block the same way. (Circassians, Muslims who had fled the 19th century Russian advance into the Caucasus, had been resettled by the Ottomans in Amman and other towns along the desert frontier.)

Most of my work in Amman was doing routine political reporting. The labor reporting was something I got into because nobody else was interested.

Q: What was your impression of King Hussein before you arrived in Amman?

WRAMPELMEIER: Well, he was always "the brave young king", even when he reached middle age like the rest of us. He was a year younger than I was. I think that there was a good deal of respect for him as an individual. Certainly, he had successfully overcome a threat to his regime. He had avoided attempts to assassinate him. He was very much an activist. When I was there he was in his go-cart period. In fact, Bob Keeley had owned a go-cart and, with the king, was a member of the Amman go-cart club. Every Friday they would go out and have these go-cart races at the airport. Hussein was still a very young man, athletic and daring but somehow managing to keep things stable in Jordan. On the Arab-Israeli problem we didn't see much progress. There was the Paul Clapp mission and Eric Johnston's visit, but nothing really came of these efforts. The king, I think, was not very astute in allowing people to mess up the Jewish cemetery on the Mt. of Olives and to build hotels there. That did not help his reputation in the U.S. with the Jewish community. But, essentially it was a period of relative quiet in Jordan.

I should note that at this time Jordan, like most Arab states, usually refused to admit visitors of the Jewish faith. The argument was that Jews might be spies for Israel and/or that the authorities might not be able to protect them from harassment or injury by Palestinians. Once, while I was

on home leave in Wyoming, Ohio, Steve Low's father asked me about obtaining a visa to visit the Old City of Jerusalem. I explained, with regret, that the Jordanians demanded that visa applications from Americans also include a certificate of Christian baptism, which Mr. Low acknowledged he could not produce. There were a few exceptions. Alfred Lilienthal, a well-known American Jewish critic of Israel, was not only allowed to visit Jordan but was invited to attend an opening session of the National Assembly. By pulling strings at the highest levels, Bill Macomber was once able to obtain permission for Senator Jacob Javits (Republican - New York) and his wife to cross through the Mandelbaum Gate from West to East Jerusalem. Unfortunately, a Palestinian activist found out the Javits were there and began to follow them around. This made Mrs. Javits nervous and they abbreviated their visit to the Old City.

Here I should point out that because Jordan controlled the Old City of Jerusalem and its Holy Places, we tended to get a number of official and semi-official visitors who passed through Amman en route to Jerusalem and then cross at the Mandelbaum Gate into Israel. I recall in particular a Congressman, a member of the House Judiciary Committee, who had arranged with two boyhood friends, dubbed "consultants" to the Committee, to visit the area, ostensibly to "study" foreign judicial systems. We perceived this as a real boondoggle but I persuaded the ambassador that we should at least make them do a little work. The evening of their visit to Amman the ambassador held a dinner for them to which he also invited four prominent Jordanian lawyers and judicial officials. The Jordanians were encouraged to discuss their judicial system with the American visitors. The following morning, as the Congressman got into his car en route to Jerusalem, he turned to me and said, "That talk last night was very interesting. Please write up for me a paper on the Jordanian legal system to include in my report to the Committee." Hoist on my own petard, I had to spend the next week researching and writing up a description of the Jordanian legal system which was pouched to the Congressman. I have no idea what use he ever made of it, if any.

Q: Were we monitoring the Palestinian influence there? Was this a concern?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, through Jerusalem. Because our policy was to recognize Jerusalem as a "corpus separatum", i.e., territory not officially under the sovereignty of either Jordan or Israel, Consulate General Jerusalem then as now was independent from both Tel Aviv and Amman. In fact, if Ambassador Macomber went to Ramallah north of Jerusalem, he had to stop at the eastern limits of Jerusalem, take the ambassadorial flags off his car, drive through to the northern limits of the city and then put the flags back on. He would have to reverse that returning to Amman. He was not allowed to fly his flag in Jerusalem and the same applied to the ambassador in Tel Aviv. Only the consul general could do that. We would go frequently to Jerusalem for recreation and to take pouches and/or talk with the Consulate General staff.

We did try to monitor what the Palestinians were thinking. We talked to Palestinians of various sorts. Among my contacts was a U.S.-trained Palestinian Christian lawyer from Ramallah, a judge who became Minister of Justice while I was there. Unhappily, he died suddenly in his hotel room in Amman. Ann and I also visited the Zaru family in Ramallah. Their son Nadim had been one of the six passengers on the Dutch freighter that I took to Beirut in September 1954 en route to AUB. Nadim later became a Mayor of Ramallah and, having been expelled from the West Bank by the Israelis, served for a time as Jordan's Minister of Transportation. His sisters were

school teachers and his brother, a pharmacist, later became headmaster of the Quaker school in Ramallah. We became acquainted with Katie Antonius, widow of the Mandate civil servant and historian George Antonius. She had turned their traditional Arab house into a charming restaurant where we held a luncheon following our older son's baptism at St. George's Church, Jerusalem.

There wasn't what one would call a terribly hectic political life in Jordan. There were parliamentary elections in 1963. I remember one day a Palestinian came to me when I was acting political section head to ask whether the embassy would be willing to support his candidacy. I said, "No. We don't do that." Periodically the government cracked down on dissent. At one point it became rather inconvenient for us. My wife was pregnant and all of a sudden her obstetrician was sent off to a prison camp, so she had to find a new obstetrician at short notice. But there was a continuing effect to monitor what Malcolm Kerr called the "Arab Cold War," when the Jordanians found themselves caught between the Iraqis, on the one hand, and the Egyptians and Syrians on the other.

Q: Was there a strong Nasserist movement in Jordan at the time?

WRAMPELMEIER: Yes, there was a Nasserist movement. It had to keep its head down because Arab nationalists, Ba'athis and communists were not welcomed. If they got too politically active the government would crack down on them and send them off to jail to cool their heels in the desert. But, yes, there were people who represented these particular views. There was also on the far right - the Tahrir, or Islamic Liberation, party composed of Islamist radicals who had sponsored terrorist activities. There were also concerns about Palestinians crossing into Israel from time to time and doing things which invited retaliation on villages inside the West Bank. That was a concern of the Jordanian Government which preferred to keep the border quiet.

We did have a period in 1963 where there was a brief period of political liberalization. The national assembly that was elected that year opposed Samir Rifa'i, who was the king's nominee as prime minister, and failed to confirm him in office. The king then abolished parliament and there were some riots in the streets for a few days.

This reminds me of a story. An elderly East Jordanian, who gone to Mexico and made some money as a peddler, had retired to his little village of Ermameen, about an hour from Amman. The gentleman sought to make himself the local godfather by going around to foreign embassies to invite the ambassadors to come out and have picnics in Ermameen. He invited the Spanish ambassador and the Chinese Nationalist ambassador (married to a Peruvian) among others. He kept coming to me to ask if our ambassador would come. After he had come by a few times, Ambassador Macomber finally said, "Look, what the hell, let's go." So we arranged for a picnic at Ermameen for the ambassador, the consul, and other embassy personnel and their families. Local dignitaries were also present. It wasn't bad, we had a good time. Turns out the man was really much more interested in cultivating the consul than he was the ambassador. When we got back to Amman that evening we found that the national assembly had rejected the prime minister and had been suspended, martial law had been declared, and tensions were running high. I don't think the ambassador was all that pleased to have gone on the picnic that day. (End of tape)

I think one of the initial problems we had when Bill Macomber arrived in Amman was that he had had no overseas experience with the Foreign Service. Perhaps he thought that we would be upset over the way his appointment had been handled and Shelley Mills' resignation had been accepted. So he came a little uneasy about us and it took a while for him to realize we were not there to undermine him or make him look bad in any way. He had some decided views about how things should be done. I remember one time he became annoyed with me for having drafted a telegram in which I talked about the king having "taken the wind out of the sail" of the opposition. He thought that this was a very unprofessional expression. He obviously thought better of his remarks and came back a little later to my office. He did not apologize but he gave me some sort of compliment which indicated that he realized he had spoken a bit too strongly.

On another occasion, I had drafted a telegram reporting that the king's announcement of his intending marriage to an English girl, Toni Gardener, now renamed Muna al-Hussein, had come as a surprise to everybody. Macomber said to me, "You shouldn't have written that because I knew about it some time ago and the British ambassador knew about it." "Well, yes sir, that may be true, but nobody else knew about it, including the rest of us in the embassy." He was upset that the cable had gone out without him having massaged it in some way.

As time went on he and the staff developed a very good *modus vivendi*. Macomber went out of his way to try to help what I was trying to do with the labor reporting, even though it was rather marginal in terms of the embassy's overall concerns. When AID had a RIF (reduction in force) that affected several of the AID employees in Amman, Macomber did his best to save their jobs or at least to help them to find other employment.

One year he called in the late Peter Sutherland, his staff aide, and instructed him to assemble a bunch of young single Jordanians and bring them to the residence for a picnic. He also organized a basketball team with some of the younger staff and Marine guards to play against teams in refugee camps. He was a great horseman and kept a horse which he would ride early in the morning. He once looked at me and said, "You know, Wrampelmeier, a young officer could make his career if he got up early in the morning and went horseback riding with his ambassador." I hurriedly explained that I was allergic to horses.

I think by and large Macomber enjoyed the assignment. There is one amusing story which I think I can tell. He was a bachelor throughout the entire period he was in Amman. At one point his mother came for a visit. As she was about to leave, he asked her, "Is there anything that I should be doing in the residence that you think would improve the comfort of overnight guests?" She suggested that he might have his butler lay out the guests' night clothes. Macomber thought that was a good idea and instructed the butler, "Next time we have guests, unpack their bags and lay out their night clothes." The next visitor he had was a U.S. Marine officer, who was stationed in Jerusalem with the UN Truce Supervisory Organization, and his wife. The butler went to unpack their bags but shortly returned to the ambassador and whispered to him, "Mr. Ambassador, I can't find the night clothes of the gentleman and lady." The ambassador told the butler just to ask the guests where they were. A few minutes later a very embarrassed butler came back and said, "Sir, they say they don't wear any." That was the end of that experiment in gracious hospitality.

It was always an amusement to me later on when Macomber became President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art because his taste in art ran more toward Currier and Ives than Rembrandt or Van Gogh.

Because Macomber was a bachelor there was always a question as to who was going to serve as his official hostess at dinners. Usually it would be the DCM's wife. But when Eric Kocher's wife returned to the U.S. to have a baby the question became who would be the official hostess - was it going to be the political counselor's wife, the USAID Director's wife, or the USIS Public Affairs Officer's wife, etc. It got rather dicey. As protocol officer, I was called upon to solve this problem. I think we finally resolved it by simply rotating the role among those wives who were available and wanted to do it.

Macomber left Amman in December 1963, to return to Washington as the Assistant Administrator of AID for the Near East and South Asia. On his way back he stopped in Switzerland to marry Phyllis Bernau who had been Secretary Dulles' secretary. I understand they are now living on Nantucket where at one time he was teaching history and coaching football in the local high school. [Note: Bill Macomber died on Nantucket in December 2003.]

Macomber was succeeded as ambassador by Robert Barnes, a career officer. When Macomber had arrived I, as protocol officer, had set up the presentation of his credentials to the king. I asked the protocol people at the Foreign Ministry how many embassy officers could attend. They said that all of us on the diplomatic list would be welcome. So, we brought about 12 - 15 people. This was a formal ceremony and we had to wear morning dress which very few of us owned. We went around the diplomatic community trying to borrow the proper clothes. I got mine from the German third secretary. Somebody else got his from the Spanish ambassador. I think because of that experience, when Bob Barnes came, the Foreign Ministry let it be known that they wanted only chiefs of sections to attend. So it was a much reduced group that accompanied Ambassador Barnes to his credential presentation ceremony.

One reason we stayed at post as long as we did was because we had two children born in Amman. Our second son was born there in early 1964 and we didn't want to go back to the States on home leave and transfer with an infant less than five or six months old.

Q: How was Eric Kocher as a DCM?

WRAMPELMEIER: Very nice. We got along quite well. Eric, of course, was a frustrated playwright. He was always going to write a play about a particular village on the West Bank where the armistice line ran right down the middle of the village. Half of the village was in Israeli hands and the other half in Jordanian hands. There was nothing but a bit of barbed wire in between to mark the boundary. Eric and I went one day to visit the village and our Jordan army officer escort stuck his foot over the wire to show how easy it would be to get across. We watched chickens running back and forth. The villagers really were quite divided and avoided communicating with each other when Israeli or Jordanian officials were present. Eric thought that would be a great subject for a play. Some years afterward, after he retired, Eric helped establish an international affairs program at Columbia University. After he left that job he offered career counseling to Princeton graduates. He would be at the Princeton Club in New

York City one afternoon a week and anybody who wanted counseling could see him there. I tried to call on him one time when I was in New York in 1991, but I missed him. Since then he has died.

Q: He was my DCM in Belgrade right after this. We have a lot of respect for him. He was a good New Englander and my wife is a good New Englander and they would get on the phone and there would be a rather short sentence, another short sentence and then they would hang up.

WRAMPELMEIER: Geoff Lewis replaced him. Subsequently Geoff was ambassador to Mauritania and then to the Central African Republic. Geoff was very good, too. He was primarily a Europeanist and had come to Amman from NATO. Andy Killgore was replaced by the late Bob Houghton. Bob was very good as a political officer. He had had Middle Eastern experience dating back to his first job in the Foreign Service in Jerusalem during the Arab-Israel conflict of 1947-1948 and also served in Damascus.

Q: Would you say compared to some other places, working in Jordan you could come away with some positive feelings, as opposed to countries in the Arab world where there was a nasty dictatorship or they were rather feckless?

WRAMPELMEIER: I think one of the good things about Amman was that it was still a small city in those days. You got to know what one might call the "Amman 400" very easily. You would see them frequently. This included not only people in the government but also members of the military and businessmen. People would invite you to their homes or they would come to your home. I think there was at that point a fair degree, at least among the upper class, of friendliness towards America. There were people who obviously didn't like our Middle East policies but I think there was a general feeling that the U.S. was doing what it could to help Jordan, especially through various AID projects operating in the country. That was something that brought us into contact with the people. I had a feeling that you could travel freely in Jordan and meet and talk with people. I thought it was a very good time, although my successors would have a different view.

Q: Yes, after 1967 it was not the greatest time as well as the '70s.

WRAMPELMEIER: In 1970 Ambassador Dean Brown had to travel in an armored car to present his credentials to the king.

I should explain that towards the end of my tour Ann and I got permission to cross the Mandelbaum Gate into West Jerusalem. From there we went to Tel Aviv where Ambassador Butterworth kindly invited me to attend an embassy staff meeting and share my thoughts on what was going on in Jordan. We also did some touring, visiting Haifa and going up to Lake Tiberius by bus.

ROBERT THEODORE CURRAN
Assistant Cultural Attaché, USIS

Amman (1961-1962)

Robert Theodore Curran was born in New York in 1931. He received his bachelor's degree from Haverford College and his master's degree from Columbia University. During Mr. Curran's career he had positions in Germany, Jordan, Yemen, Mexico, Afghanistan, and Morocco. Mr. Curran was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November 1998.

CURRAN: I was taken out of language school "a little early," probably May or June of '61, because I was asked for by Ambassador Bill Macomber, who had been a special assistant to John Foster Dulles and had been sent to Jordan to be the ambassador in Amman. So I went, obviously, and the transition for us was day and night. First of all, the climate in Jordan is delightful, and we were taken back into the embassy administrative fold.

Q: You were there from '61 to when?

CURRAN: '61 to '62. And Macomber had a lot of energy. He was very young. It was very unusual in those days to have such a young ambassador. He had his 40th birthday in Amman. And unmarried, but certainly not a swinging bachelor or anything, just worked all the time, and those of us who were used to the "old" Foreign Service ethic enjoyed that very much. It was a great embassy. The political officer was Bob Houghton. There was a good AID team, a small USIA staff, and a very large intelligence unit. I'll get back to that in a minute.

If I may, I'd like to just talk a little bit about the history of Jordan.

Q: Sure.

CURRAN: After World War I, the British were given "The Mandate for Palestine" in the Middle East. The Mandate has been subject to various interpretations, but it's now pretty clear that the Mandate included what now is the occupied West Bank and Israel. East of the Jordan River, there was a general region which was basically tribal and before the First World War didn't come to many people's attention, called Transjordan. During World War I, there were a number of conflicting promises made to the Arabs and the Israelis, Jews-

Q: You're talking about World War I.

CURRAN: The Balfour Declaration was a product of British politics which promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine. There was the British/French Sykes-Picot Agreement, which promised French-managed independence for Lebanon and Syria; there was a set of agreements made between Lawrence and Allenby and the Arabs in the Hejaz about independence for the Turkish territories - all of which were completely conflicting, of course. And at the Paris peace conference, the Europeans all sat down and divided the Middle East up - the Mandate, the French area, and the Hejaz - and the Arabs arrived late and just found the game was over, and they were furious about it. And a good deal of pulling and hauling went on. The British Arabists set to work, including Lawrence, with the backing of Churchill, and General Allenby set to work to kind of reorganize things, give the Arabs a few crumbs, and get the world back to "normal." So

the British continued their oversight of the Mandate, and one of the sons of Sharif Hussein, who sat in Mecca, Abdullah, was given Transjordan and another son who thought he was going to get Damascus got Baghdad. That was Faisal. And the British proceeded then to administer the area (I'm speaking now of Palestine and Transjordan) up until '48, when the conflict between the increasing pressure of Jewish settlers and the increasing pressure of the Palestinians to the Jewish settlements and the terrorism, the British just decided they'd had it, and they said, "Well, as of May 1, 1948, we're out of here." And there was a discussion in the UN. Palestine was partitioned. There was an initial fight, the Israelis were able to defend the partition borders with a little bit of additional territory, and then Abdullah seized the portion of the West Bank using his British-trained Arab Legion. So if you think of looking at a map of the Mandate after partition, the borders look pretty much the same as 1950-1951 except that the West Bank is "occupied" - that's using an Arab term - by the Israelis. In 1961, the U.S. called the West Bank part of the territory of the Kingdom of Jordan. The first King of Jordan was Abdullah, and by the time I got there in mid-1961, King Hussein was the ruler. A person in his 20s, Hussein had a British wife, the mother of the present king, and really was sort of not what you'd imagine a king to be. He was a very down-to-earth individual. I'll get back to that in a little bit.

People who would like to learn more about the era between the wars - I'm not going to go into it in any detail - should read Alec Kirkbride's book called *Crackle of Thorns*, a wonderful book about what it was like to be a British proconsul in those days and how Jordan evolved.

The impressive thing about the Jordanians was that from my wife's perspective and many other peoples' perspectives, in addition to a very salubrious climate, somehow the Hashemites had combined the best of the British and Jordanian systems so you had a modified parliamentary system, and an English-speaking king with a loyal and consenting population. I would say the only downsides of the country that I arrived to serve in were the huge refugee camps of Palestinians who had fled from or been chased out of Israeli-controlled territory, and the Palestinians on the West Bank, most of whom were, of course, very unhappy with the idea of a State of Israel right next door and almost equally unhappy with being managed by the King of Jordan, whom they regarded as a foreigner.

The glue that held Jordan together was the Arab Legion, a group of tribal levies who were very loyal to the King, considerable foreign subsidy, and a very large middle class, which was involved in business and agriculture and could see that their future lay in having a stable Jordan. The King and his family were and are very sensitive about not living to excess and not being arbitrary and who retain to this day, actually, a great sense of loyalty and admiration from the people because the first family is seen as leaders and examples.

Q: And I wonder if you could talk, both the time you were in Beirut and in Jordan, about how the U.S. perceived the influence, and what it was, of Nasser? I mean as you're talking.

CURRAN: I was going to interject something about the Palestinians, but let me respond to your questions about Nasser and Arab nationalism. Amman, when we arrived in the spring of '61, was a very small town, probably 100,000 people on three or four hilltops called *jebels*, which means 'mountain' in Arabic. But the "jebels" weren't really mountains; they were heights of a plain overlooking valleys, old river streambeds. The valleys led to the center of Amman, which was

the ancient city of Philadelphia. There was a Roman amphitheater in the center, still preserved. In those days, Amman had three traffic circles from the town center on the road to Jerusalem. Now, I think, there are 11, and I think the population of Amman must be several million. In 1961, you could literally walk to work, and you got to know a lot of people personally, and the new mosque on Jebel Lewebdeh, where I lived, had a live muezzin every morning, not a recorded one. He was a wonderful tenor, and we used to start the day listening to his tenor Muslim invocation. It was quite beautiful. Lovely desert air, warm days, cool nights almost year round. As I said, the climate and the people were very friendly. The U.S. had a very clear set of objectives, a very highly qualified staff, and a willing partner in the local government.

Politically, even though there was a parliament, it was still pretty much under the thumb of the King, and maybe not the King so much personally as his secret service, and behind the scenes, if anyone stepped too far out of line, they were taken away for a little talk or worse - but it was done in, I would say, more of a sort of elder-brother-punishing- younger-brother way. There were probably some thumbs twisted and so on, but there were no death camps, certainly, and you never ran into many people who felt that the monarchy was oppressive. And there were an emerging number of very young, bright Jordanian civil servants who were running the country, many of whom we got to know and like and work with. Nasser was not somebody that held much attraction for the Jordanians. He was, of course, a tremendous demagogue, and everybody listened to his speeches - even we listened to his speeches - because they were, you know - well, I don't even want to compare it to anyone else in history, but he had code phrases, and when he talked about *isti'mar*, which means 'imperialism,' and people would just roar, it didn't matter what the main sentence was. There were certainly people who were pro-Nasser, but in Jordan they were insignificant. The problem the Jordanians had to worry about was Syria, north of them, because the Syrians cozied up to Nasser, and in fact, they were in his United Arab Republic for a while, and at one point during my stay in Amman they actually led an armored column into Jordan to test what would happen, and the Jordanians fortunately dealt with this threat effectively and without a lot of bloodshed. I think the Syrians came four or five miles into Jordan before they were stopped, and it was a pretty scary time. And the Syrians, in their public broadcast, made no secret of the fact that they regarded Hussein and the Jordanians as lackeys of the Israelis and they didn't deserve to continue. And certainly Nasser said the same kind of things.

We certainly, and the ambassador in Cairo, maybe not then but starting a little later, John Badeau, a serious scholar of the Middle East - I think he came in under Kennedy-

Q: *Yes, he did.*

CURRAN: So that would have been '63.

Q: *Yes, he had been president of the University of Cairo, or something like that.*

CURRAN: Something like that. And he managed to temper our approach to the Egyptians, and in point of fact, we did considerable business with the Egyptians because we supplied them with PL-480 wheat and we had a very large PL-480 currency account there. So I guess we existed on two levels. What I remember most about going to Cairo - I'm not sure exactly what era this was, but it was within that five-year period; I think it must have been before '67 - Haile Selassie came

to visit Cairo, and there was a huge banner at the airport which read in Arabic, "Down with Imperialism - Long Live Emperor Haile Selassie." It gives an idea of the dichotomy that people in some cultures are able to deal with.

In our relations with the Jordanians: I think we were very effective on the assistance side. We worked very hard on developing intellectual capital, both AID and USIA. The military people in the embassy were superbly trained, very good people. We had to keep an eye on Iraq, but it wasn't the problem it is now. They had killed Hussein's cousin, but they didn't seem to me, at least much of a threat. It was possible to drive over to Baghdad - a terrible drive, you had to do it at night because of the heat. But once there, it seemed like most Middle East cities.

I think you could say we had two or three main objectives in Jordan: to maintain security and stability in Jordan, develop the society, and develop the intellectual capital. I think we did that really splendidly. When I went to work for the Secretary of State and read a lot of the secret files in the Secretary's office, I realized that I didn't know a lot that was going on when I was in the embassy. But anyway, there were a lot of meetings between the Israelis and the Jordanians that went way back to Abdullah, and between the Labor Party and the Hashemites. There was quite a wide understanding in terms of how to deal with the Middle East situation. Don't let me forget to tell when we talk about Black September, that was an interesting factor, because it was that ability to talk behind the curtains that probably saved the Jordanians. The third objective we had was to try to bring the population of the West Bank into this peaceful dialogue. I would say that was less successful.

Ambassador Macomber really understood how to manage diplomacy in all its aspects, even though he had a small embassy staff. The CIA had good relations with the palace, but they were weak everywhere else. I don't think there was a single Arabic speaker in the CIA station in Amman. They went with their SOP [standard operating procedure], which is to find paid sources who fed them stuff, usually of mixed value. I didn't have a very high regard for their work there. It wasn't general, I'm not making a general condemnation, but the Agency people were really living too much for easy work and not really doing the hard work of talking to Arab radicals and other "outsiders." AID was, I thought, very competent. Because I'm a member of the Society of Friends, it was very interesting to me because they used the Quakers to set up a land co-op up in the Ghor Valley, which is on the east side of the Jordan River. The Quakers set up a co-op farming system. I don't know whether that's ever been done again, but they did - I'm probably a little biased - a terrific job, and several Quakers spoke Arabic. They explained the Rochdall principles to the Arabs, and the area became a real garden spot.

One of the interesting parts of the broad intellectual development which always struck me as being amazing was that we had a Columbia alumni club in Amman with about a hundred Jordanians who had been either undergraduates or at one of the graduate schools of Columbia. There was a Princeton group, and there was Michigan group. So we had really been successful at offering that kind of opportunity and broadening. Macomber had me work on several things. Macomber wanted more U.S. contacts on the West Bank, and in fact, I was asked to spend about half my time over there. And because of my Arabic, I was able to give little talks in high schools and talk to, for example, the Friends School in Ramallah. Ramallah was an intellectual center. Palestinians interested in dialogue were available and we set up some talks for the ambassador. It

was notable that Ambassador Macomber made the effort to talk to the Palestinians. At one point, I organized a colloquium. I think it was the first one in a long time, anyway, on Arab studies in the U.S. and on U.S. studies abroad in Ramallah. The colloquium was organized in cooperation with the Jordan Ministry of Culture and had a terrific turnout from three countries: Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan - I think 500 people came. I even gave a lecture in Arabic (I was told afterward I had a Lebanese accent and I should fix that.). Still, I was pretty pleased that I was able to do it.

Another time, the ambassador and I went on a series of visits in towns on the West Bank, and I increasingly was used as his interpreter. So we began to extend the sense that the Arabs at that time had that there was something more than just a military office in the embassy.

Finally, in my tour, we brought the Philips Oilers, the basketball team, to Jordan and ran clinics for Palestinians in the refugee camps. I would say that the availability of new Arabic-speaking officers in the various embassies began to make a difference for the better in opening doors to non-English speaking Arabs.

Q: Who were some of the officers who came in that time?

CURRAN: Dick Jeanneret joined me in Amman; Fred Galanto and Phil Gray went from the FSI school to Iraq. Let's see, John Wheelock went to Aden; Harry Sizer went to Yemen; Bob Paganelli went to Basra. Certainly, in my view, the Arabists offered a new dimension, and when a new "technocrat" government came in in 1962 in Jordan, the bilateral relationship flourished. A "technocrat," pro-Western government, Wasfi Tel... Many of us knew the Tell family from Irbid, from our trips around the country. As a result, the prime minister asked Macomber if I could devote my time to education - to the minister. I was in his office half days every day working on education projects. And I think it wouldn't have happened if I hadn't had Arabic.

Q: You were talking about these projects. How were the Jordanians treating the Palestinians? Were we looking at the Palestinians, or were we looking at what I would call the Jordanians? How was this going?

CURRAN: The Palestinians in Jordan were pretty well absorbed into society. The Palestinians from the West Bank came from the British education system, and they were well qualified. King Hussein was very good about treating them equally. The Palestinian refugees, in contrast, were pretty well walled up in camps, and the only projects we had with them were UNRA projects, basically to keep them alive and provide some minimal education. The Palestinians on the West Bank were reserved about the Hashemites. There were political factions already talking about a Palestinian state.

In concluding, I might say - it was kind of a euphoric era for us - for example, we were close enough to the Royal Family so that we went to the King's birthday party in the spring of '62. We drove down to what was called a Winter Palace - actually a modest little home with a canvas-covered deck and so on. There was no alcohol, but a lovely buffet. The King said to his guests, "Please call me Hussein." It was really an amazing experience, but it was a time when he was reaching out to Western people and learning a lot.

We also traveled a good deal. We got down to Petra, which was not a tourist site then. You had to ride in on muleback and stay in a rough camp and battle the scorpions. But it was really a very special time.

In the summer of '62, Ambassador Macomber was telling Ambassador Parker (Pete) Hart - I understand - some of the stuff that I had done, and Pete Hart said, "Well, I want him in Yemen." So during the summer of '62, I was sent down to Yemen to see if we should open a public affairs office in Yemen.

Q: We had limited relations. What did we have?

CURRAN: We had a legation in Taiz accredited to the Imam Ahmad. The U.S. embassy in Jidda was our support base.

Q: When I was in Dhahran in '58 to '60, there had been some efforts down there. Charlie Ferguson was somebody who was involved.

CURRAN: Mike Sterner and Bill Crawford made visits from Aden. The U.S. opened the legation in 1960 or 1961.

Q: Yes. They were talking about this, but it wasn't really going very far.

CURRAN: I think this is probably a good place to break, but let's go back to the Palestinian question.

Q: Okay, but I would like to ask, too, were we doing anything - I realize our military was involved - with the Arab Legion? Was this pretty much given over to the British?

CURRAN: Yes.

Q: I mean, were we doing anything to make the Arab Legion officers happy or anything like that?

CURRAN: No, it had been pretty much a British show, and then increasingly, a Jordanian show. By the time I arrived, Hussein had already dismissed John Glubb - "Glubb Pasha" - as head of the Legion. The one anecdote you might enjoy involved a great parade every year on the King's birthday. The Arab Legion played the bagpipes. And one of my Quaker associates was a Scot, and as these fellows were marching by in full headdress and so on playing "Scotland the Brave," an Arab leaned over to Andy Braid, the Scot, and said, "I guess you didn't know the bagpipe was invented in Jordan." Braid didn't get the joke.

Q: Actually, the bagpipe has always been a shepherd's instrument. There are Greek bagpipes and all.

CURRAN: Don't tell the Scots!

Q: Well, do you want to talk about while you were there the Palestinian situation?

CURRAN: The Palestinians in that area, in the Jordan-Israeli area, were a powder keg waiting to explode. The biggest camp was called Aqabat-Jaber. I think there were 100,000 people living there, and they had nothing to do but breed and listen to broadcasts. We are talking about Nasser broadcasts. And the level of emotion went higher and higher. When the '67 War pulled all the plugs on the means of keeping refugees quiet, and more Palestinians were dispersed into the region, a lot of them went to Jordan and a lot of them went to Beirut. In both cases, this turned out to be a threat. So it was the period from, say, '67 to '80 that the pot boiled over in many places. Our diplomacy was at best keeping a lid on an uncertain kettle. I think it's probably best to go through the Yemen experience and then come around back to that.

Q: Black September happened when?

CURRAN: 1970.

Q: Okay, fine then, good, we don't want to touch that. But at the time, this '61 to '63 period, the Palestinians, from the embassy point of view, weren't considered a problem that was going to blow up.

CURRAN: Correct. Many Palestinians in the refugee camps and on the West Bank were the most virulent anti-Americans, anti-Israelis. The Hussein family in Jerusalem was especially vocal. But for the most part, the West Bankers didn't care for the Jordanians very much, but they didn't at all care for the Israelis, so they were willing to put up with the status quo, that is, governance by King Hussein.

Q: What were you getting from Tel Aviv? I mean, was there a relationship between our embassy in Amman and Tel Aviv, or did you get the feeling that these were two different worlds?

CURRAN: Two different worlds. In early 1962, we made a visit to Israel and were just assaulted every minute we were in Israel about "How can you possibly stand to live in that dirty Arab culture" and "Why don't you live in the land of the free and the brave here in Israel?"

Q: This is from our own people.

CURRAN: From Americans and from Israelis. I don't know if you've ever been in Israel, but outsiders get the "sell" a hundred miles an hour 24 hours a day. I learned to understand it, particularly when I ran the cultural program in Israel for five years, from Washington, and I learned to appreciate the Israelis. They are in a pretty tough spot. If you're in a country where you stand on your eastern border and you can see the sea, you have a pretty heightened sense of your security or lack thereof.

I might say, by the by - we can come back to this - I think our government has in a laborious way arrived at a pretty good way of dealing with this situation, which is to try to make the local people in the area deal with the basic problems, not having the U.S. in the middle all the time.

Q: Well, I'm just trying to catch the mood before we break. Were you in a way getting results of cables between our embassy in Tel Aviv and any sort of joint process, "Well, you'll do this, and we'll do that," or not?

CURRAN: No. The major peace initiative in the early 1960s was something called the Johnson Plan. The idea would be to take the refugees out of the camps and resettle a few of them in Israel but settle the rest in the Mideast region.

Q: This was Joseph Johnson, who was my professor in college.

CURRAN: The Israelis were adamantly opposed to accepting any Palestinians into Israel, and that was the rock on which the ship foundered.

Q: Well, then we'll pick this up-

CURRAN: -in the New Year.

Q: -in the New Year. This will be 1962. And we'll be picking this up where you have been assigned to the Yemen-

WILLIAM B. MACOMBER, JR.
Ambassador
Jordan (1961-1964)

Ambassador William B. Macomber, Jr. was born in New York in 1921. His Foreign Service career included positions in Jordan and Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Turkey. He was interviewed by Roger Ernst on September 30, 1989.

Q: You mentioned your services in Turkey as ambassador. That was not your first ambassadorial post.

MACOMBER: First I was in Jordan.

Q: How did that come about? That sounds intriguing. Here you were with a change of administration and a brand new president with a whole lot of new rhetoric about the world and his outlook?

MACOMBER: Well, I got to know him when I was managing the State Department's congressional relations. He was on the Foreign Relations Committee and he was a very able fellow on that committee. When he was elected President, he wanted to make a few bipartisan (Republican) appointments. I had enjoyed working with him and admired him a lot. Interestingly enough, when I first took that job [Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations], I went up to the Hill to call on the Vice President as a matter of protocol but also to get some advice as to

how to do the job. The vice president, Richard Nixon, gave me some very good advice, and I remember the last thing he said to me was, "Get to know young Jack Kennedy", whose offices were across the corridor from the vice president's in the Senate Building. "He is a Democrat, but he is a pretty good man and has a lot of influence with the younger people in the Senate, and if you can convince him of the correctness of the Department's course, that is likely to have influence with the other younger members." It was very good advice. Interestingly, when I was dealing in the early days with Senator Kennedy on a foreign policy issue, he asked at least on one occasion, "What does Dick think?" As 1960 drew nearer, that question never was asked.

Q: When you were asked to go to Jordan, did you have any particular background or interest in Middle Eastern affairs?

MACOMBER: I had a background in Jordan, quite a bit of it fortunately. Jordan had been on the front pages of the New York Times for years because it had been a center of the cauldron out there, it nearly went under a couple of times. It was a matter of great congressional interest and I was immersed in briefings about Jordan for the previous several years. (One morning Secretary Dulles said to me, "By the end of the day Jordan may well not exist. If it should make it through the day it will be because of its strong leadership"--referring to its young king and its prime minister, Samir Refai.) In congressional relations you went where the action was, that is where public and congressional attention was focused. Because Jordan was on the center stage for so long I was relatively well informed.

Q: You went out in 1961 after the change of administrations. You were involved with the dilemma of America's emotional support of Israel and in juxtaposition with our dependence, then and now, with Middle Eastern oil, in Saudi Arabia and other interests too.

MACOMBER: Jordan has no oil. Jordan in those days was sort of the centerpiece of the whole Arab-Israeli business. The disappearance of Jordan would create a political vacuum. No other country particularly wanted Jordan, but they did not want anybody else to have it. Hence, stability in Jordan was very important to keep the peace out there. Also King Hussein represented moderate, decent leadership, the kind of leader we could support with some enthusiasm. So that was a fascinating experience. In Turkey the job was quite different. It was like being ambassador to the United States in that if you were trying to get a policy supported you had to deal with the president, the prime minister and the parliament, and the press, and with public opinion. In Jordan it was just one person. King Hussein was the center of the whole country. It was a small country too, which made it easier. Unfortunately, it wasn't a democracy, it was not ready for that, but the King was trying to do a good job for his people.

Jordan was very fragile but it had strong leadership and that can make a difference in the tough days. The U.S. supported Jordan generously from the economic and military equipment point of view. There were difficult and scary days, but exciting. While I was there Jordan did not collapse, the King was not killed though he was very much a target of the radical Arabs, and serious fighting did not break out between the Israelis and the Arabs and had not for a number of years. I thought if that uneasy peace could somehow be kept for say 15 or 20 more years, the Israelis and the Arabs just might learn to live with, and grudgingly learn to accept, the status quo. A number of my Arab friends would say to me, very privately, that the present situation was

getting them nowhere, that Arab land was not going to be returned, compensation for that land and rights to visit were practical alternatives--not desirable, but better than what they had now. And there was general recognition that peace could bring considerable prosperity for both sides. There was even some talk of this in less private conversations. As one very prominent Jordanian leader said to me, "Someday someone has got to have the guts to make peace." Unfortunately, the '67 war put an end to my hopes of a gradual peace, first between Israel and Jordan, and eventually between Israel and all its immediate neighbors.

Q: Your instructions came basically from the president to keep the peace? Everything was derivative to that one goal?

MACOMBER: To keep the peace and to keep Jordan in existence. That was our objective and it was the British government's objective also. In those days there was no practical successor to Hussein. We wanted Hussein to survive so the country would survive. Also we felt that Jordan under King Hussein could serve as an example of what could be done with moderate and courageous leadership. Of course we knew that Hussein would put his and Jordan's interest first, but in those days those interests coincided with ours. And I think almost everyone who dealt with him in the U.S. government liked him. We referred to him as the "BYK", the Brave Young King.

Q: Did you and your counterparts, the U.S. ambassadors across the borders, operate on pretty much a common wavelength?

MACOMBER: Yes. Wally Barbour was the ambassador in Israel. He took me around Israel, which was a useful experience, and gave us a chance to discuss our common problems. People in Israel would ask me about places in Jordan they had visited in earlier times, and when I got back to Jordan people there, of course, asked about places in Israel.

Q: There were no particular problems about the attitudes of people on the Hill, in the U.S. Congress? It seems so divided now.

MACOMBER: No. The Israeli lobby, while hardly admirers of Jordan and its leader, recognized that King Hussein represented a moderate point of view in the midst of far more radical Arab neighbors. That changed after my time, and as a result of Jordan's actions in the 1967 war.

Q: I guess the Jordanians had problems with their other borders too?

MACOMBER: Yes, the Jordanian government generally felt that the Israelis could be counted on to act logically in response to their own best interests. They were never quite sure what their Arab neighbors would do.

MARJORIE RANSOM
Junior Officer Trainee, USIS
Amman (1963-1964)

Marjorie Ransom was born in New York in 1938. She received her bachelor's degree from Trinity University in 1959 and her master's degree from Columbia University in 1962. Her career includes positions in Jordan, India, Iran, Yemen, Washington D.C., Abu Dhabi, Syria, and Egypt. Mrs. Ransom was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in December 2000.

Q: In the USIA training, what were they saying you would be doing? How did you see USIA?

RANSOM: In USIA at that time, you were a junior officer for 10 months and worked in the different parts of USIS (U.S. Information Service). You did not do any work in the embassy. My first post was Amman, Jordan. I helped work on an appearance of Duke Ellington and his orchestra. My Public Affairs Officer [PAO] insisted that I teach English, even though I had no training, so that I would learn about English teaching. I did work on scholarships. I was given responsibility for running the scholarship process. I worked on producing television documentary film, newsreel footage on AID (Agency for International Development) programs... I had a terrific PAO, David Nalle, one of the best. He saw to it that I was not plunked in one place and assigned to one officer and got stuck there. He always put me where the action was. There was an Information Officer. There was a Cultural Affairs Officer and an Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer and a Public Affairs Officer. I worked in each section. I also had to act as duty officer in the Embassy. It was one place where I was discriminated against. I took care of that. They wouldn't let me read the traffic, but they would let me act as duty officer. The only time I got to see any cable traffic was when I was duty officer. So, one night I got a cable that I had a pretty good idea did not require any immediate action, but I woke the DCM up anyway. Since I couldn't see any of the traffic, I was incapable of judgment. After that, I got to read the Embassy traffic.

Q: What was the situation in Amman? You were there from when then?

RANSOM: March '63 to January '64. There were problems then with the Palestinians.

Q: It was the '67 War that really pushed all the Palestinians into...

RANSOM: By that time, I was in Yemen.

Q: How did you find Amman and the Jordanians?

RANSOM: I loved the Jordanians. I thought they were very easy to communicate with. The fact that the PAO had me teach English was really a good move for me. It meant that I had a class of 18-20 men, these were 18-20 men totally outside the Embassy circle.

Q: What were you getting from your contacts about King Hussein?

RANSOM: I wasn't seeing so many Palestinians. The Palestinians that saw were not so critical of King Hussein.

Q: How about the Jordanians?

RANSOM: I did know some journalists who were quite critical of the government. They complained about the lack of freedom of expression and opportunity for Palestinians. The Jordanians I saw were not so critical.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

RANSOM: William Macomber.

Q: He is one of the characters. Although he is not technically Foreign Service, he had a number of assignments. His temper is renowned. Did you ever run across that?

RANSOM: He had a reputation for having a strong temper, but I never saw it. He was very energetic, very active. He was a bachelor when he was there, so it was hard on families. He just worked all the time. He was very involved in sports. He liked all the male members of the embassy to play basketball. I was the most junior person in the entire embassy, but he was interested in what everyone did. I found him to be open and accepting.

Q: Were you picking up attitudes from the officers in the Embassy about Israel at that time?

RANSOM: There was a lot of concern among people in the Embassy about the condition of the refugee camps. The ambassador took people from the Embassy to play basketball in each one of the camps. I went along and watched the game and saw how the Palestinians lived. That's a long time ago.

Q: I know it is. How about your Arabic? Were you studying it other side or keeping it up?

RANSOM: I used it. I must have had a tutor. I had some Arab friends who didn't speak English. It was a struggle, but I communicated with them. I couldn't use my Arabic in an official capacity. I was a 2/2+ level at that point. I'm sure I tried to do some reading in Arabic, learning the music.

Q: Did you get involved with the newspapers?

RANSOM: I did less with newspapers and I'm not sure why. I did more cultural work. There was a press section. The FSNs (Foreign Service National, or a local employee of a Foreign Service post) in the press section were older men. I don't think they got out very much. The information officer certainly knew a lot of journalists, but I don't remember meeting them.

DAVID NALLE
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Jordan, 1963-1965

Mr. Nalle was born in Philadelphia and graduated from Princeton. He entered the predecessor of USIA in 1951. He served in a number of posts including

Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Jordan and Moscow. He was interviewed by Dorothy Robins-Mowry in 1990.

NALLE: Directly to Amman, where I was PAO for two years, from 1963 to '65, I guess, before the '67 War, so that Jordan, in effect, included East Jerusalem and the West Bank and all those places that are now occupied by Israel. Once again it was basically a very agreeable place to be. Our second child, Susan, was born in a new private hospital there.

Q: Did you like the switch over from the cultural area to a PAOship? I know that's a promotion, considered within the Agency as a promotion, but it is a different kind of a job.

NALLE: Yes, and that's something that's always concerned me about the Agency. The same question arose when I was in Moscow. If you have a good CAO and a good IO, what's the PAO supposed to do with his time during the day? Whom is he supposed to talk to? How can you talk to, say, a New York Times correspondent or Pravda writer without undercutting the information officer who's supposed to be doing that? That's to use a simple example.

Yes, to some extent that was evident in Amman. What it leaves to the PAO is management, effectively, and that's important if you're going to do your job and you have to run the place. We had a big Center in Amman, which had to be run. CAO and assistant CAO had a lot to learn, and I think we did learn together. But you often do end up in an anomalous position. You go to the ambassador's meeting, and you can tell your people what happened, but in many ways it's much better if the ambassador is there to talk to the information officer, so when he goes to visit the editor, he knows what it is he's supposed to say. Since I had a cultural background and interest, very often I found myself undercutting the CAO. When we would give a dinner, for example, we would invite the people that should have been his natural, primary contacts.

We were talking about the triumvirate system of PAO, CAO, and IO. I think I just said it was really basically an unworkable construct. But it didn't work badly in Amman, partly because of this thing I mentioned in connection with Syria. Our policy towards the Arab-Israeli situation was unacceptable to all Jordanians, so you had to leave that aside. There was no way of justifying our bias in favor of Israel--and explaining it was no help--so, by and large, we had to leave questions of policy aside. So the cultural activities, and the basic informational, rather than policy, work of the information officer, became more important. The cultural aspect was the channel through which you could communicate--maybe not always a political message, but communication, in any case.

Because of our special relationship with Jordan, one of the important things we did in the information area was to publicize American-assisted, or just simply Jordanian, efforts at development of the country. We made a film, for example, on the East Ghor Canal, which was a large project that took water at the top of the Jordan Valley and brought it down the east bank of the Jordan Valley, and irrigated all the land between that and the Jordan River in the center. We made a very attractive movie, which had considerable success, on that project.

The information officer and his JOT--and we had some good JOTs. It was a good learning process. For example, as JOT we had Marjorie Marilley, who is now Marjorie Ransom, and Bill Thompson, who later on was a CAO, and is now in charge of what's called "Arts America."

Q: Something like that.

NALLE: Yes. Both of them very good, and Amman was their first post. I think they learned a lot, covering, for example, the various development projects around Jordan, which would result in film clips or in stories for an Arabic-language magazine published in Beirut, which had a USIA printing center in those days.

Q: The regional center.

NALLE: We also did a series, which was sort of my pet project, a series of small, intentionally modest pamphlets by Americans or Jordanians on the development problems of the country by prominent academics, for example, when they were American, or by the Jordanian head of the Jordan Valley Authority. These were distributed very selectively, in Arabic, to people who made a difference in the country. It was a very positive operating atmosphere if you once got by the political question of American-Mideast policy. That's one reason it was a good learning post, I think.

I was there at the time of the Kennedy assassination, which was an interesting experience to live through, because you saw Kennedy through Jordanian eyes and got an idea of what America meant to Jordanians. It was a fairly close relationship. An interesting sidelight is that because the Jordanians were so interested in it, we didn't want to wait until the Agency produced that major film that they finally did produce. We got George Thompson down from Beirut, where he had some sort of a regional job, and he's a fantastically versatile person. George and I and the information officer and the whole staff put together a film on John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, which we then toured around to major cities of the country, within days of the assassination.

Q: Who was your IO then?

NALLE: Bob Ruggiero. Obviously it wasn't a classic, finished product, but it was mostly news clips and so forth put together with some narration, and it was tremendously successful. I remember we went to Irbid and showed it to 250 people. Irbid then was a not very distinguished city in northern Jordan. It's now quite a center of focus.

I guess what I am saying is really in response to your question: my experience in Meshed with the development program was a very good background for this development program in Jordan. The most positive thing we could say about American relations with Jordan was that we were trying to get the country on its feet, setting aside policy for the moment.

Q: Did you encounter King Hussein at all?

NALLE: Oh, yes, not infrequently, at receptions, or he would invite embassy people down to one of his palaces in the Jordan Valley--for dancing. He liked parties. One had access to pretty much the elite of Jordan there, because partly of the King's special relationship with the United States, and you dealt with some very impressive people.

Q: Was the King very much in control there? How was it different, moving from a Shah to a King?

NALLE: Probably the same degree of control and the same mechanisms, but Jordan was different from Iran in that it was much smaller and theoretically much more controllable, but also I think the opposition forces were much better organized and much more volatile at that time than they were in Iran at that time. The external attempts to subvert the King were always in operation, so even if the situation was relatively tranquil in Jordan, you might have the Syrians working at that very moment to make them untranquil, to upset them.

I remember Gib Austin came out to visit the post. I took him to the airport when he was leaving.

Q: He was area director?

NALLE: He was the deputy director of the area at that time. I remember we were standing on the balcony overlooking the field at the old airport, and he asked me about King Hussein, because he had heard all these stories about the opposition and so forth. I said, "You know, it looks to me now that he can't last for more than three months." [Laughter] That was in 1963.

Q: He's a survivor, all right. His wives seem not to survive so well.

NALLE: Yes.

Q: It makes a very interesting transition. As someone who has worked primarily in the cultural field overseas, I'm interested in your comments about the PAO-CAO-IO relationship. The interest of the PAO does affect very much how the CAO can function in the capital city.

NALLE: Yes.

Q: Either they dabble or they really understand what the CAO is all about.

NALLE: It depends largely on the temperament and the talents of the individuals in each job. If you have a very good CAO, you've got to step back and let him do it, much as it may--

Q: But it's often more fun to be the CAO. [Laughter]

NALLE: Yes. If you have a weak CAO, you've got to control.

Q: You left Amman in '65?

NALLE: 1965. Yes.

MARSHALL W. WILEY
Economics Officer
Amman (1963-1965)

Jordan – Iraq Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1965-1968)

Marshall W. Wiley was born in Illinois in 1925. He attended the University of Chicago, where he received a Ph.D. in 1943, a J.D. in 1948, and an M.B.A. in 1949. Mr. Wiley was a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1945. He joined the State Department in 1958 and his career included posts in Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: Then you went to Jordan, where you were an economic officer from '63 to '65? What type of work were you doing there then?

WILEY: In Jordan I was the economic officer in the embassy. We had a fairly substantial aid program going with Jordan in those days, including a rather large straight cash subsidy as well as a large technical assistance program. So, my job was really to analyze the nature of the economy of Jordan, report on it, and to make recommendations to my superiors about the nature of our aid program. I used to attend all the meetings of the aid mission as well as the embassy meetings, I mean the staff meetings of the aid mission. We also had a relatively small amount of commercial relations with Jordan, largely aid finance that I became involved in, promoting our commercial relations in Jordan.

Q: The ambassador then was Robert Barnes, I believe?

WILEY: Barnes came after I was there. Butts Macomber was ambassador when I first arrived, and then Barnes came later.

Q: Ambassador Macomber is sort of a major figure in American Foreign Service. Could you describe a bit about his method of operation?

WILEY: I always got along, I think, quite well with Ambassador Macomber. He was not a career Foreign Service Officer. He had come in via the Congress, where he had been a staffer, and then, from there, went into the executive branch. So he was essentially a political appointee, but he had a strong feeling for the Service. He had been in the Marine Corps in World War II, and was oriented in terms of career services and developing career services. I think he felt strongly about that, and still does. He didn't have the kind of background that a lot of Foreign Service Officers would have, in that, he didn't come up through the ranks of the Foreign Service. He came in as an ambassador. But he was certainly not the typical political appointee either, who was there because he was a fund raiser. He was there because he did know a lot about the area, and because

he knew how the political system in the Congress and the Executive Branch worked back here. As I say, I didn't have any problems with him. I always found him very devoted to his job, worked very hard, and had a very sincere interest in the United States interests in that part of the world, and took his job very seriously.

Q: In a way, you were monitoring the aid effort, there, I take it?

WILEY: Yes, and reporting on the overall economic condition of the country.

Q: Was there much economic condition in the country? Do we have any economic interest in the area? It was one of the pieces of the puzzle of the Middle East. How effective was the aid program?

WILEY: The country was very poor. Jordan doesn't have the natural resources or the oil of rich states, of course. They have a relatively well-educated population, and, in fact, a lot of Jordanians--in fact, more than half the country were Palestinians, when I was there, a lot of them refugees, of course. But a lot of them were professional people, businessmen, bankers, etc. as well.

Later on, many of the Palestinians went on to jobs in the gulf in Saudi Arabia and the oil rich countries, and sent back remittances, which became a very important part of the economy. That hadn't really started when I was there. That was just beginning at that stage. They did have this large refugee population, which was supported primarily through UNWRA, the U.N. agency. And the U.N. agency was funded, a substantial part of it, by the United States Government. So we were, either through the aid program directly, or through UNWRA, providing an awful lot of the economic support for the country.

Their resources were quite limited in terms of what they could do for themselves. Agriculture is limited by the lack of water. They don't have oil. They have developed a pretty strong service industry, which at that stage was only getting under way for that part of the world. They were helped, considerably, later on by the problems of Beirut, because a lot of companies that had regional offices in Beirut moved to Amman. That provided an in-flow of capital into Amman. That did help them a lot later on.

Q: What was the political situation in Amman when you were there? We're talking about '63 to '65?

WILEY: The king had gone through kind of a difficult period before I got there, when there were some riots and demonstrations against the king. He was still a little defensive, I would say, from that period. He always had a delicate balance to maintain of being an East banker. Actually, his family are from the Hejaz in Saudi Arabia. In a population that was more than half Palestinian in those days, many of them did not like the idea of having a king who came from the bedouin elements of the population, where as they considered themselves more sophisticated and advanced city dwellers, which a lot of the Palestinians were, of course.

So you always had to be pretty careful about Palestinian sensitivities. Of course, in those days he also had sovereignty over the West Bank, and the old city of Jerusalem which they lost then in the '67 War, when Israel occupied the West Bank in Jerusalem. But he had that large Palestinian population on the West Bank, as well, then under his sovereignty. So it was kind of a difficult political task, but he was fairly adept, I think, at balancing off the pressures upon him, and handling a delicate political situation.

Q: How did the embassy feel about him as a person?

WILEY: I think, generally speaking, the embassy was fairly impressed at his political skills. He was still quite young when I was there. He was always, at least, acceptable to the Israelis. The Israelis preferred to see the Hashemite regime in Jordan, than to one of the more radical Arab regimes taking over the place. So they never made any particular trouble for Jordan, except on some of the arms sales problems. The economic aid to Jordan didn't bother the Israeli lobby. The Israeli lobby did become quite vocal over arms sales, and that did get to be a period of real political struggle back then.

Q: Were you involved in any of that while you were there, or did that come later?

WILEY: Most of it came later, I was involved in some of the first aircraft sales to Jordan. At that point, the Israeli lobby was not as well organized as it became later on, and it didn't put up any effective opposition to the initial round. Although there was opposition in the Executive Branch in those days because, the simple reason, they didn't think Jordan could afford the more sophisticated weapons, and it would really be funded at our expense, which it was, largely, of course. They didn't see any particular reason for the king to have the more sophisticated weapons.

Q: At your level, or at the ambassadorial level that you are aware of, was there much consultation between our embassy and Tel Aviv and in Amman, or did you each go your own way?

WILEY: There was a fair amount of consultation. There was a certain amount of visiting back and forth in those days. You could go up to the old city, and you had to walk across the Mandelbaum Gate, which you could do and visit the other side for a few days, and then come back. I went over to Israel several times while I was in Amman. I think, probably, there was more visitation from Jordan into Israel, than there were from the embassy in Israel going into Jordan, except maybe to the old city to see some of the sites there. Certainly, there was a pretty wide distribution of communications between the two. We saw most of their telegrams. They saw most of ours, and airmails etc.

Q: It was, I think, as anything can be called peaceful in the Middle East, it was relatively a peaceful period, was it, in Amman?

WILEY: Yes, it was until '57, and I was gone by then. There was, I think, some tendency, particularly, on the part of the ambassadors in Israel, who were not Arabist, who didn't have a broad experience in the Middle East to become convinced of the Israeli point of view and to push

it very vigorously back in Washington, which used to annoy the ambassadors in the Arab countries around the area, of course. That tension always did go on.

Q: Then you actually got at the other end of that particular thing, because you came back to Washington in '65. What were you doing?

WILEY: I was a desk officer for Jordan and Iraq when I came back. And it was on the desk at the time of the '67 War.

Q: How did this play out, as far as, how did you hear about it, and what did you do?

WILEY: How did I hear about the war?

Q: How did this come at you? Were you ready for it?

WILEY: We were a little surprised when the war finally broke out. Obviously, the tensions had been building. And the Arabists had been saying for a long time that there has to be some kind of a settlement to this problem, or there is going to be an explosion. It was hard to predict just when the explosion was going to take place, of course. When it came about in '67, Jordan made the mistake of listening to Nasser, who talked him into joining into the war, of course, for which he paid a heavy price in losing the West Bank, which he has still lost, and has still now pretty much renounced any claim at all to the West Bank. In that period leading up to the war, I think, there was a lot of concern at the working level that our policies were not sufficiently vigorous in pursuing peace initiatives. Particularly, we were never very effective in working with the Israelis to try to get them to make an accommodation that would some how be acceptable to the Palestinians, which we still aren't very good at that.

Q: You're on the Iraqi-Jordanian desk. War comes out, I mean the Israelis. Nasser called for the U.N. to depart. The Israelis have the air strikes. Jordan came in. Were we doing anything, as far as King Hussein was concerned, saying, "For God's sake, don't get in this thing. You're going to lose your shirt," which he did? Do you know that we were involved in that, or did it just happen?

WILEY: I think this happened very quickly. The king was largely convinced as a result of a telephone call or two from Nasser, that he better join in on the first day. We, as far as I know, did not have an opportunity to make any representations to the king about this before he made up his mind. He acted very quickly based on conversations with Gamal.

Q: Gamal being Gamal Abdel Nasser.

WILEY: Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Q: What does a desk officer do, when one of the countries you're in goes to war?

WILEY: He doesn't sleep much for one thing. [Laughter] He spends a lot of time in the office.

Q: You see, these interviews are designed for people who are not overly familiar with what happens in the State Department. So I would like to get a little feel for what you were doing.

WILEY: The desk officer, of course, gets immediately deluged by people wanting to know about relatives or family members, who are in the war zone. There were some construction companies working in Jordan in the West Bank, for instance, who were then overrun by the Israeli forces-- American construction companies. They were not only worried about their personnel. They were also worried about their equipment, this kind of thing, that they had there in the war zone. Of course, they all immediately came charging into the desk officer wanting to know what the situation is, and wanting help in getting their stuff out, and getting their people out.

So that takes a lot of time. Then, of course, you're getting pressure from your bosses to write position papers on what our policy ought to be--to talking points when we're calling in the Jordanian ambassador to talk to him or the Iraqi ambassador whoever. The assistant secretary will want talking points prepared by the desk officer to help him set up a line that you take with the ambassador as to what we're advising the country to do, or whatever representations we want to make to the country at that point. And there are usually other kinds of think pieces that go to a higher level, and perhaps even go to the President, about what we should do as a result of these events. Should we put pressure on the Israelis to withdraw? Do we not pressure the Israelis, let them sit in the occupied territories in hopes of bringing the Arabs into a more accommodating stance in negotiations? If we put pressure on the Israelis is this going to lead to a situation in the future in which the Arabs will feel freer to start hostilities? What's happening at the U.N.? What are we telling our ambassador at the U.N. to say in the Security Council meetings? The desk officer gets involved in all of this.

Q: What was your thrust that you were making about Jordan, dealing with these affairs your talking about at that time?

WILEY: I was generally pushing the line that we should be putting more pressure on the Israelis to withdraw. After all, they had started the thing by their sudden strikes on the Egyptian air fields in beginning the war. I thought that we would have been in a much better situation as far as future negotiations, if we had asked the Israelis to withdraw, as we had in previous occasions when Israel had crossed the border on raids aimed at Palestinian concentrations, and so on. I thought we should have done it then, and I think probably I had support, at least up through the assistant secretary.

Q: At that time was that Raymond Hare?

WILEY: No, Luke Battle was assistant secretary. But when it got up to the seventh floor--

Q: The seventh floor being the Secretary of State.

WILEY: The Secretary and the Under Secretary, and the White House, of course, where the final decisions were made, of course. Johnson was quite close to the Israelis, and he refused to put any pressure on Israel at all about their occupation in the occupied territories.

Q: One can say one is close to the Israelis, and looking at this as a retired Foreign Service Officer, it's difficult to see what vital interest we have in Israel. Is this purely a political matter, being the Israeli lobby, which often is translated as being the Jewish voter, as sort of a rather cohesive body? Is it purely political, or is there another reason that you can see for such strong support of Israel?

WILEY: In my view, it is strictly a reaction to the strength of the domestic lobby, the Israeli lobby. The argument that Israel is a strategic asset to the United States, is essentially a rationalization for the domestic political pressures, because, in fact, they're not an asset, they're a liability. Our relationship with Israel has gotten in the way of much more important strategic relationships that we should have with Saudi Arabia, with the gulf countries, where our real interests lie in the populations, and in the wealth of the area, which is in the oil fields, primarily. Israel is only about 2 percent of the population, and because of our support for that 2 percent, we're willing to alienate the good will of the other 98 percent, which have most of the land area and most of the resources, which, I think, in terms of our national interest, is a mistake.

Q: Did you feel any pressure on you to tailor your recommendations to, you might say, the domestic political realities, or did you feel you could call it as it was, and then sit back and watch any recommendations go down the tubes, because of domestic politics?

WILEY: I think as a junior officer, I felt fairly free in giving my recommendations. Now there is a limit in how far they would go. They may not get past the assistant secretary, who I think, personally, was probably sympathetic to what I was saying, but who had to be a little more in tune with the political realities here, than I had to be. I think as a junior officer, I was free to call the shots as I saw them. The higher you get up the ladder, the more difficult that becomes. An ambassador, for instance, has to be more careful about this kind of thing. I think many ambassadors do feel that they have to be careful in their recommendations. They can't always say exactly what they believe because of the political realities back here on the domestic side.

Q: This waxes and wanes, but did you feel at the time that dealing with Middle Eastern affairs--very sensitive Middle Eastern affairs--that recommendations you made would immediately be leaked to Congress? Did you feel comfortable at the time?

WILEY: I think, as a junior officer, I didn't worry too much about that, because no one paid that much attention to what I was saying, in any case. [Laughter] I wasn't that important that the Israeli lobby was going to single me out.

Q: One of the things that is sometimes forgotten. It really didn't make any difference.

WILEY: Exactly, yes. Within the Bureau, there has always been a very healthy relationship, in the sense that the people knew and trusted each other and really expected the other person to give honest judgments and honest opinions. I think the Middle East Bureau has always been very good for that. The Arabists, I think, are an unusually honorable group of people and always have been in this sense, and have really been concerned about the national interests of the United States, and consistently opposed the Israeli lobby, when they thought the Israeli lobby positions

were contrary to those interests, which is why they are still very unpopular with the Israeli lobby, of course. I think they're a very decent, very honorable bunch of people, and supplied my bosses for the next two or three levels up. So I was, in a sense, shielded from the political problems by this being far enough down the ladder, that no one cared that much about what I was saying.

GEORGE QUINCEY LUMSDEN
Chief of Consular Section
Amman (1965-1968)

Born and raised in New Jersey, Ambassador Lumsden was educated at Princeton and Georgetown Universities. After service in the US Navy, Mr. Lumsden joined the Foreign Service. Following assignments in Izmir and Bonn, he was assigned to Amman and Beirut, where he undertook Arabic Language Studies. Subsequent foreign assignments include Kuwait, Paris and The United Arab Emirates, where he served as Ambassador. In Washington, Mr. Lumsden held positions concerning the Arabian Gulf States. After retiring, he pursued petroleum and energy matters in the private sector. Ambassador Lumsden was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: In 1964, you got home leave.

LUMSDEN: Yes. I said, "I've got to get someplace where I can get some sort of responsibility so I can make some kind of mark." In that I had had all that great consular experience in Turkey, I became the chief of the consular section in Amman, Jordan, which turned out to be a real turning point.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LUMSDEN: I went on home leave at the end of 1964. We had bought a car in Germany. I decided I would drive the car from Germany to Greece (my wife's parents were there) and we'd put it on a ship and take it to Beirut. This was a Mercedes. I paid a couple of thousand dollars for this thing. The ship was called "The Medea." It did not kill my children. It went first to Alexandria, where they took on a huge load of green beans and dumped it right on top of my car. It didn't hurt the car, but there were beans all over the place. We landed in Beirut the day that Winston Churchill died. That would have been January 25, 1965. After a night in Beirut, we drove up over Shatila to Damascus. They had had a big demonstration. They were trying to overthrow Hafez al-Assad. We didn't even know about it. We knew that there were some bricks in the streets and things like that. We just drove on through, got to Amman, and people said, "My god, you drove through Damascus yesterday? Didn't you know that..." "Well, we saw some stuff around, but we didn't worry about it." Kids in the car, both in diapers, changing diapers all the way. Thereupon, we started one of the pleasantest and most meaningful tours that I've had.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LUMSDEN: From January 1965 through.... I got assigned back up to Beirut to FSI for Arabic after this. That would have been the end of 1967. The kids and wife were evacuated. I was hard core, stayed on. November 1967 was when I went to Beirut.

Q: Let's talk about relations with Jordan when you arrived. Obviously, things were going to change.

LUMSDEN: Our relations with Jordan were really excellent at the time. Jordan looked to us to give them security support, given His Majesty's position on various things, to make sure that Israel knew that Jordan wasn't going to cause any problems, that American tourists were welcome in Jordan. Of course, for me, it meant in East Jerusalem, which was then administered by Jordan, there was no visa authority. I was responsible for the visa issuance to all of the West Bank plus Jordan itself. That means the majority of the population in Jordan proper even with Jordanian passports were Palestinian born, plus all of the West Bank. We had a registered demand for immigrant visas second only to Palermo. The number was 25-35,000 registered demands. That meant a lot of work. People would follow me home to lunch to see if I could do something for their visa. But official relations with the Jordanian government were excellent at all levels. Bob Barnes was the ambassador. He was replaced by Findley Burns, who was working hard on getting a modicum of American military equipment for the Jordanian army. We even got to the point where we had some F-104s there for training. They were still under U.S. ownership with Jordanian pilots. All of this, of course, was cleared with Israel in advance. We had a crackerjack political officer, one Richard Murphy, who was very well plugged in. We had a very good economic chief, Marshall Wiley; all these people went on up in the Service. Of course, we had me as consul. We also had the very highly respected station chief. So, they had a very good team.

Q: What was your impression of how the ambassador ran things and his relationships with the Consular Section?

LUMSDEN: Well, let's put it this way. The embassy in Amman is nothing like this now. It was on Jebel Webde. That was one of the seven hills of Amman. All of the functions of the embassy were in this one central building where all the action was, except for the Consular Section, which was in an entirely separate building across a dusty field close to 1,000 yards plus away from the embassy. The reason for this was because the Consular Section was mobbed with people. The kayeek and kabob salesmen would push their carts up to the Consular Section to sell. The line sometimes had 200 people in it. The ambassador was very glad that the distance was there and that I was out there. However, I will say, he did recognize the significance of the Consular Section as one of the main points of contact with the community at large, not the rarified levels of minister, intelligence operatives, generals, and things like that that they were dealing with. Indeed, in discussions for visas and things like that, I was able from time to time to come up with bits of information about something that was going to happen down at the Jericho refugee camp, somebody was going to visit and somebody who was close to Ahmed Shakari of the Palestine Liberation Army was going to be there and they were going to have a meeting and things like that. That was all helpful and well received. I think the ambassador realized what a job I had and I got some good efficiency reports out of that. He finally left shortly before he expected to leave. To this day, I don't know exactly what it was, whether it was something personal or whether he

had pushed the arms business with Jordan past the level of acceptability to some people back here. I just don't know the answer to that. All I know is that he left somewhat abruptly about 10 months or so before he was scheduled to and that King Hussein gave a superb farewell to him with a full military treat. But he had made the arrangements for the F-104s to come. It could have been the F-104s that did it. It also could have been something personal about which, frankly, I don't know. I've heard things I wouldn't even care to say. I'm not at all sure. He was a nice fellow.

He was replaced by another nice fellow, Findley Burns, who was not of the Arab world. This was his first post there. He came about Christmas/New Year's 1966/1967. The poor gentleman inherited the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Q: I'd like to treat prior to that first. Was there concern when you got there and during this early time about the Palestinians and where they might go in their relationship with the Jordanians? About three or four years later, you have the Black September business.

Was there concern about the Palestinians, their orientation, and what might upset the Jordanian regime when you arrived?

LUMSDEN: Constant concern. This would be seen in that all of the true power operators - the Raddi Abdullahs, the Wasfi Tals, and others who were in the power positions around the King - were all East Bank Bedouins or other Circassians who had come down. There was incessant concern. The Palestinian community at this time, pre-1967 War, of course, was mesmerized by Gamal Abdul Nasser and Arab unity. Of course, "Nasser is going to save us and drive the Jews into the sea." Unfortunately, in typical Palestinian fashion, for the most part, they were just sitting there waiting for Nasser to save them rather than doing anything. But of course, that was okay in Amman, although Nasser scared the bejeebers out of an awful lot of Arab leaders at the time. So, the answer to your question is, yes, there was great concern and great fear watching. That's why when I in the Consular Section was able to say that somebody connected with Ahmed Shakari, who was Nasser's little Palestinian Liberation Army toady on this, was coming to the Jericho Refugee Camp to give a talk, this was of interest to the station chief, political officer, and others.

Before the 1967 War actually broke out, there were a number of incidents that started sort of like birth pains coming closer and closer together. I can't remember all of the geographic locations. There was something that happened in Latroon. There were incidents in which Palestinians were making bombs or taking shots at night at someone. Then there was a large incident on the southern part of the West Bank. I can't remember the name of the town. It was almost like Shatila, but that was in Beirut. Actually, the Israeli air force got into that one and a number of people were killed. The Jordanian Arab Army unit either had no orders or didn't follow the orders that they had and thought that they would get in there and help the Arab cause. Of course, they got squashed in no time flat. It was a major incident. But those types of things were happening. You could see '67 starting to build as Nasser upped the rhetoric all the time. But maybe you don't want to get into the war yet.

Q: I want to pick up before. What about on the West Bank in East Jerusalem? Did we have a consulate in Jerusalem?

LUMSDEN: We did have a consulate in East Jerusalem. However, it did not have a cost perception that handled anything except American interests. It did no visa work at all. That was all pushed up in Amman. You could drive from Amman to old Jerusalem by going down that wonderful highway at sea level where you keep on going down and then back up. It was about a 65 mile drive. You go from 1,200 feet down to whatever it is below sea level at the Dead Sea (It's the lowest spot on the face of the Earth.) up to about 1,400 or 1,500 feet in Jerusalem. It's a real up-down drive. It is a fascinating drive.

Q: Was the West Bank really sort of a separate entity in itself within the bounds of Jordan?

LUMSDEN: No, it was administered as part of the Hashemite Kingdom. West Bank dwellers had Jordanian passports if they wanted them. There were many in the refugee camps that didn't want Jordanian passports because they had claims to land in Israel proper and they wanted to keep the UN documentation which they could use at that time. But there was at least the effort to say that "We're all Arabs and we're all Jordanians" and Palestinians had prominent positions in agriculture, fisheries, and cultural affairs. But when it came down to key military intelligence and political operations, the power rested in East Bank Jordanians. The Palestinians felt as a result of that they really there was second class discrimination against them.

Q: How was Nasser looked upon from the point of view of our own officers in our embassy in Amman? Was he looked upon as being evil or a problem?

LUMSDEN: He was looked upon as extremely dangerous because it was at that time not very difficult to see that pan-Arab nationalism might carry the day and be very inimical to American interests all across North Africa and into the Gulf and the oil states. So, Nasser was always the object of reporting from this part of the world (I wasn't doing the political reporting then.) that would keep telling Washington, "Keep your eye on this. Look out! This could be a problem for us. We have to try to keep the Israelis under control for doing things that will further exacerbate Nasser's behavior." I think that's what we were...

Q: When you arrived, what were you getting about King Hussein, his rule, his personality and all?

LUMSDEN: He was at this point gaining more and more respect simply because of his staying power and his agility and the positions that he had taken. Of course, he was just about to let happen one of the stupidest things he ever did, but that hadn't happened yet. My personal view is that whether or not he could have prevented it anyway is another thing, but it did happen and he wasn't able to stop it. There is an interesting story on that one when we get to it.

He was felt to be the best deal we could have under the circumstances. He was felt to be maturing, but not all the way there yet. He was still frivolous, sports cars, girls, this sort of thing. But up to the beginning of the war, he was doing better. Then he made the terrible misstep that took Jordan into the war from which we've been unraveling. But again, like a phoenix, over the

years, he starts working back up again until at the end of his life, he was deservedly one of the most respected leaders in the Arab world.

Q: Let's talk about the '67 War. Was this foreseen? How did it play out?

LUMSDEN: The extent of what actually happened, I don't think anybody foresaw the momentous extent of the preemptive strike that Israel took. In early May of 1967, I had put in for leave anyway and got it approved for summer. In that my wife and children were going to go to Greece where her parents were still living and they had a nice beach house, they left Amman about the 17th/18th of May. Subsequently, one of the smartest things that I ever did not knowing that I was doing it. About the 20th of May, Ahmed Shakari himself arrived in Amman. The rhetoric, what the Arabs called "mozaideh," the outbidding of who was going to be more patriotic than the other, was going on. Of course, there were huge demonstrations in Amman and in the West Bank that worried the hell out of the Jordanian government. I was lucky enough to go around reporting some of this stuff. The Consular Section was so busy that they got another consul, who was eventually going to be my relief and he got there. The ambassador in about April said, "We're going to transfer you over to work with Dick Murphy in the Political Section," so they sent a replacement. Don't let me forget to tell you the story about my relief there. But Shakari arrives. Huge demonstrations. I'm downtown thinking, "Boy, for once, I'm really in it now. Finally, I've made it." I was still pretty naive on things. But at least I was down there. They were having riots. I was reporting them back. I knew that Shakari was here. "Be careful, Quincey, you don't look like an Arab. Look out."

Two days later, the ambassador, Findley Burns called, "Quincey, come with me. We're going somewhere." The ambassador; Dick Murphy, the political officer, the station chief, who by the way is still the personal representative of the old king and the new king here in Washington, and I were summoned to the prime minister's. This was Wasfi Tal, a wonderful guy. We sat down. I wondered exactly why I was there. It later became apparent. I was working with Dick, but I knew relief had just arrived. The prime minister started to explain a likely scenario that if hostilities broke out, we as Americans had to do a couple of very important things. First, we had to get that squadron of F-104s with American pilots out of there. The second thing was, what were we going to do with all these Americans? We had a USAID group building a road. We had agricultural experts down in the valley. And we had a lot of Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs with U.S. passports. What do you plan to do with all these people when hostilities break out? Then I did probably the one thing that a young officer in those conditions should not do. I opened my mouth. I said, "But Mr. Prime Minister, surely Jordan isn't going to go to war with Israel." He stopped in mid-sentence, took off his glasses, and said, "Young man, you're rather new to our world, aren't you?" Of course, I was fairly new then. I said, "Yes, Sir, I am." He continued, "Let me tell you one thing. You must never forget that we are Arabs and you must never underestimate our capacity for totally illogical action." That was the prime minister. Word for word. Wasfi Tal subsequently was assassinated by Black September because he was the progenitor of that. It's the famous scene at the Sheraton Hotel in Cairo where the assassin drank his blood. The war came. I was there because I was to get Americans the heck out of the way. As a result of that, I was sort of informally attached to a Jordan army medical unit during the war. As soon as the cease-fire was sort of holding, I went with them down into the Jordan Valley to try to find people who were coming out from housing and sent them all back to Amman. Of

course, we couldn't do anything with them because the airport had been bombed out and the runway was all shot. Finally, they got some C-130s in there. That took about three weeks. But I traveled from South Shunay to North Shunay. That is less than 10 miles along the Jordan Valley. I counted over 100 armored vehicles that had been shot out there. They hadn't cleaned up the bodies and stuff yet. Most of them were not Jordanian. They were Iraqi. The Iraqis had entered not really knowing what they were doing, except that they were going to be Arabs. They were very confused. I think some of these vehicles probably drove off the road themselves in the confusion when Nasser had told the Iraqis and Hussein that he still had air power to protect them. Of course, the Israelis took care of the Egyptians the first couple of days and then went after the West Bank. These guys arrived just in time to get totally clobbered down there. So, that was a real eye opening time.

Now, I received previously, just at the time of the shift over in the Political Section and my relief arrived, orders just before the war. This was a good six months in advance. I was going to be the principal officer and consul, the top officer at the post, in Basra. Well, there was no post in Basra after this event. I said, "Well, you know, I would love to go to the formal Arabic training at FSI/Beirut and area studies at AUB if you haven't got an assignment for me." They said, "Okay, we'll take the MLAT Test (Modern Language Aptitude Test)." I took the test before. I also wanted to see if I could get Arabic training, not just before the war. The test was administered by none other than April Glaspie of Baghdad fame. Although I didn't star on the test, nevertheless, they said, "You're getting the feel of this. We'll let you go to FSI in Beirut." So, that was the real turning point for me. When we left Jordan, we got some home leave and then I went to FSI/Beirut at the end of 1967.

Q: We'll stop at that point, but first I want to go back to during the war. Was the fact that Jordan entered the war considered by others as "This isn't going to work?"

LUMSDEN: It was considered by us working in the embassy as folly, but having said that (Of course, Dick Murphy would be the one to really talk to about this.) it probably could not have been avoided. The Jordanians, all as a part of posturing, because Nasser was bringing pressure, had put long tongs in the Latroon salient. These were these long army tanks.

Q: 155.

LUMSDEN: From the end of the Latroon, you can shoot one practically into the end of the Mediterranean Sea. You can hit Tel Aviv and whatever you want. When suddenly the Israeli preemptive strike against Egypt in the Sinai began, some of those cannons went off. The Jordanians were in the war. They shot. Whether or not the King's uncle had ordered them to fire or not, I do not know. But what is obvious is, the King never put a stop to it. He felt that his position would be too undercut if he under these conditions didn't let the Jordanians fight with their fellow Arabs. I know that Wasfi Tal was very much opposed to this, but the resultant vector of political forces in Amman nevertheless was such that they couldn't stop the entry into the war. Of course, it proved to be a disaster for Jordan.

Q: Was the position of the King considered in jeopardy after the Six Day War? What was the aftermath, the mood and all?

LUMSDEN: In the months after the war, the great tragedy had descended on the Arab world, but it had descended on Jordan, Egypt, and everybody. You couldn't single out King Hussein for not being Arab enough. He had lost relatively as much as Egypt had lost in the war. He couldn't be singled out as a running dog of the Zionists and the imperialists. The King's problems immediately started though after the war, because there was a huge influx of West Bank Palestinians into Amman, all of them now having gotten Kalashnikovs (assault rifles) from somewhere, and you couldn't drive around town without some 16 year old sticking it in the window and asking who you were and where you had gone. Clearly, the loss was not just the territorial loss, but there was a tremendous loss of authority as this tidal wave of Palestinians from the West Bank poured into the East Bank and started setting up their own little enclaves. Of course, the Palestinians were aware that some of the King's closest advisors were unalterably opposed to having gotten into this war in the first place and didn't like Palestinians anyhow because they're East Bank Bedouin; therefore, "We Palestinians at least, we're going to empower ourselves politically and start to run things around here."

Q: Did the Palestinians themselves really do much during the war or was it left pretty much to the Jordanian Bedouin army to do the dirty work?

LUMSDEN: For the Palestinians, it was all appearance and very little substance. There may have been some things done. The ranks of the Jordan Arab Army did have people who were Palestinians in there. However, the elite units right down to the privates were East Bank Bedouin.

JOSEPH C. WHEELER
Mission Director, USAID
Jordan, (1965-1967)

Joseph C. Wheeler was born in 1926 in Massachusetts. Wheeler served in the Army Air Corps and later received degrees from Bowdoin College and Harvard University. Wheeler began working for the State Department in 1951 and quickly joined what would later become USAID. In Washington DC, Wheeler worked on projects involving India, Greece, Turkey, Iran and Cyprus, as well as serving as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Near East and South Asia, Deputy Administrator for the Near East and working with the United Nations. He served overseas in the Peace Corps, as USAID Director to Jordan and as Mission Director to Pakistan. Wheeler was interviewed in 1998 by W. Haven North.

Q: Let's move on from the Peace Corps. You left the Peace Corps in 1963. Why did you leave?

WHEELER: The Peace Corps by its philosophy was meant to be a temporary place of employment. I realized that I had gained what I could out of it and that I should be on the lookout for opportunities. Carter Ide was the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Near East and South Asia and invited me to come back as Office Director. I very much appreciated the opportunity. After I had been Office Director for a couple of years for Greece, Turkey, Iran,

Cyprus, and Central Treaty Organization Affairs, I was invited by Bill Macomber (who had become Assistant Administrator after Bill Gaud) to go out to Jordan as Mission Director. This was a terrific opportunity. I was still under 40 and was given this opportunity to go out and head what was a very significant AID mission. So, I picked up my wife and five children and got on the airplane and went off to Jordan.

Q: Did he select you, did you have any say about going to Jordan?

WHEELER: He selected me. Actually, I had a very difficult relationship with Bill Macomber. Most people did, as a matter of fact. Bill was very intense. It was said that there were two people who worked in his Bureau that he gave the most hell to and I was one of them. But somehow or other, Bill Macomber and I had an equation. He came to respect me for my independence of judgment, I suppose, and the fact that from time to time I did take him on, as in the Iran aid case. So, I felt it was a great compliment and a wonderful opportunity.

Q: What was the situation in Jordan at that time?

WHEELER: This was 1965. Ten years earlier, we had taken over from the British in subsidizing this desert kingdom. We had developed a major program there. When I arrived, we were providing major budget support. We went down to the Ministry of Finance once a month and handed over a check. Then we had a fair amount of technical assistance. We opened the door to some other capital projects.

Q: How did you define what you thought you were supposed to be accomplishing?

WHEELER: There were a number of aspects to it. On the technical assistance side, my instruction from Bill Macomber was to clean up all those messes out there that we kept hearing about from the auditors. He really wanted me to tackle these and make them work - to get rid of any excess equipment and so forth that wasn't being used. So, I saw that as one of my first tasks. Then we had a major agriculture project going in the East Ghor Canal area of the Jordan Valley. We were looking for revenue increasing projects, so we programmed something in tourism, which was not very popular under that name back in Washington, where it was felt that somehow tourism wasn't really development. But, of course, that was wrong. Tourism was real development and a very important income earner in a great many countries, including Jordan. We had been working for a long time in the field of education. I think AID did more for education in Jordan than we did for any other country in the world.

Q: All levels?

WHEELER: Primary education, yes, secondary education, tertiary education, teacher training, textbook development, school building, everything. We had opportunities to continue some of this work, but most of it was done before my time. I have always felt that AID was wrong in not being willing to engage seriously in education. AID had a feeling that the American education system was not really very good, so why should we be taking it around the world?

Q: We had nothing to offer?

WHEELER: That was the attitude. Furthermore, it was local currency intensive and we wanted to export American goods, etc., etc. But Jordan was the exception because no one expected that Jordan would ever be able to be "viable". Really, it was going to be a subsidy case for a long time to come and it wasn't going to be able to earn money. It turned out, of course, that education was one of the great things in Jordan's balance of payments. Jordan exported educated people to the Gulf and other places and they sent back their remittances.

On the tourism side, we brought in the National Park Service. Stuart Udall, the Secretary of the Interior, took a personal interest in the project. I discovered how very professional the National Park Service is. They developed plans for each site including site museums, interpretation and careful preservation. They showed how to take tourists through in such a way that they would not destroy the thing they had come to see. They planned for adequate parking spaces. They planned for restaurant facilities and places to go to the bathroom and all the rest.

At the end of my time there was the '67 War. By the time of the '67 War, there was a whole plan for taking tourists through Qumran, the place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The Israelis just took the plans developed by Jordan with the help of the Park Service and implemented them immediately and opened them for their own tourists. The Israelis had always felt confined to their own small country and welcomed the chance to go into these areas on the West Bank.

Q: So, they're the ones that profited from this.

WHEELER: Yes, on the West Bank. But they proved the value of the Park Service kind of planning. One of my exciting moments in Jordan was flying Secretary Udall in a helicopter below sea level over to Qumran. I took him to Cave Four, one of the Dead Sea Scroll discovery places.

Q: Did you find that the education system in Jordan became very Westernized, very Americanized?

WHEELER: I think that they maintained their own values, but they certainly picked up a lot of our techniques. They moved to a much more participatory system and less of a rote system of education. They educated girls. The Palestinians, who represented a majority of Jordan's population even before the Six Day War, seemed to have a cultural bias favoring education. So, it fit naturally into this particular Arab country to concentrate on education.

Q: You didn't have issues of their thinking that "education is our subject and we don't want outside influences affecting our culture, our education."

WHEELER: I think they protected themselves as far as this was concerned. I'm sure this was an issue for them, but it was not an issue that prevented them from taking our assistance. When you're putting out a textbook, it doesn't really matter what the cultural attitudes are back in America. You're going to put out your own textbooks written in Arabic by your own people. But the ability to publish them is very important.

Q: Were there any major institutions that were created?

WHEELER: Yes. The teacher training institutions were very important. We also made contributions to the University of Jordan, but our major concentration was at the lower levels, which I think was interesting and unusual. In other countries, we tended to deal at the university level much more.

There was one interesting coincidence. The Israelis had a potash project in the Dead Sea and the Jordanians felt that this would be a good thing for them to do, too. So, we agreed to work on feasibility studies and looked for private sector partners who would come in and build a project. In order to do the feasibility study, they had to go back into the history of the various levels of the Dead Sea and so forth. It was out of the brine of the Dead Sea that the potash was going to come. It turns out that a great uncle of mine participated in an 1848 expedition to study the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, and the origins of that water system up in the hills of Syria and Lebanon. He did the cartography. He was the artist of the expedition. He was the deputy head of it. He drew maps of the Dead Sea where they did soundings all over. He then proceeded to get sick and die and be buried in Beirut. A book was published on this, which I have, which was known to people in Jordan. It was one of those interesting coincidences.

We were groping for foreign exchange earners. If tourism was one, potash would be another. Phosphates was another and we had helped them some on that. Another export earner was the vegetables and fruits grown in the East Ghor Canal area in the Jordan Valley. The canal ran parallel to the Jordan River. It was desert-like but with controlled water the land became very valuable. The Jordanians had given great care to the land tenure system. We worked on it from the technical end. We were involved in land leveling, soil nutrients, marketing and in farmer education. In this last area I had one especially interesting experience. The Prime Minister one day decided that a certain school bus that we had provided under our technical assistance program to bring farmers into a training center would be better used at the radio station. I told the Jordanians that, unfortunately, this was going to get me into trouble with my auditors and I couldn't have it. There had been an agreement that this bus was to be used for the farmers. They said, "But the Prime Minister did this." I said, "Well, it doesn't really matter to me who did it. I'm only telling you that I can't continue to sign agreements if earlier agreements are not being carried out." This was an example of Joe Wheeler carrying things to extremes. In the end, the ambassador talked to the Prime Minister and said, "As a personal favor, do you think you could do something about a small problem in the assistance program?" He said, "What's the problem?" The Ambassador (Findley Burns) said, "You transferred this bus to the radio station which had been provided by AID to carry farmers to training." He said, "Well, nobody told me." So, he gave the instruction. The school bus went back. After that, I had no problems getting adherence to our agreements so that I could stand up to audit. After all, you provide assistance. It's supposed to be used for the purpose for which it's provided. I felt that that lesson in discipline was very important. It was a small item, so it didn't make that much difference. It's the sort of thing, I suppose, we could have absorbed with the auditors, but by being tough on this little issue, I really got them to understand our need for discipline.

Later on, the Prime Minister asked us if we could help in the rebuilding of a small airport in Jerusalem. This airstrip was not quite long enough for the Caravelles that were in vogue at that time. There was also a dip in the runway so that it really was a very difficult landing to make. The bigger the plane the more difficult it was. There was a need to straighten that out. We talked to the Jordanians about critical path systems and we laid it all out. We said, "The Prime Minister has said that he wants this job done between Easter and Christmas so that you can use the airport for the tourist business in both of those seasons. In order to do this, these are the decisions you will have to make." I included a number of things that they didn't usually do, like delegating authority to a group that they would send to Washington to select the contractor and so forth. Later I was very pleased by the fact that when the Six Day War took place, the project was under construction and was two days ahead of schedule. Of course, the airport was abandoned by the Israelis. But the school bus discipline had proved useful in running this project. The Prime Minister had a very precise goal. Critical path planning, that had recently come into vogue, brought a discipline to the project implementation process and that worked well both for us and the government. It was a very positive experience.

Q: How did you find working with the Jordanians?

WHEELER: The Jordanians have the reputation of being one of the best users of aid in the business. They are a very able people and they care about results. The Jordanians had about the fastest growth rate of any country in the world – over 10%.

Q: Professionally and administratively?

WHEELER: Yes, they did quite well. That doesn't mean we had no problems, but I think we had a very constructive relationship with them. It was a pleasure working with them.

Q: We were the major donor, I suppose?

WHEELER: We were the major donor, yes. Every week, we had a meeting with a group from the Planning Commission that was headed by the Prime Minister. While the Prime Minister did not usually attend, in principle, it was his meeting with me. The Prime Minister delegated his authority so both sides could make decisions in these meetings. This made for a very crisp process.

Q: Do you remember what level of resources we were providing at that time and how it compared to their own budget situation?

WHEELER: We were providing, I suppose, \$40-50 million a year, which on a per capita basis was tremendous – about \$20 per capita.

Q: In relation to their budget also.

WHEELER: In relation to their budget. Every month when I went down with my check, I had an agenda of things to talk about and they duly took notes. They didn't always accept what I had to say, but they always heard it.

Q: Why did we do this monthly rather than annually or more?

WHEELER: I think that, it being budget support, it was felt that it ought to be disbursed at a pace consistent with expenditure rates in the government budget.

Q: We must have had a considerable capacity to analyze what was going on.

WHEELER: I always had a top economist there putting out papers that we could share. Everything was done in a very open way. We recognized that we were operating in a situation where our assistance had a very strong political content. Our idea was that the way to get it well used was for them to understand why it was in their interest to do the things that we were suggesting. They were receptive to that kind of dialogue.

Q: How were your relations with the Embassy apart from the one reference to the ambassador? Obviously, you had a very prominent role in the relationship with the government.

WHEELER: My experience in AID was that I always had trouble with the economic counselor, who felt that he was really the one who ought to be running economic assistance. Then there would be the issues that would come up on differing economic analysis. The economic counselor operated with a political concern and I operated with a development concern. The ambassador had to choose between us, but since I had the money I usually won. I had a very positive relationship with the political officer, Dick Murphy, who later became Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and ambassador to six or eight countries. He was very professional. I guess, in general, the Ambassador found me a little bit fussy, the school bus incident being an example of it. But he was very supportive.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

WHEELER: First was a fellow named Barnes and then Findley Burns. Findley Burns was out of the administrative cone in State. I liked him very much. I thought he was very sensible. I had a little tussle with his deputy about drafting messages. I tended to want to use English. Sometimes I put articles in the cables to make them readable, which was not fashionable in those days. I decided that it was improper for the DCM to go through my cables crossing out words since I had to communicate effectively to my bosses and I felt it should be for me to judge how many words to use. I won that one, too.

Q: Maybe we can come back to that later. Apart from the short-term impact, obviously, you had a great rapport with the governments and good cooperation. How did you view any long-term consequences of our effort at that time?

WHEELER: There's something I'd say before I answer that. We had the '67 War, which meant that half of the AID effort was left on the other side of the border across the Jordan River.

Q: Explain that a little bit.

WHEELER: We had a lot of projects on the West Bank tourism projects, for example, some agriculture, and education. We were supporting a boys school, and the college at Birzeit, and so forth. So, we lost those projects to the Israeli side. But we gained a responsibility for new refugees. We had a couple hundred thousand refugees come across the river in a few days. We ordered all of the "Ted Williams" tents from Sears Roebuck from all over the United States to be gathered together and sent to Jordan to take care of these refugees. It was quite a program. Nobody knew how to put those aluminum poles together and we found ourselves doing that in a very hands-on way. It was obviously a time of tense relationships between the United States and Jordan. I think that the AID relationship remained very positive in those circumstances. They sort of helped to carry us through in a time when we were perceived as being backers of Israel.

Then there were some interesting things that came up. There was a need to develop an exchange rate between the shekel and the dinar. It happened that the Jordanian dinar was one of the hardest currencies in the world, 100% backed by gold. So, we weren't dealing with something to be taken lightly. I found myself being the intermediary between the Central Bank in Jordan and the Central Bank in Israel in the establishment of an exchange rate.

Then we had questions about water management. The U.S. had been very much involved in development of water schemes with the Johnson Plan in the '50s. I picked up from there and analyzed the water situation, trying to help people in the United States government understand how many cubic meters of water we were talking about and from what sources. There is a tendency for a lot of mythology in this area.

There was the question of how to deal with the off-take for the East Ghor Canal in a situation where the Israelis were now occupying the other bank of the Yarmuk River where the water was taken for the canal. So, I got involved in those discussions, which were done professionally and at technical levels. It was important that I had earlier established good relationships with the Jordanian officials.

Q: You were dealing with the Israelis and the Jordanians together?

WHEELER: No, I carried messages back and forth. This was an interesting time for Joe Wheeler.

Q: Were you able to work out solutions for that process?

WHEELER: Yes, we did. I think there's been a remarkable amount of restraint and a sensible pragmatic dealing with ticklish issues.

Q: On the refugees, it became a permanent situation.

WHEELER: It had already been a permanent situation in the UNWRA. I must say that I gained a feeling that we had handled UNWRA badly. You go into a situation too often thinking, "Well, this is just for a year or two and then everything will be sorted out," and then it goes on and on. It turned out that we were paying the biggest part of the bill in our UNWRA contribution for the refugee schools and food distributions in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The education that was being given there was very radical. Every morning, the children were learning about how "We're

going to chase the Israelis into the sea. They have no right" and so forth and so on. We were, in effect, training for people to go to war with the Israel that we were determined was going to continue to exist. There was a contradiction here. It seemed to me that prior to the '67 War we just continued supporting the refugees without thinking through what we were doing.

Q: What would have been the alternative?

WHEELER: The alternative would have been to declare that the refugees in each of the three countries from our point of view, were citizens of the countries where they resided. If the countries needed help in absorbing them as citizens, we could help the government as part of a general development effort. In other words, by helping the education system of Jordan, we would have increased the Jordanian capacity to manage the refugees. We would not build Palestinian schools but rather more Jordanian schools. There would not have been a separate curriculum for the Palestinians.

Q: Would the government have been willing to have taken that on?

WHEELER: They wouldn't have had any alternative if we had just taken a firm position. I think the answer is that, with great reluctance, they probably would have accepted our help in that other way. But I think it will be another 100 years before we can evaluate the history of these times and reach judgments as to whether Joe Wheeler was right or those who made decisions were right. Many of these decisions were made by default. There is an inertia in policy. You get a refugee, you assume it's a temporary thing. It's always one year at a time. It's not a plan to be supportive over a 20 or 30 year period. But it became a 20 or 30 period, didn't it, or longer?

Q: Maybe we could have one more discussion about what you saw as the impact of the program. Were revenues increased, for example?

WHEELER: I later found myself testifying when I became Assistant Administrator for Near East and was able to bring a perspective of having known the country for a while. We were reducing in a very methodical way the budget support because the balance of payments was improving. It was improving because of worker's remittances and because of potash and phosphate exports. I guess it was really phosphates at the time I was testifying. There were tourism revenues as well. Jordan was really doing pretty well. The economy was growing at 10% a year. The per capita income got up to a middle income range. Health rates are quite good. One area that was very sensitive for them and their situation in the Middle East where they have not done well is population. But even that may be changing now.

Q: Did you meet with the King?

WHEELER: I saw the King with the Ambassador several times. When my wife and I went through a reception line in Washington the King greeted me like a long lost friend. It really was very impressive to my wife.

Q: He had remembered.

WHEELER: He remembered. I met a number of times with Prince Hassan.

Q: Did you have any discussions with him or was it just protocol?

WHEELER: It was protocol. The real discussion was with the Prime Minister.

Q: The King didn't give a vision of what he wanted for his country?

WHEELER: He did in speeches, but he didn't give it to me in a personal way. The relationship with the King was really for the Ambassador. I didn't try to barge in on that. With Jordan, we were dealing on regional issues quite a lot. There was one amusing event when I was Mission Director. There was a need for President Nixon to send a message to King Hussein. He sent Bill Macomber, the former ambassador to Jordan and Assistant Administrator for the Near East and South Asia, out to deliver the message. Bill Macomber did his work, delivered his message. He was leaving on an early morning plane the next morning and he called me at a reception at the Central Bank governor's house about 10 o'clock in the evening. He said, "Joe, I feel terrible. I wanted so much to give a lot of time to you guys, but I've been engaged in this political mission and I couldn't get away. I am leaving first thing in the morning, but do you think we could get together early?" I said, "What time would you like to get together?" He said, "What about four o'clock?" I gulped and there was sort of a silence at my end of the phone. He said, "You don't sound very enthusiastic, Joe." I said, "Actually, I'm just thinking of you, Bill." He said, "Look, let's make it five o'clock. What do you want to talk about?" I said, "I want to talk about two things: agriculture and the public safety program." He said, "Okay." So, I called up my agriculture director and he didn't answer the phone. He just didn't hear the phone. He was asleep. So, I called up his deputy. His deputy got a ladder (because he couldn't rouse him by knocking on the door) and went up to his bedroom and knocked on the window to wake him up to get him down to the office at five o'clock in the morning to talk about the agriculture issues. I really appreciated Bill for his going out of his way. However, he could be very eccentric in his determination.

Q: Did he have some major issues or questions?

WHEELER: I had issues. I was seeking his decision on an agricultural issue. So, I wanted to talk to him, but recognized that he had a first priority to deal with.

Q: You mentioned a public safety program; what was the nature of the public safety program?

WHEELER: Well, internal security was very important for Jordan. We felt we had something to provide from a technical point of view and also from an attitudinal point of view. So, we had a substantial team working with the Jordanian police on police systems. They extended all the way to traffic control, which had become a major issue in Jordan because people drove like crazy on very difficult roads. The accident rate was very, very high and it was a real economic issue as well as a humanitarian issue. So, we had a very important relationship under the AID program with the Jordanian police forces. I'm a believer that democratic police systems are important. So, I've never belonged to the school of thought that AID should get out of these things. That doesn't mean that they should be misused. It's very important that there be a philosophy that is followed

in implementing these programs. But I felt that they were basically part of the process of economic development. You have to have good police departments. We had such a program in Jordan and later in Pakistan. I talk about these without embarrassment as among the good things that we did. I think we got across ideas about how in a democratic society you run a police department.

My next job in 1967 was to come back as Deputy Assistant Administrator for Near East and South Asia. Maury Williams was the Assistant Administrator.

FINDLEY BURNS, JR.
Ambassador
Jordan (1966-1967)

Ambassador Findley Burns, Jr. was born in Maryland in 1917. He received an undergraduate degree from Princeton University and later attended Harvard University and the National War College. He entered the Foreign Service in 1942. In addition to ambassadorships to Ecuador and Jordan, Ambassador Burns served in Spain, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Germany, and England. He was interviewed by Henry E. Mattox in 1988.

Q: Let's jump ahead for the moment. You were appointed ambassador to Jordan April 5, 1966. How did you get to be an ambassador?

BURNS: The State Department asked me if I would accept the appointment, and I said I would be very happy to do so. I believe that undoubtedly officials for whom I had worked in the past must have been influential in my receiving the appointment.

Q: Had you an inkling that this highly gratifying appointment was coming?

BURNS: None whatsoever. It came absolutely a bolt out of the blue.

Q: You must have been very pleased.

BURNS: I was very pleased.

Q: This was the Johnson Administration. You went up to the Hill. Did you have to testify at any length?

BURNS: Yes, I testified for about an hour.

Q: About the length, maybe, of a Foreign Service oral exam.

BURNS: An oral exam of today, yes.

Q: What kind of questions were asked, if you remember?

BURNS: A great many questions as to the fact that one of my languages was not Arabic.

Q: And how did you reply?

BURNS: I made no bones about the fact that I did not speak Arabic. I pointed out, however, that nearly all educated persons in Jordan spoke fluent English, its having been a British mandate before World War II, and I didn't feel I would have any difficulty communicating. That, by the way, proved to be the case.

Q: How many languages did you have under your belt then?

BURNS: Spanish and German.

Q: Did you see any evidence of political opposition to Johnson in the lines of questioning?

BURNS: No.

Q: How was it that Jordan was chosen for you?

BURNS: I do not know. I can only assume because it was vacant.

Q: Was this before or after Dean Brown?

BURNS: This was before Dean Brown.

Q: You flew to Amman and took up your post, presented your credentials to the King, I presume.

BURNS: Actually to the Crowned Prince. The King was away.

Q: What kinds of issues were facing you there at the post at that time upon your arrival?

BURNS: Issues facing the embassy itself internally, or facing us in our bilateral relations?

Q: I would like to explore both.

BURNS: I would say that US policy toward Jordan was very clear. One, that there not be Arab-Israeli hostilities; two, that Jordan remain a moderate Arab state. With regard to the second of these issues, it was not a problem with the government of King Hussein, since he, too, had the same interest that Jordan remain a moderate Arab state. The matter of Arab-Israeli war or peace was an issue that was discussed, quite frankly, from my earliest arrival and, of course, really became very much center stage a year after my arrival, after the closure of the Straits of Tiran.

Q: I understand that there was further question of a fighter bomber sales to Jordan.

BURNS: Yes, there was.

Q: In the context of the substantive issue you were talking about.

BURNS: We supplied the Jordanians with fighter planes. They were not fighter bombers, but basically fighter planes for defense. I want to make that very plain. We had a policy and not least because of Israeli sensitivities, that equipment sold to Jordan would be of a defensive nature, and the equipment was of that nature.

Q: As late as December 1966, there was another military aid arrangement made with Jordan, a sale of trucks and armored personnel carriers. Were you involved in the negotiations for that, as well?

BURNS: I recall those negotiations had pretty well been concluded by the time I arrived.

Q: What was the rationale, then, for the record, for supplying Jordan with fighters, trucks, and armored personnel carriers?

BURNS: There were basically two reasons we did so. One, we supported Hussein's government because it was a moderate Arab government. One of the ways to support a government in the Middle East is to supply it with their arms needs. Jordan had been buying arms from the British, but they came to us to switch to American arms. We did not want them going to the Soviets. The second reason is that we felt that if we were the arms supplier, then we could ensure that Jordan was not armed with offensive weapons which could make Arab-Israeli hostilities more probable.

Q: Did you have specifics on the Soviet offers of arms?

BURNS: I don't recall them today, but at the time we had the specifics. As a matter of fact, the specifics came from the Jordanians themselves, and accurate or not, were used by the Jordanians as a pressure tactic on us to supply them with weapons that we were initially reluctant to sell them.

Q: In all of these cases, they were sales, were they not?

BURNS: They were sales, as far as I recall.

Q: You had elections in Jordan in April. The Premier resigned in March. Do you remember those events before the 1967 War?

BURNS: I remember that the political situation was such that the real power in Jordan rested with the King. There would be elections, but it would be between parties which were aligned very closely together in loyalty to the throne. The prime ministers would be changed in an effort to keep the position circulating among the small group of the King's top loyal supporters.

Q: These were royal family?

BURNS: Some were royal family. As a matter of fact, when I left Jordan, the prime minister was the King's great-uncle. However, before the Arab-Israeli War, the King had one particularly able man as prime minister named Wasfi Tel. He was the prime minister when I arrived in the summer of 1966, and he remained prime minister until shortly before the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Then he moved to the palace as chief of what they called the Diwan, which is equivalent to our White House chief of staff.

Q: We'll come back to fables of that sort, because I want to ask you how you related in your official capacity to people below the level of King. Let's move on, while we're still on substantive questions, and move to the war. Hussein went to Washington in June. Did you go with him?

BURNS: That was after the war. Yes, I went at that time.

Q: Let's talk about the war.

BURNS: All right.

Q: Where were you when it happened?

BURNS: I was in Amman. A momentous event for Jordan happened about a week before the war began. The war began on the sixth of June, and this event must have taken place the last week of May. It took all of us totally by surprise, including the CIA, which had very close relations with the Jordanians. The event was that the King got on a plane and flew to Cairo. This was after Nasser had closed the Straits of Tiran. As a result of this visit, an alliance was made between Egypt and Jordan, which required Jordan to come to the defense of Egypt if the latter were attacked by Israel, and Egypt to the aid of Jordan in the event of similar attack. Furthermore, as a result of his visit, Hussein embraced the PLO. This really shook everyone, because it was totally unexpected. We had received no inkling from any source whatsoever. I can only conclude Hussein made a sudden decision to do what he did, maybe only 24 or 48 hours beforehand.

I now understand the rationale of why he did it. He did it because he was convinced that war was coming. By the way, in that particular conviction, I totally agreed with him, and so did the officers of the embassy. It wasn't at all certain, however, as to who would begin it. Hussein was convinced that the Israelis were going to attack him.

During the week before the war began, I saw him every day, if not twice a day, sometimes even three times a day. By the way, these visits would be held either during normal office hours, or I'd be called over at 11:00 at night to his house. I say "house," because his daytime office was in the palace, but he lived in a house. Or I'd be called in to see the prime minister. Never the foreign minister. The foreign minister in Jordan at that time was a figurehead.

Hussein was convinced that the Israelis were going to attack him. I argued with him at length that he was wrong. I always took the chief of our political section with me to these meetings, and both of us argued that in the event of war the Israelis would have their hands full. We didn't

argue with Hussein in his thesis that it was quite conceivable Israel would attack Egypt and even possibly Syria, but we flatly disagreed Israel would attack Jordan. Israel was interested in keeping a moderate government in Jordan, and an attack on Jordan could undoubtedly end up unseating the King. And furthermore, Jordan's relationship with the U.S.A. should certainly give Israel much pause to attack.

Hussein replied: "They want the West Bank. They've been waiting for a chance to get it, and they're going to take advantage of us and they're going to attack." I might say that this difference of opinion between Hussein and me existed right up until the time the war started.

Q: When he called you over twice a day, or the prime minister called you over, what, typically, would they want you for?

BURNS: To find out what we know, and to press for an assurance that if Israel attacked, we would defend them.

Q: And your response?

BURNS: I replied that we don't give hypothetical answers to hypothetical questions.

Q: That was what you responded?

BURNS: That's correct. I informed the State Department, and they never suggested a different response.

Q: Who was office director?

BURNS: Harry Symmes. He later became my successor.

Q: Who was assistant secretary?

BURNS: Lucius Battle.

Q: So you knew who you were dealing with and reporting to.

BURNS: I knew what was possible for the United States Government. We could not make a formal alliance. We had refused the request from Israel for a formal alliance. We hardly could turn around and give one to Jordan. Our failure to do so later caused Hussein to say, "If you'd done it, I wouldn't have attacked Israel." But I still believe to this day, that if Hussein had sat tight, he'd have gotten through without being attacked.

He had another reason for his pact with Nasser, he said, and that was because he was so convinced that the Israelis were going to attack him, and he knew he'd never get a defense pact from the United States, he wanted to bind Egypt to come to his defense. He thought it not at all unlikely Israel would not attack Egypt but only Jordan. By the way, he did not make a similar

arrangement with the Syrians, with whom he had extremely bad relations right up until the day the war started.

As you know, the Israelis attacked the Egyptians, Egypt then cashed in its chips with Hussein, and said, "Now honor your pledge. You attack." And he did. It was a disaster.

Q: It wasn't too smart an arrangement on Hussein's part.

BURNS: One of the problems was that, remember, the Jordanians only had defensive military equipment. All their training under Glubb Pasha and his successor was for a defensive war, retracting slowly and making the Israelis pay dearly--but never, never an offense. When they in fact went on the offensive, for which they were utterly untrained, utterly unprepared, utterly ill-equipped, it was a catastrophe. Tanks ran out of gas, to give you one example, because fuel reserves were positioned to the rear, not forward.

Q: They were, however, well trained.

BURNS: They were extremely well-trained soldiers, but basically trained for defensive operations, not offensive ones.

Q: On the other hand, the Egyptians were not very well trained. Was that your impression?

BURNS: The Israelis said afterwards the best trained soldiers they encountered were the Syrians, with the Jordanians next, and the Egyptians last.

Q: Also for the record, you were called by Washington at 11:00 at night, the first night of the war?

BURNS: Yes. Telephone lines, as a matter of fact, were open all during the Six-Day War, and Washington would call me frequently. What preoccupied Washington was the safety of the Embassy staff and American residents and tourists.

When the mutual assistance pact between Hussein and Nasser was signed in May, we were absolutely convinced not only that there were going to be hostilities, but that quite possibly Jordan was going to be involved. Your concern is that, in case law and order does break down in Amman, which, by the way, it nearly did, what can you do to ensure that the Embassy survives?

One of the things we did was to get in work crews to shore up everything so you couldn't break into the Embassy; and to ensure we had a large supply of gasoline, food, bedding, etc. We didn't know how long we might be in a siege situation.

It was not possible to reduce the American staff of the Embassy (about 100) before hostilities started. We only had a week between the time Hussein signed the pact with Nasser and the start of the war. To move staff out publicly at that time would have been misread all the way around by everybody. Washington certainly was not in favor of it, and neither was I.

Q: All embassies had an evacuation plan, and I assume you had an elaborate one.

BURNS: Yes, but it proved to be utterly useless, as so often happens with plans you make up that far in advance for hypothetical situations. Since we had a fairly accurate idea of exactly what the situation could be, we made up our plan from scratch. The plan basically was to get all but key Embassy Americans and all other Americans (tourists, etc.) out of Jordan.

But the third day of the war, the night before Jordan's total collapse, I got a telephone call at about 8:00 in the evening from the Minister of the Interior. He said, "Mr. Ambassador, I think I ought to tell you that in my opinion, by tomorrow morning, Amman will be in chaos. There will be no law and order. If I were you, I'd get every American out of town tonight."

Two hours later, we received a cable from CIA, stating it was reported that Hussein, by private plane, had landed in Rome. However, those of us who knew Hussein doubted very much the report. It was not in character!

As for getting the Americans out of Jordan on the night in question, it was quite impossible. We concluded it would be less dangerous for them to remain in Amman than try to evacuate them and probably get them shot in the process.

Q: Who was your DCM then?

BURNS: He wasn't there anymore. He had been transferred, and there wasn't a DCM at the time. It was really Dick Murphy, the Chief of the Political Section, who served de facto as DCM. He was an absolute pillar of strength. By the way, he was absolutely fluent in Arabic, though never in all the times we saw Jordanian officials together, did we ever speak anything but English. The Jordanians all spoke English. Hussein spoke English perfectly, knew every nuance of our language.

Q: Hermann Eilts in Cairo spoke Arabic fluently, but in the four years that I was with him, I'd never heard him use it officially. It was just not spoken.

Your Acting DCM and mainly you decided then . . .

BURNS: The "decision group" consisted, in addition to Murphy, of a very bright assistant defense attaché, the CIA station chief, and the Director of AID--all of them as sharp as they could be. When evacuation matters were involved, we brought in the chief of the consular section, who was responsible for keeping track of the Americans (about 400 of them) and the administrative officer.

Q: Did you use formally what's called the country team?

BURNS: Yes, informally. I'd simply say, "Get the boys in. We've got a problem." They were reading the cables as fast as I was, and they'd be knocking on my door, saying, "What are we going to do about this?" No, it was not formal in any sense of the word. It was very informal, but it worked. We were almost continuously in session, night and day, by the way. We just worked

around the clock. Of the Embassy staff, which numbered perhaps 100 Americans, we had only 25 in the Embassy during the war itself, and ten of those were Marine Guards. The rest we asked to stay home.

Q: So you stayed in and slept in the embassy?

BURNS: Right around the clock.

Q: Everybody else was told to stay home?

BURNS: That's correct.

Q: Were the ones who stayed home in guarded compounds, or were they scattered?

BURNS: They were bundled together - 4 or 5 to a house. Our great worry were the hoards of Americans who had fled to Amman from the West Bank before the invading Israeli forces. There were at least 300 tourists, clergy, archeologists, etc. The chief of our consular section did a wonderful job of getting them all to move into the largest hotel in Amman, which made guarding them much easier.

Q: What was the name of the consular officer?

BURNS: Mike Davila.

Q: And the name of the assistant military attaché?

BURNS: Bill Pfeiffer. He later became a colonel and military attaché to Dick Murphy when the latter was ambassador to Saudi Arabia. A fine officer, really first-class officer.

We were lucky to have good people. You never knew what you had to do next. We had a supply of gold sovereigns which we'd gotten just before the war broke out. I'd asked the King before the war actually started for a royal guard. It was part of Hussein's personal Bedouin guard staff. They set up camp all around the Embassy, with fires going at night, boiling tea and coffee. Every now and then we'd go out and pass gold around to keep their "loyalty" undiminished.

Q: I had to count the gold in the embassy in Paris one time, all stacked up in little tiny coins. When did you know that there was not going to be, shall we say, a blood bath following cessation of hostilities?

BURNS: It took a couple of days to be absolutely certain, because on the fourth day, the Army began straggling back to Amman, all armed, and under little or no officer or non-com discipline. But the Jordanians are so well personally disciplined. I could only attribute the order that prevailed to that.

Also, any time there was a formation of a crowd, the government would sound an air raid siren, and everybody would scatter. The people never caught on. We only had one air raid during that war, and that was on the first day.

Q: Who thought up that gimmick, the King?

BURNS: The prime minister. It was his major contribution to the war. The guy after the King himself, who had the most power was Wasfi Tel. The prime minister at the time was a gentleman who wasn't terribly strong. Tel was Chief of the Royal Diwan, or the equivalent of our White House Chief of Staff.

Q: With all of the consultation with the King you had at his behest before the hostilities broke out, did he let you know in advance, in any fashion, that he was going to fulfill his obligation to the Egyptians and actually attack Jerusalem?

BURNS: No.

You know what Wasfi Tel told me after the war? He said, "Well, any schoolboy cadet could have done better in that war than we did."

About a week after the end of the war, we were able to evacuate the American staff who were not key, plus the 300 or 400 Americans who had fled to Amman. We convinced Washington to send the planes in from the east, and to paint out US Air Force insignia and substitute large red crosses. The Jordanian air force was still convinced the US had helped Israel militarily. There was real danger the Jordanian anti-aircraft gunners, still were positioned to the west of Amman, would open fire on our planes. The day before our air lift was to leave, I got a call from the British ambassador, saying that he had tried to convince Whitehall to do what we were doing. Nonetheless, London insisted on flying in directly over Israel, and with RAF insignia showing. The ambassador thought they're all going to be shot down long before they get to Amman. So we agreed to take the British, and before long, everyone else. I think there were 1,200 people evacuated in that air lift, including Russians.

At the airport, it was so dicey with the Jordanian Air Force that the King had to send his royal Bedouin guards to set up machine gun posts at the airport to protect our planes and the evacuees. Until those planes got off the ground, I admit I was nervous. They got out, however, without anything happening.

Q: You had a much smaller staff?

BURNS: The evacuated staff came back after about four months.

Another interesting thing happened. The AID mission had about 150 Jordanian employees. AID wanted us to terminate them all since we were suspending aid to Jordan, but we wouldn't agree since we knew we'd eventually resume aid. After all, we had as much interest in preserving a stable Hashemite Jordan after the war as we had before. So we did convince AID in Washington to keep the Jordanian staff on the payroll, and I want you to know they kept busy for four months

until the AID program was restored, all 150 of them, writing memos to each other, as far as I could see. (Laughs) I used to tease the AID mission director about that.

Q: Peter Principle - work expands... Hussein then went to Washington shortly after the war.

BURNS: He did. He went several times, in fact. He went to Washington largely to ask for support. It didn't take long before we got back to the old basis with the Jordanians. But that was about the time I left.

Q: Harrison Simms came in October, and it was shortly thereafter that Hussein came out with his "Israel has the right to exist" condition.

BURNS: I think so.

Q: Would you say that was a direct result of having been affected by the wartime experience?

BURNS: I think that had Hussein been willing and/or able to make formal peace with Israel directly after the Six-Day War, he could have gotten the West Bank back. But, he didn't, and probably couldn't, without his dynasty falling.

Q: The last time we talked, you described for me at some length your experiences during the Six-Day War while you were ambassador in Amman. Without going over that same ground again, I would like to ask if you could possibly summarize for me how an ambassador in that particular instance or a similar instance would go about organizing his embassy for a crisis situation. What would he think about doing first?

BURNS: There are two things an ambassador would think about in a situation like that. The first is you want the people there whose functions most directly relate on the crisis that will confront you. For example, you want the chief of the political section, the station chief of CIA, and the administrative officer (because you've got the problem of keeping the embassy--the guards, the security, the communications--all running). You also want competent people. In Jordan, I went so far in one case as, to select a deputy, but not the top man, to remain in the embassy to work with us through the crisis. Of course, this was not appreciated by the top man, but the matter was too important to follow protocol. His deputy, in my opinion, was infinitely more capable.

Q: Are there any guidelines or suggested recommendations that emerged from that experience that you've had a chance to reflect on since?

BURNS: No. It was just a natural reaction to a crisis situation. I think anyone else would have done exactly the same thing in my position.

Q: You may not have done exactly the same yourself?

BURNS: No, I think I would do the same thing again.

Q: What is the critical mass? How many people can you, as ambassador, manage in a crisis situation of that sort?

BURNS: In a situation like that, in your immediate circle of advisors, you don't want many more than about six working together. That does not count necessary security and administrative personnel who have to be there, like Marine guards or the cryptographic personnel and stenographers, personnel of that sort. I'm talking about the immediate circle of officer personnel that you're going to work with. I've seen country teams with up to 25 people. That's fine for peacetime, because those meetings are more for show and improving inter-agency relations than they are for working purposes. But when the chips are down and you've got a serious crisis on your hands, you just don't have time to play games. It would be irresponsible of you if you did.

Q: Did you have daily staff meetings in times other than crisis?

BURNS: No, I did not. I had a large staff meeting once a week, and smaller staff meetings two or three times a week. The smaller group were the officers whom I have described as having kept in the embassy during the Six-Day War. We could usually get the smaller group meetings done in 20 to 30 minutes, because I was dealing with each bilaterally continuously. I dealt with each one of the six probably several times a day on a one-on-one basis.

Q: As your best working group in a crisis situation, you had about six people. What was the size of the officer staff, as contrasted with six?

BURNS: I assume you're including the officers of the AID mission, the officers of the military assistance group, and all of that. There must have been about 70 of them, as I recall.

Q: So the crisis staff shrank from 70 down to six.

BURNS: That's correct.

Q: Does that tell us anything?

BURNS: You can draw whatever conclusion from it you like. In other words, the conclusion you might draw is that six people is enough to run an embassy, and you don't really need 70. Two comments on that. Number one, you are working under intense pressure, and you're working not eight hours a day; you're working 24 hours a day. You can't keep that up for a long period of time, obviously.

Secondly, there are a great many functions which are most desirable to perform. However, normal economic reporting or agricultural research are not relevant to getting through a war that is going to last less than a week. You need the economists back right afterwards to ascertain what the economic effects will be, but during the actual hostilities, it isn't necessary. One of the officers I had there, one of the six, was an economic officer (the AID Mission Director), but basically he was there because he was a very able officer and he could do all sorts of things that were necessary to do, other than economics.

Q: Did you have any notion when the Six-Day War broke out, how long it would last?

BURNS: No, we really didn't. We in the embassy thought it would be a short war, and we also thought that Israel would win it. A short war could be anything up to 30 days. We didn't really expect it to be over quite so soon as it was. We just had no idea the Jordanians would collapse as soon as proved to be the case.

Q: I'm sure Hussein didn't either.

DAVID L. MACK
Consular Officer
Amman (1967)

Ambassador Mack was born and raised in Oregon and educated at Harvard University. Joining the Foreign State Department in 1965, he studied Arabic and devoted his career dealing with Arab and Middle East issues. His foreign posts include Baghdad, Amman, Jerusalem, Beirut, Tripoli, Benghazi and Tunis. From 1986 to 1989 he served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. In Washington from 1990 to 1993, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs. During this period, the major issue was Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the military actions that followed. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

Q: What was the situation in Jordan? I mean we're talking really just before the disastrous '67 war if you want to think in terms of the Jordanian perspective.

MACK: The Jordanians were extraordinarily likable people. To this day I consider them the nicest Arabs I know, both Palestinians and the East Bank Jordanians. And it was very easy to liken them. Clientitis was an occupational disease for diplomats in Amman. They were all very sympathetic with the Jordanians, who they felt were caught in an impossible situation, squeezed between Syria and Israel and Egypt. In the beginning of my time, Jordan's relations with both Egypt and Syria were poor. On the other hand, their relations with Israel were far worse. There were cross-border attacks from Jordan into occupied portions of Palestine, and infiltration. Sometimes they weren't hostile crossings so much as people going back to visit their home village, etc. Some of the incidents were probably sponsored by the Syrians, but it was the Jordanians who felt the brunt of the retribution from the Israelis. I remember there was an Israeli attack on a town near Hebron called Samu' in December 1966, that was followed by major Palestinian riots in the West Bank protesting against the government for not doing anything to protect them from the Israelis. The Jordanian authorities used force to put down the demonstrations.

There was a lot of tension between the Palestinian community and the Jordanian government, between Jordan and Syria, Jordan and Egypt, and Jordan and Israel. I remember one of the ways

the Jordanian government dealt with it was to kind of taunt the Egyptians for not doing more to confront Israel. In the Jordanian media there would be lots of criticism of the Egyptians. I think this was part of wider Arab world pressures on Nasser that prodded him to break the status quo in the Sinai, a development which led to the June 1967 war. I knew that relations had gotten very bad between us and Egypt. When our official contacts were broken off in Egypt in June '67, we sensed that there was a war coming. We organized an evacuation of our dependents and non-essential personnel before the June '67 war began. And we also believed that the Arabs would get beaten by the Israelis if there was a war.

Of course, being in the consular section I was only on the outskirts of any political discussions, but I read some of the traffic and talked to people, so I was kind of aware of what was going on. I was aware of the fact that US relations were in a very bad state with Egypt, and our two embassies were not talking to one another. I asked the chief of the political section if there would be any problem if I called on the Egyptian consul. I may have checked with the DCM. The answer was positive. I was able to call on the Egyptian in late May 1967 to see what they were thinking about the situation. I took April Glaspie with me. We went together and called on the Egyptian consul. I had met him socially and as acting chief of the consular section I'd called on other consuls, so this was my excuse. I remember him assuring me that they knew war was coming, and they would win. I felt a tragic sense of the inevitability of what was going to happen.

One of the reasons why the consular work sometimes seemed irrelevant to what the rest of the embassy did was because we were in a separate building, and we were very much the poor relations. When the War began on June 5th, I remember packing up all the files, the sensitive files, in a big box and carrying them across the parking lot as the Israeli jets were swooping over to attack the Amman airport. We went through quite a tense period during the war. As a young Arabist friend, April spent some time at my house. We listened together to the broadcast from radio Cairo and all the talk about how the Arabs were knocking the Israeli air force out of the sky. Meanwhile, we saw the Israeli air force over Amman. We had evidence of our own eyes that it wasn't going very well for the Arabs.

Afterwards, with Jordan having been, in effect, cleft in two, we were very worried about the reaction of the Palestinians. In addition to the Palestinians already in and just outside Amman, Palestinian refugees were streaming up from the Jordan valley from where a lot of them had been pushed out of big camps in Jericho on the west side of the Jordan River. We had reports they were coming to Amman where there were other refugee camps. We knew it would be a very tense situation. The embassy was given very good protection by the Jordanian army, but we were worried about the wider American community. We organized another evacuation, this time for those people who had been left behind and who hadn't taken advantage of the permissive commercial aircraft evacuation earlier. My job in the consular section was to gather and organize temporary shelter for American citizens for this evacuation. It became apparent that once that was done there wouldn't be anything for me to do because three-quarters of my consular clients were now under occupation. The bridges were cut, and they couldn't come up to Amman.

The decision was made to transfer me to Jerusalem, where we had to establish a visa office. We had not had a visa office in Jerusalem since 1949, only passport and US citizen protection services. If you lived in West Jerusalem, you went down to Tel Aviv to get a visa. In East

Jerusalem or the West Bank, you came up to Amman. So I would be sent down to Jerusalem to organize a visa office.

In the meantime I was helping with the evacuations out of Amman. After taking care of the last of the evacuees on the C-130 American C-130 flights with markings of the International Red Cross, I got on as well. We were evacuated via Tehran, and eventually to Athens where I hooked up with my wife, who had been evacuated earlier by commercial means with the rest of the civilians. Everybody else who arrived seemed to be met by somebody. My wife had taken advantage of being in Greece and was off traveling in the Greek countryside. She didn't realize that I was arriving, so there were a few lonely days before our expected reunion

Q: I'd like to cut it off at this point, but a couple questions before we stop. Who was our ambassador in Amman at that time?

MACK: Findley Burns.

Q: How did he operate?

MACK: Well, Findley Burns had been sent out there because, of his administrative skills more than anything else. He took a pretty narrow view of his job which was to maintain official contacts with the King and other top leaders. On the other hand, he didn't have the personality for really establishing rapport with the King. I would have to say he did not have a close relationship, or certainly not a warm relationship. He was a person of a real skill and talent, brains, but he hadn't managed to establish much rapport. I don't know whether this made any difference or not. There was nearly a Greek tragedy about what was taking place and Jordan being pulled into this war. But certainly Burns was not in a position to exercise much in the way of counter-influence.

Q: Which essentially was to say stay out of it.

MACK: Yes, we were trying to tell Jordan, to stay out. The King for whatever reason wasn't listening to us. I certainly wouldn't lay it all on his relationship with the American ambassador, which was at most a small part of it. But I don't think Burns was able to have much effect in that regard. Burns was not the right personality for establishing rapport with the Jordanians.

Q: What was the impression at that time of King Hussein? Let's say before the war and when it happened when Jordan went in.

MACK: He seemed very likeable, very down to earth, very much a king of the people. I remember bumping into him on a dance floor, for example. We felt it was a happy little kingdom, and we were probably misled. I'm sure we were overlooking the internal problems. We felt that Jordan seemed very promising compared to Syria, which seemed under such a repressive regime, or to Egypt with its grinding poverty that seemed to offer no kind of hope for progress. It seemed very tragic that Jordan was drawn into this conflict.

SLATOR CLAY BLACKISTON, JR.
Economics Officer
Amman (1967-1969)

Slator Clay Blackiston, Jr. was born in 1918 in Richmond, Virginia. He graduated with an A.B. degree from the University of Virginia. During World War II, he was an aviator in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Blackiston joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served in Amsterdam, Stuttgart, Port-au-Prince, Jerusalem, Tunis, Jeddah, Cairo, Amman, and Calcutta. He was a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations in 1971. Mr. Blackiston retired from the Foreign Service in 1975. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: You then got reassigned to Amman?

BLACKISTON: We had to stay around there because we had this large number of people you see; and there were people from other Embassies where relations had been broken. So there was a big personnel problem in finding places. Anyhow, I was sent to Amman.

Q: What was the situation in Amman?

BLACKISTON: First we had this large number of new refugees; these were people who had been in what was then the west bank and who had fled as a result of the 1967 war. One of those was my cook, Yussef Salman, who had quite a nice house outside of Jerusalem, in that part of the corridor that was the west bank, and had just put in thousands of dinars in new furniture. Fortunately for him he had a house in Amman. The Israelis were flying over Jordan all the time, violating Jordanian air space, and creating more tension. There had been some Jordanians over on the east bank of the Jordan that had been hit in a bus by napalm and a number of people were killed there. Of course, obviously not everyone fled the west bank, but my cook did and he had quite a nice house. I asked him, I said, "Yussef why did you leave, why didn't you stay put and keep your house?" I never got a clear idea; I am not sure that he was actually threatened by anything like expulsion, but it was probably a mass psychology that took the least educated people and caused them to flee. Now these people were in new refugee camps, and I was involved in getting tents from Pakistan, which made tents. We bought them with US owned Pakistani rupees. I remember talking to the Minister of Reconstruction and Development, Hazem Nusseibeh, who came from a very well-known family, who said the refugees didn't want to use the tents because there was a psychology that if you go into a tent then you are going to be like a refugee. But they had no other place to go, they had to go into the tents; so ultimately we did set up the tents. We were trying to make publicity shots of the turning over the tents and you know it is ridiculous when in essence we had played a role in the whole fiasco.

Q: Were you there at the Black September movement?

BLACKISTON: I'll tell you what happened. Arab suspicion was very great; I was told that there was a rumor that I had maps. I did have maps that were just the standard maps of Jordan put out by the British cartographer's office, and they read something into this. In any event there was a rumor which the CIA had picked up, or the Jordanians had told it to them, that there was going to

be some sort of assassination attempt. So for a period of time I had some protection. Then, shortly after I left, a really tragic thing happened. The assistant Army attaché--I was not there, it happened just a month or so after I left when this Black September thing started--was a FAS student, well they train army officers in various esoteric languages including Arabic and they had it up in Beirut. He had been a FAS student, spoke Arabic and had a very pretty wife. Some people came to the door and wanted to see him and he wouldn't open the door and was trying to protect his family, wife and kids I think; he was standing behind the door, the front door was locked, and they shot him through the door and killed him. Then we had the invasion of the Intercontinental Hotel where they took it over.

Another thing that happened, Bob Fisher and I, he was the head of UNRWA for Jordan, had gone down to Karami Camp. Karami Camp--UNRWA Camp--is in the Jordan Valley. There had been some infiltrators from Karami Camp into the west bank; the Israelis had retaliated in a massive way and the inhabitants of the camp, well the PLO--the place was heavily armed, we noticed this when we went down and it was not a healthy thing for outsiders to go into those camps--defended the camp and repelled the Israelis. They captured one or two Sherman tanks and one of them they had down in the main square in Amman. It was a very tense sort of situation; I went down to look at this tank but I didn't hang around. That was the situation there and then it got worse. L. Dean Brown came there as Ambassador and then there was the Black September thing and Brown had a terrible time. But I had left before he arrived.

Q: In your time it was Harry Symmes. I wonder if you would talk about his relationship...

BLACKISTON: Well he didn't like King Hussein; didn't like the Hashemites for reasons which I never quite understood. He knew whom he was being accredited to when he went there. I think this culminated at a luncheon at the residence which I was a guest with a number of Jordanian cabinet ministers. I can't remember the dialogue but I do remember that I was shocked to hear what Harry Symmes was saying in attacking the Jordanian government. It wasn't long after that--actually I was asked about this back in Washington--that the King asked that he be recalled.

Q: I think the culminating incident was that he recommended that Joseph Sisco, or somebody, not come to Jordan because there had been demonstrations and he felt that the Jordanian government could not give him good protection.

BLACKISTON: That is right. I am glad you mentioned that because I had forgotten that. That is true. He indicated that the Jordan government couldn't provide protection to Sisco and this infuriated the Jordanians. So it was a culmination of a number of things.

Q: What was the feeling in the Embassy about King Hussein at that time?

BLACKISTON: I don't think we had any...he was a rational sort of person, he was certainly no fanatic, he had served our interests so we always considered Jordan to be a linchpin in the Middle East; he was a force of moderation. His problem was that not all his population was prepared to be...many Palestinians there hated his guts. And of course the population of Jordan, west bank aside, was about fifty percent or more Palestinian. This is what has lead the Israelis to say, "Palestine is Jordan." What you said about Sisco, that is true.

HARRISON M. SYMMES
Ambassador
Jordan (1967-1970)

Harrison M. Symmes was born in North Carolina in 1921. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with an A.B. in 1942, and completed an M.A. at George Washington University in 1948. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1946. Mr. Symmes joined the Foreign Service in 1947. In addition to Egypt, he was posted to Damascus, Kuwait, Libya, and Jordan. Mr. Symmes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: From what you've said, I'm surprised that you were appointed to Jordan. I would have thought if for no other reason than having talked about "Thinking the Unthinkable: Life Without Hussein" and that gets leaked to our intelligence agency which has its contacts in the Hashemite Kingdom that they didn't say, "Don't let this guy get in." How did you ever get this assignment?

SYMMES: That's a good question. Mind you, when the idea was put forward, at least one of my dear friends who was in a position to make his views known, made his views known to higher authority to say, "You shouldn't send Harry there. It's not right for Harry and it's not right for Jordan." He was mainly concerned about it not being right for me because of this reputation for being "Mr. No" that had been developed and because he thought the agency was suspicious of me. I recall that when I was first told by Rodger Davies about this, I told him, "Rodger, I don't know. I think Jordan is a lovely place to be and I would like being in the country with all the archeological advantages, and that kind of thing. Nevertheless, I don't think the Jordanians are going to like it. And you know my reputation."

And he said, "Nick Katzenbach," Katzenbach then being the deputy secretary, "and I have discussed this and we want you to go because of your reputation. In other words, we want you to go because you have stood up against the Jordanians in the past. In our view you have a balanced view toward Jordanian relations with the United States and you have the kind of integrity we want. We want somebody who isn't just going to lie down and let the Jordanians walk over us."

Q: It was not just you, an Arabist, in your going there, but really, because of the reputation that you'd built?

SYMMES: After the '67 war--I was in personnel when that happened and, of course, I had little to do with it, I didn't volunteer to do anything, I left that with my colleagues who had the responsibility, I didn't even share an opinion about it, I kept myself over in personnel -- What was the point I was going to make? Now I've forgotten what I was going to say to you.

Q: Well, the '67 war had gone on . . .

SYMMES: Oh, yes. After the '67 war there was a feeling that Hussein personally and Jordan generally had let the United States down. That Hussein had run to Cairo and kissed Nasser on the nose.

Q: This was when Hussein attacked Israel with the Arab Legion.

SYMMES: With Egypt. Yes. And not only that, Hussein had made an undertaking when we had supplied him with 155-mm artillery at an earlier period with the understanding-- the ambassador was to tell him--that those weapons were never to be taken west of the Jordan River. But in the '67 war he had taken them across the Jordan River and he had used them to shell Tel Aviv. So I can't tell you how much animus there was towards Hussein on the part of the senior policymakers. That Hussein, that little devil, they would call him, had broken faith with us in a sort of typical way. They were very angry with him.

Q: So there was much more bitterness. I'd forgotten all about this.

SYMMES: There was a great deal of bitterness at those upper levels. In effect, they wanted to punish him. This is not generally known, but my predecessor there, Findley Burns, had had some very unpleasant encounters with the Jordanian establishment during the war. Not unpleasant to him personally, but unpleasant by virtue of his observing them in the throes of anguish following what was obviously a series of stupid moves and decisions.

Q: They lost Jerusalem and they lost the West Bank.

SYMMES: Yes. They lost face and they lost everything. And they were weeping and sort of wringing their hands. And he saw them at that time. So all of this was known at the upper levels and Findley--I don't want to put words in Findley's mouth--was glad to get out of Jordan. He felt that his position would have been impossible after that.

So I got there under those conditions. At the time I was named to go Jordan, I didn't appreciate all of this to the same extent I do today for a number of reasons you can imagine. I did know that this feeling of animus existed and that I was going to have a tough row to hoe and that I was expected to maintain my personal integrity. Which I did.

So as you see, in the eyes of many of my friendly colleagues--friendly, I've had some that were not friendly-- it was not a good assignment and I was being placed in a difficult situation.

Q: Did you have any instructions when you went out there other than just to maintain relations?

SYMMES: Not really, I think as much as anything else because of the breakdown of the foreign policy system caused by this Country Director business. A Country Director didn't have that much grab of policy. I think Roy Atherton by that time had become deputy secretary, I can't recall. Maybe Rodger was still deputy assistant secretary for that part of the world. Luke Battle was the assistant secretary. Luke was sort of laid back.

Q: This is, of course, the answer I get most of the time. Very few people are sent out with real instructions other than, "Get on with it. You're smart, you know what the situation is." Could you give me here your evaluation of Hussein at that point? We're talking about 1967. How did you see Hussein?

SYMMES: He came to Washington in November 1967 just as I was about to go out. I had been granted agrément just at the time he came to Washington. During that visit I was brought into meetings he had with various people, although he had meetings that I wasn't aware of as well. I was in a rather strange position because I had not presented my letters and, therefore, was not officially the ambassador to Jordan. I didn't see him again until the following January because he went off--one of his typical ways of doing things--to Spain and England and God knows where. And just sort of drifted around.

When I got to Jordan in November 1967, I presented my letters to his brother, the Crown Prince Hassan. So, as I say, I didn't see Hussein for some time after that.

The Prime Minister at the time was a great nonentity but a very clever, sly, Reynard the Fox type of person.

Q: Who was he?

SYMMES: It was Talhuni. I found that most of my contacts were with the then foreign minister, Ahmad Tuqan, a very old establishmentarian, and with the Army Chief of Staff, whom I'd known from arms negotiations, 'Amir Khammash. The King finally came back sometime in January 1968 and my first real business with him, after a courtesy call, was when the Chief of Staff called me up in late January to tell me that a Soviet military mission was about to come to Jordan, with about 12 senior military people, because we had not acted on various Jordanian arms requests. They wanted the 155s replaced, they wanted the tanks replaced, etc., and I don't remember all the details now but we had not acted on their requests. So, therefore, the King had decided to invite the Soviet military mission. As I said, the King had just come back. I spent a long time talking to the Chief of Staff and to the Prime Minister--I had to talk Arabic to the Prime Minister--over in the barracks. They said, "His Majesty is adamant and he doesn't want to discuss it. This is going to happen, etc." Anyway, after long, long talks with them, I finally got them to agree to discuss my views with the King. They called the King up and the King came over to the headquarters, and we went over the whole business again. And he finally instructed the Prime Minister to kill the request. Now whether all of this was a game or a facade, I'll never know. Maybe they have an oral history in Jordan and somebody will reveal it. [Laughter] At any rate, I had to report that, that we'd quashed this Soviet military mission for the time being.

Q: Did you feel it might be a ploy?

SYMMES: Quite possibly a ploy. I wouldn't say probably. There were other indications--I can't recall at the time--but I think it was possibly a ploy. Let me say this, there were Americans who played with ploys for the King. He had advisors sometimes, not necessarily American governmental people, who would suggest ways of pulling the eagle's feathers. So one always had to be extremely careful in dealing with the Jordanians to know what was a ploy, what was real,

what was a facade, a charade, or whatever. That was one of the first encounters I had with the King on business.

Later on--I just might throw this in--in terms of how the Foreign Service people to get to deal with heads of state. After I'd been there for a couple of years or so--I forget how long it was now--the ambassador's driver, who had been with the embassy since the beginning and had driven the various ambassadors before me, said, "You know, you have seen the King many more times than all of your predecessors combined."

I said, "Oh?"

"Yes. You see the King two or three times a week. Some of them wouldn't see him two or three times a year."

Whether this was true or not, I don't know. I certainly saw him an awful lot. At the same time, other people were seeing him. You know who I mean. When I saw him, it was generally in a situation where either I was talking about something like the Jarring mission. Jarring was the Scandinavian who had been appointed by the UN to pick up the pieces of the '67 war under UN resolution 242.

Q: Gunnar Jarring, or something like that?

SYMMES: I've forgotten his name. Jarring would have no contact with American or British or any other diplomatic representatives. He would deal only with the heads of state or heads of government concerned. So in order for us to know what Jarring and they were discussing, we had to depend on those local people. These were contacts that were very closely held.

When I reported on what the Jordanians told me about their contacts with Jarring, the only people who had access to my report would be my colleagues Don Bergus in Cairo and Wally Barbour in Israel and, of course, the Department. We didn't tell Beirut or Damascus or Jeddah about this.

So I had to see the King about the Jarring mission because he frequently saw Jarring himself, and if I didn't see the King, I saw the Prime Minister. Now, aside from that, I would see the King about arms requests or about economic aid requests. Generally, the arms requests were ones that I'd have to discuss. Obviously, I didn't on my own authority say yea or nay. I would report and then have to come back. Of course, I'd make my own recommendations.

The King had the problem of the Fedayeen who were terrorists, but had not become as terroristic as they later became. He was being quite ambivalent about dealing with them. In effect, by the time I left Jordan, he had lost control of the situation by his rather feckless behavior with them. One day he'd be very hard on them, the next day he'd let them do whatever they wanted, and the result was they were off-balance and he was off-balance, the government was off-balance, we were off-balance. Nobody knew what he was really doing with the Fedayeen. So I would have discussions with him about that.

Another big item on our agenda would happen sometimes in the middle of the night. I would get a telephone call and they would say, "His Majesty wants to talk you." I could hear the artillery in the distance, even with my bad hearing. And, of course, what would be happening was that the Jordanians and Israelis were having an artillery fire fight on the border, because some Fedayeen had infiltrated and, in effect, the Jordanians were giving them cover and the Israelis were firing back counter battery fire. So the King would get on, "I'm going to have to unleash my artillery if the Israelis don't stop this." Fortunately, I was able to communicate on line with Tel Aviv. Wally Barbour didn't bother to get up for this kind of thing, but I would talk to the military attaché, the DCM, or somebody on the teletype.

Q: So you were active as sort of an in-between there.

SYMMES: Right. And, of course, the attaché or the people in the embassy in Tel Aviv would get hold of the Israeli authorities, and the Israelis would say, "We'd be glad to stop firing if the Jordanians would just stop letting the Fedayeen come across." So the King and I would have this kind of discussion by telephone in the middle of the night. Anyway, those were the kinds of contacts I had.

Q: Harry, I'm getting a picture here of King Hussein being a very clever maneuverer but not a survivor, maybe not somebody who's as much in control of things as often as one gets a picture of from the outside.

SYMMES: I think you put your finger on his personality. I frequently have said to people that he was clever rather than wise. I think a number of decisions he made over the years. What he did with Glubb Pasha, the way he handled Glubb's dismissal. The way he handled my so-called transfer. Those various threats that he made about, "I'm going to the Soviets." His running to Nasser and kissing him on the nose just before the '67 war, and then entering the war. Reckless behavior. The thing he had going for him was a relationship with outside countries that saved him from his mistakes. We are partially responsible for that, and, of course, the British were. But there were many times when Hussein has dug his own grave only to be pulled from it by his friends before he got himself covered up. [Laughter]

Q: Before going into the relationship of the Fedayeen, I guess they're called the Palestinians today. How did you find your staff? This was your embassy and how well was it staffed?

SYMMES: When I was assigned there, I knew the incumbent Deputy Chief of Mission -- I don't want to name any names--but the Deputy Chief of Mission had been my predecessor in Kuwait and he had served with me when I was in NE. He had had a very bad alcohol problem which he had licked. Although he had licked the alcohol problem, he had not licked certain other ways of operating. He was a poor administrator and found it hard to pull things together and so on. So when I found that I was going to Jordan, I said to Rodger Davies, "Well you know from the fact that you reviewed the efficiency report I wrote on him that I don't think the Deputy Chief of Mission is a person I want as my deputy. And I would hope that since I am going to a very difficult job that you'll let me have another Deputy Chief of Mission." Rodger had always found it very difficult to make tough personnel decisions. It was one reason why he had me doing personnel in NE.

He said, "Harry, you're going out new, and you've got to have some period of transition and so on, but I can understand how you feel. We'll certainly want to do it as quickly as possible, but give it three months or so before we make the change. We'll be looking for somebody."

Well, it was almost a year before they made the change. That DCM and I got on all right, but I didn't have the kind of support that I would have wanted right from the beginning.

Now in terms of the rest of the staff, I was very fortunate. I had Dick Murphy, a wonderful Arabist. Later on Bob Pelletreau joined him. He also spoke Arabic. We had Slater Blackiston, an economic officer who spoke Arabic. The DCM spoke some Arabic. We had a consular officer Dave Zweifel -- he later became a chief of mission in the Arab world -- who spoke good Arabic. We also had a commercial officer who spoke Arabic.

I could invite in all non-English speaking Arab officials with a sprinkling of American officers and have an entire luncheon or dinner conversation in Arabic. This was very important to me. I felt we were in touch with various aspects of the society and population and government. My subordinates were, for the most part, very good, astute officers. Since we had a buddy-buddy relationship there, I felt that what intelligence we got in was not always dependable and I needed other sources.

Q: This is usually the problem. It's not that you get good intelligence but you become part of the system.

SYMMES: You get what they want to give. That's right. And you're stopped from conducting your own operations. So I had to depend upon my regular staff -- these Arabic speakers -- to pick up a lot of stuff about what was going on and what people really thought.

Q: I have found this in my experience in other incarnations. Too close relations with the CIA really don't serve you that well because it does mean that you can't then go out and have your independent relations with what amounts to the opposition.

SYMMES: Too big a risk. You compromise your buddy- buddy relationships.

Q: So it hurts more than it helps from a very practical point of view.

SYMMES: I think so. And the other thing is that it's a real undercutting of the chief of mission's authority. No sooner had I gotten out there than Arthur Goldberg, who was then our Ambassador to the UN, had sent out a back channel message asking a certain person what he really thought about the situation. He'd been reading my reports, but what did this other person think?

[Laughter] And this other person who knew me already and knew that I was a tough guy when it came to "By God, don't do anything behind my back," came in and said, "I've got this message, what do I do? I'm in an embarrassing position." I said, "Just tell him you read everything the ambassador sends in and that you are in agreement with his analysis. That's what you tell him. And if you're not in agreement with me, tell me."

The same thing with Joe Sisco. He would do the same thing, send back channel messages on me. I think that this is something it really behooves our national security apparatus to look at. Now there are times when we have to have it, and when we do have to have it, we've just got to make certain that we set up ways to prevent it from hamstringing us.

HARRY I. ODELL
Economic Counselor; Deputy Chief of Mission
Amman (1968-1970)

Harry Odell graduated from Brown University and later attended graduate school at the Fletcher School of International Affairs at Tufts University. Prior to attending Brown University, however, Mr. Odell had served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II. His Foreign Service career began in 1950 and it took him to places such as Germany, Israel, Sri Lanka, Greece, Jordan, and Switzerland. In addition, Mr. Odell has held several positions within the Department of State. He was interviewed by Peter Moffat in April 2000.

ODELL: I was supposed to go back to the Department. I got word (I had never heard his name before.) that Ambassador Harrison Symmes from Jordan was in town and that I was being considered to be the economic counselor in Amman and he'd like to talk to me. I said this was new to me. I thought I was going back to the Department. I went and talked to Symmes. Actually, I was kind of intrigued with the idea of going. He dropped hints that, if things work out, I might become the DCM. He didn't say so, but that was kind of the implication. So, we went to Jordan. In due course, that did happen. Did you ever know Duncan? He was the DCM. When he left, I became the DCM.

Q: Situate us in Jordanian history.

ODELL: This was 1968. They had gotten into the '67 War. Apparently, they would have had been better off not fighting at all. The Israelis have always said they offered not to fight them if they didn't fight. Whether the Israelis would have occupied the West Bank and Jerusalem is another question. I don't know. But certainly the Jordanians, I believe... Hussein flew to Cairo and embraced Nasser and all that sort of stuff. Then the war promptly started. It was just a debacle as far as the Jordanians were concerned. The Israelis just ran right over them. There was some rather nasty fighting in Jerusalem itself. Fighting in cities is not an easy thing to do anyhow. I think the Jordanian army, what fighting it put up was in Jerusalem. There was some serious fighting there and a number of people on both sides were killed. The Israelis, of course, were determined to capture the old city and they did. That was in June of 1967.

I got to Jordan in September of 1968, a year later. Of course, to me, not having been assigned in Jordan before, the differences weren't immediately noticeable. But to people who had been there before the '67 War, it was an enormous difference. Apparently, life in Jordan for American diplomats before the '67 War had been extremely pleasant. You could go to Jerusalem if you wanted to. It is a fascinating place to be. We would go down to Jericho. If you had the money

and the means, you went to Jericho in the chilly weather. The king had a winter palace down there. Life was quite agreeable and then this trauma hit them. They lost the West Bank. Transjordan (or Jordan proper), was largely desert. The West Bank was settled and civilized and they lost all that. So, it was quite traumatic. Of course, the refugee population had been increased enormously suddenly. The strain on the facilities in Jordan was very, very great.

When I got there as economic counselor, we had an AID mission, of course. It was smaller than the one we had had in Ceylon, but again, I don't think there was a great deal of clear focus on what the purpose of the exercise was, what they were doing. There were some good people doing some good things, but I couldn't sense any coherent picture or package. Although Harrison Symmes was nothing at all like Ambassador Willis in Ceylon, he shared her view that he should have as little as possible to do with the AID mission and that his economic counselor officer should be the one that dealt with the AID mission. So, I myself was not terribly interested in that. I tended, I must confess, to push a lot of that off a guy named Arthur (Art) Bowman, who was my number two in the Economic Section. Poor Art, I'm afraid, was the guy that I would say, "Art, you go to that AID staff meeting" and so forth. Of course, I had in mind quite clearly that I hoped I would become the DCM, which I did become.

Harrison Symmes was very attractive, a very nice guy. He had a very pretty wife, Joan. He was very much of an Arabist, but an unusual Arabist in that by that time he was beginning to get a reputation among other Arabists of drifting from the faith a little bit. He was not all that keen on Arabic rhetoric. It can get pretty intense and pretty hard to take. Of course, we were blamed for their debacle. If we did not support the Israelis, this would not have happened to Jordan. It was our fault and we ought to do something about it. Well, you can say, well, there is fundamentally a certain measure of truth to that, that if we didn't support the Israelis, they wouldn't be as successful as they were. There is no doubt about that. If we didn't give them or sell them these Phantom airplanes, they wouldn't be so dominant in the skies over Jordan. Having said all that, on a day to day basis of not being able to do anything without being lectured on that subject, it got to be a little bit weary. It got to Symmes. He also had (still has) a bit of a temper. If he is pushed very hard, he can kind of explode. He can get pretty uptight every now and then about things like this. This was a period of growing tension. The Fedayeen movement, the Arafat movement, when I first got there, as economic counselor, we lived in an apartment not terribly far with the embassy. Amman was built on hills. They say "the seven hills of Amman," called "jebels," of course. The embassy in those days, the chancery was on Jebel Luwebdeh and we lived near it. The center of gravity of the city had moved by this time over to Jebel Amman. There were deep wadis in between. It was an interesting place. Man's history in Amman goes way, way back. It was Philadelphia under the Romans and the Greeks and there are Roman artifacts all over the place. It goes back to the Stone Age. People have lived there for a long, long time. It is a very interesting place. I lived not far from the chancery.

The Fedayeen, Arafat and company, Time Magazine ran a cover article on him way, way back. Barbara, my wife, said to me, "I've seen that man." Their headquarters was just down the street. But all the while we were there, this Fedayeen presence and power was growing. Periodically, something would flare up and there would be trouble. It was usually in the refugee camps and stuff. The presence of these paramilitary groups became more and more obvious. It became more and more obvious that there were many areas of Amman and in the countryside where the

legitimate government really had no effective control. It was a growing problem. It began to impact on us because it seemed that hardly a week would go by that it would not be dangerous to go here or there. The Fedayeen down in the valley periodically went right across the border into Israel to do something and the Israelis would come over and retaliate. Then, of course, the tension would increase some more.

In the meantime, of course, the so-called "war of attrition" was building up between the Egyptians and the Israelis along their border. It was a difficult period and it was unfortunate, too. Amman must have one of the nicest climates in the world. You're up just high enough. You get some nasty weather during the winter. You get heavy rains. There is very little snow, but it can get to be unpleasant. But most of the time, in the summer, you're up high enough that the heat doesn't really get to you. In six or seven months of the year, it just kind of a lovely golden glow. The Jordanian people that we encountered were quite agreeable. Jordan has always been a step removed from most of the Arab countries in terms of western orientation. Of course, the King was very much so. We enjoyed many aspects of it, but there was always this background of trouble brewing. It just kept building up and building up, and then periodic this, that, and the other thing. Of course, it politically came to a crunch with us when Joe Sisco, who was then the assistant secretary for NEA, came out to visit the area. The Fedayeen, groups of them, in Amman decided to protest. They had big demonstrations and they burned down our cultural center and trashed things around the chancery and so forth. The police, whether they were unable to or afraid to, really did nothing to stop this. Much of the crowds were young people, students and so forth, egged on by people. You could see the Fedayeen encouraging them to do these things. They burned down our cultural center, which the USIA guy, David Strapland, was very proud of. David was really shook. They came in with burning devices, highly sophisticated ones. It takes a lot to burn books. Books don't burn very easily and they burned these books and trashed the place. Symmes was annoyed. When the foreign minister called up, I was on the extension listening in. He said how sorry he was for all this. Symmes really let him have it, that that is not good enough, that the authorities didn't stop this and this was not our fault, etc. He really let him have it. Sisco by this time was in Tel Aviv. We had made rather elaborate arrangements - I had been involved with them in the middle of the night - that Sisco was going to come over, but we would arrange with the Jordanians that they would send a helicopter down to the valley. Sisco would come down to what used to be called the Allenby Bridge and was officially now Hussein Bridge. It was nothing but a bailey bridge across a creek. Then he would be picked up and brought to Amman. The helicopter was the idea that it wasn't safe to travel by road down there because of the Fedayeen. That was the first consideration: would it be safe for him to come? We had had all these riots. This was kicked around for a while and then they burned the cultural center and everything else and Symmes had this discussion with the foreign minister. At the end of it, Symmes recommended to Sisco that he not come. He put it up to the foreign minister that "I don't see how you can guarantee the safety of this American official." The foreign minister kept saying, "Oh, he will be safe." I'm quite sure he would have, but Sisco ended up saying, "Alright, I won't come." Well, I think it was that night that Symmes called me at home and said he wanted to see me. So, I went over. He had just gotten word that the Jordanians had gone into the Department of State in Washington and asked that Mr. Symmes be transferred. I said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" He said, "Well, I don't know what the Department is going to do about it." I said, "Well, they haven't declared you persona non grata?" He said, "No, and I made that point to the Department, but I think they'll probably go along with this."

So, they did. I always thought at the time that the Department again was a little wishy washy in this. They might have said to the Jordanians, "Well, it you don't like Mr. Symmes, say so." But they didn't. They said, "Wouldn't it be nice if you transferred him" rather than simply saying, "We're kicking him out."

I think they thought he would leave immediately. But he didn't. The first thing he said was that (This was in the June of 1970 or thereabouts.) their son was in school in the international school in Amman and they wanted him to finish the semester. If Symmes himself left, he didn't see any reason why his wife should have to leave. So, Symmes stayed on for quite a while. I forget just how long it was until the foreign minister said to me one day, "When is he going to leave?" I said, "I don't know. He is taking his time." He said, "Why doesn't he leave?" I said, "He hasn't got his transfer orders." So, Symmes was very methodically packing up his books personally. Eventually, he did leave and I became the chargé. But his wife, Joan, stayed on until the kid finished school. She stayed on in the residence. She kept a very low profile. She stayed there and we gave her full support - a car and driver and everything else - but she stayed pretty much in the home. She did come over to our house a couple of times for dinner, but she didn't entertain except American gals. She would play bridge or something during that period. Symmes ended up becoming Tom Macalmee's deputy in Congressional Relations.

But I was the chargé and I stayed chargé until September. Then I was replaced. Then Dean Brown was named ambassador. He came. I left. Just about the day after I left was when the September shootout started, which was unfortunate professionally for me, in a way. It would have been better if I had been able to stay, but I didn't know what was going to happen. Tensions were building up and we evacuated dependents and so forth. Never again. That is a real mess. It just upsets everybody's lives. You can't imagine the number of people, the school problems, the family problems, and everything else. That happened. After Symmes left, that summer was a long, hot summer in Amman. There was constant trouble building up between the government and the Fedayeen. It was obvious that something was going to give.

The climax came when they hijacked the three airplanes. TWA, a British plane, and a Swiss plane. I think one of them went to Cairo, but the others landed on a World War II airstrip outside Amman. I think that was the crunch point. By this time, my successor, a kind of a political appointee, came in. I was anxious to leave at that point. I knew I was going and I wanted to get the hell out of there. My daughter was in college and my son had to get set in school. I was supposed to be on a promotion panel back in Washington. Time was going on and everything else. So, this guy came in. Dean Brown was up in Beirut. I left and then Dean came down and things started practically the next day. But what happened before the planes were hijacked that summer, our assistant military attaché was killed in a shootout. His house was in an area that was being contended over by factions within the Fedayeen. They came to the door to his house. I think he made a mistake probably. He was an Arab language officer in the military. He spoke just enough Arabic for them to fire through the door. I think if he had spoken English and stuff, they might not have done that. But he was killed. Then they started stealing our automobiles and everything. Things were getting very, very bad that summer. We evacuated the dependents and so forth. Finally, the king screwed his courage to the sticking point and told the army to go after the Fedayeen and their September civil war sort of broke out. It ended with the Fedayeen being

driven out of Jordan at that point. Some of them crossed into Israel and begged for asylum. Once Hussein's royal troops (bedouin troops mostly) got going, they didn't need much encouragement to shoot Palestinians. They were quite happy to shoot Palestinians.

DAVID E. ZWEIFEL
Consular Officer
Amman (1968-1970)

David E. Zweifel was born in Colorado on September 13, 1934. He received a bachelor's degree from Oregon State University and served in the U.S. Navy overseas for five years. He joined the Foreign Service in July 1962 and served in Brazil, Lebanon, Jordan, Mexico, Oman, Yemen, and Washington, DC. Mr. Zweifel retired in 1995 and was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on September 3, 1996

Q: I know, but those were tense days and one never knew what was going to happen next. After your completion of the language training, and after this adventure during the 67 War, you went in 1968 to Amman.

ZWEIFEL: I arrived at the beginning of 1969. One result of the Six Day War was that the market for Arabists was drastically reduced. Many of our embassies and other posts in the areas were closed as host governments broke diplomatic relations with Washington. A few were kept functioning as interests sections under friendly flags, but even in those cases, with reduced American presence. So there were few job openings for those of us who were coming out of training at the time. I was among those who faced a pretty bleak prospect. Even though I had by then determined I wanted to specialize as a political officer, I was assigned to a consular position.

An interesting footnote: in November, 1968, my wife and I drove to Amman. We were already assigned and wanted to look for housing, etc. As I recall, we were the first official Americans who were allowed back through Syria after the war. The Syrians were very hospitable. They treated us with real courtesy, even though the government in Damascus had broken relations with the U.S.

Q: That's good, although you never knew when you started out what you were going to face. Harry Symmes was the Ambassador?

ZWEIFEL: Yes, he was Ambassador to Jordan when I got to Amman. He had spent long years in the Arab world and was a very competent Arabist. He ultimately did not have a successful mission in Jordan, not necessarily due to his own actions, but it was just a difficult time in our bilateral relations. King Hussein eventually asked that he be withdrawn.

Q: Yes, I understand that. I remember, he was very well thought of. I remember the day when he was sent out to Jordan as Ambassador. Everyone thought it was a great thing for him. Tell me about living in Jordan in those days.

ZWEIFEL: Jordan during that period-we're now talking about early 1969 until the end of 1970-was an increasingly difficult and even dangerous place to be.

Q: That is, for Americans?

ZWEIFEL: For Americans, Jordanians, Palestinians and everybody else as well. But certainly for Americans. The political situation was deteriorating rapidly. The "Fedayeen", as the Palestinian guerrilla movement was known, were increasingly and openly defiant, in opposition to the King. The security situation was in a sharp downward spiral. Our daily lives were a commentary on becoming inured to even dangerous circumstances. We thought nothing, for example, of delaying our departure for lunch if there was a raging fire fight in the streets. The matter came to a head for the Embassy in early April, 1970. I believe Joe Sisco was by then already Under Secretary for Political Affairs in the Department.

Q: Yes, I think he'd already moved up.

ZWEIFEL: Sisco had scheduled a trip to the area, including a stop in Amman. Just before he was scheduled to arrive in Jordan, we experienced a day of sharp violence and rioting in Amman. Our Chancery was completely trashed. The Ambassador's limousine was among the vehicles which were burned. Our USIS Center, located in a different part of the city, was fire bombed and completely destroyed.

It obviously was a difficult and dangerous situation. Ambassador Symmes, in my view with full justification, recommended that, given the precarious security situation, the Secretary Sisco cancel his stop in Jordan. He did so. King Hussein, for equally understandable political reasons, felt that this was an insult, indicating that he was not in control, unable to provide the necessary security for Mr. Sisco. That was the straw that broke the back. The King asked that the Ambassador be withdrawn.

A couple of months later, in June, the fighting between the Fedayeen and the Royal Jordanian military forces became much more severe. In terms of the Embassy, this culminated in the tragic death of our Assistant Military Attaché, Bob Perry, gunned down in his own home in front of his wife and small children.

I have often said that the only time I was really afraid in all of this turmoil was when a small group of teenage guerrillas, armed with Kalashnikovs, came into our garden one Friday afternoon. I was home with my small children, out in the garden. The youngsters came in to ask for funds. As politely as I could, I told them I did not want to become involved in their issue. One of them became a bit argumentative. Another member, aware that things threatened to get out of hand, suggested they all leave. As they got to the gate, the one who had been particularly obstreperous released the safety on his weapon and pointed it at my children. Fortunately, that was all that happened.

Overall, those were tense, often uncomfortable times. Our movements were very restricted.

Q: It was downright dangerous at times.

ZWEIFEL: Yes, it was.

Q: After Ambassador Symmes left, who was in charge of the Mission?

ZWEIFEL: Harry Odell was the Chargé throughout that summer.

Q: When did Dean Brown come in?

ZWEIFEL: I'll get to that in a minute. In my opinion, Harry Odell was totally miscast for the responsibilities he now faced. His performance says something, in my view, of how officers are sometimes selected. Harry Symmes, for all his talents, had chosen Odell to be his DCM for two, primary reasons. First, he wanted someone who had an economic background; Odell was an economic cone officer. Secondly, the Ambassador wanted to make sure he did not have a DCM who might upstage him. Odell fit that requirement as well. He was not familiar with the Middle East and did not speak Arabic. Put to the test, he proved to be a very weak leader, demonstrably unable to manage in the crisis which evolved. He was an exceptionally poor choice to be thrust into leadership of the Mission during that critical period.

The crisis came to a head in early September, 1970, with the near simultaneous hijacking of four passenger aircraft. A PanAm plane was flown to Cairo, where it later was blown up. Planes from Swissair, TWA, and British Airways were all flown to Dawson's Landing, an old World War II gravel strip east of Amman. The situation was further complicated because the area immediately around the landing strip was ringed by Iraqi troops which had interposed themselves between the Jordanian army and the terrorists who were holding the planes. The hostages were held for a number of days. Early on, Chargé Odell decided this was a protection and welfare issue. As Consul, I was thus the person who handled the problem the Embassy's involvement in trying to resolve the crisis. We quickly perceived the objectives of the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the group holding the hostages), as transparent as they were ingenious. They sought to deal seriatim with each of the governments which had nationals on the hijacked planes. By process of elimination, any Israeli nationals would be left with no interlocutor other than the U.S. Among other factors, our evolving policy on terrorism was already firm on one point: no direct negotiation with terrorists or actions which could be construed to amount to recognition of the PFLP. We faced a real dilemma. The key from our perspective was to hold the line, forestall that negotiating tactic.

The solution we came to was to involve the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). That organization entered the scene as the intermediary between interested governments and those holding the captives. The indirect discussions went on for several days. Finally, all but six of the hostages were released, then the three aircraft at Dawson's Landing were blown up. Ironically, the six who were still held captive were all holders of U.S. official or diplomatic passports. Obviously, the terrorists thought they were more valuable as hostages.

You asked when Dean Brown entered the picture. He had already been named to be Ambassador to Jordan, and his arrival was imminent. When the crisis broke out, the Department accelerated both his arrival and that of Bill Brubeck, the latter to be the new DCM. Brown arrived literally the day before the conflict between the fedayeen and King Hussein's military forces erupted into full-blown civil war.

Q: I was in The Netherlands at that time, and one of the planes had been hijacked out of Amsterdam, as I recall. Leila Khalid, the famous woman terrorist, showed up there. So there was tremendous interest in what was happening. Those were tense days for you, I know.

ZWEIFEL: Yes, exciting but very tense.

Q: Did you spend a lot of time at the site?

ZWEIFEL: No, we could never get to the landing strip where the hijacked planes were held. As I said, we worked through the ICRC. At all hours of the day and night, we would be moving around, trying to hold meetings. By that time, the situation had become very tenuous and dangerous as far as personal movements were concerned. There was a lot of gunfire on the streets, and the Fedayeen appeared to have the upper hand.

Q: Did you have a number of people to take care of on your hands as a result of this release?

ZWEIFEL: Once the hostages were released, they were brought to the intercontinental Hotel in Amman. Some of them were kept there during the civil war period which ensued. But as soon as that fighting was over, they were able to leave the country.

Q: Tell us about the fighting which broke out almost simultaneously.

ZWEIFEL: The hijacking led directly into the fighting. King Hussein realized that this was the ultimate showdown. He ordered his loyal military forces to crush the Fedayeen.

The night before that order was executed, there was sort of a council of war at our DCM's residence. Ambassador Dean Brown had immediately taken charge. He was a very strong leader, a very decisive person. He quickly determined who was going to be inside the chancery when the war broke out and who would be left outside. Twenty-nine of us were going to be in the Chancery. So, the next morning when the guns opened up, we were there.

Q: You'd known that the guns were about to open up?

ZWEIFEL: By that time, we knew that the situation was about to blow up. We had good intelligence on that. As it turned out, after nine days entrapment in the Chancery under fire, Dean Brown left in an armored personnel carrier. It was a noted moment in Foreign Service lore: Dean Brown, accompanied by Hume Horan, our Political Counselor, going off in the APC to present credentials to King Hussein.

I finally got out of the Chancery-which was never liberated-after 13 days.

Q: I've heard of places where the Ambassadors were taken by horse and carriage to present credentials, but never by an APC!

ZWEIFEL: It was the only time that had ever happened.

Q: Some of our people were taken hostage, weren't they?

ZWEIFEL: Bob Pelletreau, who was then an officer in the Political Section and John Stewart, a USIS Officer, were both held briefly by elements of the Fedayeen. Months earlier, Morris Draper similarly had been kidnapped and held for three days. Has he been interviewed for this Oral History project?

Q: I have not, but I think he has been interviewed. I know Maury well. But, no, I have not personally interviewed him. And there was looting and, I gather, cases of rape going on?

ZWEIFEL: Earlier, in the May-June time period, a number of American women had been raped. Then, all dependents were evacuated. By September, when the Civil War occurred, working staff members were the only American officials still in Amman.

Q: Did the Embassy regard the King's position as shaky though this or not? Did we think that he would come out on top?

ZWEIFEL: We not only thought he would come out on top, we saw it as critical to our own interests that he do so. I suppose there are those who felt that he had dithered too long, that he should have acted earlier. But I don't think there was ever any real question that he had to prevail. Of course, as events unfolded, this became a very complicated international crisis. We had moved the Sixth Fleet off the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean and were poised to intervene if necessary. Hafez al Assad, who had recently come to power in Syria through a military coup, finally intervened in Northern Jordan with a tank force. That took some of the implicit pressure of the Iraqis off the King and helped stabilize the situation. The Israelis were also tacitly cooperative. It was generally perceived that the King's survival was in everyone's interest.

Q: What was the Soviet reaction to all this?

ZWEIFEL: The Soviets were playing a very devious game. They were supporting the Fedayeen politically and militarily, while maintaining correct diplomatic relations with the Jordanian Government. They perceived that Soviet interests would be served by turmoil as opposed to our objectives-regional stability based on the status quo. This, however, meant that we wanted Israel to be militarily dominant in the region. That policy can't obviously put us at odds with all the Arab governments on many issues.

Q: Was there any fear of Israeli intervention at that time?

ZWEIFEL: As I said, the Israelis were certainly willing and prepared to cooperate. In my opinion, they would have intervened unilaterally to save King Hussein if that had become necessary. That would have been the kiss of death. It was a prospect that concerned Washington, and we were relieved when this scenario was forestalled by Assad having entered the picture, coming to the King's aid.

Q: Did we have any line to the Fedayeen, to the PLO?

ZWEIFEL: There was no official contact or dialogue. One of the funny little stories I have always treasured is that at one point in the early days of the hijacking, a good Jordanian friend of mine offered to put me in contact with the hijackers or their representatives. After clearing that proposal with Charge o' Dell, the Jordanian contact and I headed off in his Volkswagen Beetle. Deep in one of the riskier areas of the city, we met with a PFLP official. Somewhere in my papers, I think I still have the scratch pad with the PFLP letterhead on which I took notes. That meeting gave us our first indication of the terrorists demands for the release of the hostages. When I got back to the Embassy, the Station Chief was fit to be tied. But, since I had checked first with the Charge, he had to swallow hard and get on with other matters.

Later during the hostage incident, through an Egyptian military officer who was cooperating with us (although Nasser had broken diplomatic relations with Washington), I received a list of Palestinians being held in Israeli jails. The PFLP was demanding their release as a condition for freeing the hostages.

We duly cabled this list of names to Washington. A "Flash" precedence message came back, directing that the list be returned to its source. We refused to accept this information-but obviously, had it in our possession! We did not want to appear to be in any way willing to negotiate or act as intermediaries for the terrorists. At the time, it signaled an evolution in our policy for dealing with such situations. I strongly agree with the concept that we should not negotiate with terrorists.

Q: During this period of tremendous upheaval, what was the role that Nasser was playing?

ZWEIFEL: Nasser was so outraged by the fact that the civil war had broken out in Jordan, that Arab was fighting Arab, that he broke diplomatic relations with King Hussein. In that sense, he sided with the Fedayeen.

We had an interesting sidelight on Jordanian-Egyptian relations at the time. Between our Consulate building on Jebel Webdeih and the main Chancery was a small house, the home of a distinguished Palestinian, a Brigadier General in the Jordanian Army. His name was Mohammed Daoud, and he had been the Jordanian Representative on the Joint Armistice Commission established after the 1948 War of Partition between Israel and the Arab States. He was a firm believer in seeking a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On more than one occasion, he told me that if the circumstances ever again were right for direct negotiations, he considered himself to be the best-qualified person to represent Jordan.

As it turned out, in the fighting of September, 1970, King Hussein named Daoud to be his Prime Minister. Rather than negotiating peace, Daoud's mandate was to preside over a wartime cabinet. The King sent him to Cairo in an attempt to dissuade Nasser from breaking relations. Those attempts failed, Nasser broke relations. Ironically, within the month he had succumbed to a heart attack.

In the meantime, the failure was such a psychological blow to Daoud that he cracked. He left a note in the Nile Hilton in Cairo, resigning as Prime Minister of Jordan. Then he went into political exile in Libya where he eventually died without ever returning to Jordan.

King Hussein historically has been magnanimous, one of the secrets of his political longevity and survival. After Daoud's death, the King had the body returned for honorable burial in Amman.

Q: Why wasn't the UN actively involved during this crisis?

ZWEIFEL: I believe that the de facto impasse between the U.S. and the Soviets on Arab-Israeli issues would have made it problematic to get agreement on UN action. We perceived that the Soviets would use their veto in the Security Council to block effective measures. Frankly, there was also considerable American skepticism about the efficacy of the UN's ability to handle this sort of crisis.

Q: Did the fighting undermine or strengthen the stability of Hussein's regime?

ZWEIFEL: In the aftermath, it obviously was a tremendous plus for the King who managed to reestablish his authority in a very real way. That authority had been increasingly contested, even tenuous. Despite the high cost in terms of human lives and damage to the economy, the King's decision to face down the Fedayeen enabled him to stand above internal challenges to his leadership. The military confrontation was critical to the King's survival. Our interests, as well as his, were served by the fact that the Jordanian Army prevailed over the Fedayeen. As an aside, remember that during the September episode Yasser Arafat had to flee Amman disguised as a woman.

Q: And what was the overall effect on the Arab cause? He had Syrians in Jordan, we had the Palestinians fighting Jordanians.

ZWEIFEL: The fallout unfolded in many ways. The Palestinian rejectionists who had opted for armed conflict rather than negotiations were forced out of Jordan. The militants regrouped in Lebanon. And we all know the aftermath of that, the tragic Civil War which broke out in Lebanon in 1975, the Israeli invasion of 1982. In a sense, we are still dealing with some of the consequences in issues such as the Israeli "Security Zone" in Southern Lebanon, the Syrian presence in that country, etc.

Q: Of course, there was still a heavy presence of Palestinians in Jordan, although the fighters, the PLO, the Fedayeen moved out.

ZWEIFEL: Yes. That goes back to the historic fact that, after the 1948 war, the only country in the Arab world to grant citizenship to Palestinian refugees was Jordan. The Palestinians who took refuge in other countries were tolerated, given permission to live and work. But only in Jordan were they granted the right to citizenship.

Q: Did we increase our military equipment to Jordan after that?

ZWEIFEL: Yes. We had a significant military cooperation program with the Jordanians which included selling them training and equipment. That continued. Despite ups and downs, military support has always been a factor in U.S.-Jordanian relations.

Q: How about the Embassy's size?

ZWEIFEL: We had reduced the number of personnel before the fighting, although perhaps not as drastically as would have been desirable. I think that there were probably still about forty American employees at the Embassy in September, 1970. It remained at that relatively low level for a time, then gradually was increased again.

Q: Are there any other comments that you'd like to make about that tense period in Jordan before we move on?

ZWEIFEL: It was an exciting time. We had a stellar staff in Jordan during that period. Maury Draper, Hume Horan-the Service's most outstanding Arabist in my opinion. Bob Pelletreau was the second ranking officer in the Political Section at the time.

Q: You had quality if not quantity. Did you have assistance in your consular work or were you entirely alone?

ZWEIFEL: In terms of American staff, I had a part-time vice consul. I had a policy during that time. It was before there were lexguard windows and other security devices to shield consular officers from the visa public. Applicants entered my office, and sat as I interviewed them. My policy was that if the applicant had a grenade hanging from his belt, I denied the visa. After all, some predecessor of mine had issued a visa to Sirhan Sirhan, Robert Kennedy's assassin.

Q: That was probably a fairly wise policy! By the way, you mentioned Sirhan Sirhan. Was there much reaction in Jordan to his condemnation in the States?

ZWEIFEL: I do not personally recall anyone who considered that a miscarriage of justice. Although some in the Arab World sought to contrive a political justification for Sirhan, Jordanians of all walks of life apparently perceived that he should be punished for his crime.

MORRIS DRAPER
Political Counselor
Amman (1968-1970)

Morris Draper was born in California in 1928 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1952. An Arabic language officer, Mr. Draper served in a number of Middle East posts including Beirut, Baghdad, Jeddah, Ankara, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC. Mr. Draper was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You were in Amman from 1968 to 1970. What was your assignment?

DRAPER: I was the Political Counselor and for part of the time, I was acting as the Deputy Chief of Mission, after our Ambassador, Harry Symmes, was asked to leave.

The country when I arrived was living under martial law, suffering from major economic dislocations, trying to absorb a new flood of refugees from the 1967 War. It was also trying to rebuild its army. El Fatah, headed by Yasser Arafat, had taken over control of the PLO. It had gained some prestige from its operation against the Israelis and it became a powerful force within Jordan--sort of a third force consisting of tens of thousands of armed fighters. They lived in Jordan and trained there. They swaggered down the street, behaving pretty badly in many respects. They controlled total areas of Jordan, including parts of the city of Amman. They operated their own system of justice; they constituted a powerful threat to the stability of the monarchy. They also were a target for retaliation from Israel for the raids that they engendered. In fact, one of the little known facts of this period is how often the Israelis flew strikes and dropped bombs on the outskirts of Amman. I remember one picnic we had in an apple orchard with some Jordanian friends watching the Israelis dive-bomb targets about a mile from where we were.

The Jordan Valley itself was practically empty because of the threat from Israel and because of the problem of getting water. The many development projects we had financed in the past were, if not in ruins, seriously underutilized. This was the richest Jordanian farm and it lay fallow primarily because the Palestinian resistance fighters were moving across the Valley and the River causing the Israelis to patrol the area and shooting at anything that moved. It was not widely known or reported that the Israelis killed some perfectly innocent people--landowners who would want to see their farms would drive in and be bombed or strafed by an Israeli plane. From the Israeli point of view, however, since the area was controlled militarily by the Palestinians and since it contained only a few well known Jordanian army positions, everything outside those positions was hostile and therefore the Valley was a battleground. In the process, of course, the Jordanians lost all their banana groves, their vegetable crops and other farm developments which had been financed by the United States. The whole situation was a big problem for Jordan.

The major problem however was the one that got Harry Symmes kicked out of the country. He had been telling the Jordanians that they had to get control of the Palestinians or continue to be at the mercy of the Israelis and suffer from their retaliations. This was of course quite true, but the Jordanians didn't like to hear the lecture. There were other issues as well. The Jordanians for example were still shell-shocked from the war and their retreat. This syndrome manifested itself in various forms. We had an Assistant Army Attaché who had gone to the Jordanian equivalent

of the War College. He was there when the war broke out. All his fellow students went off and returned two weeks later, dragging their tails. They didn't want to speak to any foreigner at that stage, particularly an American, because then they would have to admit to what had happened to them. It is very hard for an Arab to put someone into Coventry because they like to talk. So it took the Arab officers weeks, but gradually, they came out of their shell. This was just an illustration of a wider syndrome, particularly for the Jordanian military in general.

The United States had to put on a balancing act. On the one hand, we wanted King Hussein to be strong enough to resist the Palestinians and overcome them, if a threat developed. For that, he needed police weapons, weapons for his army, training, helicopters; he had very little money to pay for this equipment. The Saudis were not subsidizing him to the extent he had hoped; they were afraid of the Palestinian reaction. Our military equipment supply policies were limited by the efforts of the Israeli lobby. Throughout all of this, we were supporting the concept articulated in Security Council Resolution No. 242--"Territory for Peace". U.N. emissaries and others were trying to get some life into the peace process. That was the major occupation of all our diplomats in Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. We were experimenting with new ideas, some of which, such as a partial Sinai fall-back, were adopted by Kissinger later. We had our own emissaries coming to the region--people like George Ball, Joe Sisco and others, all with their own formulas. On the whole, they were acceptable to King Hussein, but they didn't get very far. He himself was preoccupied by the budding Palestinian threat. Then of course the Palestinian did challenge the King in summer, 1970.

That challenge took two forms. At one point, the Palestinians had become so arrogant that ordinary Jordanian citizens were being stopped at check-points; there was a lot of looting and robbery, some rapes, which is rare in Arab societies. The Palestinians had developed a state within a state. It was the way Lebanon became later after the Palestinian fighters fled to Lebanon from Jordan. They set up their own state within a state there as well. In Jordan during the late '60s, the nominal peace was becoming more and more fragile because the temper of the Jordanian army was becoming increasingly anti-Palestinian. Many of the senior generals--Bedouins--were anti-Palestinian anyway and deeply resented the Palestinians' successes, especially in the economic sphere.

The tensions had been growing steadily toward the end of the '60s and early '70s.

I myself was held captive by George Habash's Palestinian group for a couple of days in June, 1970. I had already sent my wife and children to Athens, knowing that tensions were building. My wife was getting very apprehensive. On the day of the incident, I was driving in the evening to meet a friend of mine, who was also a source, when I was stopped at a road-block. Unfortunately, I had a map of the area with me to help me locate this friend. This made the Palestinians suspicious; so they took me to one of their local hang-outs. It turned out that these fighters were a cell in George Habash's group--The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLA)--a part of the PLO network, but not in its main stream. Habash is a Christian and considered one of the more radical Palestinian leaders. So this cell held me for a sort of a ransom--they wanted King Hussein to dismiss the Army Chief of Staff and the head of the Intelligence Directorate. Both were outspoken foes of the Palestinians. Hussein was opposed to such demands. He said that if I wasn't returned right away, he would destroy that part of Amman

where the resistance was centered. So I was released in a complicated pick-up and delivery operation. The next day, real warfare broke out between the Jordanian Army and the PLO forces, mainly in Amman but also in some of the garrison towns in the east as well. This flare-up only gradually cooled down; during it more Americans were briefly taken hostage. In a very unusual occurrence, one American woman was raped. Some of the Palestinian gangs spilled over into the suburbs, creating great concern among people living there, including Americans. So we evacuated most of the Americans with the exception of a handful of Embassy staffers. We had to put people into sanctuaries, like the Italian Embassy. The Egyptian Ambassador and others provided sanctuary for some of our people. We worked through the Red Cross to get aircraft into Amman so that we could evacuate people. It was very touch and go. King Hussein was isolated in his palace with some of his entourage. None could leave. We couldn't communicate with each other except by talkie-walkie and an occasional phone. As these episodes do, they sort of die down; cease-fires were established and matters returned to something like normalcy. We brought some of the dependents back, but only after a debate in the Embassy. Some thought that this was the first stage of what would be a major show-down; others thought that peace would be restored for a while.

I had been assigned to Athens earlier in the summer. The crisis slowed my transfer. Henry Tasca, who was then our Ambassador in Greece, decided that he would not wait forever for me. Jordan was in such a touchy situation that Washington didn't want me to leave until my replacement had arrived. So came late August and early September and I still hadn't left Amman. So Tasca said he didn't want to wait any longer--it would have been a couple of months more because I wanted to take some leave after two years in Jordan. Of course, my wife was already in Athens, measuring our "future" house for new furnishing. Joe Sisco called one day and told me that he thought I should go to Ankara in lieu of Athens. I said fine and ended up in Turkey.

Q: Before we leave Jordan, tell me what your estimation was at the time of King Hussein?

DRAPER: We thought he was pretty wishy-washy much of the time. We had a lot of sympathy for him. He has always been a favorite of lot of Americans, although they at the same time they told jokes at his expense. We always referred to Hussein as the BLK (Brave Little King), which had a certain tone of disparagement. He was criticized in private for his colossal mistakes--e.g. the 1967 war. There were people who thought that he deserved the defeat he got. There was also the feeling that he might not be strong enough to withstand another challenge to his throne. We were constantly measuring the opposition and his own strength of will. Hussein is really a very attractive personality. When you talk to him, he fixes his attention on you. He seems to hang on every one of your words. He has a good memory for all that had been said; he is extremely polite and generous. Most American officials don't fall under his spell, but are attracted to him, especially when he is in an up beat mood. He tends to go through cycles when he is extremely depressed; then he isn't that attractive. His father ended up in a mental institution and one of his brothers, Mohammed, is also known for his erratic behavior.

Q: As Political Counselor, did you do a lot of "Hussein watching"?

DRAPER: Of course. One of my most important sources was the head of the Royal Court, who was a childhood friend of the King's and who became one of his closest advisors and remained

so until a few years ago. He became Prime Minister several times since 1970. We watched Hussein almost on a daily basis. We were more worried about the challenges that were arising than we were about Hussein himself. We wondered whether the Army would stay loyal, because there had been mutinies in the past. The CIA people had particular good relations with Hussein and his entourage and with the Jordanian intelligence and military establishments. We had many good sources in other parts of the Jordanian world as well. But we had very little intelligence on the Palestinians. We had to rely on other intelligence services for assessments of the Palestinian intentions and strengths. That included the Israeli intelligence services as well as such services as the Kuwaitan. We put a lot of CIA resources into these efforts. There was a good cooperative arrangement with the Jordanians. They kept us well informed on broader developments in the Arab world--e.g what was happening at Arab League meetings.

We were encouraging Hussein to contact the Israelis which he did. There was at the time a fair degree of exchanges. There were some face-to-face meetings between Hussein and the Israelis which we hoped would lead to some understandings and an eventual peace treaty. On many occasions, I heard Hussein remark about his respect for the Israelis and their achievements, although he feared them and hated their arrogance, as he put it. But he respected their achievements they had made in their land. He had considerable respect for the achievements of some of the individual Israelis. He thought that at some stage he could do business with them.

Q: Did you have any contacts with the Palestinians leadership?

DRAPER: At that time, we had more freedom to do so than we do now. Among those Palestinians we cultivated for example was Yasser Arafat's brother, who was the head of the Palestinian Red Crescent organization--the Arab equivalent of the Red Cross. The problem was that the Palestinians were afraid to talk to us, especially to the political officers. We were all considered spies. Some newspapers in Turkey had speculated that I was the head of the CIA Middle East organization and that, under cover, I was directing all CIA activities in the area--Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, etc. So I had special problems. The CIA station chief in Amman was very amused by all of this, but he also saw advantages of the situation. We were doing what we could to penetrate the El Fatah, but it was the Palestinians who really shied away from us--at least the ones we initially cultivated. There were of course exceptions, but in general, despite all my efforts, there were very few beneficial results--very little hard information was obtained.

Reporters and journalists such as Peter Jennings had the same problems. They would be brought to Palestinian training camps; they would take pictures of people charging bayoneting this and that and doing exercises, but they never really got a lot of useful information. In fact, my days as a hostage were more revealing in some ways than I would have had ever suspected.

Q: Did you think that the Popular Front was a central part of the PLO?

DRAPER: The PLO has always been a very loose organization. El Fatah was more non-political than the rest. It was non committed to a definite ideology. Habash's group wanted a socialist state and had other agendas. Fatah was non-partisan in those terms, which explains its success at the time. But these various PLO factions shared information and met in loosely organized meetings and talked one to another and maintained a certain loyalty to the PLO charter. It was

advantageous to all to have this kind of relationship because a lot of money flowed through the PLO. If Habash had gone off entirely on his own, his source of funds would have been uncertain as he discovered a few years later when he had to become exclusively dependent on Syrian support, who would sometimes would make demands on him.

Q: Tell us a little about Harry Symmes' forced departure? First, tell us a little about his modus operandi?

DRAPER: Harry Symmes had been in the Middle East for a long time. He had been the Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA before becoming Ambassador. He was a fine individual, but, as I learned only after my arrival in Amman, he was essentially a pacifist at heart. In World War II, he had agonized whether he should declare himself a conscientious objector; he finally decided to enter military service as an artilleryman, which caused a further problem because it made him slightly deaf--he couldn't hear certain pitches. There were some sounds that just didn't penetrate because some of the delicate mechanisms of his inner ear had been damaged by artillery explosions. In any case, it was very difficult for Symmes, as a pacifist, to recommend that more weapons be sent to an already heavily armed area, to deal with the Palestinian threat with military means--all the actions that are an anathema to a pacifist. Some of his personal views came out in, for example, his hesitation to endorse military assistance programs. He would support them, but he had little enthusiasm for them. This lack was visible to many of the Jordanians. Harry had been one of the people who before 1967 who tended to downplay the influence of King Hussein. The Arabs have long memories for these kind of views.

As I mentioned earlier, Symmes knew what was going wrong. He knew that a serious challenge to the King was brewing and he thought he should warn the King of it, which he did. He told Hussein that he had to get control of the Palestinians and the border areas; he told the King that unless that was done, the Israelis would continue their retaliation and that Jordan would continue to suffer from these Israeli activities. Hussein finally became exasperated and sent veiled warnings that Symmes' lectures were getting out of hand. He sent these messages through the CIA chief; I got a very strong hint from one of my sources in the Palace. Finally, Hussein took action and although it obviously had not come out of the blue, Harry was very shocked. He was quietly told that he would have to leave; the Jordanians told him that they were not going to declare him *persona non grata*, although the King thought that that was what he was doing, although he wanted to leave Symmes some leeway. He didn't really want to have a confrontation that a PNG process would engender. Symmes was in shock; he really didn't believe it and then he wanted to negotiate for time.

[tape 4, side B. this stuck and is an attempt to reconstruct]

DRAPER: Henry Kissinger had noticed little signs that instinctively compelled him to conclude, I shouldn't have said jumped to conclusion, that this assassination was not bringing tremendous grief to the nation.

Q: Not like the death of Nasser?

DRAPER: No, that was more like the death of Kennedy. Kissinger was absolutely right, this turned out to be increasingly clear, although it was not that clear at the time. Of course many Americans had sort of betrayed themselves into thinking that because he was our pal that all the Egyptians loved him. We may be doing the same thing with Gorbachev now [Soviet leader]. So Kissinger was right on the mark, and I can think of other instances when his instincts were so good. He is so quick witted.

Q: The people you were associated with were mostly Foreign Service, he did use the Foreign Service. This was not as we talk about today with Secretary James Baker who sort of has his own coterie.

DRAPER: Kissinger relied on the Foreign Service almost one hundred percent; he got on all right with political appointees and he had them in various positions, but his immediate staff, including some he brought over from the White House, were almost all professionals. He had on his staff a young person named Peter Rodman who later went on to think tanks and other such things. He attracted very bright young people, extremely bright, quick-witted people and people that tended to be socially conservative, politically conservative. He had a sprinkling of others; he had a special assistant who used to parachute on the weekends, so this was typical of people who worked for Kissinger, who throw themselves out of airplanes.

Q: Did you feel at that time, the emanations you were getting, that here we had a president who was very much a person who studied the foreign scene. Nixon felt that he, with a lot of justification, had a firmer grasp of foreign policy than did most of our presidents.

DRAPER: I came to Washington when Nixon was heading downhill, and there was a very painful transition period before Ford came on board. It came after Vice President Agnew was forced to resign, it was a pretty bad time. Then when Nixon tried to revive his fortunes with a trip to Cairo, and all those things, it was a difficult period, very difficult. Kissinger was one of those who was not losing his head, he was keeping his head above water, and at that time was certainly untouched by the scandal. It was like being in the eye of the hurricane, in a sense. Morale in State Department, despite what was happening to the presidency, under Kissinger was extremely good, extremely high. It reflected power, not only power but leadership. Even though this was causing all kinds of problems for us in terms of diplomacy and our relations with other countries, but there was kind of a feeling that we were going to pull out of it.

ARTHUR A. HOUGHTON III
Economic Officer
Amman (1969-1970)

Mr. Houghton was born and raised in New York City and educated at Harvard University and the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. After Arabic language study in Lebanon, Mr. Houghton joined the Foreign Service and in 1966 was posted to Amman, Jordan. Specializing in Middle East Affairs, Mr. Houghton served in Cairo, Egypt, as well as in the Department of State and in the National

Security Council in Washington. He was a Pearson Fellow on Capitol Hill and served as Special Assistant to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Mr. Houghton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: In '69 where'd you go?

HOUGHTON: Jordan, Amman.

Q: You were there from '69 to...?

HOUGHTON: To '70. It was originally a three-year assignment, but it was shortened by two years because of the sort of internal convulsion that took place in May of 1969. This was the predecessor to Black September. You could color it, but it was in May. It all took place in May when fighting broke out, generally speaking, through the city of Amman.

Q: Jordan, when you went there in '69, certainly was a different animal than Lebanon, wasn't it?

HOUGHTON: Sure, in every way.

Q: How were relations between the United States, that you could gather, and Jordan when you got there?

HOUGHTON: Well, very close, much closer than Lebanon. The American mission overall had extremely close ties at every level with the Jordanian government. The question of who represented the United States in the eyes of the King must have been an interesting one, because he probably saw the CIA station chief more than he did the ambassador. The CIA for its part, I think, had no question about who really ran the relationship. Those of us who were in the State Department kept stumbling over our friends and colleagues in the Agency in terms of what they did. I very much recall an interesting point when I was conducting an interview with a Jordanian in a particular labor union. He looked at me after I'd made the appointment and had been with him for a few minutes, and he said, "Mr. Houghton, why are you here? Mr. So-and-so normally pays me." That kind of thing went on from time to time. We had a military mission there. We had a police training mission. We had a very substantial AID mission active all over the country, a substantial AID program, and he obviously was engaged across the board.

Q: Who was our ambassador at the time?

HOUGHTON: Harry Symmes was the ambassador at that point.

Q: What was your job?

HOUGHTON: I was the number-two person in the economic function, and I did basic sort of bread-and-butter economic work, but I did at least as much – let me see. I was the embassy officer in charge of the translation section. I was the most recently arrived with Arabic, so they felt that would be useful. I was the labor reporting officer at one point. I was protocol officer, which gave me the worst problems of all. I could never get anything right. It was one of those

jobs where every time I did something to fulfill a protocol responsibility, whether it was to issue the protocol book and distribute it to those people in the diplomatic corps, I'd get phone calls from people saying, "Why didn't you give one to me?" Excellent question because it contained all the information important to people to function, but I was ordered to do it that way. I didn't say that. I decided that, "Well, don't ask the next question. I'll send you one right now." And I did a little bit of, I guess you'd have to call it, political reporting too from time to time.

Q: Well, at that time the Palestinians – I'm not sure what they were called; were they the Palestine Liberation Organization...?

HOUGHTON: The PLO was active. Fatah was active. There were numerous smaller groups: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Jibril faction, and so forth. And they were in increasing evidence all over Amman, not only within the refugee camps but outside. Finally in the second year of my stay there – not second year, 1969 – we began to see them set up outposts and housing and finally roadblocks in various areas around town. I had my automobile taken from me while I was still in it by one of these groups, but that's another story.

Q: What happened?

HOUGHTON: I was stopped in front of my house by a Land Rover. I had a Land Rover and they wanted it, and a couple of guys got out, and one came over to me and said, "We want your car," and I said, "I don't think I'm going to give it to you," and he began arming a hand grenade that he had and he said, "Now, will you please step out?" I said, "No, you step in." He said, "Move over," and I moved over, and another fellow got in back and put a Kalashnikov to the back of my head, and at that point they said once again, "We'd like your car." I said, "Okay, you've got it."

Q: Was this part of an organization?

HOUGHTON: No, these were members of a ragtag small group of Palestinians who held control over a few-block area, a small area involving a few blocks, near the so-called First Circle, between the First and Second Circles of Jabal Amman where I lived. I had to go through that area in order to get to my house, and they had obviously targeted the car as something that they wanted and they set out to get it.

Q: I assume the embassy made the due protest and all that, or did anything happen?

HOUGHTON: I don't think the embassy did anything official about it. But by that time things moved very rapidly. An internal convulsion got involved and within a week general fighting broke out in Amman and elsewhere in Jordan involving the army on one side, armed Palestinian groups on the other, and it continued probably for the next six or seven days before it died down, the end of which saw a major evacuation of both American dependents and most Americans attached to the embassy out of Jordan, which included me at a later point. So what happened to my car, where my car was, was of less importance and got sort of absorbed by other events taking place.

Q: Had there been sort of a period before this fighting broke where you were wondering when was the army going to step in?

HOUGHTON: This was the sense of others in the embassy about when was the Jordanian government going to establish or exert control. The king, to the minds of many, had been extremely weak in terms of his response at that point with regard to the enormous challenge that had been put before him by the Palestinian groups. He'd been reluctant to take any strong action against them. It was precipitated actually by an event that involved two officers in our own embassy, actually one officer in our embassy, Morris Draper, head of the political section, who was taken....

Q: Morris Draper?

HOUGHTON: You know Morris?

Q: Yes, I've interviewed him.

HOUGHTON: He was taken captive by a Palestinian group and brought into a refugee camp and became the subject of a negotiation, extremely difficult negotiation, between the group in the refugee camp and the Jordanian government, which was intent on getting him out. Morris was no more than a political officer; in other words, he didn't belong to any other agency; but they were concerned and we were concerned, and in the end after three days – I recall three days – he was released. But the town, the city, was in an extraordinary state of tension, and for whatever reason the palace was inclined to move on that camp immediately afterwards, but it became sort of a general move involving the rest of the army within a very short period of time. Within hours, within half a day, of Morris' return, fighting became generalized across town.

Q: Was it too dangerous to have all but a small cadre of Americans there?

HOUGHTON: Well, we had very specific threats. Our number two in the military attaché section, Bob Perry, was shot at his doorway in the head in front of his family. There were clear indications that certain groups of Palestinians were targeting particular individuals in the embassy staff. The Air Force officer who was the defense attaché in particular was informed that he should not come home because there was a group that was waiting to take him – kill him, I think he was told. The number two in the consular section at the time went home from the embassy where he'd been for two or three days in a row to find his cleaning woman saying, "I'm glad you're alive." He said, "Why?" and she said, "Because those young fellows were looking for you, they were going to kill you." He said, "Well, whatever became of them?" and she said, "They've gone away for a few minutes. They'll be right back." He got out. There was a decision, a pretty quick decision, to evacuate and get people out as fast as we possibly could to reduce the exposure level of Americans, particularly official Americans, working there. With non-official Americans, I don't know what happened there. Many non-official Americans sort of worked for international agencies or were missionaries, and they were assured that there was not going to be a problem, and I think they mostly stayed and there was not a problem. They didn't run into any particular problems. There was a small number of American wives of Jordanians who were integrated into Jordanian society, and they didn't have a problem either.

Q: While you were the economic officer, was there much of an economy?

HOUGHTON: Well, there was enough of an economy to report on, yes. There was enough of an economy to make it important that the embassy had a reporting function and an analytical function, most of which was performed by my economic section chief, a very able guy called Art Ballon. We had to keep Washington informed of what balance of payments and other issues were of concern to the embassy and to try to place a no-spin story on what the Jordanian economy looked like to the extent that it could be understood by high-level Jordanians who were involved in it and therefore by us because we were concerned. We frequently ran afoul of the AID mission, which had a different view as to what the economy should be in order to be able to make a decent presentation for continued funding for their project there.

Q: Did you feel you were reporting on an enemy? Was the AID effort something that you looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion?

HOUGHTON: No. They looked on us with a certain amount of suspicion. The poor AID people, I'm sure they suffered. First of all, they always felt themselves to be second-class citizens after the embassy staff. Only the director and deputy director were on the diplomatic list and therefore received either the invitations or the protection, depending which was considered to be the most important, or the customs exemption, while the rest of the AID mission was further down the totem pole. Those of us who were in the embassy were obviously sort of from the AID perspective not necessarily on the same team. AID put out a report every so often that would be glowingly and unrealistically optimistic about how the economy was doing in Jordan, which the embassy then would be paralleling with the report on how the economy in Jordan was doing. It looked rather different. There would be no attempt to reconcile this – I think that's fair – so that there was no unified reporting between AID and the embassy on what was going on in Jordan, and I think that's the way it should have been. I think a lowest-common-denominator approach would have divested Washington of sort of an important unvarnished viewpoint.

Q: Was there much trade with Iraq at that time?

HOUGHTON: Oh, there was a great deal of stuff that went through Aqaba en route to Iraq. Let me think about this for a second. But the trade with Iraq was hardly trade that was generated in Jordan. I'm sure Jordanian merchants, to the extent they could sell to Iraq, did sell, but in the end it was mostly a transit trail that went through, Beirut to Damascus, down to Mafraq, and over to Iraq was their main route, or Aqaba and up to Mafraq and over to Iraq, one way or the other, two main channels. But in fact Iraq had a port that was open, a big port, Basra, as well as the normal routes going through eastern Turkey, but they would have been rougher. The easier one was using the Jordanian highway, desert highway.

Q: I thought this might be a good place to stop now. So we'll pick it up in 1970 after you were evacuated from Jordan. Where'd you go? We'll just put this at the end of the tape so we'll know where to pick it up next time.

HOUGHTON: I was evacuated to Athens and then returned to the United States and given an assignment to INR as the Egyptian analyst.

Q: All right. So we'll pick it up in 1970 when you're in INR as the Egyptian analyst.

Today is the 16th of May 2001. In 1970 you all were removed from Jordan. We were talking off the mike. Did you cover the Sisco visit? I don't think you did.

HOUGHTON: Well, it was an episode. There were lots and lots....

Q: Would you mention that.

HOUGHTON: Let's do that.

Q: Could you explain.... basically the King asked that Harry Symmes be removed as ambassador, and it was precipitated by the aborted Sisco visit, and I was wondering if you could explain what the situation was.

HOUGHTON: Well, it was an episode among many episodes at a very troubled moment in Middle Eastern history, US-Middle Eastern relations, and US-Jordanian relations. It involved an area visit by then Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco in early 1970, to the best of my recollection – I don't recall the exact month – that involved a visit to, among other places, Israel then Jordan in that order. The visit, when it was announced, was one that engendered a certain amount of political resistance, particularly among Palestinian groups in Amman and elsewhere in Jordan, most of which were fairly mild with the exception of some street demonstrations. But as Sisco arrived in Israel and during the course of his several days of talks there, the temperature, political temperature, in Amman clearly mounted. It was known that his visit would take him across from Jerusalem to Amman, Jordan, by car to the Allenby Bridge across the Jordan River then up to Amman. We'd learned that a large number of buses had been rented, maybe 50 or more buses, which would be filled with people who would want to meet him at the bridge and let him know their views on American policy toward the Middle East. That sounded fairly threatening, but I was informed that it wouldn't be threatening to Sisco since a helicopter had been arranged to take him from the bridge up to the palace, leaving one embassy officer in charge of the baggage, and I was identified as that embassy officer. I felt uncomfortable about this, but I'm not certain I was in much of a position to do anything. In fact, demonstrations broke out in Amman and across the town preceding his arrival. So the day before, there was a certain amount of chaos that caused a conversation to take place between the then US ambassador to Jordan, Harry Symmes, and Joseph Sisco by secure line between Amman and Jerusalem, during which it was decided that Sisco should not come to Jordan. It was too critical a moment and the conflagration could have gotten considerably worse. Therefore, Sisco announced that he would not be going to Amman. This was an enormous blow to the King of Jordan, who had expected him, to all of those other people who had wanted to see him there and, most importantly, to the sense by the Jordanian government that it could control its own environment. They objected and protested very strongly and felt that Harry Symmes was the cause of that, and in time it was my

recollection that he was asked to leave and did, leaving the embassy in the hands of the then deputy chief of mission. That's that particular incident.

BRADSHAW LANGMAID
USAID Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1970's)

Bradshaw Langmaid was born in Salem, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard in 1958. He spent five years in the Air Force, and then attended Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He joined USAID in 1963, and spent a large part of his career at the Near East Bureau in Washington, D.C. He retired in 1993. Langmaid was interviewed by W. Haven North on July 14, 1998.

LANGMAID: I picked up Jordan well after the 1967 war, so we had a West Bank program and a Jordan program.

Q: What was the Jordan program?

LANGMAID: The Jordan program at that time was largely budget support, a cash payment to neutralize the economic cost of their military budget. We sought to maintain their military force at a certain level. Jordan was interesting because it had a fixed fully convertible foreign exchange. The Dinar was a very hard currency largely because we were financing it. Jordan was a long established program. We built a canal system in the Jordan valley, universities, roads. We did some work in agriculture, particularly in the valley which was all irrigated. There was a lot in public administration, training, and some work in tourism. Jordanians are delightful people. They are very Western in their orientation and are well educated. They are also very entrepreneurial. They were carrying a military force because of the Arab/Israel issues. It was not the most democratic country although it was a pretty open society. The King controlled things. His power base was the military, which was Bedouin. The King was a Bedouin. But, the country had a large Palestinian population. Relatively speaking, the military presence was not heavy and was fairly positive, building roads, schools, hospitals, etc.

Q: Our assistance was essentially to keep things going day by day or year by year rather than any long term objectives?

LANGMAID: We had a traditional technical assistance program for those times. We built schools and university buildings and provided technical assistance to them. We had an agricultural program, some rainfed and irrigated. The mission was probably 60 people. We did health, a little population, and a lot of small business. The program was \$40 million in budget support and maybe \$10-15 million in capital projects of some sort and then maybe \$5-8 million in technical assistance. It contained the normal things for that day, a full service technical assistance program, and a large direct hire staff.

My recollection is that public administration was an important component of the Jordan program in the public and private sector. We had a development bank project. We provided loan funds and technical assistance. It was what you might call privatization today, but it wasn't called that then. We had large programs in the Jordan valley, irrigation, construction, and management, credit programs, technical assistance in agricultural production. The Jordan valley is a very small area, but a hugely profitable investment. By the time I worked on Jordan, it lost the West Bank, which was the most economically developed part of Jordan. What remained was the highlands, which is poor rainfed land, a lot of desert, and the Jordan valley. That was the resource of Jordan. Its real strength was its very talented, industrious people.

Q: Were you involved in tourism there, too?

LANGMAID: Yes, there was a tourism component of the program. As I recall, we worked with the Ministry of Tourism and on tourism sites - preserving them, protecting them, upgrading them, providing facilities to them, training staff on how to present tourist sites to the public, that kind of thing. This was largely technical assistance. There was a small Title I program. In those days, Title I generated local currency counterpart. A lot was used for tourism projects.

Q: In your view, what was our overall rationale for having a program in Jordan?

LANGMAID: Political.

Q: To accomplish what?

LANGMAID: Peace in the Middle East.

Q: To keep the balance?

LANGMAID: I would probably say the status quo. We obviously were not providing a balance to the Israeli aid level. I came in after the 1967 war. This was a new set of circumstances. We had picked up from the British the financing of the Jordan military establishment and the economic base for that establishment. The Jordanians had committed themselves, although I don't think there was anything in writing, to maintaining that military establishment in an effective defensive posture. It did not increase when I was there, but it was maintained at a level of competence and readiness to secure Jordan, but not threaten Israel.

One of the stories of the time describes when we finally agreed to give the Jordanians M16 rifles, which was the latest technology. The Jordanian soldiers at the border facing the Israelis were showing them off, saying, "Look, we now have them also."

The King of Jordan had been a loyal, effective leader of the area. Jordan was stable. There weren't many effective leaders in that area and little stability. He was committed to a democratic society. At that time, Egypt and Syria were threats. King Hussein had proven to be reasonable and effective. We wanted to build the economy, but we didn't have in mind an end to assistance in the classic sense. However, we did not want to reduce the budget support but had only

marginal success. We wanted to get out of that kind of relationship. That was part of a policy dialogue.

I remember going out as part of a team which Curt Farrar headed. He was the Deputy in the Near East Bureau. We went to assess the Jordanian assistance requirements. Our brief concluded to keep the budget support down and get the economy on a track where it would no longer need budget support. The Jordanians were not prepared to accept a reduction at that time because for them budget support was an integral part of a special relationship with the United States which politically was a high priority. But, Congress put on some pressure and the budget support level eventually came down.

When I started working on Jordan, the Jordan valley closed because of terrorist activities. This was the period when the Palestinians tried to take over Jordan and their fighters were operating from the Jordan valley, crossing over and making terrorist strikes into Israel. The Israelis had targeted the Jordan valley. They turned off the head waters at the Yarmuk River and shelled the canal. Everyone had left and were living up in the highlands. Our team was one of the first groups back in the valley. One of our priorities was rebuilding the infrastructure and institutions. Technical assistance to the institutions of the valley was as much a component as capital assistance to build the roads and rebuild the irrigation system which had been badly damaged by the Israelis. Jordan had a perfectly good educational system. There were some strong universities. A number of Jordanians had gone to the United States, England, and Europe for training. They are very entrepreneurial. The valley was key to the Jordan economy.

What has happened since then has been fun to watch. The economy has grown rapidly. When Beirut closed because of the fighting, many of the banking and service industries moved to Jordan. That was way past my time in AID. I have been there since and the change is remarkable.

Q: Did the State Department have any particular views about the program other than to maintain the balance of payments?

LANGMAID: No, I don't recall any pressure. Obviously, State wanted to maintain budget support and overall levels but also knew neither could be maintained indefinitely. Jordan was one of those programs and was cut somewhere around the \$60-65 million level. If we tried to take something more off that, we had a battle on our hands. It was that kind of thing. But there were very good ambassadors in Jordan at the time, very sensible folks. Their working relationship with the AID Mission was very good. Art Handley was the Mission Director I recall through most of this period in Jordan.

In 1972, I was part of a team sent to assess Jordan's assistance needs. Curt Farrar headed the team. We tended to skew our interests towards those actions that Jordan could take that would reduce the requirement for budget support. Of course, those actions tend to impinge upon what was considered a sacrosanct military level, size of the military budget, and the full convertibility for the Jordanian dinar. We would hear arguments about anything that impinged on those. But, beyond that, the PL 480 program was very sensitive because that again was a form of budget support. Jordan was a net food importer, so it was a good tradeoff. It was a well run, effective Title II program. But, other than that, the content of the program was pretty much up to us. We

wanted to work in the Jordan valley and so did the embassy. We were interested in building a trunk road from Amman to Irbid in the north, which was important from a military as well as a civilian standpoint. The Jordanians wanted that and so did the embassy. But overall, we had a good working relationship with NEA. This was a political program, but that doesn't mean you can't do developmental work. Furthermore, Jordan used assistance well.

I went to Jordan a couple of times. I spent some time working on its issues, but it did not occupy as much of my time as Turkey did. The political parameters were set as well as the program content when I arrived.

EDWARD G. ABINGTON
Junior Desk Officer for Jordan
Washington, DC (1970-1972)

Mr. Abington was born in Texas into a US military family and was raised in military posts in the US and abroad. An Arabic language officer and specialist in Near East Affairs, he describes his experience dealing with Israel-Arab hostilities and general regional problems while serving as Political Officer at Embassies Tel Aviv and Damascus. In his postings at the State Department in Washington, he also dealt with Near East matters.

Q: So, you were in NEA from 1970 to when?

ABINGTON: From 1970 to 1972. I joined the Jordan desk as a junior desk officer in August of 1970 just a few weeks before the multiple hijackings which occurred on Labor Day and then led to Black September.

Q: This was when the PLO high-jacked three planes.

ABINGTON: That's correct. I think it was the PFLP, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine led by George Habash.

Q: What was the hierarchy? Talcott Seelye was what?

ABINGTON: He was the country director. Also on the desk were Tom Scotes, who became Ambassador to Yemen and in 1973 went in and opened up the U.S. presence in Damascus after the '73 war. There was Andy Killgore, who had been a Middle East specialist for 20-30 years. He became Ambassador in Doha. Peter Sutherland, who became Ambassador to a Gulf country. And for a very short period of time Pierce Bullen was in the office as well. He was a longtime State Department Arabist. The Assistant Secretary was Joe Sisco. Roger Davies was the principal deputy assistant secretary. Roy Atherton had responsibility for the Middle East Arab-Israeli issues. Talcott Seelye reported to Roy Atherton. Chris Van Hollen was the deputy for South Asia. There was another deputy for the Gulf, but I can't remember who that was right now.

Q: What piece of the action did you have?

ABINGTON: I joined the desk right before the hijackings. At that point, the situation in Jordan was very tense. There had been an assistant Army attaché that had been assassinated in Amman by Palestinians. They had come up to his house and shot him, killed him in his house. There had been a drawdown of the embassy. The ambassador was Harrison Symmes. He had been kicked out. The Jordanians had asked for his recall. At that point, the relationship between the CIA, the station chief, and King Hussein was much stronger than between Hussein and the American Ambassador. Symmes ran afoul of that relationship and did not have Hussein's confidence. As a result, Hussein asked for his recall. It was a time when a senior American delegation was going from Tel Aviv across the Allenby Bridge to Amman. They had a very risky time because of the PLO presence and it was a time in which Jordan was in tremendous turmoil. They were on an ice edge of whether the PLO was going to take Jordan over, overthrow the government. It was a very tense and uncertain time. That was the environment in which I joined the desk.

Q: Harry Symmes had told Joe Sisco, "Don't come." It wasn't safe. The King took great affront at this. This precipitated his recall.

ABINGTON: That's right. I wouldn't say it precipitated it. I would say that was the last straw.

Q: You were the new boy on the block, which is interesting because you're not coming in with preconceived ideas but you're listening. What was the feeling? Did they feel Hussein was going to make it?

ABINGTON: This was a time of great turmoil in the Middle East. There was the situation in Jordan which was extraordinarily unstable. The feeling was that it was very questionable whether Hussein was going to make it or not. I certainly think that that was the feeling in the NEA front office with people like Joe Sisco and Roy Atherton. It was also a time when Soviet involvement in Egypt was increasing. The War of Attrition, the artillery duels were heating up. The Israelis started carrying out penetration bombing of Egypt. The Egyptians had increasingly appealed for better Soviet fighter jet. Eventually the Soviet pilots started flying combat missions over Egypt and engaging in air clashes with Israeli fighter pilots. It was a time of danger and turmoil in the Middle East. The approximate cause was the Arab-Israeli conflict but the backdrop was the U.S.-Soviet competition over the Middle East. Of course, Kissinger was in the White House as the national security advisor. Rogers was the Secretary of State. Nixon was President. It was a time of high stakes and being a junior officer and getting a bird's eye view of this was fascinating.

Q: I imagine it was. Were you looking at Syria at the time?

ABINGTON: To a degree, but the Jordan crisis kind of overwhelmed people. On Labor Day I had been out and I got home and there was a phone call from Talcott Seelye. He said there had been these multiple hijackings. He asked if I would come in and pull the graveyard shift in the Operations Center. They were setting up a task force. At that point, the State Department and the Operations Center had not had experience in setting up a task force and in running a situation like this. Here you had multiple aircraft high-jacked, increasing turmoil in the streets of Amman, a new ambassador, Dean Brown. I remember a photograph of Dean presenting his credentials to

the King. He was taken to the palace in an APC. The hijackings provided the catalyst for the confrontation between the Jordanians and the PLO. I spent 3 or 4 months working 7 days a week 12 hours a day in the Operations Center first with the high-jacking, then with the civil war and the threat of Syrian invasion of Lebanon and then the Israelis with U.S. urging, Kissinger working with Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin to really put the pressure on the Syrians to keep them out of Jordan. This was a geopolitical struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. I was this junior officer in a catbird seat watching all of this.

Q: The situation was that the Syrians were putting some armor down there and the Israelis more or less made it known that if they did they would come in and-

ABINGTON: The Syrians deployed armor but not air. They had deployed their air assets. Of course, Hafez El-Assad at the time was the chief of the air force and he refused to use Syrian air force. The army actually crossed the Syrian-Jordan border with tanks. King Hussein was increasingly frantic and was calling for U.S. and Israeli air strikes in order to fend off the Syrians. But as it turned out, the Jordanian army fought hard. They carried out a tank battle against the Syrians and defeated them. The Syrians withdrew back across the border. Meanwhile, Kissinger was masterminding this with Yitzhak Rabin. The Israelis made it very clear that if Syria were to invade Jordan, Israel would look upon this as a threat to its security and would act against Syria. The threats made by Israel, the action of the Jordanian military, and the very strong statements both publicly and privately by Kissinger and Nixon defused what could have been a situation that could have sucked the U.S. and the Soviets into something.

Q: Were the Iraqis part of the equation at this point?

ABINGTON: There was an Iraqi contingent in Jordan. Certainly people were keeping their eye on the Iraqis. But basically the Iraqis sat by and just watched what was happening.

Q: How about the Pakistanis?

ABINGTON: They were still there. There would be occasional air clashes between the Syrians and the Israelis. These were clashes between Pakistani pilots and Jordanians, but the Jordanians were very careful because their air force had been decimated in '67. But the Pakistanis were flying for the Syrians.

Q: What was the feeling that you were picking up from the desk about the Palestinians in Jordan and what their orientation was?

ABINGTON: There was deep concern because Hussein had been such a friend of the U.S. for such a long time. Hussein was looked upon despite his ill-considered decision to join Nasser in the '67 as someone who the U.S. could deal with, a friend of the West, a friend of the United States, anti-Soviet. There was very deep concern that Palestinians could overthrow the Hashemite regime and you would have a very unstable situation with the PLO taking over the East Bank, that it would become open to Soviet influence and perhaps Soviet presence. Quite clearly the stakes were felt to be extremely high.

I was up in the Operations Center during that period. I was there when Sisco and Atherton would come up. It was a small group that was running this whole thing. I was right there in the middle of it, occasionally writing end comments for Sisco or Atherton. I recall being in a room when Secretary Rogers came in and we set up a live teletype conference between Dean Brown in Amman and Secretary Rogers. Communications then were still relatively primitive compared to today. You didn't have voice communication because of the fighting. The only way that they could communicate real time was to have a communicator in Washington typing out the question for the Secretary and a communicator on the other end with Dean Brown there answering the question or giving his assessment. I think as a junior officer, a first tour officer, one cannot ask for a more exciting initial tour in the State Department unless you're in Amman on the ground.

Q: Were you getting any feel about Secretary Rogers and Kissinger on this issue?

ABINGTON: Yes. I was looking at it from a junior officer's viewpoint. As time went on, and this lasted over a number of weeks, it became increasingly clear that the shots were being called in the White House with Nixon and Kissinger and that Rogers was not a big player in it. Sisco was a player because Sisco, who was not really a career FS officer but a civil service person who became Assistant Secretary of IO because he was a marvelous bureaucrat, Italian origin... When you talk about Machiavellian, Sisco was that way.

Q: Did you have the feeling that you were part of a player?

ABINGTON: Yes. There was the feeling that because Sisco was there, the bureau was much more involved than would have otherwise been the case. To the extent that the State Department was a player in this drama, it was in large measure because of Sisco and his influence. It's very interesting. Sisco saw Kissinger as a rival and tried to take him on. I saw him take on Kissinger over Cyprus and lost. The interesting thing is that Sisco then despite his going head to head against Kissinger and losing, he managed to work with Kissinger and ultimately became Under Secretary for Political Affairs and a very important player in the peace process.

Q: While you were there, did you get any feeling for the attitude towards Israel?

ABINGTON: It was a very anti-Israeli feeling. I felt that some of the old-line Arabists had an unreconstructed view towards Israel, that it never should have been created, that it was a mistake, that it hurt American influence in the Middle East, that it was against our national interest. At times, I felt some of the views bordered on anti-Semitism.

Q: Did you see any parallel between some of the people you met at the University of Florida and people opposed to desegregation?

ABINGTON: These people came out of a different historical perspective and the State Department was a different place, in the past an elitist... much less open to the currents in American society and to a degree out of touch with American society and American politics. They possibly were bemoaning some of the individuals, Jewish influence and so forth. It seemed that they did not have a very sophisticated viewpoint of the American political system and how it operated.

Q: Within NEA, were there people who had served in Israel who were playing much of a role?

ABINGTON: The head of the Israel desk, Haywood Stackhouse, was a very fine man, had been the political counselor in Tel Aviv prior to becoming country director. You had another fellow named Walter Burgess Smith who was head of the Egypt desk. He was brought on board because he was a Sovietologist. He did not have Middle East experience, but Sisco put him in the job because he wanted someone with a Soviet background, which became very important in terms of the situation in '70/'71 when the Soviets were building up their presence in Egypt. Roy Atherton... I can't remember if he had served in Tel Aviv at that point or not. He had been in Damascus or Aleppo at the time of the '67 war. Roy had an extraordinarily balanced point of view. He was the DAS that my office reported to. He was just a very balanced person.

Q: Did you find that there were efforts within NEA to say, "Come on, fellows, let's take a look at Israel as being on the ground? Things aren't going to go back. Let's deal with the reality?"

ABINGTON: Oh, yes. I think if you look at people like Walter Smith, head of the Egypt desk, Stackhouse, head of the Israel desk, Joe Sisco, Roy Atherton, Roger Davies, they had a sophisticated point of view. You might hear frustration in dealing with Israel, but you didn't hear this kind of "Israel never should have been created" point of view that you heard from some people. The people who were in charge of the bureau, the influential people in the bureau, had a sophisticated point of view about Israel, its place, the conflict between the Israelis and the Arabs, and the overlay of Soviet-American rivalry in the Middle East because of the conflict. I never felt that people like Sisco and Atherton ever had this bias in the slightest.

Q: Talcott Seelye was the quintessential missionary kid.

ABINGTON: Yes. He was born in Beirut. His parents taught at the American University of Beirut. He grew up learning Arabic, immersed in that environment. A book written on State Department Arabists by Robert Kaplan, the cover photo that they used was Talcott Seelye presenting his credentials to President Bourguiba of Tunisia.

Q: What about the Soviet side? Were we looking at the Soviets coming in and mucking things up?

ABINGTON: Absolutely. It was an issue of tremendous concern. Sisco and Walter Smith had made several trips to Moscow to discuss the Egyptian-Israeli situation and to work with the Soviets to try to put some breaks on what is considered to be a dangerously escalating situation but without much success. Part of the reason that they were not successful in my view was that this war of attrition was going on and the Israelis were not willing to take casualties from artillery barrages along the Suez Canal. They therefore started carrying out deep penetration bombings of Egypt, including in the area around Aswan. That heightened Egyptian concern and Soviet concern. There was some fear that the Israelis might even go so far as to bomb the dam at Aswan. Doing so would have caused a catastrophic flood. Who knows what loss of life it would have caused. The Israelis by taking the initiative and not fighting the war the way that the Egyptians wanted to fight it escalated the fighting and the tension and created a situation where the Egyptians were increasingly desperate and turned to the Soviets. The Soviets felt that their

prestige was on the line because Egypt was their client. That led to the deployment of more sophisticated surface to air missiles in Egypt, the dispatch of better fighter aircraft, and eventually to Soviet military pilots to fly combat air missions over Egypt. The Soviets I don't think ever crossed the Suez Canal, but they were fighting defensive missions in Egypt and on occasion engaging in air to air battles with Israeli pilots. That created a very volatile situation. Given the anti-Soviet cast of Nixon and Kissinger, this soon took on the cast of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation between our respective clients. So the Soviet aspect was something that preoccupied the NEA leadership on a daily basis.

Q: Was there any leader of the Palestinians that we identified? I can't remember when Arafat came on the scene.

ABINGTON: He was on the scene at the time I joined. He was in Jordan. He was head of the Fatwa. We pretty much looked upon all of the leaders of the various factions as being radical, as willing to carry out attacks of terrorism – hijackings and so forth – as being a very destabilizing influence. Of course, at that time the Arab states were manipulating the Palestinian question to their own advantage and you had different Palestinian groups which were sponsored by Arab states – Syria, Iraq, etc. – often with Syrian troops funded by the Syrians. For example, Sifa was totally a Syrian creation. There were Palestinian leaders but it was funded by the Syrians. Syrian troops without uniforms participated as members of Sifa. They had bases in Syria and were trained there, etc. So, from the point of view of Washington at that point there were no moderate Palestinian leaders among the Fedayeen groups.

Q: In '70, how did this play out?

ABINGTON: I basically spent about three months in the Operations Center starting first with the hijackings. My role was to liaise with the families and the representatives of TWA and to brief them, to talk to them - it was almost like a consular role – and to feed them information such as we knew about the well-being of the passengers. The PFLP destroyed the airplanes, blew them up at Dawson's Landing, and then took the passengers and brought them to various places. It was an extraordinarily tense period because fighting had broken out between the Palestinians, the PLO, and the Jordanians. People did not know the whereabouts or well-being of the passengers. There were a number of Jewish Americans who were held captive. People were deeply concerned. Communications were uncertain between the embassy in Amman and the State Department. When the fighting really broke out, it was in the area where the embassy was located so that our diplomats could not get out. But we managed to be in touch with some of the hostages and some of the PLO groups. Some of them were held in the old Philadelphia Hotel not far from the embassy. Embassy officers managed to get there, talk to George Habash and other people. So, it was a fascinating period. As the hostages eventually were released, we returned to the fighting and monitoring it. The fighting went on for some time, maybe as long as a year, as the Jordanian army gradually mopped up and expelled Palestinian units from Jordan. By and large, these units ended up in Lebanon. Then there was kind of the reconstruction effort. After the fighting, the United States put together an aid package and tried to help put things back together in Jordan. I was involved in all these phases. First, it was the hijackings. Then it was the monitoring of the fighting and trying to ensure that the Jordanians were staying on top of the

situation and not being threatened. And then working on the aid program, bringing in food and medicine and reconstruction. That took about 6 months.

HUME HORAN
Chief of Political Section
Amman (1970-1972)

Ambassador Hume A. Horan was born on August 13th 1934 in the District of Columbia. Horan served in the US Army from 1954-1956 and graduated from Harvard University in 1958. In 1960, Horan entered the Foreign Service. Ambassador Hume's overseas career includes posts in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan and as Ambassador in Saudi Arabia. The interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy 2000 – 2001.

Q: Well then, whither, this would be 19 what early '70?

HORAN: That spring I began to think about my next assignment. Pete Spicer was head of assignments for NEA. He had been a desk officer for Morocco when I was in AFN. He called and said there were Political Chief jobs available in both Algiers and Amman. I said they both sounded good, and he gave me a day or two for reflection. At first, I was inclined to Algiers. I had read a lot on the Algerian war: George Buis, Thadee Chamski, Francois Denoyer - even Jean Larteguy! And Algeria had had a genuine revolution, not one of these bourgeois- Yasser Arafat-salon- debating society- revolutions. It offered the prospect of Arab radicalism and Arab nationalism at their most successful. Algeria was the only Arab nation that had not had independence handed to it. Algerians had suffered maybe a million killed. They had bought their independence with a high price. I thought, "They must be different from other Arabs." But I had a change of heart. Amman, it appeared, was becoming the next epicenter of Arab radicalism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. So I chose Amman.

Q: I think what this is pointing out is if you are an Arabist, your choices are often pretty hot. That is, in the Foreign Service euphemism, "challenging." Such posts get the adrenaline going, whereas if you are a Europeanist, unless you gravitate to the Soviet Union, what's the difference between the Hague, to Copenhagen, to Brussel, and then to Paris... The cuisine? I mean they are just not in the same certainly adventurous column.

HORAN: Oh, you are a million percent right. I was really torn. I heard that Algeria was beautiful.

Q: Hume, in the first place you were in Amman from when to when? I'd like to put this at the beginning.

HORAN: I must have gotten to Amman sometime in July, 1970. I was there until February 1972.

Q: What was the situation in Jordan when you arrived?

HORAN: It was almost as bad as it could be. Our military attaché had been assassinated a month before by one of the radical Palestinian groups - George Habash's PFLP, probably. They came to his house and shot him through the door. With that Amman became an unaccompanied post. We had already rented our house in DC. But the lessors, a Foreign Service family, were very decent. They let us tear up the lease. I went on to Amman, and the family stayed in Washington.

Life at the Embassy was like that in an embattled BOQ facility. The only effects you had were those in your suitcase. There was lots of violence. Bob Pelletreau, the junior Political Officer, was visiting the Intercontinental Hotel when the PFLP seized it. With great presence of mind and wit, Bob made his way down to the basement and escaped through an air duct. An assassination attempt on the mother of King Hussein, failed. The streets of Amman were full of "Guerrilleros," from one Palestinian faction or the other. All of them bristling with arms. "Miles Gloriosus"! They were terribly abusive. They would steal from trades people and give them a lot of lip. After they took over the Hotel, long-suffering businessman described them as "Abtal al Fanaadiq, wa laa al Khanaadiq." i.e., "Hotel heroes, not front-line fighters." The police didn't dare to intervene. They were of no consequence, and besides, many were also Palestinians. They found themselves pulled in two directions. The guerillas went out of their way to show disdain for the Army. The army, especially the East Bank combat units, were smoldering. At one point the King reviewed a tank unit and the lead tank commander rolled with a brassiere fluttering from his tanks's antenna. It was a very dicey time.

Q: This was when you arrived. What was sort of the thinking in Washington just before you got there, that Jordan was going down?

HORAN: Yes. All the indicators were downward. Nuri Said was long-gone, Naguib had been replaced by Nasser - who was blowing fire and brimstone across the Arab world, King Idris was history, and the PLO factions were the darling of Arab intellectuals and the Arab street. King Hussein was extraordinarily isolated. Washington wondered how could Hussein last, with half of Jordan's population being Palestinian, a hostile Syria to the North, an Iraqi tank division encamped at the Jordanian oasis of al-Azraq, and every Arab under 20 thinking him a stooge for Zionism and Western imperialism? Arabic is wonderful for scurrilous invective. Some of the translations that we would get from FBIS Cyprus were just marvelous pieces of writing.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

HORAN: Oh! One of the great officers of my, or any generation. L. Dean Brown. He arrived while all this was going on. We had had a chargé for a time. Dean just took over and electrified the entire staff. He was a great war leader. Irreverent, direct. His motto could well have been that of the Infantry School at Fort Benning: "Follow Me!" With Amman in turmoil, we needed a boss who made us feel we were safe with him. There would still be danger and risks, but you knew those risks were calculated. You felt your boss knew what he was doing. Dean was the always cheerful, irreverent, and often sardonic, "Happy Warrior."

A story typical of Dean: I get ahead of myself, but during the Embassy siege, the RSO and the gunny took advantage of a lull in the shooting, and one night - unknown to us - sneaked out into the garden. After days in the Chancery, he wanted to bathe with the garden hose. Some

Palestinians must have noticed movement. Because hardly were our colleagues outside, than small arms fire poured into the garden. The Chancery's steel door was ajar! We slammed it shut...and only then noticed the Gunny and the RSO were not among us. The firing seemed to go on interminably. We feared the worst. But in a little while, after the shooting subsided, we heard a tapping on the door. We heard American voices. We opened the door a bit, and the Gunny and the RSO crept in. They were naked and covered with blood. But the wounds were not from ordnance. When the firing surprised them, they had both dived for shelter in the Embassy's luxuriant rose garden. They had burrowed down among the thorny stems! When Dean saw that the damage, though extensive, was superficial, he said to the Gunny: "I thought we were NOT supposed to promise you a rose garden!" I was saddened to read of Dean's death in the Washington Post's Metro section for Thursday, May 10. He'll always be one of my heroes. *Mais revenons à nos moutons [French: But back to the subject at hand...]*...

Q: So Brown was arriving...

HORAN: Yes, he came maybe three weeks or four weeks after I arrived. As I recall, we'd all gathered in the garden of the Residence for a "'Welcome to Amman" barbecue for Dean. It was also a welcome to Pat Powers, Dean's super-nice, efficient, and cool-headed Secretary. Right in the middle of the function, alarming messages began to come in. Four international passenger planes - from BOAC and TWA, and two other airlines - had synchronously been hijacked by the PLO. One after the other they landed at "Dawson's Landing," a flat expanse of desert not far from Amman. Soon you had like 500 people broiling under the wings of airplanes, surrounded by fedayeen fighters, who were in turn surrounded by the Jordanian Army. In the end, all the passengers were able to leave. Did the Jordan government agree to release some PLO prisoners? That had been one of the hijackers' demands. My recollection is frankly unclear. But no one was killed or hurt. The Amcits, a number of whom were Jewish, got back to the U.S. in time for Yom Kippur. Among them was an American teenager who had decked himself out in the uniform of an Israeli Army major! His mother did some vigorous explaining! The hijackers weren't punished. The Jordan Army was at the end of its patience.

Q: Did you get involved in the hijacking?

HORAN: You know, I am trying to remember. Everybody was doing something then. I must have written a lot of cables on the question. We didn't have secure voice with the States. We had secure teletype with our Embassy in Tel Aviv, but not with the U.S.

Q: I heard he had to go to the palace in an armored troop carrier or something..

HORAN: With yours truly. Yes, after the fighting had broken out. You know, sometimes your nose gets there before your brain. Every day, I'd go wandering around downtown, just to have the feel of the place. Talk to booksellers, small tradesmen I knew. But one afternoon everything was closed. Dead. It all looked and felt creepy. Ambassador Brown would hold a "sitrep" meeting each afternoon, around 5:00 p.m. I went to the meeting and said "Mr. Ambassador, I've been all over downtown. I've never seen the town look quite so silent, keyed up, ready to go. I think I'd better spend the night here in the Embassy." I had previously spent a number of nights in the office when things looked especially tense. You know, so that we didn't get cut off from

communications and stuff. He said, "You're on target. We have just gotten word from the Palace that the Army is going to move against the Fedayeen early tomorrow morning." There had been a standoff with a new Prime Minister, an accommodationist. But faced with what looked to be a new ultimatum from the PLO, the King decided enough was enough. We spent that night in the Chancery and the next seven or eight days, too.

Fighting broke out the next morning. The firing at and around the Chancery was sometimes intense. The windows, shutters, and upper floors of the Chancery were just riddled with bullets. As my wonderful secretary, Liz Raines, was typing on the floor, a 20mm slug came through the window and ricocheted off her safe. It dented the steel. In the evenings, everybody slept on the ground floor, in an interior room, on a carpet of mattresses. Fetid. I'd quietly go upstairs and sleep on the floor in my office. We only had a little bit of water every day. Water was rationed. I used a little bit of my water to wash my collar and my cuffs. Every day I had my tie on. The whole Embassy found it humorous, in an affectionate sort of way: "Hume has got his stupid clean shirt on. His collar and his cuffs look just fine." I'd say, "Well, if I have got to work, I just like to look clean, even if I'm not."

Q: Tell me some more about security - Marine Guards, the Regional Security Officer, and the like Marine guards.

HORAN: Yes, the Marine guards - they were super solid. And the RSO, Pete Roche. Pete later that year received the Secretary's Award for Heroism..

Q: Regional security.

HORAN: That's right. The Fedayeen had gotten close to the Chancery. We had Jordan bedouin troops, the super-loyal Badiya, around the Chancery, inside the high sandstone wall. But the insurgents had fired incendiary rounds into the motor pool. Some cars were burning, and we were afraid of the gas tanks blowing up. If the fires had gotten to the cars that were parked against the Chancery back wall, we foresaw big trouble. So Pete ran out, and I was out there with him. We were moving cars away from the Chancery wall. Rounds kept coming in. In the end, the cars were all a safe distance from the Chancery wall. That Roche! a *mensch*!

Q: Well, go back just a bit. You talked about when the Ambassador presented his credentials.

HORAN: Oh yes. When the troubles broke, Dean had not yet presented credentials. Comsec was bad: the fedayeen had one of our radios - taken from our assassinated military attache. Sometimes the fedayeen would call on our frequency and boast about what they would do when they had seized Jordan, etc. But there was an abandoned Police Station near the Chancery. One night I sneaked over there - the line was working. I called the Palace, and they said: "All right, we want to get your Ambassador up here. Some people will come to the Chancery tomorrow. Be ready to go fast when they show up."

Anyway, the next morning, I was sleeping on the floor of my office and I heard the most God-awful racket coming. I mean there was firing all the time, but this was firing like I had never heard before. I remember crawling under my office table. Then the firing got even heavier and

closer. I figured it was the Jordanians. I heard Dean say, "Horan, get your ass out here. I think this is the Union cavalry coming down the road." Down they came. They were not tanks, they were armored personnel carriers. They were firing with everything they had, suppressing fire. Dean said, "Move it. Move it!" And we ran downstairs. There was a Jordanian officer at the gate. Like many East Bank regulars, he looked like a real soldier. When they opened up that rear hatch, he actually threw Dean and me in. Off we went. Boom! Boom! Boom! Keeping people's heads down. The Chancery was in a "bad" part of town. But pretty soon we got to the Queen Mother's Palace - out of Indian territory. Here, the commanding officer asked "You want to take a picture of this moment, Mr. Ambassador?" So Dean stood chest-high out of the turret, and the officer took a picture of us - my head was at Dean's elbow. The photo became one of the next covers of State magazine. The officer, by the way, was Circassian and had relatives in Newark, New Jersey!

As we rolled on up to the palace, I kept thinking: "I hope we have a good breakfast." It was excellent. I remember orange juice, and sausages, and scrambled eggs. The Ambassador then presented credentials to the king. It was totally informal. Then we relocated to an AID building near the Queen Mother's.

Q: Did the king say anything about what was happening?

HORAN: And how! Yes! The King said, "Tell your government to stay with me, and I'll stay with you. This is my country. I am going to win. The PLO is going to lose. My army loves me. Don't worry. I will not do a Farouq on you Americans or on my people." He clearly meant what he said, because just days before, the Syrians had invaded from the north, while the Iraqis were behaving menacingly at el-Azraq. At the time, we'd wondered whether Jordanians could handle threats from three fronts - in Amman, from Syria, AND from Iraq.

Q: Well, also the Israelis were cranking up to do something, too.

HORAN: You got it, you got it. This was contingency *numero uno* [Spanish: number one]. It was pretty clear that if the King looked to be going under, the Israelis would not allow a radical Iraqi-cum-Syrian-cum-Palestinian state to pop up on the West Bank. There was a lot of very sensitive traffic back and forth between us and the Israelis and the Jordanians as to who might do what if certain things happened. Some of these exchanges have surfaced recently in FOIA declassifications. There were some serious cards on the table. But in the event, the Jordanian air force and armor beat the Syrians, and kept the Iraqis in place. The Jordanian military was just better trained and led than its opponents.

Q: Well, how did the "Battle for Amman" go from your perspective, I mean what, this happened in September because it became known as Black September. It happened rather quickly?

HORAN: The fighting took about a week. It was very messy. The Jordanians didn't want to send their good infantry against the guerillas in the slums of Amman. They felt the urban geography would negate the Army's edge in discipline and weaponry. So they led their assaults with armor, the infantry following close behind. Through field glasses you could see the tanks roll up toward some buildings. Lurch to a stop. Then the main battle guns would go, "BOOM!" and part of the

buildings would collapse. Out would swarm some Palestinians. The tanks would chase them, firing machine guns, with the infantry also in pursuit. Once, after the Army had encircled a rebel neighborhood, they captured some 1500 guerilla from various factions. The Jordanian commander, and East Banker, addressed the group: "You Palestinians, now stand before me united as you never have been before."

There were atrocities. One night Palestinians raided a military hospital and killed many wounded Jordanian soldiers. There were situations where groups of Palestinian rebels were not read their Geneva convention rights and just vanished from the scene. But these were bad days. The insurgents had meanwhile murdered the mother of the King's uncle, and tried to assassinate the Army Chief of Staff. It was a time when no quarter was asked by or given to some of these combatants. The good guys won.

Q: Was the embassy at all the focus?

HORAN: Yes the embassy was in a terrible neighborhood. Lucky for us, the PLO didn't have anything heavy. I guess a 20mm cannon was about the biggest they had. That wasn't effective against solid limestone or sandstone walls. Mortar rounds did no damage to the roof - just messed up our transmission facilities.

Q: Were there any lesson you drew from your experience?

HORAN: Absolutely. Jordan was the reverse of Libya. The King's victory showed that it was not the size of the dog in the fight, so much as the size of the fight in the dog. King Hussein was a fighter, and we all knew - his Army knew - that if he went, it would only be feet first. He was a fighter, and Dean Brown was right there with him. They worked together like a pairs skating team. The King's victorious leadership helped us to shelve some contingency planning of a sort that you can imagine.

The King's victory showed me how important leadership was in a crisis. At the time, perhaps a majority of the East Bank population was against him - that is, the Palestinian element. The area conjunction of forces was also very bad. And yet Hussein won! After the Fedayeen had been defeated, he gave another great example of leadership. When the macroeconomists from the IMF and the World Bank came to see about rebuilding Jordan, the King was often absent. To the experts' consternation, he had scheduled military reviews at each Jordanian base. Rank after rank, he would walk through the formations, shaking each soldier's hand, thanking him personally for having stood by his King. These were very emotional occasions, I'm told.

Q: At the time, what happened to the Palestinian forces?

HORAN: They were disarmed, put in camps, and then sent to Lebanon - and we all know what they did there. It having turned out that the road to Jerusalem did not lead through Amman, they decided to try Beirut, instead.

Q: Was there any concern on, you know, the part of the embassy at all about them going, I mean within the diplomatic dispatch world or something, about what is going to happen to these guys?

HORAN: We knew many mad and radicalized Palestinians would be added to the refugees already in Lebanon. But the Jordanians did not want to hold them, and after some indecision, the Palestinians concluded Lebanon was their best alternative. Poor Lebanon! The weakest state in the area became a "floodplain" for Arab radicalism!

Q: How did Washington react?

HORAN: Washington was more than ready for a victory in the Middle East! Secretary Rogers came out in May of 1971. His visit celebrated a Jordanian victory - and at the same time an American one. There was also the hope, that with the defeat and expulsion of the PLO, the radical tide might have crested. Might we be about to turn a corner? Secretary Rogers' visit came off well. I was control officer. The Jordanians just went ga-ga over him. There were foxholes around the airfield, and Dean said, "Hume, pick one out. And if the fedayeen deploy some mortar rounds...take cover." In the event that no serious crisis marred the visit. WE HAD WON THE BOWL GAME! There was a lot of room for mutual congratulations. I guess that had something to do with Dean going on to Under secretary for Management.

Q: What was Dean's background?

HORAN: He'd had a good war. Received a battlefield commission, after landing at Normandy. After joining the Foreign Service dealt with the collapse of the Belgian Congo and the birth of Zaire! What a time! "Mad Mike" Hoar, Patrice Lumumba, the Simbas, etc. Dakar was Dean's first Ambassadorship. Amman was next. Later of course, he went to Beirut after Frank Meloy and his Economic Chief were assassinated, same with Cyprus after Roger Davies' killing. Last, I guess, he handled the evacuation of Americans from Vietnam! A full helping of life!

Q: Well, what were you focused on after the Civil War ended?

HORAN: I was doing a fair amount of political reporting with military and political leaders, and officials in the Royal Diwan, that is, the office of the King's household. I even did some economic reporting on the reconstruction effort. The local Saudi Ambassador was an important figure on aid to Jordan, and he did not speak English. Contact with him thus fell to me. I recall the King had very little interest in discussions of the London Club, the Paris Club, reconstruction repayment schedules. It bored him, that sort of stuff. His eyes glazed over. He'd won the war. The excitement was over. The Palestinians had been dealt with, no more challenges of that sort. Grey, incremental, nation rebuilding did not engage his enthusiasm.

Q: Were we getting any indication that the king was having covert or whatever you want to call it, meetings with the Israelis and the...

HORAN: You know, I think now the public record shows that there had been a number of encounters between King Hussein and Golda Meier, and I would not be surprised if they had had a regular, secure means of communication with each other. There was mutual respect and regard between Mrs. Meier and King Hussein.

Q: How did you find when you were doing political reporting, was there a political movement that you could report on that was really trying to sound out what was happening you know in the court?

HORAN: Yes. All the radical Palestinian parties were gone. Left, was a large mass of Palestinians who were aggrieved and grumpy but not organized in any way. Then you had the Jordan Army commander, plus some of his very hard men - all East Bankers. They had close relationships with some American agencies. They were very helpful and cooperative. I saw a good bit of the head of the super-loyal Bedouin strike force, Major General Habis al Majali. a very colorful, grizzled, desert warrior. He was credited with one of the rare Arab non-defeats during the 1948 war. He had successfully defended the "Latrun Salient." He died this May. Habis spoke no English, so I used to see him. I had friends in the court circle. That is where the power lay. There was always something for me to do - in support of Dean, but you know, it was the King and the Ambassador. In such times, important decisions quickly rise up to the top of the decision tree.

Q: Was there an appreciable diminution of the influence of Nasser and Nasser-ism during this time?

HORAN: Yes. Of course. He died that same month, but even by then he had shown himself to be ineffective. His place in people's hearts was still there, but "Nasserism" as a movement had been checked. The results were pretty depressing for the left wingers, Arab radicals. Poor Jamal! He was so like the Robert E. Lee, the Bobby Lee of Arab nationalism.

Q: What about Syria and Iraq? Did either of these go rumbling off in the sand or were they sort of distant thunder or was it a real concern?

HORAN: The Syrians had been thrashed by the Jordanians. Syria had sent its tanks in without air cover and were mauled by the Jordan Air Force. Jordan had put a blocking force between Amman and al-Azraq, where the Iraqis lay. Whatever the Iraqis intentions might have been, it soon became apparent that the moment had passed. Once the fighting was over, it was over.

DAVID M. RANSOM
Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1970-1973)

Ambassador David Ransom was born in Missouri on November 23, 1938. He received his AB from Princeton University in 1960 as well as a BA from the School for Advanced International Studies in 1962. He served in the US Marine Corps from 1962 to 1965 as a 1st lieutenant and entered the Foreign Service in 1965, wherein he served in Yemen, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, and Bahrain. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 2, 1999.

RANSOM: We returned to Washington. I was assigned as the Yemen desk officer and quickly found out that jobs in the United States for Foreign Service officers are very different from their jobs in the field. I worked hard. I later became the Jordan desk officer and went on from there to join the National Security Council staff. So, in fact, my misadventure in Saudi became an experience of great change and not a setback at all.

Q: After Saudi, as you said, you were assigned to Washington and dealt with Jordanian affairs. How was Hussein doing at the time?

RANSOM: Hussein managed to survive that period splendidly. He was, among other things, a survivor, which in the Middle East has a certain nobility of its own. Many regimes that preach lofty ambitions have fallen by the wayside. I think Hussein has been good for Jordan and good for the Arabs. His views of how the Israelis should be dealt with and how dealings between other Arab states should be managed have been vindicated by events. He managed not just to outlive his critics, but to convince most of them. That is an extraordinary feat in the Middle East.

Q: At this time, Jordan still claimed a protectorate over the West Bank. The Israelis were sitting there, but Jordan had not renounced its protectorate to the West Bank.

RANSOM: That is right. They claimed the West Bank as Jordanian territory as well as Jerusalem, even though both were occupied by Israel. They alone among the Arab states have given citizenship to Palestinians. Legal arguments have been made about who should have control of the West Bank and Jerusalem. But the fact is that now we are looking at the situation where once again the "land for peace" formula will be invoked by all parties - maybe more so by the Israelis after the election that takes place today - to justify a withdrawal from those territories which were occupied by Israel after the 1967 War.

Q: Did you find in the Near East Bureau that Jordanian interests sometimes collided with Israeli interests? Was this a battle that was fought out within the bureau?

RANSOM: It wasn't much fought out in my presence. It passed for high politics in the United States and those decisions about where we could back the Israelis and where we could not, were typically made by other people. But it was as automatic a decision in the Israeli favor in those days as it became later on. In the early 1970's, the Israelis were making a lot of demands on Arab states and on the Jordanians in particular. They didn't always get their way in their demands for aid or for sales of military equipment or for diplomatic support. But they had a very great asset at the time, which was that they were saying "yes" to negotiations for territorial settlement and for peace. The Arabs were, by and large, saying "no." The situation was reversed later on by Netanyahu, in the late 1990s, when there was a tilt in the balance of power. But in the 1970's, the Israelis gave many people reason to support them and the Arabs did not.

Q: Were there any issues such as selling anti-aircraft missiles, advanced weapons systems, to Jordan which ran afoul of the Israeli lobby during this 1971-1973 period?

RANSOM: The Israelis didn't want aircraft and anti-aircraft defenses delivered that would make Jordan a threat to Israel or be less vulnerable to Israeli pressure. Therefore, our task was to put

together a package of military equipment that would allow the Jordanians to maintain their defenses against Arab states but not become too great a challenge to the Israelis. That made it a tricky business. The Jordanians knew exactly what we were doing. So did we. By and large, we were able to succeed. The sale of the Hawk missiles was approved later based on a compromise that these missiles would become stationary. They would have to be cemented in place. This, the Israelis thought, was a clever way of making it possible for them to destroy the missiles if there was ever a war, but when the Jordanians got finished building these things into place, they had so resourcefully protected them that I'm not sure the Israeli ambition would have been realized. They still remained a potent weapon against Israeli air force planes. To my knowledge, however, no Hawk missile was ever fired at an Israeli airplane.

Q: Were you still on the desk during the October 1973 War?

RANSOM: Yes, I was.

Q: Can you talk about the buildup to that and how the bureau-- you and others-- were reacting to this?

RANSOM: The Israelis were adamant in their view that there was no likelihood of war, that the Arabs wouldn't dare do such a thing, and they were only making feints to see whether they could energize the United States to play a more active diplomatic role and to put pressure on the Israelis to be more forthcoming. The bureau did not read the intelligence reports quite the same way. Eventually, we acquired intelligence reports from the Jordanians about Syrian and Egyptian war plans that were absolutely convincing. We went to the Israelis with these. They still refused to believe it. So, that war was not a surprise that can be laid at the feet of the Americans. We thought that was war coming. We had good, hard intelligence. We shared it with the Israelis. The surprise can be laid at the feet of the Israelis, who were simply so blinded by their own success in the 1967 War that they never really credited the Arabs with the nerve to resume the fight. The task then became one of keeping the Jordanians out of the war. They felt they needed at least some martyrs. We felt we didn't need any more battle fronts in the struggle. When the war opened, it opened with only two fronts.

Q: This was the Syrian front and the Egyptian front.

RANSOM: That's right. There were some skirmishes late in the war on the Israeli-Jordanian borders largely for show; there was no real Jordanian-Israeli war. The Jordanians claimed some casualties and claimed to have maneuvered mightily, but I don't think there was ever really the threat of a large third front.

In the early stages of the fighting, the Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal and the Syrians recovered most of the Golan Heights. The Israelis suddenly panicked and found that their airplanes which they had been used as artillery, thereby relieving the ground forces from dragging the artillery pieces around, were being forced to bomb from very high altitudes becoming relatively ineffectual. Arab armies were advancing against Israeli ground troops, both across the Canal and on the Golan. The Israelis were also caught short in their mobilization. They had maintained a very small standing army and it took them 48 or more hours to mobilize.

There was a panicky period when the professional army could not initially hold or even inflict heavy casualties. So, a few days into the war, it looked very desperate.

The Israelis rose, however, magnificently to the military task. It helped a lot that the Jordanians were not deeply into the fray. An American military team went to Tel Aviv to give recommendations of how to conduct the war. Basically, it was to hold in the north, fight in the south to make sure that the Egyptians, once they had crossed the Canal, did not go deeper into the Sinai Peninsula. These were dramatic days. I became a watch-stander in the Operations Center-- long stretches and at strange times of the day or night. Eventually, the Israelis ground out a victory. There was help from the Americans that led to a belated and reluctant decision on the part of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to impose an oil embargo. But by and large, the Israelis did it by themselves. They began to push the Arabs back. Part of it was that the Arabs had very limited war-games and when their initial successes left them in good positions on land, they had no plans and no means to go further. They gave away the initiative to the Israelis, thinking that this was the time for diplomacy and that they would stop and talk. The Israelis were not ready to stop and talk. So, the war began to go against the Arabs.

Then there was this dramatic event when - and I was on duty at the time - a piece of intelligence came in from our watch stations on the Dardanelles. Soviet ships going through the Straits were detected by sensors to be carrying nuclear warheads. I thought rightly that the Soviets were shipping warheads to Egypt. That sent Kissinger into an extraordinary series of moves to bring the fighting to an end. It included a worldwide nuclear alert on our part and suggestions for talks which we knew the Arabs would accept. The war came to an end and the talking began. At this point, I went off to the NSC to work on different issues; so I wasn't as close to Jordanian matters after this.

Q: During this time of the October 1973 War, what were our communications to the Jordanians? Were we telling them "Cool it. Stay out of it?"

RANSOM: "Cool it. Stay out of it."

Q: What were you getting from the Jordanians?

RANSOM: "We need martyrs." The Jordanians remembered what happened in 1967 and they weren't about to plunge into war the same way they had before, but they also didn't feel they could simply stand aside particularly when Arab armies were going down to defeat. So, they mobilized, maneuvered, and did all kinds of things to put off any major conflicts. They did feel that they needed to fire some weapons at least. In fact, they were in a very tricky situation. The Israelis did not want to get at the Syrians straight across the Golan, but to make a right hook through northern Jordan into Syria. That was not all clear sailing. The border city of Dar'a is a natural boundary and it is very hard to cross. There are ravines and lava fields. But if you can do that, you have flanked the Syrian defenses both in Damascus and on the Golan. You would then be in a position to drive the Syrians back to Damascus and maybe even out of Damascus. This scenario made the Jordanians feel that they had to position themselves in strength in the north. They said it was against Syrian entry from that direction, but it was also against Israeli

penetration, too. It was one of those ambiguous situations in which the King of Jordan and his advisors had dealt with so well for so long.

Q: I would have thought that we would have been doing an awful lot of “back and forth” between explaining to the Jordanians and explaining to the Israelis about “This is what they’re doing. They are doing this for their own good. Don’t do anything” on both sides. Telling the Israelis, “Don’t flank here” and telling the Jordanians, “Don’t push too hard.”

RANSOM: I know what we did with the Jordanians, but I was not as close to what we did with the Israelis. But I’m sure that a lot of that took place.

Q: We were telling the Jordanians “Don’t be aggressive?” on the Jordan-Syria front”

RANSOM: We said they could mobilize in the northern part of Jordan and defend their own borders against a Syrian attempt or an Iraqi attempt to bring forces in. We didn’t want the Israelis to provoke them nor did we want these forces to be used against Israel. From the northern part of Jordan, you look directly down into the marshaling yards and the supply depots of the Israelis as they funneled forces up onto the Golan Heights. We didn’t want the Jordanians throwing themselves at the Israelis from there.

Q: What about the West Bank? We had our consulate general in Jerusalem, which was reporting independently of the embassy. Were you keeping a watching brief on the West Bank as part of your Jordanian responsibility?

RANSOM: Some. It was occupied territory and so it was outside of the administrative control of the Jordanians, although they had a number of linkages which the Israelis tolerated. For example, the Jordanians had schoolteachers and certain banking officials there whom they paid. The Israelis allowed certain traffic to go back and forth across the bridge. So, there were connections there with the population that continued. I monitored all of that. But the West Bank was reported on by Jerusalem, not by Amman. So, information was there to be used, but the collection of it was not part of my direct responsibility.

Q: I was just wondering whether for political reasons we were watching what was happening there with the idea that eventually Jordan might regain sovereignty over this area.

RANSOM: I don’t think that was an issue at the time. No. The issue seemed to me to be more about trying to keep the Jordanians out of combat and not have them engage with any Arab army or with the Israeli military.

L. DEAN BROWN
Ambassador
Jordan (1970-1973)

Ambassador L. Dean Brown was born in New York in 1920. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University in 1942 he served in the US Army from 1942-1946. His career has included positions in Belgium Congo, Ottawa, Paris, EUR, Rabat, Senegal and the Gambia, Lebanon, and an ambassadorship to Jordan. Ambassador Brown was interviewed by Horace J. Torbert in May 1989.

BROWN: Yes. Well, so I went out and shot off to Jordan.

Q: *Who were you replacing there?*

BROWN: Harry Symmes. Harry Symmes hadn't been there for months. He had been--well, politely, PNGed by the king. He was an Arabist, and he had offended the king by saying Jordan wasn't safe to visit. He left.

Q: *Quietly.*

BROWN: Yes. So he left in the spring after some bad riots that had taken place in Jordan. Among other things, they had burned up Harry Symmes' car, which made him very cross. I wouldn't blame him; it was a nice Lincoln. [Laughter]

But when I arrived there, I couldn't even get into the country. I flew, instead, to Beirut with my wife and installed her with friends to sit there and wait. She waited there for many months. I flew down under a false move. I drove by the embassy and then said, "Let's go to the house and I'll leave my bags." I went to the house, I looked at it, soldiers around. I looked at the people around and I said, "Leave the bags in the car." I went back to the embassy, unpacked in the embassy, which we didn't get out of for several weeks because the war started within about 24 or 36 hours. This was the big Black September of 1970. That embassy was under fire. They shot every window out of the place. I'm glad I never went to the house, because I finally got to the house sometime later and it was really blown up. Everything.

Q: *So you really had to start and rebuild there physically.*

BROWN: Oh, yes, yes. I didn't live in the old embassy residence for about nine months. I rented a house. We also moved the chancery. The old one was a bit shot up, it was located right in the middle of an area where the various factions such as FATA, the PFLP, the PFLPGC, and the ALP were located. All these people had separate headquarters and separate machine guns and bombs and all of that. You could get shot at from any direction.

Q: *Were they shooting at each other?*

BROWN: No, they were shooting at the Army. What was fascinating was that up until that moment, the king had catered, in a sense, to the Palestinians. He had agreed that they could set up these headquarters, they could have troops there, and all that. The governments, the prime ministers, were Palestinians of leftist nature. But that wasn't enough for the Palestinian leftists and ordered it a general strike. They called on the Army and the Air Force to desert, and that was

it. That finished the game. The king just said, "Fine. We'll kick out the civilian government and put in a temporary military government."

The city of Amman, for instance, downtown was forbidden territory to the Army or to the government people. They governed from the edges of town. But the real thing is, the soldiers didn't desert. The general strike didn't work. The people did not leave the Army. There were two divisions that were almost all Palestinian, and not one man deserted. Some of the Air Force non-coms deserted, about 200, and that's about all. So it broke the real strength of the Palestinian claim that they could take over that country anytime they wanted. It was a very courageous act on his part.

One reason he did it, just shortly before I arrived, he went to review one of the largely Bedouin armored outfits. From the antenna on the top of the commander's tank was hanging a brassiere. The king said, "What's that for?" And the commander replied, "If we're going to behave like women, we might as well dress like them."

Now, a king has a hard time taking that, and the king said, "I understand." And that's when things changed. But that's the way it happens in those little Arab countries, dramatic things.

Q: I suppose it was a little while before you could establish contact with the king under these circumstances?

BROWN: Well, yes and no. I had some radios. When I arrived I had to reduce staff quickly. There was one plane leaving in the afternoon, I ordered about half the staff to depart. I just went, "You, you, you, go." Then I said to the rest of them, "You come to the embassy; you stay at home with your two-way radio. We've got to have outside people." So even the political officers in the embassy are left, some of them on the outside, some on the inside. Same with the CIA, same with the military. So that we had good, experienced people on the outside, and we were in touch with each other by radio and they could get in touch with me. So a couple of them were able to get in touch with the king and the military headquarters where the king was. So we were in touch.

We also had a little police post nearby, which still operated. Our embassy was protected by Bedouin soldiers, about 25 of them, and several of them were wounded in the war. No one was killed, fortunately. But we did have communications, so I was in direct touch, of course, with the State Department by radio. I was also in touch with Beirut and Tel Aviv by Single side-band, and then we had our walkie-talkies. The king had one of our walkie-talkies and I could talk to him. But we had to be careful as the rebels also had walkie-talkies.

Q: There never was a time when the king was not reasonably responsive and had good relations with you?

BROWN: Excellent.

Q: He more or less had to.

BROWN: We finally got out of the embassy and they sent a column of tanks in, and Hugh Horan, my political man, and I went too see the king. We didn't get back to that embassy for a couple of weeks. We opened up another embassy. Then about three weeks later, Zaid Rifai, who was with the king, called me up to say, "Dean, it's time for you to present your letters of credential." I said, "Yeah, I guess we've forgotten about that."

So I and the senior staff put on suit and tie, and went to see the king. It was the first time I'd ever seen him in a tie. He said, "This is a very formal ceremony. I'm wearing a tie." We handed the papers over and then went on to business.

He was charming to work with, and the Jordanians were very good. The prime minister was Wasfi Tel, later murdered in Cairo by Palestinians. He was a strong man; he had to be. The war didn't end in September. It lasted to next spring.

Q: That was in November of '71 that Tel was assassinated.

BROWN: Yes. Yes. He had broken the last guerrillas or whatever you want to call them. They had left the country, some seeking refuge in Israel from the Jordanian troops.

Q: Wonderful piece of history. On the whole, do you give the king most of the high marks for this?

BROWN: I give the king high marks because he established a good relationship with the United States. I give very high marks to President Nixon, who understood the problems. Practically the first message I had from him was, "The minute you can see the king again, pass him this personal message. I haven't discussed it with anyone. I want him to know that we will make up every loss he's had in the way of military equipment in fighting this and fighting the Syrians:" (the Syrians had invaded Jordan at that time).

Q: I'd forgotten that.

BROWN: You know, to be able to go and say, "He hasn't even gone to the Congress. He just said this is his commitment to you." Then within a couple of days, I was able to go back again to him and say, "And we will help you modernize your forces. Yes, this is a commitment. We won't talk about money yet. This is just a commitment that the President will go and get the money to modernize your forces," which was very important. They really had some pretty poor stuff.

Q: Did we also have economic programs there?

BROWN: We'd had large ordinary economic programs there before the revolution. I had gotten rid of all the AID people in the embassy. There weren't any after September. I was the only ambassador, I guess, who's ever been AID chief. I got myself appointed the AID chief and made FSO Bill Wolle, who was the economic officer, my deputy to run the AID program. I mean, the detail part of it. Yes, we did a lot of reconstruction right away. Their main canal, which waters the Jordan Valley, was totally blown up and had never been repaired.

Q: *By whom?*

BROWN: By the Israelis during the '67 War. That territory was largely deserted. It was the Crown Prince with whom I dealt on anything having to do with economics, because the King of Jordan is very much like General De Gaulle. When you discuss economic things with De Gaulle, he said, "That's for the quartermaster." His eyes glaze over. The king was sort of that way too. His younger brother Prince Hassan was the action man. We established a group the World Bank, the Germans, EEC, ourselves, and the Jordanians and redid that valley. We put hundreds of thousands of people back where there was virtually nobody. A very successful farming place now.

Q: *Good.*

BROWN: We could do anything at that time with AID, because we could just get the White House to make phone calls. Each time I would always say to the Crown Prince and to the director of the Central Bank and to the head of the Planning Commission, all of whom were still around, say to them, "I'm a serious man on these things. Don't give me any silly ideas. Let's not have any projects that will be in the funny papers. I don't want that. We don't want that reputation. You want to be able to go back every time you see the President and say, 'We are using your aid intelligently,' in contrast to some other places. Every single project has meaning to it." And it did.

Now, of course, it's back in the hands of the AID administrators, and you've got dozens, maybe hundreds, of people around.

Q: *What is the main strategic function of Jordan, as far as we're concerned?*

BROWN: The main strategic function of Jordan is that it is essential to peace in the Middle East. Without Jordan being involved one way or another, it won't work. You've got to have a sensible, moderate, non-leftist government in Jordan for peace to work in the area.

Q: *This is a buffer against Syria and Iraq, more or less?*

BROWN: Yes. That's basically what it was.

Q: *It also is protection for Israel, I suppose, in a sense.*

BROWN: Well, in a sense. There are no raids ever, I mean since 1970. No raids against Israel from Jordanian territory.

Q: *How did you finally earn a rest out of this? I suppose before you left, it got to be sort of normal living again.*

BROWN: It got to be normal living. Then we went through the '73 War. By then, Henry was ready to take over the State Department. That was clear. Then I got another one of those phone calls to go from Jordan and, once again, go out to San Clemente. But there it was to talk to Henry

about how he was going to organize the State Department. The people who were there were Bob McCloskey, Bill Sullivan, Larry Eagleburger, Phil Habib. Phil Habib came in from Korea.

As you remember, he was looking around for new names and new people. He wanted new faces. Henry Kissinger had collected lists over the years, very interesting, at the NSC and as a professor, of people in the Foreign Service whom he'd met that he liked. He had also asked other people for lists. In other words, he would have gone to the Rockefellers and said, "You've done a lot of traveling. What people have you met?" So he had all those lists, all anonymous, about 15 or 20 of them on pieces of paper, some with only ten names, sometimes 20 or more. But the lists were mostly named FSOs who had served in Europe, got, nevertheless, a good selection. I didn't know what I was to do when I was back in Jordan and was told: "You're going to be in management, a career man in management." Like in the days of Loy Henderson.

WILLIAM D. WOLLE
Chief of the Economic/Commercial Section
Amman (1970-1973)

William D. Wolle was born in Iowa on March 11, 1928. He received a bachelor's degree from Morningside College and a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1946-1947. Mr. Wolle was an Arabic language officer whose overseas posts included Baghdad, Aden, Kuwait, Amman, and Beirut. He was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Then you left and went to Amman where you served from 1970-73?

WOLLE: Yes. I suppose it was the assignment that was the most exciting and probably the most fruitful for my career in that when I arrived the place was in turmoil because that summer of 1970 the commandos were setting up roadblocks here and there. Before I arrived they had shot and killed through the front door an American assistant military attaché. That, along with other incidents, had caused our government to evacuate families and some non-essential employees to Beirut, for the most part. So I arrived on my own. The family went to live in Beirut.

Within a few weeks came Black September...the three planes that were hijacked and set down by terrorists in the desert forty miles or so east of Amman. Our Ambassador, Harry Symmes had been PNGed and removed from the country a few months earlier. Harry Odell was the Chargé when I arrived that summer.

Q: You went as what?

WOLLE: As head of the economic/commercial section. Hume Horan had come in new as the principal political officer. Harry Odell's tour was running out and he had been through a lot of problems there in the last two or three years and really needed relief. I can't recall the exact timetable of these events but in any case Dean Brown was appointed that summer as ambassador

to replace Ambassador Symmes. He was not scheduled to arrive until perhaps October. Bill Brubeck had been designated as the new DCM, but again was not to arrive until approximately October. But as the crisis came to a head...the planes were hijacked and put on the ground...Harry Odell left the post, signed it over to me. But the Department in its wisdom advanced the arrival of Bill Brubeck so that my Chagésip was in effect overnight...twenty-four hours.

Bill came in and within a week or so Ambassador Brown was sent in early as well. But the passengers were freed from the airplanes after a few days and there were some wild scenes back in the city on their arrival. The international press was focusing in on Jordan.

Tension was still rising between the king and the commandos. So all of a sudden we got the word one evening in mid-September that all of the Americans who were still there were to gather at two or three relatively safe housing locations and remain there until further orders. I think the word had been passed to our Ambassador that the king had had enough of this situation of two governments in one country and was giving the commandos a deadline to withdraw.

So there was literally a war in the city for over a week between the commando groups and the king's army. All of our Embassy people were stashed away in three or four locations, those who hadn't been evacuated in time, and sort of sat it out for a few days. Sounds of firing were everywhere. In the end most of us were evacuated by air to Lebanon once movement about the city was resumed. The Ambassador, Hume Horan and a number of Embassy officers and communicators were kept in place in Jordan...I was told to standby in Beirut for further orders.

Within a few days I got a cable from Ambassador Brown saying that I should plan to come back into Jordan in about a week and that he wanted me to take over temporary control of the AID mission, such as it still was, as well as doing economic/commercial work.

We had had 40 or 50 AID technicians until mid-1970. It was one of our largest AID missions for a number of years...all through the sixties. But it had been reduced to zero in these evacuations. So I went back in and from mid-1970 headed up the rebirth of a different sort of aid program in Jordan as well as the economic side of things.

Of course for the first year families were still in evacuation status. They came back in mid-1971. Starting that fall of 1970, with the help of an AID program officer who was sent out and later on two other experts...one in Jordan Valley agriculture...particularly with the help of the long time local AID staff we began to pump in money to help rebuild the city and the country. Mostly the city, because it had been heavily damaged in this warfare.

So in shots of \$5 million at a time the Ambassador and I would get the paperwork done and go over and sit with the Jordanian ministers, and planning board. I think we did this three times. Gradually we got a couple of other things started. We restarted the student education program, mostly to send Jordanians up to the American University of Beirut for various types of specialty. The Jordan Valley development program was reborn to a certain extent. We did this very, very gradually and without more than a couple of AID personnel in country because Ambassador Brown knew there had been such a risk to American personnel through the spring and summer of

1970 he was going to run the Embassy on a very lean basis. We had some TDY people from Washington from time to time.

All in all it was very interesting because on the economic side I was in touch with the Finance Ministry and Central Bank. Those two in particular had some very good Jordanian leadership and in effect were trying to put the country back on a working basis, after a few years and particularly a concentrated summer of near anarchy in terms of running the government.

Q: Going back to this, you arrived just about the time when these three planes were put down. When they came down how did you see it in the Embassy?

WOLLE: First of all we wondered where the heck is this place where they were supposedly landing. These were big 707s.

When that was actually in progress we were at the Ambassador's Residence, then unoccupied, having a farewell party for Harry Odell who was due to leave that night. Vague reports kept coming over from the Embassy, which was at that time a mile and a half away. But they were garbled and indefinite as to exactly how many planes, where the spot was. Meanwhile the military attaché was out doing some reconnoitering trying to figure it all out. But it was the dead of night so they couldn't imagine where these large planes had been set down on the desert like that. Dawson's field turned out to be the site, an old RAF landing strip not on the maps. It was sort of confused to say the least.

Q: As this developed, was this seen as sort of a gauntlet tossed down to Hussein or just happened?

WOLLE: The way it seemed to us, Amman had gone through a summer with danger on every corner. Several Embassy persons had been stopped at road blocks and had their vehicles stolen by commandos. The army was simply not in control of the city and wasn't preventing these forays, road blocks, wild shootings now and again. We would be working in the Embassy in its old location up on what they call Jebel Luwebdeh and all of a sudden you would duck under your desk because you would hear shots in the vicinity from time to time. Not daily, but frequently.

So the way we looked at it, the king had simply come to the end of his patience and had decided he had to face up to this challenge and rely on the loyalty of his army to push the commando groups not only out of the city but out of the refugee camps that surrounded the city on a couple of sides. So a lot of the firing that we heard during the week of the full scale, warlike conditions, was Jordanian army artillery firing at refugee camps and, I am sure, doing damage far beyond getting at the commandos, some of who were taking refuge in the camps.

After this ended there was a distinct sense of relief among the foreign population and I think among the Jordanians generally that most of them had come through this ...there were a lot of scars in the city, buildings, but the commandos were completely evicted from the capital and within a few months were evicted from the country. A lot of them fled up into the hills around Jarash up towards the Syrian border.

By mid-1971, the situation had been peaceful for several months and the dependents all came back and the country began to do more than just try to restore the buildings and homes.

Q: Was there concern during this time that the Syrians might move in or that the Israelis might make a move?

WOLLE: Well, there was during this seven or ten day period when the conflict was at its height. We at the "safe" homes were just getting whatever news our radios could pick up or whatever we could get on our walkie talkie system with the Embassy. But, yeah, it was a period when the Syrians were threatening to come across the border with their tanks and the Israelis gave them a few distinct warnings and the Jordanians gave them a few bloody noses in the small battles that did take place.

So it was all settled in that fashion. The Syrians took some hits and were warned to keep out. The Israelis did not occupy additional territory and King Hussein got back in control, first of all his capital and then the forested areas of the north as well. And to this day he has not let things get back into that shape again.

Q: What was the impression of King Hussein when you arrived and as events changed?

WOLLE: Not very good because there didn't seem to be any active control on his part or on the Jordan government's part. The army units would be visible here and there but were not doing anything to regain control from the groups of irregulars. So the shoot-up resulted in September. Jordan's development really took off again in mid-1971 after the initial period of rebuilding of homes and buildings. And the King resumed full charge.

Q: How did you find Dean Brown as an ambassador?

WOLLE: Very decisive. He always seemed to know what he wanted to do. He left no doubt about what he wanted others to do. I don't like to contrast too much, but (recalling Kuwait in 1969) here was another case where an ambassador with little or no previous experience in the Middle East took over. This one, Brown, knew exactly what to do. He knew how to take advantage of the expertise at hand, be it political, economic, administrative or linguistic.

I think we came out very, very well in large part because of his leadership, which, of course, was in extreme contrast with the state the Embassy had been in since Harry Symmes' departure in the early months of the year. DCM Brubeck also was a very decisive kind of a person. He could be controversial in terms of his personal relationships sometimes, a little heavy handed. But a brilliant guy. I think they formed a fine team, although I don't think they were ever that close personally.

Q: You had your first opportunity to look close up at an AID program when you got involved with this. What was your impression? AID has always been quite a controversial thing...not just AID per se, but how it goes about things, how decisions are made and all that.

WOLLE: This was an eye opener. The most valuable thing that we had going was the continued presence of the local staff which was a sliced down local staff. When we had 40 or 50 American technicians in the country I am sure we had 50 to 100 local employees. In my time we had a nucleus of about half a dozen. But they really knew the paper work that had to be done. One of my main impressions was the tremendous amount of red tape, paperwork that is involved, or at least then was involved in an AID program. Without them we couldn't have done it. We would have had to have more Americans coming in. But they wouldn't have done it as well, because these people had worked for the AID mission anywhere from ten to twenty-five years. One was a specialist in training, selecting and sending Jordanians mostly to AUB. One was the controller who knew his stuff backward and forward. There was a program officer who helped us with all the paperwork involved in monetary transfers. Two were experts in PL 480 and technical assistance across the board.

But Ambassador Brown made the point from the very beginning with Washington in late 1970 that we had to keep the profile down. He didn't want a big AID mission to develop again even after security returned. He wanted to do it with just a very few people. He wanted to keep the red tape to a minimum, but yet get results. He succeeded, and we felt we were making progress and not being harassed.

I hardly ever went to a social event or what have you in Jordan but what I would be hit for favors...the word got around that I was now the AID director who could get your son or granddaughter into training or, who knows, even get them a job at the Embassy. So I had a flood of friends all of a sudden who felt somehow I was the one who had all that money in my pocket and it was just a question as to how fast I would give it out.

Q: Did you find that the Jordanians had a pretty good lobby back in the United States?

WOLLE: I didn't get any feeling for that really. They were very likable, the Jordanians. Most Foreign Service people who have served in Jordan find that. I think when you serve in Jordan, right off the bat you tend to be a bit happier because it has a nice climate. You actually have a short spring and a short fall and a real winter. If you come from posts like I have mostly, around the Peninsula, you suddenly feel that you have a civilized climate so you approach your work with a little extra zip somehow.

Again, just like I found in Saudi Arabia particularly, a few key contacts were indispensable in doing my job. One was Governor of the Central Bank, Dr. Khalil Salim. Bill Brubeck and I passed him back and forth as a contact. And a fellow by the name of Fathi Obaid who was running the Finance Ministry as deputy there. They were very pro-Western and full of information and tips right down to the last detail. I think Obaid had his orders from on high to tell all to the American Embassy so we would extend our full hand more frequently.

So we had good cooperation. And before you know it things were really normal in Jordan. The last two years I was there it was almost as though there had been no problem in 1970. Business was booming again. Everything as before except that our Embassy and particularly the AID mission were drastically streamlined.

When I left, however, in spring of 1973, a more regular AID presence resumed, but it never returned to what was the case in the late fifties and all through the sixties.

Q: To wind up this, you left there before the October 1973 war, obviously.

WOLLE: Yes, but only three weeks before.

RICHARD E. UNDELAND
Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Amman (1970-1974)

Richard E. Undeland was born in 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from Harvard University in 1952 with a degree in English literature, received an M.B.A. from Stanford University, and studied in Egypt from 1955-1956. In addition to Algeria, Mr. Undeland served in Vietnam, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July of 1994.

UNDELAND: After a couple of months in Kuwait, Washington informed me I was to go immediately and unaccompanied to Jordan. It meant returning to Beirut with the family, where they rented an apartment in Ras Beirut and remained, while I became the only passenger on one of the first relief flights into Amman, on September 26, to be precise. It was myself and the crew in a DC-3, loaded with bread, flour, rice and perhaps some other foodstuffs.

Q: This was Black September, wasn't it?

UNDELAND: Black September, yes. I got off the plane at Amman's airport, reopened only on that day by the Jordanian army, in order to handle the constant flow incoming flights, loaded with relief supplies. I was met there by our military attaché, who took me by the winding, narrow back road to the city suburbs, to the house of the former AID director in the northern part of *Jebel Amman*, where all American officials not holed up in the chancery were staying. That road was the only one open between the airport and city.

Q: Could you tell me what Black September was, for those who don't know?

UNDELAND: September was the month in 1970, when the *Fedayeen* hijacked three airliners – TWA and Swissair first and then one of BOAC – and forced them to fly to a place in the Jordan desert east of Amman. After a protracted delay and much posturing, the hijackers let the passengers and crews go, then set off charges that wholly destroyed the planes. Throughout this crisis, Jordanian army forces stood by in a circle around the hijackers and planes, powerless, or at least not prepared, to intervene with force. It was Jordan's darkest hour, for although the king had been increasingly urged by his army and supporters to enter the fray, soundly defeat Arafat and prevent him from even thinking he might be able to take over. Yet, he continued hesitating to act, why, I have never really understood. In the end, he did give the order, the army moved

rapidly and decisively, so that after a couple more days, no question remained over the outcome.

When I arrived, the most serious fighting in the city was over, but there was still resistance and a good deal of firing, especially at night. We had no choice but to stay put, hunkered down if you will. Our movements were restricted to *Jebel Amman* and then only from its third circle to the west. If one needed convincing that it was not completely over, an army truck mounted with a 50 caliber machine gun was stationed a couple of hundred meters from where we were staying; it would fire off bursts towards the center of the city from time to time. To give a physical idea of Amman and what being on part of one hill meant, it is another of those cities built on seven hills or, in this case, *jebels*. We had access at that time to no more than perhaps ten percent of its total area, maybe not that much.

The American embassy, located on *Jebel Luwebdeh*, one hill over from Jebel Amman, had been surrounded and besieged for some two weeks. The only persons to get out were the ambassador, Dean Brown, and the political officer, Hume Horan, who twice or thrice went to see the king. For these trips, an escorted APC roared up to the embassy with all guns firing; the two Americans ducked in through the back hatch and off they went at top speed, with all guns still blazing. Those in the embassy had a difficult time physically, with diminishing food and fuel supplies, stopped up drains, little space, but, as I was told, with morale that was never higher.

I was sent into Jordan primarily to get out news items for USIA's media and to send to other MidEast posts for their home grown usage. The U.S. was providing major assistance, and we wanted others to know about it in more detail and, frankly, with more of our slant than was being provided by the commercial media. My first task was to report on the air force hospital, which had been flown in and was treating the most badly wounded. We got photos, I wrote stories for the USIA press service and did radio spots for the VOA. This went on for about a month, although in the latter part, it was tapering off. I nearly needed the hospital's care myself, for driving out there one day, I got run off the road into a ditch by a Jordanian army truck but fortunately emerged no more than a dazed "what happened, where am I?", as bits of the shattered windshield rained down.

Q: What was your assignment there after the fighting ended?

UNDELAND: The USIS operation had one American, myself, where there had formerly been four. It obviously had to be entirely rebuilt and in some ways recast. The former center, burned out just after my visit the previous March, had been given up, and the FSN staff and I were provisionally jammed into what had been the embassy's storage space. Everything physical, including all records, had been destroyed. At that point, none of us knew what the future would hold, but we were determined to get back into business as soon as possible.

Right away, we had to find more appropriate space. We got it partly in another embassy annex, which was larger although still hopelessly inadequate and not equipped or arranged for our needs.

An initial task was twofold, to reassure the staff as much as one could and to begin establishing and reestablishing contacts. Programs could and would follow. I was impressed by how rapidly the spirit of the Jordanian staff bounced back and how ready, indeed eager, they were to get

active again. This did not surprise me, for it is the attitude I had come to expect from our employees everywhere I've been in the Arab World. I cannot say enough good things about these and our other FSNs, who time after time have shown me extraordinary pluck and gumption, as well as competence.

The first Jordanian I sought out was Adnan abu Odeh, a major in the intelligence branch of the Jordanian army, who had been plucked from that service and made the minister of information, a sage move on the part of the palace. When I first called on him, he was still in his army uniform at the *qiyada*, i.e. army headquarters. We hit it off well from the outset, thereafter saw each other often and cooperated closely throughout my tour. Abu Odeh has since moved on to be court chamberlain at the palace, information minister again and Jordan's ambassador to the United Nations, all the time remaining centrally engaged in the internal political picture.

I do not believe he ever received the full credit he merited for his astute dealing with the Western media in those early '70s days, which saw the *Fedayeen* challenge, the victory for the king and national renewal. He presented the government's case tirelessly and cogently. I am convinced he was the key figure in turning around the international media's often negative view of the country and the regime. He did it by being open, confident and accurate, the only government official at that time who seemed to welcome serious exchanges, often challenging and even antagonistic ones, with journalists. I would add that in this effort he was ably supported in this by his deputy, Butros (Peter) Salah.

Abu Odeh is a Palestinian – in his youth a leftist, a *Baathi*, some said a communist – who changed course, and while never forsaking his Palestinianism, became a bulwark of royal Jordan. Salah was also an impressive, similarly committed, royalist Palestinian. He had been a dedicated, skilled fighter against the Israelis, who kept his militant outlook, but in the service of the government.

After the initial flurry of getting out news materials on our immediate help, I continued to do some of this informational work, that is recording our ongoing assistance. In the main reporting it dealt with our supply of food and supplies that were at the outset flown in on USAF transports. Most of it was pretty humdrum, but there was one notable exception – the delivery of relief items for the hospital atop *Jebel Ashrifyyah*, in the heart of the city's main wholly Palestinian quarter, which had been Arafat's bastion and supposedly where he had his most devoted popular support base.

Not only were these supplies American and clearly so marked, but they were delivered in U.S. army trucks, which had been also flown in. The white star and "U.S. Army" markings had been hastily painted over, but so feebly that the original easily showed through. Was that intentional? Probably not, but it sent the right message. They were driven by unarmed U.S. army personnel in civilian clothes. As the convoy noisily wound up the narrow streets of the *Jebel*, they became lined, in a couple of places several deep, with the curious. I didn't sense any hostility from the onlookers, but then we were moving along as fast as the narrow roads and incline would permit. Arriving at the hospital without incident, its staff greeted us in a friendly way, but at the outset some eyed the trucks and cartons piled up in them warily. Those qualms were fleeting and wholly disappeared, as we formed human chains, Americans and Jordanians intermingled, and

got on with the unloading as rapidly as possible. I had a double job of pitching in on one of the human lines and also taking photos and doing a few interviews. The hospital people openly expressed their appreciation for this help that few expected. It was the first time in months anyone from the Jordanian government – a handful went along on this operation – let alone official Americans, had gone into this quarter. We did not see a single gun at any time.

From there we went on to the Italian Hospital at the foot of the *Jebel* where we delivered more supplies. The reception there was even warmer from the Palestinian employees and the Italian doctors and nuns. We were relieved everything had come off without hitch or incident, for though we had received assurances from the Palestinians that there would be no trouble, we had not really known how friendly our reception would be. We later heard from various sources nothing but good things over what the Americans had done, sometimes stressing the fact the Americans had done it for Palestinians. If you can combine being respected with being liked, you are way ahead at the game.

The hospital story has an amusing coda. Some months later, I went there on a follow up visit and heard once more how appreciative and surprised they were to get this American help, but they did wonder about one thing. What was the strange oily, brown stuff in the gallon cans? It looked disgusting and most wouldn't taste it, but a couple of brave souls finally did so and were sure, whatever else, it was some kind of lubricant and definitely not to be eaten. So much for a Jordanian introduction to peanut butter.

In addition to foodstuff and medical help, the U.S. provided Jordan with emergency budgetary support. We also flew in plane loads of arms and munitions, which we made no effort to publicize, but we didn't need to. The street grapevine took care of that. Our assistance was both timely and vital – Dean Brown saw to that. For this, the U.S. stood sky high in the esteem of all who backed the king, and among a surprising number of Palestinian fence sitters as well, as well as those who had made their commitment to him and his regime. From the public opinion standpoint, America and Americans have never enjoyed greater popularity and standing in my well over 30 years in the Arab World than they did in Jordan at that time.

The authorities on their own took two brilliant steps, which had major psychological impact, winning over many of even the most skeptical. The first was to assure that all schools opened on the first day of November, which was only a few weeks away. In order to do this, many buildings had to be repaired, some considerably, and everything else, including teachers, textbooks, supplies gotten into place. The Ministry of Education uncharacteristically worked overtime. School directors, principals to us, were told to get windows replaced, walls repaired and painted and everything else that was needed, with the government to pay the bills as submitted and without delay, unless the charges were totally out of line. I don't know of another case in the Arab World where a government school head has ever been given such responsibility and the authority to go with it. Open on November 1 they did, and it went far in proving to that education obsessed society that the government was back in business, in control and, perhaps most important, truly concerned with the people's welfare. I did not hear one word about corruption in getting the schools up and running again.

The second was a program to provide rapid compensation to those whose homes had been

damaged in the fighting. Committees were set up to inspect these places, to decide on how much to give and to authorize its payment. Once an application had been made, the inspections came in a day or two, made their evaluation, determined the sum and okayed that the money be paid out in the following few days. Some of the decisions were mildly criticized, with carping that a few were awarded too much and others too little, but these complaints were not only minor, but lost in the widespread wave of appreciation for the program and its speedy execution. For both the schools and the compensation, we played an important role in providing most of the funds, which wasn't all that much, five million dollars at the outset and more that followed.

A reassuring move by the government was to station security forces around Palestinian refugee camps and Palestinian quarters in cities throughout the country to assure those living there they would be protected against any hot heads, anyone who might seek retribution and that sort of thing. For an administration which had almost collapsed, this also was an impressive show of responsibility and reestablished authority.

I've wandered over the landscape from your question, but my thinking flowed that way.

Q: That's fine. But it looked like it was a country thoroughly divided into two sides, the Palestinians and the native Jordanians. Could we be popular on both sides, as you seem to indicate?

UNDELAND: If you mean, were we popular with all the Palestinians, particularly those who actively and wholeheartedly supported Arafat, of course not, but the Palestinians did not divide neatly into such pro and anti groupings. The lines were not that simple or clear cut. While the king had solid support from the East Bankers, he also had the allegiance of many Palestinians, and there was another large element, who just wanted to get on with their lives and not be caught in the middle. To take the case of the *Ashrafiyyah* quarter, resentment against the government of course existed, but once the fighting was over and armed *Fatah* elements had left, that was the end of the violence. That sector did not have to be controlled with an overwhelming police presence or other open manifestations of power. I went there freely, sometimes by myself, sometimes with one of our Jordanian employees, without any qualms or hesitation. Accommodation was the rule, not the exception. Overt Palestinian opposition to Hussein and the government became so muted that it often seemed not to be a factor. The road back to a viable state proved to be far shorter and easier to navigate than most had expected, myself included.

In a population that was roughly 60% Palestinian, almost all them were Jordanian citizens. They had a legal right to claim this nationality. Many held important positions in major walks of life. Hussein's power base was from the East Bank when the chips were down, but he also could count on reliable support from a sizable number of Palestinians. Certain jobs by unwritten rule were reserved for East Bankers, which aroused some resentment among Palestinians, but overall they had done well in Hashemite Jordan, and many openly expressed their commitment to the king. He, in turn, acted to make this loyalty fundamental and assured. When in the spring of 1971, Prime Minister Wasfi Tell was murdered by Palestinian extremists in Cairo, Jordanian radio held off carrying the news until the refugee camps were surrounded by security forces to protect them. There was a moment then when some Palestinians feared this was a prelude to slaughter, but when the truth became evident, there was not only a huge sense of relief, but an

intensification of appreciation for and loyalty to the king. His support among them became stronger than ever, as several Palestinians told me. Many businessmen, doctors and other professionals most committed to the king were Palestinians. So was the chief vice president at the University of Jordan, Mahmud Samra. I have already spoken of information Minister abu Odeh and his deputy, Butros Salah. I could make a long list of loyalist Palestinians.

How did we fit into this picture? We got along well with both East and West Bankers. I, for one, dealt on equal terms with both, but if I had to say with which grouping had I the most contacts, it would be the Palestinians. This was not a conscious or planned decision, but rather stemmed from their being in the majority among professors and teachers, doctors, lawyers, architects and other main parts of our clientele.

My point is that anyone trying to divide Jordan into Palestinians on one side and Jordanians on the other just did not understand the reality and dynamics of that country and its society. I had a continuing battle with the NEA office, which was ever after me to pay particular attention to Palestinians, including a call that I devise special activities/programs aimed at them. I endlessly pointed out I was in constant, substantive contact with them, but this was not accepted as adequately carrying out the Washington wishes. Deputy Director Bill Rugh visited Amman and I thought it would be useful to expose him to a solid dose of East Bank thinking to help get across the point that we also should not ignore or downgrade our ties and dealings with this political dominant element. At a lunch at my home the radio station's director general and the dean of the Economics Faculty at Jordan University, both fervent Jordanian nationalists, spoke out as if they were Palestinian militants, wholly belying their true feelings and pushing the line that completely undid what I was trying to get across. Afterwards, I with no little exasperation bluntly repeated to them my aim and asked what they had they been trying to accomplish by mouthing stuff they didn't believe in and, more to the point, why? Both came back with apologies, saying that they did not know my guest and therefore decided it safest to hew the phony line they put forth. Palestinian-Jordanian divides, and comings together, could at times get more than a little tricky.

Q: During that period, 1970-1974, what were the main things you were doing in USIS? Did your staff increase?

UNDELAND: I reduced the staff slightly, with, for a time, no library or center and some necessary programming reductions. All librarians but one and some others had to go. I worked hard at it and was pleased to be able to find positions in the embassy or outside for all of them, except a couple of the janitors, and I remained involved with them until I saw they finally were into jobs.

We had less waiting for activities to perk up than I had initially feared. USIA headquarters was commendably responsive to our requests, and I wasn't bashful in making the needs known. The post had a good and loyal staff, with gaps to be sure, but it was not one you'd want to tear apart only to have to put together again. And there was the important factor that they had stuck with us through very tough times, showing a loyalty that deserved our every consideration.

When the embassy moved into new quarters on *Jebel Amman*, I was forced to put the USIS operation into hopelessly cramped space in the basement, albeit with a separate entrance and

somewhat less strict physical security arrangements than those for other parts of the building. But we had no room for any public activities. I fought the battle for more space as best I could, but the decision was taken, not for the good of USIS, but because the embassy insisted on our being crammed in, as I initially suspected and finally definitively learned, to force a sizable, too high in fact, USIS contribution towards the building's rent. My battles with DCM Bill Brubeck, who took the embassy's lead on this matter, were some of the most unpleasant internal set-tos I've had during my career.

To fit in at all, we had to have smaller than usual desks and chairs specially made in Beirut, which in fact we came to like and used throughout my tour, even when we finally got into an appropriate place. Maddeningly but almost predictably, the embassy soon found that after all it needed our space and wanted us out pronto, in terms as vigorous as those earlier used to compel us to be in. Not an impressive display of administrative acumen, but it was not the only time I have encountered this kind of flabbiness in embassy administration.

We were fortunate to find just off Jebel Amman's Third Circle an appropriate, vacant building, with excellent interior space. It was readily accessible for our clientele, only a couple of blocks from the embassy and next door to the Ministry of Information. Before the fighting, it had housed the Cinematographic Center of the ministry, but took several hits from phosphorous shells, which burned out the interior and was consequently given up. It looked a total mess, which was almost certainly why it was available in that real estate short city. Investigation by engineers we hired determined no structural damage, and it took only a few weeks to get the char off the walls, the repairing and repainting done and the few interior changes I wanted made. As of the time I retired, more than 20 years later, USIS was still located there, so this choice was not only good for the moment but stood the challenges of time.

By early in 1971, we were getting back into our usual fare, which were pretty much the full range of what most small posts do, with the exception of no lending library or auditorium activities, i.e. speakers, film shows, exhibits and the like. Still, we kept on our senior librarian, who was one of our most important employees, giving us, as I was told by more than one Jordanian librarian, more influence on the local library scene than we ever had had before. Constantly on the move, cooperating with libraries all over the city, initiating inter-library cooperation and promoting purchase of American books, she was rightly described by a key University of Jordan official as the most important librarian in the country.

While not all that many exhibits or speakers or cultural presentations were offered to us, there were some, which we put on outside our premises, always under joint sponsorship with a Jordanian institution or organization. I was convinced we were better off doing it this way, whether we had our own space or not. Getting someone from the local scene to lend his name and support to it, and draw his own audience to it was almost always a solid plus. Parenthetically, few Americans wanted to come to Jordan for our programs in the months following Black September. When the state of California's head of education cancelled out "for safety reasons", I shot back to Washington that if it was safe enough for me and my family, it should be damned well safe enough for him. Big brouhaha over that one. He didn't come., which, given my attitude about him, was probably a good thing.

But the Florida State marching band did, and what a show it put on, performing in Amman's 20,000 seat stadium, with every seat taken and Hussein and his entourage in the royal box. The demand for entrance was so great that Jordanian military police literally had to beat back the ticketless would-be attendees who pressed forward en masse at the entrances. Part of the program was performed by the Jordanian army band, the local cultural institution of which many Jordanians were rightly most proud. But what a show Florida State put on, bobbing and weaving with precision to jazzy tunes and marches it blared out. Was it the high point when the baton twirlers in their tight, shimmering silver costumes turned and waved their fannies towards the royal box? All I will say is that Jordanians talked glowingly about that performance as long as I was there. It was the first public show in the stadium in several years, as well as the first one attended by the king for a longer time. Making the arrangements cemented my access to and ties with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Palace and parts of the military establishment.

If that was a high point, a low one came with the visit by an astronaut, name of whom I think was Buzz Aldrin but am not certain, who had carried a small Jordanian flag to the moon. The event was to give him a forum to talk about his adventure and to present the flag and a bit of framed moon rock to the king. Lots of hoopla, the Sports City auditorium was jam packed, Hussein was in his box. After saying nice things about Jordan and his flight, the astronaut got religious and started in on the idolatry of putting faith in a black rock, presumably a reference in his mind to the moon rock but to everyone else the *Kaaba* in Mecca, contrasting the false belief in it with the true faith of Christianity. I and other Americans present could not believe what we were hearing and were so embarrassed we wanted to crawl through the floor. The king ignored this unintended anti-Islamic diatribe, and graciously accepted the flag and rock. I was told he personally sent out stern instructions that no one was to see it as a religious affront, but must pass it off as something unimportant from one who meant well and didn't know better. Anyway, it was not mentioned in the media, nor were there other repercussions.

The post immediately got back into the full panoply of exchange programs. We worked with the press, television and radio, getting some placement, though even in super friendly Jordan, almost nothing with political or policy content or implications. As I keep saying, I have long felt that any paper or station that carries stuff supporting the policies of another government is rarely if ever worth reading, listening to or seeing, unless the item is in itself newsworthy and the source fully identified. We fool ourselves if we do not recognize that many in our audiences have antennae out to detect such efforts and are pretty sophisticated in determining things as they are. Isn't it almost always a sign of weakness and lack of character when any in the local media carry another country's laundry? If not that, then it's just plain laziness? In addition, there was always the argument that if we take your political output, we'll have to do the same for other foreign governments, including those you don't like.

While it was an era of good feeling for the U.S., East and West Bankers alike remained strongly and unanimously opposed to our policy on the Arab-Israeli issue and what they saw as our always taking the Israeli side when the chips were down. The story of the IV grant for Munther Anabtawi, the chairman of the Department of Political Science at the university, has these overtones, if not illustrating this point. At the time of the '73 war, he protested our support for Israel by cutting off all contact with us and asking we take him off our publications and activities lists. A few months later, he relented to let us know he would again like to get the publications,

but he still didn't want to see me. More time passed, and I indirectly got word to him about a possible IV grant to attend the American Political Science Association's annual conference and then visit selected American universities. He jumped at the opportunity, and our contacts resumed. Shortly before he was to depart, he asked me to see him urgently, in order to say, "I want to make sure you and everyone else knows that in accepting this invitation, I am not in any way approving of your one-sided policy in the Middle East, which I continue to wholeheartedly oppose." I could only smile and reply, "Dr. Anabtawi, if I dealt only with people here who supported U.S. MidEast policy, I would have very little to do with anybody. I will always listen to your views and only ask that you hear out mine." That broke the tension. By the way, after returning, he surprised students and faculty colleagues alike with the positive things he had to say about almost everything American, save our MidEast policy. I had suspected this would be a result; it was frankly why I went after him.

One of the more fun and useful things we did in Amman – how often the two went together – was to administer the immensely popular American Field Service program, which sent high school students to the United States for an academic year, to live with American families and attend our public high schools. For the 1971-72 program, I was determined to have a boy or girl from a refugee camp and was prepared "to cook the books" of the selection process to make sure we did have one, though that was not necessary. A very intelligent boy who applied was from the huge Baqaa camp, located along the main road a few miles north of Amman. Following his selection and stateside approval, I went out there to talk with him and his family about the experience lying ahead for him and to answer any questions he or they might have. (Not being supposed to go into refugee camps, I didn't inform the embassy security people about it. I must admit it wasn't the first or last time I just went ahead and did my thing, ignoring these types.) I had heard in advance that everyone, including the camp leadership, was pleased, but I was wholly unprepared for their outpouring of warmth and gratitude and the importance they gave to my visit. Greeted at roadside by a large delegation, taken to see the leader in his office and then, accompanied by a happy group, walking down the muddy, unpaved lanes to the boy's humble, cinder block house, where there were more effusive greetings, I was bowled over. They were so pleased at for the boy's good fortune, but at least as much for this recognition by the U.S., as a country and its people, and by me as the representative, who moreover had trusted them to the extent he had been willing to come to the camp alone. This was in spite of the fact that it was American arms and munitions only a few months back that drove Arafat and the *Fedayeen* out of Amman and then Ajloun. Not this nor any other political note was sounded during the couple of hours I spent in the camp. My guess is that if they had had an American flag they would have flown it to honor my visit.

The boy had a fine time in the States and, word got back to me after his return, of his wholly positive comments on his experiences and on the U.S. in general and how widely they spread in Palestinian circles. The next year, among those we selected was a talented girl student from a very modest family, living in the Palestinian quarter, just outside the *Wijdat* refugee camp in *Ashrafiyyah*, and very much an integral part of its society. She returned equally impressed and once again the word of her good fortune and happy life she had led spread widely in Palestinian circles. The fact that we had selected a girl was also not lost on her community.

On the other side, inclusion of a boy from the Beni Hassan tribe and his positive experiences

spread widely in East Banker circles in much the same way, though among an entirely different part of the nation's society. So many families of importance wanted to have their sons and daughters selected that we had to fine tactful, well hopefully tactful, ways of turning them down, in fact saying no to well over 80% of the applicants.

Those were the good old days, when we had lots of money for our activities, and, when we had promising ideas, we usually got a receptive response from our Washington headquarters. Under the Fulbright program alone, we had annually nearly 30 grants for fully paid graduate study in American universities. (And there money for even a larger number of grants in the AID kitty for PhD study in designated science, technology and business fields.) It was sufficiently large that each year I had long sessions at the University of Jordan with its president, Abdel Salam al Majali, and academic vice president, Samra, to line up the best Jordanian candidates. We were a significant player in helping build the staff of that institution, which was one of the best universities in the Arab World. Each year, it usually broke down to about ten new doctoral candidates and twenty renewals. I cannot remember what our initial allocation was, but we were always able to glom onto additional grants. One of the reasons was that the university was only interested in having its top notch students get them, and we and they thus had established an enviable reputation for their quality.

A sidelight. I had long sought a comprehensive list of the Jordan University staff members with American graduate degrees, including where they'd been, the dates, their specializations and other details. It was promised me several times, but never came through, until we provided Israel with missiles or another major military item, which prompted a protest to the embassy, signed by all professors with U.S. doctorates, giving the full details I had been seeking. My subsequent asking at the university whether the only way to get this information was to supply military equipment to the Israelis brought out bemused responses. Most appreciated the irony, the sort of thing that almost always appeals to Arabs. By the way, there were over 130 profs on this list.

But things did not always work out. To get our foot better in the door, I offered a couple of PhD study grants to the minister of education for the English language teaching section, with the proviso the candidates had to be top flight and suggested the names of a couple I knew who were. I made the pitch directly to the minister, Ishaq Farhan, who was an ideologue, a fervent member of the Muslim Brotherhood, which seemed strange for one who had gotten graduate degrees from AUB and Columbia with highest honors. He proposed two Brotherhood types, a fact which I didn't particularly like, but far more telling was that they had academic credentials far below anything I would even think about accepting. When I called again on Farhan to tell him this, our session descended into a pretty heated affair, from which stemmed his order that Ministry officials were henceforth to have no contact with the American center. Typically, that order was, so far as I knew, almost totally ignored and then forgotten.

But that's not the end of the story. One of the candidates I had suggested was Salma Jayyusi – not the *Fatah* political figure of that name – who succeeded in lining up her own support in the palace and with the military, including the financing, and off she went to UCLA, where she got her PhD with honors. Parenthetically, the other one I had my eyes on also got her doctorate abroad, from England on a British Council grant, which its director wisely did not put through the Ministry. I might add that both were Palestinians. A lesson. Take ability and combine it with

personal and family ties in Jordan, and other Arab societies as well, and you can sometimes work wonders when nothing else seems to be able to do it.

A brief digression on the Muslim Brotherhood. It had come to an agreement with the Palace, whereby it would not only not challenge the regime, nor cause it any problems, but would help it in combating *Baathis* and other leftists. In return, it demanded and for a while got control of the Ministry of Education and untrammelled access to villages. That explained why Farhan was in his position. However, It didn't last long before he was ousted, and his successor was the university's immensely capable and forward looking president and later prime minister, Dr. Majali, but I must add that he had a difficult time as head of the Ministry, for he kept running up against Brotherhood members, who were well entrenched at all levels except the very top. I know less about the village access story, but the *Ikhwan* faced a major struggle there for it was opposed by the army and supporting civilian administrators, who in the end won out, though not all that easily.

Q: The staff of our embassy had a number of Arabists, and you were in that category yourself. Can you give a feel of you might say was the spirit or perspective of those officers towards Israel and our policy towards Israel at that time, the 1970s?

UNDELAND: Let me say that the vast majority of us approached foreign policy in a professional, not a personal way, which meant that we supported to the best of our ability U.S. policy on the Middle East. Even when we felt it tilted towards Israel too much for the good of moving forward our interests, we didn't permit ourselves to let this get in the way of what we were charged with doing and how we went about it. You must remember, the United States was the only country that had been and was seriously and constantly worked for a viable Middle East peace settlement – under Democrat and Republican administrations alike. We all worked as part of and contributors to both the policy and the process. For me that aspect has been a matter of both satisfaction and frustration, the former because we were trying and the latter because it wasn't resulting in more than usually just keeping the lid on, and not always that.

You used the word Arabists, and I might make a comment or two on this. There has been, I feel, a campaign to equate interest in and expertise on the Arab World with near disloyalty, as was done in the Kaplan book. He sounded a refrain I have heard over the years...

Q: We're talking about a book by Robert Kaplan called The Arabists, in which Undeland is discussed.

UNDELAND: ...A refrain that Arabists have somehow been working in Machiavellian ways, to bring about their own agenda. I am convinced in this regard, it is an essentially dishonest book, for I feel certain Kaplan's conclusions were fixed in his mind before he came to do the research and writing, and he used only the evidence and arguments that supported his pre-cooked thesis. He ascribes to Arabist diplomats far more power and influence than they ever had and largely ignores the fact that foreign policy comes from Washington and is based on a range of considerations, national interests, public opinion, estimation of what will work best, views of interest groups, interplay with Congress and likely effect on other countries. But where he goes most wrong is in trying to present the case that the Arabists have used their skills and talents to

the detriment of American policy towards Israel and the American-Israeli tie. That is nonsense.

As I said about Vietnam, an diplomat or any other civil servant should try to bring information and insight to bear on policy formulation, but once the policy is in place, there are only two honorable choices: support it, whether you have personal misgivings or not, or resign. And a third, somewhat down on the honor scale, is getting transferred to somewhere else, where he doesn't deal with it. This applies to Arabists as much as to anyone else.

Q: You were in Jordan during the 1973 war, in which Jordan did not participate. How did it impact on your work? What is your perspective on it?

UNDELAND: That's not quite correct, for Jordan was engaged on the Syrian front, although not in a large way. Two elite units were sent there and took modest casualties. Jordan certainly was not fully into it, but nonetheless did enough to pay its dues.

The war's effect on the USIS operation was immediate and nearly total, bringing to a halt our normal public activities, both cultural and informational, beyond providing our daily information bulletins to an expanded list, mainly officials and those in the media. We still all came to the office every day and carried on, to the extent possible, with our routines, but frankly a lot of the staff had next to nothing to do. Emotions throughout society were running high, and for us to have continued as if nothing was happening would have been imprudent and a psychological mistake. Not that advice from outside was needed, but a number of persons we counted among our best friends, both East and West Bankers, sought us out to suggest this temporary hiatus. They added that when it was all over, things would bounce right back and so should we. In any case, everybody's attention was focused on the War, and people had little if any interest in our normal program fare.

I spent little time in the office these days, instead being out to test the waters, to try to keep close tabs on what people had on their minds. Our more senior FSNs did the same. What we gleaned on public opinion vis-a-vis the War itself, the U.S. angle, the situation in country, people's hopes and fears went into a several page daily memorandum I wrote for the ambassador and others at the embassy. I also drafted some cables and contributed to those done by the political section. I probably spoke on for far too long at staff meetings, relating what I and the USIS staff had picked up, but then I was never told to cut it short or shut up. This reporting went over quite well with both the embassy and Washington, so it seems others agreed this was the way we should use our talents, time and contacts.

While the fighting was soon over with only minor dislocations to the country, nobody knew in advance this would be the case, and we were trying to be prepared for whatever might come. In such situations, there is always the tendency to project worst case scenarios by asking all those "what if" questions. Amman put in force a half-hearted black-out, and people were advised to avoid moving around at nighttime, but a general calm prevailed, along side the expected jitteriness over what the future might hold. The big question on everybody's mind was whether the king would decide to throw the army wholeheartedly into the fray or whether Jordan might anyway be dragged in. And if so, what then would happen? Or, what would it take to stay out? I found Jordanians as available as ever to me and willing to speak out openly. As I noted earlier, I

had made it my business to know a fairly large number and wide range of people, and here it clearly paid off. I hardly need add it's much easier to get on a frank basis with your interlocutors, if you have already established your credentials with them.

Q: Would you get a little more into how you found public opinion in Jordan? Was it very volatile and ready to believe the worst about the United States and all that.

UNDELAND: I wouldn't use the word volatile, but it was predisposed to think the worst of our intentions, actions and policies whenever Israel was part of the equation. The support that we provided it and stances we had taken over the years had created a mind set of expecting the U.S. to come down against the Arabs, whenever important issue arose. I know I'm repeating what I've said to you before, but I cannot try to deal with your question and not go back over much of the same ground in this manner. A war comes along, emotions run higher and so does the propensity to think badly of U.S. Middle East policy. This was as true of those who knew us well, who had studied in the U.S. or otherwise had significant U.S. ties, who in most ways were openly pro-American, as it is with those who lacked these experiences, contacts and views. One must take this as fact, as a given. Whether they are cooperating with us, benefiting from us, are our friends or not makes little difference. They of course had considerable evidence to draw on to indicate that we have almost always come down on the Israeli side, and however one may feel about the rights or wrongs of it, the considerable price paid with Arab public opinion has been the inevitable consequence.

If that one issue were the whole picture, the Arab World would not have been a very satisfying place to be and work in, but fortunately it wasn't, for most of the Arabs have great deal of respect for the United States, for Americans, for what we stand for, our institutions and ways, our products and outlook. They have admired us and gotten along well with us. A Jordanian academic once told me, "I wish you were different, so it would be easier for us to hate you." I can think of well over a dozen times in Jordan, when someone would start sounding off to me about the manifest wrongs and evils of American Mid-East policy, only to have another person shut him up, often with something along the lines of, "there's no reason for us to get into this again – we differ, and a big argument isn't going to serve any useful purpose for any of us. It's unpleasant; stop it."

Still, touchiness remained. There was the case of an American studying Arabic at FSI in Beirut. Its head asked me if I could place him in one of the summer youth camps run by Youth and Sports. One of the best budding Arabists at FSI, what he needed was 24 hour a day immersion, and the Jordanian youth camps were perfect for this. I made the request to the head of Youth and Sports, Director General Prince Fawwaz, whom I saw often and knew well, and he agreed. The student arrived, went into a camp near Ajloun, fit in well, and seemed to be getting on with no problem. Then, I was summoned by the Prince, who, with flashes of anger, demanded to know what I was up to in trying to place a CIA officer in one of his camps. He said that we were friends and cooperated and collaborated on much, but this he could not accept. After checking and finding out that the affiliation was as charged, I went back to him and, without ever explicitly admitting he was right, took the line that the one thing neither of us wanted was an incident or public spat. He agreed, the officer finished out his remaining short time, but the point had been made in no uncertain terms. The prince, indeed the establishment, didn't want the CIA

mucking around with the country's youth programs. He was watching to see it didn't happen again, and he was letting me know he had the ability to find out. This happened at the time U.S.-Jordanian ties were perhaps the closest and most friendly they have ever been. Parenthetically, my relations with Fawwaz remained as close as ever. A footnote – the station in the Amman embassy was very close to the palace and king, but that was seen as totally different.

As I have said elsewhere, there were so many positive elements in Arab views of the U.S., and none more so than in the Jordan of the early '70s. They admired American higher education – the new University of Yarmuk then being built outside Irbid was popularly known, and with a good deal of reason, as Michigan State East, for that is precisely what its president, Adnan Badran, wanted to create. I need hardly add where he had gotten his PhD. By the way, many years later he became the nation's prime minister.

Jordanians were favorably taken by American openness, in fact nothing was more often singled out in discussions on their experiences with returned grantees. They also, liked our popular culture, frankly more than I do. They came to me for detailed information on our social security system, which they almost without inspection wanted to use as the model for their own. I had similar praise of our court system, followed by a statement that that's exactly what Jordan needed and wanted. And, they liked us personally. This list could go on and on, but I think I've made my point that we had a lot going for us. Having this array of positive elements resting there in the background helped us greatly whenever crises, the '73 war and others, arose.

Q: What was your impression, and maybe also from the embassy's point of view, of King Hussein during this period?

UNDELAND: He nearly lost his crown in those weeks just before I arrived, but afterwards did not, from what I could see, make a false step. Aside from this lapse and an earlier one in the '50s, he has shown himself perhaps the most adept political practitioner and survivor in the Middle East. He has had that ability to change, to lead a diverse country, to bounce back from adversity, and to maintain popularity, while at the same time ruling over one of the most decent, open to give-and-take societies in the Arab World. It's not a democracy, it's probably not going to be one, but it has had considerable participatory character, whether expressed inside or outside of established institutions, along with much personal freedom. Access to sources of power and influence was easier here than in any other Arab country in which I've served. The descriptive word that comes to my mind is decency. People were largely permitted to go their own way. They've had their *mukhabarat*, which could do nasty things, but theirs was not anywhere near as oppressive as the Syrian and Egyptian versions, when I was in those places. Jordanians were a relatively happy people. For this state of affairs, major credit rightfully went right to the king. Maybe popular is too strong a word, though I've used it, for he was liked and respected across the spectrum. It was widely believed that without him everything would fall to pieces, and that view may well have been right.

Q: How did we view Syria at that time, that is, those in the embassy?

UNDELAND: We were not getting along well at all with Syria, and I think you know it not only menaced Jordan, but had sent armored vehicles on a foray across the border, where the Jordanian

army set an ambush and wiped them out. I knew the Jordanian officer, of Circassian background, who commanded that force; he related with glee more than once in my presence every detail of the event.

More serious was the threat of major Syrian military intervention into Jordan to support Arafat and the *Fedayeen*. I wasn't in any way personally involved, but both the U.S. and the Israelis let the Syrians know this would not be tolerated, and the bluff was called. Syria was the bad boy on the block for both us and the Jordanians. Our assistant military attaché was scarfed up by *mukhabarat* while driving through Syria on his way to Lebanon. Unspeakable tortures were inflicted on him before he was released, which intensified our negative feelings about the authorities of Jordan's neighbor to the north.

Anti-Syrian attitudes ran strong among Jordanians, particularly the East Bankers, but including much of the entire population. I recall being at a *mansif* – that traditional tribal meal of rice and lamb cooked in goat milk, served on a huge tray and eaten with the right hand only – with members of the Beni Hassan tribe, when the subject of Syria came up. Almost in unison they broke out with how you could never trust Syrians, because they had a bad and deceitful government and were often unreliable in themselves, bringing up one past incident after the other to back up their contention. At this one and many others, it was a Theros-Undeland representation.

Q: My usual question. There were two ambassadors while you were there, Dean Brown and Tom Pickering. How did they operate? What were your impressions of them?

UNDELAND: Extremely effective, both of them. They have been two of the leading lights of American diplomacy in our time, and their importance to what we were doing in Jordan and the Middle East in general can hardly be overstated. Dean Brown developed closest of ties with the palace. He got to be known as “the crisis ambassador”, sent into Lebanon and Cyprus after our representative in each of these places was killed. He had the reputation of never having failed at anything he set his hand to, also of being able to use the administrative and bureaucratic machinery with a skill equaled by few others. Having seen him in action, I can well believe it. He took on the big issues himself and didn't concern himself with other matters, which he looked on as minor, like USIS quarters, to mention just one that affected me. He repeatedly refused my request to go for a second USIS officer, telling me, “you're doing fine by yourself; we don't need anything more.” Yet he was fully supportive of USIS and what I wanted to do, while not himself pushing particular ideas, programs and projects. His backing combined with a certain distance was fine with me. He like to have me drop in on him when I was in the building to pass on what I had picked up from my Jordanian contacts. He once told me that Theros and I had the best stories on Jordan and Jordanians of anyone in the mission, and we should keep on getting out and getting more.

I shared an outside interest with him in weekend, i.e. Friday, jaunts into the desert and rural areas mainly to visit antiquities sites, accompanied by our Jordanian archaeologist friends. I would always drive an old USIS Scout carryall, and he would be in a back seat. When we met people, he would never say who he was. We didn't decide until the day itself where we would be going; he did not take along anyone from his security detail.

With Tom Pickering I had a quite different, but equally satisfying and in ways closer, relationship. His style, personality and operating ways were totally different from those of his predecessor. He traveled widely around the country and came to know Jordan well in things large and small. He drove his staff hard, using them to satisfy his insatiable curiosity about everything that was happening in the country and the place itself. Tom had clear ideas and desires for all sections of the mission and, although always open to new or differing ideas and proposals, convincing him to change his mind was never easy. In being with him, one did well to know the matter at hand inside and out and to be fully prepared for new twists and directions he brought up. Many of his sentences began with a what, how or why. That breadth and depth appealed to me.

Jordanians in all walks of life responded warmly to him and his outgoing ways. I hardly need add that his relations with the king and others in the Palace were superb.

Pickering was also a devotee of the Friday jaunts to antiquities sites, so we continued with these outings begun with Dean Brown. The difference was that he insisted on being the driver, often going at frightening speeds, particularly over desert tracks and salt flats. Indeed, after a few of these experiences, I refused to ride in his vehicle, instead driving the old carryall at a considerably more restrained pace.

It was Jordan's good fortune, ours as a government, and mine personally to have had Dean and Tom at the helm during this critical period and, I might add, during my time as well. Jordan, with American support, came back from the brink, and both of them played key roles in making this happen. Moreover, their efforts led to what was the era of closest U.S.- Jordanian ties.

Q: What about Iraq? How was it seen at that time in Jordan?

UNDELAND: There wasn't all that much emphasis on it, at least not that I encountered. When the subject came up, Iraqis were often referred to as Arab brothers, but many Jordanians had never really liked them. That they had overthrown the Hashemite monarchy and murdered the king, a cousin of Hussein's, was a factor, even though the event dated back to 1958 and was not seen as a pressing current concern. However, that the Iraqis were often looked down on as being brutal and unsophisticated dates in part from that bloody event.

The only specific case I can recall concerns the Iraqi air force, which Jordan had temporarily permitted to take over the air base at Azraq during the '73 war. When it was returned, the Jordanians were aghast at the dirt, filth and squalor left behind. This was widely bruited about and heightened disdain for the Iraqis.

It's not part of your question, but we're talking about other Arabs, and I might mention that Jordanians, official and private, found Qadhafi a clown, when not a problem and embarrassment to all Arabs. I was visiting the Jordanian army liaison officer in his office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, seeking information on an island with a Crusader castle in the Gulf of Aqaba I hoped to visit, when his phone rang and the conversation became excited. He cupped his hand over the phone and said, "I'm sorry, but you must now leave. None of us know what's up, but

Qadhafi's airplane is going to land in ten minutes." When I saw him again, he told me they never discovered exactly why Qadhafi had come, let alone done so unannounced. He questioned whether the Libyan leader was sane.

I have already talked about tension with Syria, but there is also another side, for many Jordanians loved to go to Damascus, which more than one described to me as the most civilized city in the Arab World. There were often strains in relations with Egyptians, who were resented as looking down on Jordanians and other Arabs, of treating them as inferior, but having been in Egypt, that sense of superiority came to me as no surprise.

Q: Dick, do you want to say a little more about Jordan?

UNDELAND: I am not sure I have made quite enough of the political astuteness of the king and, to a certain extent, those around him, sometimes in the face of strong pressure from us. More than once we had urged him to enter into some sort of public relationship with the Israelis, direct negotiations and open contacts, which would have put huge internal pressures on him, pressures which I question whether he could have successfully borne. Privately, as was widely known or at least suspected, he was meeting with Israeli leaders quite often, but it was never turned into a political issue that affected him. In retrospect, I think he was absolutely right and would not have remained monarch had he followed our advice on these occasions. It is a mark of his skill, that he rebuffed us in such sure-footed ways that he continued to maintain his close ties with us.

He had a human touch that contributed greatly to his stature and standing. I'll cite a couple of stories, where I was directly involved. Once when stopped along the side of the road while out on a Friday antiquities jaunt – for some reason Ambassador Brown wasn't in tow this time – two cars pulled up along side us, and the driver of one of them asked if everything was all right or did we need some help. He then got out and chatted with us for a few minutes, about what I don't now recall, before getting back in his car, waving and driving off. It was, of course, Hussein. We all were impressed, but it was more than that with the Jordanian archaeologists in our group. They couldn't say enough good things about him, including the one who was a strong Palestinian nationalist. Only a gesture, but how much it meant.

Another concerns my daughter, Anne, then seven years old, who was at a children's party at the Bushnaq farm in the Jordan Valley. Splashing her feet in the water of the pool dating back to Byzantine days but not knowing how to swim, a man approached her and asked if she would like him to teach her how; she shyly said yes and the lesson began. I don't need to tell you who the instructor was. The king loved children, and they in turn adored him, a fact that did not go unnoticed and unappreciated in Jordan's very child oriented society.

For my last Hussein story, though there are others I could relate, I heard it some years when I worked for air force headquarters in the Pentagon. On his annual visits to the U.S., he always piloted the plane and made it his custom to stop at Torrejon Air Base just outside Madrid for refueling and to spend the night in that city. On one of these trips, he arrived and then went off to do whatever a Jordanian monarch does on an evening in Madrid. The next morning he returned to find the plane not just refueled, but completely cleaned, spic and span from top to bottom, inside and out. Hussein, obviously pleased, said he appreciated this unnecessary extra care, and

then insisted on personally thanking those responsible. The commander, Colonel Chuck Donnelly, called in the concerned officers, each of whom got the Hussein treatment of the firm handshake and gaze in the eyes, shutting out all else. Then he told Donnelly he also wanted to thank the men who had done the actual work. Taken back into a work area and introduced to them, he gave each that same Hussein magic, ignoring the greasy hands and soiled mechanics' clothes.

Now move ahead some to when it was Major General Donnelly in the Pentagon, who was playing a key role in the annual U.S.-Jordan military assistance talks. I was on the exchange assignment to the air force and involved these sessions. The Jordanians wanted from us some oxygen equipment for their F-5s and a large unloading machine. Given the job of trying to locate these items, I did so, but had to report back to him I had been categorically told that none were surplus or could otherwise be made available. He looked up and in a matter of fact way said, "I have just found them surplus" and called in an aide to do up the necessary paper work. End of story. The Hussein personality worked time after time and often with lasting effect.

Anwar Sadat projected splendidly his personality, to Americans and other foreigners, so in different ways did Bourguiba and Hassan, but for one-on- one impact, I think no other Arab leader has been as effective as King Hussein.

Q: I've heard the story that at one point before he decided to move against Arafat, he was reviewing his troops and saw a pair of women's underpants, flying from an antenna on a military vehicle, and the remark was made, "well, you're treating us like women, so we'll look like women," or something like that.

UNDELAND: I haven't heard that one, and while I therefore cannot comment on whether it in fact happened, I am highly skeptical, for that kind of incident would be a huge insult to the king and also to women in that very correct society. It just doesn't ring true. Had it occurred, I am sure he would have been deeply offended, and I think Jordanians, and particularly those in the army, would be equally aware of how much this would hit him wrong and would avoid it.

Q: This may be just one of those stories.

UNDELAND: To me, it sounds as phony as a three dollar bill.

You asked me earlier if I had anything more to say, and I have already had all too much, but let me close out the Jordan chapter by still a couple more stories, one of embarrassment to me, but perhaps instructive. The first. Princeton and the University of Jordan had worked out a project without USG involvement to exchange one graduate student each way each year, but while it wasn't our show, both parties kept us informed. I applauded this private initiative, which supported exactly what USIS was doing, and I offered to help informally in any way I could, if they ever wanted me to.

One day a phone call from Vice President Samra told me a big problem had arisen and I should come out and see President Majali, right away. I did as he asked only to be raked over the coals, up one side and down the other, for Princeton had turned down the Jordanian nominee as not

qualified, after he had been personally contacted by Majali and had given up a good paying job in Libya in order to accept the offer. He threatened that if Princeton wouldn't take him, Jordan University would refuse to accept the designated American student. I pointed out that I knew about the Princetonian, a black woman already *en route* and while I didn't know why Princeton had reacted so negatively to the Jordanian, to turn her down at that juncture would only make the situation worse and could damage the existing excellent university-to-university ties. But it wasn't my responsibility and I was only trying to be helpful. However, Majali continued to storm, and I left his office disturbed at the outburst and not knowing what would happen.

So, I went directly to Samra to find out what was going on and why hadn't he prepared me for what I was to face before I went into the lion's den. His disarmingly replied that I had been in Jordan more than three years, knew the country well, and he was sure I fully understood what was up. This floored me. Seeing my blank expression, he went on to explain that the rejected Jordanian was a member of a Christian family from Karak, protected by the Majali clan, the foremost power in that region. Then he disarmingly asked: hadn't I understood this and what it meant? Alas, the answer was I hadn't. Samra was dead right; I should have.

If we don't become pretty conversant about the societies in which we operate, we are walking on thin ice with the ever present risk it may give way beneath us and we will fall in the soup. In Jordan, as much as any place I have served, knowledge of families and tribes and how they interact is essential. That experience has been firmly implanted in my mind ever since, and I have gone to considerable effort to try to make sure I am never so caught out again anywhere I've been posted.

The second. The radio station's director general, Kilani (his first name embarrassingly escapes me), invited Joan and myself to an outdoors wedding feast. We went and found the entire leadership, the power structure, of central Jordan present. I had met, let alone had come to know, only a handful of those at this large gathering. Reporting this event at the next embassy staff meeting, Pickering chimed in that we should never fool ourselves on how well we are plugged in. He went on that we try to learn and get around to our best ability, but it is never enough to become thoroughly conversant, and anyway we are always the outsiders. But we have to keep reaching out. He was again right on.

Jordan was a superb assignment from beginning to end, partly because of the country and people, partly because of the close ties between our two countries that were burgeoning, partly because of the satisfaction in rebuilding the post from the ground up and partly because I was convinced we were making a significant contribution to our standing in a part of the Middle East of importance to us. It was a place to be confident and optimistic. It was a post for one who liked to be out and doing things. I have already gone on at great length, but there is so much more I could relate, more stories, more vignettes. It was, in short, a remarkable time to be there.

JON G. EDENSWORD
Consular Officer
Amman (1973-1976)

Jon G. Edensword was born in the state of Washington, and graduated from school in Illinois in 1956. After a five year teaching career, he entered the foreign service in 1968. Edensword has had tours in Martinique, Liberia, Haiti, Jordan, France, and Mexico. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing on October 30, 1995.

Q: You described how you managed to get your next assignment in Amman because the Ambassador's feeling that he had let you down by giving the second position in the Consular Section to somebody else because he thought that you weren't being promoted, but in fact, you were being promoted. Was this a direct transfer to Amman?

EDENSWORD: Yes, I had only been in Haiti one year. It was a direct transfer to Amman. I think we spent about a week in Washington on consultation. They told me that they'd taken the previous two consular officers out of Amman on stretchers and that they needed somebody who was going to be there a little longer.

Q: Was that because of the stress or too much work?

EDENSWORD: I don't know. This was in the days when we still had a lot of consular officers who were essentially failed political officers. In those days, that's how you became a consular officer: you tried to become a political officer and you couldn't make it and you ended up in the administrative or consular cone. Both of these men had heart problems. I know one of them had a heart attack. I don't remember their names. But the section had been sort of running itself for several months and they were looking for somebody. When Ambassador Knox called, I think he must have spoken highly of me and he also must have spoken sharply to whoever his contact was...his source on promotions.

Q: How large was the Consular Section in Amman? This was really your first supervisory responsibility - your forth post.

EDENSWORD: Well, I actually had quite a bit of supervisor responsibility at my first post because I had...

Q: And your second post too in Monrovia?

EDENSWORD: Yes, except there I just had a part-time secretary. But at Fort-de-France I had about four or five FSNs working directly for me in the administrative and the consular work. Eventually I sort of took over the administrative side of USIA while they kept scaling it back. We had that little reading room in Guadalupe and so on. But I suppose you could say...

Q: How large was the section in Amman?

EDENSWORD: We had a part time vice-consul, plus me and five Foreign Service nationals. All five were Palestinians: four women and Christian; and the man was a Moslem.

Q: You arrived there in August of 1973, and, as I recall, some big things happened within a few weeks if not months.

EDENSWORD: In October, the '73 War broke out with the Egyptian invasion across the Suez and that apparently was a surprise to everyone because, as I recall, the Ambassador, Station Chief, and the Military Attaché were all out of the country and had a lot of difficulty getting back. I think the Ambassador eventually flew to Tehran and then to Saudi. Then King Hussein sent his own plane down to Saudi Arabia to pick him up. That was how the Ambassador got back.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

EDENSWORD: Dean Brown. Jordan stayed out of that war. We all had to paint blue paint on our headlights. I think the biggest danger to Americans at the Embassy was that the taxis never slowed down with these blue headlights. You stepped off the curb at night and you were likely to get run over. Occasionally the Israeli phantom jets would come over in the morning and go through the sound barrier just to remind everybody who controlled the air space. But Jordan stayed out of that war. At the end of it, the Kissinger shuttle started which lead eventually to the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. I ended up like everybody in the Embassy, we began to view these Kissinger visits like they were normal procedures. We had one a month for it seemed like months. Sometimes Kissinger was bouncing back and forth between Damascus, Cairo, and Tel Aviv; and not get to Jordan before three or four o'clock in the morning. So they were trying times. One time, the Ambassador made me responsible for the administrative side of things. The administrative officer was in Washington for some reason and that was a pretty exciting time. On one of the trips, Kissinger had gone up the Nile to the Aswan and had their meetings there. So Hussein decided to have his meeting down in Aqaba. I remember that Kissinger was going to arrive the following morning and he and Hussein were going to fly down in Hussein's plane. So there were three or four cars that went down that night before. This was in the winter. Dean Brown had just left to take over an Undersecretary for Management job. Pierre Graham was the Chargé. There were three or four cars of Jordanians and Americans. I remember Dick Undeland, the PAO, and his major contact there, the press man for the palace; and there must have been one other American. I was in that car and when we got to the pass just before you drop down into the Aqaba plain. They actually had the army out shoveling snow. This must have been in January of 1974. We got down there, and we had to set up all kinds of things. I think there was one telex and one hotel: it was very primitive in those days. Anyway, the visit came off very well. At the end of the visit, Kissinger got us all together. There must have been six or eight Americans down there and introduced us to the new Ambassador, Tom Pickering. He said, "I have asked Tom Pickering to take over" and at that time he was the Executive Secretary of the Department, traveling with Kissinger. I can't remember why this came out like this, but Pickering stayed with us. I am sure he did because when we drove back, we were invited to a "meshwe," which is a traditional Bedouin meal of lamb and rice out in the Bedouin tents of the local chief. He was the son of the man who went with Lawrence into Aqaba back in World War II. I think he was six or seven the time, and he would regale us with all kinds of stories about Lawrence and his father.

Q: Was the place where this event took place near Aqaba?

EDENSWORD: Near Aqaba, actually quite close to Quwayrah (in that area) out in the dessert - in these black goat hair tents set out in the dessert. His sons and the sons of other chieftains had horse races and camel races for us and various activities. We spent most of the day out there eating.

Q: Ambassador Pickering was with you?

EDENSWORD: Yes. I am trying to think of why he would have been with us, why he wasn't traveling with Kissinger, but I have forgotten why. I am sure he was there, because he wasn't yet the ambassador.

Q: When he did become the Ambassador, that was the first time he had served as an ambassador?

EDENSWORD: That was his first ambassadorship.

Q: Besides the Kissinger visits and the routine work of the consular section, were there some other things you were involved in Jordan?

EDENSWORD: I think probably the best thing that I did - the thing that I feel the best about - in fact, maybe one of the best things I think I might have done in the Foreign Service...there were a fair number of American women married to Jordanians - not hundreds, but probably somewhere between fifty and one hundred. The ones in Amman had some kind of organization, but there were others that lived out of the city, who were really isolated. Very often they were not well educated, had come over and met their husbands or their husbands when they were in the States going to school usually, got married probably in their teens, had several children, came back to Jordan thinking they would be a princess and found that they were essentially the slave to the mother-in-law, and were never allowed to go back to the states. My head Foreign Service national, a woman named Miss Munah, started telling me about these women. The genesis of this was one who was married to a Jordanian who lived in Amman, and she came in one day and clearly had been beaten up. She looked seventy and she was in her late forties. Miss Munah told me that this happens regularly: she comes down here and usually spends some time with them and then she has to go back. She had really nothing back in the States: she had been in Jordan probably twenty, twenty-five years and had no family left, no skills. She was really stuck in this position. So, I started a program and I took Miss Munah with me (she was a very matronly, solid woman,) and we started visiting these women. I started with the American Women's Community in Jordan, and I met with them and got to know their president. Miss Munah put together a list and made the appointments. It was clear that I had to go with a woman like this because a man would not be allowed into these houses. We start visiting these people, in fact, Ambassador Pickering when he heard about it, said, "Why don't you take my car and driver?" It was this armored thing that must have weighed ten thousand pounds. Anyway, we started doing this all around the country: every week we would take a day and go somewhere. Some of the women had done very, very well: they had really established themselves. Others were completely dominated by their husbands. There was one case of a woman (Miss Munah showed me the file) who had written to the Consulate several times saying, "Is there any way you can help me visit my family in Texas? I haven't been there in twenty years and I would like to show my kids to my parents." We went to see this woman and we met the husband, who was very suspicious, and met

his mother. They allowed us to meet with his wife with Miss Munah present and I met the kids, who were American citizens. Then on another trip we stopped and met them again. One of the really nice things was that after about three or four months (Miss Munah really played an important role here,) we convinced this man that his wife would come back if she could take a trip to Texas and brought the kids to see the grandparents who had never seen them. By God, she went and came back. It was pretty clear to her after she had been in the States for awhile (I think she stayed for a month or a month and a half) that her life was really in Jordan. She was kind of a celebrity when she came back, but there wasn't anything for her in the U.S. She didn't have the kind of skills that would allow her to find work. So she came back, and I would then stop and see her or she would come into the capital city from time to time and she would come into the Consulate. She had been able to get out. One of the results of all this was that the women up in the north part of the country organized an American women's group. That was a very satisfying thing.

Q: I think it is very difficult for particularly the wives in a number of countries (certainly where I have had experience) where there is love, there is maybe a good solid marriage, but they don't have any idea of the culture and all of the other relationships that they are going to have to deal with when they...

EDENSWORD: That's true.

Q: Sometimes it's hard to make a second decision. You're stuck with the one you made. I know in Jordan over the years there have been some child custody cases where American citizen children were taken back from the United States by their (in this case) Jordanian father against the wishes of perhaps the American court and certainly the American mother. Did anything like that happen when you were there?

EDENSWORD: Muslim law normally gives the child to the mother until age seven. After age seven the child goes to the father. I spent a lot of time in *cadi* courts (their religious courts). That's a very interesting experience, too, because you cannot even appear to show the bottoms of your feet, the soles of your shoes, because that's an insult. You go into these places and there is a guy that sort of sits you down and you sit there very straight with your feet flat on the floor and then the judge comes in. I got to know these people, but there was a great deal of dignity and a great deal of honor that had to be paid to these people and, by God, you didn't move your feet! In fact, it took me a couple of years after that post, before I could actually put my feet on a coffee table again with somebody in the room. We had a couple of cases like that: the worst case that I can remember involved a Jordanian who immigrated to the States, had married in the States and they had a daughter who was about twelve. When she became twelve, they decided to send her to his brother (they were from a conservative Muslim family) in Amman right after school was out in June. Then the mother, the father, and, I think, the other child were then going to come in August when he had vacation time, pick up the daughter, visit with the other family, and then all return to the States. So, the twelve year old girl went and was living with her uncle and aunt when the father in the States died. The mother then came to get her child and they wouldn't allow it because she had not converted to Islam. They went to the *cadi* court and I was there. The religious courts (it goes by whatever religion you are: Christian - it was mostly Orthodox - , Muslim) are in charge of family matters. The court gave the child to the aunt and uncle. There

was no way that we could get that girl out of Jordan. The mother was writing everybody she could think of and it was a very tense moment because Congress heard about it and was raising the dickens about U.S. aid to Jordan. Ambassador Pickering might have even talked to the King about it, but it was a very difficult case. Under Muslim law, it was the only thing to do - it was the only decision reachable. As far as I know, that girl never went back. I used to go and visit her. It was clear to me that they had one of their sons or nephews: they were grooming a marriage for him to immigrate with that girl.

Q: Because she was an American citizen?

EDENSWORD: She was an American citizen. I guess she had Jordanian citizenship but I'm not even sure of that because in all my dealing with the government on the case and with the courts I never acknowledged anything except the girl's American citizenship. I insisted on our rights to see her under those conditions.

Q: Besides the Americans married to Jordanians and, of course, the Embassy itself, were there very many other Americans in Jordan in this period, the early seventies?

EDENSWORD: There were some, not a lot. In 1975, when Beirut started to have serious problems, a lot of people moved/immigrated down to Jordan and Amman grew very, very rapidly after that period. Several Americans came down who had been living in Beirut, but there were never lots of Americans. I think Amman never had the appeal for people living in the Middle East that, say, Beirut or Jerusalem or some of the other places did.

Q: Even Cairo?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: You were there not too long after the September 1970 Black September so-called Incident involving the Palestinians with the Jordanians. You mentioned that there were several - I guess all the Foreign Service nationals employees in the Consular Section were Palestinians. Generally what was the state of the relationship between the Palestinians and the Jordanians as you experienced it?

EDENSWORD: Well, the Palestinians were Jordanians in the sense that they had Jordanian passports and that before the 1967 War the West Bank was part of Jordan. You could say the Bedouin, you call them the East Bankers (I guess what you might call the non-Palestinian Jordanians) I think relationships were pretty good, but I think that there was always the feeling that the Palestinians were not true... true to the king and the Bedouins are very loyal to the king although many of his closest advisors were Palestinian. Of course, the best educated were Palestinian. There were still sections of the city we were not allowed to live in as embassy employees. Most of the buildings still had marks from that war between the PLO and Hussein in 1970.

Q: What about Israel...Israel is obviously very close to Amman...this was a period of tension...you were there during the 1973 War. Did you ever go to Israel? What was your feeling toward Israel as part of the Embassy?

EDENSWORD: I think that someone like myself who isn't an Arabist - for the first time, I was shown the Arabic view of the Israeli-Arab War and problem. I think probably your sympathies change a little over there. Before I went I was very pro-Israel without really understanding the Arab position. After I had been there for awhile, I had a more balanced view, if that is possible. Once a month, we had a vehicle that went over to Jerusalem and sometimes on into Tel Aviv that picked up pouches and swapped films and you could sign up for that. I was on that run many times. There were usually two and we had two sets of plates. We would drive down to the bridge which was a military bailey bridge which was put up when the Allenby was blown up in 1967. You could see the Allenby downstream from the bailey bridge is sitting in the water. At the bridge we changed and put on the Israeli diplomatic tags and that would get us through the other side without too much problem. Coming back, we would reverse the process.

Q: Did you usually stay overnight?

EDENSWORD: Yes. We would usually spend one or two nights in Jerusalem. Sometimes I would drive down and see one of my colleagues in Tel Aviv. At the time, we had in Jerusalem (I guess we still have...there used to be two consulates there - since 1967 it was all part of the same consulate.

Q: Was it actually two consulates or one consulate in two buildings?

EDENSWORD: Well, before 1967, you had the Arab side of Jerusalem, so there was a consulate there and I think there was a separate one. I'm not sure of this, but when I was there (it was after 1967) they were part of the same consulate. The Consular Section was in the Arab side.

Q: Near the Damascus gate?

EDENSWORD: Yes. Jerusalem itself was certainly a lot of fun. I mean, seeing that old city: in fact, one Christmas we went over and stayed in the Episcopal hospice.

Q: St. Georges, I think?

EDENSWORD: The St. George Hotel is that beautiful one in Beirut. It may be. There wasn't any heat in there I remember, but you were right in the old walled city. It was really kind of nice.

Q: You were able to take your family though?

EDENSWORD: Yes.

Q: When you did that, you went the same way? Changing your license plates when you crossed the Jordan?

EDENSWORD: How did we go? I can't remember how in the heck we got over there. I don't think we drove our own car. I'm not sure...I can't remember how we got there.

Q: You probably wouldn't have flown?

EDENSWORD: No, you can't fly. You'd have to fly to Cyprus or something. One of my jobs there was actually arranging bridge crossings and that took a lot of finagling. If you started in Israel, you could not go back to Israel. If you started in Jordan you could make it a round trip. Both sides were very careful about what stamps they put in the passports.

Q: Did you have to have other documents before you started the trip?

EDENSWORD: Americans...embassy people did it through my office and I dealt with the military commander, who controlled the bridge. Emergencies, I could call him up and get permission (it usually took something like three to five working days to get the permission.) For regular Americans, they had a way of doing it, but it often ended up in my office because it was very complicated. They often had delays. I remember once, a guy from Iceland - he was just delayed and he had money in Jerusalem waiting for him. He had been to the (do the Swedes have any Embassy there - I think they do) Swedish Embassy and they had thrown him out. I think I leant him fifty dollars to get him through after he told me his story and he mailed it back to me. I always wanted to go to Iceland: he owned a music store in Reykjavik. I never got to Iceland to see him. Anyway, so I used to deal with that problem and it was always a problem. The Jordanians were very sensitive. If you had an Israeli stamp in your passport, you couldn't get in. We were issued two passports: one for use in Israel and one for use everywhere else.

Q: So, you were in Amman about three years?

EDENSWORD: Three Years.

Q: It was the longest assignment you had had up until then?

EDENSWORD: I was on home leave when President Nixon came through in 1974 when after the signing of the...but the people told me it was quite a show and he was attempting to use this success to help his cause back home. He came in June and two months later he was out. He left, resigned in August.

Q: Of 1974? So you were on...Okay?

EDENSWORD: I was on home leave when he was there in June for the signing of the Peace Agreement between Israel and Egypt. One of the interesting that I was told by...

Q: This was not the Camp David, but the earlier one?

EDENSWORD: Yes. As a result of the Kissinger shuttle. Apparently, when he got off the plane in Amman, he was interested in one thing only: that was press coverage back home. The best color for the face is orange and they said that when he got off the plane (I always wished I had

seen this) that his face was so orange when he got off the plane that Hussein actually staggered back a step or two when he saw him - he saw this orange face get off the plane.

Q: Who is this person? Did you get to travel around Jordan quite bit? Did you get to Petra?

EDENSWORD: I went to Petra. I used to go to Aqaba quite a lot. I had a very good friend down there: an Irish friend who worked for the king as a diver and he is still a very close friend. We used to go diving down there a lot. Petra is interesting. This friend of mine had a jeep and so we would go out into Wadi Rum a fair amount, which was just beautiful. Got to Syria - in those days when I first got there you couldn't go to Syria, you'd go to Beirut. When I left, you couldn't go to Beirut, but you could go the Syria. We started going to Syria - it took about three..three and a half hours...

Q: Damascus?

EDENSWORD: Aleppo - you could really spend a nice day up there just in rug shops, not even buying a rug, just looking at them. We all brought rugs of various kinds.

Q: So when you finished in Jordan, in Amman, where did you go next?

EDENSWORD: I went to Harvard for a year. They called me up and asked me if I would like university training. So I thought that was a terrific idea. Most consular officers had been going to Syracuse.

PERRY W. LINDER
Administrator Officer
Amman (1973-1976)

Perry W. Linder was born and raised in California. He attended San Jose State College and the University of California at Berkeley. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957 and held several positions in Germany, Jamaica, Honduras, France, Benin, Belgium, Jordan, Greece and Spain. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1996.

LINDER: Brussels was a fascinating assignment. Again I learned a lot, and a lot of things happened there. I left there in 1973 and went to Jordan.

Q: And Jordan had lots of visitors; this was right after the war, I think.

LINDER: I got there before the war, so I was there during the '73 war.

Q: Which was September...

LINDER: It was called a War of Atonement by the Israelis, and I don't know, we just call it the...

Q: Yom Kippur?

LINDER: Yes, that's right, Yom Kippur War.

Q: But it just lasted a short time, I believe.

LINDER: Yes, it only lasted about seven or eight days. But we went through the full drill.

Q: Now, what was your position in Amman, you were Administrative Officer?

LINDER: I was Administrative Officer there.

Q: Senior Administrative Officer for the entire post.

LINDER: Yes, I was Administrative Officer, and there was a GSO who happened to be an AID employee, and we had a security officer, and communications section.

Q: You'd just arrived earlier in '73, then, when that war took place.

LINDER: I arrived just shortly before it broke out. Dean Brown was the ambassador. The embassy was at the point where it was beginning to build up again after the civil war, black September for the PLO.

Q: That was 1970.

LINDER: Yes. We moved our embassy after all of that happened, but it was still pretty minimal. It was just beginning to build up, and Dean Brown was resisting the buildup. He didn't think we needed to put in a lot of AID people and bring over a big military establishment, and so forth, so he was dragging his feet.

Q: And when you got there, there was probably a lot of pressure on the administrative section, because in fact, there probably had been people arriving.

LINDER: That's right, and they continued to arrive while I was there. USAID did establish a mission there.

Q: With its own administrative...

LINDER: No, it was a joint operation, and it worked quite well. The GSO was an AID guy, and they didn't have an Executive Officer, so we dealt directly with them; it was a good arrangement. USIS was there as well.

Q: No Peace Corps, I suppose.

LINDER: There was no Peace Corps, no.

Q: Was there an evacuation at the time of the war?

LINDER: No, we were all set to evacuate. We had it all worked out and coordinated, and we were going through the exercise of the countdown, and we were working with the other embassies. We had it all planned.

Q: It did not take place because the war ended?

LINDER: Yes, and Jordan managed to stay out of the war.

Q: Even though it was very close.

LINDER: Even though it was very close. The planes would fly over, Amman was blacked out, and you could hear the guns. But only in the last and final day did the Jordanians send their tank brigade into the Golan, but they never engaged with the Israelis. Cleverly, they were able to make the right sounds and say the right things, but not get themselves involved militarily. And as a consequence, we didn't have to evacuate. But we understood at the time that Jordan had been warned by the Israelis, that if you make any belligerent move toward Israel, we're not going to think twice about it, we're going to flatten you.

Q: "We" the Israelis.

LINDER: The Israelis. We had that to worry about. It was, as you can imagine, a very tense time. I don't know how long it lasted in days, but I mean, it was twenty-four hours a day for ten days.

Q: If you had evacuated the embassy, your families, it would have been done by air, or over land?

LINDER: Well, it would have been dependent on the conditions; we had both worked out; we could have gone by air, convoys to the airport and out by air. I know a couple of other strips that we could have as alternatives to the main airport. And then also, we could have gotten out by Saudi Arabia.

Q: But if you had undertaken an air evacuation, there probably would have had to have been a cease fire arrangement, an understanding that there wasn't going to be an attack on the airport at the time.

LINDER: Yes. It was interesting to me, the different reactions. We had quite a military operation there, too. Well, we provided military equipment and assistance to the Jordanians, so we had a taut operation; it wasn't huge, but we had military people there. But it was interesting the different reactions of people to the threat, and I learned a lot about human nature, and you know, just by labels you couldn't tell how people were going to react in a situation like that. A lot of different ways.

Q: After the war ended, what was the situation in the embassy? Did our buildup AID increase or was that kind of suspended for awhile?

LINDER: No, I don't think there was any change. I mean, the war ended, and things went on, and I don't recall that it made any change in our policy toward Jordan.

I should mention that when the thing broke out, Dean Brown was out of the country. Pierre Graham was DCM.

Q: And chargé.

LINDER: And chargé. Anyway...

Q: Perry, we're talking about your assignment in Amman, Jordan as Administrative Officer; I think we were talking when we finished the other tape about Ambassador Dean Brown and how he reacted particularly to the war, when he wasn't in country at the time it started. Why don't you finish what you were saying about that if you can remember.

LINDER: Yes, he was someplace in Europe, I don't remember where, but we were in touch with him, and he was frantic about getting back, and of course, it wasn't easy to get in; the airport had been closed, and commercially it just couldn't be done. He finally worked something out where he came into Saudi Arabia and got a light plane and flew to a desert strip in Saudi Arabia that was up near the border with Jordan. We sent a couple of cars to pick him up and brought him back. I guess he got back about two or three days before the whole thing ended, but it was exciting. He's a great Ambassador, a very dynamic, charismatic person who's a lot of fun to be around and to work with.

Q: He let you do the administrative work?

LINDER: Very much so, very much so. I'd go by his office and he'd be playing Solitaire. He let things run themselves; he knew what was happening, he didn't feel compelled to mix into everything. When there was something important happening, he was right there, he knew all about it, and he took an active part in it. But otherwise, he had the ability, which I think is very good, to let things go, let competent people handle things, and not mess with them.

Q: And not feel he had to do it all himself, second-guess.

LINDER: To be able to sit up there and play Solitaire at his desk; I've never seen any other ambassador doing that. Anyway, it was a very tense time; very interesting.

Q: What was the main thing that happened after the war; I know that there were visits by the Secretary of State and others.

LINDER: Yes, that's the other thing that stands out from the time I was there, during the Kissinger visits, the shuttle diplomacy. He came in there every month, I would say; there must have been 12 visits while I was there. In the first visit, Tom Pickering was with him, because I

think he was the head of the Secretariat at that time, and we had some rumors that Pickering might be the next ambassador, and sure enough, he replaced Dean Brown.

Q: While you were there.

LINDER: While I was there. And for most of the Kissinger visits, he was there as ambassador.

Q: Was he able to play Solitaire?

LINDER: That was not his style, although he, too, was a wonderful person to work for, and I worked for him another time after that, and we've remained friends. But he had tremendously broad interests in terms of traveling, in terms of machinery, everything that came within his purview he was interested in, and seemed to acquire all the knowledge that one could have about any subject very, very quickly.

Q: To come back to the Kissinger shuttle, as Administrative Officer you obviously had to provide cars and support and everything for that. Did you usually have a fair amount of warning to make those preparations, and did it become kind of a routine, or was it each one a bit frantic?

LINDER: No, it became somewhat routine, because there were so many of them. As I say, I think there were 12 visits while I was there, and I was there at the first visit. When we first got the news he was coming, of course we were a small embassy, and I think with just a charge, Pierre Graham, I don't think that we had an ambassador. So, that was a first for me, a first for probably all of us. Shuttle diplomacy was a new phenomenon. It had been a long time, if ever, since a Secretary of State had visited Jordan.

But we geared up, worked closely with the Palace. At that time, when Kissinger first came to work in the State Department, he was supported by the Secret Service, not by the State Department's security.

Q: Because he had come from the White House.

LINDER: He'd come from the White House, and he knew the people, and for whatever reason, he kept them. So they would send the Secret Service person as advance. Once we'd gotten a telegram and made our initial response in preparation for the visit, we went up to the Palace, and we dealt with their Chief of Protocol, a Circassian who worked at the Palace. I say Circassian just because a lot of people up at the Palace were Circassian. Anyway, he was a very knowledgeable guy, I think he had gone to UCLA, and had managed many visits the King and his family had made to the United States, and he knew the Secret Service people by first name, and he knew how they operated.

So anyway, we would go up to the palace, we'd sit in his office, and I guess like most Arab functionaries, it'd be an office with a lot of big easy chairs along the wall, and telephones, and he had people serving coffee, people all dressed in uniforms, and the coffee was just wonderful. People would come in and out while we were there talking to him, and would ask questions and he'd have to break off and deal with their subject matter, telephone calls would come in, so it was

a long, long process when you'd go up there. But he was a charming man, and very astute, and very, very, capable, and you know, we would work things out with him about the security, the motorcade, and how we were going to get into the airport, what the ceremony would be there, where Kissinger and his entourage would stay, and they always stayed at the guest house on the palace...I forget the name of the palace, but it was the palace right there in Amman, and it was the Prince's guest house. And the King would be out at the airport to meet Kissinger, and we had the usual, you know, give and take, push and pull, with Security, and what we would do and what they would do, but it was eased because of the experience that the Jordanians had working with the US security and protocol.

Q: As I recall, this period of, as you say, shuttle diplomacy, there were times where nobody seemed to know what was going to happen the next day, it would depend on the discussion with the Israeli's or the Egyptians...

LINDER: That's true.

Q: ...and all of a sudden he'd go the next day to Damascus or to Amman. That happened sometimes?

LINDER: Right, that happened sometimes, but we knew he was in the region, so we were prepared. After the first two visits, we had the drill down pretty well, so we could do it, and set up things, and take care of it. At least once, and maybe twice, we went to Aqaba. The King had a compound at Aqaba, and we would set up there. Of course, that was a different matter, because that was a long way from the embassy, and we had to transport everything over there. We'd do that by car, but one visit was during the winter, it snowed, and you had to go over some high pass to get over to Aqaba.

Q: Because Aqaba's on the coast.

LINDER: We were afraid we couldn't get there, so it was decided that we would transport the stuff by aircraft, and it would go by Alia, which was the national airlines.

Q: For Jordan.

LINDER: Yes. Anyway, we loaded up the aircraft, it was a regular commercial airliner, and we were all on the plane, and we take off and we're in the air, and then the pilot comes on, "This is your pilot, Jose, speaking. We're now..." It was the King, he was flying the plane! And you know, we got over there in Aqaba, and we set up on the compound, a very small compound, so you could see everybody, and the King was very visible and friendly. He was a ham radio operator, he used to get together with the Marine security guards, he'd come to the Marine house. He was a person that liked people, and had many manly interests. He liked to hunt, and go-carting. It was a small community there in Amman. I did know Princess Muna quite well, she was the King's second wife.

Q: He was not yet married to his American wife.

LINDER: No. His third wife was a Palestinian, and she died in a helicopter crash.

Q: Was that Alia, or something?

LINDER: Yes. She died in a helicopter crash, and then he married Halaby, his present wife.

Q: Besides the war situation, the Kissinger shuttle diplomacy, the King, or the Palace, what are some of the other things that you particularly remember of your....

LINDER: Well, one other big event you can't ignore is that Nixon came to Jordan after or during Watergate, on his last international tour.

Q: That was just before he resigned.

LINDER: Yes, that one was big, that was my first Presidential. I mean, I had been involved to a degree in Kingston, Jamaica, with a Vice Presidential visit...

Q: For the inauguration, for the independence ceremony.

LINDER: Yes, for the independence. But this was a Presidential visit. A month before the event, this White House team came out, it was headed by the fellow who was noted for managing the balloon drop at the Republican convention in Miami.

Q: Was that Ron Walker?

LINDER: I can't remember his name. But anyway, it was a team of Republican supporters. None of them were professional at this. None of them had ever been overseas before, and had no idea about a place such as Jordan, Moslem culture and all of that. They pretty much let us handle it.

Q: How long was President Nixon in Jordan?

LINDER: I think Nixon was there two days.

Q: Did he go outside of Amman, to Petra, or...

LINDER: No, no, he was just there a couple days. I think just overnight. He stayed in a private house, Ben Shacker, who was head of the Army, or of national defense. He let them use his house, right on the edge of town. And I don't remember where the conference itself was held. We took over all of the hotels. The press was there in great numbers. There was only limited hotel space in Amman. There were a thousand people. It was really something. Nixon looked awful. He was in bad health, and they painted him orange for the television cameras. He was really kind of a pitiful sight.

Q: Was this toward the end of that trip, or beginning, because he went to several other places, as I recall.

LINDER: I think it was the beginning, but I can't say for sure. I don't think it was the first stop.

Q: Was Kissinger with him, do you remember?

LINDER: I don't remember, though he must have been with the President. Of course, there was a big State Department contingency there as well.

Q: Tom Pickering was ambassador?

LINDER: Tom was our ambassador, and of course, he did everything in his own fine way; I'm sure he had all the substantive part well covered. But I really managed that whole thing, and for me, it was a very gratifying experience.

Q: It went smoothly, no major hangups.

LINDER: It went smoothly, I met a lot of people. Counterparts on the administrative side. John Thomas was out there, Harvey Buffalo was his assistant at that time, there were all kinds of people. And of course, the ridiculous things that all of these strap-hangers want, and I mean I'm not talking about John Thomas now, but you know, I mean, other people that come along, doctors and all of these people who don't have much to do. Anyway, it was quite an experience, as were all of those visits. I mean, the visits were, again, Larry Eagleburger used to come out, and...

Q: What was his, what was he doing at the time, was he with Kissinger, or...

LINDER: Yes, in the beginning, he was with Kissinger, then Ray Seitz was a junior officer at that time, he used to come out. Jerry Bremen frequently accompanied Kissinger.

Q: Oh, Jerry Bremer.

LINDER: All of the other people that dealt with the Middle East, they were all there, McCloskey, used to come out. I remember George Vest, briefly, he was not happy working with Kissinger.

Q: What, besides, well, with the visits you had to communicate coordinate with other posts, so I'm sure we're dealing with the same visit on the circuit or shuttle or whatever. Other than that, how about on sort of a routine basis, did you have much to do, for example, the consulate with Jerusalem, or the embassy in Tel Aviv, or the embassy in Damascus?

LINDER: We used to run a regular courier service across the Jordan River, the Allenby Bridge over to Jerusalem, and so we maintained regular contact with the consulate there. We didn't go into Tel Aviv.

Q: And you could do that even after the war had changed things?

LINDER: Yes. It was an interesting arrangement: we would drive our car down to the bridge, and we'd do that ourselves, because we didn't use a Jordanian driver. You'd use an embassy car, and there would usually be two of us. We'd have the pouch, we'd drive down to the bridge, we'd get out and change license plates; put on Israeli plates, and go across the bridge. Of course, we had to go through controls on both sides. The controls on the Israeli side were much more onerous than on the Jordanian side. The Jordanians were very easy going, friendly about it. It was routine, but it never seemed to be quite routine over on the Israeli side.

Q: And then when you'd go back, you'd reverse the procedure.

LINDER: We'd reverse the procedure; we'd stop and change the plates on the Israeli side, just at the bridge, and then cross back over.

Q: Did you get supplies, do procurement, shop in Jerusalem, or didn't really need to do that.

LINDER: No, we didn't need to do that, but we always enjoyed going over to Jerusalem, typically we'd stay at the American Colony Hotel, which was in the old, what you'd call the Arab side...

Q: East Jerusalem.

LINDER: Yes, East Jerusalem. The old city, was just fascinating, one of those places that just gives you a thrill when you see it, kind of grabs you. So that was interesting. We knew the people in the consulate in Jerusalem, and we'd see them.

Q: The FSN's that you had in Amman, the Foreign Service Nationals, were mostly Jordanian, or were some Palestinian, or...?

LINDER: Jordanian and Palestinian. I guess maybe 50% of Jordan's population was Palestinian at that time. We had Armenians working in the Embassy. At that time, up until '75 we still used Beirut. Our regional security officer was in Beirut. Later the Embassy got its own security officer. I handled security in the beginning, and then introduced and settled the new security officer into Amman. We used the American University hospital in Beirut.

Q: Was security a major issue of concern in, because terrorism and all these things came with it later, so was it a major consideration for you?

LINDER: Yes, it was always a major consideration. Before I got there, a military officer was shot; somebody rang his doorbell and when he answered the doorbell, they shot him. And that happened just before I got there. And there were always things to be concerned about on security. The embassy itself was a real fortress; it was a small apartment building that had been converted into an embassy. They had put a fence all around it, a high fence, with various devices; the front door was not a welcoming door, it was a locked, secure door. A Jordanian armored vehicle was frequently parked on the street before the entrance. We were right across from the Intercontinental Hotel, which was the main hotel in town.

Q: And all this was before the civil war kind of got going in Lebanon, or before the takeover of the embassy in Tehran.

LINDER: Yes. Our concern wasn't from the Jordanian government, obviously, but the Jordanian government was not popular with the PLO and other groups.

Q: Particularly after they had...

LINDER: Kicked them out.

Q: Kicked them out in 1970, by September. And of course, there had been terrorist hijackings and other incidents in the Middle East already.

LINDER: My office was on the ground floor in the back of the embassy, and there was an old derelict house behind us. A rocket had been set up back there to go off, to fire against the embassy, but it had been picked up and had been monitored by the Jordanians, and I suppose by our own people, and so, before it was set to go off, they removed it. But that's pretty close! There were people in the embassy that found it very hard to work in that environment. Security was a major concern all the time.

Q: You didn't speak Arabic; was that a problem for you, or was English pretty widely used?

LINDER: Not really, English was widely used. For me it wasn't a handicap not to speak Arabic. We had the usual language classes at the embassy that you could take, you could learn a little to get by in restaurants and in the streets, and so forth.

We could also go to Damascus, and until 1975 to Beirut. In '75, Beirut went to pieces, and a lot of changes occurred at that time.

But first, let me talk a little bit about Syria. Again, shortly before I got there, a military attaché and his wife, and they had a child with them, had been traveling from Jordan to Beirut or vice versa from Beirut back to Jordan. They had to go through Syria and were picked up and held, and mistreated. I don't really know the whole story, but it was a very traumatic event, not only for him and his family, but for people in the embassy. So there was a lot of concern about Syria. When I first got there, we didn't go to Syria. But I guess after the shuttle diplomacy got underway relations eased. I made several trips, and it was an interesting place to go, a great place to shop, and Damascus is one of the great cities of the world.

Q: And you could go up there essentially for a private trip, as opposed to taking the pouch or anything...

LINDER: That's right, we'd go on a private trip. And we would drive across the Golan Heights. You'd see all the tank revetments in place there; you didn't often see tanks, but you'd see a lot of military, and on one side of the road, you'd pass the SAM missile sites...

Q: Which were Syrian, or

LINDER: No, Syrian. It was all through Syria.

Q: Because it was in the '73 war that Israel took control of the Heights.

LINDER: Yes. Well, a part of it. The highway between Amman and Damascus went across the Golan Heights on the Syrian side.

Q: Not in the Israeli-occupied site.

LINDER: Right, but the military establishment was very visible. I remember once coming back, my car broke down, an old Volvo, broke down right in front of one of those SAM missile sites. And immediately I had all kinds of people around the car, and...

Q: "Why did you stop?"

LINDER: Exactly. Anyway, I finally got the thing going, and we went on our way. But it was always a little bit tense in Syria.

Q: Could you make private trips with your family to Jerusalem, or only when you took the pouch and were a courier?

LINDER: A family member could go with you when you took the pouch, but...

Q: But you really had to be an official.

LINDER: That's the only way when I was there. By the time I left in '76, they'd begun to have some tourism by a mutual agreement between Israel and Jordan. They were bringing people in by air on a package deal, those included Jordan.

Q: And then cross into Israel, or vice versa.

LINDER: Right, it was arranged like that.

Q: In Jordan itself, you got to Petra, and did a lot of people, visitors, want to go there, was that sort of a place you went to frequently, or not?

LINDER: I went to Petra several times with my family; we used to go down to Aqaba, it was a lot of fun. Again, it was very primitive while I was there. In Aqaba, there was just a couple of marginal hotels. When I went to Petra, there wasn't any hotel; we stayed in a cave. I remember I got up early one morning and went into the kitchen; I was there with two of my kids at the time, the place was abandoned; I didn't see anyone in the structure, which was the hotel, we stayed in a room in a cave. The kitchen was just crawling with bugs and cockroaches. it was a very primitive. But a fascinating place. When I was there I rented a couple mules and a guide, and we went way up in the hills. There were ancient sites to visit, and it was a fascinating place; nobody

around, you might run across a Bedouin here and there. But that was something you could do. There were a lot of things to do in Jordan, really. I was fascinated by the valley, and...

Q: The Jordan Valley.

LINDER: The Jordan Valley, and all the old sights there. We used to go down there, my wife took an archeological course and we had good friends who were involved in archeology. Pickering became very interested in archeology in Jordan and did a lot to encourage participation by people. But we used to go down into the Jordan Valley on a Thursdays, our weekend, we worked Saturdays and Sundays, and...

Q: You'd have off Thursday and Saturday?

LINDER: Yes, Thursday and Friday. But you could poke around in the valley at some of the sites. There was so many shards, a lot of it on the surface; you could pull out pots and things like that; it was a lot of fun.

Q: Did you actually go down to the Dead Sea, then, too? On the Jordanian side?

LINDER: Yes, we got to the Dead Sea. We had a Scout group at the American school, and once I went down with the Scouts and camped beside the Dead Sea.

Q: You talked about some of the region, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem. I have to ask you one other question in terms of the period that you were there: Cyprus blew up in 1974, a coup against Makarios, the Turks came in, the embassy was evacuated to Beirut from Nicosia. Did you get involved at all in any of that, there was no impact on Jordan or the embassy in Amman.

LINDER: No, no.

Q: Anything else that you'd want to say about your time in Amman?

LINDER: In the beginning, we went over to Beirut, and we used to do a lot of procurement over there; we bought household furniture over there, and carpeting, and so forth and so on.

Q: The State Department FSI Arabic Language School was there.

LINDER: That's right. We used to get students after a year at the Arabic Language School, they would sometimes put some students in the University in Amman. They'd send them to Jordan, so they would be associated with the embassy, but basically, as a follow-on to their language training. I used to go over to Beirut, and I remember the last time I went over there, there was a lot of turmoil, this must have been in '75. We had some problems with some vehicles that we couldn't get out of customs, and I went into what was then a PLO controlled area to recover the car. In retrospect it was lucky I didn't get kidnapped, because that sort of thing was just beginning to happen.

Q: Well, the PLO was...

LINDER: They were there, their camps were there, but I didn't appreciate the risk at the time, in some of the things we were doing, and places I was going.

Q: But you didn't have any direct problem, in retrospect?

LINDER: No, I didn't, but my wife was up there, Judy was up there at a hospital, and she was there when the fighting really started, and there was a huge explosion and it broke windows in the hospital, and the nurses, Judy told me, would come in, and cry and crawl under the bed. Things were really in disarray. I was very concerned about how was I going to get her back. The major who was head of the Marine detachment in Beirut, put her in a car, she had to lay down on the floor of the car, and they raced to the airport. The road to the airport was controlled by the PLO because there were several camps along the way. There was shooting and firing, but she got out okay.

Q: And flew from there to Amman?

LINDER: Yes, flew from there to Amman. But once Beirut blew up, it was no longer a safe place, a lot of money and companies and interests started moving to Amman. And Amman really began to take off in '76. New hotels started going up, they started developing Aqaba as a resort, new businesses opened; there was a lot of inflow as a result of the destruction of Beirut.

ROSCOE S. SUDDARTH
Political Counselor
Amman (1973-1979)

Ambassador Suddarth was born in Kentucky and raised primarily in Tennessee. He was educated at Yale and Oxford Universities and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and served in the US Air Force before joining the Foreign Service in 1961. Primarily a Middle East specialist the Ambassador served as Political Officer and Counselor in Yemen, Libya, Jordan and in Saudi Arabia, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served with the Department of State in Washington in senior level positions concerning primarily Middle East and Political Military matters. In 1987 he was appointed Ambassador to Jordan, where he served until 1990. Ambassador Suddarth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: That aside, there is the politics. To sell F-4s, which at that time were relatively advanced aircraft, to Turkey, you had to be doing something to Greece, didn't you?

SUDDARTH: The final thing, which was more significant, which got me started in Jordan, was after the 1970 Black September civil war in Jordan, there was an emergency package of military assistance sent to Jordan in 1971, the Mellon Report, I think. It got start, according to the myth, and I think it's true... I think I asked the Jordanian prime minister at the time... He wrote it out on

a cocktail napkin while having drinks with Henry Kissinger, who was the national security advisor, how many tanks, how many APCs, how many artillery pieces. He had been a student of Kissinger at Harvard and so forth. But we did a follow-on report, the Granger Report, in 1973, and went out on a two-week survey mission, quite interesting. We went all over the Jordan military forces. We were trying very hard to strengthen the regime by strengthening its military arm, which is the primary prop of the regime, a very good army which had, in effect, danced circles around the Syrians in 1970 when they tried to intervene. But that was a pretty cut and dry thing. We assessed their military situation and it turned out to be fortuitous because right after our report, the 1973 War started. I was on the task force during that time. Then the Jordanians needed an even greater package of assistance. Our package includes various segments and it turned out that our assistance to Jordan after the 1973 War greatly increased. It was partly a reward for their staying out of the war. All they did was send a minimal task force up to the Golan Heights, where they had a couple of encounters and spilled a little Jordanian blood, which was necessary to appease their public opinion. But also the war demonstrated that Jordan had no air cover. They had no air defense, which is a whole other interesting chapter that we'll get into later. So, I think that's about the totality of what I did in my year and a half in Political-Military Affairs.

Q: What was your estimate of the Jordanian military at that time?

SUDDARTH: The Jordanian military were, I think, the best Arab army man per man. But they were a small army. Jordan was a small country. I think they have around 70,000 troops. They had a recurrent budget problem. I should mention that when I was in Political-Military Affairs. After the 1970 shootout with the PLO, we instituted a joint security assistance meeting every year. The Jordanians would come and we would look at their needs. As I recall, in 1972, King Hussein met with Nixon. At that point, Jordan's economy was on its knees because of the disruption during the 1970 War. They weren't generating very much revenue and he desperately needed security assistance, not only security assistance, but direct budgetary aid. We were having terrible problems getting enough security assistance out of the Congress. They were switching us to credit rather than grant A. So, King Hussein hung around the United States for about two weeks, went down to Florida and was calling back virtually every day to see how we were doing on getting the package. We finally scraped together \$40 million, which was enough to meet the military payroll for the next quarter or something like that, maybe for the rest of the year. But that's illustrative of the kind of straightened circumstances the King was in. We had a running dispute with them. It's so obscure now I can hardly remember it, but it raised a lot of hackles. It was O and M (Operations and Maintenance). For all of the hours I've put on that problem, I can hardly remember what it was about. It had something to do with the fact that they should be performing their own operations and maintenance and not factoring it into their security assistance. To King Hussein, who had been fighting for his life, who saw the United States as his important anchor windward, this was such a nitpicking thing that it tended to exacerbate relations rather than to help them. I think we quietly dropped it after a while, but there was a point where we were looking very carefully into the military budget of Jordan, which they didn't like at all, partly because the military budget, as I later learned, actually funds the expenses of the palace and of the General Intelligence Directory. So, we were analytically correct, but there was a lot more being spent in that budget than we could find being applied to

the military. It turned out, yes, indeed, we were funding a major operation in intelligence and the upkeep of a rather austere but still expensive palace operation.

Q: My understanding is that we give a certain subsidy to airplane companies and manufacturers and all in order to have them capable of giving just a sort of airlift and then they won't do it when the chips are down. Do we ask for our money back?

SUDDARTH: It's the craft program. I wasn't directly involved in the details of that. That was all done by the Pentagon. So, you may be right. There may have been other factors involved. Schlesinger tried desperately to put this thing together and he wasn't able to do so. So, that accounted for several of the days of the delay. It was about five or six days' delay. But the Israelis urgently needed TOW missiles to knock out the tanks on the Golan Heights and then the Sinai. They had depleted their stocks. In effect, we depleted almost the stocks of our NATO forces in order to resupply them. There are comical aspects to all of this. We were supposed to send in these unmarked planes. We had painted over the U.S. Air Force insignia and they were supposed to go in under cover of night. They got delayed in the Azores. Schlesinger talks all about this. So, instead of getting there in the dead of night, they were there right in the early morning hours and there were thousands of Israelis out cheering it on. So much for our clandestine airlift.

Of course, the question of whether we were cobelligerent came up and so forth. But another thing that I vividly recall from being on the task force... You worked on the task force at night and did your regular job during the day. In came a NODIS from our embassy in Tel Aviv with a complete, exhaustive list of what the Israelis needed in terms of resupply, Tel missiles, tanks, all kinds of exotic things, spare parts and so forth, ammunition (lot of ammunition)... After I read this and was getting ready to initiate some action on it, it was pulled back to Kissinger's office. It wasn't supposed to have been sent out to our bureau, so that's the last we ever saw of the list. That preceded, of course, the delays on the airlift. So, I personally think Kissinger was really quite wisely and cunningly using this as a way of exerting some pressure on the Israelis to get the negotiations started. Then they did get started on Kilometer 101. I think that was the major thing I remember during the war.

We were all trying to find ways of getting the resupply in place and so forth. I also remember sending cables very tough talk, to Genscher, the German foreign minister, in Germany getting them to allow us total use of our facilities in Germany for resupply, which we were able to do, and also clearances in the Azores. We had a lot of aircraft clearances that required political clearances to get that thing going. Then, of course, there was the red alert, the Defcon Two or whatever it was, that seemed to be unnecessary. Again, this was all taking place in the background of the Watergate White House where Nixon himself was incommunicado. Even Kissinger was having to work through Alexander Haig to get support and clearance on things from Nixon at that particular time. The Night of the Long Knives occurred. There was a lot of cynicism about Defcon Two that diverted attention from Watergate in order - you know, "You created the foreign policy crisis" and so forth. But that is an interesting theory.

I left the job in December and the Jordanians came to town while Kissinger was out on his mission to Moscow trying to get the Soviets to agree to convene the Geneva Conference, which

we were successful in doing and which produced Resolution 338, which was very important. They extended 242 to the territory that was involved in the 1967 and 1973 War. The Jordanians came to Washington. We were given instructions. Once again, not having any security assistance to speak of, we were given instructions that we were to appear to be as forthcoming as possible. But we had no money. So, try to orchestrate that. I was forced to resort to third order ruses and gimmicks. For instance, the "Washington Post" published a front page picture of Kissinger in Jordan. King Hussein didn't come on this mission. It was Zayd Shader. Hussein was back dealing with Kissinger on a very important early stage of the shuttle diplomacy. There was a picture of Kissinger on the front page of the "Washington Post" reviewing this very impressive Jordanian honor guard. They had Scottish bagpipes and spitpolish type guys on alert. So, Dean Brown was our new under secretary for management. He had just been ambassador to Jordan. I went to Dean and said, "I need your help to get the original photograph from the 'Washington Post,'" which we got and then we mounted it and gave it to the Zayd Shader, who was probably the closest person in Jordan to King Hussein. He was not amused in lieu of the security issues to have a picture of Henry Kissinger reviewing the Jordanian honor guard. In any case, we eventually scraped together \$40-50 million and gave it to the Jordanians.

It was interesting because my assignment in PM dovetailed exactly with my assignment to Jordan. I went to Jordan. The political counselor moved out in December. I took his place right after one shuttle. I did go to Jordan. But during the 1973 War, it became painfully apparent that the Jordanians didn't have an air defense. So, I remember helping write a memo to Kissinger telling him that and telling him that we anticipated there would be pressures from Jordan to get an air defense system. Sure enough, as soon as I got to Jordan, then Tom Pickering was named ambassador. He had been my boss in PM, he and Ron Spiers. I felt very, very fortunate to have Tom coming out. The way that this happened, Tom was executive secretary and he came out on all of the shuttle missions with Kissinger. Kissinger met with King Hussein in early January of 1974 in Aqaba. He turned to the King and said, "We have our new ambassador designate here. We'd like your agreement, your Agrément. It's Tom Pickering, the cream of the crop. He's the cream of the Foreign Service."

So, Dean Brown had left maybe before the October 1973 War. In any case, Tom Pickering finally arrived in March when Pierre Graham was our charge during that interim period. The Jordanians were desperately interested in getting involved in the peace process even though they had not engaged on their front with the Israeli forces. The first couple of missions... Whereas the Syrians and the Egyptians had forces locked into positions that had to be disentangled from Israeli positions and hence the disengagement agreements - first the Syrian one.

There was Third army that was trapped there.

Q: That seemed to have the priority, I would imagine.

SUDDARTH: Right. I don't remember the sequence. I do remember that it was in May of 1974 that they had the disengagement agreement with the Syrians, which was closer and more important to Jordan at that point. But what was interesting... I do remember the visit of Kissinger in March of 1974 when the Jordanians said, "We want a disengagement agreement as well" and Kissinger rather politely (I wasn't present at the meeting.) said, "Well, let me sleep on that." He

could have legitimately said, "Well, since you haven't engaged militarily, how can you expect us to disengage you?" As it turned out, we had also supplied to the Jordanians some of our new M-16 rifles to a platoon whose role was potentially to go down and be the force that would move across the Jordan River as the first disengagement unit. This is still a big dispute. There is a rapid concatenation of events.

Kissinger slept on it and came back the next day and said, "We can't support this." He may have said, "Look, let me try it out on the Israelis," but he was skeptical. A lot of this is now rehashed, so historians will want to check more primary records on this. This is all part of our book as well, and Kissinger's memoirs. I just saw Kissinger a week ago and asked him about this thing. But Kissinger says (I think Roy Atherton told me the same thing at the time.) that Golda Meir had just resigned and Rabin had just taken over. The feeling was that he was not sufficiently powerful yet to do the audacious thing of doing a West Bank and disengagement with the Jordanians to allow any of the West Bank to go back into Jordanian hands.

The result of this was that the PLO filled the vacuum. In the summer of 1974, there was the Rabat Summit and before that an Alexandria and foreign ministers meeting where the Arabs designated the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Before that time, King Hussein had the torch. This was a tremendous blow to Hussein. I'm told that Hussein had reason to believe that the Allon Plan, which was the basic Israeli plan for giving up some territory on the West Bank and it involved what they called "balloons and sausages." In some ways, it's close to what Arafat has now - and the Palestinian Authority. It was a salient that went from Jericho to Ramallah to Nablus. In other words, through the three most important populated areas outside of Jerusalem on the West Bank. And another one that went from Tulkarem to Jenin. In other words, it gave the Arabs the populated areas, left the Jordan Valley to Israel, and all of the area around the Israeli settlements, which in 1974 were quite small. They were just little things right along the Green Line on the Israeli border with the Jordanian West Bank. Since that time, you've got 300,000 Israelis who have settled, so that's no longer the case. The story at the time - and I haven't been able to verify this - was that the Israelis were willing to give up that area (and nothing in Jerusalem) in return for a final peace agreement with King Hussein. Hussein took this offer to the Rabat Summit. In a closed session, he briefed them on it and said, "There's no way that I would accept this." Also, the Saudis and the Egyptians pulled the rug out from under Hussein in favor of the PLO and the rest is history.

The Saudis, who until that time had been supporting the United Arab Kingdom, which had Jordan in control of the West Bank, joined forces with the Egyptians and King Hussein was extremely bitter and came back and dismissed Palestinians from his government, made dramatic gestures in effect of almost retribution against the Palestinians for having in effect dismissed that what he thought was his rightful role. So, that was an extremely important episode. Kissinger says, "A mistake was made." Zaid al-Rifai, the Jordanian prime minister, says, "Kissinger made a great mistake." I think Kissinger in his mellowing current years does dwell on the fact that there was a mistake. I guess it's irrelevant whose mistake it was. I think it was essentially Kissinger's assessment that the Israeli leadership couldn't take on something. The only thing that they could do was to make an offer which even in those days was audacious to have a final peace treaty in which they kept Jerusalem, the refugee question wasn't settled, and all the populated areas of the West Bank went to Jordan, but nothing else. It would have been again a Bantustan

type of arrangement. But a lot of effort was put into that. So, that was the sort of thing that dominated the first year that I was in Jordan.

Q: In the aftermath of the '73 War, in the talk in the corridors of NEA, had the Egyptians and Sadat gained stature at this point, thought they were much more serious players than they had been before?

SUDDARTH: Yes, because we had seriously underestimated Sadat. He was considered to be sort of a clown. He was put in as number two by Nasser just because he wasn't a serious contender. Mike Sterner had taken him on a Leader Grant tour to the United States during that time and got to know him quite well and had a great deal of respect for him. If you haven't talked to Mike, you should.

Q: I have. It was a long time ago.

SUDDARTH: Going back, when I was in Political-Military Affairs, we had these big separate meetings where a lot of the security assistance for the world. Sadat had just kicked the Russian (Soviet) military advisers and their families out of Egypt. This severed the connection in '72. The Pentagon was saying, "Why aren't we making any political reaction to this?" Tom Pickering was quite embarrassed. He had gotten some instruction from on high "We're not going to play that game. That's great, but we're not going to make any gestures because there's no peace process going." We still had a residue of bad blood with the Egyptians. This was right after Sadat took over. He was an unknown quantity. People thought Mukhiadeen and various others were probably going to overthrow him, so he wasn't considered to be much of a guy to be putting your bets on. He was underestimated in '73. He sent his national security advisor to Washington to tell Kissinger and Nixon that they were very serious about getting some progress on the peace thing. The Saudis orchestrated a joint demarche of all the American oil producers in Saudi Arabia. EXXON, Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, you name them, came to the State Department and said in the fall or the summer of '73 and said, "You've got to get something going on the peace process." They were spot on. Lo and behold, Sadat put together a war in the 1973 War after having made repeated entreaties to the United States. It turned out to be a militarily unsuccessful war, but was politically extremely successful. It galvanized the United States. We must remember that the Saudis cut off the oil, embargoed the United States, Holland, and the UK from oil because of our arms supplies. So, one of the things that was pushing this process desperately... If you'll recall, there were lines at the pumps and oil prices had quadrupled because the Shah took advantage of all this and they got together and quadrupled the oil price, which stuck at \$10 a barrel. It had been \$2 before that. So, in effect, what happened was, there was tremendous pressure on Kissinger to get these disengagement agreements because the Saudis weren't going to relax the embargo until we were seriously engaged in the process. So, Sadat's stature went up immeasurably. We finally got a mission. We went Hermann Eilts out with 48 hours notice as the head of an interests section which was then elevated to an embassy. That was the time that Sadat really emerged.

I was just with Kissinger two weeks ago when he gave the Sadat lecture at the University of Maryland and said publicly that "Sadat is the greatest public figure that he had the honor to know" in his entire public life. That is how Sadat's stature came up.

Q: Were you all thinking in these terms?

SUDDARTH: No, we weren't. Kissinger tended to be pretty secretive and he compartmentalized things an awful lot. We all recognized in Jordan that Egypt had the urgency because they had the biggest army and they had the most perilous situation. But King Hussein was very disappointed when they got the second disengagement agreement, where the Israelis disengaged from a good bit of the area around the Suez Canal and we put an AID package together that was billions and billions of dollars, including paying for air bases and some of the oil production in the Sinai. So, the point was that for a substantial disengagement that didn't bring a final peace, this was a hell of a price to pay. So, that is rather controversial everywhere except in the U.S. Congress. But Sadat was already beginning to reap the benefits. The Egyptians got something, too, out of it. But the Israelis in particular.

So, those are the major elements. I do remember, Nixon came in May of 1974. This was what they called the "Watergate visit." This was May. Nixon left office in August. It was pretty obvious from the way this thing was being orchestrated that it was designed to save his presidency. It turned out... I was the control officer and went through some scrapes with his advance team. A number of things happened, but in brief, Nixon was wanting to get maximum publicity. This being the first visit of an American president in the Middle East with an extremely unpopular U.S.-Middle East policy in the Arab world, the Jordanians were afraid he was going to get killed. One of the ways that this came together was in who was going to be in the flatbed truck following the Nixon car and motorcade. The Nixon advance team wanted to put all photographers and the Jordanians wanted to put all soldiers with submachine guns. One of my jobs, which made me unpopular with the White House, was to try to mediate between the two parties in the composition. This sounds trivial, but it is illustrative. Nixon was made up and looked like a waxen Madame Tussaud effigy.

Q: People remark again and again about this.

SUDDARTH: He had a yellow coloring and yellow flecks in his hair which somehow made him more photogenic. He was always made up for television coverage. The visit was kind of amusing, more by insight into what was going on with the White House than anything else. We had a very good administrative officer, Perry Linder, who had been through a lot of the Kissinger shuttles and knew the drill. Nixon's advance team sent out an advance man whose primary role, the reason he got the job was that he had been in charge of the balloon drop at the Miami convention. He was a small businessman from Buffalo who had never been abroad. It was a nightmare dealing with him. I finally found that the best thing to do was, I would take him up to the palace to deal with the very charming Yanal Hikmat, chief of protocol, while our Perry Linder did all the things administratively without this guy knowing about it, had them all in place while we were just wasting time up at the palace. This guy was so nitpicking about details and about the President's schedule that Yanal Hikmat gave him a watch at the end of the visit and he said to him, "You will appreciate this because your watch is demarcated in five minute segments," which meant that he had been arguing over five minutes of the President's time during these periods. There were silly things. Nixon had a rule that he would have lunch alone with Pam. He didn't want to have any events in the middle of the day. The Jordanians were just falling all over

themselves to give him hospitality. They did a virtually unknown thing, which was to open the Queen Mother's palace, which is a modest but elegant palace, for him for lunch. The problem came on how to describe this. Tom Pickering, with his characteristic brilliance, came up with it would be "light refreshments." So, the Jordanians had their lunch and Nixon had his light refreshments and then went off with his wife. He just wanted to be alone and worry about Watergate, I think.

I was struck by the disproportion between the United States and its demands and a small country. For instance, they had two advance visits, each one in a 747. There would be 100 people that would get out. Then they would go to the other... Then they came back a second time. I think there were five 747s that came with Nixon. But Kissinger didn't come. That was a giveaway. He had a NATO meeting, which he could have finessed. He dropped off in Jordan but was at both the Syrian and the Egyptian parts of the trip, which was a way of telling the Jordanians that "We're not playing ball on this. There's nothing we can really do for you."

The one thing that - and I'm not sure whether it was a Nixon visit that started it or not - we made a commitment (I think it was after the Nixon visit.) to provide an air defense system to Jordan. That gets into another whole episode which I want to talk about later. During his visit, the disproportion was that, for instance, they took over Sharif Zayd bin Shaker, the King's cousin's house, a very nice house, but not palatial by any means, for Nixon to stay in. The demands of the electrical devices that were installed in the house were such that it shorted out the house immediately and caused a small fire and they had to bring the army to fix things and whatnot. So, the Nixon visit seemed to be nothing but photo ops from the Nixon point of view. Nixon left and the King was quite disappointed.

Two things came out of that. I think a lot of U.S. foreign policy toward Jordan has been to give King Hussein sufficient consolation prizes that he wouldn't be totally disaffected from the peace process and that we could retain his friendship and cooperation. The two things that we offered during my tour were, number one, an air defense system; and number two, serious movement toward a Maqarin dam, which gets into another interesting aspect of the whole question of Jordan waters and the Israeli-Arab disputes over those.

But on air defense, it turned out that the problem was that the Israelis didn't want Jordan to have an air defense system. They didn't want either Jordanians or others coming and using Jordanian airfields to be able to defend them. So, they mounted a huge campaign in Congress. They got it engineered so that the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave a briefing in which they recommended a far smaller system than Jordan really needed. Then that was taken as the benchmark. Then the unkindest cut of all was the Congress insisted that the Hawk missiles and the others be permanently implanted in non-moveable concrete structures, which made them sitting ducks for any halfway decent air attack. So, in effect, you had semi-functional air defense system. If things got really serious, their Hawks would have been knocked out fairly early. That was a huge dispute that raged for months and months. The Jordanians went to the Soviets and got the Soviets to propose a system of their own. So, we went through many cliff-hanging months. It even got down to the question of statements. The Jordanians finally reluctantly accepted. But then it was a question of having a joint statement. We had separate statements. The Jordanians were saying that these arrangements were an infringement on Jordanian sovereignty and we were saying that

they weren't. If you read the two statements, you wouldn't think we were talking about the same problem. When things get to be so ironic and ridiculous... Art Buchwald wrote a humorous column about our two positions on the Jordanian thing. Tom Pickering will have better detailed knowledge of this. It's a little vague in my mind.

But then the other problem on that was, we needed money. We weren't going to pay anything. We went to the Saudis and got the Saudis with the Soviet threat to finance a \$100-150 million program, which was a lot of money in those days for air defense. They paid for it to the United States. So, we were finally able to get the system in place even though they were in hardened sites.

There were also some financial misunderstandings. The Saudis were supposed to send the checks directly to the United States. They sent one by mistake directly to Jordan which disappeared. The Jordanians never sent it back. The Jordanians had been making so many aid requests that they told the Saudis, "Well, gee, we thought that was for one of our other aid..." So, they had a certain amount of chutzpah to pocket a check. No one pocketed it personally. It was used to build some grain silos so that Jordan would have a secure grain supply. But it does illustrate the kind of difficult things you get into when you try to do foreign policy on the cheap. It was the Saudis who were flush in the middle of all of their post-1974 oil increase that were able to do this. But this is a very brief encounter of a very long and painful episode.

I recall when the Jordanians said they were going to the Soviets, Kissinger instructed us to terminate all of our military visitors to Jordan. The Jordanians tried to lobby the AID administrator, Dan Parker, who came out on a visit to - Jordanian's five-year plan... So, it was about a two-year saga. Eventually, we got them in. I went around to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran to see how those programs were run so we could set our program up in a good way. But it was up and running. I don't recall whether it's ever been unhardened or not.

Q: What was the estimate that you were getting in when you got to Jordan of King Hussein and his stay-ability, his survival?

SUDDARTH: There was no doubt about his survivability. It was only if he got assassinated and he had very good security trained by the United States. His moment of truth was in 1970 when Arafat with Syrian and Iraqi support tried to take over Jordan. When he had a civil war and expelled Arafat and all of the PLO forces from Jordan, that's when he became quite secure. That was the point where the United States rallied with unusual aid to make sure that the army was taken care of and that the economy at least had a minimal amount of support. So, his survivability was never a question during the five and a half years I was in Jordan.

There was a Zarqa mutiny over pay early on in 1974 while King Hussein was on a visit to the United States. King Hussein went out and placated them. It was essentially over bread and butter issues - pay, housing, and that sort of thing. It could have been orchestrated by the Jordanians themselves. I think there was some discontent but there was a basic loyalty to the King in the armed forces. They were very careful to screen out the Palestinians from service, certainly in the officer corps and everything but the technical corps, where Palestinians were needed in the military services.

We did a lot of symbolic things, more than symbolic. For instance, I remember going out as charge d'affaires to meet the first C-5A that came in with 12 F-5 aircraft. We provided the Jordanians with a bunch of F-5 aircraft, a lot of artillery, a lot of armor stuff, after the 1973 War to make the military feel that they were more capable. Plus an air defense system.

Q: You were there 1974-1979.

SUDDARTH: Yes, that's right.

Q: How did we see the threat from Syria and Iraq at that time?

SUDDARTH: Syria was off and on. At one point, and it seems incredible (We didn't believe it at the time.), Tom Pickering would come back from talks with the prime minister and the King in early '75 saying, "The Jordanians are seriously considering a confederation with Syria." This is a Syria they had been at war with only five years earlier. It never went anywhere. King Hussein and Assad never got along and visits were few and far between. The prime minister had much better relations and has always been used with the Syrian connection. At that point also, ironically, the Jordanians were trying to sell us on an up and coming young man in Iraq named Saddam Hussein. We recognized that the Iraqis were trying very hard to get a relationship with the United States... Well, that's putting it a bit too mildly. The Jordanians were trying to promote one. But the Iraqis were trying to mend fences with the Jordanians and we knew that they were serious when they dusted off and spruced up the Hashemite tombs in Baghdad. They had assassinated one in 1958. But one of King Hussein's constant leitmotifs with us during this period was, Saddam Hussein is young, he's influenceable, he is possibly moderateable. They were trying very, very hard to get us to do business with them. We had relations that had been broken back in the '67 War. I don't recall exactly when our first mission came back in, probably in 1974 or something like that. So, we were just reestablishing relations with Sadat and the Jordanians were pushing, pushing, pushing with Iraq for us to get to know Saddam, who at that point was number two. So, Jordanian-Iraqi relations were improving radically and they were becoming a major trading partner.

Q: Did you all consider the opening to the Soviet Union for missiles and air defense a serious one?

SUDDARTH: Yes and no. We thought Hussein was bargaining. We weren't sure that he would actually go for a system like that that would bring people in that were basically inimical to his regime. But I thought he used it pretty cleverly to get the attention of the United States. Whether he would have gone through with it or not I'm not certain.

Q: How about relations, if you can call it that, with the Israeli government? Was there an undercurrent that they were talking to each other and things were happening there or was it pretty much a cold freeze?

SUDDARTH: Yes. Well, we had indirect information that there were some contacts between Jordan and Israel. King Hussein before he died publicly admitting that he had spent many hours

with Rabin and others, the top leadership in Israel, over many, many years. We had very close relations with King Hussein, but he didn't tell us everything by any means. He never lied and I've never known him to tell a falsehood or even to try to mislead. But he didn't tell you a lot of things. I've got to give a lecture (I'm looking forward to it.) at Oxford in the fall about U.S.-Jordanian relations. I'm starting to formulate some things in it. He was extremely guarded in discussions. I certainly never discussed with him his Israeli contacts, but it was known to us at least that they were occurring. It's now come out publicly on the BBC that King Hussein was mislead in the 1973 War by Sadat and by Assad. They didn't tell him that they were going to war until Assad mentioned something to him. King Hussein then admitted that he went over and talked with Golda Meir and told her that there was something brewing. Golda Meir dismissed it. This was one of the great scandals of the '73 War. The Israelis and the United States had sufficient feeling - and this is part of this book that we're putting out - that something might be going on, but they missed the fact that there was going to be a fully coordinated two-front war. King Hussein wasn't brought in until the very end and then he did tell the Israelis. Why they didn't act on it, I don't know.

There are two things we need to talk about on Jordan before we finish, probably some things about the King and Crown Prince. I got to know them both quite well. I admired both of them. But there is the Maqarin Dam episode and then there is the whole Camp David business. Then there are the revelations that he had a relationship with the CIA.

Q: We'll work on that.

Today is August 14, 2000. Jordan, 1974-1979. Could you talk about what you observed and the evaluation of the King and the Crown Prince during that time?

SUDDARTH: The King was central. He was ruling under martial law ever since 1967 without parliament. So, in effect, there was very little political life as one normally knows it outside of the King and his immediate entourage. King Hussein is one of the great personalities I've met in public life. I think his public image is close to what he was like privately. He was a person of immense courtesy. I never knew him to tell a lie. He often didn't tell you the whole truth, but that's part of diplomacy. He was far less as he was characterized by his enemies an American puppet. He wasn't an American puppet. If I were to think about the relationship, I would say that culturally he was very much a man of the West and England, where he was schooled, but increasingly and particularly after his marriage to Queen Noor, but even before that, culturally he was moving toward the United States. He was a great movie watcher. He used to see a lot of American movies. He loved to visit the United States. I always think Britain was Greece to America's Rome. When he was upset with the United States, he would go cry on the shoulder of British prime minister, hoping that they would help. He was usually upset about two things. One was, we weren't doing enough in the peace process. Secondly, we weren't giving him enough aid. But personally, culturally, he was very much a man of the West. I think he spent most of his time speaking English even though his Arabic was superb, both colloquial and classical Arabic. But he was also very Arab. I think he managed to keep the two spheres pretty much apart. I'm giving a lecture on this at Oxford, so I've been thinking about it. I'm writing it now. I don't know of

any instance where the United States ever interfered politically in Jordanian internal affairs. When I say the King managed to keep the two spheres apart, most of his discussions with me and with all of the other ambassadors that I've talked with were on foreign policy or on Jordan's domestic economic problems. But he really didn't share very much about Jordan's political problems, the problems with his parliament later on or how he was dealing. He had the chief of intelligence, who was sort of his chief operator along with the prime minister. But he very rarely talked, if ever, about Jordanian inner politics, how the Muslim Brothers were going to be used against the Baathis or the communists. We just didn't get into that. Nor did we ever get into questions of appointments. I don't know the United States ever suggesting that he should appoint so and so as prime minister or as foreign minister. I think he would have bitterly resented it if that had been the case. I think it's worthwhile clearing the air on that. So many of his detractors, particularly Nasser and the others, accused him of basically marching to the American drum.

Where our interests did coincide, we were both intensely interested in keeping the peace process alive. He was concerned that we weren't doing enough. On the other hand, the only time when he would balk was when there would be U.S. initiatives to get Jordan involved in public direct negotiations with Israel. Even though he knew that we knew that he was having clandestine, non-public, conversations starting back in the early '60s... It's public knowledge. He had a meeting in London with later President Herzog and his brother. After the '67 War, thousands of hours probably with the Israelis. Most of this, or all of it, is public knowledge. He met with Golda Meir and then he met with Rabin and Abba Eban. Those were the main interlocutors. Usually, he would fly in by helicopter somewhere. They were having these conversations. So, we had this curious situation of the King... The King would sometimes talk to us some about it, but often it was the Israelis telling us rather than King Hussein himself. But it was courageous. Had it become public knowledge, the King would have been under a lot of criticism and perhaps assassination attempts and so forth even though it was well-known within political circles from '67 on that he was having these conversations. When you would go up to the palace, I always said, it was like you were visiting a very successful dentist. He had several different dentist chairs that he was running to. You would be in an anteroom and there might be the chief of station of the British embassy in another anteroom and then some hardened Palestinians in another one who hated the U.S. His part of the job as chief of protocol was to keep all these people from seeing one another.

I'm talking about a broad swath of time, maybe even going beyond this '74-'79, which we can get to later. His conversations with other Arab leaders when it was emphasized that it should be confidential, it was confidential. For instance, we didn't know a lot about his relationship with Saddam in this period.

Q: Saddam by that time was in charge, had taken over, in Iraq?

SUDDARTH: Yes. As early as 1976, he was emerging. He was the number two under Aref. But the Jordanians, the King would come to us and say, "Hey, you should pay attention to this fellow, Saddam Hussein. He is on the up and coming. He is capable of moderating his views." That was a Jordanian view. We began to realize there was a rapprochement when this hardened Baathi socialist republican regime began to refurbish the Hashemite tombs in Baghdad, whom they had overthrown at an earlier age. King Hussein was very much trying to promote a relationship with

him. That was a time when they started to buy a lot of American commercial products, a lot of cars, a lot of wheat and things of that sort. So, our commercial relationship started basically in that period. But he tended to be an advocate for Saddam without talking about the darker side of him.

On Syria, he actually went through a brief love affair with Assad in 1975. Ambassador Pickering would come back with these stories from Zaid Rifai, the prime minister, who some said was very pro-Syrian, that they were contemplating a confederation with Syria, which was hard to imagine, a Baathi regime and a monarchy. Nothing ever came of it, but the King under Rifai's influence worked very hard on developing a Syrian relationship. Talking about the man personally, I think we have to talk about his foreign policy. He had a poisonous relationship with Sadat, who used to call him the "dwarf king."

Q: Do you have any idea of the genesis of this?

SUDDARTH: I don't. Nasser didn't think very highly of King Hussein. Hussein was closer to the West. He didn't break off relations with the U.S. after the 1967 War. Sadat seemed to inherit this. But there was, I think, a feeling in Sadat after the '73 war that Egypt should be the primary interlocutor with the United States. I think what colored the whole Hussein relationship with the U.S. during that period was the feeling that Kissinger was trying to hold Hussein at bay while cementing a very strong relationship with Egypt, which eventuated in the Camp David Accord and the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty. The way he did this was, he was very good about keeping King Hussein briefed and so forth. But I think I went over the fact that the refusal to try to get Jordan involved in a disengagement agreement the way we did with Syria, Iraq, and Egypt during the 1974... There were a lot of things that we did in our policy that were surrogates for getting Jordan involved in the peace process. I think I mentioned earlier that the assessment of Kissinger and his staff was that when Rabin took over in 1974, he was too weak domestically, being a new prime minister... After Golda Meir nearly lost the 1973 War, the Israelis were very cautious. Therefore, they saw an opening with Egypt. Holding Jordan at bay, one way of doing that was, we agreed (Tom Pickering actually pushed it.) the idea of getting the Maqarin Dam going. This was a Dam on the Yarmuk River. There is a great flow down from the mountains in the winter which was lost into the Dead Sea. This dam would have allowed Jordan to use that water. The problem was that under international law, it required an agreement with the downstream riparian, mainly Israel. That was a condition. So, we spent a good bit of the time in the period with Cy Taubenblatt of AID actually going back and forth on a technical level between Jordan and Israel to try to work out Israeli agreement. In effect, the Israelis then did a *fait accompli* by building a series of siphons that siphoned off a lot of the water without asking Jordanian permission. Then the Syrians on their part had an agreement that during this honeymoon period of a possible confederation whereby they would allow Jordan to take the off take from some of the Golan Heights for this and then the Syrians began to build a series of little earth dams where at the end there wasn't too much water left for the Maqarin Dam, even though they had gotten a World Bank commitment to do that.

Our assessment, of course, is being proven today and that is that the Maqarin Dam was urgently needed because by the year 2000 Jordan would need virtually all of its water for municipal uses and here was this wonderful Jordan Valley project that we'd put in with orange groves and

bananas and everything that was going to be in rough shape. What has happened is that the orange groves are still growing because they're owned by the power elite of the Kingdom. The Jordanians in the municipal area are having water rationing. It happens in agriculture and dominant areas. It's happening in Israel as well.

The other key relationship was with Saudi Arabia. The King would come to us when he really needed our help. He needed Saudi money. It was right after '74 that money was gushing into the oil rich countries faster than they could spend it. We were effective in getting the Saudis to finance a \$500 million air defense scheme. The Hawk missiles... In effect, it was a humiliating thing. The Israelis objected even though the Jordanians had been completely nude of air cover in the 1973 War and desperately needed this. The Israelis opposed it and they got the U.S. Congress to insist that before they would allow the system to go out, it had to be rooted in concrete. The whole point of an air defense system is for it to be mobile, as Saddam showed in the Gulf War. But here they were sitting ducks to the Syrians or to the Israelis who would have taken them out in the first sign of any confrontation.

Q: These are Hawk anti-aircraft missiles.

SUDDARTH: Yes. But nevertheless, one of the major episodes in that five year period that I was in Jordan was the Hawk missile saga. The Jordanians went to the Soviets, who were ready to supply on very concessional terms a Soviet missile thing. I think that was one of the key things that brought us and the Congress around to providing the Hawk missiles. The Israelis didn't want anything over in Jordan. We went to Saudi Arabia and got the Saudis to finance a trust fund that would come directly to the United States and which would finance this thing. That worked quite well.

There was one amusing kind of footnote that plagued us for years. That is, the Saudis were supposed to send these checks of \$100 million increments to the United States, but they sent one by mistake to Jordan that got gobbled up in the Jordanian treasury. I found out later that it was some lower level functionary in the Saudi government who just sent it there by mistake. The Jordanian prime minister, Badran, told me years later that he had checked and didn't find any discrepancy there. So, he put it in the Jordanian budget and they built a whole series of grain silos and imported a lot of grain so that they would have a strategic reserve of grain in case of war, deprivation, or something like that.

But then when I was in Saudi Arabia in the early '80s, the Saudis were coming to us saying, "Where is our \$100 million?" We were going to the Jordanians and saying, "Where is the \$100 million?" "Oops, nobody told us. We put that in our budget. We had these requests to Saudi Arabia that were outstanding. We thought it was a wonderful example of their munificence." That gave Tom Pickering and me a very hard couple of months when we were trying to deal with that.

But the Saudis were very helpful. They were giving Jordan a lot of money. The UAE started giving them money. This was in addition to the Khartoum payments after the 1967 War and the Khartoum Conference, where all of the oil rich countries were supposed to give the confrontation

states money. They fulfilled that for a number of years, which helped Jordan quite a bit. They were always short of money to do their army.

Jordan developed over this period an oil rich mentality without having the oil reserves. So, later in the mid-'80s when the oil revenues began to fail, Jordan was really hit hard. King Hussein then put enormous pressure on us to try to make up the difference, which we were not able to do.

Just other amusing anecdotes. Sheikh Zayed in the newly independent UAE and Abu Dhabi had a very active ambassador named Mahdi Tajir in London. He was really the second most powerful guy. He was working out all of these big deals. One of them was to buy a whole bunch of Boeing 747s at the time. It turned out that he bought a whole assembly line, a whole series of 747s, and in a wonderful Arab gesture he gave numbers six and seven to King Hussein, he gave numbers eight and nine to Hafez al-Assad. So, that's the way the Jordanians got their 747s initially for the Royal Jordanian Airline. There are a lot of kind of amusing stories like that.

Kuwait had a poisonous relationship with them. At the time of Kissinger's shuttles, Kissinger was considering going to Kuwait and the Jordanians, I don't think they manufactured it, but they certainly amplified with a megaphone the fact that he wouldn't be safe in Kuwait because Kuwait was infested with PLO operatives. So, Kissinger ended up not going there.

Q: How about Iran and the Shah? Anything there?

SUDDARTH: Oh, yes, there is good stuff there, too. The King thought he had a great relationship with the Shah and he and Queen Aliyah used to go to Gstaad and go skiing with the Shah and the Shahbanou. But it soured and well before the Shah got in trouble. I remember the King telling us (He told Tom Pickering, the ambassador.) that he was never going to go anywhere with the Shah again. The Shah was getting delusions of grandeur. These stories would circulate around the palace. One of them was that the King, King Hussein, is a proletarian monarch, as contrasted to that peacock. The chief of protocol told me a story about how the major general who was his military aide would bring in the intelligence report for the Shah to read every day and would be required to stand at attention saluting for up to 40 minutes or an hour sometimes.

I was present when the Shah came in on a state visit in '74/'75. Jordan opened up... Once they recognized that the PLO was speaking for the Palestinians and not Jordan, they patched up relations with Syria, with all kinds of countries. But Iran had a relationship with them and helped them. Jordan sent a special forces unit to Oman, which participated along with combat units from Iran to quell the Dhofari rebellion against the Sultan back in the 1970s. So, they did a few things together.

I don't think the Shah ever gave King Hussein any significant aid. At the end, the King was disillusioned with him. But just to jump forward a bit, when the Shah came to the States for medical treatment after he had been forced to leave Iran and the Islamic Republic, King Hussein came to Washington. They were going up to New York to see the Shah. I was with David Newsom when we told the King - or maybe it was Bin Shaker, his chief of the army - that we preferred that he not call on the Shah in New York because we were emphasizing that this was

not a political visit of the Shah; it was purely a humanitarian one, which the Jordanians were a little bit miffed about.

But talking about the King, he was immensely courteous. I wouldn't call him tightly strung. He didn't vent his anxiety on others, but you could see that he was under strain. He developed a heart fibrillation at this point. He spent a lot of time worrying about medical problems even when he was 38, little medical problems. He had a bad sinus problem, a skin rash, part of which caused him to grow a beard, part of which when you turn 40 as a good Muslim, you're supposed to grow a beard. He did that. But this fibrillation caused a lot of worry. But he always kept in very good shape.

He had banker's hours. You would get called at around noon. I don't see how people in the palace ever did it. They went without lunch. He would go from noon until about four seeing people. I would often, when Tom Pickering wasn't there, have to go up to see him. Kissinger kept him very much informed, so it would often be just a very brief message. I got to know the King as charge and as DCM, partly because all of these Kissinger visits (There were 6-12 over the 18 months that this was going on, the shuttle diplomacy)... I wasn't in on the meetings with Kissinger, although I was later with Vance, but I would be present for dinner. I don't know whether I told the story that I later found out from Tom Pickering that Kissinger had commented, "Tom, there are too many embassy people at these social functions." He said, "But it's just me and my DCM." He said, "Exactly." So, Tom never told me, but I think he alluded to it. I continued to go, but every time Kissinger would look around, I would pick up my walkie talkie and pretend that I was a Secret Service agent. So, I was still able to get to know... I felt in a very privileged position. I was the same age as the King. Pickering was four years older, but we were both youthful. The King's best buddy, the prime minister, Sharif Zaid Bin Shaker, who I had gotten to know when I was in Political-Military Affairs... When the U.S. didn't meddle in his internal affairs, the one time on the economy, where we weighed in, was that we thought the Jordanians weren't giving us a good enough accounting for our military assistance. We were always harping on their budget. The King just got furious that we were getting involved in the Jordanian military budget. I think part of the reason is that the budget was obviously going also to fund the palace expenses and the general intelligence agency. So, they were obviously patting their budget a little bit. They didn't want a jeweler's eye looking at it. When he got upset, we pulled off. But during '72 and '73, there was a lot of bad blood because basically bureaucrats in the State Department were nickeling and diming him.

Q: What about the relationship with the King with his army?

SUDDARTH: The King is best understood as the commander in chief. I brought military briefers out a couple of times later. The national intelligence officer for military intelligence told me once that he took a briefing like an American general. The king thought of himself as a military leader and a strategist. But also, he had a deep personal relationship with his army. I've been out on exercises with him where he flew his own helicopter. The relationship between him and his army... Virtually anybody in that army, one had the impression, would lay down their life for the King. He worked at it. He would go out on exercises on an average once a month and was very much the soldier. There was a time when Abu Nidal staged a terrorist incident in the Intercontinental Hotel. As soon as the thing was quelled, King Hussein was there on the spot. It

was the worst thing he could possibly do from a security viewpoint because often somebody could booby-trap something. He never talked to us about appointments in the army or anything like that. You may note that his falling out with the Crown Prince, which was public, we learned more from that public document two weeks before the King's death than he ever told us. We all suspected it inferentially, but when the Crown Prince decided to make a few changes in the military while King Hussein was back in Mayo, that was one of the things that tore the relationship. This was his thing. It was so delicate. There was an outstanding military officer who seemed politically ambitious that I got to know. King Hussein made very certain that this guy was sent out to be chief of staff for the fledgling UAE army and then he was given a series of ambassadorships. So, anybody who seemed to have coup potential was immediately shipped out. He realized that. That was his source of ultimate power. There was also very heavy screening. Palestinians weren't allowed into the combat arm. That was later relaxed because they were needed in the technical arm. That relationship with the army, with the air force, he had a similar relationship. But combat arms are different. He was very much the chief pilot also of the air force.

Q: I heard somebody saying that just before the Black September when the Palestinians seemed to be ruling the roost, they were flying a pair of women's panties from the antenna of a tank. In a way, it was sort of "put up or shut up" to the King, wasn't it?

SUDDARTH: Another characteristic of the King is that he tried never to make permanent enemies. He recognized that this would be a traumatic event for Jordan with half the population Palestinian. So, he held off until the very end. Sharif Zaid Bin Shaker, who was the chief of operations - at the time 34 years old - at least his wife claims credit that Bin Shocker pushed the King to move against them; it was not his instinct to do it. But it wasn't out of any lack of bravery. It was just that the King knew that he was in a weak position. As it proved, once he moved against them, you had Syria and Iraq that had units that were ready to engage on their behalf. The Israelis were enlisted to basically come to their aid with air power. But it wasn't any lack of personal courage. But the King had great difficulties. He remembered being rushed into the '67 War and what a disaster that was. Then in '73, they stayed out of the war except for a token unit simply because realized what can go wrong when you go into a war.

More on the King. We had a wonderful relationship at the American community school because his twin daughters attended. It took a certain amount of courage to send your kids to that. I remember his flying out and dropping in a helicopter one day when we were having a kind of "kids day." It was on a weekend. I took him around to show him things. You could get him out on the occasional U.S. Navy ship coming into Aqaba. The King was a very active guy. Kissinger came around. He flew him around in his helicopter to Jerash, to Petra...

On Kissinger's initial visit to Aqaba, the King flew up to welcome him in his own helicopter and did a dipsy doodle with the helicopter to welcome this 747 bringing Kissinger into Aqaba Airport.

He was a great water-skier, did a lot of judo, jiu-jitsu. He liked to race cars around. After the '70 shootout, his security got a lot tighter, so he didn't participate in rallies anymore. But he was still very active, very vigorous, right up until, I think, the end of his days.

Q: I would think there would be a tendency on Kissinger's part to take this guy who was younger than he was and try to overwhelm him. How did that work out?

SUDDARTH: I wasn't in the Kissinger meetings. I think that Kissinger treated him with great respect and great courtesy and would often to the dismay of staff and embassy take him aside at the beginning into a one on one and then they would come into the meetings together. Hussein treated Nixon as his equal. He was courteous to Kissinger, but when Nixon came to town, they really rolled out the red carpet for Nixon. After all, this was the first U.S. President ever to visit. He was always aiming his remarks at Nixon. Ford he met but he treated Kissinger with great courtesy, never any denigration of his role, but it was obvious that as a chief of state he was relating to the chief of state. We were good to him. Gerald Ford when we had the extra quarter in the fiscal year when we moved it from July to September sat down with the speaker of the House (McCormick) and gave an enormous wad of cash to Jordan. They had this extra quarter and this money to do something with. I figure that during Tom Pickering's tenure, we spent \$1 billion of U.S. coin in Jordan partly as a surrogate for their not being involved in the peace process and largely to provide this air defense system. But we had major aid programs that were going. We were real nation builders in that country.

Q: How about the Crown Prince at the time, who did not become the king? I would think with King Hussein... The only time I met him was in 1958. He was a young kid. I was a young kid, too, a vice consul in Dhahran. But I remember thinking, "Gee, it's good to meet this guy. He's not going to be around long. He's going to be assassinated."

SUDDARTH: Oh, yes.

Q: Because of this being a very difficult and dangerous neighborhood, the Middle East at that time, and the King having all sorts of death threats, that you'd be looking at the Crown Prince and figuring out... Here was the guy who was going to take over.

SUDDARTH: I don't think the King ever thought he was going to die. He never conducted himself like that. But he was made the Crown Prince precisely because of the threat, because it should have gone to his oldest son. So, this was an exception from the constitution. The older brother, Mohammad, had clinical emotional problems that were well known. So, Crown Prince Hassan, even at age 18 or so, was made Crown Prince. He is, I think, 10 years younger than the King and myself, which meant when I was 38, he was 28 and beginning to feel his oats. There was a division. The King handled political-military things and the Crown Prince handled aid matters to the immense chagrin of the prime minister. Actually, Zaid Rifai was often plagued... All prime ministers were plagued by the interference of the Crown Prince on what they thought was their responsibility. But the Crown Prince was very good at getting money from donors. He was better educated than the King. The King was not an intellectual, had no intellectual aspirations, and the Crown Prince did. The King had gone to a military college, Sandhurst. The Crown Prince, although they both went to Harrow, went on to Oxford, and was a self-styled intellectual who used lots of big words. He was a wonderful fellow, very warm, in many ways warmer than the King. The King maintained his reserve with the foreigners so far as I know. The station chiefs had a good relationship with him, but it was much more subordinate. I think their

role was portrayed as helping to assure his security. We trained the Jordanian security service and provided a lot of security equipment that helped to sustain his thing. It was said that his throne was saved (I think that's an exaggeration.) by somebody in the CIA station who alerted him to the Zarqa mutiny back in 1958 that he quelled and then a coup d'état was stopped. But the Crown Prince you would see when you had something to do with the UNRWA aid program or some of our aid things, he did the Five Year Plan and that sort of thing. But they had an intimate brother to brother relationship that no one ever saw. The King was very, very private and very compartmentalized. I want to emphasize that. The Crown Prince was often not in the big meetings with the people coming through. He was in his sphere and the King was in his other. The Crown Prince was probably the only person in the Kingdom who could and did talk to the King frankly.

Q: Did the Americans go to the Crown Prince in order to get a message across?

SUDDARTH: No, we always went directly to the King. He was always accessible. Only when he didn't want to be accessible and that happened to me just once or twice.

We should talk about Camp David. This was a terrible thing. I should start on the CIA episode. You may recall that "The Washington Post" one day out of the clear blue sky issued an article which outlined all the money and aid that the CIA had given to King Hussein over the years. It was totally out of the blue and still no one quite understands the motivation. It was a new Jimmy Carter White House. There was a certain lilywhite purity that was involved. There was the Church (Senator Church) Committee that was talking about the inequities of the CIA and all of the things that they had done. But it was grossly unfair-

Q: It sounds like in the Washington context, this would be an Israeli supporters of Israel sort of liberal Jewish groups or something like that.

SUDDARTH: No, I wouldn't see that as behind it at all. We'd have to check the timing. Maybe Begin had taken over by that time, in which case there was a very different Israeli mentality. I wouldn't rule that out as a hypothesis. It occurred to me that it was more in the Church Committee mode than "let's shed a little light on some of these things that the CIA is doing." Somebody in the White House... I can't believe Jimmy Carter did it, but who knows?

Q: Yes. A new administration.

SUDDARTH: It's a new administration, but some of the grossly unfair part of it was that it listed \$800,000 or something of subsidy a year, most of which was going (and the figures are probably wrong) for security. There was a permanent security guy attached to each of his two sons at boarding school in the US. But the diplomatic fallout of all of this was that Cyrus Vance arrived the very day or the day after this thing appeared in "The Washington Post" on his initial visit to King Hussein. We advised Vance to take the King aside and go over this with him and make an apology. Things went reasonably well. But that was the first thorny episode.

The next one was the Glassboro remarks of Jimmy Carter where he talked about how the Palestinians ought to have self-determination.

Q: Glassboro being a meeting in Glassboro, New Jersey.

SUDDARTH: It was someplace up in New England where he said this. Of course, King Hussein still hoped against hope that there could be a confederation of Jordan.

But to fast forward to Camp David, Jordan was written into the Camp David treaty by name several times without ever having been consulted by the U.S. or Sadat, so he was really browned off. Then I was in charge during the period leading up to Camp David. Right after Camp David, Nick Veliotis was ambassador and we presented his credentials about the same day that Camp David was going to end. We predicted it was going to be a failure and then it was a success. The Jordanians were just furious because the West Bank had all this stuff that was supposed to be going on in autonomy negotiations. Then we tried to get Hussein to endorse Camp David. I remember taking a message to the King and he knew it was going to be a tough message. It was one of those messages where you've got the standard text and then the Secretary wrote a personal message saying, "You have got to impress on the King that if he doesn't join Camp David, there will be a severe effect on our bilateral relations." Somehow, the King got word that it was going to be a tough message, so I went to the prime minister's office to see him and I was received by the chief of the royal diwan, who said that the King was indisposed and that I should give him the message. So, it was such a tough message, I said, "Just to make certain that you get this thing, I'm going to read it word for word." I read it to him and left a copy of it with him. I said, "I also want to make this directly to the King." He said, "Well, I'm afraid that won't be possible." But that was one time and the other was during Jordanian disengagement in 1988. Those are the only two times. They were crucial times. I got around it on the second time. I had learned a few tricks by that time where the King knew a tough message was coming or that he was going to deliver a tough message and he didn't want to do it directly. But it was a very tough period after Camp David. There was a chill in relations, although Carter did receive the King later. After I came back, I went to the White House and they were kind enough to invite me, although I wasn't involved with Jordan anymore. Things got patched up a little bit. But it was also obvious - and this is important - that Hal Saunders, the assistant secretary for NEA, came through, still trying to sell Camp David after King Hussein had rejected it after Vance had come out. One of the things that blew the thing apart was, Vance made a very impassioned plea (and I was with him when he made it) to the King to join Camp David. He was fresh from three or four days out at Camp David. He said, "We have a letter from the Israelis there will be a moratorium on settlements during at least a three month period. We don't have the letter yet, but we're getting it." Of course, the letter never came. Begin could not agree to any moratorium on settlements. So, that really knocked the bottom out of our credibility in terms of what we could do on the West Bank. We had a legal agreement for getting out of Sinai. But it was only best efforts on the West Bank and it was a terrible flaw from the Arab point of view. It's what caused them to break relations with Sadat. He should never have signed, by their likes, an agreement without having a similar agreement for the West Bank. We're living with that still today. I've gotten off the point of the Crown Prince. I think that's about all I have to say.

But I would like to say on Maqarin Dam that the King never really followed the details. It was his prime minister that was doing it and very carefully. The King's point was, "We just want our legal rights." Legally, the Jordanians should have been able to build the dam. The Israelis were

preventing them from doing that. We had to allocate the funds when I was working for the Under Secretary for the Maqarin Dam project because it was going nowhere to some emergency that came up back in 1980.

Q: Did Hussein follow relations? Was he watching the West Bank? Were we talking to him about what was happening on the West Bank during this time?

SUDDARTH: Oh, yes, that was a constant part of our dialogue. He up until 1988 maintained administrative authority over the West Bank. He appointed people who were handling the bureaucracy. Part of the Jordanian budget went for health, education, various other things on the West Bank. So, in a sense, it was a curious thing. The Israelis were occupying it. The bridges were open. This was Moshe Dayan's thing. So, under the legitimate reason - and this was the genius of Moshe Dayan so as not to have an explosion of family reunification, people were able to make visits from Jordan, people working in the Gulf (There were hundreds of thousands there.) could go back to the West Bank and visit relatives during the summer particularly. So, there was a huge flow back and forth. We were often involved with the Israelis trying to get them to keep the bridges open more on the Jordanian's behest. But that was a time when the PLO was making inroads. There was a lot of Saudi money going to build universities and things like that. But Jordan was keeping its hand in. That's about all I can say.

Q: With Camp David, there was a pretty close embargo on news out of Camp David. Were we having to say to the embassy, "We don't know what's happening now?"

SUDDARTH: Yes. That's why the King was furious. Sadat, according to the record now, assured Carter that he would be bringing Jordan on. They never had a call from Sadat. There was a complete news blackout to the point where when Nick Veliotis was up presenting his credentials and he and I were having discussions, I was introducing him to his new hosts and we were both saying, "It looks like it's going to fail." Then it didn't. We were totally out in the dark.

All this stuff came out on the wireless file before it came out in telegrams. We got a short telegram saying "Steep yourself in the wireless file and get up and start delivering it to your interlocutors." It wasn't quite a betrayal, but it came close to that. But as I was mentioning, Hal Saunders when he came around, King Hussein really told him the thing. He said, "If you can get the Saudis to agree, I will be happy to enter Camp David, to enter the process." Of course, Hal went to the Saudis and they said they couldn't agree, the PLO was the sole legitimate representative. I left Jordan in mid-1979 where our aid program was being cut back because of the downturn in bilateral relations. Camp David and the Egyptian track was going on. Jordan was basically out on a limb.

EDMUND JAMES HULL
Student, Language and Area Studies, University of Amman
Amman (1974-1975)

Ambassador Hull was born in Iowa and raised in Illinois. He was educated at Princeton and Oxford Universities. After service in the Peace Corps, Mr. Hull joined the Foreign Service in 1974 and had postings in Amman, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tunis and Cairo as well as serving as Ambassador to Yemen from 2001 to 2004. In Washington, the Ambassador served on the National Security Council and as Advisor to the Secretary of State on Counterterrorism. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005

Q: You went for what, six months or so to the University of Amman?

HULL: Yes. Six months.

Q: In 1973 or 1974 or so?

HULL: This was 1974 to 1975. Tom Pickering was the ambassador at the time, a remarkable man. I remember my interview with him when I was leaving Jordan and remember: one that he wanted to see me because I wasn't a very prominent person, but two, that within the space of about twenty minutes he had absorbed from me almost the entirety of my intensive experience at the University. He had put it into his data bank and had it ready. It was an interesting experience in many ways because, of course, the campus was very politicized with lots of Palestinian teachers and lots of Palestinian students. Having an American diplomat there, as you can imagine, presented certain opportunities for provocations, but by and large I enjoyed the experience.

Q: I realize you're looking at one perspective, but how did you see the situation in Jordan at that time?

HULL: Of course, this was in the aftermath of Black September, which occurred in 1970. It was Jordan returning to normalcy, I think. Having come from Beirut where the Civil War was just breaking out, by comparison Jordan seemed calm and relatively effectively governed.

Q: Among the students you say there were a significant number of Palestinians. How did they view the king?

HULL: I don't know if I remember anything that was specifically said. I think, maybe this was imagining more than anything else, there was lingering resentment, but at the same time, respect because he had confronted a very challenging situation and he had mastered it. So no love lost, I think, but perhaps some grudging respect.

Q: I would think given that you have the Palestinian population and you had the Jordanian population of more of nomadic stock, I would have thought the Palestinians would almost overwhelm the university by their presence. Palestinians are like Jews. They go for education.

HULL: Right. I think that's true. Very many of the professors were Palestinians. The course I took on Palestinian issue was done by a Palestinian professor. My Arabic teacher at the university was a Palestinian from a prominent Jerusalem family. Yes, they were the dominant intellectual force.

Q: Was anybody looking at what was happening in at the time?

HULL: People were looking at what they would call Palestine and of course you had the phenomenon there where Israelis watched Jordanian TV and Jordanians watched Israeli TV depending upon the programs being offered. It wasn't the other side of the moon. There was a knowledge, and not quite familiarity, but certainly a pretty good knowledge of what the other side was like.

Q: Did you have any problems?

HULL: I didn't have any political incidents that were unmanageable; a couple of perhaps embarrassments. I remember there was huge class on the Palestinian problem, maybe 150 students. One day we came in and the Israelis had just attacked Palestinians in southern Lebanon and the professor invited me to come up and justify the Israeli conduct and I really didn't think that was my responsibility: as a student to be justifying anything, much less as a non-Israeli to be justifying what Israel was doing, so I declined that invitation. Other professors would invite me. I remember I took a diplomatic course, and the professors would invite me to talk a little bit about how an issue would be handled as a practical matter.

Ironically, my most difficult course was my Arabic course. It was classical Arabic and I'd only studied colloquial and modern standard Arabic. This was very challenging material. It included "Kalila wa Dimna," a kind of Aesop's Fables in Arabic, and I found the vocabulary very strange, nothing to do with diplomacy or economics or politics. It had to do with jackals and foxes and chickens and things like this. I took the final exam in that course and the professor called me in. She had kind of a depressed look on her face and she said, "Well, I think one thing is sure, and that is you have no future in the Arabic world given what you have done on this exam." And she was right, I had no future in terms of classical Arabic literature at all in the Middle East, but I did find applications for my colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic.

Q: We're talking about 1975?

HULL: The end of 1974. I think I moved in January of 1975.

DAVID WINN
Political Officer
Amman (1974-1977)

David M. Winn was born in Texas in 1942. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1964, received an MA from the University of Texas in 1966 and an MPA from Syracuse University in 1969. He served in the Peace Corps and then joined the Foreign Service in 1969. He has served overseas in Vietnam, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, France and Senegal. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: Well, then you went to Amman directly?

WINN: Literally, drove over the mountains from Beirut to Amman. My first tour...

Q: You were in Amman from when to when?

WINN: It would have been the summer of '74, actually spring, I was pulled out of the course a little early because my predecessor, Pat Theros, had to leave. I hadn't even spent a full year in Beirut, but it would have been the spring of '74 to the summer of '77. Wonderful tour. Tom Pickering was the ambassador and I had the time of my life. Married there.

Q: Well, what about, what did Black September come about?

WINN: It would have been September of '73. So it had occurred just little before I got there.

Q: That must have had some effect on you all.

WINN: Yes, although surprisingly little. I guess you've interviewed Bob Pelletreau?

Q: No, I haven't.

WINN: Well, he's the man with the stories. Ended up NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs) as the Assistant Secretary of the Ambassador several times. He was there in '73, picked up by the Palestinians. Well, anyway, he's the man, talk about stories. Sure, the dust was still settling, but that said, the king had by then so asserted himself over the Palestinians, those were the Halcyon days, security wasn't an issue. You had the plane hijackings, but I don't remember that security was any big deal at the Embassy. We didn't have any security concerns really. It was pretty much go wherever. The king so asserted his authority over the Palestinians that they just weren't a problem.

Q: What was your job there?

WINN: I was the junior in a two person political section. I was the junior political officer. Rocky Suddarth would later return as ambassador; he was the political chief.

Q: I've interviewed Rocky.

WINN: Well, he was a wonderful mentor for a new FSO (Foreign Service Officer) - a very conscientious one. Very nice wife. A great guy, Howard Walker, who lives right out here in Bethesda, later replaced him. My job was whatever I made of it. Basically I was the "street" person who wormed my way into hanging out with Jordanian young men. Rocky wrote me up very well in those years. I was often scooping the agency with the rumors, telling them whatever I was picking up. I was the classic young political officer with nothing else to do but scurry around in the souk and spend boring weekends with these Jordanians. So, I really got to know Jordanian society at a low level.

Q: Well, tell me, how does this kind of work?

WINN: Well, it was whatever I made of it. I was also the labor officer. I would go out there and I made it my point to press the flesh. At least I said to myself, "They taught me Arabic and I'm going to use it as much as possible;" so I was out of the building as much as possible. It was taken for granted in Amman by Jordanians that I was an Agency type because I was spending so much time out with the Jordanians. I learned an early rule there. Those in the Foreign Service who aren't married move up in the Foreign Service because they have the time. It's a rule that seems to me that you have all this time to scurry about after a certain level that doesn't apply, but early on that's how to make it. When single, there's nothing better to do but spend hours and hours with the locals. That's when my Arabic got quite good.

Q: What was your impression of, I assume the young men you were, the Jordanians you were talking to?

WINN: Well, it was a lot like Iran. They were intensely curious about the West. I tended to hang out with East Jordanians as opposed to Palestinians. It was and is a strict division between the East Bankers, the real Jordanians, and the Palestinians. The Palestinians were firebrands, since they had their own particular viewpoint but they got less attention. But the East Jordanians were intensely curious, intensely curious about the West to pass on to me all the stories of corruption, while at the same time still intensely loyal to the king. They were resentful of the corruption and his cronies. Of course, they wanted a cut themselves. You know, they were... they wished they had more upward mobility. They were proud of Jordan. They loved showing me around. They always wanted to make sure their view prevailed over the Palestinian view. They were worried about the Palestinian influx. With striking loyalty to the king, irritation over too much cronies, intense curiosity about me and the West, we talked.

Q: Well, I take it, I mean was there sort of a feeling about contempt or fear or something of the Palestinians?

WINN: Resentment, resentment that these better educated Palestinians or not even better educated, but just Jordan had few resources and to see them flood over in '67 in these huge refugee camps competing for jobs. So, there was resentment about these outsiders. "What are we going to do with them?" After Black September, you can imagine the resentment to say the least. But, there were Palestinians in high places, at the palace; they were after all in many cases better educated than the East Bankers, so fear and resentment, by all means yes.

Q: Were the East Bankers sort of a generation removed from the tribal?

WINN: From the desert, yes. A transition they had made successfully, unlike the Saudis who to this day amaze me that they are still out in the desert. Yet, a generation removed and sophisticated. They had this intense interaction with the countries around them unlike the Saudis. So, they'd made the transition very successfully and Amman was a bustling little town, a huge city now.

Q: Were any of the young people that you talked to looking toward going to the United States for education with the hopes of coming back?

WINN: The crowd that I was hanging out with, that would have been almost beyond their comprehension and means. This crowd, these were low-level civil service types in the Ministry of Youth and that sort of thing. I was really down there with folks who didn't speak a word of English, so they were the struggling young civil servants living at home. I was taking it for granted they were living at home. You had another echelon of young people, the young up-and-coming bureaucrats and the Foreign Ministry officials and most of whom were Palestinian. Or they were young East Bankers tied to the tribal sheiks and they were very wealthy. I stuck with the sort of the lowest echelon and I had a wonderful time. A couple of them I'm in touch with, incredibly, to this day.

Q: Was Israel much of a topic or was that over?

WINN: No, at least it was among the Palestinians, but I think to the East Bank Jordanians, Israel was just something that caused them to be stuck with all these Palestinian refugees, but they didn't agonize over Israel per se as a source of indignation surprisingly. No, the topics were of East Bank politics and day-to-day little corruptions - what scam this minister and that minister was involved in. The big picture didn't play very much in it and I would feed these memos to Tom Pickering - memos about "who is doing what to whom" at these lower levels, and what they thought of the King.

Q: What was your impression of Tom Pickering? How did he operate?

WINN: Well, I didn't realize I was around a unique personality, since I had had no experience with Embassies or Ambassadors, despite five years in the Foreign Service! I remember the first day I walked in that Embassy having driven over the mountains from Beirut. Rocky Suddarth said, "This is your office." The safe was open and I looked at the cables for the first time in my Foreign Service career. I said, "Oh, this is what a cable looks like, secret confidential." I threw it in the safe and went home. The next morning I had a security violation. Now, I'd been in the Foreign Service five years and had never had a safe! I tell you this story to show you how out of it I was. Therefore, I knew nothing about how the embassy worked, five years into my Foreign Service career and I didn't even know what an ambassador did. So, I cannot imagine a better introduction than Tom Pickering who, as you know, is smart as a whip with a photographic memory. I would go with him as note taker and then he would correctly correct my notes later; just a photographic memory. Rocky quickly became DCM and ran the embassy as a DCM should, while Pickering dealt with the King and the tribal sheikhs. Tom was never a back-slapper, never a hail-fellow-well-met; wonderful wife by the way and two wonderful children. He would walk in my office as much as he would walk into anyone else's office to just find out what's going on and sit down and chat. I remember him as extremely personable, somewhat distant as I say, not a back-slapper but sharp as a tack. He never hassled me, never got in my way, never lost his temper. I served with many a prima donna later on and only later realized that I had taken for granted working for a real gentleman. I remember sitting around with the two of them thinking, "I cannot imagine that I'm getting paid to do this, it is so much fun. Between scurrying around at night and doing what I did during the day and then sitting around with these two great role

models, Tom Pickering and Rocky Suddarth, I couldn't ask for anything better." I have golden memories of that tour. I remain in close touch with my second boss, Howard Walker, who arrived in Amman after never having set foot in the Arab world. Needless to say, he quickly figured the place out as well as we Arabist "veterans."

Q: Oh yes.

WINN: So, it was a sight.

Q: From your colleagues and all and your own impressions what was the impression of King Hussein at that time?

WINN: I thought there was a little too much obeisance paid, it always irritated me, particularly at that time. Every morning after an evening with these guys I would come in with a little bit of gossip and stories about royal shenanigans. I think Tom was irritated and pained by my concentration of the king's love life, which was exotic to say the least. He didn't want to hear about that. I remember Rocky saying, "You know, can you tone down these memos? We have other things to do." So, I thought there was almost a little too much obeisance paid to the king. He was just a young, cocky man then. Apparently they had it right. They had him pegged for being more of a statesman than I would have given him credit for. There was a close Agency relationship with him. I hung out with the Agency people quite a bit. You know it's funny, in later years in many embassies I've noticed this huge divide between the Agency and the State Department people. This was unknown in my career - not only were we always together in Beirut, but very close relationships, just hand and glove in Amman and in my subsequent posts early on. I have often wondered what has happened. I'll have to analyze that someday. Different FSOs, different types coming in, different Agency types, more gumshoe types into the agencies, they were pretty much out of the same mold back there in the '60s and the '70s, but they had a very close relationship with Hussein, everyone knew that. Chuck Cogan was the station chief then and has been on TV many times recalling those days. We became good friends.

Q: I have to ask, what was the King's love life?

WINN: Oh, my God. Well, by then he had been married to his first wife, an Egyptian, Dina, back in his teens. They'd had a daughter and then when I arrived he had just divorced a British lady whose name escapes me. She lives out in Bethesda, known as Princess Muna. She was the daughter of the Brit who ran the Water Authority out there hanging out in Amman. The King had just divorced princess Muna and had married a Palestinian woman whose name now escapes me, too.

Q: Princess Muna is actually the mother of the present king?

WINN: That's right. Absolutely right. She was still living in Amman when I arrived and the ladies of Amman decided I was just the thing for her. That's a different story. The King had then married a Palestinian woman. He was just notorious for chasing women. I always found that quite amusing. I mean, it was quite open. They all just put up with it. I remember I got there and this little clique of Western women decided I would just be the perfect escort for Princess Muna

and I thought this was amusing. I'd never dated a princess and I was fixed up with her at various dinner parties, but Tom Pickering had a word with me. He said, "Back off. This is beyond just having fun. Don't go out with the King's former wife. Cease and desist!" Actually, it was Rocky who passed that on, and that was the end of that. Very brief. Another fellow you might want to talk to is Pat Theros who preceded me as political officer in Amman and went on to be an Arabist and later Ambassador to Qatar.

Q: Where is he?

WINN: He lives here in Washington. T-H-E-R-O-S, Patrick Theros.

Q: Was there a feeling that the king wouldn't be around very long, you know, assassination or something like that?

WINN: I hear what you're saying, I don't think so. I think they figured they had a very good security service and his days were not numbered. When he gave up Jordanian sovereignty or authority for the West Bank, people thought he wouldn't weather the storm, but he managed.

Q: That was during your time?

WINN: I remember Pickering writing the cable telling Washington the King had given up the West Bank. In those days you would either type them out or handwrite, he always handwrote his cable. There were always security concerns for the king. No, I think it was felt that he was going to survive. Worried that someone might get him, but pretty confident that he would be there for a long haul. For two years I was a junior political officer, and for about a year I was actually the political counselor. Rocky became DCM. There was a year before they found his replacement Howard Walker. I had no administrative responsibilities whatsoever. I just had fun scurrying about and churning out reams of reporting.

Q: Were you... was the embassy monitoring or looking at Israel at the time?

WINN: Not very closely. Rocky may have. I remember having some resentment when I walked in Rocky's office once and he and Tom were pouring over his overhead photographs of the Jordanian-Israeli border and they hurriedly folded them up. I remember being angry. To sit out there in Vietnam and then to be excluded from some of the councils in the embassy was irritating. There may have been more of that going on than I realized at the time.

Q: Did you get any feel for the political environment of the United States, particularly the Jewish lobby and all that, having its effect on our Arab policy?

WINN: Well, yes I remember Senator Javitz, Steve Solarz and I remember the king being especially cordial to Jewish visitors, but I guess it's hard to put my finger on anything except a cliché, you know, certainly that was the usual influence of American policy. I can't think of anything original to say on that topic. It's been around so long.

Q: I know it and we've learned to live with it.

WINN: To live with it.

Q: I think in a way we've housed a free ride until the last few years and all of a sudden it's beginning to catch up with us.

WINN: Beginning to catch up, that's right. So, something that you sort of took for granted. Again it was surprisingly little, you know as I look back, my focus was constantly on East Bank politics and I did little of the broader picture. I got to know every city official of little towns in Jordan. We were worried to that extent about the king's staying power, or whether the East Bankers could hold out against the Palestinians and that sort of thing. I let Rocky and Tom Pickering worry about the bigger picture. You might want to talk, as I say, to Howard Walker who replaced Rocky as political counselor. As I said, it was very useful for me to work for a real pro, who could view the Arab world from a perspective other than NEA. I learned a lot from Howard.

Q: He's now head of?

WINN: Howard Walker?

Q: Yes.

WINN: He's now retired, but he was an Africa type and later became ambassador to Togo and Madagascar. He's now retired and lives out here in Bethesda. Although as we speak, he and his wife are at their house in Cape Town.

Q: Was there, I mean, you're saying by the time you got there after Black September, that the Palestinians as a political force were really spent?

WINN: That's right. They were just totally, utterly beaten. It was a total victory. They were totally spent, that's right. They still had positions of authority in the government. They were lying low and they were again the source of resentment of the "real" Jordanians. The East Bankers had had a phrase for themselves: "the spinal cord of the backbone." They were the center of the country and these Palestinians were just hangers-on as a source of resentment.

Q: Were there any sort of tribal groups still important?

WINN: Oh my God. That was what I concentrated on. This tribal group, the many this and the many that, I confess I've forgotten their names over the years, but we would spend hours, we the embassy people, going out on mansafs, going out there and sitting in the tent with these tribal leaders, the East Bank leaders, stroking the tribal chiefs. Hours we'd drive out there and you'd spend the whole day for lunch.

Q: Goat grabbers?

WINN: That's right. So they had to divide the jobs at the palace among the various tribes. So, that was my thing, the tribes and the East Bank politics. Funny how I've lost the names of them and I'm sure they're important to this day.

Q: Was there any spillover from Iraq or concern or Syria?

WINN: Syria was always a concern. I'm trying to think what was Syria was trying to invade.

Q: Well, they came really near.

WINN: Right down to the border and it was not while I was there, but that was a constant concern. Syria, less so Iraq. Maybe Iraq was a concern, I was not so much aware of it. Syria was always a concern. What were they going to do next, absolutely and the border was closed much of the time I was there. I mean the Jordanian-Syrian border; you couldn't even drive up to Damascus a lot of times. Yes, those were the big tensions.

Q: Did you get to Israel at all while you were there?

WINN: We would often go to Jerusalem. We hotly contested the trip to carry the pouch over, drive over there and then stay a night or two and then come back. The pouch being this huge orange bag the size of that coffee table in the back of a station wagon. So, that was fun to go there over into Jerusalem and stay at whatever hotel, American Colony and tour the old city. I later returned to work as number two in the Jerusalem Consulate General, but it was a different city when I returned.

Q: Well, you mentioned that you got married there. How did that develop?

WINN: Yes. Well, I was...

Q: You were just beginning your thirties?

WINN: Yes, actually 33 when I married and there were all these foreigners who would gather at the only place in Amman they could-the Intercontinental Hotel. There I met a French lady who had been seeking adventure teaching French for the Jordanian Airlines. One thing led to another and I married her. Renee, Renee Rangin. We married in Amman and Rocky presided over the proceedings and had a party at his house. We had a very happy marriage until she died 17 years later in Jerusalem of cancer, liver cancer. During that time she had MS, Multiple Sclerosis. The first symptoms appeared on our honeymoon. So, that was a long and happy marriage, despite MS and then liver cancer, as if she didn't have enough problems.

Q: Oh, boy.

WINN: But, we married there and never looked back.

Q: You were mentioning there's this sort of a sub theme of how the Foreign Service dealt with the MS problem. So, we'll pick this up.

WINN: Right. Sure. Sure. Multiple Sclerosis differs in every person. Each case is different. I have nothing but praise, pretty much praise, for the Foreign Service medical program. They have their formal programs for dealing with this sort of thing now; they didn't in those days.

Q: Well, as you know, as you finish this time, you've now been in the Foreign Service for about seven years. Then what happened?

HOWARD K. WALKER
Political Officer
Amman (1975-1977)

Ambassador Harold K. Walker was born in Virginia in 1935. He attended the University of Michigan and later Boston University to earn a PhD before serving in the US Air Force. After briefly serving with the CIA, Walker joined the Foreign Service and served overseas in Zaire, Nigeria, Jordan, Tanzania, South Africa and as ambassador to Madagascar and Togo. Ambassador Walker also worked in the Inspection Corps and as vice president of the National Defense University. Walker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

WALKER: They had had all of their experience in that region. So, he very sensibly had a policy of getting people assigned to other regions as they moved in their careers. I had the benefit of that and got an assignment to the Middle East. I didn't speak Arabic. I had never been assigned there. I'm sure there were a number of officers of my grade in the Middle East Bureau who wanted this job as the head of the Political Section in Jordan, in Amman. But the GLOP policy gave me a boost in that and so I got that assignment. It was a country where you didn't really need Arabic. So, I was a contender and I got the assignment.

Q: You were there from when to when?

WALKER: From '75-'77.

Q: Before you went out to Jordan, what were you getting about the situation?

WALKER: As in any country, you go to the desk officer of that country and spend some time reading through the files, getting a sense of the history (both longer term and more recent) not only of developments in the country but the U.S.-Jordanian relationship, something of a feel for the embassy, who is doing what, who is doing what well, who is doing what not so well. Then you go to briefings around town, not only within the Department of State, but Commerce, Defense, CIA, Treasury, all of the agencies that had anything to do with the country.

Q: Did you go to the Israeli and Syrian desks?

WALKER: Oh, yes. You learn fairly quickly... I went to the Israeli desk, the Syrian desk, the Iraq desk, the Saudi desk since the Saudis financially supported in many ways Jordan, the Egyptian desk, all of that was part of getting up to speed.

Q: Did you find yourself having to watch yourself? Here you are in a nest of Arabists and you were getting a good job.

WALKER: I was concerned about that, but I found that I couldn't have been welcomed better when I got to Amman. Tom Pickering was the ambassador at that time. I hadn't known him but he and his wife were very welcoming to my wife and me and our children when we arrived. The first thing I did before my family joined me after about two or three weeks was to go out on a trip on the desert with the Pickerings. I soon learned what became part of Tom's reputation: he probably was responsible for more wear and tear on more official vehicles of embassies than any other U.S. ambassador in the world. He liked to drive himself and he liked to drive at high speed. I was welcomed by him. His DCM was a Middle East and Arabist and had spent a lot of time in that part of the world. He was professional and welcomed me in a professional way. That was Rocky Suddarth. The guy who was my deputy in the Political Section, David Winn, was a young Arabist who spoke Arabic very well and was a delightful person. We've stayed in contact and friends with all of those people ever since.

Jordan was a big embassy in many ways compared to what I had known thus far in Africa. It had a major AID operation, though not as big as the one we had in Nigeria. It had a big CIA station and a big Defense attaché operation and military assistance program as well. As head of the Political Section, that was my first field experience in the problems of coordinating policy within the embassy with a number of other different sections of the embassy and with a number of other departments of the federal government represented at the embassy. I got to know this much more than I had known in Nigeria, for example, or on the desk for Liberia/Sierra Leone. There is a lot of major interest in that region, the Defense Department had in Jordan - and as a political officer, you learn that you had to know what those were and to take them into account. But at the same time, the ambassador and Washington had their own perspective on things. Well, it's interesting what the role of a political section is in a place like Jordan where the relationship is between the U.S. government and the King, and all of the real diplomacy that occurs affecting important U.S. interests there occurs with the King and the King is the ambassador's contact. So, that left few other really sexy pieces for the rest of the embassy. But we found our niche in the Political Section, one in doing some independent analysis that the ambassador didn't have the time to do... I did some of that not as an Arabist, not as a Middle East specialist, but really as a political scientist and as a diplomat in assessing largely on the basis of the ambassador's reporting, from his high level contacts, and the reporting of the Defense attaché's office, who also was the head of the Military Assistance Group [MAG], from the reporting of the CIA station, and looking at all of these things and bringing my own judgment to bear as a political scientist and a diplomat what all of this meant in terms of the political situation in Jordan, Jordan's relations in the region, and in terms of U.S. policy interests in Jordan. Other than that, I had one particular job with this particular ambassador, who was a prolific writer and had a memory like a sponge when he went in to meet with King Hussein and he would come back and draft cables that were 20-30 pages long, full of detail, as Pickering has a reputation of knowing minutia - the big picture as well. I ran into it not only from my experience in Jordan but I ran into it when I inspected some other

posts where he was. This is the only ambassador I've ever known who knew how many bullets the Marines had in his embassy. He just knew these things, not because he was a micro and overmanager but he was just interested in all of that sort of thing and takes it in. He would come back from sessions with the King or some other senior officials and write these long telegrams, which Secretary Kissinger I understood just lapped up and loved. He liked all the detail he could get. Tom decided that what he wanted me to do was to write the cable summaries. So, I had that job. It was very good. I got to see the ambassador's first drafts, which covered a lot of detail. So, I learned an awful lot about the King, about our ambassador, and about U.S.-Jordanian relations. Having to summarize those 20 pages into two or three paragraphs made you really think about it. The ambassador was pleased and Washington was as well. In addition, my deputy, David Winn, had what we called the "underbelly of society account." He was to move in that part of Jordanian society, not only the Bedouin, but the Palestinians, at the level that nobody else looked at very much. If I had a particular beat there, it was with what we would call the head of department or sometimes the permanent secretary level with the diplomatic community and particularly with the PermSec in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We were not very much concerned in the Political Section with opposition and dissent in Jordan, firstly because we couldn't get to them. There was no formal opposition. Those who might have been some serious opposition were the kinds of people who government would not have liked embassy close contact with. That section was covered by the Agency and by the Defense attaché's office and by our Political Section in our contacts at the university with students, with journalists, with academia. I developed some very good and lasting friends in Jordan, particularly in the academic world and the media world.

One of my most satisfying moments in the Foreign Service was after almost a year in Jordan, I decided to do an assessment of Jordan's relationship with Syria, particularly King Hussein and Assad at the time. I did that clearly from secondary sources. I didn't have primary sources to people at that level. But using the things I saw that the ambassador was reporting and conversations I had with him, it was sort of a search that any good journalist would do without the access to the ambassador's reports. But I wrote an assessment about Jordan's foreign policy in the Middle East and some key questions and particularly the relationship with Syria. I was quite pleased that it was very well received in the Middle East Bureau, which was not my home bureau. So, that was a satisfying thing.

Q: From what you were getting from Pickering and your reading and sometimes being the new guy on the block you have a little brighter eye than somebody who's been around and gotten used to Arab ways, what was your evaluation of the King and his abilities?

WALKER: My evaluation had to be based on the ambassador's reporting and what I heard from my own middle level contacts. The King was a survivor in the Middle East, which gave him some impressive qualities. He was wily. He always kept front and center what Jordan's interests were in any discussions he was having with other countries, including the United States. He was a man who made being a diplomat in a sense easier. He had clear identifiable interests which he pursued. He was not ideological. I didn't know very much about his personal life, but I understand it was rather "active." I didn't see any carryover of that into his political persona.

Q: How were Syria and Jordanian relations?

WALKER: They were tense. There was an attempt much before I got there of the Syrians to bump the King off when he was flying his own airplane, as he was want to do often. In the northern part of Jordan, a Syrian air force plane tried to shoot him down. It was very tense. One of the things my assessment of Jordan-Syria relations looked into is what were Jordan's and Hussein's interests in dealing with the Syrians at the time? It was a tense relationship with Syria. One of the reasons we had such good access with the King was that we were a strong trump card in the King's hand in dealing with Syria. The military assistance, weaponry, and training that we gave to his forces were a strong dissuasion to the Syrians regarding actions against Jordan. One of the most interesting things to me in Jordan, later on in my career, particularly regarding South Africa, was looking at the Jordan-Israeli relationship. That was part of our portfolio as well. I got over to Israel and the West Bank a couple of times and had a chance through our consul general, Mike Newlin, to meet some Israelis. It was very interesting to compare the discussions I had with them with the discussions I would have with Palestinians in Jordan. One quickly got the impression in sitting up all night over dinner or drinks with Palestinians and with the Israelis (separately) - in Jordan with the Palestinians and with the Israelis in Israel - that you could talk about the Arab-Israeli issue, and that's all anyone talked about, into the wee hours of the morning and get a brilliant insight on how to resolve an issue and deal with it and put it on the table, and all of them had thought of it years ago. They had gone through so systematically all permutations and combinations of the possible there that there wasn't that much new. I will come to my South Africa experience later on, but I was struck by how that was the same there.

Q: What seemed to be the inhibitor from using these brilliant ideas to solve the situation?

WALKER: I see it more in hindsight than I saw it at that time, but the main inhibitor was that no one was really ready for a settlement. Not all of the pieces on the chess board found their natural place. Both sides thought that they could get more, and both had an exaggerated notion of their positions of strength. That was a time when Israel wouldn't sit down and talk with the PLO, would not have any notion that the PLO could represent the Palestinians in negotiations and be part of the negotiation process, and certainly there was no Israeli notion of a Palestinian state. It was far away from there. At the same time, there were, as there are in my view today, models of a settlement that people just seemed wedded to and stuck in. They couldn't break out of that and think beyond the box, beyond those models of a settlement, models which were valid at the time because the good ones were based on the power realities and political realities and some of those have shifted. The new models have come out of that. But there is still always a set package when you talk about Arab-Israeli or Palestinian-Israeli things. Very seldom do you find people breaking out of the box and trying to think creatively.

There is another aspect of my time in Jordan that I remember particularly. That's the first time that I really was concerned about my own security. This was the time of George Habash and some of the others who were targeting Americans. So, we had to be careful where we went in our time outside of the embassy. There was one occasion when Tom Pickering was up at the palace talking to the King. The consular officer came up to my office and he said, "I'm thinking of leaving the Foreign Service. It's dull. Nothing ever happens here." At that very moment, machinegun fire broke out from the hotel across the street. This was an attempt of some Palestinian extremist groups to take over. Very quickly, the Jordanian security services came in and fired back. I remember how brave I thought some of those people were, getting up on the

roof and throwing hand grenades down the chimney where some insurgents were and then jumping into it. But that was rather frightening. I called my wife. She was teaching at the American school with the children. They were all hunkered down there. It didn't go much further than that. But you did have to be concerned when you went walking into town on the weekends or camping out - we had a Volkswagen camper at the time - in the desert. The security issue was always in the back of your mind.

Q: What was the situation with Jordan and the West Bank at that time? Did the King still claim sovereignty over the West Bank? At a certain point, he renounced sovereignty.

WALKER: One of his sources of support and income from the Saudis and others was that he was the temporary guardian, in theory, of the holy places in Jerusalem and of the West Bank. The Israelis wanted to push for a long time the notion of Jordan's resuming responsibilities on the West Bank. The King was of two minds on that. On the one hand, it would certainly have increased his importance, but it would have infuriated many Palestinians.

Q: Did we have much of a reading of the Palestinians?

WALKER: The Palestinians in Jordan, I think so. Certainly the Agency did. I think the Political Section did. My deputy, David Winn, deserves a great deal of credit in that in moving well in the Palestinian community. Some of my contacts there - tennis contacts, for example - were Palestinians who were high in the legal profession, in the academic profession, and in journalism - were quite open and a delight to be with. This is the Palestinian elite. We did not have good information about Palestinian opinion in the refugee camps. That was not only dangerous to go into, but the government didn't want us going in there. So, what was brewing in there aside from what we knew from more controlled information, I don't think we had a very good grasp on that.

Q: This was a period where we were not talking to the PLO.

WALKER: That's right.

Q: Did Arafat make appearances in Jordan?

WALKER: No, not only were we not talking to the PLO but the Jordanians weren't talking to the PLO. Arafat was among those who tried to overthrow King Hussein and they had a bloody battle.

Q: Were you aware of Israeli contacts in Jordan?

WALKER: One was aware of the King's non-public contact with senior people in Israel, particularly down at Aqaba, where he had a residence and used to go to water ski. It was an open secret that the King would sometimes meet with Israelis at his villa in Aqaba. That was a delightful thing. We would go down and camp on the beach in Aqaba, and we would see the King out there water skiing. There was much more contact by people at my level and below with him 10-15 years before I got there. He was a young guy who liked to hang out with the expats, go cart racing, that kind of thing. But he had pulled back from that by the time I got there.

Q: Was there an attitude in the embassy among the junior/senior officers towards Israel, maybe taking sides to a certain extent?

WALKER: I expected to go to my first Middle East post with a bunch of Arabists and find it full of “localities”, people who are more Arab than the Arabs. There is criticism in some circles of our Middle East Bureau that it is full of people who get wedded to the Arab point of view, the same way there is criticism of localities in all regional bureaus, particularly by people who have studied a hard language and got to know. But I didn’t find that. That said, there was a closer identity of people at our embassy with Jordanians than there might be in some other countries in the Middle East not only because of the good bilateral relationships we had with Jordan but because the Jordanians who the embassy came in contact with, both the Jordanians and Palestinians in Jordan, were just so modern, westernized people. They liked the sort of things we did. They invited you to their houses for dinner. Wine would be served with dinner, cocktails. The wives would be there. It was quite a comfortable setting. But for all that, I didn’t sense certainly on the part of the embassy front office, the ambassador and the DCM, nor on the part of the Political Section and my colleague who was an Arabist, any localities, nor did I do so in the other sections either. That is not say that our diplomats did not see justice in many of the Palestinian complaints of Israeli actions, and that they did not believe a settlement required greater flexibility on both sides. Some pro-Israeli critics mistake that for anti-Israeli sentiments.

Q: Did we have any feel or was it not important about Islamic religious leaders?

WALKER: I don’t have any recollection of even the term “Islamic fundamentalism.” The hard line Palestinian “rejectionists” were secular. I don’t have any recollection in our Political beat in the political Section of looking out for and trying to learn more about political mullahs, that kind of thing. There were people among our contacts who were very concerned, Jordanians and Palestinians, about some Islamic issues, particularly the protection of the holy places in Jerusalem. But these people were more scholars than religious people. I don’t recall religious fanaticism there at all. When I spoke of security, that was never a part of it. The security threats were the Palestinian extremist groups for secular political reasons.

Q: George Habash and others, who had nothing to do with religion.

WALKER: These were Palestinian nationalists.

Q: What was the reading that you were getting on the Jordanian army? Was it an effective force? Was it loyal?

WALKER: We got a very good reading on the Jordanian army with the ambassador’s with the King, with the station’s contacts, and with the Defense attaché’s contacts.

The Defense attaché was doublehatted. He was both the Defense attaché and the head of the Military Assistance Group, the group that gave military assistance. He not only could get an understanding and information wearing his attaché’s hat, but his MAP hat gave him had something to give in return, which increased the flow of information to him. I think our understanding of the Jordanian military is that compared to a number of Arab armies, it was

quite good, particularly the air force. One, it had good weaponry from us. A lot of the diplomacy at that time was what kind of weaponry would it get? But that was an effective force vis a vis Syria, for example, but not so effective to be a real military threat to Israel. The other aspect of the Jordanian military was not external but internal. Any leadership of Jordan beginning with the King had to have the strong support of the army, which was Bedouin led and not Palestinian, whereas the Palestinian refugees were dominant in commerce and many of the professions (legal, academic, medicine, and so on). They were not allowed into the controlling positions in the armed forces. That stayed solidly Bedouin. The Bedouin looked to the political leadership, beginning with the King, to be concerned primarily about the interests of the people east of the Jordan River, mainly themselves, and not to jeopardize these interests by being too concerned about the interests of the Palestinians.

Q: How did things look on the West Bank at the time? We had our consulate in Jerusalem. Did you keep a running brief on what was happening?

WALKER: No, we didn't from Amman on the West Bank. I would go over there as Political Counselor from time to time just to coordinate with the reporting coming not only from the embassy in Tel Aviv but from the consulate general in Jerusalem. Through our Political Section contacts with Palestinians living in Jordan who certainly kept their contacts with relatives and others on the West Bank, we could follow it, but it was reporting that was filtered through the eyes of Palestinians there. Much broader and more accurate reporting was coming from the Consulate General in Jerusalem.

Q: You left there in '77. Were there any major problems during the time you were there outside of attempted coups?

WALKER: No, not in U.S.-Jordanian relations. It was a pretty steady time for me. I got a chance to learn something about a new part of the world. One of the things I saw in Jordan which is an aspect of diplomatic life is, we had more senior Washington visitors than we had at any of my other posts, beginning with Henry Kissinger and later Cyrus Vance when the administrations changed, but also congressional delegations. You referred to Congressman Solarz earlier. He was visiting Jordan when I first met him. We had a number of senior officials from the State Department coming out and a lot of congressional delegations as well. That was my first real experience of being a control officer for big delegations. I was that for Kissinger, for Vance later, and for congressional delegations. I might say a few words about this. This is an important part of the work of diplomats abroad.

It's a false notion to think that diplomats don't like to have senior visitors come out. Some people put that out as it takes up their time with people who are not all that serious and interesting. But diplomats are interested in not only getting the country to which they are assigned and their portfolios on the map so that people read what they write and pay attention to it, but handling visiting VIPs is also good for one's career. Let me tell you about a couple of VIP visitors which are symbolic in a number of issues and problems.

Kissinger came out on two occasions when I was there. The first one for which I was control officer, I met the plane with the ambassador. The ambassador greeted the Secretary as he came

out and I greeted the other people with him who were handling his trip. One was Joe Sisco, who at the time was Assistant Secretary for the Middle East. Sisco was incensed because the King wasn't there to receive the Secretary. I said, "Mr. Assistant Secretary, this isn't a state visit. This is a foreign minister coming." He had this inflated notion of who this particular secretary was. We got over that. Then the Secretary was being put up in the residence of the Crown Prince, the King's brother, who was number two. I saw what happen, the sort of arrogance of this visiting delegation. They went into this man's house, the security people, and started cutting up carpets and nailing things in walls for cables and the rest. I said, "What are you doing? You are a guest in the Crown Prince's house." I was told that their primary concern was the security of the Secretary. They left us a lot of feathers to smooth when they left. The difference in personalities and the difference in egos was as night and day with the visit of Secretary Vance. I was control officer some months later when Secretary Cyrus Vance came and it couldn't have been a bigger difference. One of the first things he did was say, "Provide some time in my schedule for me to meet the families of the embassy people." He took time away from a very busy schedule and met with the wives and children. That was so appreciated. He was not demanding at all.

Another anecdote. We had a visit by Senator Javits, for whom I was control officer.

Q: He was a senator from New York.

WALKER: Yes, and also an important player on the Foreign Relations Committee. He in his own travel schedule wanted to come on Friday, which is the Sabbath or the Holy day of the week there. We said, "It's going to be very difficult to arrange any visits with you." But we were able to get the foreign minister to receive Senator Javits in his home on Friday, which was a big gesture. I took this congressional visitor over there and we knocked on the door and the foreign minister welcomed him personally at the door. As we went in, Senator Javits' first words to the foreign minister, who had gone out of his way to welcome him, as the foreign minister asked if he would like a drink, and the Senator asked, "Is it safe to drink the water?" He was in this man's house. Foreign Minister Rifat, who was a very cosmopolitan, urbane man, sort of looked at me and we both smiled and went on.

Another big congressional delegation came in. A few of them were serious about having meetings, but for some of them this was a junket. We had to spend a lot of time with a senator from Virginia helping him search in the market of Amman for a cuckoo clock. You don't go to the Middle East for cuckoo clocks. But you learn some things from these visits. You learn that a lot of this is very lighthearted stuff. But you meet other people like Solarz, who worked harder than anyone I've ever known when he came to visit, which meant that we had to work harder as well. You welcome these visits because they can be helpful to your own agenda in that country but also because you can build up contacts with people who can be helpful to you back at home both in support of their policy recommendations and not incidentally of your own career progression.

Let me make another point because it's instructive of the business of diplomacy and diplomats. I ran across this time and again in subsequent assignments. That is the role of diplomats at an embassy, other than the ambassador, in countries like Jordan and many to which I have been assigned where the important, real decisions on foreign policy are made almost totally at the top.

So, the other points of influence that you normally would expect in a government and you would want to touch to have influence on foreign policy matters are not connected. Foreign diplomats assigned to Washington have a wide arena of points of influence on policy, not only in our government, partly because our federal government is so decentralized and so many different departments of government have an oar in foreign policy matters, and the role of Congress and Congress itself is decentralized and our civil society is so large and decentralized itself that first and second secretaries of embassies in Washington have a lot to do. There is a lot of ground to cover. But in some of these other countries - Jordan is one of them - power is not decentralized. So, even though I had contacts in the foreign ministry up to the person directly under the foreign minister, who was the ambassador's contact, that was heavy stuff in another kind of country. But when I went to see the permanent secretary in the foreign ministry and the other ministries or heads of department, I would make my pitch, my argument, sometimes under instructions and sometimes freewheeling in an exploratory way myself, but I knew that they had marginal impact on the final making of policy in Jordan, which was made in the royal palace by the King. You never knew to what extent senior officials of government were taken into account or even taken into the discussion, had a seat at the table at the royal palace. So, even though I met with the number two person in the foreign ministry and should expect to have influence in that way, my best contact was a relatively low grade captain in the armed forces who was assigned to the royal palace because he married one of the King's daughters. He and I would play tennis. I learned more from him and I think the things that I said to him in terms of trying to project the American position or interest in things probably got closer to the decision making channel than through my more formal demarches to the number two guy in the foreign ministry. That's a kind of conduct of diplomacy that you have to get used to and learn how to play.

Q: Was there enough room to play for people in other parts of the embassy who dealt with policy? If they were cut off from the real top level people, did they have to find room in which to exercise their abilities?

WALKER: The people who had contacts where it counts in Jordan - and this is so in other countries of a small leadership group - were the ambassador, the Defense attaché (who also was a military assistance person), the chief of station of the Agency since the Agency had big programs in Jordan, not so much AID in Jordan because although we had an aid program there, it wasn't all that key as in some other places... We got to know some people there in the development of the Jordan Valley and Jordan River program but, no, except at those very top levels, the rest of our contacts were marginal, but nonetheless giving color and shadings to our. You were always thinking of the future of the next generation. We were cultivating those people. That always helps. One of my contacts was a guy who a couple of years after I left became foreign minister. That's the kind of person you want to create close contacts with. So, that paid off in a longer sense.

Q: Were there any water issues that came up while you were there?

WALKER: Oh, yes, for example, the Yarmuk River up in the north. In my classes that I teach today in international relations and another in diplomacy, and the lecturing I do in foreign affairs, we get to the issues of the 21st century when you move beyond some of the typical geostrategic/geopolitical issues, one of them is water in many parts of the world. As Israeli

leader Rabin said, "If we settle all the problems of the Middle East and don't settle this problem of water, the region is going to explode." Yes, there were issues of the Yarmuk River and the aquifers along the Jordan River which were issues we knew were down the pike in settlement negotiations between not only the Palestinians in Israel but Jordan and Syria and Israel. So, some of our aid programs were directed towards improving the management of water resources on the Jordan side of the Jordan River and the Yarmuk River. That aspect of our aid program was useful as a diplomatic tool in that way. I know the ambassador got very much involved in that program. I went with him on a couple of trips on that.

Q: Were you hit heavily on longstanding support of Israel by your Jordanian contacts? Was this a source of constant discussion?

WALKER: Yes and no. Permeating all of the discussions - and they would bring it up from time to time - were their views that Americans are unbalanced and biased against them on this issue. But our contacts among the Jordanians, the Palestinians as well as the Jordanians, were a very sophisticated lot. Many of them had studied in the United States, knew the U.S. or read U.S. newspapers. They knew the politics of this issue. They knew that domestic politics plays an important role in the foreign policy of any country. They understood that. But they also understood the importance of having some feedback into Washington of their point of view. So, they continued to talk to us in that way. But never was there in any of the contacts I had any sense of bitterness that one senses we get these days. One of my major contacts was a very successful Palestinian attorney and a good tennis partner of mine. He lost a lot in the expansion of Israel. His family was of great social and economic position in Haifa. Their house is still back there. Their property is still back there. They suffered and would like to go back one day. He had every reason to be bitter but wasn't bitter. I remember when my parents visited me there, he invited them to dinner at his house. Very hospitable. We continued friendly correspondence after I left Jordan.

DAVID BLAKEMORE
Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1975)

David Blakemore was born in 1941 in New York State. He graduated from Valparaiso in 1962 and joined the Foreign Service in 1965. He served overseas in Saudi Arabia, India, Korea, Bangladesh and Nigeria, as well as the staff director of the Board of Examiners and Deputy Team Leader in the Inspection Corps in Washington DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in the winter of 1997.

Q: You were on that desk for a year from '74 to '75. In '75 whither?

BLAKEMORE: I had a very interesting two month stint on the Jordan desk filling in before my new assignment started.

Q: That was when everybody was in NEA wasn't it?

BLAKEMORE: That's right so it was the other half of the same bureau. King Hussein was making one of his official visits to the United States during that period. He came often but not always as an official visitor. That was my major focus in the two months that I was there. It was all the paper work and all the scurrying and preparation for a state visit. Interesting to get a little glimpse of Arab-Israel politics from the Washington perspective in the State Department. I don't have much recollection of the two months beyond that.

Q: Where would it be, '75 that you went?

BLAKEMORE: It was in the spring of '75.

DOUGLAS R. KEENE
Political/Military Security Assistance & Sales (Middle East)
Washington, DC (1975-1980)

Mr. Keene was born and raised in Massachusetts and graduated from Colby College. He joined the Foreign Service in 1967, serving first in Viet Nam and subsequently at Middle East posts including Jerusalem, Karachi, Cairo, as well as Amman and Muscat, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. His Washington assignments also concerned primarily Middle Eastern matters, including the Arab-Israel problem. Mr. Keene was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: Did you get involved in the AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System)?

KEENE: Yes. Sure did.

Q: I interviewed Senator Percy, who shot down in flames over AWACS. What were you doing with AWACS?

KEENE: Well, it was a major weapons sales, so the office was involved in it intimately from the beginning--as with that whole Middle East aircraft package, which was also very controversial: F-15s to Saudi Arabia, which came at a slightly different time. We tended to think AWACS to Saudi Arabia was all right, that in their hands, it would be more of a command and control system than any real threat to—it's all about the threat to Israel. That's what all this stuff is always about. So maybe we didn't care as passionately as some of the regional bureaus did; they were more affected by "clientitis" as they were and tried to be more objective.

Q: Who was the head of PM at the time?

KEENE: Well, I went through a couple of them: George Vest and Leslie Gelb and then Reggie Bartholomew.

Q: Was Jordan a factor at that time?

KEENE: Yes, there was a big controversial sale of I-Hawk anti-aircraft missiles, which just attracted unfavorable views in congress, and they finally compromised. The I-Hawk is inherently mobile, but they made the Jordanians emplace them in a fixed position. That's how that one was resolved. And the Jordanians wanted aircraft, too, but we didn't want to face that battle on the hill (Capitol Hill, i.e. congress).

Q: Did you have a relationship with the manufacturers?

KEENE: Yes, the office also reviewed commercial applications for export of international traffic of arms regulations; and so we would review all of their applications and make our recommendations back to the office of munitions control, which actually issued the licenses, or refused, whatever the case may be. So the guys from the companies would come in and state their case, frequently.

MORRIS DRAPER
Country Director: Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon
Washington, DC (1976-1979)

Morris Draper was born in California in 1928 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1952. An Arabic language officer, Mr. Draper served in a number of Middle East posts including Beirut, Baghdad, Jeddah, Ankara, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC. Mr. Draper was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy

Q: Then you moved over to become country director from 1976 to 1978. Looking at this list of names I can't think of a more god awful combination, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Talking about moving from the eye of the hurricane right into the hurricane.

DRAPER: The Lebanese were then going on as in the past. Jordan was a bright spot, but we were having our problems with Jordan for they were seeking more arms and more security vis a vis Israel. We were bumping up against the supporters of Israel in that respect. Our relations with Syrian were kind of interesting. This is another place where Henry Kissinger sort promoted a modest aid program. It was quite substantial. We had some interesting people in Washington who were content to go along with it, allotting money to Syria for behaving itself and holding to the withdrawal agreement. The AID people in the woodwork were making sure that no real money was being spent in Syria.

Q: The program was sort of a quid pro quo?

DRAPER: It was a *quid pro quo* for the withdrawal from the Golan Heights and the easing of tensions. This was pre Camp David. We were very interested in maintaining the relationship in

preventing another outbreak. And we were kind of hopeful Assad was a pragmatist and that under certain circumstances he would work something out with the Israelis. Of course Syria was vitally concerned with stability in Lebanon. In the summer of 1976 we squared a three way deal with the Christians, the Syrians and ourselves. There was a lot of very interesting things going on and it is still true fifteen years later.

PHILIP R. MAYHEW
Political Officer
Amman (1978-1980)

Philip R. Mayhew was born in California in 1934. He graduated from Princeton University in 1956 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957-1959. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961 and served in Laos, Congo, Vietnam, Thailand, Jordan, and Washington, DC. Mr. Mayhew was interviewed on May 26, 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: You went out to Amman, Jordan.

MAYHEW: Yes, February '78.

Q: You were there from when to when?

MAYHEW: Ostensibly, I would have left February 1980, after 2 years, but I extended for a few months so that I would get on the transfer cycle. So, actually it was in the middle of 1980.

When I arrived in Amman it was in February, cold and gloomy, and of course there were few trees. There is little vegetation in Amman. It wasn't what I thought of as my part of the world and was kind of depressing at first. But, it was a very interesting time. Very early on in my tour there, the US started trying to convince King Hussein to join the Camp David peace process. We had visits from Cy Vance who, I think, did his best to convince King Hussein to join. But Hussein, if anything, is a survivor. He has to be very careful what he does and, of course, the Palestinians were against Camp David. At least half of his population was Palestinian. The Syrians were against it. He was going to certainly need some cover.

The one thing, which we might have been able to give him, an end to Israeli West Bank settlements, proved not to be there. President Carter apparently thought he had an agreement to end West Bank settlement. Prime Minister Begin, if he ever made such an agreement, or if he ever thought he had made such an agreement, had changed his mind on it.

So, convincing Hussein to go in on those circumstances was a very difficult task. I think Vance and other visitors who came at that time did their best and made a very good case for it. One of the best cases for Palestinian participation in the Camp David process I ever heard was by former Congressman Solarz, who in my house at a dinner talked to a dozen leading Palestinians and made the case for Camp David as well as I'd ever heard it argued. The Jordanian-Palestinians,

being moderates, were certainly receptive to his arguments. But not entirely convinced and, of course, they wouldn't allow themselves to be convinced as long as Yasser Arafat and the PLO as an organization were against it.

I think there were a few who saw it as a good thing to do, at the time. In retrospect it's very unfortunate that they didn't join the Camp David process. Like so many cases with the Middle East and with the Arabs, it was a lost opportunity. But we were not able, at that time, to convince Hussein to join.

That was probably the most important thing that happened during the period that I was there.

Q: Again you were the new boy on the block, what impression were you getting about King Hussein and his role?

MAYHEW: In Jordan he is, and remains, the foundation of the state. He was the one person who had the authority, the public appeal, the personal charisma, the political ability to keep together the Jordanian East-Bankers and the Palestinians, to enjoy the general political support of both groups. I think it is without question that most Jordanians admire the King, realize the necessity of the throne, and are comfortable with the King.

It doesn't mean they always agree with him. In fact, the Palestinians being a very fractious bunch, there's very often disagreements on whatever particular strategy or tactics he's following at the moment. But we're speaking here with moderate Palestinians rather than the radical ones. Most of the radical ones having departed for Lebanon after 1970.

Q: After Black September.

MAYHEW: After Black September, after they almost took over Jordan. The King would not allow them to do so. And they eventually went and took over Lebanon.

So the ones that were left in Jordan were, by and large, very middle-class kind of Palestinians. Most had been educated in the West, many of them in the United States. They were very reasonable people that you could talk to, very forthcoming. In fact, I always thought that with Palestinians, the problem is not getting them to talk enough to write a reporting cable, the problem is getting them to stop talking and to figure out what is worth reporting. Because they're a very voluble bunch and lovely people. I enjoyed my time there.

But to get back to Hussein. He seems to be the real glue that has kept the country together for this very long time. His brother, Hassan, is probably innately more intelligent a man than Hussein himself is, but without the charm and the charisma. Hussein is marvelous, he can charm a bird out of a tree. He's extremely good with visitors. All of the congressional figures and others that we had out there, who talked to Hussein, would certainly come away with the impression, that this is a reasonable man.

And he is a reasonable man. But he also recognizes the limits. Jordan, after all, is a very small, resource poor country and, I think has never gotten credit from the Arabs for being the only

country to give citizenship to Palestinians. It's got Syria on the north and it's got a difficult neighbor to the South. The Saudis have always been very difficult. Jordan needs Saudi assistance, or someone's assistance. Jordan has to put on a very careful balancing act between radical Arabs and the conservative Gulf regimes.

Domestically, Hussein has the problem of Islamic fundamentalism to worry about. He obviously has always in mind the fate of his grandfather, who was assassinated in Jerusalem because he was ready to negotiate with Israel.

He has a difficult family background. His father had mental difficulties. He took over the throne very young and raised himself, in many ways. A man who's proved himself with all kinds of physical feats--jumping out of airplanes, flying helicopters, driving speeding cars, driving motorcycles--all of these very masculine kind of things. He's had a lot of personal tragedies in his life, including a wife who was killed in a helicopter crash. So he's had his share, certainly, of non-political difficulties. To say nothing of the numerous assassination attempts on his life.

At any rate, he's very charming and sophisticated. Discussion is always very reasonable. He speaks in a very modest kind of subdued voice. Good sense of humor, understands how westerners speak and talk. A leader who has proven himself, certainly over a very long time in a situation which has incredible constraints.

Q: What was your impression of how Nick Veliotis as our ambassador, operated?

MAYHEW: Tom Pickering was there when I arrived. Nick later replaced him. There was a great difference of style between Pickering and Veliotis. Pickering is very methodical and very well-organized. Nick kind of managed by the seat of his pants, but certainly everybody liked him, and the embassy ran well. I think he had a real rapport with the King, but Tom Pickering did as well. Entirely different kinds of people, but both very competent under difficult circumstances.

Q: Again, this was an area that was unfamiliar to you. One of the charges of outsiders has been, you have these Arab specialists who have no understanding or sympathy for Israel, hence are almost un-American. I'm talking about the American from within the American Foreign Service. How did you find the view of Israel as you were dealing with them, because everything had an Israeli facet to it, I suppose.

MAYHEW: Particularly in Jordan. If you're in Morocco everything probably doesn't have an Israeli facet to it. But if you're in Jordan there is only one foreign policy issue, the Arab-Israeli problem. You do have economic problems; we were providing assistance. But really there is only one issue. You do nothing but talk about that issue, at all times, at great length. You ventilate completely every facet of it. If you call on a Jordanian, whom you haven't met before, and we did a lot of this, they don't assume that you're going to talk about anything else but the problem.

Like anything else, if you really dive into it, you soon realize the historical complications. History is never really far away in any of your conversations. You go talk to some of the old Baathists and they start with a recital of historical events as they see them, beginning with the

Balfour declaration. It's half an hour before you can get a word in edgewise and they've worked up by that time to 1948, maybe even to the '60s.

To make a judgment whether there is a sort of Arabist misunderstanding, or lack of understanding, seems to me to be extremely difficult. It's very individual, but my impression is that there's little to the charge.

I think there's no doubt that if you spend your time learning Arabic, and talking to Arabs, and you're in Arab countries all the time, that you're going to pick up some of the local flavor. I do not think that you're going to disobey any instructions from Washington, or that you're going to go outside the established policy line. Because the situation is so incredibly complicated, it seems to me that it's very hard to take a different line. You can't go around telling the Arabs, for instance, that they're right and that A, B and C ought to be, because then they might well expect you to deliver on it in some way or other. When you're in conversations in the Middle East, you have to stick to a line. The line you better stick to is the one that is current US policy, because otherwise, your Arab contacts are going to think that while this guy is saying A and B, which doesn't seem to be what I see in the press, is this guy reliable.

So the complexities of being different from the official line, seem to me, to be virtually insuperable. Now it does not mean that if you work with the Arabs for 20 years and speak Arabic that you wouldn't have a certain sympathy for their point of view. I think that's natural. At the same time, you wouldn't be around for 20 years in the Foreign Service, it seems to me, if you did not also realize the imperatives of dealing with Israel. And, of course, many of the people who are Arabists have been in Israel. But the policy imperatives, whether you agree with the policy or not, in the longer run, are certainly there.

Q: Where did you go after?

NICHOLAS A. VELIOTES
Ambassador
Jordan (1978-1981)

Ambassador Nicholas A. Veliotes was born in California in 1928. He attended the University of California, where he received a B.A. degree in 1952, and an M.A. degree in 1954. He joined the State Department in 1955, serving in Italy, India, Laos, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Washington, DC. Ambassador Veliotes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

VELIOTES: The countries surrounding Israel, essentially. So when you took a look at that area... Tom Pickering was our ambassador in Jordan at the time. The tradition in NEA, at that time, anyway, was that if you became deputy for an area, you were expected to be a candidate for an embassy that opened in the area that you were handling. And the opening came in Jordan when Tom Pickering was transferred back to Washington to become assistant secretary for OES, at that time.

Q: Were there any problems of getting confirmed or anything like that?

VELIOTES: Not really. I had no problems. There was an initial concern, and I think misplaced concern, on the part of certain people in the bureau (particularly those who had entered NEA in a more traditional way, through Arabic training, something I never had), that the Jordanians might resent my having been assigned in a highly visible position in Israel, particularly during the October War. And I think that was a legitimate concern to be explored. The decision was made that the Jordanians are smarter than that, and they might actually welcome having someone with whom they could speak with confidence, privately, about Israeli developments, which, of course, were so important to them. And basically that's the way it turned out. I had no problem in the Congress, no, none whatsoever.

Q: Well, on going out to Jordan, obviously you'd been dealing with this.

VELIOTES: Yes, I knew the issues.

Q: Did you set up: these are American interests with Jordan, and these are the major problems that I want to concentrate on? Did you sort of have an agenda?

VELIOTES: Well, you see, the Jordanian agenda almost defines itself, depending on what's going on in the area at the time.

What am I talking about? The peace process is always there. And, of course, this was Camp David. I presented my credentials in that Camp David time frame. That was one important part of the agenda: Could we get the Jordanians to support, or perhaps even participate in, the Camp David process? I'd say that was the top priority as far as the president was concerned.

The second issue also defined itself very quickly, because in that time frame several things happened to demonstrate again, vividly, the essential fragility of the Gulf and the need to protect our interests in that area. The Shah fell, bringing Khomeini to power, dedicated to the destruction of American and Western influence not only in Iran, but everywhere else in the area.

At about that same time, you had the Mecca mosque incident. A small renegade extremist splinter group of Sunni Muslim fanatics occupied, with guns, the great mosque at Mecca, during the Hajj, in 1979, I believe. And finally they were dislodged, with French help. It was clear to everyone that if that same group had done what they'd done in Mecca, in Riyadh, the royal family would have been wiped out. They just were not organized to protect themselves.

This led to a number of things. The Saudis ended up hiring a bunch of Pakistani mercenaries, in essence, to help them with their security.

The problem was how could we, now with the enhanced threat to the area through Khomeini and the continuing concern about Soviet penetration in the area... This was also the time when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Marxist South Yemen was seen as threatening North Yemen.

Q: In December of '79.

VELIOTES: So you began to think that maybe the great game of the 19th century was being replayed. It turned out, in retrospect, it was quite exaggerated, but those twin shocks, of the fall of the Shah and the invasion of Afghanistan, were things the administration had to cope with. And so did the area. What that meant is it put a premium on enhancing our security relationships with the Jordanians. And, indeed, within a year, we and the Jordanians had arrived at arrangements and exercises, et cetera, so that if there was a need to move into Saudi Arabia to protect it, the Jordanians would have gone with us.

Q: If I recall, at the time, there were maps in American newspapers, with big arrows pointing down through Iran, and having Soviet armored divisions coming down there.

VELIOTES: Yes, there was a lot of fantasizing about that, whether they were Soviets or Iranians. The problem was, this was an area that essentially was unprotected and could not defend itself.

We started then a process of trying to find ways to promote self-defense and readiness in the area, and sought to work with Jordanians, in the first instance, and then Egyptians, in exercises where we would acclimatize our equipment and have Arab partners in case we had to move to the area.

These were the days of the famous Rapid Deployment Force. And the Rapid Deployment Force existed in the person of Marine four-star general called P. X. Kelley, who was a perfect Marine and a Xerox machine. The Jordanians were the first division of the Rapid Deployment Force.

So the agenda defined itself. It was the peace process in Camp David. And, of course, the Palestinian issue. And then security cooperation.

Then, in your dealings with a country, it's not enough that you have the leadership with you, you have to try to ensure that enough of the needs of the people are met so that this favorable leadership will stay in power. So we had concerns about the economic situation.

We had a small but active and successful AID program. That led us into the problem of water resources. I spent a lot of time on seeking to get an agreement amongst the Jordanians, Syrians, and Israelis on control of the last water resource on the Yarmuk River.

This agenda is pretty much there.

Q: We'll talk about the individual parts, but did you find that the Jordanians were able to separate the threats to them coming from the Soviet Union and from Iran, and the fact that the United States was the obvious defender for that, and the other fact that we were a strong supporter of Israel? Were they able to separate this out?

VELIOTES: Yes, they were, in the Jordanian government, in the Palestinian elites. These were highly sophisticated people, extremely well educated, as opposed to the Palestinian man-on-the-street. But I think you had two points of view there. You had the Bedouin point of view, the

native Jordanian point of view, which recognized the threat to Jordan from a number of sources, including from Israel. But they also saw us as their best guarantor against Israel because of our relationship with Israel.

Q: So this was not all a minus, by any means.

VELIOTES: It was not all a minus. I don't want to suggest that they supported the American relationship with Israel; that would not be true. But, in the palace, when you spoke to selected advisors, selected cabinet officers, you found people who understood the issues. And complicating everything in Jordan, of course, were the Palestinians, because the native Jordanians, at least when I was there, were as antagonistic to the Palestinians as they were to the Jews across the river. Frankly, the Palestinians were the ones who were their current problem.

Q: Did we see that as just something they were going to have to work out themselves, or did we try to do anything about the Palestinian problem?

VELIOTES: Well, through the Camp David process, at that time, we tried to engage the Palestinians as well as the Jordanians in discussions with Israel. And we failed. As far as Jordanian-Palestinian relations internally, a mixed marriage was a Jordanian marrying a Palestinian, or vice versa. And, of course, to complicate the situation further, you had two distinct Christian minorities--a Palestinian Christian minority and a native Jordanian Christian minority, based on Christian tribes. But the tribal pattern in Jordan was fascinating, because Christian tribes and Islamic tribes would form alliances against each other. I mean, you just didn't have one Christian tribe and another Christian tribe forming an alliance against the Islamics; no, you had, depending on where you lived...these were nomads, don't forget. In a sense, you were coming out of a pre-modern era.

Q: At the head of this, of course, was King Hussein. One gets a very mixed reaction as I've gone through these interviews, including somebody who remembers King Hussein, as a young boy, opening the door for him when one of our people went to visit his grandfather, Abdullah.

VELIOTES: And then you had the King Hussein, as the young king, who would go to Saudi Arabia in purple jumpsuits to offend the Saudis.

One of our problems was, back in Washington, you had a lot of people in the State Department and the CIA who remembered that King Hussein. And I have to tell you, I got very little briefing in Washington that was worth a damn, for dealing with King Hussein.

Tom Pickering gave me what I needed, but Tom, too, was an outsider. Tom went to Jordan and dealt with what he found there: the days of purple jumpsuits and grab-ass parties at the palace long, long gone. By the time Tom got there, you were dealing with a man in his forties who had developed a certain sense of dignity, a sense of weightiness because of the events that had transpired over his life. And that was who I met. I had to discount most of what people...

Q: At that time, how did you deal with King Hussein? What was the approach that seemed best for you?

VELIOTES: Up-front all the time. Not uptight. Always be a hundred percent honest, which is, I think, what you should do in diplomacy all the time, anyway. Be sympathetic to the concerns, but make sure that the king, and whoever else is listening, doesn't interpret your sympathetic interest in their problems as lack of support for your own country's policies, because what they want to know is that you represent your government. I had good relations with them. I found them extremely congenial, so I liked them as well.

But my job was to make sure that they understood our policies and that we understood their policies. With Jordan being what it was and being in the fragile position it was in, particularly since the alienation between Jordan and the United States over Camp David and Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, the trick was to let them know that you thought they were wrong in not supporting American policy in their own interest, but to do this in a way, honestly, that could not be interpreted as therefore we've lost interest in the territorial integrity and stability of Jordan.

My hardest job was to get the Jordanian government and the U.S. government thinking beyond the current problem that we had. How do we fence off our disagreement on the peace process? Work on it over time and hope that we come to a meeting of minds, but put that over here and then work on the things that we really agree on, like security.

Q: In the Camp David agreement, Egypt was making peace with Israel. And, of course, we wanted to get Jordan to go along with the process, too, which would have really been a major victory. But when you went out there, did you feel that you were going to get anywhere with this, or did you say, well, I'll give it a try, but I'm not going to push too hard? How did you feel about this?

VELIOTES: The embassy had predicted the king's position one hundred percent, so Washington should not have been as surprised as apparently it was when Jordan did not follow in behind Sadat. What I did was try to get the Jordanians to keep their options open until senior people from Washington could come and talk to them. I think we succeeded in that; the Jordanians did not totally close down their policy options for a month or two.

I think there were two things that were primarily responsible for the Jordanians taking the position they took, which was very vigorously opposed to America's policy.

In my view, the most important was the fall of the Shah. I say this to people, and they're shocked.

Q: Because you could tie this together.

VELIOTES: Well, the fact of the matter is, the Shah's relationship to King Hussein was that of elder brother and protector and financier. All of a sudden, at a stroke, the king lost--an emotional loss--a man for whom he had deep, deep affection. Secondly, he lost the lever that would get more money out of the Saudis and the Gulfies, because the Shah would be the banker of last resort. He lost the counterbalance to Iraqi power, to keep the Iraqis honest, and maybe the Syrians honest. (Jordan's a very small, exposed country.) And he lost a major force for respectability of the thesis that Muslims in the Middle East should do business with Israel. Had

the Shah lived, Hussein would have found himself between the Shah and Sadat, both of whom had decided to support American policy with respect to peace in the Middle East as well as the security of the area. Without the Shah and under those circumstances, Hussein considered himself abandoned by Sadat.

And, in our wisdom about this time, we had cut back all of the Jordanian aid programmes.

Q: Was there a purpose for this? Was this a lever or just budgetary?

VELIOTES: Budgetary, essentially. You know, we go through these cycles. You may recall the early Carter administration equated military assistance with immorality. And then we decided also that budget support was immoral, because, you know, it's a bottomless pit and what do you want to just give people budget support for?

So we cut both of these things and put the Jordanians out looking around for money, looking around for emotional support, looking around for allies. And, all of a sudden, there was Iraq.

Q: Jordan and King Hussein supported Iraq. We're now speaking in September of 1991, where Jordan has found itself way out on a limb by support of Iraq.

VELIOTES: That process started in 1980.

Q: Were you in there at the beginning and involved one way or the other? We had a rather ambivalent relationship with Iraq all along.

VELIOTES: Right, through the eighties. Well, I'll tell you when my involvement started. My involvement started in Jordan when the Shah collapsed.

Q: This was in '78.

VELIOTES: I guess the Shah went down in '79. The Iran-Iraq War started in '80. I got involved because we had no embassy in Iraq. We had a low-level interest section that had access to no one. I found myself a channel of the U.S. government to Saddam Hussein, through King Hussein. And I'd say that in the beginning our message to Saddam Hussein, through Hussein, was very clear: We do not support the war. We want the war to end. We see nothing good to come out of this. We will not support your dismemberment of Iran by taking the oil, Kazakhstan, which the Iraqis had renamed Arabistan). And we will fight any attempt on your part to expand the war.

And indeed we did. Saddam Hussein and King Hussein were pretty far along in trying to compromise the Gulf states. And we came down and we wiped that out. We told Saddam Hussein that we did not see his taking the oil-producing part of Iran as saving it from the Communists. We told him that this was a self-fulfilling prophecy. If anyone starts to dismember Iran, the Russians, for their own protection, will come in. So we oppose that. Don't even talk to us about that. Don't even think about it.

And these were the ways we got involved with Saddam Hussein.

Q: But you were basically calling on King Hussein and saying this is our policy...

VELIOTES: That's right, and would you please pass this on. Make sure he understands.

As I recall, on the first one, the question of the expansion of the war, we had learned, through our embassies in the Gulf, what was going on. Through intimidation, the Iraqi air force was starting to get ready to land in certain of these countries and go across the Persian Gulf and attack Iran. That would have compromised those countries. And we said no, that's not going to happen.

On the question of the dismemberment of Iran, this was raised with me, and I said, "No, that's not our policy, we will never support it. That's a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Q: We're talking about a time...

VELIOTES: That's the earlier part.

Q: We're talking about a time when here is somebody who is attacking Iran, Iran is holding our embassy hostage, and, you know, the old Middle East adage: My enemy's enemy is my friend. Were there any pressures at all on you from the United States, within the government, saying, oh, hell with them, let's let these Iraqis take the Iranians apart?

VELIOTES: No, our policy really was not determined by concern for our hostages. Our policy was determined by a very solid geopolitical consideration. We saw the dismemberment of Iran as the trigger for the scenario that we didn't want to happen and we were not prepared for, but which we would have to react to on the ground if it did happen, and that would be the Russian troops coming into northern Iran.

Q: We'd already gone through that in 1945.

VELIOTES: Well, you know the background. And we just said, no, we will never support this.

Now when I came to Washington in '81 as assistant secretary, things started to change. The Iranians started to mobilize themselves; they started to throw the Iraqis back. This process reached a point which led to near panic in the Gulf states. And the fear was that the Iranians would succeed in collapsing southern Iraq. And then what's to stop them if they decide to turn left? And we saw, in '90, that this was not a foolish concern. There was nothing there to stop it. So we had to deal with this. And, again, we had to deal with American geopolitical realities. Whereas, in the first instance, if we supported the dismemberment of Iran, there'd be the Russian scenario that we would have to meet on the ground. We were trying to get prepared for it, but no one wanted it. Certainly no one wanted to promote it or trigger it.

As that threat receded, the concern was that we'd have to meet the Iranians on the ground. Well, what do you do about this? It's simple, you help the Iraqis not lose the war--within limits.

Q: Did you find that, say, from the National Security Council and Zbigniew Brzezinski and this group...

VELIOTES: Well, but this is a different time; I'm talking now about the early Reagan administration.

Q: All right, but let's go back to the time you were there. The war began while you were in Jordan, under the Carter administration. There was a consistency in what we knew we really didn't want. What was our evaluation, as you saw it at that time and it was coming both from Washington and through Jordan and all, of Saddam Hussein?

VELIOTES: No one paid too much attention to Saddam. Well, very little. He was known as the strongman, the vice president. I think he probably came to prominence in the United States, on the intelligence screen, in 1975, when he negotiated with the Shah the humiliating Treaty of Algiers, wherein the Shah agreed to stop supporting the Kurdish rebellion in the north in exchange for the Iranian sharing of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway and a few other things.

Q: And it was humiliating for the United States, too, because of our involvement with having inspired the Kurds.

VELIOTES: Yes, it was not everyone's finest hour.

So Saddam was seen as the strongest of these shadowy figures that ran that bloodthirsty tyranny called the Baath Party and Iraq.

In 1977, Jimmy Carter made a horrible mistake. He insisted that we take the initiative in sending our Under Secretary for political affairs to Iraq to say, hey, we want to be friends. That was a time when Carter said, "Let's be friends with everyone. Aren't we all nice people in this world." It was not thought through. Some of us tried to stop it. And the net result was the Under Secretary for political affairs was sent to Baghdad and no one would talk to him. So we hardly were well disposed towards the Iraqis in this time frame.

When the war started with Iran, we had no role to play in it. We had our preoccupations with Afghanistan, with the hostages, with Camp David. And I should say, earlier in the Carter Administration, we had this scare of the invasion of North Yemen by South Yemen. And that was seen strictly in East-West terms.

Q: South Yemen was a Marxist state.

VELIOTES: Yes, and North Yemen was sort of a funny kind of a non-Marxist feudal state of some sort, without the trappings of monarchy, at that time. I wouldn't say we paid much attention to Iraq at all. As a matter of fact, when I was deputy, before Camp David, our concerns were the Israeli invasion of Lebanon; could we get the Geneva Conference reconstituted; how were things going on the disengagement agreements between Egypt and Israel and between Syria and Israel. We were worrying about oil supply and increasing prices.

Q: Now this was during a real OPEC crisis.

VELIOTES: Right. And reestablishing a working relationship with the Gulf countries in the aftermath of the '73 War. These were the kinds of things that were of concern to us. Iraq was over there, known to be a rich country and a pretty terrible place that no one had any real knowledge about, except some scholarly knowledge and what could be gleaned from the Americans who lived there and from travelers. It wasn't too important. It was a rejectionist state. It was seen as sort of living on its own blood. And then Saddam knocked off Bakr in '78, replaced him, and took over. Then the Syrians and the Iraqis started to fight again in their intelligence wars. That was the kind of stuff.

Q: How about Syria? That always posed, in a way, the greatest threat, didn't it, to Jordan?

VELIOTES: The Jordanians are always conscious of the Syrians. Some of my colleagues will tell you that, oh, well, we knew the Syrians would never invade Jordan. Well, they did, in '70, during Black September, during the Palestinian revolt, that's what you had. And the Syrians did come down into Jordan. They didn't do much fighting. They turned around and went back, for a variety of reasons, including the fact the Israeli air force might have destroyed them, or we might have--we had carriers out there. And the Jordanians surprised the Syrians by still being in control of their country and being deployed to fight. So, since the Syrians weren't going to be welcomed by crazy mobs enthusiastically putting roses in their gun barrels, they thought better of it and they went home. But the Jordanians were always concerned about the Syrians. They preferred to have better relations with the Syrians rather than worse relations.

And one of the things the Jordanians had going for them, in the Syrian context, was the enmity between Iraq and Jordan, stemming from 1958 when the Iraqi army overthrew the precursors of the Baath Party, overthrew the monarchy, and killed the king's family. So, as long as the Jordanians were enemies of the Iraqis, they had something in common with the Syrians.

Well, that changed, and all of a sudden the Iraqis and the Jordanians, when the Iran-Iraq War started, became partners of convenience, and it turned into a very stable marriage. This offended the Syrians, who are great practitioners of intimidation, either directly or through intelligence operations.

I remember, once, in the eighties, talking to one of the leaders of a Lebanese faction. And I remembered it was generally believed his father had been killed by the Syrians. I was trying to persuade him about supporting American policy, noting that the Saudis were in support of us. And he looked at me--we were sitting there alone in my office in Washington, and I was assistant secretary at the time--and he said, "Well, you've got to understand something. For those of us who live out there, the Saudis are very important, and they've got a lot of money, and we really appreciate that, and they can influence us. But the Syrians kill."

The Syrians sought to use these various techniques on the Jordanians. Some hit men came into town, killed some Syrians dissidents who had sought refuge in Jordan. The Syrians believed the Jordanians were sympathetic to, if not actively supporting, the Islamic fundamentalists who were revolting in Syria in the early eighties.

Jordan's a very non-bloodthirsty country, by the way. The king is careful not to spill blood unless he absolutely has to. He doesn't have an accumulation of blood debts, which helps explain his longevity.

The king responded by hanging the hit men when they caught them.

The king hosted an Arab League meeting, which the Syrians didn't want to take place because, in 1980, they feared it would result in going on record in support of Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War. So the Syrians mobilized troops on the border. Well, what do you do if someone mobilizes a couple of divisions on your border? You mobilize and you turn to your friends.

Now my colleague up in Syria at the time, Talcott Seelye, reminded me recently that he thought I had terribly misjudged the situation. And I said I hadn't misjudged anything. It was the Jordanians who lived there who were sincerely worried that the Syrians might indeed come across the border.

And Jimmy Carter said, "If they come across, we're with you."

Q: And you passed this word on.

VELIOTES: Yes. And then that word gets out. Now I'm not suggesting that it was because we did this, but can you imagine not responding because Talcott Seelye thinks the Syrians won't do it? We heard a lot of this about ten years later.

Q: This was the Gulf war of '91.

VELIOTES: Of course, that's silly.

So the Syrians are a very difficult group of people. I've always felt they were a black box, from a policy point of view. The people who say they know them, and the books that are written about Syria, never answer key questions. Really, what is the motivation behind Syrian policy? I think most of us can deal with a country and say, well, here are the real motivations behind their policies. With Syria, I think the longer Assad has stayed in power, the less rational and the more idiosyncratic some of these things are. I mean, is he after the PLO and Arafat because Arafat humiliated him by claiming Syria did not fight in the war of '82? Or does he have some other scheme for wishing to weaken the PLO?

Q: Was King Hussein seeking assurance from you, or were we going to him with assurances?

VELIOTES: No, let me also say that in the time frame we're talking about, the Russians were very active in the Middle East as sponsors, in general, of the Syrians.

I think it would depend. With respect to our military relationships, with respect to our security cooperation concerning the protection of the Gulf, it was a mutual thing. We needed each other, and we just came... I will say this, he was ahead of certain parts of Washington. For reasons

which I have never understood, the secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, did not wish to go into security cooperation with Jordan. The Pentagon and the White House wanted to. I wanted to, on the merits of it, and also on the fact that this created an important community of interest that I hoped would have a spillover effect into the peace process. So I think we came to each other in that instance.

On the Syrian issue, it was different. The king did not wish to alarm his Arab guests at the Arab League conference, so, for the two or three days that the conference took place, there was simply no concern expressed to anyone about the Syrian buildup. We were aware of a Syrian buildup, but the Jordanians had not come to me, and there was an Arab League meeting, and I thought, to hell with it, it's their country, their border. No one in Washington was panicking, but they were very interested in what are the Jordanians like. The Israelis wanted to know.

Apparently, the king took the last head of state to the airport, returned to the palace, and called me. He said, "Get up here fast." So I got up there, and he said, "Look what the Syrians are doing." They had the maps out and everything, you know, "Please communicate to Washington. Will you help us if the Syrians move?"

Q: Well, a little about the decision process. Here is somebody sitting on it, Washington is not always the fastest responder, and you had not an active...maybe I'm misstating it, but you had Secretary Vance and Carter who came in trying to be nice people to everybody and all this, and yet apparently you got a fast response.

VELIOTES: Yes, but don't forget, several things had happened during these years. Afghanistan was a terrible shock.

Q: Afghanistan was really the turning point.

VELIOTES: Terrible shock.

Q: That was the road to Damascus, wasn't it?

VELIOTES: Yes, it really was. And the fall of the Shah. Jimmy Carter just wasn't interested in any more friends going down the road. And don't forget, too, the Syrians were sponsored by the Russians. Not that the Russians were behind what the Syrians were doing. I think people have to be clear: If the Syrians are sons of bitches, then they're their own sons of bitches.

Q: But they were being sons of bitches with Russian tanks.

VELIOTES: Russian tanks, and Russian protection in Security Councils, and rhetoric in *Pravda* and *Tass*, and embassy propaganda. But it wasn't the Russians supporting the Syrian attack on Jordan.

But I had no problem getting a quick reaction to it. Basically all it would mean is the Jordanians would give us permission to fly a couple of squadrons of F-15s in, or F-16s. Out in that part of

the world, wars are tank wars. If you've got control of the skies and the kind of sophisticated firepower that our Air Force represents, you win.

And Assad didn't want to take us on. I'm not sure he wanted to take the Jordanians on, but the Jordanians called his bluff. They're tough; they held the meeting. If they didn't get a condemnation of Syria for its support of Iran, they got a vast majority of the Arabs on record as supporting Iraq. These things were very important to Assad. But he failed.

Q: In dealing with the Jordanian government, did you feel that the king was absolutely the key, or were there other people you and the embassy...

VELIOTES: For decisions, it was the king. For discussions, there were other people to talk to--foreign minister, crown prince, people in the court, prime minister, depending on who he was. There weren't that many people to talk to. Former prime ministers, I'd go around and talk to and get a feel on how to do it. But the king was the one who made the important decisions, domestically and internationally. And once he made those decisions, they were unchallenged.

Q: This is interesting, because, in some of the earlier interviews, a different King Hussein, in the early period, was very moody, swinging back and forth, and they weren't quite sure where he was coming out.

VELIOTES: Well, I think this was most aptly described during the Black September period, when finally the army forced his hand. But when I knew him, yes, he was racked with indecision; these were agonizing decisions that had to be made.

Q: These were really life-and-death matters, too.

VELIOTES: He didn't take them lightly.

But on the Camp David thing, when he found out that the Palestinians would oppose him, and if he tried to go alone, the Saudis would not support him, then it was over. Sadat had told Carter, "Now don't worry, I've got the Arabs with me. I'll get Hussein." Well, he had no one. But he [Hussein] worried about this.

The decision to have a rapprochement with Iraq was easy. The king was on a long-time depression from the events of '79 and '80--Camp David, the fall of the Shah. The Iran-Iraq War was almost an emotional lifesaver to him, because here's an easy decision: I will ally myself with the Iraqis to save the Eastern Arab world from the fanaticism of the Iranians.

And I believe there was a lot of sincerity in that. That fit his dynastic vision of his family and himself. After all, Abdullah and Hussein of Mecca led the Arab revolt to liberate the Arab lands from the Turks. This was his opportunity to play a role in the worthy succession of his own view of his dynastic position. After all, the man who lost Jerusalem was going to go out and redeem himself in the East.

There were some practical considerations there, too. Saddam Hussein's Iraq was an immensely wealthy Iraq. Obviously, there were going to be financial benefits for Jordan. Not for the king, for Jordan. With the Gulf closed to shipping, Jordan was a transshipment point. The development of the port of Aqaba and the creation of a major transit industry was pretty important for a country that has no resources. So that played a role in it. And then Jordan became quite a prosperous little place.

Q: How did you feel about the concern that many people in the United States had about Islamic fundamentalism, fanaticism, seeing this arise from Khomeini and all? One, did you see this spilling over into Jordan? And, two, did this affect the operation of the embassy?

VELIOTES: Number one, it did spill over, even in the time I was there. Number two, it did not impact on the operations of the embassy.

There was an indigenous, conservative Islamic movement in Jordan amongst the Palestinians, based initially in the Hebron area in southern West Bank, where the tomb of Abraham is. This is a very strong, conservative Islamic area. Many of those people left the West Bank and ended up in Jordan. Jordan, don't forget, is full of dispossessed people. And this Islamic fundamentalism, to the extent you could see it, was strongest amongst the Palestinians.

You saw it in things like how many of the girls who received their degrees at Jordan University covered their heads or wore gloves to shake hands with the king, who was a male not a member of their immediate family. You saw this. And there was quite a scandal. The king refused to shake hands with one of the young girls who had had gloves on, because he had always considered himself a modernizing religious figure. He's very conscious of his descendance from the prophet. That's why he has the title sharif. So you began to see that.

It's a matter of fact that many Westerners in Islamic countries, or a country like Jordan, will come into contact with the more Westernized parts of the society. To the extent those societies have significant Christian minorities, the Christian minorities will be amongst the most highly educated and... modern sort of minority behavior for survival. So you could sort of monitor concern through your Christian friends.

My wife and I had an elderly Arabic teacher who was a Christian, and she would periodically, at coffee in the morning, talk about some of the events that were taking place in the mosques, things that worried the Christian community. King Hussein was seen as the protector of the Christians...interesting...which is a traditional role for an Arab...an enlightened Arab monarch, anyway.

So this was starting when I was there. It was not yet Iranian-influenced, I believe, it was more indigenous. But the king saw this, too, and he is a dedicated opponent of destructive Islamic conservatism. Fundamentalism is hard to define. I think you can be a religious conservative, and that is not necessarily a destructive context.

For example, for me, a young Islamic girl who wants to cover her head, it's just a statement, like...

Q: A yarmulke.

VELIOTES: A yarmulke, or wearing a cross or a Star of David. That's what it is. So I would not say that it was Iranian-influenced at the time.

But the extent to which the Iranian victories were accelerating in the East, and particularly the publicity being given to them in the press, must have quickened the pace of Islamic fundamentalist awareness everywhere, including in Jordan, and led the king and his advisors to be even more convinced that they must support Iraq to prevent that infection from spreading by force of arms.

Q: How did you, as the ambassador, and your staff deal with the large Palestinian community?

VELIOTES: Well, we used to deal with them all the time. We were friends. I had a lot of Palestinians that I'd play tennis with, a lot of Jordanians that I'd play tennis with. We'd be invited to their parties.

It took a little while to get acceptance. You see, when I showed up there, during Camp David, the palace sort of put out a freeze on Americans. Not serious, but... And you were supposed to be given a hard time. Not threatened or anything, but... Well, that broke down pretty quickly, because Jordanians pretty clearly draw the line between official policies over which they have no control and people that they live with. We found them interesting; they found my wife and me interesting, so we circulated.

As a matter of fact, the problem wasn't socializing. Almost from day one, the problem was how to protect yourself from socializing, and that included Palestinians.

Q: Could you explain what you mean by that.

VELIOTES: Well, it means that we were invited by Palestinians to large Palestinian gatherings, as well as to native Jordanian gatherings. A lot of this is inherent in being the ambassador of the United States of America. Some of it depends upon personality and your relations with people, but a lot of it was formal stuff. It depends upon your position. My wife and I tried, whenever possible, to engage on an informal level with the Jordanians. And we found they responded.

Q: Did you have a problem with the Palestinians? The Palestinians must have felt that they were being left out of everything.

VELIOTES: Well, there are different levels. When I first arrived, we were invited to a dinner party. And I assumed that this was a pretty small society. It didn't have freedom of expression as we understand it, but nothing went unnoticed, and was reported. And very quickly I was confronted by this attractive Palestinian matron, who said, in a very loud voice in a crowded dining room, "Mr. Ambassador, where have you served in the Foreign Service?", knowing damn well I'd been in Israel my last post.

And I said, "Well, I've been in several posts, but my last one was Israel."

She kept needling me, and she finally started saying things that I recognized as coming out of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, that czarist secret-police fraud about the Jewish conspiracy here and there and all that.

And I said that. I said, "Well, that's out of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

And she told me about how, yes, but it was authentic. And she went on and on.

And I stopped her, and I said, "You know, I told you I had been in Israel my last post. And I just decided the perfect partner for you. I'm going to suggest that you and Guella Cohen be locked in a room together." (Guella Cohen is this *rabid* anti-Arab Israeli that everyone knew.)

Well, the whole place broke up, laughing. I noticed one guy was splitting his sides. And there were many Palestinians in that room.

No one ever pulled any of that stuff on me after that.

And it turned out that the guy who was literally killing himself was her husband, and we subsequently became very close to both of them. You know, I mean, you just have to understand and do it.

Q: How about with the Jordanian army? This must have been a very important...target is the wrong word, but certainly...

VELIOTES: Point of contact.

Q: A very important point of contact.

VELIOTES: Jordanian army, Jordanian police and intelligence service, the palace, those were the three most important areas for me. The cabinet was secondary. I personally would not...I had a station chief and a military attaché, and they talked to their counterparts. I'd go to their parties, I would meet these people, I would talk to them, but that wasn't where I was doing my business. I was doing my business with the king and the commander in chief. That's what I did as far as in that context.

But we had a lot of business with the Jordanian army, official business. We had a lot of interaction, interchange. We had yearly meetings, formal meetings. I had, maybe once every two months, a general come through. And these were essential. I tried to encourage the greatest possible number of official visits to Jordan. Jordan is not Israel; we don't have people breaking down the fences to come in, from the Congress and other places. So I would encourage everyone to come, from Commerce, from Interior. Because, often, in a relationship like that, it becomes very personal, and the personal relations that we built up between our military were really the strongest bonds that we had to compensate for the strains in the political side.

So that was a very perceptive question.

Q: What about Congress? I mean, every congressman makes his Hajj to Israel, but what about Jordan? Were you able to get them there?

VELIOTES: When I heard of them going to Israel, I would ask them to come to Jordan. I got some, not as many as I would like. But they were all very important at the time and afterwards. There was an Appropriations Committee chairman...some pretty tough nuts. I got people like John Chaffee, Steve Solarz, Lee Hamilton. We got Senator Byrd, when he was majority leader. And when I came home, I'd go up and see the Congress, encourage them to come, all of them, many Jewish congressmen--Solarz being unusual in this respect--who didn't know what kind of a reception they would have. And I said, "Well, you're going to be received appropriately as an important member of the American parliament; that's how you're going to be received. And the king will talk to you; you'll talk to him. If he disagrees with you, he'll tell you; if you disagree with him, you tell him. Come out."

So this was a very important part of conducting relations with the Jordanians, particularly since King Hussein and Jimmy Carter were not speaking. I had to find ways to compensate for the fact that they not only weren't speaking, they didn't like each other.

Q: How did this come about?

VELIOTES: It came about, I think, two ways.

Number one, Carter was so disappointed that Hussein did not do what Sadat said he would do, that he bore him a deep grudge.

Secondly, Zbigniew Brzezinski, for whatever other credit you can give him as an analyst, was a horrible implementer of policy. I mean, he came out to Jordan, against my recommendation, and went to Saudi Arabia; totally clouded the waters, and just ended up, in the most insensitive way, making things infinitely worse.

I'll give you an example. I'd been called back on consultation, and they wanted me to do some speaking. And when I came back, I was asked, "What do you think about Brzezinski coming out to Jordan?"

And I said, "Look, it's just before the Baghdad Conference. He has nothing new to say. Unless we have something new to say, it'll be a failure. Why does the president want a high-profile failure when, a week later, the Arab League is going to condemn Camp David? Why have two in a row?"

And they said, "You're right." "You're absolutely right," said the secretary of state.

I went off on my speaking engagement. I came back, I walked into the Department, and someone said, "My God, where have you been? Get upstairs quickly." And I learned that Brzezinski had somehow managed to convince the president that he had to go to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and

Egypt, in the period before this Baghdad Conference, which was sure to condemn Camp David. I read the briefing book and...[tape ended]...

VELIOTES: ...the under secretary for political affairs. We sort of sat and looked at each other. He looked at me and he said, "Tell me, why do you think Brzezinski's going to the Middle East?"

Well, I knew he had a great sense of humor, and I laughed and said, "Oh, it's one of those."

He said, "Yes, it's one of those, and you're to be on his airplane."

I said, "What am I supposed to do?"

He said, "Well, hopefully, brief him."

Well, here was a man who didn't need any briefing, because he knew everything. So I read his briefing book. And Gary Sick was on the plane, which surprised me because Gary had been dealing strictly with the Iranians.

Q: He was the National Security Council...

VELIOTES: And I said to Gary, who was a friend, "You know, Gary, this is a god-awful briefing book. It just is totally off the mark."

And he said, "Look, we put it together at the last minute. I'm not going to justify it. Why don't you write a one-page memo to Brzezinski."

I said, "Great." So I sat back in the plane and I did a one-page memo, that was typed up, that spoke about the Saudis and spoke about the Jordanians... going to do. I don't know if he ever read it, because he never asked to talk to me.

Q: You mean he never talked to you?

VELIOTES: I was sitting there in the back of the plane all the way across and he never talked to me.

So we got to Saudi Arabia, and Brzezinski said, "Let's have a briefing." So we went to the swimming pool.

Do you know what kind of a briefing you can have, sitting in the sun in Saudi Arabia in November around a pool? And who was there? John West, God bless him.

Q: He was a political appointee from South Carolina.

VELIOTES: Yes, the former governor of South Carolina. And his whole staff. And I was sort of sitting in the back. And Brzezinski, he had his shirt off, lying down, with dark glasses on, and

people were briefing him before he went into this thing. Well, I sat there and listened to this. It turned out to be utter trash.

And finally the poor ambassador, impressed by Brzezinski, said something like, "Well, yes, I think that we can convince the Saudis to prevent the Arab League from ostracizing Sadat."

And that was too much. I just blurted out from the back row that this was absolute bull shit. That wasn't the way it was going to happen. (You know, sometimes you've got to say things in a certain way so someone will pay attention to you.) And that you can't possibly go in there with that idea.

Well, that sort of threw a pall over everything. But Brzezinski didn't ask me what I meant or why, and he still hadn't read my paper. So, as I was walking back, all of a sudden John West sort of accosted me, and I thought, "Oh, God, he's going to kill me."

And he said, "Thank God you said that."

And I said, "John, I know you know better. What's happened?"

He said, "Well, Nick, I told the president something he didn't want to hear about this, and do you know, I got an official reprimand. So I just don't feel I can say that... do it."

I said, "Well, John, you know how I feel. And you agree." Or maybe he didn't agree. John never really understood the subtleties, particularly at that time. It was early on... But he knew that...

Well, the next time I saw Brzezinski, we were a half hour out of Jordan, and he called me up, and he was lying down sort of on his couch, and he said some wise-ass thing about the king--"I don't want to see the king."

And I said, "You go in with that attitude, don't go. I mean, let's not even go. Go somewhere else. You've got to take time. You've got to so intrigue the king that he's going to want to know more. At that time, the three of us, or just the two of you go off into another room, because then you're going to start doing business."

Warren Christopher was on this trip, and I'll never forget this.

Q: He was the under secretary of state at that time.

VELIOTES: Deputy secretary of state. And I remember we were sitting in there, and the king had brought his entire power structure. Now, mind you, the last VIP that had come, about a month before, was Cyrus Vance. And Cyrus Vance had told the king and these same people that there would be a five-year freeze in settlements. And it turned out not to be accurate.

Q: You're talking about Israeli settlement in the West Bank.

VELIOTES: Jimmy Carter had said there'd be a five-year freeze, and Menachem Begin said there'd be a three-month freeze, and there was a three-month freeze. So American credibility was quite low with respect to entering negotiations there. And I remember that this was a very wooden, wooden session. And the king had all of his advisors around, which meant everyone in Jordan would know about what went on, which meant he wasn't in a deal-making mood. Oh, and Brzezinski was only going to spend two or three hours in Jordan on the way to Sadat's. If you want to lose friends, say you're going to come and spend three hours with them on the way to somewhere else. You know, that's the currency that people deal with in foreign affairs; you have to be careful.

All of a sudden the king said something...I forget what it was, but he said something. And I wrote a note to Christopher and said, "Give this to Brzezinski. He must now say, 'Your Majesty, I'd like to explore that with you. Why don't we go into the next room, maybe, and have a chat?'" I said, "This is it, the first thing that is interesting. See what his terms are, what's he talking about. He won't talk in front of everyone. Go and do it."

I don't know what Christopher did with my note, but Brzezinski said, "Well, Your Majesty, that's very interesting, but, you see, I have to hurry because I have an appointment with President Sadat." He got up and he left.

That night, King Hussein gave an on-the-record press conference, which got him disinvited to Washington, and he went off to Baghdad.

Q: Well, going back to the original question, what inspired Brzezinski to make this trip, which wasn't going anywhere, not supported, and apparently he was not ready to deal?

VELIOTES: I don't know. The under secretary of political affairs didn't know what the hell he had in mind. The briefing book that was prepared for him was so shallow as to be useless. He damn well wanted to go out in the area and the action. And I guess he wanted to threaten people. I don't know, you know, he was a funny guy. Do you remember him looking down the barrel of a gun at the Khyber Pass?

Q: Oh, yes. One always had the feeling he was trying to out-Kissinger Kissinger. I don't know if this is fair or not.

VELIOTES: But sometimes you've got to be careful. Often you have to be careful. When you're national security advisor, you have to be particularly careful, because you're carrying the name of the president. This was a kamikaze mission if I ever saw one.

Q: Okay, you get a mission like this, which, as far as you're concerned, is a disaster. But you're the American ambassador on the ground. The kings and princes depart; you are left. What did you do in this case? You must have felt there was damage control that had to be done, didn't you?

VELIOTES: Well, there wasn't much that could be done for a while. The king was so mad that he figured, well, if Carter was going to do this to him, he was going to do this to Carter. And he

said a lot of things that were unfortunate, on the record. A journalist friend of mine called me and said, "You're not going to believe what he's put on the record. I have to leave tonight. I just wanted you to know. Wait till you see it."

I waited a little while. Then the king was going to go to Washington in another few weeks or a month or something, and all of a sudden I got a message that, well, it was now inconvenient for the president to see him. And they gave me some cock-and-bull story to go and explain why the visit was being postponed. Fortunately, the king was not in Jordan. Then I had to explain something that...oh, you know, you stretch the truth. If I can use the old Marshall Green... put the best face on something, which was another sign of the very serious personal animosity between the two heads of state.

Now you would have thought it might have gotten better, with our security cooperation and things. We were doing things together that were important. And I stopped pressing for a visit. You know, there are times when you press, and there are times you don't press.

But all of a sudden I was jerked out of Amman and brought to the U.N., because the secretary of state was going to meet with King Hussein, in late '79, at the U.N. The king was giving a big speech there, and I was told they wanted me present because, after the meeting with the secretary, the king was going to be invited to come to Washington on a quick visit to meet with the president. So I was jerked in at the last minute, and I flew to New York (it takes you a day to get here), and I checked in to the U.N. Plaza. And you know what the U.N. is like--the secretary has twenty minutes for 400 people. And so all the people around him, spinning. I barely had to time to say hello to the people involved before we went into the meeting. And it was a good meeting, talking about a lot of things. The king left, and the secretary said to me, "Well, Nick, I can't do it. You have to tell the king he can't go to Washington to meet the president."

And I said, "Well, what are we talking about? What have I missed? I thought this was a very helpful, healing step. Isn't this what we're trying to do, start a process, long-term American interest and Jordanian interest? This was it."

He said, "I can't tell him to go see the president, because he hasn't agreed to join Camp David."

And I said, "Cy, whoever told you that was possible at this point? I'm totally stunned to hear this. You can't mean it. You can't mean that, at this point in time, with everything that we know and all the people who have been asked and my reporting, someone told the president he was going to agree to join Camp David, as opposed to start the process and maybe moving closer together and looking to the future."

And he said, "I'm sorry, you must go and tell him."

If I had to choose the one low point in my career...I had to go over to the Pierre Hotel, sit with the king and the crown prince and the others, and explain to the king that he was not invited to Washington.

Q: Had it been implicit that he would be?

VELIOTES: Absolutely. Absolutely. Otherwise why would I go tell him he wasn't coming?

Now the denouement to this story is that I went to Washington, because I figured, well, you know, hell, they got me here, if I can't do anything useful in the State Department, I'll go up in the Congress and talk to people and see how things are and explain and talk. But I made an appointment...as a matter of fact, I was told, the minute I hit Washington, go see the Middle East negotiator, Robert Strauss. And I went into his office, and he said to me, his exact words, "Nick, how could you let the king not come here? How could you let this happen?"

I just assumed he was playing a game with me, and I said, "I was told that you and the secretary were going to make that decision after you talked to the king. Are you telling me that you were not a party to this, that Cy Vance just sent me over? Do you know what I had to do? Do you guys realize what you're doing as you seek to advance your move?"

Well, it turned out, the next day he was off the job and he'd taken the special trade negotiator job, so he didn't give a damn.

Q: Looking at this, where did this thing fall?

VELIOTES: Well, let me tell you. You know, it was all personal. King Hussein felt he had been abused and he had not been consulted on Camp David, and he'd written the president and he'd said to the president, "Please don't leave me hanging out here alone when Egypt makes a separate deal with Israel. Don't leave me. I can't accept it. I can't be a party to this." The president felt abused because the king, I guess, told him that, or did not see the opportunity and didn't have the courage to take the opportunity.

When we finally got the two of them together...

Q: When was this?

VELIOTES: Nineteen eighty, about June. It was a terrific meeting. I mean, they really talked things out, you know, motives and hurts and things like that. But it was a meeting that should have taken place two years before, or at least a year before, when this thing hadn't gone all out of whack.

Q: Was this the president calling the shots, or the secretary of state, or were there advisors?

VELIOTES: I don't know.

Q: Because it's very difficult for me to think that the secretary of state, who's a skilled negotiator, would have assumed that King Hussein would have seen the light, with nothing particularly to have paved the way for it at a twenty-minute meeting in the U.N.

VELIOTES: I don't know. I don't know. Presumably Cy Vance said, "Mr. President, you must receive King Hussein. You must see him." And I can imagine the president saying, "Only if he agrees to Camp David." But I learned that only once the meeting was over.

Q: In a way, it sounds like one of those off-hand things where there are a lot of leaders coming and an unthought remark on the part of the president becomes policy.

VELIOTES: I don't know. But, then as now, if you're going to have a peace conference and if you're going to have Palestinians involved, you need Jordanians. Nothing much has changed in the ten or twelve years.

Q: No, they have been considered the key, always.

VELIOTES: I'm not suggesting that there was not fault on the king's side. I think he made a major mistake not joining Camp David, with or without anyone's support. It was such a remarkable opportunity to make progress. Such a remarkable opportunity. And he could have given the Palestinians a shield. Now if the Shah had been alive, maybe he would have done it, back there at the beginning. We'll never know.

Certainly, in the mid-eighties, starting with the Reagan plan in late '82 till about '85, as we tried to get the peace process going, the king felt much more secure in being able to try to work with us, because he had the security of the Iraqi relationship. Iraq was a giant in the Arab world at the time. And he had Iraq and Egypt. I thought he was being very cooperative in trying to get the joint delegation and things like this going. And Iraq, because of its needs in the Iran-Iraq War and because of its relationship with Jordan, had pretty well...ahead of time, we will acquiesce in whatever you think is right. So there had been a major change in Iraqi policy towards the peace process from one of complete rejection to, well, you know, what you and the Palestinians work out, we'll support.

Q: What about another issue that sort of clogged up the works--the 1980 Olympics? How did that come out? After Afghanistan, we decided to boycott the Olympics, and we were putting pressure on everybody to do it, and this became sort of a litmus test.

VELIOTES: I don't even remember what happened on that. I don't even know if the Jordanians went, if the Jordanians had any... They may have sent a rifle team or something. I don't know.

Q: Then it wasn't a big deal.

VELIOTES: Not for me, no.

Q: How about with the Carter administration and human rights? I noticed Amnesty International at the time sort of put Jordan on their list as having some violations of human rights with political prisoners and all that. Did this become much of an issue for you?

VELIOTES: Not too much, because, as I said, the king did not shed much blood. Most of the Jordanian papers were self-censored. That was censorship, don't get me wrong, but people were not thrown in jail for talking at cocktail parties or for meeting with people and things like this.

Q: It wasn't a Big Brother atmosphere.

VELIOTES: No, no. It was understood that there were things you couldn't do. You couldn't publicly criticize the king or the palace. You couldn't publicly support American policy if it was contrary to Jordanian policy. And most of their newspapers were hopeless rags of extremism.

Q: So, in a way, the media was not a problem.

VELIOTES: Not really, except that, sure, you know, people read the media, people watch it. You know, when it happened out there, you get a tirade of propaganda and then everyone turns to *Dallas*.

Q: Dallas being an American soap opera that was in.

VELIOTES: The first dinner party we went to at a Jordanian home (Jordanians eat quite late, not as late as the Egyptians, but still quite late for American tastes), we were all seated in the front living area of the house, the front rooms of a lovely old house. And at a certain point, about nine o'clock, I looked around and there were only foreigners in the room, foreign diplomats. I looked a little perplexed, and one of them laughed and said, "Go down the hall and look in that room." I went down the hall, and every Jordanian guest had his or her eyes glued to *Dallas*. So you couldn't eat until after *Dallas*.

Q: Well, this was true in Italy and everywhere else. Is there anything else we should cover on Jordan, do you think, before we stop at this point and then I'll come back to it?

VELIOTES: Oh, if you can think of anything else about Jordan that you'd like to talk about. The queen...

Q: King Hussein, in '78, married an American woman. Did that change anything? Could you explain a little about the relationship and all that.

VELIOTES: She is the daughter--Princeton graduate she is, lovely person--of a prominent Lebanese- American family. Najeib Halaby had been the first federal aviation administrator, under Kennedy, and then went on to head Pan Am for a while and has always been active in Arab aviation matters. So his daughter sort of came back to her heritage and worked in the office of his company in Jordan. And it was in that capacity there, and she also did some pre-school teaching, I believe, that she met the king and the queen and their children. The queen died in a helicopter crash, and then the king and she got married.

I arrived shortly after the marriage. It would have been easier not having an American queen, having a Palestinian queen, someone whom my wife could relate to without any sense of inhibition, someone whom I could relate to, and someone who didn't feel that she had to

overcompensate for being an American and becoming a super-Arab. These are all understandable things. And they had some very tragic consequences, because early in their marriage Camp David came up, and this was a traumatic experience for them, and she was pregnant with their first child. Well, it was such an emotional problem and she got so involved, she had a miscarriage. So it was a hard thing for her. And it's awfully hard to be a honey blonde posing as an Arab queen. I think she did a good job, while we were there, of trying to bridge these gaps. And, don't forget, this is a little, gossipy town, and everyone's got a favorite King Hussein stud story--not easy for her.

As far as we were concerned, I told the American community, you know, speak when spoken to. She's not an American, she's the queen of Jordan. And you're going to make her life a hell of a lot easier if you don't presume she's American. Those of you who knew her when she was Lisa Halaby, in particular, she'll call you, don't you call her. She's got too many things to do. I always treated her extremely formally, as did my wife. And when I left Jordan, I counted the king as a good friend, despite all the... ..trouble trying to relate to us. As I said, we stayed away. The first sort of reaching across came on the tennis court, because I used to play with some members of the royal family, and so did my wife, and she came out and played with us a few times in a group. But we...strictly no familiarity, none whatsoever. I assume she appreciated the way we handled it. And it was a very tough thing for her.

Her first visit back with the king was an extremely difficult issue for her. Fortunately, the press all treated her, I think, with a certain tenderness. Later on, when people got catty, it didn't make any difference, she was so secure in her role.

One of the things, though, that she did early, particularly around Camp David, particularly around the time that she was pregnant, whenever I came up to see the king, she was in the meetings. I suspected he didn't like it, but I dealt with him. And she surprised me by how she would come in and come across. Later in the relationship, I think both of us--the king and I--rather tacitly understood that we would prefer to speak alone about some of these issues. I think she got the picture. She was always gracious when I was there--she'd come in, we'd talk--but often she would then just leave before we got into the issues. This is not a male-bonding issue.

Q: No, no, no.

VELIOTES: Here's a man who has been in his position for a long time before his current wife, hopes to stay a long time with her, and there were just things we had to talk about. Particularly when I had to say things to him that were unpalatable to him, that he wouldn't want to hear, I did not want to say them in front of his wife.

Q: Because this gets it on the emotional side, when we're talking about state-to-state relations, which are different from personal relations.

VELIOTES: Right. As I say, she got so emotionally upset in the Camp David period that it ended up with a miscarriage. And that was really too bad. It's not easy, I don't think, for her. I think she's done remarkably well at it. And I don't know, from my successors, what may have happened in their relationships there, but I haven't heard of anything negative.

Q: I haven't either. Well, all right, why don't we stop at this point. I'll catch you again and we'll get on to assistant secretary.

VELIOTES: Okay, Stu, thank you very much.

Q: Today is May 4, 1992. This is a continuing set of interviews with Ambassador Veliotos. We had just left you, in 1981, in Jordan, where we'd finished Jordan and you had been called back to Washington to be assistant secretary, where you served from '81 to '83. How did this assignment come about?

VELIOTES: I don't know. If I were given my preference, I would have argued that I'd be sent to the Philippines to replace Dick Murphy, who had been there three or four years. Clearly I had at that time a unique qualification for dealing with Arab-Israel issues. I had been chargé in Israel, and my next overseas post was ambassador in Jordan. So I was the first person to have very senior positions in an Arab country as well as in Israel, within a five-year time frame. And, in between, I had served as deputy assistant secretary of NEA. So I had that background. I think, in the course of my Middle East career, the close relations I had formed with congressmen, Jewish leaders, who remembered me from the first time in the Middle East, in Israel, were helpful, in the sense I did not carry the "harmful baggage" of being considered an Arabist. Now Arabist, to all of us, is a very honorable term--it's like a Sinologist or a Japanologist or a Sovietologist; it means an area language officer. But Arabist, in the popular journalist sense, has come to mean anti-Israeli, if not anti-Semitic.

Q: This is really more a creature of...can I say it? the Israeli lobby, which has promoted this for the wrong purposes.

VELIOTES: And popular conceptions--Herblock cartoons, you've seen how Arabs are portrayed. So it's not an easy job to fill, with a new administration. And I guess Al Haig felt that I would not have any major opposition and that I had enough knowledge to be helpful. I'm guessing.

Q: When the new administration came in, in late January of '81, when did you arrive?

VELIOTES: Well, I was called back in early December, shortly after the election. I was going home to California for Christmas, and I was told to come by and stop in Washington, which I did. And I saw different people, including Al Haig, who told me at the time that he wanted me to be assistant secretary. I went home to California, I came back after the holidays, and I was told to stay. I was given seven or eight days to close out in Jordan and come back to Washington. Then I left on about the 25th, 26th of January, and I started about the first week in February.

DAVID E. ZWEIFEL
Deputy Chief of Mission
Amman (1979-1981)

David E. Zweifel was born in Colorado on September 13, 1934. He received a bachelor's degree from Oregon State University and served in the U.S. Navy overseas for five years. He joined the Foreign Service in July 1962 and served in Brazil, Lebanon, Jordan, Mexico, Oman, Yemen, and Washington, DC. Mr. Zweifel retired in 1995 and was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on September 3, 1996

ZWEIFEL: Yes, I went back to Jordan.

Q: And this time as DCM.

ZWEIFEL: Nick Veliotis, who had been the Deputy Assistant Secretary with overall responsibility for Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel, invited me to be his DCM. He had gone to Jordan about a year before I was due for transfer, but the assignment was already set. Despite the fact that we had experienced a pretty difficult time during our first tour in Jordan, my wife and I were delighted with the prospect of going back since we had come to appreciate the country and the Jordanian people very much.

Q: You and the Ambassador divided the work. Did he use you as an alter ego? Were there certain fields that he wanted you to handle?

ZWEIFEL: Yes and no. Nick was a tremendously gifted leader. He knew what he wanted and was most capable in doing his job. At the same time, he gave those around him a lot of space. During the first part of our tour together, our working relationships followed the classic inside-outside pattern, found so often between an Ambassador and the DCM. At the same time, Nick was never jealous of his prerogatives. He wanted me to be involved in all aspects of the front office work, including contacts with upper echelon Jordanians.

He was quite insistent that we arrive in Amman at the end of June, in time for the Fourth of July commemoration just before the beginning of Ramadan that year. This would be the opportunity to present us to the leading lights of the local community. As it turned out, the occasion was more like a homecoming for us, since so many of the guests were people we had known during our earlier tour in Jordan.

Nick and I worked together in Jordan for about eight months or so, not an extended period of time. Then he was called back to Washington to become Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs. Thereafter, I was Chargé, for about the next fourteen months.

Personally, it was perhaps the most professionally challenging and satisfying time in my entire career. The high profile attention given to policy issues which were our daily fare gave me a tremendous insight into the events and developments, and I felt that I was playing a significant role in the process.

Q: It was a great opportunity for you, I think. What was the size of the post at that time?

ZWEIFEL: I suppose there were about 100-120 American employees. We had a full range of agencies and departments represented. There were sizable AID and military assistance programs; USIS and other agencies had personnel stationed in Jordan. It was a broad gauged Mission.

Q: How about the Peace Corps, any of them out there?

ZWEIFEL: No. There were Peace Corps Volunteers in other countries in which I served, but not in Jordan.

Q: What is the role of the Christian Arabs in Jordan? Do they play any role at all?

ZWEIFEL: They are small in number, by and large engaged in business and the professions such as medicine, law, etc. There are few Christians in government, though not as a result of conscious discrimination or public policy. Christians are permitted to worship openly, to have their churches, etc. They are not subject to persecution by the predominant Muslim population. The Christian community is also clustered in certain villages such as Karak near Mount Nebo, the site of Moses burial. That community traces its religious roots very far into the past.

Q: They were mostly Palestinians were they?

ZWEIFEL: Yes, although as I have noted, some communities have lived in Jordan almost since the time of Christ.

Q: We were sending military equipment to Jordan at that time, were we not?

ZWEIFEL: Yes, we had a long-standing program of military cooperation, both in terms of training and equipment sales and support.

Q: And there were occasions when the Syrians had mobilized at the border?

ZWEIFEL: Yes, in a less friendly way than was the case in late 1970. Ten years later, Syrian President Assad faced considerable internal opposition from the Muslim Brotherhood. The Syrian Government, perhaps with some justification, accused the Jordanians of supporting the Brotherhood's actions against Assad. So, it was a tense time in Jordanian-Syrian relations. This, coincidentally, led to a rapprochement between Amman and Baghdad. Historically, there has been something of a triangular relationship among those three states. Each of the three governments has, from time to time, sought to play a two against one game, and Jordan often has been the swing vote in that political minuet.

Q: I see. "Your enemy makes me your friend." What were relations between the King and the Palestinian PLO at this time?

ZWEIFEL: By the end of the decade of the 70s, there had been a reconciliation. The King met on a reasonably frequent basis with Arafat. The PLO had been restored to grace within Arab ranks. But there were clearly understood limits. Most importantly, the PLO and other, more radical and militant Palestinian groups were not permitted to launch operations against Israel from

Jordanian-controlled territory. The lessons of 1970 in that respect were still fresh in mind. So, the relationships between the King and the Palestinians were carefully calibrated, focused on political and social issues.

Q: In other words, they weren't shooting at each other?

ZWEIFEL: Military cooperation and support were not part of the relationship. Significant from our policy interests, the Jordanian-Israeli front was completely quiet, no cross-border raids or operations. That was in marked contrast with what was going on along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

RICHARD N. VIETS
Ambassador
Jordan (1981-1984)

Ambassador Richard N. Viets was born in 1930 in Vermont. He served in the U.S. Army and attended Georgetown University and Harvard University. He joined USIA in 1955 and served in Afghanistan, Tunisia and after a break reentered the Foreign Service in 1962 serving in Japan, India, Romania, Israel and was ambassador to Tanzania and Jordan. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy 1990-1992.

Q: Next time we will move on to your next assignment which was Jordan.

Today is February 24, 1993 and this a continuing interview with Ambassador Viets. Dick, could you tell me how you got your next assignment after Tanzania?

VIETS: I think it fair to surmise that I had established some minor reputation while I had been DCM in Israel with the seventh floor and the White House, and also with Nick Veliotis who had been named as the new Assistant Secretary for NEA. Nick and I had shared a very curious career pattern. I had succeeded him in three or four jobs over the course of my Foreign Service career. I succeeded him as political officer in India; I partially succeeded him in my only Departmental assignment; I succeeded him as deputy chief of mission in Tel Aviv and succeeded him as ambassador in Amman. This was sort of a diplomatic Siamese twin act. I think Nick probably provided the final impetus to the decision to send me to Jordan.

Q: This is the beginning of the Reagan administration isn't it?

VIETS: The very outset of the Reagan administration.

Q: Could you give us a little feel about it? In interviewing people who served in Latin American affairs it was bloody when they came in. But I don't think the same hostility was there in the Near Eastern Bureau.

VIETS: No, I don't recall that there was any particular sense of that. NEA was still felt by many to be the premier Bureau in the Department. There were a lot of extremely talented, very experienced people in the Bureau at that time. It subsequently, alas, has declined considerably. But at that time I certainly don't recall slipping on anybody's blood.

I am reminded of an amusing anecdote in connection with this transfer. You may recall from other interviews that Ronald Reagan decided at the outset of his administration that he personally would telephone every one of his ambassadorial appointees. That was probably as close as he got to the substantive side of foreign policy. One was always alerted that you could expect a call from the President within the next 48 hours or whatever, and to make sure somebody always knew how to reach you.

Well, I got the usual call from Washington saying that everything was set and that the President was going to be calling me in the next couple of days offering this appointment to me. At that particular point, it was in the spring of 1981, my wife was in a hospital in England. She had been at some kind of charity fete down on the beach in Dar es Salaam and one of those tremendous cyclones had blown up out of nowhere. She had been under a huge tent which collapsed with the tent pole narrowly missing her head and pulverizing her leg. So she had been evacuated to an Air Force hospital in England and I was alone in my residence except for the presence of a very personable, interesting Anglo-Indian lady who had been on my personal payroll for a number of years taking care of my youngest daughter.

Mary, as I say, was an Anglo-Indian who had seen a good bit of the world before I ever knew her. She subsequently served in many posts with us. She often took over the general management of whatever residence we were in, superseding the government employees and was really almost part of the family. She was very protective of all of us and particularly of me. She was especially effective in handling importuning phone calls that always manage to get through to an ambassador's residence.

On this particular early evening I was taking a shower preparatory to going out to dinner. I had been advised early that morning that the President would be calling within the next couple of days. I failed to mention this to any staff in the house. Unbeknownst to me while I was in the shower the telephone rang. Mary picked up the telephone and an operator said, "This is the White House calling. Is Ambassador Viets there?" "Yes, he is." "Well, the President would like to speak to him if you will put him on." She apparently said, "Yes, she would get me" and meanwhile for some reason the President, himself, came on the line and said, "This is President Reagan speaking, am I speaking to Ambassador Viets?" Mary roared back at him, "You bloody trickster, you joker, we don't take calls like this here. Play your games with somebody else." and slammed the telephone down thinking this was just some local joker who was playing games with the American Ambassador's phone number.

About that time I emerged from the shower and Mary was standing in the hallway. She said, "Some joker just telephoned claiming he was the President of the United States and I hung up on him." I said, "Oh Jesus, Mary." Well, the phone rang again and this very patient operator said, "Do we have the right number?" And all went well. I subsequently told the President this story

when I saw him next in Washington and, of course, he got a great charge out of it. He said he vividly remembered being told off by this woman.

Q: Can you give us a feel about when you came back, how you prepared for the post, what you saw were the major problems and were there any problems with Congress?

VIETS: The confirmation procedure was very easy when it finally took place. I recall it was a fairly long wait. Congress was on one of their summer holidays, etc. I didn't get out to Amman until August, having come back to Washington in late May.

I knew, having gone through the process once and having assisted any number of other ambassadors to go through a confirmation procedure, I knew pretty much how I wanted to handle my own preparations. These included taking sort of a vacuum cleaner approach to the city of Washington and calling on almost anybody who had anything to do with Jordan, whether it was the Congress, the key agencies, Defense, Commerce, etc. I made a number of trips around the country talking to business executives who either had interests in Jordan or...

Q: In the American community, Jordan seems like a very poor country, who would have an interest in the place?

VIETS: Petroleum companies have long been interested in Jordan and several, indeed, have sunk significant amounts of money into exploration in Jordan. There are a variety of lesser manufacturing joint ventures in Jordan...light industry. For example, there were a number of projects relating to the exploitation of the resources of the Dead Sea. It is very curious that as I talk to you this morning I just got off the phone from a call to Jordan regarding a major joint venture involving an American firm that I have been working on for the last months and it looks as if it may finally come to fruition.

Q: What is there in the Dead Sea that excites exploitation?

VIETS: Well, the brine of the Dead Sea has more minerals and chemicals in it than any other body of water anywhere in the world. The particular project that I just referred to is one relating to Bromine. Bromine additives are chemicals that are used in fire retardant clothing and equipment. It is a very big, big field and there are only three companies in the world who produce it in any quantity. Two of them are American and the other is Israeli. Now, maybe we will have a fourth.

Q: Speaking of Israeli. Did the Israeli lobby get in touch with you before you went out? Jordan seems to be the one maneuvering ground.

VIETS: My recollection is that it worked both ways. A lot of these people I had known for a number of years and worked with and I called on them. Others contacted me. I think there was a strong sense that because I had recently spent two years plus in Israel, separated only by what I call my sabbatical of a year and a half, I was still fairly fresh off the griddle and knew a good many Israelis and knew a great many members of the leadership of the "American-Jewish Community." So it was a natural thing to do.

Q: As you go out to Jordan, you are looking at it with an experienced but fresh eye. What did you see as American interests in Jordan and what did you see as your check list of things you would like to do?

VIETS: There was only one overwhelming objective that I had. That was to do whatever I could to relieve some of the pressures of the Arab-Israeli confrontation and ultimately, of course, to help move the parties into negotiations. I do recall getting ready for this assignment. We had a new Secretary of State, General Haig, and I remember that Al Haig did not have time to meet his new ambassador to Jordan. This is perhaps understandable, although I took it as not a particularly good omen.

Haig already brought to his new role a pronounced bias favoring the state of Israel. I remember within NEA there was growing apprehension as the weeks went by and he was seen to be staffing his office with a number of people who were very pro-Israeli. He would see every key Israeli who would flow into town, but he did not make the same effort with the Arabs. So I remember worrying at the time that this was going to be a problem of getting through to the Secretary. I had been rather spoiled when I was in Israel because, of course, almost everything you sent got on the Secretary's desk and the National Security Advisor's desk and ultimately to the President's desk. And there were lots of phone calls and visits. So you got to know these people personally very well. Suddenly one found himself back to addressing the same issues, but from "across the river" and yet unable to get to see the gentleman in charge. This didn't bode well.

Q: Was there a feeling in NEA at that time that we had just come from Secretary Vance and Secretary Muskie and moving to Secretary Haig, that there was a difference in the way these Secretaries did this? Was the perception that Haig was more inclined to listen to the Israeli side more than either Vance or Muskie?

VIETS: That was the perception. How fair it was I am in no position to say. Nick Veliotis would be in a much better position than I am to make that judgment because he had to deal with Haig day in and day out.

I finally did get to see Haig because I had gone up to some eighth floor reception with Nick and there was Haig talking to a group of people. Nick, in his best tradition, just grabbed me by the shoulder and propelled me forward and pushed right through the crowd around Haig and said, "Mr. Secretary, we have been trying to get to see you for days and here is Dick Viets who will be leaving in three days for Amman and you damn well ought to talk to him." Haig, who I knew, but not well, said, "Oh, Dick, nobody told me." We walked over to a corner and talked for about five or six minutes. So I did have my brief moment with the great man.

I recall the night the news was flashed to Amman, and I guess I was listening to the BBC 11 o'clock newscast and was all alone in my residence, my family were away on a trip, and I heard that Secretary Haig had resigned or been fired. I distinctly recall going out to the kitchen, pulling out a bottle of champagne and uncorking it and consuming the entire bottle. I was greatly relieved.

Q: I heard from someone else that when the news came out in the State Department that Veliotis ran down the hall saying, "Don't anyone dare cheer. Keep at work." It sounds like tremendous disloyalty, but it is not. Attitude and the perception of attitude is important. It is very disheartening to be in a post where you feel you are not going to get a fair hearing.

Now, what was the situation in Jordan when you arrived?

VIETS: My timing couldn't have been worse because I arrived there two or three days, I can't remember precisely, after the Israelis had bombed the famous Iraqi nuclear reactor. The Middle East, as usual, was full of conspiracy theories, all of which sooner or later connected the United States to the Israelis attack. I arrived to find the Embassy in a state of siege, psychological siege. Nobody was moving out to see anybody, talk to anybody. People were just hovering in their offices feeling sorry for themselves. I remember realizing my first task was to get this Embassy to get on it's bicycle and get on down to the bazaar and to ministries, etc., and to begin to do its job. I think all of this was exacerbated by the fact there had been a Chargé for about ten months. A long, long haul for a Chargé. He had taken the view that the Chargé's job is essentially to maintain the status quo so far as the internal operation in the Embassy is concerned. And that is a perfectly defensible thing to do. Perhaps he would have taken a different view had he realized he was going to be running things for ten months. But he didn't know that. He felt that the new Ambassador ought to be able to change things as he wished. So I had the sense the first day or so that I was in Amman that I was in kind of a haunted house or a summer house that had been closed up all winter. But there was a group of very, very good people at the Embassy who responded with alacrity to a little leadership and we soon had the place humming with activity. I had great fun working with this wonderful staff.

Q: What was the reaction to this Israeli bombing? I find myself most of the time personally sort of annoyed or angry at what the Israelis do, but this one I can't fault because subsequent events certainly proved you had a real nasty person, Saddam Hussein, who might have used a nuclear bomb.

VIETS: You have just reflected, of course, 20/20 hindsight. I think at the time, not only in the Middle East but even here in Washington, even Al Haig, was very concerned about the precedent that had been set where a national air force crosses two sets of borders and bombs a strategic objective which it is concerned about and returns home and expects the rest of the world to applaud. The fact that it was a nuclear reactor didn't appreciably change the concern that this was setting one hell of a bad precedent that needed to be responded to in an appropriate fashion in the Security Council, which we did.

Of course, in hindsight, as you just said, the history of the Middle East was changed more than we realized at the time by that mission. The Arabs and I think the Jordanians in particular were deeply concerned because they all felt, "Oh my god, if they can do it to the Iraqis, they can do it to us."

Going back to my time in Israel, every three weeks or so the Israelis would fly reconnaissance missions deep into Jordan and Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. They were doing this essentially at

will. Partly I think for psychological purposes and partly to monitor air defenses, tracking capabilities, etc. in order to draw a profile of the type of reaction you would get if you ever had to attack that country. We would regularly go into the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel and warning against this practice.

My first meeting with the King was the day after I arrived in Jordan when I presented my credentials. That was, I think, a sign of the importance the King placed on the Jordan-US relationship...within twenty-four hours of arrival you present your credentials to the chief of state. It was probably also a reflection of the tension of the moment. It was a good thing to get an American Ambassador in place because people were damn well heated up over this incursion.

In my first conversation with the King he confided that in fact he personally had spotted the Israeli aircraft on their way into Iraq. He had been up in an aircraft of his own in southern Jordan, down near the Gulf of Aqaba, and had spotted some miles away part of the squadron of Israeli F-16s on the way in. He had a copilot with him and had said to him, "My God, I think they are on a mission into Iraq." He may have even said "after a reactor" because there had been some concern this might happen.

In any event he radioed the ground control staff to advise the air control center in Amman that he had spotted X number of Israeli fighters at very low level, which was part of the signal that this wasn't a reconnaissance mission. And he instructed them to inform immediately the Iraqi Minister of Defense of the sighting. Somehow there was confusion and the message never got to Amman air control and thus was never passed to the Iraqis. So that is one of those little ironic footnotes of history.

Q: Did King Hussein ever imply to you or say to you that he thought the United States was implicated in this, or was he savvy enough to understand what this relationship between the United States and Israel was, which was not a client/patron relationship by any means?

VIETS: He was much too sophisticated to make that allegation. He knew very well Israeli concerns regarding Iraqi nuclear ambitions and he also knew Iraqi concerns about Israeli nuclear capacity. But the street, the bazaar, I think, saw it quite differently, and believed there had to have been collusion. And I think to this day there are many people who believe that the US knowingly provided the Israelis with satellite photos, etc, of this Iraqi target. My recollection is that Mr. Pollard, the famous Israeli spy, did indeed provide them with quite a bit of information relating to that Iraqi enterprise, but I don't know the details of that.

Q: Well, you said your arrival couldn't have been more inopportune for opening up a dialogue. This mess must have set you back some in attempts to sew a few seeds.

VIETS: In the Middle East one can almost use the metaphor for the sea...the tide comes in, the tide goes out. You simply know that every X number of weeks or months or days or hours there is going to be a crisis. You just move from one crisis to another. And you know these things heat up and become very passionate and tense and then subside to be replaced by something new. So I understood that this was today's crisis and one had to keep it in check...

Q: Based on your time in Tel Aviv, your time before you went out and arriving and talking to people in the Embassy, what was your mind set of King Hussein?

VIETS: One must start by observing that the Israelis felt they knew Hussein much better than any other Arab leader. They certainly had ample time to get to know him over the years. They had a number of psychiatrists and psychologists and strategists who were constantly updating profiles on him and on his immediate advisors.

But to answer your question, I felt quite confident that because of my time in Israel I had a leg up, as it were, over almost anybody else in the area because I had lived cheek by jaw with the Israelis and personally knew very well all of the political leadership. Remember, Begin was still in power in 1981 and I knew him and all of his principal cabinet people very well. I also knew the Israeli military leadership very well. So I had this great advantage of being able to sit down with the King, and often it was a daily meeting, sometimes twice a day, and discuss with him in detail the personalities who were responsible for whatever was going on that particular day. And believe me there are events that transpired every day between the two countries that just don't get into the newspapers for one reason or another. Each requires sitting back and taking a deep breath and deciding what you are going to do about them, if anything.

So throughout my period in Jordan I found it enormously beneficial to be able to say, "Well, I think, your Majesty, this is being said or done for the following reasons. Here is my analysis." Our present ambassador in Jordan, Ambassador Roger Harrison, two or three years before going to Jordan had served in Israel as well as the political counselor, and I remember his saying to me that his Israeli experience was extremely helpful for him. Of course, my immediate predecessor, Nick Veliotis, had also been the DCM in Israel.

So the three of us had this Israeli experience. I suppose if I were drawing up a list of qualifications for ambassador to any of the so-called confrontation countries with Israel, I would probably say that I think an assignment in Israel was not only advantageous but perhaps even imperative. I felt the same way about serving in Eastern Europe during the Cold War. You had to have been there to understand the Cold War.

Q: What was your assessment of what was driving the King? Where did he want to come out?

VIETS: One must first note that Jordan is blessed by having on its western border a juggernaut of military and economic power, the superpower in the area. Remember, Jordan has the longest border with Israel of any of its neighbors. This border also has been the one most carefully policed and the one in which the fewest incidents have taken place, since the end of the 1948 War.

Then on the other eastern border are the Syrians, neighbors some would find not the most pleasing of societies to have sitting at your back.

On another border are the Iraqis, a colossus of a country with a tremendous population, highly educated, the most industrialized country in the Middle East, second greatest oil reserves of any country in the world, with a tremendous military establishment.

And then there are the Saudis on the southern front. And here you had tensions between the royal families dating back to...

Q: Hashemites versus the Saudis.

VIETS: Yes, that is right. And on the far side, across the Gulf of Aqaba, are the Egyptians. And there sits this tiny little Kingdom of Jordan with a small population, almost no natural resources, that survives by its wits. Jordan has a well-educated upper class. Many people in our aid agencies and in international aid agencies think that Jordan stands among the first two or three countries in the world over the years in its sensible use of foreign assistance. It was a model for many, many years. A place where you got things done with minor infusions of capital.

Sitting astride all this is a man who became King while still a teenager. He has lived through several wars and lost half of the territory that the kingdom claimed, called the West Bank, after the 1967 War. He also lost direct Arab access to Jerusalem, the third most holy place in the Islamic world. As a descendant of the Prophet this probably has caused him greater pain than anything else in his life.

Over the years the King replaced Jordan's ties with the British, which, of course, in the beginning were imposed ties, to a new focus on the United States. For many years Jordan has viewed the United States as its principal protector and benefactor and best friend. The King has dealt with every President since Eisenhower. He may now be the longest reigning monarch in the world, if not, he must be number two. So he has seen it all and dealt with everybody. The de Gaulles, the Macmillans, the Khrushchevs, etc.

I think he accepted long ago the reality of the state of Israel, that it wasn't going to be blown away or pushed into the sea. He was always way ahead of all of his compatriots and fellow leaders in the area. Shortly after the 1967 War he initiated personal contact with Israeli political leaders. This is not the time or the place to go into the details of this, but I will simply say that hundreds of hours of conversation have taken place over the last 20 odd years.

I think starting with the Johnson administration, the King became increasingly concerned that for a variety of domestic political reasons as well as perhaps for foreign policy reasons, the United States increasingly began to favor Israel in its overall Middle Eastern political relationships. He was wise enough to know there wasn't really very much that he could do about that, but it certainly didn't preclude him from being deeply concerned by it. He also to this day accepts the view that the United States continues, as it has from the beginning, to hold the key to a final resolution of the confrontation between the Arab world and the state of Israel. And I think one can fairly say the principal policies that he has articulated over the years have been directed toward the sole objective of encouraging a continued American involvement as the main intermediary, or mediator, in the confrontation. He has not permitted his unhappy perception of an increasing Washington bias in favor of Israel to cloud the reality that Jordan and the other Arab nations need U.S. involvement as the principal diplomatic catalyst in the search for a solution to the confrontation.

Q: This brings up something. I have talked to other people who have served in Jordan. You were saying that you would often see the King once or twice a day. Obviously he had been through a number of ambassadors and knew how to use them. He had his own staff so how was he using you?

VIETS: We now get into very personal and sensitive areas and I think the only way I want to answer this is that kings are no different than anybody else. They need one or more people with whom they can sit alone and discuss issues openly without fear of seeing it appear in the newspaper or being used by their enemies. They need listening posts. They need people to use as sounding boards for ideas. They need to share confidences. When they are down they need someone to hold their hand and they need someone to share their exaltation when something has gone right. Kings, I think, by the nature of the institution, are often more isolated than presidents are. It is very difficult for a monarch to know who his friend is and who is simply there to gain whatever advantage he can from the relationship. In a democracy there are institutions and compensatory balances, etc. in a system that winnow out much of that, but in a monarchy there isn't.

Q: It is the only game in town. Whereas in a democracy you can opt for party A or party B or perhaps something else.

VIETS: As I say, this really does touch on personal relations and I don't think, for purposes of this it is...all I can say is that one spent hundreds of hours with this man discussing not just simply foreign policy differences and problems, but the state of the world, the state of his own country, his neighbors, family, etc.

Q: Now let me toss a question and let you figure out how to answer it. Here you are the paid representative of the United States. You get into this and know that back in Washington anything dealing with Israel leaks like hell. How did you feel on your reporting? You must have decided what you would and would not report based on where it was going, etc. Can you talk a little about this?

VIETS: Well, you said it better than I can. I think that any ambassador who is worth his salt must be able to develop a relationship with a head of government or his cabinet ministers, in which there are conversations relating to the most sensitive aspects of that person's personal life, private life or public life. You have to make a decision about which part of this is important to policy makers in your own government to know about, and which part of it simply goes to the grave with you. I am sure that every ambassador who has developed those sorts of relationships every night when he goes to bed has this on his mind.

Of course there is highly selective reporting always going on. I don't think you have that relationship very long if the reporting isn't selective because, as you said, there are plenty of people who always find reasons to leak it.

I have to say in defense of the institution of the State Department and the White House, that there are very, very few instances of sensitive reporting I sent home in which there was ever any blow back--or at least traceable blow back. We had in those days, and I am sure it continues, some

highly compartmented reporting categories in which distribution was very, very limited, very few people saw it. I have no complaints to make that people didn't honor their commitments to this sensitivity.

Q: Along with the King, who were some of the other players?

VIETS: In the period that I was there, 1981-84, there were really three principal players whom I saw very frequently...the King; the Crown Prince, his younger brother; and the head of the military forces, a man by the name of Zaid bin Shakir. He is now the Prime Minister. I had very little to do with Jordanian prime ministers during this period. The King preferred that the channel of communication be directly between him and me and the business that normally would be done with the prime minister was accomplished with one of those three men whom I just listed.

Our present ambassador sees much more of the prime minister than he does the King. So things change depending on who is the prime minister. And as democracy has matured in Jordan, the prime minister takes on more and more power and there is more and more need for the American Ambassador to deal with him. He also deals much more with the parliament than I did. The parliament in my day was not much more than a rubber stamp group. It was not an important segment of my job.

Q: In your conversations with these people, I am sure they were asking your evaluation of Begin, and in particular, Sharon. How did you feel about them at this time? We had gone through this security zone business which the Israelis had grabbed...by the way I had an interview with Sam Hart who talks very highly about you being the one person around who was willing to raise his voice in saying that this was a land grab at the time that the Israelis moved into the security zone. What were you imparting to the Jordanians about this? It turned out to be a rather lethal combination of Sharon or a weakening Begin or something.

VIETS: Yes, there was a weakening of Begin's position at that time and Sharon was certainly on the ascendancy. I felt, even while I was in Israel, that Sharon was frankly a very dangerous figure. Dangerous for Israel and dangerous for his neighbors, and perhaps even dangerous for the world. I felt even stronger as time went on in Jordan and I watched Sharon's maneuvering as Defense Minister and as I received intelligence information of what he was up too, I became very, very concerned. I certainly imparted that sense of concern without imparting the gory details to the King and to his immediate colleagues.

Q: Sam Lewis was still in Tel Aviv. Did you feel you understood what the action was in Israel, or because Alexander Haig was in Washington and Sam Lewis had much more a direct line and you had this affinity towards Israeli...?

VIETS: Well, remember Haig was gone within the year.

Q: But the year was a very important year.

VIETS: Yeah. I am afraid my memory is a little dim on the specifics of what we were going through at that time. My memory becomes sharper at the time George Shultz picks up his role as

Secretary and then ultimately launches the famous Reagan plan in September, 1982. I will go to my grave thinking it is one of the greater diplomatic triumphs of the post war era of American diplomacy. Unfortunately, it foundered, but it was a triumph because it got through a very biased bureaucracy and the President got behind it. We simply didn't follow through on it as well as we might have for reasons we can discuss as we go along. But it was a tremendously well-constructed diplomatic effort which had great promise.

Q: My dates are getting hazy here. The really major event, of course, was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. That took place on Haig's watch. In fact allegedly there was a wink or a nod when Sharon...When did that happen?

VIETS: That was in the early summer of 1982 because the peace initiative came in September.

Q: Were you...?

VIETS: I was absolutely devastated by that invasion.

Q: We were having an Israel which was saying that if anybody does anything they will take threats. In other words it looked like this was something, in hindsight, that was obviously a trumped up event...an attempted assassination in London of the ambassador started this thing. There was no cause and effect.

VIETS: Sharon decided it was time.

Q: Had our Embassy in Tel Aviv, in your analyses and everybody else's who were looking at this thing, felt, "Oh my God, here is a gun that is loaded and cocked and is going to go off?"

VIETS: I think there was no great secret that Sharon had been promoting the idea, the concept, for quite some time. That sooner or later, preferably sooner from his point of view, the Israelis had to go into Lebanon and once and for all take care of the problem of the PLO operating inside Lebanon. And along the way to remind the Syrians that the Israelis remained the boss of that part of the world. I don't recall that there were any major intelligence indicators that the invasion was going to take place up until immediately after the assassination attempt, and then you began to see reports. The Israel military is as good or better than anybody else at having contingency plans filed away in the safes of their headquarters, and I am sure the Sharon plan in various incarnations had been developed over the years and was ready and waiting. Sharon decided and persuaded the Prime Minister and the cabinet that this was the excuse (the abortive assassination) they needed.

In fact, you may recall the principal argument for launching it was that Israel had to neutralize the border; that the PLO would continue to threaten Israeli border settlements with rocket attacks and the odd infiltration effort by guerrillas. Over the years this had resulted in the deaths of innocent people and children.

In fact, Phil Habib had negotiated a year earlier, in Lebanon, a cease-fire along that border and my recollection is that it had held to the letter. So Sharon's "excuse" for launching the invasion

because it was necessary to purge that border of all these dangerous people who were throwing bombs over the wire fences is pure baloney. The record simply doesn't sustain it.

And secondly, as we now know, Sharon sold the Prime Minister and the cabinet on the fact that this would be a very limited operation. He insisted he had no intention of coming in contact with the Syrians and certainly had no intention of going all the way to Beirut. In fact, he did. They did precisely that.

I think for those of us who were out there it was a very, very bad moment of our lives. God knows it was much worse for the people in Lebanon who were the victims.

Q: Could you talk about how you felt when you got this news?

VIETS: The first recollection that I have is a midnight phone call from the Queen of Jordan, daughter of Najeeb Halaby, a distinguished American citizen. She just stripped my skin off..."How can I serve a government which is doing anything to stop this carnage and this terrible war?" I remember giving it right back to her. Firstly, I thought she had no right personally to castigate me in this form. And secondly, she was speaking from total ignorance about what I was doing in trying to stop it.

The King called me the next morning and asked that I come up to see him. He closed the door and started laughing. He said he had been listening in on an extension phone and had heard the whole conversation. I guess I should not go into what he said about it. But it was not an easy time. There were demonstrations against our Embassy and threats against our people.

Q: It was sort of salami tactics in that...I have just finished a long series of interviews with Bob Dillon where he notes that Sharon and the Israelis were saying they were going up to such and such a line and stop and actually we saw them 20 miles beyond that line. This went on and on. Did this unfold gradually or did you immediately realize they were going the whole way?

VIETS: My recollection is that it was happening so fast that one was stunned by the blatancy of the whole thing. It was as if there were no constraints, no restrictions whatsoever, placed on that army. I can still recall those terrible moments when the Israeli artillery units sat up on the hills overlooking Beirut and 24 hours a day just lobbed shells and rockets into that city of totally unprotected people.

I think from a personal perspective it was even worse for me because I realized what we were seeing at that point was in fact the first time that the most modern technology of war, those horrible weapons of war that were not available to the third world, were being used against defenseless populations. I was just horrified by what I saw on television. It seemed to me that as these terrible weapons became available to more and more armies and irresponsible governments the world would be witness to carnage and devastation of heretofore unknown dimension.

This is a slight aside, but at this time I got into terrible difficulties on Capitol Hill. I came home shortly after the end of the war. I was going back and forth between Amman and Washington with considerable frequency in those days, and whenever I did I always made a point, as many

ambassadors do, of spending a certain amount of time on Capitol Hill going around seeing key senators and representatives and staffers, to brief them on what was going on, offer my own views, etc.

One of the people who I often went to see was Senator Rudy Boschwitz, now defeated Senator from Minnesota, a Jewish member of the Senate who had a very strong interest in the Middle East. While he was very pro-Israeli, he also understood there certain aspects of our interests in the Middle East that even transcended our/his affections of the state of Israel. I remember sitting in his office, this was right at the end of the war, and saying to him that I thought it was going to be a long, long time before those of us who had been witness to all of this could forget the inhumanity of the Israeli army's attack on the city of Beirut itself, which had absolutely no military significance whatsoever. I remember Rudy Boschwitz rising out of his seat and putting his finger under my nose saying, "You get out of this office. And you never cross the threshold of this office again. I will never tolerate hearing any American Ambassador or any representative of the United States government ever using the word "inhumane" in connection with the state of Israel. Get out of here."

Well, I sat there and gave him back exactly what he had given me with a little chapter and verse on the number of innocent casualties, men, women, children, grandparents, etc., who had been killed and maimed, and then got up and left. I have not seen him again to this day, but I know from others on the Hill that he went around really doing a job on me concerning my perceived lack of loyalty to Israel.

Q: During this time was there any thought of the Jordanians jumping in or anything like that?

VIETS: No. The last time the Jordanians jumped in (1967) was also the final time. This war was an insane military operation and thank God everybody saw it for what it was and did what they could to contain it.

Q: How about the Syrians?

VIETS: There was always the potential of this exploding into a regional war and the potential had various scenarios inherent to it. You could have had an uprising in Israel in the occupied territories in which large numbers of settlers, for example, might have been killed and maimed. You could have had the lost of American life and damage to American interests and installations in countries on the periphery. We certainly were concerned about such an event in Jordan, and so was the Jordanian government. I remember we had very heavy security around our Embassy and staff housing units, provided by the Jordanian government. That was true throughout the area.

Q: The two camps of Palestinians, Shatila and Sabra, men and women were left and with the collusion of the Israelis, Christian militia were allowed to go in there and it turned into a massacre. How did that play in Jordan and what was our Embassy's reaction in Israel to this?

VIETS: The press reports led to a feeling of abhorrence that this could happen and led to all kinds of contrasts with Nazi atrocities during World War II, etc. I'm being a little hesitant as I am responding to your question because my recollection is that all we really had in the first days

after this were press reports. We really didn't have any inside information on exactly what had happened. We knew something terrible had happened and while there might not have been any doubt in the minds of people "in the streets" in the Arab world that this was a direct result of Israeli collusion with Christian elements in Beirut, I think most of us were a little reluctant to jump to that conclusion without further evidence to support the fact. We simply didn't have it at that point.

My own view is that the total story of what went wrong has not yet been made public to this day. I was told shortly thereafter that we had intercepted some communications between Israeli units and the Phalange, which we deep-sixed because we felt it would make the Israelis even more culpable than the Israelis' own investigation suggested. But I have never heard the tapes and have never seen them.

Q: Just to get a feel for the times, was this whole war on daily TV in Jordan?

VIETS: Yes. It was the first war to use modern weaponry and to be covered with such intense press interest. You remember, for its size the city of Jerusalem has more journalists from all over the world than any other city in the world. Wars attract journalists like flies. So there was tremendous coverage of that war and nothing has seen its equivalent since.

Q: Today is March 11, 1993 and this is a continuing interview with Ambassador Richard N. Viets. Dick let's talk a little about the Shultz plan.

VIETS: I first became aware of what we call the Reagan Initiative in August of 1982. In fact, George Shultz was its principal architect, and I will always believe this effort was one of George Shultz' finest hours, if not his finest hour. Despite the fact that the plan never went anywhere, it had all the elements that seemed to me at the time, and still does, to provide a fair and durable end to the confrontation between the Arab world and the state of Israel.

I first heard of it when I was on holiday in England with my family. I had taken a house for a month in the Cotswolds. We no sooner got settled in and had taken our first amble through the Cotswold hills when I was informed by our governess Mary Luke that our Embassy in London was trying urgently to reach me. I called in and was told to come into London immediately because there was a secure line call I had to make to Assistant Secretary Veliotis. Well, I sensed immediately that that was the end of my holiday.

I drove to the train station and went into London and got Nick on the phone. He said, "I am going to make a very secret visit to Amman this weekend. I will be arriving in London Saturday morning and the King is sending a special airplane to pick me up and I want you to go with me. I will explain it all when I see you. No one is to know we are in Amman except the King and the Prime Minister. So do not advise your Embassy of this. We will not be staying at your residence, etc., etc."

Q: This was when?

VIETS: This would have been in August, 1983. I think the plan was announced in September.

At the appointed hour I showed up at Heathrow. I remember taking a taxi to Terminal 3 where we were to meet. I got out of the taxi and, my God, who was the first person I should bump into but the administrative counselor of our Embassy in Amman. He saw me with baggage and wanted to know right away whether I was going back to Amman. I said, "No, no, I am going on a hot weekend to the south of France." I could just see the look on his face..."This son of a gun Viets has some tootsie he is secretly meeting." And, sure enough, he went back to Amman with a big story that he had seen the Ambassador on his way to a weekend in the south of France. So, it took some time to live that down.

In any case, Nick and I joined forces at Heathrow and were flown out on a very plush private jet belonging to His Majesty, and over champagne and smoked salmon Nick first briefed me on the plan. That literally was the first I had heard of it. I knew something had been going on that required certain people in NEA to work very long hours, but I really did not know what was afoot.

Nick's job, as Assistant Secretary, and as ex-Ambassador to Jordan, led the Secretary to ask him to personally brief the King on the plan and to attempt to secure the King's support of the plan. We had several sessions with the King...we had a couple of days in Amman. On the whole the King subscribed to the plan with alacrity. There were one or two questions he had.

Q: In essence, what was the initial plan proposing?

VIETS: In essence it involved the US calling a conference of the confrontation states with Israel based on the famous UN Resolutions 242 and 338 requiring Israel to withdraw from the bulk of the occupied territories. It involved a series of telescoped time steps leading to Israeli withdrawal and to elections, etc. The final status of the territory that the Israelis withdrew from was to be decided in negotiations to be concluded within 5 years. In the interim the Palestinians were to establish and implement a self-governing authority.

We took the stand that while the United States was against an independent state, it would support whatever the parties themselves agreed to. In recent years we have backed away from that second part. Now we are solidly against an independent state--period. We no longer say that we will support whatever others agree to. This is only one of many erosions of the Shultz policy that has taken place in the last two administrations.

In any case, Nick flew back to Washington and I flew back to England to pick up my family and take them back to Amman. Obviously I had to be in Amman to follow up those initial consultations with the King. The plan was announced and our Ambassador in Israel, Sam Lewis, forecast very accurately when he learned of it, that it would go nowhere with the Israelis because they had not been apprized beforehand of it. They were not informed until just before the announcement of the plan. They had no hand in developing the plan. For the Israelis this was the first time in some years that they had not received notice over everybody else of a U.S. policy initiative in the region. They had almost always managed, as a result of having advance notice, to shape, to form and modify whatever the policy the moment was to accommodate their own needs--or perceived needs.

Begin immediately said no way to the Reagan initiative. He could see the handwriting on the wall. This would mean ultimately getting out of most of his beloved Judea and Samaria, and he wanted nothing to do with it. The Israelis put up a tremendous public relations campaign against the initiative. They pulled out all the stops in Israel and with their friends here in the halls of Congress and with the American Jewish community. I think it is fair to say they plain buffaloed the Reagan administration. The Administration got scared and in consequence walked away from its own plan--a plan many of us considered to be by all odds the fairest and most comprehensive, most balanced, most creative diplomatic framework thus far conceived to resolve this long festering confrontation. Those of us out in the field were left pretending that we still backed it, but in fact there was no muscle put behind it. It just died almost stillborn. It lived for a very short period of time.

I believe in retrospect that this failure was a great shame. Look at what has happened in the interim in the region in terms of the costs to human life in Israel and amongst the Palestinians. The toll has been terrible, to say nothing of the instability that continues to exist in the region because of the absence of a settlement.

Before we go any further, Stuart, I want to get on the record one of those bizarre instances that rarely become a matter of public record, but in fact have a very important bearing on relationships. In this instance I want to talk a little about the personal relationship between Secretary of State Shultz and King Hussein.

About two or three months before Secretary Haig resigned and George Shultz was appointed Secretary of State, George Shultz came to Amman with his wife on a brief visit. He was at that time head of Bechtel. I remember he came with one of the senior Bechtel vice presidents. He had known King Hussein in the past, I think through Bechtel, which had done some work in Jordan over the years, perhaps he had also known him in one of his earlier government positions. He considered the King a friend.

As I mentioned in one of our earlier taping sessions, George Shultz was number one on my personal list of potential Secretaries of State. I recall he was allegedly very disappointed when he wasn't named in the first Reagan cabinet in place of General Haig. I had never met Mr. Shultz. When I heard he was in town I immediately called him at his hotel and arranged to go over and to pay my respects on him and to invite him to lunch. I spent quite a lot of time with him and his wife. Of course the first thing I did was to inquire if there was anything I could do to expedite his meeting with the King. He let me know politely but firmly that he didn't need any help from me or anybody else. The King knew he was in town and he was sure the phone was going to ring. His office had sent advance word to the Palace of his impending visit.

A couple of days went by and I was wining and dining the Shultzes and still no word. I think he stayed in town three days and the phone never rang. He left Amman in a major huff. He never heard from the King or from the royal palace. On two or three occasions I said, "I am certain the King doesn't know you are here because he is an enormously polite man and if he knew you were here I am sure you would hear from him. Let me just call and find out." Well, he didn't want me to make any calls.

As soon as he left I happened to see the King, who had been down during this entire period at his palace in Aqaba for a long weekend with his family. I said to him, "I think somebody has made a bad mistake. George Shultz was here and spent three or four days waiting for word from the palace to call on you and he never got any word. He left in a hell of a huff and his nose was really out of joint. What happened?" He said, "George Shultz was here? Why in the hell didn't anybody tell me?" Well, once again it was one of those dreadful instances when staffs decide that the lord and master shouldn't be bothered with some businessman.

I always felt that this perceived slight negatively affected George Shultz' future relationship with King Hussein. I honestly am trying to remember as I am talking whether I ever told Shultz later when he became Secretary of State that the King had never been told he was there. I must have, but I can't recall the conversation. I do know that the relationship never was very warm. Shultz is a man of great personal pride and dignity and ego and does not like to be slighted, even by a king.

I don't want to use this particular tape to cite chapter and verse as to why I feel as strongly as I do on this, but it affected their relationship, that I am convinced of. And that in turn affected some policy decisions with respect to Jordan. As I said at the outset, this is one of those rinky dink things that forms little pieces of history.

Q: It is an interesting thing, you said this about Shultz. I don't know the man and have never dealt with him and there hasn't been a great deal of psychoanalysis of Shultz ...Alexander Haig gets all the psychoanalysis of that period, but I have never heard this strong sense of self with Shultz.

VIETS: Very, very much so. In my view, and I am probably almost alone in this, George Shultz in the first years as his time as Secretary State harbored, I believe, ...and again I do not want to cite why, because it is and enormously personal insight which affects somebody else...I think he harbored the hope that somehow he might find himself as a presidential nominee at the end of the Reagan administration. I believe he strongly felt there was no one else in the government at that time who had the vast experience at cabinet level that he had. And, of course, he was absolutely right. Treasury, Labor, OMB, Chairman of a huge international contracting firm...he had done it all. A man of considerable gifts. But a very substantial ego would be required, I guess, to survive in the fast lane and do as well as he did. He also was a man of considerable temper. You wanted to be very careful when you saw the color begin to rise in his neck. He knew how to sound off.

Q: Back to the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. When would this be?

VIETS: The date would be summer of 1983.

Q: And it was essentially over in the fall of 1983?

VIETS: Yes, I think so. I should have brushed up on the chronology of this.

Q: Well, the exact chronology is not all that important. It had happened, the Israelis were withdrawing, the Palestinians were getting out...

VIETS: Well, you remember they didn't get out for a long time and this was part of the problem. As time went on the Israelis began to suffer increasing casualties from truck bombs, car bombs, assassinations, etc. and life became intolerable for the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in Lebanon. They finally decided they had had enough and got out. Of course it was about that time George Shultz got on his horse and decided that he would negotiate the famous Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty.

I have one major recollection of that period. The Secretary flew out to Cairo immediately prior to launching his shuttle diplomacy between Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Beirut to negotiate the treaty. Immediately prior to that he went to Cairo where he summoned seven or eight of his ambassadors in the region, and I was one of them. The reason for summons was he wanted our collective judgment on what was needed in the treaty--and what was possible to attain. With the exception of Sam Lewis, who was still our ambassador in Israel, the rest of us to a greater or lesser extent told the Secretary--either very bluntly or very diplomatically--that he was embarking on a useless and dangerous venture. We all already knew essentially the dimensions of what he wanted in the treaty. His primary goal was to normalize relationships between Lebanon and Israel. Most of us believed it would be a big, big mistake to abandon what had been US policy for many, many years, of seeking a comprehensive agreement. To negotiate treaties piecemeal with Israel would surely guarantee an imbalance in the final result--or so we thought. As we went around the table with these warnings, as I say, one ambassador in particular, our ambassador to Syria, spoke to the Secretary about as bluntly as anyone I have ever heard.

Q: This was Bob Paganelli.

VIETS: Yes, Bob Paganelli, who if he has not been interviewed, should be.

Q: Yes, I want to get a hold of him.

VIETS: Bob almost was fired on the spot, I think. But in any case I could see the color rising in the Secretary's neck and face as more of us spoke our pieces. He didn't like it at all. At the end he just stood up and slapped his papers together and abruptly observed that he guessed he had heard all he wanted from us and stalked out of the room. I was subsequently told by a very close friend who was working on the Secretary's staff that later that day Mr. Shultz had told him he should have fired us all on the spot. In his view, all of us had been bought out by the Arabs or we couldn't see the forest for the trees.

Alas, the treaty that he ultimately negotiated was an appalling invasion of Lebanese sovereignty. It included permitting the Israelis to build and maintain monitoring stations on Mt. Hermon and to conduct over flights of Lebanon--and many other kinds of fundamental infringements of Lebanese sovereignty. The Lebanese ran for cover--the Syrians provided a good deal of that cover--and the treaty blew up in George Shultz' face. Although none of us ever had the effrontery to remind him, I think he got some pretty sound advice on that famous day in Cairo.

Q: Dealing with your staff in Jordan. Here you are watching what is happening every day on TV. From a practical point of view what the Israelis were doing was pretty outrageous. They were bombing essentially an open city. Lots of people were getting killed. It was not a justified invasion. But at the same time Israel has a special close relationship with us and you had served there. Did you find that you had to kind of damp down the feelings and reporting?

VIETS: Yes. I had two problems as ambassador in that particular domain. One was personal feelings. At various points during the three years I was there my staff would get very excited, emotionally involved over various Israeli incursions into Lebanon or over flights over Jordan, etc. I have to say that I think as in any environment...I remember when I was posted in India I was there for two wars with the Pakistanis. One picked up the Indian cudgels in no small measure, particularly if one had no responsibility in the hierarchy of the Embassy it is easy to become excessively involved in emotional terms. Certainly a number of the younger staff people at the Embassy got pretty exercised over what they perceived as immoral acts by the Israelis, if that is the right characterization. But they became even more exercised over their own country's policies on these matters, which they were certain were highly prejudiced in favor of Israel. So one had constantly to attempt to control, tap down, that feeling within the Embassy. And it pervaded the entire mission. It wasn't simply the substantive officers who were involved.

The other problem that went hand in hand with that was that a great deal of what I was doing particularly with the King, was being reported in very restricted cable channels. There was a paranoia in the Secretary's office that much of what we were doing simply should not be shared with anybody. So I, as ambassador, had another problem of trying to keep my Embassy generally informed about what was going on and at the same time not revealing some of the more sensitive aspects of it.

I found this more difficult to deal with than I did the emotional side of things because temperamentally I am one who takes the view that while I accept that there is nothing wrong with embracing the concept of "need to know," I tend to give a broader interpretation of this than many of my colleagues did. I believe you get more out of people and better performance out of people the more you confide in them. You simply have to make a determination as to the degree of trust that you can put in people and then let it go at that. I recall there were many times in meetings with substantive officers when I told them things that George Shultz and company would have been unhappy that I was revealing. But nobody ever leaked it. These people were mature, disciplined officers and I felt they should be treated as such.

Q: Well, there is also the problem too, that somebody might speak out of turn if they don't know what is going on. Well, when did you leave Jordan?

VIETS: I left Jordan in August, 1984.

Q: Were there any developments of the aftermath that we haven't covered?

VIETS: No, I don't think so. We just kept drilling away at trying to find ways to keep the diplomacy of the hour from being torpedoed by some foolish action by one party or the other. You had, of course, during that period the Iran-Iraq war which became an increasingly important

part of my dialogue with the King. The Jordanian role during the early eighties with the Iraqis was a very critical one.

Q: In what way?

VIETS: Aqaba was the principal access port for everything going into and out of Iraq. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to a much lesser degree. Aqaba was the principal port available to the Iraqis. During those years the Jordanian economy became very closely tied to Iraq. And the King became a very close confidant of Saddam Hussein. The King felt strongly that the war must not result in an Iranian victory because of various geopolitical upheavals implicit in an Iranian triumph. Islamic fundamentalism is not a creature of the nineties. It has been around for some time and this was the King's principal nightmare. The King, more than any other foreign leader, I think, was responsible for the reopening of a dialogue during this period between the United States and Iraq. You remember after the 1973 war Iraq broke diplomatic relations with the U.S. Kissinger finally managed to get an interests office opened up.

Q: But there was never very much contact.

VIETS: No, but through the King's good offices we were able to build up quite a substantial presence in Baghdad. I think the King was very persuasive in the issue of opening up an intelligence relationship with the Iraqis which became very, very important in the prosecution of the war.

Q: Satellite photography and that type of thing.

VIETS: Yes.

Q: We were giving that information to the Iraqis to help them.

VIETS: That is right. So that part of my job became very interesting and quite important. Also in that period we worked very hard at trying to develop a Jordanian rapid deployment force which could be used on a moment's notice anywhere in the region. During that period the Jordanians had the best trained special forces in the whole region, exclusive of the Israelis. We worked very closely with them in training exercises, etc. and tried to get through the Congress in the so-called black budget funding to establish a quick reaction force.

Q: This is the budget that does not appear or is covered in other areas...a sort of hidden budget.

VIETS: ...funding for this force. Alas, the Israelis decided that it was a bad idea and through their surrogates in the Congress, killed it. Again, if that force had in fact been funded, I think there is a good possibility we would not have had the famous Desert Storm.

Q: When you were talking about doing a special force, what sort of eventualities were you looking at?

VIETS: Everything from coup efforts to border incursions to mob scenes that local government couldn't handle to outbreaks of regional strife. Remember, the Cold War was going on at this point and there were plenty of people who felt the Russians were manipulating forces in the area and looking for ways to destabilize regimes, etc. How much of this in retrospect was real and how much of this was a figment of our imagination...

Q: But it was certainly how we were operating, particularly in the Middle East because there it was very volatile. Talking about the Iraq-Iran problem, although it had already happened by the time you had arrived, did King Hussein ever question Saddam Hussein getting involved in that mess?

VIETS: He may have, I simply don't remember it. By the time I got there the war was in full swing. Saddam was taking a hell of a pounding from the Iranians. There were tens of thousands of people being killed on both sides. It was a carnage and the King simply wanted to get it over with. But he also wanted to ensure Baghdad had won the war or at a minimum had left the battlefield with Iran so severely mauled that it would not pose a future threat to the stability of the area.

DAVID L. MACK
Director, Office of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq Affairs
Washington, DC (1982-1985)

Ambassador Mack was born and raised in Oregon and educated at Harvard University. Joining the Foreign State Department in 1965, he studied Arabic and devoted his career dealing with Arab and Middle East issues. His foreign posts include Baghdad, Amman, Jerusalem, Beirut, Tripoli, Benghazi and Tunis. From 1986 to 1989 he served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. In Washington from 1990 to 1993, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs. During this period, the major issue was Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the military actions that followed. Ambassador Mack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

MACK: Turning to Jordan, our relationship with that country was outwardly quite good. There were strains within the U.S. government, because it was difficult to get support for all the things that NEA and the Pentagon thought we ought to be doing with Jordan in terms of arms sales and joint military activities. These were items that the Jordanians clearly required and things that would help promote our bi-lateral relationship, but there were also possible joint programs to advance wider U.S. security objectives. These included the idea of promoting Jordan as having a rapid reaction force which could help out in a pinch down in the Gulf. We worked on matters like this, but mostly unsuccessfully because of congressional opposition to doing more for Jordan.

Q: This is basically because of Israeli...

MACK: The Israelis were opposed to selling anything to Jordan unless it was directly related to helping the Jordanians prevent terrorists from infiltrating across the border in Israel. That the Israelis would support.

Q: What was your impression of King Hussein?

MACK: Washington at this time viewed Hussein as key to restarting the Arab-Israel peace process. He had a history of secret contacts with the Israelis. Israeli Prime Minister Peres had to be very careful with Shamir, his coalition partner as foreign minister. If the coalition held together long enough, the two would trade places with Shamir advancing to be Prime Minister. In that event, Shamir might well oppose such contacts with Jordan. I don't know all the details on this, but I was aware of enough to know that we had helped open a secret channel from Peres to King Hussein, by-passing Shamir and the Israeli foreign ministry. It was a very closely held, tightly controlled channel. The channel was used for trying to get the peace process going again, but also to pass messages regarding terrorist infiltration threats and how to deal with them.

Partly because of some successes in the secret Jordanian-Israeli talks that we aided, we became very hopeful that King Hussein might take an initiative with regard to the peace process. Mind you, we had tried to develop a relationship with the Yasser Arafat and the PLO that might one day be useful in the peace process. We had helped Arafat get out of Lebanon in September 1982 with most of his organization for political activity intact. He returned to Lebanon when the central government collapsed and our forces withdrew. A year later, in 1983, he was operating from in and around Tripoli, in northern Lebanon, where he had supporters in the Palestinian refugee camps. Once again, Arafat got into all kinds of hot water there, caught between the Syrians on the one side with whom he was at odds at that point, and the Israeli navy on the other. He was being hammered by the Syrians, and the Israeli navy was preventing his escape. Working closely with Dick Murphy, and with the essential support of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, we brokered a deal to get Arafat out of Lebanon once more. Once again, he disappointed us. We thought that after two close calls, he would make a deal with the moderates, Mubarak and Hussein, and support the peace process. Once again, Arafat flitted off, courting so-called supporters in South Yemen and the Soviet bloc.

The question became whether Hussein would be willing to take the plunge into the peace process without the cover of Arafat being there as well. We had failed to arrange the latter. There had been direct but covert contacts with the PLO. Officially authorized talks in Tunis did not start until later in the 1980s. Hussein did come to Washington, as I recall, on a high profile visit in the spring of 1985. The Reagan Administration placed a lot of hope on this visit. They brought Phil Habib back, and many top officials at State and the White House were involved in trying to get the peace process ginned up again. My very capable Jordanian desk officer, Marc Grossman, was right in the middle of developments and very close to the Jordanian delegation. Marc was helping to pull this together and providing top people in the State Department with a sense that Jordan would go for full peace in return for full Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories. The trick was whether that would seem enough in reach to get Hussein to commit publicly to the process. We were 70% confident that the King would take the plunge. In the end, he did not. Hussein felt too exposed to the Syrians on one flank and the PLO on the other, to depend on an Israeli government of National Unity that could not be relied on even by us to take a firm

position on the extent of withdrawal. At that point, hopes for the peace process evaporated. It was a disappointment for those of us in NEA but also, I am sure, for Reagan and Shultz.

Although U.S. diplomatic contacts with the PLO no longer existed, my office had some responsibility for liaison with Palestinians in exile. I had a working relationship on a non-attribution basis with a Palestinian-American named Jawad George, who at that time was the head of the National Association of Arab-Americans. Jawad was also a member of the Palestinian National Congress, which was nominally an umbrella group for Palestinians in exile and of which the PLO was one constituent part. That was enough of a fig leaf for NEA to authorize my discussions with Jawad of what he heard from the PLO, but it was not the kind of thing to which we drew attention. Jawad used to come and see me after returning from meetings in Tunis, and I'd do a report to the NEA front office without mentioning his name. Presumably, the Assistant Secretary might brief select persons on the seventh floor or at the White House, but I did not ask.

JOHNNY YOUNG
Administrative Counselor
Amman, Jordan (1983-1985)

Ambassador Young was born in Georgia and raised in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. He was educated at Temple University and entered the Foreign Service in 1967. Before being named Ambassador, Mr. Young served in a number of embassies in the administrative field, including Madagascar, Guinea, Kenya, Qatar, Barbados, Jordan and the Netherlands. In 1989 he was named US Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 1992. He subsequently served as US Ambassador to Togo (1994-1997), Bahrain (1997-2001) and Slovenia (2001-2004). Ambassador Young was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Were you sort of mentally making a list of what you were doing on what you were, you know, if I ever run a mission or something like that, I will do this, I won't do that, seeing the problems, did this help?

YOUNG: No, I never thought I was going to become an ambassador. I was making notes of what was good and what was bad based on these debriefs that we would get from the inspectors, but I never made mental note in terms of well, if I became an ambassador I'd do this and that. No, never entered my mind. I made notes in terms of what a good admin counselor would do. I did that because that was my goal to be the best admin counselor that I could. That was how I made the notes in my mind. I learned a lot from that.

Anyhow, I was getting toward the end of that assignment and it was time once again to bid. That ugly monster of bidding had reared its head and it was time to deal with it once again. I began to look around for a position overseas. I had established very good relationships as a result of this executive director position. I got to know all of the other executive directors. I got to know all of

the executive directors in the geographic bureaus and the functional bureaus and they were all very supportive. I narrowed down my list to two key jobs. One was admin counselor in Rabat in Morocco and the other was admin counselor in Amman, Jordan. I had spoken to Sheldon Kryss who was the executive director of Near Eastern affairs. He liked me. He was very supportive and he arranged for me to interview with the political appointee ambassador in Morocco, Joseph Verner Reed. He was here in the States at the time and I interviewed with him. He was a character. I interviewed with him. It all turned out very well. He offered me the job, but I didn't accept right away. I went back and conferred again with Sheldon Kryss and Sheldon said to me, "Johnny, you can have either of these jobs. You can have Morocco or you can have Amman. If I were you" these were his words, he said, "both of those ambassadors are a pain in the ass, but I would go with the one in Jordan because he's a career man." I took Sheldon's advice and I opted for Amman. I was very happy. It was a very competitive job and it was one in an exciting area. I thought it was just a perfect match. My wife and I were happy. Our kids weren't too happy because they were settled in the States here with their friends. My son was at the point of puberty and friendships are so important at that stage. He didn't want to leave them, so that required some work on our part.

Before I went to Amman an inspection team went out there in the spring of 1983 and they returned and provided a debrief that was a horror story, one of the worst horror stories I think I'd ever heard. I remember they looked at me and they said, "You want to go to that post?" I said, "Yes." They said, "You're out of your mind." I said, "Why?" They said, "It is the biggest mess we have ever run into." I said, "Well, what's going on?" They said, "Well, it's been a raging battle between the ambassador and the administrative staff, particularly the admin officer and the budget and fiscal officer. The ambassador has already savaged both of them." The ambassador was Richard Viets, Dick Viets. So, I was terrified after hearing these stories. I didn't know what to think. I read the draft inspection report and it had something like 150 recommendations almost all of them on the administrative side. I just couldn't believe it. I'd never seen anything like it. I was really very worried and this troubled me for months before I went to the post. As you can imagine, as an FS-1 wanting very badly to be a senior officer one day, I was worried about the impact this might have on my chances to cross the threshold to become a senior officer. I just did the best that I could. I prepared and I studied and I read and I briefed and debriefed and then in the summer of 1983 we wound up things here and we moved on to Amman.

Q: You were in Amman from '83 to when?

YOUNG: From 1983 to 1985.

Q: Okay. Before we get into the workings of things, what were sort of the state of, what was happening in Jordan at the time sort of the state of relations with the United States?

YOUNG: Well, I was going to get into that when we got into talking about Jordan. I can do it now.

Q: You can do it now.

YOUNG: Okay. The state of relations were frankly as good as you could expect under the circumstances. Jordan was a moderate state in the middle of the Middle East crisis. A good friend, a loyal friend. It had tremendous problems of its own that it had to deal with. Almost the majority of the population there, I mean the majority of the population was really Palestinian. As you know the Palestinians back in 1971 attempted to take over the country.

Q: Black September.

YOUNG: Yes. This was something that the king had to live with. The king was trying to be a peace maker, trying to be the good moderate, trying to be the good soldier in the Middle East. He was trying to be the good friend of the United States and at the same time trying to demonstrate that he was a solid Arab and a good backer of the Palestinians, so he was in a very delicate position. That said, the relations with the United States remained good and I must say that Ambassador Viets' faults notwithstanding and I'll get to those later, those faults were basically internal, but from a substantive point of view he was an extraordinary ambassador. I have never seen an ambassador with a more effective relationship with the head of state as I witnessed Ambassador Viets and King Hussein of Jordan. It was truly exceptional. Hussein trusted Viets more than any other ambassador there and trusted him more I think than even some of his own ministers. He relied on him for all kinds of advice and counsel. Viets even looked the part which was this great, good looking man, large mane of silver hair, beautiful complexion. So he not only looked it, but he played it, a very smooth fellow, just a top notch professional in his relationship with the host government. He was loved at all levels, not just by the king, but his relationship with the king was truly extraordinary. I've never seen anything like it. I'm not sure, I can't speak to this authoritatively, but I'm not sure any of his successors succeeded as well.

Now, to Jordan. We arrived in the summer. We got settled in our house. Then I had my initial walk around the mission and my initial meeting with the ambassador. He acknowledged that the inspectors had written up a less than favorable report on the mission and that he basically wanted me to clean it up. That was my job to clean it up and I understood that and I respected him telling me okay, you have a free hand, take care of it. I began to do that right away in terms of all kinds of general services, rules and regulations and administrative rules and regulations and financial rules and regulations. It just went on and on and on.

I have to tell you a couple stories to highlight this problem. We arrived at the time the outgoing budget officer was still at post, the one who had had a lot of difficulty with Viets. I might add that when I was in the inspector general's office and when the inspectors had returned from Amman and had told me about some of the things going on there, one of the things they said to me was, you know the budget and fiscal officer had a file about five inches thick and on the cover of this file in big black letters were CYA.

Q: Which means cover your ass.

YOUNG: That's exactly it.

Q: You're protecting yourself.

YOUNG: So, that's what they said. I said, you're kidding. They said, no, he had this file and they showed it to us and we saw all of the things in it, etc. Back to meeting this fellow who was on his way out. His name was Hume. I don't remember his first name. He was on his first or second assignment as a budget officer. Now, he went upstairs to pay his farewell call on the ambassador and after that he came down and he sat in my office and he said, well, here's my checkout sheet. I've done all of the things I'm supposed to do and I can now go and get my tickets. I said, oh, how did your farewell call on the ambassador turn out? He said, well, I sat there in front of the ambassador and he said the ambassador looked at me and said to me you're the sorriest assed thing I've ever seen as a budget and fiscal officer. He said he just laid me out. He said I listened to him. When he finished, I said to him thank you very much Mr. Ambassador and then I took my finger and I pointed it at him, and I told him, thank you Mr. Ambassador, but I'm going to get you one day.

Q: He did.

YOUNG: I know he did. He says, I'm going to get you one day. Mr. Hume then collected his tickets and left and moved on to his next assignment. Bernie Woerz was my predecessor, an admin officer who had an outstanding reputation in the Service. He had done just superb work. Well, he left Amman cowed and savaged by the ambassador. The ambassador just ripped him apart in the EER (employee efficiency report) that was prepared on him. That was how I got started in Jordan. I began to sense that my relationship with Viets was not going to be that difficult. I sensed that it was going to be better. I got terrific guidance and support from the DCM at that time who was Ed Djerejian and a wonderful guy, a very supportive fellow. When I got to difficult points in something that I had to go to the ambassador and tell him about Ed was always there to say, well, maybe you might take this approach or that approach. But he never for a moment tried to back away from what we knew we had to do in terms of complying with what the inspectors had recommended. We were quite a group at that time. I didn't realize it until later on, but I just wanted to mention some of the people who were there at the mission at that time. Ed was the DCM. Jim Collins was the political counselor.

Q: Later ambassador in the Soviet Union, Russia.

YOUNG: Right. A new junior officer on his first assignment was Bill Burns. Molly Williamson had just left as the head of the consular section. Brenne Bachmann was the economic counselor. I began to just focus on getting these numerous recommendations taken care of so that we could say that we had complied with the inspection report and had fulfilled all of the recommendations and we did. I mean it required also in some cases for the ambassador to pay back money, which he did. Some of these problems centered around his pressuring the budget officer and the admin officer to agree to paying certain things for him, certain first class travel, purchase of Christmas cards and all of these things which are clearly prohibited by the regulations, but he pressured them to do it and they did it. Eventually he had to pay all that money back and what have you and he did. We did get things cleaned up. Viets completed his assignment, I don't want to put it that he was pulled out. That was not the case. He completed his assignment and then moved on to await another onward assignment and he was replaced by Paul Boeker who was an economic officer and had come out of, I think his last assignment was as the head of FSI as a matter of fact. A great guy, but no big feats in terms of the rapport and relationship that he established with the

king. At that point Ed Djerejian had moved on and the new DCM had arrived, Skip Gnehm. Jim Collins had moved on as well and he was replaced by Ken Brill. We had that turnover in staffing.

Q: You might, are you familiar with what happened to Dick Viets?

YOUNG: I am.

Q: Because to sort of complete the story.

YOUNG: Well, I'll come back to Jordan in a minute, but just to complete the circle in terms of Viets. He returned to the States. There were various possibilities floated as onward assignments for him and for one reason or the other none of them worked out. I was back in the Department one day when I was walking past the director general's office and I noticed Ambassador Viets in there and I went in to say hello. He called me over, welcomed me very warmly, introduced me to the director general who was George Vest at that time and George said, you know, this is a wonderful man. I said, I know and Vest said to Viets, before I leave this job, I'm going to make sure that you get a good onward assignment. We chatted there a few minutes and then I left and that was it. Well, these various possibilities continued to float for Viets. One of them was South Africa, I don't know what else. Finally, Portugal came up and that was the one that seemed to click. He was nominated. All of the papers went through. Everything was going very nicely and then when it became time for his hearing it seems that information that had been in that famous CYA file was made available to the members of the committee. Dick Viets was never confirmed as ambassador to Portugal and left the Service and that was the end of it.

Q: So, the B&F officer got back. How did you read the whole thing? Was it that the B&F, I mean what had gone wrong do you think?

YOUNG: It was a perfect example in my view of how autocratic behavior can get you in big trouble and that's what it boiled down to. Viets was good. He knew he was good. He let that go to his head and he thought that he could then basically bully his way into anything that he wanted to do with his staff and that was his failing in my view. A superb officer in terms of substance, but flawed in terms of his ability to listen to the experts who were there to work for him and to make him look good.

Q: Did you have much problem straightening out the administrative stuff or was it a matter of going through and checking off the list that said don't do this, do this.

YOUNG: It was basically working through the list. At that point he had resigned himself to the fact that although he didn't agree with the actions that were required he had no choice but to go along with them and he did.

Q: How did you find Mrs. Viets?

YOUNG: Mrs. Viets was a lovely lady.

Q: She has quite a distinguished record on her own side during the war in Poland I believe or France?

YOUNG: I didn't know that. We just found her a very lovely person. She and my wife got on just famously and we thought she was just a warm and loving person, a very caring person. She was madly in love with her husband and just a good, a really good person. We liked her a lot. A little bit unusual in terms of her style. She had a very Bohemian style in her dress.

Q: As I recall and I think I'm right, she had distinguished herself during the occupation of France in the resistance.

YOUNG: I don't know. She was originally Romanian.

Q: Well, then, go on with Jordan.

YOUNG: Well, Jordan for all of its good relations with the United States at that time was a very dangerous place from a security perspective. As a matter of fact it was considered the second most dangerous post at that time in the world. Beirut was number one and Jordan was number two. I'll never forget that we had bombs going off all over town, all the time. There were assassinations there of various Palestinian and Jordanian officials. They bombed my water truck in the GSO section in the warehouse. I remember when the new security officer arrived, my wife and I went out to the airport to meet him and we greeted him and on the way to his residence we got a call that there was a suspected bomb at one of the residences. So we took off, he and I to go check that out. Fortunately it was not a bomb in that particular case, but I cite that to indicate the kind of climate that we lived in. We were very careful. Mind you we lived a good life. We went out at nights. We went to restaurants and parties and things like that. We mixed with Jordanians, but we were just very careful.

Now, we had of course during that time the bombings of the embassy in Lebanon and this had a tremendous impact on us in Jordan and we needed to do something to enhance our own security. We were right on a main street. We were right across the street from the InterContinental Hotel. It was a very busy street. There was no kind of setback whatsoever. We began to look desperately for measures to heighten and strengthen our security. We tried all kinds of things. We tried additional guards. We tried all kinds of inspection procedures and this and that and we finally decided that we had to sandbag the embassy and sandbag the residence. We got these sandbags and we built a wall of sandbags around the embassy. It was about six feet thick and about two stories high. That's what we did for both the residence and the embassy. The residence by the way was one that we had in 1971 at the time of Black September and there were still the bullet marks all over the façade of that building from the shells that were fired at it during that time. That was really quite something. The country team decided that we should try to make an interim move from where we were to some other building with sufficient setback until such time as a new chancery could be built for us. The ambassador said to me, "Johnny, it's your job. I don't care what else you do. You've got to do this." So, that's what I focused on. I put the word out that the embassy was looking for a building. Everybody in town came my way. I looked at building after building after building. We settled on a group of buildings. A team came out from Washington to evaluate them. We took core samples of the cement in these buildings to test them

for the how much weight capacity they could hold and things like that. We looked and we looked. Couldn't find anything after all of the analysis. The determination was none of the places we looked at would work. The ambassador met with the assistant secretary for security, Bob Lamb at the time and they had some rather heated discussions and I remember sitting in on a meeting when Lamb said to Boeker, "You find the site. I will build you a new chancery on that site in two years." They agreed on that and we just decided we would continue in our sandbagged embassy until such time as we could move into a new chancery. I was then given responsibility to find land for this new embassy.

Once again the word went out the embassy is looking for land. I had all kinds of people coming to me saying I've got a site here and I've got a site there and my uncle this and my brother has this and that and we looked and looked. Finally, we saw a site that was possible in terms of size. It was if I recall correctly about 13 dunums and a dunum in Arabic measure is over an acre, but I don't remember exactly how much over an acre. This came to I forgot about 14 acres of land or something like that. We could basically have all of this land. It was all together except there was one little part that we weren't sure about, but the rest of it was all-together. We presented this to the Department and to all of the other interested parties and they said, well, this looked good. Again, a team came out and we evaluated all of these different sites, including the largest of the sites with this one little piece that was missing. After their evaluation they said, we can go with that one site. It was located literally in the middle of nowhere. It was off of what was at the time the fifth circle. There was nothing out there except rocks and sheep, nothing. I mean absolutely nothing. It was in the middle of nowhere. I made all of the arrangements and we bought that land and I think we paid about \$8 million for it. I remember signing all the agreements. Skip Gnehm was the DCM. He was with me when we made the final assignment and got the checks and gave the purchasers the check, gave the agent the check and what have you. Then we completed the land registration at the office and that was my last major achievement in Jordan in the spring of 1985. I thought that the effort to try and find a transitional building and then the follow on effort to purchase land was going to kill me. I really did. I had never been so pressured in my life as I was during those two exercises. I couldn't sleep. I was just consumed by this because there was so much at stake.

I was consumed by these two projects, the transition that didn't work out and the purchase of the land that I couldn't sleep. I couldn't rest. I was tense. It just bothered me so much. When I finally achieved this, I was really so happy. Yet there was an element of disappointment in some of this. It came efficiency report time and the ambassador wrote a very nice efficiency report on me. The job that I was in Amman was called a joint administrative operation, so I was the JAO director so the ambassador wrote my efficiency report. All of the reports that I had received prior to that, this was at a time when efficiency reports had these little blocks with gradations of ratings. I had always been in the very top block or in the one just below that. I was always superlative or outstanding. In this report the ambassador gave me one a little bit below that so I was down in the third block and I had never had one, which was wonderful. Yet the substance of the report was extraordinary because he said such things as he gave me this responsibility to find this land and I handled it as well as any minister could have handled it. Really nice stuff. There was good solid meaty examples in this report. I remember I went to the DCM, Skip, I asked him, "Can you see if the ambassador could change this one block?" I was thinking of the appearance that this would have that people would look at that little checkmark and give more attention to that than

to the substance of the report. I was also concerned because the year before I had received a meritorious step increase. I wasn't promoted into the senior service and before Ed Djerejian had left I had spoken to him about opening my window and Ed was the one who encouraged me to open my window. I'll never forget it. He said to me, "Johnny, we have both done very well. We're boys from the streets of New York and Philadelphia, respectively. You open your window. You're going to be fine." I took his advice and I opened the window.

Q: You might explain what open the window means.

YOUNG: Well, in the Foreign Service if you want to compete for the Senior Foreign Service you have to basically go on notice that you wish to compete. You get six years of being considered for the Senior Service and if you don't make it in those six reviews then you're out the door. The year I opened my window as I mentioned I received a meritorious step increase so I was very encouraged by this. When I got this report from Ambassador Boeker I was concerned that that checkmark which was down at the third box instead of the second or top box which had been really the pattern in my career might have a negative effect on me. I asked Skip to go to the ambassador and asked him to change it and he said he did and the ambassador wouldn't change it. He kept it that way. There was nothing I could do. I left, but I was disappointed because I had put such a tremendous effort into buying that land for what was to be the new American Embassy.

I was thinking about extending in Amman for an additional year. I had been in touch with Mary Ryan who was the executive director of the bureau of European affairs and she had said to me, "If you decide to move out of the bureau of Near Eastern affairs, I would love to have you in the bureau of European affairs, but I don't have much at the moment in terms of an onward assignment. Whatever comes up you can have." Now, I've never had an offer like that in my career and haven't had one since to tell you the truth. She said, "I don't want you to stay in Jordan. It's too dangerous. I want you to move on." I kind of left things in her hands and I did bid on a couple of things in Europe, but they weren't particularly exciting. Then I got a call from her one day and she said, "Johnny, guess what?" I said, "What?" She said, "The fellow Stan Robinson who is the admin counselor in The Hague is leaving. He has decided that he would retire instead of completing his assignment. Would you be interested in that position?" The timing was just right for me to move into it after Amman. I said, "Yes." She said, "But you have to bid on it and what have you, but as far as I'm concerned, you're my candidate." I bid on the job and that was in '84 for an '85 opening and Mary selected me. I was selected for the job and I didn't say anything to my family. I kept quiet about it. Christmas of 1984 we went to Egypt and then from Egypt we took a tour around the Nile Valley. On Christmas Day 1984 I informed my family that we would be moving on to The Hague. My son who had become very enamored of Jordan wanted to know what do we have to go there for? I'm very happy here in Jordan and on and on. I said, this is going to be our new assignment and he didn't want to go. Later on he did like The Hague quite a bit. That's how we got to The Hague and I will only add that Jordan was truly a remarkable assignment. Years later almost in fact all of the counselors of the embassy except one we all became ambassador. We proudly say we were Viets boys. We learned from him. No matter how you look at it and I'm grateful for what I learned from him although I wasn't consciously thinking of being an ambassador or anything at that time and I've always had the greatest respect for him.

Q: Before we leave Jordan we're talking about bombings. Who was bombing?

YOUNG: These were we believed radical Palestinian elements definitely.

Q: Did you get any feel for fundamental Islamic religion while you were there?

YOUNG: No, there were very conservative types there, but that was not an issue at that point, no. That was something that would come up later on. The king's balancing act was trying to comfort and assure those Palestinians who might stir up trouble in his own country internally as well as those who might come in from the outside and stir up trouble.

Q: Any relation as far as you were concerned with our embassy in Tel Aviv?

YOUNG: No. We, you know, we would inform them of course, we kept them informed in terms of reporting and that sort of thing. There wasn't even any talk at that point of any kind of rapprochement. During that time we could move very easily between Israel and Jordan over the Allenby Bridge and we did that almost daily. In fact we had weekly non-pro courier runs which we would circulate within the mission so everybody got a chance to go over to Israel and sort of have a different kind of environment and to shop and to do all kinds of things like that. It was very nice. We could take our families as well. We could do these runs independently of the non-pro courier run if we wanted to. We just had to make arrangements beforehand. All of us enjoyed it. I don't know how it is today, I can't speak to it today.

Q: Any reflections of the Iran and Iraq War when you were there?

YOUNG: It didn't affect us much at all. I mean I have to be honest with you that I didn't focus on it that much, but I don't recall that being a major issue. I would like to cite another little story. One day I was up in Viets' office and I had read a message and I can't recall the substance of it, but I commented to the ambassador, "That was a really good message." He said, "You liked that message?" I said, "Yes. I thought it was very well done." He said, "It was well done. Who do you think is the best drafter in this mission?" I said, "Surely you Mr. Ambassador." He said, "No, not me." I thought quickly and I said Young, you better go down the list. I said, "The DCM?" He said, "No, not the DCM neither." I said, "The political counselor?" Sticking to the hierarchy. He said, "No, not the political counselor either." I said, "Well, then who?" He said, "You know that new junior officer that just came up from the consular section, Bill Burns?" I said, "Yes." He said, "He is the best. You keep your eyes on that young man. He's going to go far." Believe me if ever there was a prediction that came true, that was it. Bill was an extraordinary officer. Everybody loved him because he was so bright and so clever and yet with it all you would never know it because he was so modest and so decent that it was such a contrast with another officer who was there at that time. We had several junior officers, but the other officers, they arrived all about the same time. The other one was ready to tell you in a half a minute that he had a degree from Princeton and he spoke Arabic and he did this and did that and on and on. Bill would never say anything, ever say anything. You would ask Bill, where did you go to school and he would say well, I went to a small school in Philadelphia. Okay, La Salle College. Did you do any graduate work? Yes, I did some graduate work; he wouldn't tell you

that it was at Oxford University. He wouldn't tell you that he had written and published a book. He wouldn't tell you that his father was General Burns. He wouldn't tell you a lot of things about himself. You literally had to pull it out of him. That was the degree to which he was so modest, but you give him anything to do and he would turn out a piece of work that was just masterful in every sense of the word.

Q: What happened to Bill Burns?

YOUNG: He's our ambassador in Russia. Yes. Need I say more?

Q: No.

YOUNG: Before that he was the assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs.

ERIC J. BOSWELL
Administrative Counselor
Amman (1985-1987)

Eric J. Boswell was born in Italy in 1945. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1970 he served in the US Army from 1967-1969. His career has included positions in Dakar, Quebec, Beirut, Amman, and Ottawa. He was interviewed by Edward Dillery in November 1998.

BOSWELL: Nothing special. My concern obviously was the running of the joint administrative operation but I don't remember anything particular or unusual about that. That's a very tough job for any administrative officer. He or she has to work for three ambassadors. But you know I didn't view the administrative problems in Europe as being particularly endless.

After EUR-EX I went to embassy Amman as administrative counselor. It was time to go overseas. I was a five-year rule person. I never thought I would be a five year rule violator but I was close and I wanted to go overseas. I wanted to go to NEA. I wanted to go to a hardship post. Amman was a nice hardship post. It was at the time a critical high threat post. I didn't realize how high threat until I got there. My predecessor as administrative counselor was Johnny Young. During his last year there they at one point were getting a bomb a month aimed at some U.S. facility: Citibank, a warehouse, a car, a truck, something. It was a bad situation. I remember Johnny telling me the great feeling of relief he had when the wheels of the airliner he was on lifted off the Amman tarmac and that he had made it through two years without losing anybody. I felt the same way about it two years later.

That was my first time in the Middle East. We had an extremely vulnerable embassy from a security point of view. We were in the process of trying to nail down a site for a new embassy. Johnny had done most of the work and I finished up on it. The new embassy is now up and running, and while not exactly Inman standard embassy because it predates Inman, it nevertheless has a lot of Inman features that were built into it. We are awfully glad we have that

embassy. [Editor's note: reference here is to The Inman Report of the Secretary of State's Advisory Panel on Overseas Security. Retired Admiral Robert Inman headed the commission.]

It was another extremely interesting tour and I think it was less successful in terms of an administrative officer. I didn't quite have the relationship that I wanted to have with my DCM and my ambassador. I had awfully good help in the embassy but I didn't speak Arabic. It was the first time I had ever been assigned to a post where I didn't speak the language. You don't really need to speak Arabic in Amman but I missed it. I missed not being able to converse in the local language.

Q: Today is January 11th. We'll begin with picking up his assignment to Amman, Jordan as administrative officer.

BOSWELL: I arrived in Amman in [July] 1985 and was administrative officer for Ambassador Paul Boeker. It was my first tour as an administrative officer. Even though I'm an administrative officer I spent most of my middle career in non-administrative or interfunctional jobs. This was the first time in many, many years that I had gone back to the field as an administrative officer. I may be repeating myself a little bit here if we've talked about Amman to any degree before but I think the most significant thing about embassy Amman was that it was my first exposure to an extremely high threat post. Amman was in the critical threat range and there were only about 11 such posts in the world.

In the year preceding my arrival there had been a whole series of terrorist incidents aimed at the U.S. embassy and other U.S. personnel in Amman. I called it a bomb a month. That may not be entirely accurate but it was pretty close. The embassy water truck was blown up and there was a bomb attempt against Citibank. There were various other attempts including a bomb attempt against just an ordinary AID family where an alert spouse woke up in the morning and found in her driveway a garbage bag that didn't look like she put it there. She called the bomb squad and the bomb squad came along with the embassy RSO [regional security officer]. In fact it was a bomb. Security absolutely dominated the tour from an administrative and every other point of view.

[This was] a time when Embassy Amman was very much active in the peace process and there was a big problem with the location of the chancery. The chancery in Amman was in the world's most vulnerable place, particularly in a critical threat environment. It was on a main street and there was no setback. Heroic efforts had been done by the previous administrative officer, Johnny Young, and the RSO, David Haas, to protect what was essentially an indefensible building. They protected it and we maintained the protection while I was there with enormous walls of sandbags that went up two stories reinforced with I-beams and things like that to keep it in place. I think the RSO got a Ph.D. in sandbag architecture. It was impressive looking to the uninformed [eye], but it would not really have done a hell of a lot of good against a major truck bomb as we've just seen [used] in recent years. Nevertheless, it was the best we could do. They closed the street behind the embassy to the great concern of the local merchants on that street. We managed to do just about everything that we could, given the location. The government of Jordan was extremely cooperative and we had very visible and strong police presence including jeeps with M-50 caliber machine guns in them parked in front of the embassy.

Nevertheless, we had to find a new chancery. The new location had been found, but I had to complete the negotiations for a couple of missing parcels of the property. It was to be one of the first of the new chanceries, not built according to Inman standards because it had been designed before Inman standards but it incorporated a lot of Inman standards. You couldn't call the new chancery in Amman now an Inman embassy but it is very close. It is built out of town on a very large parcel of land with the setback, with anti-ram barriers, and all the rest of the bells and whistles. During the course of my tour I completed the purchase of that property but I didn't really see the cornerstone laid. I've been back many times since, in my capacity as NEA/EX and as DS assistant secretary. I saw the embassy under construction and I was there for the ribbon cutting. It was very gratifying.

As I say, security and embassy construction pretty much dominated my tour. I was acting DCM, in fact chargé, for a fairly substantial period toward the end of my tour. There continued to be a host of security incidents but no fatalities and nothing went off. We found bomb parts including a briefcase on the walkway leading up to the political officer's residence; this was the political officer that covered the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization]. We made sure he got out of there. He changed residences and we thought for a while of removing him from the country, but essentially he laid low and changed residences.

We found an unexploded grenade that had been heaved over the wall of the embassy commissary. If it had gone off, and at the right time, there would have been casualties for sure because this was a place where families shopped and there were children there. There were a series of threats against the American community school, a school that was mostly Jordanian in student body but that was where all the American kids also went. We had some pretty good intelligence about attempts that were going to be made originating from dissident groups in Syria in which the school was going to be targeted. Fortunately we felt pretty good that these attempts were going to fail because of cooperation from extremely effective Jordanian intelligence organs and counter-intelligence organs as well.

While we put a lot of Jordanian security around the school for a period of time, it was interesting that people didn't seem to be too alarmed by it. High security was a way of life in Jordan. I think in retrospect, in light of what we know now, we might have been thinking about evacuating dependents. We never really did. We simply kept on keeping on and there were very little complaints from the embassy families. People were used to security. My kids would glance under the car every morning before they got in. They were alert for surveillance. They would occasionally tell me about somebody that had been hanging around my residence suspiciously. We would call it in and it was always investigated. The embassy community in general was I think very, very security aware.

That is pretty much all I wanted to say about that tour except that I absolutely loved Jordan and the Jordanians. I am full of admiration for the king and for what he did, and has kept doing, under the most difficult possible circumstances.

BARBARA J. GOOD
Cultural Affairs Officer, SIS
Amman (1985-1987)

Barbara J. Good joined the Foreign Service in 1951 and served in La Paz, Rome, Buenos Aires, Kobe/Osaka, Paris, Calcutta, Amman, and Washington, DC. This interview took place on May 25, 1993

Q: Your next post was Jordan, wasn't it?

GOOD: Well, then I was assigned back to the State Department Bureau of Public Affairs as NGO Liaison Officer because I had previously been assigned to the US National Commission for UNESCO Secretariat. I was also able to lecture on special issues. But at that time the Reagan political appointees were not pleased that I had worked with UNESCO especially IO Bureau Assistant Secretary Gregory Newell who was opposed to UNESCO. When he saw a UNESCO portrait of women leaders on the wall in my office, he did not want me to be assigned to the US Committee the Administration was planning for US participation in the UN Decade for Women's Final conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. A number of FSO career women serving on the Secretariat Committee read documents I had drafted for the 1980 UN Women's Mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen and other meetings worldwide. They suggested I be assigned to their staff to facilitate relations with women's nongovernmental organizations in addition to the official Administration political appointee delegates. I was also very impressed with these women FSOs such as Ellen Bonaparte, a Political Officer, and previous professor who had organized international women's conferences and programs in Greece and other countries during her decades as a university scholar prior to joining the Foreign Service. Another FSO Ann Stanford, an African-American academic woman Ph.D., served in the American Embassy in Nairobi previously as Administrative Officer and was then assigned to the Bureau of International Organization Affairs in my previous position as Director of International Women's Programs and Alternate Delegate to the UN Commission on the Status of Women to support. Maureen Reagan was then assigned as US Delegate to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. We tried to convince her of the unique role that State Department career officers could play in helping political appointees organize international conferences and link foreign policy objectives with the private sector. Unfortunately, she refused to accept the role of career experts in this field and therefore we were not allowed to serve on the US Delegation to the Nairobi Conference.

Q: Maureen Reagan was the President's daughter and was considered very conservative, wasn't she?

GOOD: Yes, she was at least more supportive of women's rights. I was trying to help her by strengthening contacts with all the women's nongovernmental organizations, but she didn't understand my role and told my boss that I was being too politically active.

Q: What was her definition of being too politically active?

GOOD: Well, because I was coordinating with NGOs she must have considered this political. But that was my responsibility, therefore, I told my boss that if she wanted me to be less politically active, I'd be very happy to be sent ten thousand miles away. I was then fortunate to be assigned on detail to USIA again as Cultural Affairs Officer in Amman, Jordan from 1985 - 1987. I worked with excellent foreign service nationals, and it was an enlightening two years in the Arab world. When I first arrived in Amman, a party was held at my residence to bring together approximately 100 Jordanian scholars who had served as Fulbright scholars in the US. I was immensely impressed with the links we had established as a result of encouraging academics and students to learn more about American history and society.

While my regular duties included carrying out an extensive educational exchange program, there were many other aspects of my position which required managerial skills and organization. A great deal of my time was spent dealing with our American Fulbright students and professors. With the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Fulbright program from 1947 - 1987, I helped organize and participate in events such as an interview on Radio Jordan to explain the history and status and unique role that Senator Fulbright played in organizing an important international, intellectual dialogue to strengthen ties worldwide.

I also worked with various organizations such as the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship Program, the Hubert Humphrey Program and we brought American academic specialists to Jordan for two weeks to promote excellence in American academia and to help Jordanian universities plan or design curricula.

My staff and I also worked very closely with the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR), which receives USIA grants and was established in 1968 as a non-profit institute for research and education in the fields of archeology, anthropology, political science, history, pre-history, languages, Islamic Studies, Biblical Studies and other related disciplines. ACOR serves in its primary capacity as a local agent for seasonal American archeological projects in Jordan. It was founded to facilitate fruitful interaction between American scholars and students and their counterparts in Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. ACOR continues to represent a vigorous American academic and cultural presence in this part of the Middle East. ACOR offers lecture series and courses, resident fellowships, and engages in Cultural Resource Management.

In addition, we collaborated fruitfully with Amideast, established in Amman in 1963 as a nonprofit organization that offers free educational guidance for students seeking study in the US. Its leaders are representatives of the majority of Educational Testing Services (ETS) in Jordan. Amideast also administers the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, the Royal Diwan scholarships, West Bank and Yemeni scholarships. Amideast receives USAID grants to support legal and democratization projects, and is currently working on a needs assessment for the Jordanian Parliament.

I also collaborated with Mrs. Inam Mufti, President of Queen Noor's Noor Al Hussein Foundation in bringing experts to Jordan to work with a number of their 25 programs, and maintained close ties with the societies for the handicapped by offering them sports specialists in the field of athletics for the handicapped.

One of my duties was to chair the International Visitors' Committee and ensure that appropriate offices in the Embassy and USAID participate in this program. I coordinated closely with USAID regarding programs they could finance such as a group of directors from the Ministry of Education, a summer research fellowship for Arwa Amiri, Professor of Psychology at the University of Jordan, who was perceived by Jordanians as a woman leader who could best help Jordanian women achieve higher education and greater roles in Jordanian government and the private sector. Again, my previous contacts in this field were very useful in arranging for her to study at the University of Minnesota about women's rights with one of the most outstanding experts in this field, Director Arvonne Frazer, who had previously been appointed during the Carter Administration as Director of Women in Development (WID) for AID, a result of Senator Charles Percy's Amendment to give more financial support from AID to third world women.

One of my most rewarding experiences came about during the first month of my assignment to Jordan. USIA had organized a worldwide program to bring painters together worldwide to share ideas on their various artistic styles in different cultures worldwide. Since I had not yet met any artists in Amman, I went to the museum to determine who was the most gifted and talented Arab artist in Jordan. After looking at the paintings of many different Arab painters, I came to the conclusion that Ali Jabri was without doubt the best painter in Jordan. He was very pleased with the opportunity to meet with painters of different countries and visit many museums throughout the US. I was pleased to learn that not only did I consider Ali Jabri a very gifted artist, but King Hussein also recognized his impeccable skills; paintings still appear in the King's Royal Palaces. Ali Jabri has always been concerned and also involved in museums and conservation work for the preservation of traditional rural environments and vernacular architecture in which Jordan is so rich.

Q: Then you retired when?

GOOD: From Jordan in 1987.

Q: One can look back on one's career with great satisfaction.

GOOD: Can't you though! And every time you read the newspaper it is like returning to your assignment. After serving in Argentina I was so disappointed to read that some of poor Argentina mothers' children were put in jail and killed because they wanted to change the military government. I was so fortunate not to be able to marry in this country.

Serving abroad with the US Information Agency was such a fascinating life and supporting your society and representing it abroad is truly a privilege and great fun besides. Now that I volunteer and serve on the board of five organizations: National Woman's Party, National Council of Women, United Nations' Association/National Capital Area, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and International Abolitionist Federation; it is still a rewarding life because I was at the right place at the right time and I did what I really believed in and still do.

ROSCOE S. SUDDARTH

**Ambassador
Jordan (1987-1990)**

Ambassador Suddarth was born in Kentucky and raised primarily in Tennessee. He was educated at Yale and Oxford Universities and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and served in the US Air Force before joining the Foreign Service in 1961. Primarily a Middle East specialist the Ambassador served as Political Officer and Counselor in Yemen, Libya, Jordan and in Saudi Arabia, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served with the Department of State in Washington in senior level positions concerning primarily Middle East and Political Military matters. In 1987 he was appointed Ambassador to Jordan, where he served until 1990. Ambassador Suddarth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: At that time, there really wasn't a peace process going on between the Israelis and Palestinians.

SUDDARTH: No, the PLO still wasn't recognized by us and more obviously by Israel. We were in this period working out what we hoped would be a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that would be able to negotiate under a UN umbrella with the Israelis, but it really didn't go anywhere. Right at the end of my time... We had a meeting of chiefs of mission in London in April of 1987 before I went out to Jordan. We sent a cable back to Shultz saying, "Look, we've really got to push the peace process harder. People in the area are expecting it. We can't be stopped by a Shamir government." Shultz basically rejected it. At the same time, there was the secret Hussein-Peres meeting in London where they came to an agreement on a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, I think, even with names of the Palestinians. Then it was opposed by Shamir. Tom Pickering just did marvelous work in pushing this with the administration. He was the ambassador to Israel. Shultz concluded that if the prime minister of Israel was against it, there was no way the United States could push it. Hussein was deeply offended by this. It showed we weren't willing to take any risk whatsoever. So, that was the atmosphere that I confronted when I went to Jordan as ambassador in 1987.

Q: You went to Jordan when?

SUDDARTH: In September of 1987.

Q: 1987. You were there until when?

SUDDARTH: Until late July of 1990, just before the invasion by Iraq.

Q: As ambassador going there, did you sort of have to swear the oath to abide by Israeli demands?

SUDDARTH: No, that never came up. But I should say, one of the prime ingredients in my job description was, I was the liaison with the Jewish community, the pro-Israeli community, in Washington. So, I had spent two years dealing with them. I think I had a reasonably good relationship. So, there was no sense that they were going to be opposing my nomination. As a matter of fact, I made a point and believed this very sincerely of wanting to get some of the Jewish leadership out to Jordan. The tendency was to lump all the Arabs together and say they're all terrible. Jordan is just a little gem of a country. It's well administered, neat, has that British spit and polish to its military, they're courteous, kind to foreigners, there is beautiful sunshine, lovely buildings and antiquities. So, I went around and gave my card out to several people asking them if they could... I said, "I'd like to get you to Jordan. I think I can do it." I knew the King well and knew the Crown Prince. They like to play that game a bit. They liked to have a little bit of contact with the Jewish community. So, my big triumph was, I got Malcolm Hoenlein and a fellow named Greene, who was in charge of Jewish Affairs in the White House, to come out on a two day visit to Jordan. The Jordanians were charming, nice chats and so forth. Hoenlein came to me at the end and said, "This was the most wonderful two days of my life." Arthur Herzberg, who was a prominent, very liberal rabbi, and a good friend who taught at Dartmouth and Columbia and writes for the "New York Review," a real heavyweight, came over at a very dramatic time which I can get at later because it was when the King was giving up claim to the West Bank. So, Barbie and Larry Weinberg that run the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (They're angels), Larry showed me the other day, he said, "I still have your card" when you said, "Look, when you're ready to come, Larry, we're ready to receive you." Martin Indyk came out and led a group at that time. So, we had a decent flow of Jewish-Americans.

Q: Were you seeing both in the 1985-1987 period when you were in NEA or later when you were in Jordan any sort of divide between what you might call the fundamentalist Israeli "This is all our territory. We're going to... God has chosen us to do this" and other ones that said, "We've got a political situation. The Palestinians have got a cause, too?"

SUDDARTH: That was always the case. You had Labor that wanted to play ball and you had Likud that didn't.

Q: But in the Jewish community here?

SUDDARTH: In the Jewish community here, it was said that the Council of Presidents was much more conservative, much less willing to entertain liberal ideas than the mass of Jews in the country. I think to some extent that was true. They were very much in touch with Israel. As I recall at that point, a fellow named Bibi Netanyahu was the UN ambassador. He had been or was to later be DCM... He was said to be in charge of orchestrating Israeli government things with the Jewish community here. He had a lot of contact in New York and around the country. I'm not sure on the timing of that. But no, they were a major force. Ronald Reagan and the White House paid a lot of attention to them, but so did George Shultz. George Shultz's style was not to let any daylight get between him and the White House. He would come back and he wouldn't – at least he didn't tell us in NEA what had really gone on in the discussions. So, he tried to take the guidance from the President and push it down. There were very few scenes. There was one that broke on the Iran-Contra thing, but that was after the fact. So, that tended to be his style. He tended to muffle any kind of sniping. We had a good relationship with the exception of Ollie

North with the NSC. Later on when they cleaned up the NSC and you had Carlucci come in, Bob Oakley, Dennis Ross, who had always been very, very cooperative and excellent to work with, was moved down and became the advisor to Bush, which helped him immensely in later years... At this point, I think we've pretty much exhausted the 1985-1987 period.

Q: In 1987, you were saying relations with Jordan... We had turned down military aid and all. They weren't good.

SUDDARTH: No, they weren't good. We had had a one shot dollop of \$300-400 million. I remember the 1985-1987 period. I remember having to go up as DAS and testify on the Hill to the Middle Eastern aid program. At that point, I had to say something about Jordan. I took the guidance and said within the overall funding guidelines that this was all we were able to give for Jordan. It was something like \$75-100 million, nothing like the \$400 million. So, the Jordanians were very unhappy. Our ambassador, Paul Boeker, said he had to go and do a lot of mending because... King Hussein said, "If our friends are this way (meaning me), how can you imagine the rest of the administration is?" So, I was a bit under a cloud because the main requirement for an ambassador is to be in with the King and to be in there pushing for Jordanian aid. They felt eminently worthy of aid. It wasn't all smooth sailing by any means.

Q: What was the role at that point when you got there in 1987 of the King and how did we see the King in the Jordanian and the broader Middle East context?

SUDDARTH: I think we still had some hopes that he would be able to be the cover for Palestinian entry into the peace process. We were happy that he was posited toward peace. We were a little unhappy that he was so unhappy with us that we weren't doing more. He was very sour. Before I went out, George Shultz had this sort of thing... You had your picture taken with him. He went up to see Charlie Hill before and he batted around some ideas. My ideas with Hill were, I recall, I said, "Look, we're not going to be able to satisfy the King on the peace process. We don't have an aid program that's going to meet his desires. I suggest two things that we do with him. One is to push for the Unity Dam project, which would have given Jordan a lot more water resources. That will make him very happy. And to engage him seriously in a dialogue about the Gulf." We had the reflagging issue when the Iranians were attacking Kuwaiti shipping and taken an American flag. There were a lot of problems. Iraq was winding up its war with Iran. That was an emerging issue. The King is close to Saddam. I said, "Let's get him seriously involved in talking about these things." At that point, Charlie Hill said, "At last, we've got an ambassador who has something in his head. Take Shultz aside after the picture and go over these ideas with him," which I did. Shultz said, "It sounds like a good idea to me." Then he said, "Look, I also want you to tell the King 'I know you're unhappy with me.' Shultz was very delphic and cryptic about these things), "but I'm going to keep pushing."

With that guidance, I went out. I got my letter and all those other things. It said, "Stay close to the King and all his chief advisors." I went out. I went through my hearings, which were very easy. Nat Howell and I were given hearings together. He went to Kuwait. I went to Jordan when I thought he was prisoner in Kuwait. The moving hand writes and fate is what it is. So, I went out.

The other thing was that Reagan was in the middle of this mess over Iran-Contra, had just had a nose operation, and wasn't seeing anybody. So, here I was going out with the King who thought he had a close relationship with Reagan and the United States. So, what was I going to do? I went to Bush, who was Vice President, and I said, "Can you help me out?" I described the situation. He said, "Sure." It was really wonderful. He wrote me a handwritten letter to the King saying that "I'm delighted that Rocky is coming out to see you (showing that I had some kind of relationship with Bush). I'm sure he's going to do a great job. I just want you to please feel free to call on me anytime I can do anything to help." Well, I went out and it was one of those kind of curious diplomatic things. It doesn't mean anything to historians or whatnot, but Bill Webster, the head of the Agency, was out on a visit. I got out there for the visit and even before I had presented my credentials, I worked it out with the palace so that I would be able to participate in those meetings. So, there at those meetings – and we had a dinner together – I told Webster I had this thing from Bush. So, I took the King aside and told him how happy I was to be in Jordan and then gave him this letter from Bush, which he loved – the thought of a personal tie and so forth. I was able to get started on the right foot. Then when I presented my credentials, it was all very pro forma.

But we were in such bad fettle that when I got there, Geoffrey Howe, the British foreign secretary, was on a visit. Taher Masri, the foreign minister, had a dinner. Just to show displeasure with the United States, they had the Russian up at the head table with Howe. They had me seated in an obscure seat back in the back. Some people would have walked out, but I thought, it's a British ally, why do that. People came up saying, "Why don't you talk to the PLO?" I borrowed a phrase Herb Okun from the UN had used I thought quite effectively. I said, "They have our phone number. All they have to do is dial 242-338," which is the two Security Council resolutions, which acknowledged the right, in effect, of Israel to exist in return for a peace process and giving up land." So, my early days in Jordan...

There was a big Arab summit in Amman that the King was all involved with which was not really here or there. There weren't many issues of direct interest. Well, there were a couple of things. The major thing was, Shultz had a trip. Without having cleared it with me, he was persuaded by Peres to have Jordan and Israel meet at the tail end of a U.S.-Soviet summit. King Hussein suspected something was going on. He was away during Shultz's initial visit on this trip to Jordan. So, Shultz saw the prime minister and others and then picked me up. I went to Cairo and then we went on to London, where we met the King. We had two very difficult meetings. I told Shultz beforehand, "The King is going to be surprised, disappointed, and frightened by this offer. It ain't going to work, but the best way of doing it is to take him aside before the formal meeting and provide this to him." Sure enough, the King came back nervous as a cat saying, "Well, Secretary Shultz has just come up with a very radical idea" and then told it. The advisors all scowled and Shultz finally got him to say that he would think it over. So, we then went into lunch. I made one of those ambassadorial errors that don't really fit into high policy. The King had been skiing in Switzerland when Shultz had been in Amman, which didn't give a very serious cast to his view of the United States and the peace process role we had. Trying to break the ice in this glacial atmosphere, I said, "Well, how was skiing in Switzerland?" The King glowered at me. He was very unhappy with me. I should have just sat there. But I thought I knew them both. Shultz was impressed that they called me "Rocky," all these guys that knew me before. So, I probably took liberties. But then Shultz went to a NATO meeting. I stayed back

with the Jordanians. They were very unhappy. Then the next meeting was out at Ascot at a gorgeous little palace that the king had there. Nothing came of that either, so it was a failed mission. It was so bad that we had had to practice before that when you'd have a meeting abroad, we'd get clearance from the State Department that the ambassador would fly back on the King's plane. So, I called Marwan Qasim, the head of the royal palace and said, "Is there any chance I could hook a ride?" The State Department was so broke that Murphy wanted to save a few bucks from his budget by having me come back. They said, "We're sorry. That would not be convenient." Later on, I flew back with the King in the United States and other things. But that was sort of the nadir.

I spent my time going around paying calls and so forth. I had this curious discontinuity between a very close relationship I had with the King and the Crown Prince, chief of staff, the prime minister, and the icy relationship with the United States. Then they had this summit. I got involved in that because the Lebanese wanted to be indemnified by the Arabs. I had been working with them. Nothing really came of it. But Jordan was very happy to have the summit. That sort of boosted Hussein's prestige and morale.

Then the next thing that happened was the Intifada.

Q: Could you explain what the Intifada was?

SUDDARTH: The Intifada was the uprising of indigenous Palestinians – not led by the PLO, a kind of spontaneous combustion of the frustration accumulated after 20 years of occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the fact that the Palestinians there were willing to take matters into their own hands, I think, frightened the PLO that the leadership was moving inland, inside. So, the PLO became more willing to get involved in the peace process. One of the major galvanizers of this was, the King, having concluded after what they called the "Shultz mission," which was pretty non-substantive just trying to talk the Jordanians into getting involved in talking with the Israelis, the King then decided (and they alerted us to it several times in advance, although not in any detail) that they were going to disengage – not from the peace process but from the West Bank. So, sure enough, while we had the Foreign Service inspectors, the Jordanians made this dramatic announcement. They had demarches to the British, the French, the Russians, the Japanese, and the Americans. I was meant to wait last to get news of this. I knew about it all before that. My British colleague had gotten first notice of it, although we had been told quite formally by the prime minister several weeks in advance that they were moving in that direction. So, I immediately tried to see the King and he wouldn't see me. The prime minister held me off. The point was, "Don't do anything. We want Dick Murphy, the assistant secretary, to come out before you make the announcement." They said, "No way. We're going to do this." And they did it. In effect, I think it had a generally beneficial effect in the long-run.

There was an interesting little sidelight. The King was holding me off, but Arthur Herzberg came to town. He was our houseguest. The Crown Prince, who had been involved with him in religious things (the Judeo-Islamic-Christian stuff) and knew him a bit... So, I went up with Arthur to talk to the Crown Prince. Arthur had some kind of message from Peres. So, I managed to sneak my way in with Arthur with the King. So, before they made their formal announcement, I was able to get a pretty full readout on it. It illustrates for those at FSI that the practice of

diplomacy is sometimes an exercise in luck, sometimes in resourcefulness... You really have to keep your wits about you. If you only follow the formal dictates of diplomacy, you never get anywhere. So, I got a little bit more insight into it, particularly his very strong reassertion of the fact that he was not abandoning the peace process, only his claim to the West Bank so that the Palestinians would be able to take full responsibility of it.

Q: It sounds like giving up. Or was this designed to strengthen the Palestinians or was it "This is too much for me. I'm out?"

SUDDARTH: I think it was a combination of things. I think it was an assessment that the process was going nowhere. It was unhappiness with the Israelis. It was unhappiness with the United States. I think he wanted a dramatic gesture to put blame on the U.S. that things were going nowhere. But I think it was essentially to say "We tried this joint delegation stuff. We tried all this stuff. It's now really up to the Palestinians. The Intifada has shown that there is some resistance on the inside. There is some interest in nationhood there. So, we're throwing it to them." And in a sense, it was a challenge to the PLO: quit all this peripheral terrorism and get involved in what is really the real thing. That is my interpretation.

Q: On your staff at the embassy, you had obviously some junior officers and sometimes they're a problem. Getting too much involved in this... Were you having to run a seminar to understand the Israeli point of view? In other words, make them part of the team rather than...

SUDDARTH: We institutionalized it in 1974 by getting the Israelis and the Jordanians to agree to a diplomatic pouch run whereby we could drive our cars across the Jordan Valley and spend a weekend in Israel. I wanted to be sure that people were aware of the real facts rather than having it filtered through Jordanian propaganda. You could tell the children that went to the American community school came back rabidly anti-Israeli simply because of these influences on them. We made a special effort to make sure we didn't have localitis. I don't recall an instant of any junior officer writing a dissent cable or anything of that sort. On the other hand, they were extremely helpful in getting out in the hustings and finding out what the Jordanian population was thinking about the Jordanian government, which comes up later with the Jordanian political land economic places.

Q: What about the ties to our consulate general in Jerusalem since Jordan had - until they renounced it - presumptive authority over the West Bank and Jerusalem was not attached to Tel Aviv? How did that work?

SUDDARTH: We had a very cordial relationship with all the consulates general. I would say starting with the Carter administration and Mike Newland in 1978, the consulate general became pro-Palestinian and by extension pro-PLO. So, there was a little bit of a policy separation there. We tended to be pro-Jordanian with the feeling that the West Bank was so small, so dubiously viable, that probably an association with Jordan was necessary. This was the flipside of a joint delegation was, I thought, by the Israelis and a lot of Americans thought to be the opening wedge to a Jordanian-Palestinian federation, which Peres and company and Rabin favored. It still could happen someday.

Q: Did water play much of a role?

SUDDARTH: Yes. We had a major effort on the Unity Dam. I talked earlier about the Maqarin Dam. This was the same thing but 10 years later and was pushed by Zaid Rifai. They got a kind of agreement with Syria of dubious sustainability. Then we went through a series of exercises of negotiating with the Israelis and resuscitating the engineering schemes and whatnot. It was essentially water from the Yarmuk that came into the Jordan River system with Lake Tiberius over there. In the winter with the snow and rain on the Golan Heights, there was a lot of runoff which just ran into the Dead Sea and became dead water. So, the idea was to build a dam that would hold that and to work out a rationing scheme between Syria, Jordan, and Israel. One of the issues that came up... And I have to give Dan Kurtzer credit for it, who was in NEA at the time. We were assuming a straight Jordanian-Israeli deal. Dan quite bravely said, "Look, you've got to factor the Palestinians in here. That's Palestinian West Bank land that it's coming down through." In the early days, it was just Jordan and Israel and no Palestinians. So, that was to be worked out. It was never explicitly broached. But that thing went on. It turned out we were finding that the Syrians were building earthen dams up which was bringing less and less water in. The Syrian minister of defense developed a large farm where he was using water. So, there was some question whether by the time the dam was built there would be enough water to justify it. I think that's still a question.

But then we brought in Rich Armitage and his team, who were wonderful. Rich, of course, if Bush is elected, will probably be the deputy secretary of Defense. He loved Jordan and had been the head of ISA. He was not doing anything in the Bush administration, so we signed him on... He had two jobs. He was a negotiator of Philippine bases and then he was the Unity Dam negotiator. So, he came with his team of very bright guys. Among other things, he went through the details, the data, and found that the Jordanian data was way off. Their conclusions were way off, even basing it on Jordanian data. Then he went back and forth between Israel and Jordan. He was in the middle of his mission when the Gulf War broke out. So, that was still forming.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover at this point? Shall we stop now?

SUDDARTH: I think now is a good time to stop. The latter part of all this was the Jordanians got into trouble because of (and it's in my paper there) arms purchases that they wanted to make from Britain. They had a big budget and a run on the dinar because of this huge deficit, which brought in the IMF, which brought in riots, which brought in a totally new political picture.

Q: We'll pick it up then.

Today is January 22, 2001. Rocky, you heard where we were.

SUDDARTH: Yes. This is, I think, an interesting case study in political economy. When I arrived in Jordan in September of 1987, the Jordanians had been rebuffed earlier for a combat fighter by the United States. The King, never to be totally rebuffed, was threatening that he was going to go to the Russians. When I arrived, we had a kind of instruction to support the British

that were trying to sell them a high performance fighter even though the financing on this was very dubious since the Jordanians had run out of help from the Gulf but were always hopeful they could go back for a discrete purchase of this sort.

Just one of the footnotes. Soon after I arrived, it appeared to me that our objective was to thwart the Soviets and if it was feasible economically for the Jordanians to have them get a free world fighter. Well, the French were also contending. In effect, I think they had more influence with particular people – General Bin Shaker and others – than the British did. One never knows what under the cover kind of things are on these things. But I wrote back and said that it didn't make any sense for us to be supporting the British and not the French. So, we got a change and I had an instruction in one of my earlier demarches with King Hussein to say that we did support the French and the British. Our interest was not to have the Soviets, provided that financing could be provided for it.

Q: There seems to be this peculiar thing we get in the Middle East. Everything is peculiar there... Here we are, the preeminent producer and desirer of fighter planes and all that and yet you found yourself as a pointman trying to be honest broker between the British and the French. Was this incongruous?

SUDDARTH: In one of our earlier sessions, I mentioned that King Hussein came in October of 1985 and wanted a combat aircraft package and in return he went very far to saying that he recognized the existence of Israel and was interested in peace, but that wasn't enough for the Congress because the Israelis took a very – and probably still do – tough line that anybody who's in a state of war with Israel should not be getting advanced combat equipment. So, they had fought the Hawk deal and every purchase the Jordanians had ever made, particularly of high performance aircraft. So, he then went to the British, the French, and the Russians and said, "Hey, what have you got?" But what was unbeknownst to me in all of this and was never in any of the official records that I know (and this is to be checked for accuracy), but my understanding is that Margaret Thatcher in one of her repeated informal weekends that she would go out and spend in Aspen with President Reagan had cajoled him into supporting a British offer to the Jordanians. I arrived in Jordan. They had a very high-powered British ambassador who had been private secretary to Margaret Thatcher who thought he had this thing all lined up. When he found out that I was supporting the French as well as the British just as he was leaving to go on as ambassador to Australia (He later became head of the diplomatic service: John Cole, and a very tough customer he was) he came over and very frostily accosted me about supporting the French as well as the British. I gave him my rationale. The British always have a little commercial angle where they want to get some money on these things. I didn't feel that geopolitically that that made any sense. So, he left on a bit of a frosty note.

As it turned out, none of it panned out. The British were also hawking their big multibillion dollar public security package where there would be armored cars and fancy electronic equipment and computers, which I also thought was imprudent given the parlous state of the Jordanian finances. It all came home to roost. The Soviet deal was nixed. As I recall, the Jordanians put off any combat aircraft. That would have to be checked, but I think they eventually got some F-16s from the U.S. But I don't think they got anything because they couldn't finance it.

Q: Military people who were watching this, was there a certain disdain for Soviet aircraft? They all seemed to get shot down by the Israelis with very little trouble.

SUDDARTH: Well, that's true. These were always rather hollow threats. But the Jordanians had tried this with the Hawk missile earlier. The Soviets have a pretty good air defense system, so that was a more credible threat. So, that sort of vanished away. In the meantime, the Jordanian economy was getting into more and more trouble. If you recall, the oil prices peaked in 1979 and then were at a high plateau until 1985 when they started gradually to come down. That meant that the Gulfies were less willing to support the Jordanians. Their aid was drying up. Our one-time package was drying up. The Jordanians were getting in more and more desperate shape. Then these two big security packages really sunk the budget. They were put in the budget. As a result, you had a flight of capital and a decline in the dinar that happened in the summer of 1988. I have to give credit to my predecessor, Paul Boeker, who is a first-class economist. He, working together with our AID PhD. economist, worked out a paper showing the inevitable, that this was going to happen. He presented it in May of 1987 with my arriving in September. But the problem was, it was a totally local initiative. Washington was never advised of it. So, I arrived in Amman and I found that the only thing I really got briefed on was his interest in not having my wife participate in charity bazaars, which was a similar desire of the British ambassador's wife since they were both career women and felt it demeaning.

What I wish I had been briefed on was the very good, very concise memorandum that Ambassador Boeker had presented to the prime minister, which in effect said, "Your government budget is out of whack. You don't have assistance coming in from the outside. There will be an inevitable foreign exchange imbalance and speculators will ruin the excellent reputation of the Jordanian dinar." I found out about this by chance two or three months into my ambassadorship. Then we had a changeover and a new economic officer who was convincing me more and more. I spent a lot of time with the finance minister and talked to the prime minister about it. But one regret I have is, I never talked to King Hussein, who hated economics and hated to talk about it. Once this bubble burst, there was all hell to pay. Among the things that happened was, Ahmed Chalabi, who was now head of the Iraqi Opposition Council in London, was head of a new bank called Petra Bank. He allegedly absconded with half a billion dollars and was sneaked out in the boot of the car of somebody because he had his passport lifted. He is now under indictment in Jordan. But it was a severe blow to the Jordanians. Their dinar went from about three dollars to a dollar and a half in just a very short period of time.

What this brought on was a fire brigade from the IMF, which put in a very tough adjustment program which included heavy cutbacks on subsidies, particularly gasoline subsidies. While the King was in the United States. (I was with him), this was put into effect. They made a technical error, a political error, because at that point, Jordan was supplying much of the transport for Iraq through the Aqaba port and it was Jordanian truckers largely from southern Jordan that were doing this. They found themselves with a huge increase in their gas price, their diesel price, with no corresponding permission to increase their retail prices to the Iraqis. So, there was a big riot in Maan in the south, which is also the East Bank constituency of King Hussein. Prince Hassan went down and tried to quell it. Finally, the King had to do it himself.

There was some amusing asides. We were in the Senate. I was sitting next to Jesse Helms during King Hussein's visit. King Hussein made a kind of amusing remark about, "Here I am trying to get aid and my country is falling apart because we don't have any." It didn't help any. But there was an interesting dynamic that occurred. So, this brought on riots that then spread to other areas of Jordan – the sacking of the prime minister, who was considered very unpopular. The King then had to relax a state of emergency or at least the non-convening of Parliament that he hadn't convened since 1967 and held rather hasty parliamentary elections, which resulted in a plurality being given to the heretofore quiescent Islamist grouping in Jordan. They were able to do this because the Jordanians had repressed real political activity for all those years. In the sanctuary of a mosque, the Islamists had been able to organize things very well. They tended also to be very eloquent. They tended also to speak better Arabic than a lot of the Western-educated people. The other thing was, the King refused to get involved in organizing the elections. I felt like Diogenes with his lamp trying to find anybody among the establishment in Jordan that was willing to organize. They had a whole splinter of loyalist parties and then some leftist parties. Then you had this one determined block of Islamists. Then they won a lot more under proportionate representation. I think it was a third of the Parliament. So then the King had to bring in Muslim Brotherhood members of the Parliament who were fairly tame. But he suddenly had on his hands a rather fractious parliament, which he hadn't had for several years. That changed his ruling dynamic. Even though the King got the reputation of being an autocrat, in effect, he paid a lot of attention to Parliament. He had had terrible parliaments in the '50s which caused him to get rid of and try to get a better group. Then he had ruled without other than a rubber stamp parliament ever since 1967.

In addition, he had absolved himself of administrative responsibility for the West Bank, so there were no West Bank representatives, which meant that the Palestinians were underrepresented, which became a real problem in the elections. The PLO people also boycotted it. So, what you had were an underrepresented and underactive East Bank constituency, an abdicating PLO and Palestinian group. Therefore, the Islamists came in. Fortunately, they were preempted and coopted into the government largely and really didn't cause any major problems, although they did ask embarrassing questions of the prime minister.

Q: Speaking of Islam, did King Hussein and his immediate entourage pay particular attention to the observance of Islamic rule?

SUDDARTH: No, the King was personally very observant. He would publicly lead prayers at the major religious occasions. He was often photographed praying at the mosque. He was not a terribly observant Muslim. He wasn't really a drinker. He might have a scotch once every six months or something. But he was modernist and he wanted really very much to move his country along, so he wanted a modern educational system, which the Islamists really didn't want. He didn't buy their cardinal rule, which was that Sharia is the way, which is to say that all legislation should come directly out of the Koran and the interpretations of a theocracy. And there was always the suspicion that the Islamists wanted to take power. The way the King got around this was, he forced any officeholder in Parliament or anywhere else to swear allegiance to the Jordanian constitution, which many of them undoubtedly didn't really believe in. But at least it held them to a promise while they were serving in government. So, that changed the politics.

We then move on to another really important chapter, which was the Gulf War. Here, there are some things in the background that may be of interest that we can talk about. But in general, the relationship with Jordan was getting closer and closer. As the Gulf monarchs' money ran out, the trade and the concessional oil agreements where Jordan got oil at half price from Iraq became more and more important. Also, during the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam had tried to keep both guns and butter, so Jordanians became more and more involved in the Iraqi market. People built huge chicken farms on the Iraqi border just to move chickens into Iraq. The Jordanian beer makers were going full blast to try to supply the enormous thirst of the Iraqi army for beer. The Iraqis would often reward returning officers by taking them to nightclubs to drink scotch and gave beer to their enlisted men. But in effect, the Jordanian economy was being tied to this enormous oil producing country with the second largest oil reserves in the world but was also heavily in debt for its military expenditures.

So, that was where things stood in early 1990. The Jordanian former prime minister, Zaid Rifai, just in May when I was getting ready to leave, we had a chat and he said he was afraid the King was getting far too close to Saddam Hussein. I discounted that a little bit because ____ had always been a very close friend of the Syrians, which was in a rivalry, but he is a very astute observer. I think he was right on. The Iraqi relationship was never fully disclosed to the United States. We would get kind of apologetic views from the King and the King liked to view himself as an interlocutor. We would often brief the King on military developments in Iraq and the Iraq-Iran War, which he undoubtedly passed on to the Iraqis. So, he was in a good position with Saddam. They had a good personal relationship. But then there were all kinds of warning signs that occurred. There was the big gun that was discovered that was being built in London. That was a huge big berth that could lob a several hundred pound shell several hundred miles.

There was an important visit by Senator McCain and Senator Kassebaum in 1989 where they had complained about Saddam using chemical weapons, not only against the Iranians but also against the Kurds in Halabja, where several hundred or thousands of people were killed. The administration was still on a kind of "let's get close to Iraq" course. Iran was still the *bête noire*, so the enemy of our enemy tended to be somewhat our friend. But the war ended and that left Saddam with a huge debt, with a huge army, and with huge unfulfilled ambitions on his hands. Having convinced himself that he had won the war the way he's convinced himself he won the Gulf War... These warning signs began to show. He threw an Iraqi-British citizen, a journalist, in jail. He may have executed him. He had all of these nefarious companies set up around the world to provide him with cutouts for building up some very sophisticated weapons. Then the culmination was really the April or May 1990 Baghdad Conference, where he blustered about and showed himself to be a bully. Right around that time, he talked about "We will burn half of Israel if they don't tow the line." So, we were all getting more and more agitated about the threat that Saddam was beginning to show. Then he picked his bone with the Kuwaitis over the Rumaylah oil fields just in the last month that I was in Jordan. It was obvious that the Jordanians were under the King's lead becoming very, very pro-Iraqi. The business class had great vested interest in doing it. I remember, I had a terrible reaction from Congress and from Washington when the Iraqis started meddling in Lebanese affairs and they shipped a rather large missile through Jordan to Lebanon, where they were supporting some forces that were against the government. I got a demarche from Washington to protest this. The King very forthrightly said, "What do you expect? This is an Iraqi port." When I reported those words verbatim, there was a

huge firestorm in Washington that Jordan and Iraq were developing this kind of a close relationship.

But at the conference in Baghdad, Saddam not only tended to treat Hussein and others discourteously but it showed that he showed that he had huge ambitions and huge ignorance. I mean, historians should study that speech carefully because as the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc were crumbling... He didn't say this... He said that all of the oil rich Arab countries should move their money from the United States and the western powers to the Soviet Union and to the Eastern Bloc countries. It just shows how ignorant the guy was. Then he made a populist play that the haves of the Arab world should get behind his banner and force the haves to give more money to the poor. This is the height of hypocrisy because his futile war with Iran had squandered virtually a trillion dollars if you took opportunity costs into account during an eight year war. So, Saddam was getting out of control. The Rumaylah thing hit with Kuwait. They had a meeting in Jeddah which was inconclusive.

Before this happened, as I was leaving, we were worried about Saddam. I got a very good instructions the last time I was supposed to see King Hussein about a week before I left proposing that he talk to Saddam and smooth the way for John Kelly, the assistant secretary, to call on Saddam and to try to smooth the way to working out some of the difficulties in our relationship. At that time (I'm hopping back and forth), I think in early 1990, April or something, a big congressional delegation came through. Jordan on their way to Iran led by Majority Leader Dole, Metzenbaum, and one or two others and they were very unclear about really what they were supposed to accomplish. They took me into their confidence and we called the President. They talked to the President about what he wanted. I wasn't in on the conversation, but as I recall, it was "Try to mend fences. Try to find a way out of the difficulties that we have." April Glaspie is writing her own book on this. I do recall, they got to Baghdad and Saddam had been very unhappy about two things, one that the State Department had received Talabani, a Kurd, at desk officer level. He made a big issue out of that, we interfering in his affairs. Then there was a very kind of inoffensive otherwise VOA broadcast where they talked about the human rights violations in Iraq. So, he hit the ceiling. April Glaspie got in the middle of it. She got this congressional delegation to talk about this issue, which I thought was ill-advised.

The result was, I don't think the Dole mission put him on any guard. He hadn't suggested his move to Kuwait at that point. Then we got an instruction from the Department of State when he was beginning to get bellicose after the failed Jeddah Conference. People will have to check the record, but I remember saying to myself... There were these two lines which said the United States doesn't take the position of interarab boundary disputes." I said to myself, "This is going to be trouble" and it is one of those cables that I wish I had written. I called in the DCM and the political counselor. I said, "This is going to be misunderstood by Saddam." As I recall, in presenting it to King Hussein, there had been some press guidance which said, "We don't countenance and would oppose any threat or use of force in this." I used that guidance very heavily with King Hussein. I was afraid King Hussein was going to relay this other thing back to Saddam and that the two of them would misinterpret it. But people will have to check the record on how that was actually reported.

The King said at that point, "This is an Arab family affair." I recall saying to him without instructions that "Well, Your Majesty, back in the '50s and '60s when you were under attack by Nasser and by the Syrians and the Arab nationalists in general, would you have liked that to have been considered an Arab family affair? It was U.S. and British support and the Eisenhower Doctrine that helped you to pull through on that." He did acknowledge that. He said, "Well, you have a point there." But he went right on back to his thing. I think, strategically, he felt that he had been let down by the United States by not carrying through on the peace process. He was afraid that a Begin or a Shamir government, particularly with Sharon, would carry through on their threats that Jordan was Palestine. He was disillusioned with the Saudis and the Gulfies for cutting off their aid to him. He was dependent economically on Iraq.

In addition, the Iraqis had done some rather bold things. They had given 55 Mercedes 500s that cost around \$100,000 apiece in Jordan to several legislators and press lords. This sent a chill through the Jordanian security establishment because they realized the power that they were dealing with. Saddam was spreading anti-American and anti-Israeli banners around him. We had to go in and invoke the third country rule. My wife, meanwhile, was trying desperately to get these posters for memorabilia from off of the Iraqi embassy, which was around the corner from our residence. She didn't succeed. But the atmosphere was turning ugly and fearful. I recall just a few days before leaving, the Iraqis then moved a combat brigade down to the Kuwaiti border. I didn't see King Hussein on this, but I saw the chief of the Royal Diwan, Field Marshall Bin Shaker. I said "What's going on here" and he dismissed it as just a bit of blustering. I sent a farewell cable around to my colleagues at various posts. I didn't report it to Washington for a variety of reasons. I said, "I have a feeling the stakes are going up in the area" without citing Iraq. But it was obvious that they were the ones I was talking about. But I was as surprised as everybody. The King has assured me just at the time after I had done this initial demarche that Saddam Hussein was not going to be taking military action against Kuwait. I think he may have been reassured on that by direct conversation by Mubarak rather than directly by Saddam.

Q: Most of the Arab leaders treated this as kind of bluff.

SUDDARTH: Right. I remember sending a cable... I regret the distribution because it was so reassuring, so definitive on the part of King Hussein. The instructions that I had mentioned earlier had gone out to all Arab League posts. So, I did a collective to the Arab League collective posts. There were 15-20 posts. It said, "King Hussein has assured me that they will not be invading Kuwait." Well, then I left one week before Saddam invaded Kuwait. The King had a wedding party for his daughter up at the palace. It was my last day in Jordan. It was very nice to see him and his family that I was so close to, as well as a lot of Jordanian friends. There was no feeling at that point of anything other than reassurance. I think the common wisdom was, even if Saddam went back a bit on the pledge, it would be a limited occupation of only the Rumaylah oil fields and maybe the Bubiyan Islands. So, we were all surprised when Saddam took over Kuwait. Subsequent to my departure, I know that our chargé, Pat Theros, got some tough instructions in saying "What gives here with moving all of these troops toward Kuwait?"

Q: You mentioned you had some disquiet about what was happening, but you didn't send it to Washington. You said that was for a variety of reasons. Was this the sort of thing you don't share with Washington?

SUDDARTH: Well, this was a farewell to my colleagues in the area, telling them what I was doing. It was an informal cable. The other reason, quite frankly, was that I didn't have a good relationship with John Kelley. He had made a move to remove most of the experienced Arabists. Ned Walker was sent off. I was sent out. Nat Howell was going out. He had his own people that he wanted to put in. So, I was going out to an interesting assignment with the Inspector General, but I would have liked to have had another post. So, I had little confidence in Kelley. This was a cordial personal message. So, I had no cordial personal feelings with Kelley. When I considered sending messages back as things heated up, the one I would have sent saying "Be careful about this..." By the way, the other problem on sending something back on this instruction was that they had sent it to the entire Arab League collective, so everybody was going in. So, it was too late really for me to change an instruction, but I should have registered my reservations on it. I would have sent that to Kimmitt, the under secretary, rather than Kelley.

Kelley was totally unprepared for the position. He had spent one tour in Beirut, largely dodging bullets, and he didn't have the depth.

Q: Yes. I think it gives a feel.

SUDDARTH: The story I heard, which was on fairly good authority, although I don't remember who it was now, was that Baker when he came in wanted to make certain that he had a good relationship with Congress. So, he went to Rudy Boschwitz, who was head of the Near East Subcommittee and the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, and said, "Look, I've got three candidates for assistant secretary: Frank Wisner, Bob Pelletreau, and John Kelley. What is your thought on these?" Boschwitz said, "Well, I prefer Kelley because the other two have had too much experience in the area." I prefer somebody to take a fresh look at this." So, Kelley was over his head. A genius could not have handled that job the way that he was thrust into it.

Q: It's interesting how at certain times there is almost disdain of people who know the area and say, "Well, let's take a fresh look," which often means "Let's bypass the people who know." What's the point of having a cadre of people who know the Arab world?"

SUDDARTH: You know, I have to be fair to John, with whom I have fairly decent personal relations. He replaced area people with other area people by and large. He was big on control. What he wanted were people that he had appointed that were beholden to him and who therefore he could control, whereas senior people who had been around who had had similar jobs were more difficult to control. He told me when he was taking over, "If you have some policy thoughts, please send them to me in a personal letter." He didn't want telegrams that were questioning policy. So, Kelley was a very controversial Secretary. I think he made a big mistake... It's always easy to do these things in hindsight. One of the critical moments was when he went to Congress and was asked, "Do we have any security treaty with Kuwait?" I had been in Saudi Arabia and gone out and given them some assurances. We didn't have anything written that I know of. But the thing to do in a case like that was, since there was some worry about an invasion, to say in the open session, "I prefer to not get into this in open session." That way, you at least left the ambiguity. You could say something to the effect that we had a security dialogue with them over the years over subjects such as threats to them and so forth. But that probably

more than April Glaspie may have been one of the things that led... Although, quite frankly, I don't think Saddam would have been deterred even if April... I think she was scapegoated. She was brought there in the middle of the night. I was told that the notetakers were primed to even burst into tears when Saddam talked about his economic difficulty. April told me that she had been assured by Saddam that he wasn't going to be using military means. Their report of the cable was, there was a conditional clause if it all worked out. But that also tends to be Arab rhetoric. Kelley was not the right guy to be dealing with a crisis of this magnitude. He had from what I understand very little impact in the decisions which got taken over to the White House. NEA didn't have too much of a role.

You can imagine my chagrin sitting on the Riviera with my parents-in-law at their house when I had a friend, a Jordanian, call from France who heard over the news on this Sunday morning, August 2, that Saddam had invaded Kuwait. So, that was the end of that period and, in effect, the end of my diplomatic involvement in the Middle East.

Q: You came back to what?

SUDDARTH: I was a senior inspector. I led several inspections, which I found very interesting. A five or six man team would go out. I did inspections in... It was a weird feeling, too, to be in Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica during the fall as things were building up and then in Chile and Peru during the Gulf War itself. Then I was in Brazil and then OES in the summer. Then I was named Deputy Inspector General, which I was pleased to get, but went out and led our inspection in Germany the following year just at the time when the Madrid Conference was on. What to say about use of career people?

As I say, Kelley put career people largely in places and did listen and had a chiefs of mission conference in March, was very flattering to the expertise of the people that he was dealing with from the area. But it's different dealing with an assistant secretary who's been in the area and knows the issues and one that doesn't. The Middle East is a tricky area. There was a big Saudi arms package that came before him which he was very nervous about supporting. That's always tricky. Then of course, the Gulf War he was totally unprepared for. He had been to Jordan and had done a credible job in briefing the King on what was going on in the peace process. We had had a meeting with the prime minister as well. But my own thing, Kelley indicated to me that he had some people he needed to place. John McCarthy had been risking his life in Beirut.

The other thing that would be interesting... Ivan Selin, who was a classmate of mine in college and a good friend... I thought I was going to go to Tunisia to replace Bob Pelletreau in the dialogue with the PLO, but that didn't work out, because Kelley was not favorable, even though I had support on the 7th floor. I was asked by Undersecretary Kimmitt my recommendations on somebody to replace me. The Arabists will probably revile me for this, but I told him I didn't think that was an essential condition that, in effect, other than Harry Symmes, I was the only Arabist – that is to say, someone who has learned Arabic and has spent their career in the Arab world... I thought the main thing was a person who would have a deep rapport with King Hussein. He picked a person of quality with broad experience who could relate to a man of very broad experience and would bring more to it than just a narrow understanding. There is no problem of having an Arabist, but the person was more important than the experience in that case.

The case in point was Roger Harrison, who was political counselor for a couple years in Tel Aviv but otherwise was a Europeanist. Roger had a very tough time. My friends in Jordan said I was very lucky to get out. Even though I wish I had been there for that fatal week... I might have had some influence on King Hussein, but his closest advisors didn't. I'm told that other than Adnan Abu Odeh, nobody supported King Hussein's tilt toward Iraq during the war.

Q: It went over very, very poorly in the United States. All of a sudden, King Hussein was not the brave little king, but rather a dirty little turncoat.

SUDDARTH: Right. No one has a satisfactory explanation. I mentioned several disillusionments he had with Israel, the U.S., and the Saudis, and his strategic reliance on Saddam. I think that was a lot of it. I think a lot of it was ego. A lot of it was fear of what Saddam could do against him. An element was public opinion, but I take the argument, as Assad has, that he could have led public opinion. It was fluid. After all, you had 300,000 Palestinians who had been kicked out of Kuwait because of Saddam's actions. It turns out that they disliked the Kuwaitis as much as the Iraqis because they had been treated as second class citizens. But I think that the King could have led things in a different direction. There is some classified stuff that will come out at some point that will put a little better light on some of the actions that he took right before or right after Saddam's invasion, although I will leave that in a tantalizing note.

But force of circumstances – and then he realized he was wildly popular. Then he also had tried in this last minute 11th hour diplomacy to get Saddam to mediate between Saddam, Mubarak, the Kuwaitis, and others. He had been spurned on that. He then came to Washington. It turned out he had no assurances from Saddam, so he was spurned there. But he seems to be convinced in his heart of hearts that he was undercut by Mubarak and by Bush even though I think that's an exaggeration. He set great store by the Arab League condemnation of Saddam and Saddam had told the same, "Look, I'll do anything but just don't condemn me." I think that was an utter rationalization. I don't think Saddam, once having invaded Kuwait, totally invested the country, was about to move out. If he moved into the oil fields, then he could have negotiated, but I think King Hussein was vainglorious to think that he could move him out of a totally occupied Kuwait. I think he got his ego involved in it. I think he realized that he was very popular with the street. I think he realized also that the U.S. needed him in the peace process and could never totally abandon him. The United States in effect got the Japanese to pick up a good bit of our lapsed aid to Jordan that the Congress was blocking. So, I think it was a dumb move strategically but tactically I think the King handled it reasonably well.

U.S.-Jordanian Relations: 1958-2000: Myths and Realities

(A lecture given at St. Anthony's College, Oxford University, by Roscoe S. Suddarth)
October 27, 2000

Introduction

Personal: how Oxford started me on the Middle East.

I should start by stating my credentials and my limitations in giving a lecture on U.S.-Jordanian relations at this venerable institution. My credentials are as an American diplomat who by chance had two tours in Jordan at crucial periods, first as number two at the U.S. embassy---from the October War through Camp David in the 1970s and again as ambassador from 1987-90 during Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank, its economic and later political crisis, and ending with the buildup to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (one week after I finished my assignment).

While I am relatively familiar with the academic literature, I must confess that this is not an academic talk and hope you will forgive me for any lacunae of knowledge or lack of academic rigor. Secondly, I am an admirer of King Hussein and have a favorable view of King Abdullah, despite the fact that he has not yet been challenged. I hope I can be reasonably objective however.

While the talk is about U.S.-Jordanian relations, I cannot help but comment on the UK aspect of all this, since it is of a piece with the whole subject: not only because the U.S. assumed the primary support role for Jordan from the UK in the mid 50s but also because either of our two countries had--if I can state a contradiction-- a unique relationship to Jordan and to King Hussein and now with King Abdullah. To have a full picture of Jordan, one needs to study both relationships. Let me say now that Britain's gift to Jordan of an efficient army and government plus a viable constitution laid a strong foundation on which Jordan has built well.

The Common Basis for a Relationship

When we talk about U.S.-Jordanian relations I would break it down into two component parts: cultural and strategic. It was a close relationship on both counts. When I discuss the relationship I am really discussing mainly King Hussein who was Jordan to all intents and purposes after 1958. So the two terms will be almost interchangeable in my talk. I want to talk about both the cultural and the strategic aspect since in Hussein's case, they both color and shape the relationship.

The Cultural Side

While Hussein was careful to compartmentalize his Arab and Western relationships from each other, I believe he was culturally as much a child of the West and specifically of its Anglo-Saxon element as he was of his Arab heritage. His schooling at Victoria College, Harrow and Sandhurst gave him a distinctly British culture, further reinforced by his marriage to Tony Gardner, later Princess Muna. The U.S. never fully displaced England as the core of his culture but it certainly came to rival it in at least a superficial way.

However I tend to think that Hussein's core values were learned in and shared by our two countries. His courtesy and gentlemanly conduct were certainly British products. More fundamentally, his decency and rectitude sprang as much from Anglo-Saxon values as from a deep sense of his Arab and Islamic roots--where his devotion to his Hashemite historical legacy is often undervalued. In fact, King Hussein came to symbolize the kind of Arab ruler who could successfully combine traditional and Western values in ways that did honor to both cultures. For

instance, I never knew anyone to suggest that he had ever lied in his 47 years of statecraft. (He often did not tell all that he knew, but that is part of diplomacy.)

Even the atmosphere of the Palace had a distinctly British air. He liked Bentleys and Daimlers for protocol. His closest advisors all spoke English fluently and often the Palace discussions were as much in English as in Arabic, even though his colloquial and classical Arabic were impeccable. The kind of modernizing society that Hussein spent his lifetime cultivating had English at the center of its being. He filled British and American military schools with his military for training and even managed to garner some regular scholarships to a distinguished Southern military college, the Citadel.

His decency was reflected in a far more benign autocracy than is the norm for the Arab world. While he kept a tight ship under a martial law regime much of his reign, there were relatively few tales of brutality in his intelligence and security services by Middle Eastern standards. He also had a shrewd sense of political forgiveness: a host of former coup plotter (including General Abu Nuwar) were rehabilitated, thereby reducing most of his permanent political enemies to those outside of Jordan.

For Hussein, America was a constant source of often bemused amazement and occasionally of unpleasant surprise. Hussein was less relaxed in but more excited by America than by Britain. John Wayne hosted him in California on a trip to the U.S. in the mid-'60s and he was flattered and somewhat awed by the big, rawboned country that he saw at first hand. Lawrence of Arabia filmed partly in Jordan added to this Anglo-U.S. mystique. He was proud in his reign that he had met with (sometimes many times) every American president from Eisenhower to Clinton with the exception of Kennedy. He had visited most of the interesting places in the United States and enjoyed relaxing for a few days in, variously, Newport, Palm Beach, Charleston, and gave talks in many of its principal cities. He got his annual checkups in the U.S., first at Walter Reed and later at the expensive private hospitals. He bought his motorcycles and his speedboats in the U.S. and he sent his sons to boarding school there. He kept a house in Potomac, Maryland and a small ranch at Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Princess Muna was eventually succeeded by Lisa Halaby, later Queen Noor, and I would venture that American culture through that daily contact had a growing affect on him in a marriage that grew in strength throughout its course. She also I believe reinforced his inclination to play a greater role internationally while she on her part was a fervent supporter of Jordanian and Arab interests.

In the final analysis, King Hussein became a folk hero in the American popular imagination. As you know, the American republic adores foreign monarchs and Hussein carried the Royal purple superbly. Start with a base of tragedy (his grandfather's martyrdom at the Al Aqsa Mosque before his very eyes, his father's insanity requiring his accession and the radiant queen Alia's unfortunate death in a helicopter accident). Add to that the legends of the assassinations and coup attempts bravely surmounted by the handsome Arab; put in a dash of daring-do with his piloting and karate; mingle this with whispers periodically of discreet romantic escapades and you have the makings of a modern international celebrity. Fortunately, his successor King Abdullah embodies many of King Hussein's appealing qualities and values. His appeal to the West is

undeniable as is his image to the new generation of Arab elites. What is still untested is his interaction with his main Arab interlocutors, although he has excellent relations with many of the Gulf leaders.

Some Myths to Dispel

One may ask how, given the profoundly Anglo-Saxon culture of King Hussein, he could escape the reputation in the Arab world of being a Western stooge--which indeed he was called by every Arab revolutionary from Nasser to Arafat. This is however a false view, and one that was perpetuated as much by anti-Hashemite propaganda as by genuine belief. Increasingly it became less strong as Jordan's success at modernization made discerning observers understand better that it was the result of Jordan's openness to Western culture.

For Hussein was anything but a stooge. Let me cite some crucial examples to the contrary. First, he entered the 1967 against the strong urgings of the U.S. for him to stay out. In my view, he would have been overthrown by a popular upheaval if he had heeded U.S. advice.

He did stay out of the 1973 War except for sending a brigade to the Golan Heights for symbolic solidarity with the Arabs but in my judgement he did so to avoid another loss of territory and military defeat by Israel and not because the U.S. was urging him to do so.

In 1978 he refused to endorse the Camp David accords despite U.S. pressure and threats. I remember delivering the message that bilateral relations would suffer significantly if Jordan remained aloof. At one point, to counter our thrust to have him associate Jordan with the forthcoming negotiations on the West Bank, he asked the visiting U.S. assistant secretary to see if Saudi Arabia would back Jordan's endorsement, knowing of course that they would refuse to part company with the PLO.

Again in 1990-1 Hussein refused to join the U.S. led coalition against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait despite heavy U.S. pressure. This was a heavy blow to his strong personal relationship with George Bush but he stood his ground even though he had little support among his Jordanian advisors. I was not in Jordan during this crucial period and am still confounded by his position. To my mind, it was an admixture of disillusionment with the U.S. lethargy on the peace process, Saudi unwillingness to help the distressed Jordanian economy and some fear of the troubles that Saddam Hussein could cause him internally--after some troubling signs of Iraqi involvement in Jordan following the Baghdad Summit in the Spring of 1990. Other major elements included Jordanian economic dependence on Iraq plus King Hussein's wounded ego when others did not recognize the opportunity for him to negotiate an Iraqi withdrawal once Iraq had invaded Kuwait. Fortunately, King Hussein later indicated publicly that he had misjudged Saddam Hussein.

Regarding another false myth, the U.S. did not meddle in Jordanian affairs. Contrary to popular belief, even among some Jordanians, I do not know of a single instance in which the U.S. suggested specific appointments to King Hussein. I do know he would have not only bitterly resented such suggestions but also probably would have defiantly done the contrary if ever asked.

The U.S. did sometimes get restive with the economic policies of the Jordanian government but usually to no avail. When the U.S. increased its budget and military aid to Jordan following its civil war in 1970 with the PLO, some bureaucrats in the State Department began to make regular inquiries concerning how Jordan was spending its military budget which King Hussein deeply resented and eventually quashed when the October War erupted.

One personal confession I have to make. In the mid-1980s Jordan was suddenly cut off from large annual amounts of Saudi aid when the oil price began to slip and there was a sharp drop in U.S. aid after the very generous one-time U.S. economic aid package (given as a surrogate for the combat aircraft the congress refused to authorize in 1985). Jordan had come to expect to live like an oil-sheikhdom without unfortunately possessing the oil. My predecessor--a first-class economist--launched a local initiative (a dangerous practice in diplomacy) warning that Jordan at its current rate of deficit spending was going to cause a run on the dinar--which is exactly what happened. He had pressed his analysis on the government but not King Hussein (whose eyes glazed over at the mention of economics). When I arrived at post the predicted crisis was approaching as government spending continued apace and I pressed the matter again with the government but not with the King directly. By the following Spring the predicted run on the dinar occurred and for the first time in memory Jordan was forced to devalue and to accept an IMF austerity program.

I have always regretted that I did not press this issue directly with the King. I suspect I would have been unsuccessful in any case since the King would have suspected U.S. motives. Much of the expense was to be for the acquisition of UK or French combat aircraft and although we had indicated our support for either sale, the U.S. refusal to offer similar aircraft may have incorrectly colored his view of our motives. Sometimes however I dwell on the aftermath: an austere IMF program which caused widespread riots that led the King to hold the first Jordanian elections in decades, which returned a plurality of Islamist MP. However, it all appears to have worked for the best: Jordan now has a functioning if limited parliamentary government again and the Islamists have not taken over Jordan but have been given a limited voice in the political arena.

The Strategic Relationship

The strong Anglo-American cultural affinity I mentioned earlier is not to say that the U.S. and Jordan did not have a strong rational basis for a strategic relationship. From Jordan's viewpoint, starting in 1956 it needed the support of U.S. strength in its exposed position to Arab nationalist neighbors backed by the Soviets and in its relations with an unpredictable Israeli situation. It needed U.S. aid (and was to receive some \$ 4 billion from 1974 to 1999 after a previous billion dollars given from 1958 to 1974, including funds to build the Jordan Valley East Ghor Canal irrigation project). All this was intended to help Hussein build and defend a nation whose origins dated from a stroke of Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill's pen in 1922, creating a Trans-Jordan from a loose congeries of tribes living on essentially barren ground and bereft of mineral wealth besides phosphates and some potash in the Dead Sea.

From the U.S. viewpoint, it needed a strong relationship with Jordan--because Jordan had a long border with Israel and contained the unstable Palestinian problem in its very midst. It also needed another Arab moderate friend in an era featuring Nasserist ascendancy among the Arab people

and an opportunistic Soviet Union. Lebanon was too small and Saudi Arabia was too remote from the boiling politics of the Levant and the Fertile Crescent and its oil wealth less prominent at that time to attract as much U.S. strategic attention. I remember hearing a lecture from the director of Northern Arab Affairs from the State Department before going to my first Arab assignment in 1963 in which he described Jordan as “the keystone in the arch” of U.S. strategy in the Middle East.

This strategic assessment was implemented through major and continuous economic assistance that literally was instrumental in Jordanian nation-building and the sustainment and modernization of King Hussein most cherished institution, the Jordanian Armed Forces.

During Jordan’s severest crisis, the civil war with the PLO in 1970, the U.S. under President Nixon’s energetic personal involvement, stood forcefully behind Jordan in its confrontation not only against the PLO but also Syria and Iraq. I was on the task force formed in the State Department in the crisis and I remember the usual-leisurely Secretary Rogers spending a night on his sofa in the Department at one serious moment during the crisis.

It is well-known that the U.S. encouraged Israel to be ready to use its air force against Syria if the Syrian air force had been used against Jordan. I was later told that King Hussein at one point thought seriously about asking for direct U.S. military engagement--which I believe would have probably been forthcoming--but declined in the end because of the serious risk to his throne in the long run posed by such a U.S. intervention, given the extreme unpopularity of the U.S. Israeli policy.

Arab-Israeli Issues

Arab-Israeli issues were of course at the core of the U.S.-Jordanian relationship. One leitmotiv of King Hussein’s reign was his pre-occupation with these issues--a deeply-felt legacy and obligation from his Hashemite forebears and, frankly, an opportunity for Jordan to occupy a larger role in the world than its barren resources would otherwise allow.

The U.S. supported his activism and usually on his terms. We supported Resolution 242 to recover occupied territory after the 1967 War and we upheld Jordanian claims to negotiate for the recovery of its West Bank territory (although never joining Britain and Pakistan in recognizing its de jure right there) and we and King Hussein both bitterly resented the Rabat Summit’s selection of the PLO to represent the Palestinians in place of Jordan. We continued to hope for the re-assertion of a Jordanian role there which we hoped (vainly) could occur in implementing the Camp David Accord. In the 1980s we sponsored a Jordanian aid program to the West Bank and a formula whereby Jordan would head a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in negotiations--aims that we shared with the Israeli Labor party under Rabin and Peres. We were disappointed when Hussein gave up Jordan’s administrative role there in 1988 in its “disengagement” decision and “the Jordanian option” was further buried when the PLO came to accept the principle of peace with Israel in the early 1990s.

I predict the U.S. will follow the Israeli Labor Party’s lead in the future on the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. The idea of an eventual Jordanian-Palestinian confederation is still a

theoretical possibility which has several attractive features but enormous obstacles in the form of mutual Jordanian and Palestinian suspicions--including Jordanian existential angst over the Israeli "Jordan is Palestine" campaign as enunciated from time to time by various Likud governments.

U.S. and Jordanian Mutual Disappointments

In this four decade relationship it was inevitable that both sides would disappoint the other. Most of Jordan's disappointments with the U.S. stemmed from two sources: 1) our unwillingness to be more forceful on Arab-Israeli matters; and 2) our inability to come up to King Hussein's expectations of American aid.

Much of my memory of King Hussein was of his pressing the U.S. to exert itself on Arab-Israeli matters involving Jordan more than we were willing and sometimes able to do. The best and well-documented example is following the 1973 War. Jordan wanted desperately to have its own disengagement agreement with Israel, like Egypt and Syria, despite the fact that Jordan had not engaged Israel across its own border. Kissinger, after sleeping on the proposition overnight, declined to press the Israelis on this issue on grounds that the new Rabin government could not sell the idea because of their political weakness. The Jordanians undoubtedly suspected (probably correctly) that Kissinger was already favoring the Egyptian track and did not want to complicate it. As a result the Rabat Summit came out in favor of the PLO as the "sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians" and the rest is history. Kissinger later admitted that a mistake was made in not giving support to the Jordanian disengagement but with hindsight now after Oslo perhaps it was for the best.

Another big Jordanian disappointment was the failure of Secretary Shultz to support the London Agreement between King Hussein and Peres for negotiations with Israel in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Since Prime Minister Shamir himself opposed the agreement Shultz did not feel he could press it further, but King Hussein was extremely bitter with the U.S. at the moment I arrived as ambassador in 1987. His bitterness increased when at Israeli bidding Shultz tried to persuade King Hussein to meet directly with Israel under the diaphanous cover of a forthcoming U.S.-Soviet Summit.

Disillusionment with the U.S. and Israel and the stalled peace process plus the outbreak of the Intifada finally led the King to announce Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank which it had never relinquished in terms of its continued--albeit limited and long-distance--administration following the 1967 War. Once again, in hindsight, this had a role in spurring the PLO to engage eventually with the Israelis eventually, through the Oslo process.

The U.S. Congress periodically disappointed King Hussein in his quest for arms. We cut him off briefly after he joined the 1967 War against Israel. We humiliated him in 1976 when Congress reduced the size of the air defense package for Jordan and then insisted that the Hawk batteries be fixed in concrete, making them sitting ducks for any opponent. Even to acquire this limited system King Hussein made a credible threat to acquire an attractive Soviet system and the U.S. had to seek Saudi financing for the half-billion dollar cost of the Hawks. Again in 1985 the Congress refused his request for combat aircraft even after King Hussein made a declaration

going far towards recognizing Israel. Instead of aircraft he got a handsome one-time economic aid stipend which King Hussein hoped vainly would be repeated.

Resentments and Misconceptions

Looking at the sweep of U.S.-Jordanian relations, I discern some leitmotifs. From King Hussein's side, while he enjoyed the favored position he had with the U.S., he also nurtured a resentment that the U.S. took him for granted; he was considered "a cheap date" compared with the Israelis and the Egyptians. U.S. aid was rarely sufficient nor were our entreaties to Saudi Arabia to aid Jordan and its problematic economy and its expectations of living like an oil-rich state. I think he grew increasingly to resent the growth of U.S.-Saudi relations after the oil boom when Saudi Arabia eclipsed Jordan as a sought-after partner for the U.S.

The U.S. was somewhat ambivalent about King Hussein's large ambition. On one hand we utilized his prestige in helping to broker Israeli-Palestinian agreements at the Wye Plantation but we resented his attempts to broker a deal with Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. We often believed Hussein overestimated his clout in Arab circles, as our other Arab friends in other capitals would often tell us.

The Crowning Glory: The Israeli-Jordanian Treaty

The crowning glory of the U.S.-Jordanian relationship was the Israeli-Jordanian Treaty of October 26, 1994. Even though the negotiations were carried on directly and without any call on the U.S. for help, the germ of the direct contacts could be traced back to the Tripartite Declaration in Washington on an earlier trip by then Crown Prince Hassan. I believe I expressed the general U.S. sentiment when I wrote to congratulate King Hussein on the Treaty, saying that he had vindicated the efforts to two generations of American diplomats (and, I did not add, of American policy objectives). U.S. support was overwhelming: not only did President Clinton attend the signing ceremony but large amounts of American aid flowed in (although not in the open-ended fashion that attended the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty). This included however a five-fold increase in aid levels over previous decade (making Jordan's current per capita aid from the U.S. larger than any country's other than Israel) It also includes some \$700 million in debt forgiveness, efforts to obtain rescheduling from the G-7 allies, and the provision of a dozen F-16 aircraft.) In the euphoria of the Treaty, the U.S. also supported the MENA Summits and the Peres vision of a new Middle East which promised significant development for Jordan until the Netanyahu government slowed the peace process and Jordan became disillusioned with the lack of economic benefits that materialized from peace.

The British-American Dynamic in Jordan

It is impossible to discuss the American relationship in Jordan without discussing the British (particularly in this setting today). In many ways Jordan was emblematic of the "Britain's Greece to America's Rome" sobriquet. In my experience our relations were of a closeness in Jordan that I have not seen elsewhere. There was no commercial rivalry (because there was no commerce, unlike in Saudi Arabia for instance) and the U.S. was delighted to have Britain provide military

equipment including combat aircraft to Jordan, particularly when our congress prevented us from doing so.

As a major military and economic aid donor, the U.S. had a good deal more business to transact with the government and as the primary interlocutor with Israel and Saudi Arabia, we had a lot to talk about with King Hussein. But I still felt that King Hussein was more comfortable in his relationship with the British--because of his basic formation there and because Britain seemed more steady, less pro-Israeli and with longer experience in the area.

Britain sent a consistently outstanding group of diplomats to Jordan at a time when the Arabists were a dominant group at the top ranks of the Foreign Office. Sarrell, Moberly and Urwick were all outstanding ambassadors when I was there first time as were John Cole and Tony Reeve on my tour as ambassador. We consulted closely and generally were both informed at the same time by King Hussein regarding significant developments.

When the U.S. was in put in the doghouse by King Hussein he would sometimes gravitate more towards Britain. This was the case I found on my arrival in Jordan as ambassador in 1987. John Coles, who later went on to become Head of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service and who came to Jordan fresh from being Prime Minister Thatcher's Private secretary, had the King's ear more than virtually any ambassador I have known. So low was the U.S. reputation after its turndown of the London Accord that I remember being seated by the Jordanian Foreign Minister at an obscure table at the back of the hall at a dinner honoring visiting Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe.

I thought the UK overplayed its admittedly strong hand at that time by trying to sell Jordan an expensive combat aircraft package and a major upgrade of the equipment for the Public Security Service. These placed a heavy burden on the Jordanian budget which helped provoke the economic crisis of 1988. Perhaps a joint demarche to the King by our respective ambassadors could have prevented that, while hopefully holding off a competing Soviet aircraft offer.

Both countries' ambassadors had ready access to the King although their influence differed with ambassadors and with the state of our respective bilateral relations. I suspect the King and the a succession of British Prime Ministers over the years spent much mutual hand-wringing regarding the U.S. position on the peace process which both considered far too pro-Israeli, even though the UK usually came around to backing our major initiatives like Camp David or the Reagan Initiative.

King Abdullah and America

King Hussein's slow and agonizing death from cancer was traumatic for Jordan and distressful to the entire world. Hussein's sense of melodrama was with him to the very end: his dramatic intervention at Wye Plantation, pleading for peace, and then his astounding removal of Prince Hassan as Crown Prince in favor of Prince Abdullah--and the revealing letter justifying his actions.

At the time I wondered if the dying King had not made a mistake but I must say that King Abdullah has allayed many of my misgivings. Among other things, he has projected well in his public image internationally and has established a solid relationship with the U.S. both personally and professionally. While like his father, his diction and carriage seem impeccably British, King Abdullah in my judgement is culturally closer to the U.S. because of the formative school years he spent in America and through his close association with the U.S. military in his military career. He is yet to be tested as is the American relationship. The relationship is off to a good start, with Abdullah re-affirming his father's commitment to a warm peace with Israel and enjoying healthy levels of U.S. aid.

Domestically, I suspect Abdullah's honeymoon will shortly end when he faces, like his father, the difficult economic facts of life for Jordan. The major question is whether Jordan and its semi-viable economy can move into self-sufficiency and escape from economic dependency on the U.S. and the Gulf. As long as the West Bank and Iraqi trade opportunities remain closed, the odds are against a Jordanian take-off. King Abdullah is commendably trying to reform the economy, including jump-starting a private sector take-off by instituting economic reforms designed to attract foreign investment, by courting the new information technology companies in the U.S. and by carefully enlarging the QIZ's (Qualified Industrial Zones) with Israel. He has amazingly managed to convince the U.S. congress to pass a Free Trade Agreement for Jordan, as we have with Israel. One would wish the U.S. would be more successful in persuading Israel and the Palestinian Authority to liberalize their own trade relations with Jordan.

It is an open question whether Jordan and the U.S. will move beyond the traditional dependent relationship that had obtained during the past 42 years. Current trends in U.S. foreign aid are not encouraging for an continuing large amounts of aid for Jordan. If there is a breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that ends that conflict, one wonders how much aid would be left for Jordan, given the huge sums being claimed for Israel, and the large sums for the Palestinian Authority and even Syria, to say nothing of the gigantic claims for Palestinian refugee compensation.

The immense political challenge before King Abdullah in those circumstances is how to come to terms with the new Palestinian state and the significant Palestinian majority in Jordan. Jordan is already making the case--with considerable justification--that it should receive billions for past and future integration of this Palestinian majority into Jordan. If the U.S. stands up to its responsibilities, it will need to continue to help Jordan economically to get over that difficult issue that, mishandled, could threaten its national existence. Jordan continues to occupy a key strategic position for the U.S. because of its proximity to Israel and its intimate and inextricable involvement in the Palestinian problem for the foreseeable future. The civility, sophistication and decency of Jordan--learned from King Hussein and, indirectly, from the British legacy dating back to World War I and passed on intact to his son Abdullah--makes our relationship--even with its periodic strains-- both mutually useful and gratifying. So I would conclude by predicting that the U.S. will remain deeply supportive of the Jordan of the Hashemites as long as they prove capable of maintaining the support of the people of Jordan and the internal stability of the Kingdom--not an automatic assurance but a task--despite the fragility of the Jordanian economy and the internal and external challenges--that King Abdullah has embarked upon auspiciously.

DAVID G. NEWTON
Director, Office of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine Affairs
Washington DC (1988-1990)

Ambassador Newton was raised in Massachusetts and educated at Harvard University and the University of Michigan. An Arabic speaking Middle East Specialist, he served both in Washington and abroad in positions dealing with Middle Eastern matters. His overseas postings include Yemen (three times), Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq. From 1984 to 1988 he served as US Ambassador to Iraq and from 1994 to 1997 as US Ambassador to Yemen. A graduate of the National War College, he was also assigned there as Deputy International Affairs Advisor, and in 1997 he was Special Envoy to Iraq. Following retirement, Ambassador Newton joined Radio Free Europe in Prague. Ambassador Newton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Well, then you came back, what about, how stood we with Jordan? How did we feel one about King Hussein renouncing the West Bank, the West Bank?

NEWTON: Well, I don't know that, he did this rather hurriedly. I don't think, I think it did complicate our life. I wasn't there at the time he did it. It was a "fait accompli" (done deal) by the time I came. I don't think we made much of an issue of it. For the King it was getting to be too much of a burden. It did remove risks of confrontation between Israel and Jordan on the plus side.

Q: Did, was there much of an effort to, during the two years that you were there, to bring Jordan into the peace, to bring Jordan into a peace agreement with Israel at the time?

NEWTON: I think largely we followed King Hussein's lead in that because we had a very high regard for him as a leader in the Middle East. I knew, to think about it I don't think, I don't recall any major efforts at the time to, I mean we had very good relations with the king. I don't think we really thought much about, we were looking for a comprehensive peace agreement. We were not looking for a separate peace agreement. I know from my previous tour in Syria one of the problems was that the Palestinians were always afraid the Jordanians would jump first. The Syrians were afraid the Jordanians would jump first followed then by the Palestinians. So they all distrusted each other and the thing that the Syrians really feared, which was largely happened, is that they would be isolated. I mean they lost Egypt, and their fear was the Israelis could kind of strip away other opponents one at a time, and the Syrians would be the last in the line. When they got down to the front of the line, there wouldn't be anything left for them and their bargaining position would be very weak.

ROGER G. HARRISON
Ambassador

Jordan (1990-1993)

Ambassador Harrison was born and raised in California. He was educated at San Jose State and Claremont Colleges, Oxford University and Freie University in Berlin. Entering the Foreign Service in 1967, Ambassador Harrison served in London, Manila, Warsaw, Manila and Tel Aviv before being named US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Jordan, where he served from 1990 to 1993. He also had postings in Washington, primarily dealing with Political/Military Affairs. Ambassador Harrison was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: Today is the 20th of September, 2002. Roger, how did this appointment to Jordan come about? First of all, what dates are we talking about? You were in Jordan from when to when?

HARRISON: From August of '90 through July of '93. The appointment came about actually as most appointments in the Foreign Service come about, by combination of good luck and circumstance. I left the job as Deputy Assistant Secretary in Political Military Affairs in June of 1989 and the new administration had come in, new people had been appointed. Reggie Bartholomew in particular to the under secretary job supervising PM and so it became increasingly clear that the power relationships were shifting and I wasn't going to have much of a role in that process. I was not unhappy to leave that job in June of that year, so about four months after the new bunch came onboard.

Q: This would be Bush?

HARRISON: This would be the Bush administration, Bush I. At that point I had no assignment, but there was a program called Diplomat in Residence from State and I had a friend out at Colorado College, so I arranged for the Colorado College to invite me and then for these people to ship me out there. They were happy to do it because I was a senior officer without an assignment. They're always happy to find places to put people like that. Out I went. In the meantime, the State Department had sponsored me as the ambassador to the committee on disarmament in Geneva, but I'd been blackballed by Ron Lehman over at OSD because of his unhappiness with the chemical weapons convention conference in Paris which I'd been instrumental in setting up in '88. He was not eager to see me off to a forum in which arms control was going to be their chief subject, because allegedly he didn't think I was sufficiently robust, or would be, in negotiation with the Soviets. That had fallen through. I was sort of on the beach for a while. Luckily I had someone in the hierarchy working on my behalf in the person of Robert Kimmitt, who had been appointed Under Secretary for Political Affairs and whom I had known for a long time and who was eager to get me an embassy in part, simply to I think do me a favor. He had lined up Tunis for me, but Bob Pelletreau was in Tunis, but he had decided to extend because he was going on to Cairo and then took another year. He extended in Tunis and that fell through. Essentially the next thing I knew I got a call from the paneling board saying that I'd been paneled as ambassador to Jordan. It was a little bit of a surprise when that happened. It was in January of '90. I began preparations at that point I did some Arabic language training and arrived in August of '90 in Jordan. There were a couple of things that happened before that though. As I was briefing up at the Department there was a visit by the foreign minister of Jordan to Washington and I was invited to sit in on the meetings between him and Secretary Baker and I

got my first sense in that meeting of the atmosphere of U.S. Jordanian relations at that time, which was not good. It was deteriorating coincident with the deterioration of our relations between the United States and Iraq. Jordan had great interest in Iraq, both financial and political and of course, saw us as the ultimate guarantor of Jordanian security, so the king had cast himself as the role of intermediary between Saddam Hussein and Washington. In this meeting the Jordanian foreign minister tried to convince Baker that Saddam was actually someone who could be dealt with, that Saddam was someone who the king knew and he was not as bad as he was being portrayed and that what we should be doing is to find some communication with Baghdad. Baker was very impatient with that argument and dismissed it out of hand. By then Washington was becoming increasingly convinced, by which I mean, the Bush administration, that Saddam was a bad actor and his use of chemical weapons in Iraq against his own citizens and the Kurds had felt that and also the statements about burning down Israel which had been made within the six month period before that meeting, had pretty much convinced Baker and Bush that Saddam was not someone whose motives were as benevolent as the Jordanian foreign minister was trying to portray. The meeting was not a success and so I sought a meeting with the foreign minister at his hotel after that partially to introduce myself, you know, one on one context. In the course of that meeting I told him that I thought that the position that the Jordanians were taking on this issue was not going to be acceptable in Washington. Washington was not, in fact prepared to accept that Saddam was a benign or a potentially benign element in the region and that the result of that was going to make the Jordanians look complicit in Saddam's strategy toward the region which in fact I had already discovered was increasingly true in decision making circles. That conversation was going to play a role later because the foreign minister took my statements in that regard to be an indication that Washington was set on war with Saddam as early as, I think this was in April of 1989.

Q: '89 or '90?

HARRISON: '90, I'm sorry, April of '90 and so that no matter what happened after that the war was going to be inevitable and the invasion of Kuwait was pretext. He always argued that way. I don't know if he took it seriously or not. It was a debating point, which he hit me over the head with often later. In any case, Jordan was looking in bad reputation, the king's reputation, Jordan's reputation as not at its highest in Washington at this period. I was due to leave to take my assignment up in the last week of August, but the invasion took place. I in fact had gone to the White House. The person never called me by the way to ask me to accept this assignment, which I guess had been the practice I think maybe, at least he never called me. At any rate, I didn't get a call, but I did get my ritual meeting with the president to get the photograph for the piano and so forth. Scowcroft was there because he and Bush were conferring obviously from their conversation on the sort of the hour by hour Kuwait situation. I remember Scowcroft telling the president that it was actually looking a little better, that it might be easing a little bit at that point.

Q: Was this on the day of the invasion?

HARRISON: It was, yes, it was about three hours before the invasion. It was 3:00 in the afternoon in Washington, so that would have been midnight in Kuwait. It came in about 3:00 AM. They, at least from that conversation, were not aware that the invasion was imminent at that

point, which was a point I often made to Jordanians who thought that -- many of them -- that we had provoked the invasion and were pretty well tuned into it from the beginning. It was sort of part of our notorious plot. That meeting went well. The other thing that I had tried to do, because I had detected this worsening relationship in light of communication with Hussein, was engineer a letter from the President to Hussein that I could take with me. I wrote a letter like that and shepherded it through the NSC bureaucracy to the president's desk; by the way, I did this after the invasion. Before my departure there was a period of what, I guess about ten days. The letter said essentially that we were about to embark on this very difficult period, but that the president's relationship with the king was going to stand us both in good stead and that he looked forward to collaborating closely and we had to keep our heads and work to undo this, I forget the word I used, this invasion, to restore the status quo in the region. That in fact was signed. The other thing I did was I decided to speed up my departure because of the war and because I knew that the chargé out there was having to meet with Hussein on some very difficult issues and thought I should be in place. I canceled the events, my swearing in and so forth and the dinner, which the Jordanian ambassador was planning to hold for me and I departed on the 10th of August instead of the 24th, which had been the original plan.

Q: Question, Roger, when you saw Scowcroft and President Bush just before the invasion and you had your picture taken, was this completely pro forma or did either of them say, Jordan's going to be a key component or something like that?

HARRISON: Well, no I mean I'd love to tell you that they asked my opinion on this and informed me of the policy, but actually they talked to each other. My impression was that they were using this occasion to touch base, because the president obviously has other things that are going on, so any time that Scowcroft had access on that day he wanted to fill the president in on the situation. The president wanted to talk to him about it and that they were using the occasion of my meeting to do that, so I was pretty much just listening while they chatted. I think the president probably wished me well and did all the usual things, but I was an accessory to the meeting rather than anything else. At any rate, I had sped up my departure and arrived on the 11th of August with that letter in hand. Before that, by the way, I had my plane, I think it was a Saturday and my plane was supposed to take off at 3:00 in the afternoon, but the letter hadn't issued out from the White House bureaucracy, so I was over with my wife in the car with our bags all packed waiting for that letter to emerge signed by the president and not knowing whether it was going to emerge or not. It came out just in time to get me out to the airport. I had letter in hand, flew first class as we used to as our first trip to post in those days. Pan Am has also been eliminated in the mean time. We arrived on the 11th about 6:00 in the evening there. On the way I had been in the first class cabin on Royal Jordanian out of London with that fellow who turned out to be Prince Fahd, the King's cousin, a nice man. He was reading an Arabic newspaper with the headline, which I'll never forget -- I had deciphered it and was proud of myself -- was that Syrian troops had reached Saudi Arabia, because they participated in Desert Shield. The example they offer now is the benefits of coalition as opposed to other approaches that seem more fashionable at the moment. At any rate, arrived, taken to the house of course, the usual fussing around and the next morning I commenced to try to get the letter delivered. Since I hadn't been accredited yet, wasn't quite sure how to do that, but I ended up talking to Crown Prince Hassan on the phone and he sent a courier over for it and off it went and I think it bypassed the foreign ministry altogether, which would usually be the way of doing this. Off it

went to the king and the result of that was that the king called Bush. They had been rather reluctant to do that. He'd talked to Bush about four days before the invasion and assured him that the invasion wasn't going to take place, and was something, by the way, the king ever after denied or neglected to mention -- that it was just a diplomatic feint. I should say, too, by the way, that as I was briefing I noticed a change in the tone of the briefers in the last week or so before the invasion. I think the intelligence community was slowly, as it always does, had come to conclusion that there was going to be an invasion. The key indicator was that the Iraqis were moving expendables up to the border, ammunition, petroleum products all the things you need for a modern army. It turns out, of course, that modern warfare is material intensive and you have to move that stuff. You can't move it after you start fighting, but moving it is expensive and time consuming and if you do it, usually it means that you're going to use it. You're not just parading people around to put the wind up your opponent. So, that had been changing, but the king had talked to the president from Aqaba; he'd seen the text of the conversation essentially and said no, no, this is just a diplomatic feint instead of a diplomatic endeavor. That call was embarrassing to him in the event because of what happened, so he was reluctant to call the president again thinking that he'd discredited himself and knowing that his position on this was already suspect in Washington and that he was seen as an apologist for Saddam. He had not called, but the letter appealed to him because of the friendly tone. It was a great relief to him and he immediately picked up the phone and called Bush. Bush invited him to come to Kennebunkport. I guess I could say that I was the officer of the Kennebunkport meeting, but since it turned out badly that may not be a thing that I want to claim. At any rate, so it was necessary, because I still wasn't accredited to get my credentials presented, so that was a great advantage there, because some people wait a month or so to get those done and can't operate effectively until they get their credentials presented, but I presented mine on the day after I arrived and then had my first meeting with the king and handed him my credentials as you do, and made the ritual statements about desire for eternal friendship. He did the same and shook hands, so I was there. The embassy of course, there was a lot of apprehension around in the embassy, which had been without an ambassador for about six weeks. One of my jobs was to try to give the embassy some sense of direction and purpose which I commenced doing, but also because the Kennebunkport visit was on and I had presented my credentials I was going to be on that trip. I think I arrived on a Saturday and he left Wednesday of the next week. So four or five days after my arrival, he invited me to come back with him on his airplane. My first real meeting with any of the officials of the Jordanian government was on that airplane coming back from Amman. I came out to the airport. They have a VIP center there from which the king always leaves. Whenever he leaves the country the whole of the establishment shows up to bid him farewell and of course, they were all there and I found myself walking out to the plane with a short gentleman in a military uniform whom I didn't recognize, but I chatted amicably with. It turned out that he was the crown prince, Hassan, but because he was in a military uniform I was thrown off because he was not a military officer, so I had a little moment of disengage there, but didn't say anything nasty to him, so that all went well. Got on the airplane, the king always piloted his airplanes to take off and so I sat in the back there. There was a big lounge area in the middle of this plane. It was a DC-10 and all fitted out as an executive jet. From the wings forward it was a big sort of conference room thing, a sitting room with tables that hydraulically rose out of the floor and all sorts of wood accents. In fact, the pilot told me that as we had to stop and refuel, that the reason that the plane was so heavy was because it had all this wood and folderol on it. I got in and I sat down on one of the lounge chairs in one corner in the back and up

in the opposite corner in the front across this lounge area, the cabinet was meeting. The foreign minister, the chief of the royal court and Adnan Uday and Mudar Badran, the prime minister were all huddled around the table and smoking like crazy, talking and occasionally glancing over to me and then after we were up on auto pilot the king came back and went over and sat down with them and they all smoked and all had a confab and I sort of sat back there on the other side of the cabin quietly waiting to see what would happen. Eventually the king got up from that group and walked over and sat down with me, which was my first real conversation with him other than this exchange at my credentials presentation. He began to lay out what he planned to do in Kennebunkport. After describing to me what he had been doing over the past year, which had been trying to avert the crisis which he now saw, trying to avert the invasion of Kuwait, partly by urging the Kuwaitis to be moderate and partly by urging Saddam to be restrained, but that the Kuwaitis had ignored him and instead of being moderate had been increasingly obdurate in demands for Saddam to repay his indebtedness from the Iraq- Iran war and in recalcitrance about setting of the final border between Iraq and themselves. On the issue of oil prices, the issue there was Saddam, because he had this huge debt from his war with Iran, was a constant force within OPEC to raise oil prices, and the Kuwaitis had resisted him on that score -- in his view allegedly because they were doing our bidding, but in fact, of course, because they had their own strategy about long term oil prices. For whatever reason, from Saddam's point of view -- as the king described it -- they were demanding repayment and then denying him the means of acquiring the money to do it. The king had been warning, he thought, Washington about all this. He essentially had this presentation which he wanted to give the president absolving himself of all complicity in casting himself as a prophet of this then current crisis who had been roundly ignored by everyone. It was a kind of a combination of "mea culpa" and "I told you so." I listened to all of that and then I told him that I thought that was not the right approach to take. I told him that it seemed to me that he had a limited time with the president and that the president was going to be interested in what we did now, what our future collaboration was going to be, how we could ease tensions as we jointly attempted to address this situation which had now been created and that the president wasn't going to be eager to go over all of these past events. Part of the reason that I told him that was because I knew that it was simply going to raise hackles because nobody was going to accept this insane rendition of what he had been doing. It didn't fit with Washington's vision of what had happened and it was going to get into a process which was fruitless in any case. These were not historians; they were politicians and now preparing for way. What they wanted to do was talk about how we solve the problem not how Hussein wasn't responsible for the problem arising. He took all that onboard, went back to flying the plane and we eventually got to Washington about 3:00 AM Washington time when we got there. We went immediately to the State Department because Baker was going to leave for the Kennebunkport meeting the next day and wanted to know what was going on in Jordan, and I was considered from my 72 hours in country the expert on that and so I prepared a memo and basically in the memo I told the Secretary what the king had told me about what he was going to do and what I told him. Then the next morning about 8:00 I went back to the hotel for a couple of hours, no actually we had 24 hours and this became an issue. The king had asked to stay in Washington for 24 hours before he went up to Kennebunkport and he did. That was later portrayed as letting him cool his heels in Washington in the atmosphere that was then created, but in fact it was his request to kind of assemble his thoughts and to get over jet lag before he went to Kennebunkport. There were 24 hours in the Department telling them all I knew and then the next morning I met with the Secretary and we rode out to Andrews together where they were all going to join up and

take the plane to Kennebunkport and told him what I knew about the situation, about the king's state of mind, and so forth as we rode out to the airport, actually it was the longest conversation I had with him over my three year tenure even though he came to Jordan seven times. We got on the plane, flew up to Kennebunkport, they basically chatted about old times, you know, it was all, there wasn't much substance in the discussion. Everybody waiting for Kennebunkport. Took a helicopter, landed there, escorted in and then off the king and the president went for the tape session with no one in the room. I was in the outer room with our cabinet, more or less, Bob Bates was there and Baker was there and Scowcroft was there and other people, too. I'm not sure now in retrospect quite who all the crowd was. The thing I remember about that session with everyone talking about the situation, was Baker's unhappiness that there had been an announcement of the call up of the reserves. But he hadn't been consulted about it, but he thought it was a diplomatic signal when we call up the reserves and he should have been consulted. There was no indication that he saw that it was an unnecessary step, he just thought his area had been transgressed a little bit and he was unhappy about that. I think part of the other element of this was that it's still not clear because at that point we didn't have solely the agreement to station troops there we needed to have in order to mount this counteroffensive, if we were going to be able to mount it. Baker thought the announcement of the reserve callout was premature. There was a lunch. There is a pattern in these things -- for all the future historians -- is always the lunch is non-substantive, usually the lunch is non-substantive. There is a general meeting between the sides. There was no meeting of minds and although I was briefed about the session later, it was clear that it was not going well. The king had done what he had told me on the plane he was going to do. He had not been deterred by my wise and sagacious advice and the session hadn't gone well. The impressions on both sides were not good from that session and it had I think the opposite of the effect that I had intended the letter originally to have, which was to reestablish communication. The meeting did something to weaken communication between the two. I think that essentially the fault was the king's because he was absolutely intent at this point of adverting war between the United States and Iraq, and that was his agenda. The president, on the other hand, was increasingly hawkish in those days and therefore, was bound to view what Hussein was trying to do as appeasement of Saddam and apologetics for Saddam as well, which didn't sit well in Washington. Had the king been a little bit more adroit he might have approached that meeting in a way which would have solidified his relationship with Bush and increased his influence on what was then going to ensue. He was often moved by emotional considerations and by the necessity as he saw it to defend his own actions. He was inclined I think to take the wrong approach. At any rate it was not a happy occasion. I did get to know members of the Jordanian cabinet because we then hopped on the plane and flew all the way back. The other thing that happened...

Q: Well, when you were talking to them, did they reflect how badly this had gone?

HARRISON: They didn't really know. None of us had been in the private meetings. The open meetings had been amiable. I think it was only later that, as the reaction to the meeting set in as the reports to what had been said there came out, that it was generally seen that this had not been a happy occasion. I don't know what the king told them about it. I'm not sure that he realized it hadn't gone well, maybe he did. Nothing he said to me though. The other thing that happened in Kennebunkport is that as we were leaving, going back to the helipad there, the president had asked the king, there is a long path up from the house to the helipad and it goes by a little cottage

there and in those days the president's mother was living and his uncle, her brother, had died the day before. So, as they were going to the helipad, the president asked the king if he'd mind that he, Bush, stopped off with his mother who was distraught about her brother's death and the king of course, said, absolutely no problem, that's great. So, back to the helipad we went. The president was therefore, not with the king when he got on the helicopter and that was recorded for posterity by the news media who aired and reported it in Jordan as a slight that he hadn't actually gone to the helipad. I was in on the conversation when the president asked to stop off to see his mother. I don't think this is conceivable that this was intended as a slight, but I would doubt greatly that it was. I think it was simply a natural reaction by both of them, which was then blown up into a diplomatic incident as was the king's 24 hours in Washington. So both of these things, in that atmosphere, were signs of strains in the relationship when they were both just circumstantial. We flew back.

Q: During this flying and talking with members of the cabinet, did you find any sense of indignation or something over the fact that Hussein had invaded Kuwait? Did they have the same reaction that we had?

HARRISON: No, absolutely not. I think the cabinet and the king to a degree shared the view of the public in Jordan, which was that the Kuwaitis had it coming. The Jordanian-Kuwaiti relationship had been very troubled because it was a dependency relationship. The Jordanians got subsidies to the Kuwaitis and the years prior to 1990 the Kuwaitis had been increasingly, as the Jordanians saw it, miserly with the handouts and had asked for more groveling in order to receive them. The king had been treated with less and less courtesy on his periodic begging trips to Kuwait City. They had lorded it over their poor cousins from their point of view.

Q: Apparently from people, who have been in the area, the Kuwaitis have a reputation of being insufferable.

HARRISON: Oh, absolutely. I think the one thing that unites the Arabs, is that everyone detests the Kuwaitis. That's the one sort of constant, you know, the remnants of the Baathi philosophy. You know, we don't agree on anything else, but we all hate the damn Kuwaitis. We did, too. I mean we didn't hate them, but you know, we found them to be very vexatious folk. Their votes in the UN, their support for terrorist organizations and various strikes. They were really not an attractive bunch from Washington's point of view. The only thing that could possibly rescue those guys and deal with Washington policymakers, was an invasion, but it certainly hadn't rescued their reputation in Jordan. There was a lot of satisfaction among Jordanians that the Kuwaitis had taken them on in shorts and you know, I mean, hit them again with the kind of general view that the Kuwaiti ambassador in Amman turned out to be less popular than I was. He was kind of holed up in his embassy and not receiving visitors for a long time. No, no. Of course, the overwhelming public reaction in Jordan was in favor of Saddam Hussein. I mean it was absolutely an emotional catharsis for the Jordanians to think that here was an Arab leader who was decisive, who had hit these uppity Bedouins in Kuwait, this creation of imperialism who had been so arrogant about distribution of what after all was an Arab and not a Kuwaiti asset. It was just stunning. Jordan is not naturally a politically unified place because it has a Palestinian community and also this Jordanian Bedouin community who view each other with mutual suspicion. But on this issue they were absolutely unified. I never heard anyone express a contrary

view, partly because it's also a small and therefore a conformist society, and partly because you tend to express the view in Jordan that are acceptable to the palace because there's always been consequences of expressing other views, and partially because there is such an outpouring of repressed anti-American feeling and anti-Western feeling in generally. Finally, here is an Arab who is daring to sort of cock a schnook at the Western powers to undo this division of the Arab world imposed on Arabs by the British.

Q: It sounds a little like the reaction in that part of the world to Nasser taking over the Suez in I guess it was '56 or '55.

HARRISON: Absolutely. Nasser had been the great hero and he had had feet of clay as it turned out and here was the next Saladin to lead the Arab cause and it was astounding. One of the first impressions I had was that the overwhelming public sentiment -- and part of it was this spontaneous appearance of pictures of Saddam all over the country, as it had been true of Nasser, too. Just as with Nasser a lot of concern at the palace that Saddam was becoming more popular than the king. One of the expressions of this was in this picture, which was sort of placemat size, which kids were hawking on the street corners in traffic like they sell puffs on cigarettes in Manila, they were selling these pictures. People would stop and pay a few pennies through the window and then put these in their car windows. Every shop had Saddam's picture; posters of Saddam pasted everywhere. At the beginning with little icons of the king up in the corner. By the way, these pictures of Saddam he always had a penumbra behind his head. He was doing benevolent things and there was one in which he had a young girl on his knee who looked Swiss, a blonde young girl on his knee and he was being avuncular. Obviously not an image we could get away with here, but one that had great currency there. Then the image of this icon of the king up in the corner starting down benevolently began to disappear from these pictures and it was just Saddam.

Q: Did this attitude surprise you because you weren't a Jordanian hand when you came out there and I think you know within the United States all of us were sort of realizing that this was a pretty beastly act and Saddam. Were you ready for this when you got there?

HARRISON: Yes, I was. First of all they had been reporting about it from the embassy so I knew about it intellectually, but also, after I had been 23 or 24 years in the Foreign Service you don't have many illusions about how people in other countries view the United States. We're not seen as quite the benevolent force in the world as we see ourselves and how complicated that relationship is, and the kind of wellsprings of anti-American feeling there are around waiting to be tapped. Saddam had hit a gusher. It was really astounding. It showed the context in which the king was trying to conduct his diplomacy, which was the other element of it because his kingship was always, was and always would be, artificial. It was imposed on Jordan, which had no tradition of kings. It's an alien notion in that part of the world. I was as exemplified for me by the use of the crown iconography. For example, on the Royal Jordanian airplanes there's a crown on the tail and there's crowns everywhere. One day I asked the political chief about the crown. Where is the crown? Oh, there is no crown. I mean any Arab leader put on a crown he'd be hounded out of office or laughed out of office. It's not an Arab tradition, it's a Western transplanted one, but it points out the artificiality of the Hashemite monarchy. It wasn't one which arose from the place that it was imposed. They were Hejazi, they were from the Western

part of the Hejaz who were kicked out by the Saudis-- harder men -- and sent as wandering princes around the area and scooped up by the British and by the French -- the brothers -- to be nominal figurehead leaders, to give some legitimacy to their occupation of these places. Nobody had voted that when old King Abdullah, that King Hussein should be king. He had no popular mandate. So, his own survival was never assured. That's the problem of being a king, you have to be so responsive to public opinion, much more than a democratic leader who can ignore it if he wants for periods of time between elections. Kings like this one in a country that had only existed as truly independent for about 25 years at the time. This was not a well-established entrenched bunch. The king's foreign policy had always been based on this careful balancing act, small power balance of power politics. He'd try to balance off the big powers around and be friendly with everybody, if you can, and get whatever economic benefit you can and sort of hope that the balance of the larger powers will keep you independent. This was the game that this family had been playing for a long time. Don't unnecessarily antagonize anyone, especially the Americans. Don't get real fanatic about Israel, you know, it's a fact of life which you haven't the power to change and you're not even sure you'd like to see change for a lot of reasons. You have meetings with them surreptitiously and do some intelligence changes with them, cooperate, be nice, you know. That's essentially the place that Hussein stood and also with his own people. The reason the Hashemites persevered was, precisely and ironically, because they aren't Jordanian, they weren't Bedouin, they weren't East Jordanian, they weren't Palestinian, therefore, they were acceptable to both of those communities in a way that a Palestinian would not have been to the East Jordanian community or a Bedouin would have been to a Palestinian community. They were in a sense the people you'd have to invent if they had not existed, but they existed on grace and favor. They were subject to popular discontent. They had also had riots two years before, when they tried to end some subsidies, and it had been these riots in Amman when the king was in Washington which was one of the centers of their support which was always rooted in the East Jordanian community. That's a very East Jordanian place, Bedouin place, Amman in the south, and the truckers down there had rioted and they had gone absolutely berserk. They had sent, since Hussein was in Washington, Hassan the crown prince had gone down there, but a more inept political figure would be hard to imagine trying to calm the crowd. The king had gotten on the plane and gotten back, but they had calmed things down, but they were very gun-shy after that. They realized the tenuousness of their position. Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown you don't have. This Iraqi thing was a great threat to them, this outpouring of support for Saddam, the knowledge they have that erasing the border between Jordan and Iraq and making it all one place under Saddam's leadership would be seen as easy as drawing it had been 70 years before with Churchill at the Cairo conference. So, this war was in fact both from a domestic and a foreign policy point of view their worst nightmare, and exactly the right thing for the king to do what he could to avert it. The problem he had was once it was decided upon the middle ground, which he'd always occupied, disappeared and he was forced to have to jump one way, or the other. He could never do that so he discredited himself, but luckily we are jumping ahead of the story here. He still needed the Hashemites anyway, but they had to be rehabilitated, but that came later.

Q: How did things go after he came back?

HARRISON: Well, the first issue after I came back arose because there had been an outpouring of refugees from the Gulf and from Iraq itself of all different nationalities, a lot of Egyptians, but

Sri Lankans, a lot of Filipinos, a lot of Indians, and Bangladeshis and it was a whole Noah's Ark of folk. They had come rushing out of that area trying to get into Jordan and the Jordanians were overwhelmed. They closed the border and these people began to build up in this no man's land between the Jordan and Iraqi checkpoints out there. There was about a 30-kilometer strip of desert between these two and that's where these people began to crowd.

Q: This was in August?

HARRISON: Yes, this was in August, out in the desert there. I got called in. Two events arose from that. One was the foreign minister called me in and this was about three days after we got back and said that the U.S. Navy which had already begun blockading the Jordanian port of Aqaba against contraband that was headed for Iraq under UN mandate had stopped a Yemeni ship which was coming to Aqaba to pick up the Yemenis who had been transported from this no man's land to Aqaba to get them out of the country. They couldn't leave because the Navy wouldn't let the ship pick them up. At that point the Jordanians had started trying to ferry these people down through the border in bunches in Aqaba if they had some transportation out or to the airport in Amman in a kind of orderly way. The foreign minister, Marwan al-Qasim, a very blunt spoken man, the same one I'd met with in Washington, said that he'd given orders to close the borders and tell the Navy to raise this blockade of Aqaba. He would let nobody across. Our interest in particular was a lot of Americans in this group, or some, a few hundred. We had actually set up a trailer out there, an old school bus with some officers in it to process these people and make sure they got across the border okay, but Marwan said he was going to close all that. I protested strongly. I pointed out that I had no instructions before I went over there, to make a general point that I seldom knew, in fact, what U.S. policy was. In a situation like that, policy is evolving very rapidly and Washington may be unaware of the situation and if they're aware of it, very likely they haven't made you aware of it. Ambassadors are not high on the information food chain. I thought that I was on firm ground in protesting very strongly on behalf of my government to closing the border and telling the foreign minister as I did that this would have profound repercussions on relationships between Jordan and not only the United States, but the rest of the world and urging him to reconsider his decision. He was adamant; he was an adamant man. So, I came out of that meeting and immediately from my car phone I called the palace. The king was out of the country again then and so the crown prince was regent and I asked for an immediate meeting with him on an urgent basis and he agreed. I went to the palace and met with him and told him the same thing I'd told the foreign minister that this was a grave error which have profound repercussion and that this decision should not be implemented, that the border should not be closed. Then I went back to the embassy and I got a call from the foreign minister to come back and back I went to the foreign minister. This was all in a space of about three or four hours. A very upset foreign minister told me that he had in fact rescinded his order to close the border, but that he would impose it again unless the Navy would give him an assurance of not stopping any other ships that were going to Aqaba to pick up refugees. The border was not closed. I never bothered to ask the Navy for that kind of assurance because I knew, number one that they wouldn't give it to me and number two, that the foreign minister was not in fact in a position to close the border at that point. This was a face saving step on his part. Two things that arose out of that sequence of events. One was that the border stayed open and eventually brought great credit on the Jordanians for the processing of these refugees and the other was that the foreign minister conceived a great dislike for me because I had gone over his

head essentially. Foreign ministers in Jordan are not particularly powerful characters because most of the key point policy decisions are made at the palace, not at the foreign ministry. Most foreign ministers are content with that, but Marwan al-Qasim was a very assertive individual in whatever job he had. He prided himself on being blunt spoken and was jealous of his power as foreign minister and overestimated it as well. He saw this as an affront and the consequence of that was that, ever after during the foreign minister calls, he wouldn't sit me on the couch and he never offered me tea. I would always come and sit at the desk. I would sit at the chair in front of the desk and he would stay behind the desk and I was never given the courtesy of the traditional Arab tea. In retrospect it seems to me I did the right thing, would do it again exactly the same way in those circumstances and it turned out to be the right move for Jordan as well. I think the other lesson to be drawn is that in circumstances such as this that existed in Jordan at the time, some of the diplomatic niceties which you'd normally observe, and you'd have to, go by the board as there are larger things at stake. Your relationship with the foreign minister might have to be sacrificed as mine was, although it later improved. Now, it's easier to sacrifice your relationship with a foreign minister in a country where the foreign minister is not a particularly powerful man. It would be suicide for an ambassador to do that in Washington. Nevertheless that's the sequence of events.

The next time this refugee thing -- which was the major issue for me in these first days -- I decided to go out and see for myself what was going on at the border and we're about the 23rd or 24th of August. It was an incredible scene when I got out there. Beyond the border posts there were these huge encampments and some of them were simply in the open air, people sitting around in great circles. Some of them were in tents. There were some international organizations out there, but not too many American ones. Maybe Sans Frontières [Doctors Without Borders] were there. The Jordanians were there and when I got to the border post there was a great disinclination to let me in and at the border posts there were a passel of newsmen who were trying to get out there, but were being prevented from getting out there by the Jordanians. I gathered all the newsmen up and sort of bowled my way through the colonel at the border and off into the no man's land with the media having been convinced that we had to get some media attention on this because nobody knew what was going on. I had already asked for example -- and here's another sort of bureaucratic venue -- I had \$25,000 in emergency aid, which ambassadors have, that I wanted to release and I had asked for some emergency supplies from State to release. In particular, we had some prepositioned stores in Jordan. We had a lot of MREs, meals ready to eat. I ran into a bureaucratic roadblock because the issue was are these refugees in which case the refugee bureau would handle this, or are these displaced persons in which case there was a whole other bureaucracy that dealt with displaced persons. I was sending off burning cables pointing out that there was actually a human tragedy here and that we ought to probably put the bureaucratic wrangling aside and see what we could do about it. We got the MREs released and then it turned out a lot of them had pork products in them. Ham and eggs and so forth. Most of the people out there were Muslims, so giving them ham and eggs was not the political thing to do. So, we set up this elaborate screening process where these things went through three different checks making sure that the ham and eggs had been separated from the stuff that the Muslims could eat. Luckily we had no orthodox Jews out there that would have tilted the thing altogether. Then we distributed the ham products to the Filipinos who were Christian and so that went through. I went out there and saw what was going on and talked to the people who were trying to cope with the problem and started giving interviews. I went back to

the border and started giving interviews to BBC and other people to try to highlight this problem and saying very carefully with great admiration for the Jordanians for what they were doing, but they were overwhelmed and there needed to be some international response to this. I discovered first of all, I don't know what particular impact that had as opposed to the general dawning and realization about this that would have occurred in any case. It probably sped it up a little bit because they got pictures out there and so forth including a nice picture of me in the New York Times out there which I think helped get some publicity to this. What I experienced which I think is the experience for a lot of people dealing with this crisis is that at first you can't get anyone to pay attention and you can't get any help. Then it reaches a critical threshold and then you can't stop the help from coming no matter what you do. The next thing you know you have Dr. Barnot out there with a planeload of relief supplies when you have very few people left to eat them, but that's what happened in this case. The other and I came back, you know, I had again no instructions to try to publicize this issue. I knew that Baker was very allergic to his ambassadors showing up in the press too much, but thought I could see if I could get some leadership to policy on this and so I did although not without apprehension. Often in those days I was taking actions that I did not know would be supported by my superiors and just sort of because the circumstances required it. It was a lonely position to be in especially because I think ambassadors tend to be colored with the same brush that is applied to their heads of state. If your head of state is in high odor in Washington, you tend to be in high odor, too, and it's also the case that my predecessor, and the most part of his predecessors in Jordan, had always been seen as having the most outrageous clientitis. Rocky Suddarth my predecessor had made the mistake for example of always referring to the king in cables as his majesty. The protocol in Jordan in fact is he is not referred to as the king but as his majesty. It's a mistake to refer to him that way in State Department cables which had been his habit, so there was a predisposition to see me as a special pleader for the Jordanians as well.

The other event, I'll come back to that because there was a key issue there in an early cable I sent. The other time I went out to the border was with the crown prince. There was an Indian who had shown up in Amman, a minister, I forget what he was a minister of. He was a big, overfed man in a Nehru jacket. I think this guy was probably the last guy. It looked like he had attended a fire sale at Simms, you know, nobody, Nehru jackets were not. He had one on and we got in a C-130 along with the Indian ambassador and a bunch of the cabinet members and the genre. I always liked the genre. Off we went to the border and because as it turned out there were 30,000 Indians out there and we got in a jeep with a machine gun jeep behind us and off we went to where these guys were assembled. This was fantastic scene. They were just squatting out there in the desert. They had had no attention from their government. They'd been there at least a week by then with no contact from the Indian government and they were not happy. When this guy stepped down from the jeep they, it was the most incredible thing, there was instantly a circle of 30,000 screaming Indians being held back by a ring of soldiers with the eight pack on this machine gun trunk under which I was sheltered and in the middle of which was this fat Indian sweating in this Nehru jacket. This was August, probably 110 degrees out where we were. He's smiling, but it's not a happy smile. I remember the image, have you ever seen the footage where they drop a pot roast in a piranha infested pool and then they dangle it there? Well, that's exactly the impression I had because all you could see in this crowd of people around the soldiers in this circle, maybe 50 yards across, were teeth. You know, people bearing their teeth and this guy saw it, too. He was alone out there in the center, so he walked out there to the edge. By the way, everyone's

screaming. There's this great animal scream in the background, constant and this guy walked over to the edge of the circle and where he walked it bulged in and so he took a couple of quick steps back which I would have done, too. He's trying to talk to these people, but they're not interested in dialogue. Then he walked over to another part of the circle and it bulged. These guys and the soldiers are trying to keep these guys away and I was standing under this machine gun truck watching all this with the minister of transport and he turned to me and he said, "What are we doing here?" I said, "Oh, gee that's a good question, I'm not quite sure." We eventually reconvened that guy and got in the jeep and beat a hasty retreat out of there. I remember at the same time somewhere else in this vast field of people because there were 200,000 people out there at this time on this land, Queen Noor had come to see what was going on and she landed in her helicopter. The problem was that the helicopter kicked up this huge cloud of dust, which then drifted over all these people who were miserable enough in the heat. Suddenly they were sitting out there in the heat covered with this helicopter backwash. We eventually went back in the C-130. The interesting thing about that was that when we drove into this place we landed on the Jordanian side of the checkpoint and then drove with the crown prince on a road that had been newly bulldozed around the checkpoint and that road was going to become a great issue between the finance minister because it was also wide enough for trucks carrying contraband to bypass the border checkpoint. I had a long dialogue with the finance minister about whether that road was actually there when I got back because Washington of course, was very eager that the Jordanians stop all traffic into Iraq. At that point, all traffic, nothing was supposed to go over. Having a road that didn't actually pass through that checkpoint was not a good indicator that the Jordanians were doing that in fact which they were trying to do whatever they thought would not trip our reaction. We came back to Washington and to Amman from that expedition and eventually the aid started coming in and just to finish the refugee story.

The other thing I did was the, you don't think about stuff like this, but there were a lot of diabetics in the crowd. I mean if you assemble 200,000 people, you're going to have some diabetics out there, actually 3,000 or 4,000 that need insulin, but insulin has to be refrigerated and there wasn't any insulin for the country. A friend of mine named Lionel Rosen, who was an old Foreign Service Officer...

Q: I know Lionel. I was with him in Saigon, yes.

HARRISON: Who was by then doing refugee stuff so I called him, well he called me and wanted to come and I said to bring as much insulin as you can. He brought all this insulin out in refrigerated trucks. My wife was very active in trying to organize the administration out of these camps and the other American wives. There was another one of these centers by the airport because what they do is bring people in. I took a helicopter down to Aqaba, a Jordanian helicopter to see the people backing up there along the road out of Aqaba, this great sea of people. We came over in a helicopter and they're all waving and shouting and shaking their fists just to show, they'd staged it. The other refugee story is about the Philippine residence which was across a narrow alley from ours in the old residence in Amman. Pacifico had got his government into sending some 747s to pick these people up, but they could only send one a day so you could only put on 400 or 450 people each day. He'd bring that many in and the night before he'd put them in the alley between our two residences so that he could get out there early in the morning for the plane. The problem with that was they had nothing to do out there. They'd

come in in the early evening and then they wouldn't leave until the next morning. He organized this huge party every night. I always thought that the reason he did that was because Pacifico was an Elvis impersonator. Every night he'd do his Elvis impersonation. He'd come out and sing the whole Elvis cannon in the Elvis suit and so I got to listen to that every night while he was clearing these Filipinos through.

The other issue at that point was that there was a movement afoot in Washington to apply the sanctions to Jordan that were being applied to Iraq, and there was some logic behind it. The Navy blockade that existed off Aqaba was empowered to look at manifests and then look at cases, and if the cases appeared on the manifest they could let them through. They weren't empowered to open these things and see whether this stuff actually was what they supposed to be trying to stop, and it would have been overwhelming to do that. There was a certain pro forma quality to it since it's easy to fake a manifest and ship anything you want. There was also a lot of suspicion in Washington that sanctions weren't being implemented on that border with quite the systematic care that we would have liked. In fact, that was the case, public opinion always swore it was absolutely watertight whenever I would raise this complaint with him. My main job in those days was to be a scold and one of the chief things I was scolding them about was sanctions in port. A lot of reasons not to enforce sanctions and one of them was the economy of Jordan had really been rebuilt in the '80s from profits from the Iran-Iraq war, for which they were the main conduit of supplies to the Iraqi side. They had built up a huge trucking industry to truck stuff up from Aqaba to Iraq, which meant a lot of truckers, and there were better ones. Their livelihood depended on the trade with Iraq and they were very unhappy to think that they could not practice their livelihood especially because they were also sympathetic with Saddam. They were frustrated on two counts. Since they were the king's main constituency domestically he had to look the other way so a lot of this traffic went on. Washington realizing all this there was a hardline faction that wanted to apply the same sanctions to Jordan that were being applied to Iraq. I sent in a cable very strongly opposing that early on. I remember the subject line because my view was always that you had to get whatever your point was into the subject line, since that's all you could ever assure anybody would read. The subject line was Sanctions Against Jordan, A Very Bad Mistake. I got some support from Tom Pickering who was up at the UN, a former Jordanian ambassador, on that, but not much from anybody else. I think the problem with it was that although again, I think I would do it again just as I did it before. It reinforced the thought that the Jordanian ambassadors were natural apologists.

Q: You mean American ambassadors to Jordan?

HARRISON: Yes, natural apologists for the king and his cohort. In fact, I wasn't especially sympathetic to them, but it seemed to me that preserving the integrity of Jordan was an important thing to do as we dealt with Saddam.

Q: This must have been, this influence or impression probably was somewhat emphasized by the fact that it was sort of common knowledge that the political ambassadors who went to Morocco were apologists for the king of Morocco. Maybe this one Arab king went over to another Arab king.

HARRISON: Well, there is a natural inclination to see the State Department people as clientitis anyway because they are. I mean it's one of the functions of the State Department is to represent the point of the world to a bureaucracy. It was a particular problem with me because John Kelly was the assistant secretary then and he was not a particularly sympathetic figure, but he was kind of an emotional and erratic kind of guy. At this point of the story I'd only been in Jordan for a couple of weeks. The next week or two he was trying to get me recalled because of another cable I had sent in that period. The sense was that there was nobody really covering your rear end in Washington. In fact, you were more liable to be stabbed in the back than in the front. That was my sense, so I did not spend a lot of time seeking guidance from the NEA front office. My inclination was to do what I thought was the right thing to do and then let them cope with that as best they could. That came to a head because I had, the king had been to Baghdad after his visit to Washington and had come back having been very ill treated by Saddam, his sense of propriety as elder statesman. He had kind of come in as an elder statesmen to give this young upstart some sage advice and had been treated like a petitioner and had been greatly upset by that, or so I heard from the court. I proposed to Washington that we had some foreign aid that was going to have to be dispensed by the end of the year and I said, "Well, let's speed it up and give it to them now," I think it was \$20 million, as a way of establishing this relationship with them that we hoped to have during the war. It's not new money; it's money that's already been appropriated. It just has to be given to him. Kelly seized on this as particularly egregious, but I knew it would be controversial so I called back to Kimmitt who was Under Secretary then and I told him what I planned to do and he told me to go ahead. That occasioned a couple of things. One was, I got a cable from the party -- they were underway then out to Syria -- telling me that I should go in to see the king and tell him that we expected him to make a public speech denouncing Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. I got that cable and was on my way over to the palace with it. I decided I wasn't going to deliver it because I was convinced that Hussein wasn't going to do that and probably shouldn't, given his domestic situation. It was inappropriate to ask him and I simply decided that my loyalty here was to the president and was his representative and not to the State Department. Especially to NEA who had sent me this cable that had all the hallmarks of having been a staff drafted thing although it was personal from Baker to the king. Midway over to the palace I stopped at the Marriott which was midway and I turned around and called on my cell phone and told them I wasn't coming and went back. Actually it was going to be to the crown prince; the king was still out of the country. I went back to the embassy and sat on this demarche. It's very uncomfortable to sit on a demarche you're supposed to have made. In order to see if I could find some defense -- I knew I wasn't going to get any from State -- I called the White House. David Satterfield was there then as the junior guy to Richard Haass. I told Satterfield what had occurred. I said I didn't want to present this demarche and I thought it was a mistake. He agreed it was a mistake and he said he would see what he could do. Then I just sat, you know, and in the end no one asked me. Of course, I never reported delivering it and nobody asked me if I'd ever delivered it and it kind of faded off into obscurity, but I got summoned up to Damascus. Now I'd been in the country about three weeks because the Secretary was coming through, on his first trip to the region and with Kelly and Dennis Ross. I was summoned into their presence at the hotel about -- I don't know, midnight or 1:00 in the morning-- and was sent down. Basically they admonished me for being not tough enough on Hussein, and said that I would have to go back in and be tough on this issue of public support for our position on the public denunciation of Saddam, and that in effect my tenure depended on my acquiescence. The cable was not mentioned and the demarche was not mentioned. The next morning we met, the

four of us met with Baker and so I decided to get the issue out in the open. I said to Baker that I'd had this discussion. I kind of preempted the conversation. I didn't wait for anybody else to talk. I said I had this conversation with Kelly and Ross the night before and they wanted me to tell the king that he had to do these things and did Baker want me to do that? Baker said no. He said, "I don't want you to do that." That was the end of the issue.

Q: It certainly didn't endear you to.

HARRISON: No, it didn't endear me to Kelly, but you know Kelly was a strange guy. I think if you went back and looked at the unsuccessful assistant secretaries that he would top most of the lists at least for NEA people. He'd been put there allegedly because Baker didn't want someone interfering with his Israel-Palestine policy. He wanted somebody to caretaker the bureau while he got on with and it was his style to do things himself. Kelly had been in Lebanon, but was not a Middle Eastern hand and certainly not an NEA guy, kind of imposed on the bureau. He was not in the inter-Baker circle. He had to be taken on these trips to the middle east, but he would usually be sitting in the room reading a newspaper while Ross and the Secretary were conferring on policy none of which made his mood any better, of course or improved his view of me. It meant that I didn't have to worry too much about retribution. I didn't think he was going to be around when I was up for reassignment anyway. I remember I spent the time on the trip up to Damascus figuring out what my pension would be, you know, if they were to cashier me now, what happens? Well, I hadn't had the pay raise then, so it was not going to be very high. I was sort of tottering on the edge of being recalled, at least in the view of the bureaucracy. I don't think that Baker would have. I would have had to be a lot more egregious for Baker to have moved to that step. I also got a call from Kimmitt saying that he told Baker the background on the cable that I got on the \$20 million foreign aid release, that he had been conferred with that ahead of time and so forth. Some of that threat receded, but it contributed to a sense that I had which I really had throughout my tour there that there was no backup. There was nobody protecting our back and in fact, I had to be as worried about the people back there as I had to about the people I was confronting. I was kind of a lone figure out there with no political support and of course, I had as a Foreign Service Officer no constituency outside the State Department. There's some ambassadors come in with some political clout and I had none, so I had to maneuver around energetically. I also got no guidance from State in particular. Part of the reason that I adopted the tactic of going in and doing my demarche before I received it knowing the occasions on which Washington would want to puff up and blow. I'd go and puff up and blow and record it and include the instruction cable, which would tell me to puff up and blow and then insult him as well. I sort of adopted the tactic of preempting what I thought they were going to do which is also a more dangerous tactic because you've got to get it right. You don't want to go in there and luckily the issues were black and white enough usually that I could do that.

For example, early on there was an intelligence report that the Jordanians were training Iraqi pilots on F-5s in Jordan and there were certain maneuvers they were training them in. They didn't fly F-5s, but they were training in night maneuvers, which seemed to be pretty credible. At 10:30 at night I called the chief of staff of the military and went over there and said that I had this report that you're training these Iraqi pilots and I want to tell you, don't train Iraqi pilots. This is not going to be understood and then reported. They stopped. I did a lot of stuff like that. I tried to stay in front of the story. Always I think in times like the present one, those people who

have never sniffed gunpowder, tend to become very bellicose and they want to show how tough they can be. In that instance there was really only one Arab you could muscle up on and that was Hussein. The rest of them were either victims like the Kuwaitis or collaborators like the Egyptians and even the Syrians. Hussein was the last guy to kick and there was a great desire to kick. The tendency was to go overboard always and especially when you sent something around for clearance in the State Department. Since I've been there I knew, it's a great advantage what the clearance process is like and to know, therefore, how much intellectual or even policy validity there is and the resulting mishmash that you get pretending to be a message from Baker or the president. You can read down there and see every bureau, every bureau's sentence or imprint or paragraph. I ignored that stuff. I rewrote a lot of it. I never felt restrained by that process to go in there and parrot whatever it was that they were dishing out. I was an independent minded ambassador in the end. Although it also always frightened one because it was sort of day to day for me for a long time in this period, so a lot of sleepless nights, a lot of anxiety, not to mention of course, there is a lot of anxiety to what's happened to the embassy personnel because there was a lot then of planning for an evacuation. I think the hardest issue I dealt with in this period was the evacuation of dependents because of the unhappiness all that caused within the embassy community. On that issue Washington essentially had punted which is a mistake and they should never do, but they essentially said, well ambassadors will make the decision on when evacuation is necessary. That is exactly the wrong thing to do because it puts you on the hot seat with your staff in a way you wouldn't be if you simply got an order saying okay, time to evacuate, dependents out. Dependents don't want to go. There is nothing happening, there's demonstrations going on, but they don't feel any less safe in their environment than they did before. So you're really evacuating them against future contingencies that you can't predict. The wives don't want to leave their husbands. They don't want to take their kids out of school, so they're very unhappy. I finally had to make a decision about that in which I did after much soul searching. That was a huge strain on me at a time when I should have been doing other things and really unconscionable on the part of the Department's future. It's undoubtedly a decision being made right now about evacuations and I hope that they've got a plan for ordered evacuations that don't involve telling ambassadors they've got to decide when this happens because that makes no sense at all. I did send dependents out. I had a voluntary departure policy and then decided to make it mandatory and I sent my wife out on the first plane when it was mandatory. The interesting thing was that initially no one wants to go and then you get down to a certain point and everybody wants to go and there was a long debate about that, too. I think I may be getting ahead of my story.

Q: Was the decision about evacuation, was it because of the threat from Saddam or was the threat of the Jordanian populists?

HARRISON: It was the threat of military action first of all whether that would spill over into Jordan. Scuds were flying over at that point. There was some concern about an Israeli retaliation against Iraq which would have involved the Jordanian attempt to try to keep the Israelis from transiting Jordan to do that. So the majority of the Israelis, it was thought, would have to disable the Jordanian air defenses for example, because they couldn't rely on coming back when they were empty of fuel and ammo and vulnerable. They couldn't come back with active air defenses in Jordan so they would take those out as the first step. It would undermine the monarchy and you know, you could have a military assertion of authority and all kinds of awful things could

happen. That was part of it and the other part of it was you know, demonstrations against our citizens. In that period, too, we just dealt with the evacuation of Damascus because as you know for a couple of months Saddam held the embassy personnel in Damascus wouldn't let them leave as hostage in Baghdad.

Q: I interviewed Joe Wilson up to December.

HARRISON: Yes, December. The king always took credit for persuading Saddam that he should let these people go and so he did and the way point was Amman of course. So, we had just been dealing with the processing of those people through Amman and getting them on their way and I was going up to meet them and so forth. The other thing of course, they had the, I don't want to call them, jackals. We had the peace groupies, that's probably too dismissive, too. Those people whose international representation demands that they intervene in issue of dispute between us in foreign countries. Ramsey Clark, Jesse Jackson, Mohammad Ali all came through. It's kind of funny. Ramsey Clark I don't know what happened to Ramsey Clark and he's still doing it and he's still up to it. He must be 105 now, but he was clearly a collaborator I thought. If not a paid collaborator, which is, I think in some ways better than an unpaid collaborator, which he may have been. There were absolutely despicable things that he was doing, but he didn't bother with us. I always wanted to meet Jesse Jackson, so when he showed up I went out to the airport and drove him in. He sort of talked to himself all the way in about what he was going to do in the guise that he was talking to me, but he really wasn't talking to me. It was kind of interesting to see him do his thing, then he went off to Baghdad and then he went back just like most people in that circumstance. I remember noticing about Jackson though, the Jordanian are very watch conscious. One of the things the king had always done and also Saddam when he was trying to influence Jordanian politicians was hand out these Rolex presidentials, gold Rolex watches you can buy. He had the presidential with diamonds around the edges, so I was very impressed with that. There are only a few of those around and I thought that Jesse Jackson was not going to be out-watched by anyone he met, giving instant credibility in that crowd. The other guy who came to us was Mohammad Ali and I was very eager to meet him. He already had the Parkinson's problem that he has now, but with him I went over to the hotel and he was kind of a big inert figure in this huge entourage of people who seemed to be grinding their own axes. In particular, this one guy, I wish I remembered his name, I would like to record it here for posterity, who decided he would sort of make the embassy his command post and for sorts of things he wanted us to do at Mohammed Ali's request. But having met Mohammed Ali and sat with him for a while, I doubted very much whether he was making these requests because he didn't seem to be much engaged in this trip. In fact, much engaged in the world in general. He seemed pretty heavily medicated. I eventually, in fact, very early on, I just barred this guy from the embassy, he kept showing up. I told the Marines to not let him in. I thought that Mohammed Ali's situation was not a happy one at that junction. I got to see all these people as they came through. We greeted the Iraqi refugees coming out. We began evacuating our people to their great disgruntlement. It also raises issues that you have to think about in training, and one of them is you have to close the school. Well, then what do you do with teacher contracts and what do you do with the teachers for that matter, who are not your employees? What do you do with rent on the building, how do you pay it? The money stops from the Department that subsidizes all this. Also, your commissary. You have all this food that you have to pay for, but now you can't pay for it because nobody is buying it because nobody is in the country. I had a terrific admin officer.

That was one of the chief blessings of my early months in Amman was Lee Loman who was the kind of administrative officer -- there are two varieties of them in my experience -- one who'd look for ways to do things, and one who looked for ways to not do things. Thankfully, he was of the first category and just did a marvelous job of getting us through this difficult period. When we had this huge infrastructure which depended on this stream of income which had stopped. In many other ways, too. Of course, we were building a huge embassy complex and the construction had to be shut down and all the people sent home, including the security people who were preventing listening devices and so forth. The issue arose how we were going to secure the embassy so that we would know when we came back that it had not been compromised in the meantime. It was just a construction site. With Lee's help we devised an elaborate bricking up process with all kinds of imbedded wires and things which would be very difficult to reproduce if you were to burrow in there. We were able to resume the construction of the embassy when everyone returned without having to tear it down because we didn't know whether the security of the embassy had been compromised. All those things were going on as well. I guess I should stop there because I'm running out of inspiration, plus I've got to go back.

Q: All right. We'll stop at this point. You've talked about events leading up to, I mean the operation is beginning to build up in Saudi Arabia for our counter offensive, but we haven't talked about the possibility of a real war coming. I mean, up to now you've been talking about the reactions of the Jordanians, but we should talk a bit about, you know, were the Jordanians beginning to realize we were for serious and this was, how were they beginning to look at what was looming on the horizon and figuring out maybe they were betting on the wrong side and all that. Do you have any notes you want to put in here to where you want to pick this up?

HARRISON: Yes, I want to talk a little bit about interaction with the prime minister, interaction with Abu Oday and the palace staff, my contacts with the king and how they went, and his effort to sort of make me one of the family which he did in those early days. My role as a communicator because of his inability to communicate and how I messed that role up in one particular case because of a mistranslation of a speech that he'd given and my relations with the crown prince which is another area in which I had not shone in the best possible light because I'd been puffing myself up here. I probably should talk about some of the areas in which I had done things, which I might have done a great deal better than I did do them. What the Jordanian public reaction to me was, how my movements were restricted, some of the publicity, some of the parliamentary denunciations and the status as a social figure in town, all of that.

Q: Today is the 21st of September, 2002. Roger we've got a lot to talk about. I guess the big thing to do is to talk about your relationship with the king and the court and the sort of ruling elite and whatever.

HARRISON: Well, maybe I'll talk about the king a little bit. When I got there he'd been on the throne for 37 years. There were a lot of anecdotal stories about his early relationships with American ambassadors which for some of them it had kind of been a father and son relationship. In the early '50s when he first became king when he was 19 or 20 years old and before he fully had his feet, he by reputation was looking for a father figure. In fact, some people thought that Saddam played that role for him, too when he was looking that was part of his motivation, his admiration for Saddam Hussein. As history rolled on, all of that had faded and by the time I got

there, he had in his relationships with me, it very seldom broke through to any personal kind of exchange. He was very formal in meeting, very conscious of his role as king, very quiet, renowned for his good manners which were in fact of a sort that you don't see much any more: of his consideration in social situations for people, of his habit of addressing all men as sir in conversation. He was in all those ways exemplary of a kind of an older, gentler European tradition. It was also true that he had learned the necessity of ruthlessness as king. It is instructive -- I always told people to read their book of "The Courtier" -- to be in a country to which all power flows from one man, which was the case in Jordan then and is the case in Jordan today. It creates all kinds of personal rivalries and backbiting and fighting for power around the throne and attempts by individuals around the king to use his power for their own purposes or for their own profit, in many cases. The king had learned a couple of ways to dealing with that. One was never to allow anyone to stay in the inner circle too long. He would rotate; even his closest advisors would be rotated in and out of the palace, so when they would be rotated out it would be sudden and unexpected and for no particular reason and they would be shocked and chagrined. The king was always very good about that. He would have them to lunch and he would tell them that they had been working too hard and that they needed time for rest and contemplation and thanked them for all that they had done and they would be cashiered and someone new brought in. He was also not above sacrificing Prime ministers for political causes. He would bring them in for some temporary and unpopular purpose and when they became unpopular, but the purpose was accomplished he would fire them again and move on. He did that several times for several purposes during my time there. All of that as an attempt I think on the whole, well I'm not sure it was successful on the whole, but to prevent usurpation of his authority. He was, in fact, very jealous of his authority, as the crown prince would later find out when he presumed to exercise it when the king was in his last illness, and suddenly found himself suddenly -- the crown prince -- deposed, and a new successor of the king named. The king had that ruthless streak. Also he would not hesitate, if he thought that you were a threat to his regime, by which I think in that context, we always mean family, to have you arrested and tortured and otherwise persuaded that your views were not acceptable in that society. He had a very active secret service, not just for domestic extent, but also of course because he had many enemies and very active operations by foreign intelligence services going on constantly in Jordan, including attempts in the past to assassinate him. He survived four assassination attempts.

Q: The intelligence thing, did he have a good relationship with the Israeli intelligence service?

HARRISON: Yes, he did in fact he had a very close relationship with Israeli intelligence. There was one individual in particular whose name at the moment escapes me who was a regular visitor, as the king had been to Israel throughout his reign. He was forced to adopt a certain public posture, but in terms of the interests of Jordan and incidentally of his own survival -- and we talked a little about how the king had to play politics, the politics of a small state surrounded by more powerful neighbors -- it made every sense for him to not upset the Israelis and to cooperate with them. As long as he could do it surreptitiously, because of course, he had a domestic political problem to consider. The defining event for him politically before I arrived were the riots in Amman in 1988 which I described previously, they were food riots. I described how they upset the regime. It is true of hierarchal regimes of all kinds including monarchy, authoritarian regimes, that they have a very difficult time of keeping track of grass root politics. What's going on out there in the country, because there's a great disinclination to pass that information

upwards to the king. We saw that in the communist countries and certainly it was true in Jordan so domestic situations had a tendency to get out of hand before the palace was aware of it. The kind of rough democracy that operated. There were two systems really. One was the direct contact system. The one system whereby everyone would have access to the king, of course that turned out to be the leaders of all of the groups of the country and especially the sheiks of the various Bedouin tribes that made up the king's court constituency, would show up at the palace unannounced and demanded to see the king and would see the king. This kind of direct contact, democracy. You saw it also in the petition process. I remember once watching the queen at an event we were staging to open up a project, an aid project in Jordan. She came in by helicopter. She made her way from the helicopter pad to this little ceremonial stand that we set up. She was surrounded by petitions, people with petitions written on pieces of paper. She had a petition gatherer, a lady in waiting whose sole purpose was to take these petitions in and they could be anything, college admission for a son, a loan. I suppose there might have been a request for healing at this session, whatever one can imagine would be in these petitions. She would very graciously accept them and dealt with. There was a staff to do that. The idea was that they had to be responsive and so they were assiduous in cultivating their constituency as any congressman in the United States in that kind of way, but it did not translate into any political field at the local level.

Q: I can see this in a Bedouin society, but what about all the Palestinians who were more city folk and all that? Did they have that type of thing; it sounds like this was designed for the Bedouins?

HARRISON: That's right, but I think there was the same system for the Palestinians, but it wasn't quite as carried out in a traditional way. I would often come to the palace because the chief of protocol hated to have the king unoccupied so he would always stack up the appointments so that there was never a time when one man would leave and there wouldn't be another ready to go in. Sometimes, because the king tended to be gracious to his guests, we'd back up in the waiting room for hours. There were often Jordanian Palestinians there with various requests for the king that they wanted to make directly. Of course, these were the elite. The Palestinians in the camps did not have access; they had to be represented at the court. They were not as enfranchised in this system as the Bedouins were, but they were not as important to the king, in fact, he was suspicious of them. We can talk about his attempt to get them out of the army, which happened in my time, to exempt them from the draft and so forth. He was always conscious of division between communities, but again, he was not of either community. It was one of the keys to his rule. So, an outwardly very gentle man. I never saw him really lose his temper, with the ruthlessness which is necessary to an absolute ruler -- willing to do what was necessary to preserve family and in moral and ethical balance as far as I could tell -- with the necessity to do that. I don't think he felt any remorse in that process. I think he spared self-doubt as to the need to do what he was doing. There was a strain of self-pity in him and a sanctimony and a moral dimension and ethical dimension to his judgments, and emotional-moral-ethical dimension to his judgments which often led him astray. He tended to see his cause as more as well, as being of international interest and himself as a great world leader who deserved respect and a role in that capacity, and was greatly upset whenever that role was denigrated. For example, he had a very keen eye for demarches, which reported to be from Secretary Baker or President Bush, that had in fact been drafted by the bureaucracy. Nothing was more inclined to bring a

negative reaction no matter what we were requesting than that bureaucratic cast to a message to him. If the message was not genuinely personal, it would backfire and therefore, I often rewrote the cables from Washington to make them genuinely personal. This bureaucracy would always slip. It was clear if you look at it from the king's eye when these things slipped into this terrible bartering that goes on between bureaus when this kind of thing is being drafted. I had a good eye for it having been in that process for a long time, so I just rewrote them. I don't know that I ever quite fooled him, he was always a little skeptical of my rewrites, but not as skeptical. He'd just dismiss, he'd throw them back at me, these bureaucratic products, for which I don't blame him. I think a way of a bureaucracy asserting its own importance. They weren't in fact important. He understood that only Bush and Baker in the administration was important in terms of foreign policy, and he felt it was lese majesty to deal with drafts. He simply wouldn't do it.

I remember a lot of depression in him in those days. I saw a lot of it. The other thing in my first four or five months in Jordan was that he felt estranged from Washington, from Bush in particular, after Kennebunkport, and his ambassador was also estranged. You were always unfortunately subject to the relationship of your country with the host and the relationship between Jordan and the United States was bad, plus the ambassador in Washington was a career guy with no particular royal connection and therefore, was frozen out. That left the king dependent on me. He put on a big campaign to kind of bring me into the decision of the circle. The earliest example of this was on the weekend, early in my tenure, when he flew me down to Aqaba to spend the weekend with the family in the Aqaba palace. I showed up and was treated like one of the family. I was astounded. I wandered into the main house where there were a lot of cabanas around the main house; one of the cabanas was given me. Everyone was sitting around and the kids were playing. All of the kids, there were eleven of them. Everyone is in housedress. We had an informal breakfast. We'd go out on the beach and play volleyball. He took his kids out on his yacht on the Red Sea and he let me steer for a while and showed me how to operate the boat. That kind of thing, no business discussed, just a family weekend. I was treated kind of like an uncle from overseas who's coming into this environment which was in fact, of course, very flattering, very encouraging for the future, not a good harbinger of what was to come, but I was bait. I'll go, absolutely. To meet the family in that kind of informal environment, I don't think I was deceived by this. It certainly didn't affect my attitude toward Jordan, but of course, an ambassador lives or dies by access and this was tremendous access which my predecessor had not had and so I was very gratified, and attributed it to my extraordinary diplomatic skill and irresistible personal qualities. Also, soon after my arrival he invited me to lunch at the palace. These invitations would come out of the blue. I never knew what I was going over for and they dried up later, but in this case I came into the breakfast room in his Amman residence really, which had been all designed by Queen Noor. It was very House and Garden, green and white, a round table. Around it were seated the queen and the king and the cabinet. The king welcomed me very graciously and the cabinet wasn't so sure. There were a lot of sideways glances. They were not happy at all that I was there. When I say the cabinet I mean the Prime Minister, the foreign ministry and the chief of the royal court. I've already described at that point my relationships with the foreign minister so there's no reason for him to welcome my presence there. The prime minister had been appointed because of his close ties to Saddam Hussein and in fact, he was just returning as that lunch commenced from a very harrowing road trip to Baghdad. I remember the Baghdad highway was under interdiction then. There were odd patrols out shooting up cars and trucks on the highway.

Q: This was after the war had started?

HARRISON: This was after the invasion right before the ground war had started, during the air war. No, I'm sorry. This is a different occasion. He had not just come back. But he was there and we began eating and the queen began this long diatribe against Bush, against U.S. policy, imperialistic, and a very long dissertation on the favorite subject of all Arabs, the double standard, and also of our treatment of the Arabs and Israelis. Part of the diatribe was that our interest was solely in oil and we had abandoned our friends and so forth.

Q: What was the queen's background?

HARRISON: The Queen, Lisa Halaby, was the daughter of the head of Pan Am Airways who had come over initially to redesign. She'd gone to Princeton and been raised as an American and a Christian. She had become an interior designer and been hired, her firm had been hired to redesign the Jordanian National Airlines. That's how they had met. He was between wives. His previously Palestinian wife had been killed in a helicopter accident. He courted her and from all that I could see it was a love match, I think. I think that she genuinely loved him and in his way he did her as well. He did not put her aside as he had some of his previous wives. All the women, and all this was true of the American wives, too, were in a delicate position, and she was. She had made every effort of converting to Islam. Noor al Hussein was her Islamic name. Although she initially did the full Imelda in terms of just sitting around and buying expensive things, she'd toned that down. The economy had gone south in the late '80s and there had been a lot of resentment and she'd reacted to it by being less conspicuous on the international jet set scene. Although she didn't sell anything either. She just sort of kept her head down and did her long term good works.

Q: Anyway, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but you were talking about she was going after you?

HARRISON: Yes, she did this sort of initial opening diatribe which I listened to and it went on for I guess it must have been five or six minutes. Then he just cut her off with a glance. He glanced at her and she stopped almost mid-sentence and then she figured it out. Then he began to tell me why he had called me in to ask, and that is that he was about to embark that afternoon to Baghdad and he was going to try to rescue the situation by offering a deal with Saddam Hussein whereby Saddam would withdraw completely. The benefit for us was that he would withdraw actually from most of Kuwait because he, Saddam, would be given some border rectifications according to the Iraqi position, the border not having been established and having been a long point of irritation between Iraqis and the Kuwaitis because there was oil up there. So, the Iraqis position on borders would be reaffirmed, and he would also be given an island at the northern tip of the Persian Gulf which was an island that the Kuwaitis controlled but which itself controlled the access to, key access to, Iraq. So, Kuwait would move out of there, but otherwise Saddam would withdraw. The king was optimistic that he could persuade Saddam to accept that deal and he asked me what I thought. Of course, as I said, I think the last time, often as ambassador you, and especially in a position that is rapidly changing, you are asked questions on which you have no guidance. I certainly had no guidance on this case and he was leaving that afternoon, so seeking guidance was not in the program.

Q: You probably couldn't get guidance then, I mean real guidance.

HARRISON: Well, it would have taken 24 or 48 hours, but in a sense I didn't need guidance because I knew what the reaction of Washington would be. I'd been in Washington for a long time and knew the position of the government -- mostly by reading the New York Times, not by anything they were telling me. I knew this would not be acceptable and in fact, it was their greatest fear that what might look like a reasonable position to the coalition movement we were trying to put together should be accepted by Saddam Hussein, and therefore interrupt the process and reward him for his invasion. We simply wouldn't accept it. I told the king that in fact I used the words, which I remember still when he asked me that. I began my response by saying that if he did that, if he went to Baghdad and cut that deal with Saddam that my government would repudiate the deal and repudiate him. Then the lunch went on. Even more uncomfortably as before and he went off to Baghdad and by all reports and did try to cut the deal which he had described. Saddam, as infallibly as he did in this period repudiated, or I should say not repudiated him, but dismissed him, he was not interested in cutting a deal, thank God. So, the king came back chastened by that experience, well, not chastened so much. I think he was irritated with Saddam. It gives I think an inside approach again. He was trying to play a mediator role after the period of playing a mediator role, and he did not understand and did never understand I think that there was no chance for mediation in this dispute. The only thing that he could get Saddam to do was to withdraw on the condition that everyone would thank him, but not with any conditions. But the king understood that this was a negotiation, or thought it was a negotiation, in which he could be the negotiator or the mediator and cast himself in that role which traditionally had been his role, long after it was appropriate to do so or if Washington was willing to tolerate him in that role. I think that was one of the major causes of dispute.

Q: Did you have the feeling that, I mean, here was this situation where his people were all for Saddam, the United State's main fracture was not, that the king was concerned that he might be making another 1967 decision. I'm told that he, his decision to support the attack on Israel in 1967 when he lost Jerusalem and the West Bank really it was a bad decision. Was this in the background, thinking oh my God I might be doing it again?

HARRISON: I think that I don't know if that influenced his unwillingness to side with one side or the other. He certainly knew that Saddam was not going to prevail militarily. He knew what American military power was and he knew that Saddam did not know, and one of the things he always told me was that he was trying to educate Saddam, but Saddam had never seen the Western military man. In his battle experience had been with Iranians running across from their front with Korans held high, screaming and being shot. He didn't know what was coming and the king did. It wasn't ever a matter of siding with Saddam because Saddam was going to lose. On the other hand, he had a domestic constituency that was overwhelmingly emotionally committed to Saddam Hussein and to Iraq in its struggle and therefore, siding openly with the United States was also a problem for him. The appropriate thing in good old foreign policy terms as we understood them at the time, it was to try to continue to operate on that middle ground to be a mediator. Only by being a mediator could he satisfy both his own population and the United States and address this invasion which, after all, was not a good precedent for him either anymore than it was for the Gulf. A notion that someone can just come in if they have military

power to do so and to depose you. Especially someone as Saddam then was in Jordan. This is not something that he could welcome. But if he could mediate a solution short of war, because war for him was the worst of outcomes. Iraq would be destroyed, and Iraq was his major economic partner. He couldn't then anticipate ten years of sanctions, but he certainly realized that the economic prospects for Jordan would be very dim if Iraq were to engage in war with the United States. If he could prevent that he was going to do it and that was his consistent effort, long after it was going to be successful. I think his miscalculation was that this was possible, but the overwhelming view of him and his government was -- and the reason that it was impossible -- is because we were set on war. We weren't going to accept any solution. The fact was, as I often told them, that was right: we weren't willing to accept any solution which involved an aspect by which Saddam Hussein would gain by his invasion. Simply weren't going to accept any rewards for this behavior. And since they despaired of getting Saddam to withdraw unconditionally, they were frustrated by what they saw as unreasonableness in this matter, but in fact it was a miscalculation on their part which led the king to do things which I think worsened his standing with Washington -- which he didn't have to do, including a whole series of speeches in which the rhetoric was designed to please his population, but was very displeasing indeed to the United States. We've talked about imperialism; we've talked about the threat to the area of people that was involved in this affair. The other motive that the king talked about was the need for an Arab solution to the Iraqi problem. The notion that any other solution imposed by an outside power would split the Arab world and the Arabs knew that this was important and indeed it was important. In essence, his claim to some legitimacy beyond his little country and also, his claim to share in the assets of the oil producing countries -- why should they give him money -- that the Arab assets were one and belonged to all Arabs because the Arab world was one, but divided into political entities, but at a deeper level, an emotional level, all were brothers and that brothers should share with the brothers. If one brother is fortunate enough and is essentially arrogant and despicable, as the Kuwaiti, he should share with his more virtuous. The sign of their virtue was that God had seen fit to give them an acidic life by depriving them of the temptations of voluptuous which had been visited upon their less fortunate Kuwait cousins. Nevertheless, the Kuwaitis should be generous, generosity after all is one of the few tenants of Islam under the commandants, alms. Of course, the king never wanted it to appear to be alms.

As I said in a previous session, the Kuwaitis had made him grovel and increasingly humiliated him when he came to Kuwait City to beg for a few more million dollars. As the Saudis did when he came to try to keep his oil coming in for free. By the positions that he took, and by the self-righteousness by which it took them, vis-à-vis his Arab brethren, and by his tendency to deny any culpability in the process that had led up to the war, but on the contrary to pose himself as the prophet who had warned of these things and had urged on his brethren the kind of rational policies which would have avoided this outcome, had they not only been so stubborn and blind to this leadership and wisdom. He was alienating not just Washington, but the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia who were his paymasters, and had been for a long time, and they were not slow to show their displeasure so that one day soon after the beginning of the war the pipeline from Saudi Arabia, which had been supplying Jordan with oil for 20 years, suddenly stopped. The oil stopped coming down the pipeline and an urgent message went from Jordan to Riyadh asking why that had happened. The message came back that there was a little matter of a bill, which was unpaid for oil supplies for 15 years. The king said that he had been assured that King Fahd that this oil would be provided in perpetuity for free. This turned out to be something that King Fahd

himself could not remember having promised the king and therefore, where was the money to pay for these supplies. Until it was forthcoming the Saudis said the oil supplies would remain, the oil pipeline would remain in the off position. Since all the oil came in that day and since there was no alternative to that, immediately apparent, because we were, remember, in a blockade of the port at Aqaba -- which didn't mean that oil could not come in for Jordan but did mean that insurance rates for ships had skyrocketed. To go into a war zone now was enormously expensive and therefore, the cost of that energy, counting the transport, counting the fact that you actually had to pay for it and you had built an economy on free oil -- which was a delusion as it turned out -- and counting the fact that it would cost you a lot more than it would cost anyone else because of the insurance you would have to pay for shipment, and finally the fact that you had no foreign exchange to pay for any of it. That posed quite a dilemma for the Jordanians. They knew better than to ask any of the Gulfies who were even more, especially the Kuwaitis of the people that had oil, even more vociferously anti-King -- and their opposition to him increasing as the threat from Iraq seemed more real. So, the Jordanians resorted to the only alternative, which was to take up the offer which Saddam immediately made to supply them oil at a greatly subsidized rate, which he began to do by tanker truck down the highway from Damascus. Which led to an incident, which led among other things to some very good videos for General Schwarzkopf who had shown them on our television from the Arab war and precision guided munitions coming in and blowing up these objects. They were actually Jordanian oil tankers and not Scud missiles that you don't park by the highway as these were parked. I was called in by the Jordanian foreign minister and asked why we were blowing up the oil tankers. The other part of this was that oil from Iraq was, in a series of United Nations resolutions had been passed at this point, in fact contraband. One could not legally import it and so it was in violation of sanctions and we had every right to blow up all those oil tankers in theory. Tom Pickering went to work in New York and persuaded the Security Council to take note of the Jordanian necessity to import oil from Saddam Hussein. They did not exempt Jordan from the sanctions regime or from the requirement to prevent that oil from coming across the border. It was a neat little diplomatic trick to ease them around the fact that otherwise their economy and society in general would have had to shut down. That was one of the issues that was exacerbated because of a combination of the king's bad tactics and his projection of this self-righteousness.

Q: Were you called in to try to do something with the Saudis?

HARRISON: Yes, I was called in by the minister of energy and told about this situation and Washington did actually, there was some intervention. Chas Freeman was down as ambassador in Saudi Arabia and he was not sympathetic to the Jordanian cause. He's not a man who is terribly troubled by self-doubt, and was very assertive on his position on this, and here was a place in which he could look very robust since he was trying to cut a break for his Saudi clients in other areas. Ambassadors in those situations always look for somewhere to *démarche* and Jordan was his. The embassy didn't bother commenting on our reporting in those days as well. At any rate, not my favorite guy. I think that the king misplayed that and I think that he would have suffered the oil problem anyway, but he made the situation worse with the self-righteousness with which he presented his position.

Q: Was there a press corps there that was reporting this back so that the Washington papers would constantly harping on, here is a guy who had been very popular in the United States, but going against he usurped the turpitude or whatever it is, our guy?

HARRISON: Yes, I think there was an element of that. The fact that foreign policy is actually a ruthless business in which your friends are always temporary, and the feeling in Washington was that we had done many favors for the king over the years. A lot of feeling that the king owed us an enormous debt and that he had betrayed us, double crossed us and therefore that he deserved what he got and that he should get more than he was getting. All of this was very much the feeling in Washington; what prevented from issuing a more draconian measure against Jordan chiefly was Secretary Baker and the president. The bureaucracy was all set to put Hussein firmly between the uprights, but whenever this issue got to Bush, he would moderate, as would Baker knowing Bush's mind. They had, they were the only ones that I ever ran into in the bureaucracy that really had an appreciation for the dilemma the king faced. I often -- when the king said some awful thing about our policy or about them personally -- would point out to him that they never did the same, there was never a denunciation of the same by Baker. He was in fact cast, himself, as a little bit of an apologist for what the king was doing, as did the president. Whenever asked about this they would always point out the difficulties under which Hussein labored. I was not slow to remind the king of this and to point out how his personal attacks on them were first of all unnecessary and secondly especially damaging.

Q: I would think that kind of explained the King's position why he was doing this would not endear you to the bureaucracy back in Washington it would further drive you into that into the category of oh this is just another apologist.

HARRISON: Yes, it actually drove me into private industry. Even worse. Yes, I think that was very true. I wasn't seen as a friendly force by the military because of my criticisms of the way the Navy was conducting the blockade in Aqaba. I remember we got information about a load of Iraqi dates in Aqaba about to ship out. It turned out to be the producer of the best dates in the world. Iraqi dates are what you want if you're a classic person. You can have, especially during Ramadan when the first thing you serve after the breaking of the fast is a meal of dates and dried apricots, and Iraqi dates were what the classic people wanted to have. There was a whole shipload of them about to be locked up and so I went in I protested these dates leaving. The dates were stopped and never got out to the Navy, who would have turned them back anyway and fermented away in the Aqaba sun there for the next six months turning into whatever dates turn into when they've been cooking in the hull of the ship for six months. There was stuff like that. On the general issue I think again there was no sense that I had back up from Washington. I thought I was in a position where any mistake by me would be pounced on and that my tenure was very tender all through this period. I thought that particularly of my Foreign Service colleagues. I always felt first of all that they were less forthcoming with information and secondly that they felt no loyalty to a brother officer in a difficult position at all. I suppose the disillusion about the nature of the business, although anybody who had been in it that time as long as I had should not have been disillusioned about it. I have to say that I was by that experience, which made it much more difficult for me because I always had to weigh the danger inherent at my rear as I was trying to deal with the people in front of me.

In fact there was a good incident, a good illustration issue for me of this after I left Jordan in '94. I was a professor at the Air Force Academy and an old air force friend of mine who was a deputy at NSA (National Security Agency) said, "You know, I was really worried about you. They were after you. They were out to get you." I assumed that he meant Washington. Well, it turned out, he meant the intercepts they'd had about the various operations that had been mounted in Jordan to harm me, but it didn't occur to me that this was what he meant.

Q: The enemy was us?

HARRISON: The enemy was behind me, absolutely as much as in front of me. The people in front of me were willing to go around me to the people behind me if they saw it in their interests and the people behind me were willing to -- with one exception -- to allow that. There were all sorts of incidents. I think one that really exemplified it for me is our current ambassador there, Skip Gnehm who at that point was our ambassador designate to Kuwait, who came out. He was traveling around during the phony war between the invasion and Desert Storm and came to Jordan, where he had served twice before. The last time as DCM, a job for which he beat me out by lot of big wigs for whom he was DCM. Laid down his body on the tracks to have me as his DCM, but the system defeated him. Skip came out, and as we're riding over to the palace, Skip said, "You know, I realize that you have had to bring all this bad news to the king." Indeed, I was sort of the official U.S. government scold. I was always complaining to him about one thing and responding to my instructions and trying to preclude getting harsher ones. He said, "But don't worry, I'm bringing a tough message here. So, you'll know that this is not just you, that you're reflecting Washington." Then we got in with the king. Skip began by saying, "Your majesty, my heart overflows to be in your presence again" which was just about the toughest thing he did. So, in the car on the way back, I said, "You know, Skip, I don't think the king is ever going to recover from that blasting you gave him." He was very apologetic." But I think it was really a part of the process then. I was sort of the front man for Washington's displeasure.

Q: Were there any of these traveling emissaries bouncing through, you know, telling the king what he should do and that sort of thing?

HARRISON: The only one that he had, and it was in January, and it was Rich Armitage who came. I welcomed that. Armitage was very popular among the Jordanian leadership because he had done a lot to modernize their military when he was assistant secretary of defense. He had a lot of credibility and he was an enormously likeable figure, has a manner which appealed very much. We set out basically to see if he could do something to repair the relationship with the king in January I think it was of 1991, which I thought, was great. He delivered a good message and went away again and all of that, I thought, was well done. So, I don't want to cast Washington in a consistently awful light here. That was the king. This all came to a head in early 1991 when -- right after the bunker explosion in Baghdad. We had targeted the bunker because we thought Saddam was there and had put an earth-penetrating munition and it was very impressive. Reinforced concrete and it killed a lot of people, it turned out that it was being used as a shelter and that Saddam wasn't there. This was all broadcast by the Iraqis around the world and the king had seen it and had commissioned a speech. He does this to me every time he sees me. He always begins by telling me how unpopular I was in Jordan and then he tells me that he wasn't responsible for the speech, because what I discovered in casting around was that he had

written the speech. He now claims that he didn't write it, he refused to write it and therefore, one of his subordinates wrote it and didn't check it. I just talked with a Jordanian who was in the inner circle at the time and told him that story and he just laughed. Whoever wrote the speech, the king delivered it and it was just awful. I mean it was all a repetition of all the ancient Arab prejudices against the United States and full of talk of imperialism and an attack on all the Arab peoples and all the kinds of things that just absolutely drove Washington berserk. I remember watching the speech and thinking that it was going to make my job a lot easier because there was nothing left to repair. There would be no contact, you could simply relax and go swimming and play tennis and wait for the whole thing to blow over which was going to take a while. As I reconstruct the king's motives, it was much further than he had to go. First of all, he did have a domestic problem to deal with, but there was an essential stability domestically for him and this was shown every time the war got anywhere near Jordan's border. Whenever that happened, the people I talked to basically shut up. All the diatribe. By the way, that was my daily fare. I was the universal ear for Jordanian discontents, not only the United States with Israel because of course, there was no Israeli ambassador there and I was considered his surrogate. Everybody would pour out their unhappiness to me as their one shot at affecting the cosmic order of things. When the war got close all that stopped.

People got very cautious because in the end there was a great and universal interest in Jordan for this stability as a society to be maintained. There had been a civil war there 18 years before. The people in leadership. 5 September between Palestinians, Arafat's attempt to take over the governing authority in Jordan and the king's resistance which the king had won. Everybody remembered that civil war, remembered the kind of thing that happens when your society dissolves and therefore did not want that to happen again. Even though they would protest, those protests would never get out of hand. There was an essential consensus that the status quo in Jordan should be maintained at all costs, so the king did not have to do what he did. As I reconstructed it, he did it because of his emotional reaction to watching the videos of that bunker. It was simply an emotional spasm of the kind to which he was given at the end of the day. He was not a cold blooded politician, and I suppose admirable for not being one, but it was a huge miscalculation and any other leader would have spilled at the end. Hussein was rescued by what he'd always been rescued from his folly by, and that was his indispensability to the peace process which was then going to ensue and needed Hussein. So he had to be rehabilitated after the war, but it was a huge miscalculation. It is remembered still by anyone who ever had anything to do with Jordan.

There was another incident soon after that which I should probably repeat in this instance. This was after the war, but the king gave his speech from his throne. We all went to attend. He gave it in Arabic and we were handed a text. The text repeated many of the same arguments that had been made in an earlier speech and therefore, this was right before the king was supposed to go to Europe to meet Baker who was going to be there. We took that text we were provided. My only Arabic speaker having been removed from the staff by then, I was at the speech with a couple of members of my staff all looking ceremonial while the king intoned. We took out this translation which was handed out by the palace of the speech and hustled back and used it as the basis for our report, but it turned out not to be the speech he actually delivered. The one he delivered was more moderate than the one that we'd been given and omitted some of the language which was most objectionable. So, it was a mistake on our part. I think understandable;

we always wanted to be first with the news. We were handed what purported to be an authorized translation of the speech which was the same speech handed out in Arabic to other people there, but it wasn't the speech he gave. We had to come and do a very quick report saying that it wasn't the speech and that he'd given another one. That was an error on our part, which might have been avoided by having an ambassador there who was familiar with the language, as I was not. That was a problem. It resulted in the cancellation of the meeting in Europe that was supposed to take place and, therefore, slowed the rehabilitation of Hussein and of course, fed his own resentments. I never did find out why we'd been given one speech and he'd delivered another. That was in fact what occurred.

I should talk, too, about the role of the Crown Prince Hassan in all of this. Hassan was a peculiar man. There was a lot of insanity in the king's family. Hassan was not the next elder brother in the family, that was Mohammed who had inherited a greater strain of the insanity that had killed the king's father.

Q: Yes, it went from his grandfather to Hussein, Abdullah to Hussein?

HARRISON: It bypassed the king's father except a brief period and then the king's father had died institutionalized. It was a gene with ragged claws on the bottom of the gene pool and Mohammed had inherited it and he was medicated most of the time and interested only in playing chess. When he discovered that I didn't play good chess he'd dismiss me, which was great because having to sit with Mohammed for any length of time was a chore. Hassan was the next brother and I think that Hassan had gotten more of that same gene and it was good for him. He was a scholarly man who had been educated in England, thoroughly secularized. His wife once told me that he kept the air conditioner on all winter so that it would drown out the early call to prayer so he could sleep. They all were secular men who observed the religious conventions as required of their position, and since their claim to legitimacy was their descent from the prophet, it behooved them to uphold the Islamic traditions. In terms of their own personal conduct, they were not committed Muslims. They did not pray five times a day nor do the other. They all made the Hajj at one time or another. So, Hassan spoke in Oxford English, saw himself as the leader of the think tank element of the palace and had a group of bright young men around him, was continually doing studies and going to conferences abroad and entering into the international dialogue. He had a very eccentric side to his nature. I think, by the way, also a decent man, the only one of the royal family that was really monogamous. The rest of them, the king was a great philanderer and revered for it nationally and sort of the kind of guy who would see a new presenter on Jordan TV and point, and then she would be delivered up to him. Good to be the king. Of course, the women all had some choice. As Kissinger used to say power is a great aphrodisiac. The king made the most of it. The queen didn't like it going on much when she was around, but she was not around a lot, but all of that went on. No rumors ever about Hassan in that regard, partly because he was married to Princess Sarvath who was a Pakistani lady, the kind of trippy acid lady of the Pakistani upper classes, which is, as you may know, one of the most thorough communities anywhere in the world, but whose self-regard is succeeded only by their corruption. Maybe their corruption is exceeded only by their self-regard. She was very ambitious for her husband, too much so as also would have been seen eventually when the king was sick. Always wore Pakistani made dress, which alienated everybody. They didn't like Noor trying to assimilate, but they didn't like Sarvath not trying to assimilate. When I

say that Hassan was not a philanderer I think she would have probably not taken as indulgently to that as Noor did. Hassan had a couple of peculiarities. One was a kind of hypophonic laugh. He had a kind of Jimmy Carter tendency to suddenly break out in this laughter in the middle of conversations at inappropriate times and invite you to join in the laughter which was one of the difficult things that I had to do as a diplomat. I never was quite sure why he was laughing. It was an explosive, kind of peculiar laugh, in which his eyes would roll a little bit. It was always a little bit disturbing I think. The other peculiarity he had was that he was no slave to antecedents in conversation. It took me a while to learn this that he would drop a subject in conversation, but come back to it 20 minutes later or 25 minutes later with no acknowledgment. Suddenly the next figure in whatever the argument that he was making would appear and if you were attentive you would realize that an argument being made at the beginning of the conversation was now continuing, but there was no obvious bridge. Always when I brought people in to meet with the crown prince they would go away confused because no one of course was sensitive to this except me, having heard the lot, so I would sort of explain what had happened, that the conversation was discontinuance.

I say this I think against the background that the fact that the crown prince was very well intentioned but had a problematic relationship with his brother, who I do not think had great respect for him. As indeed society did not. He had never for example served in the military. He had never had the opportunity to show personal bravery. The king had often had the opportunity and he was in fact exceedingly brave in command. The crown prince was not. Another anecdote about the king. I was in the period where I was sort of being one of the family the king took me down to see his vintage car collection because he knew I was a car nut, as he was. In his Mercedes going down to his garage in the big palace compound there, there were three guns. There was an AK-47 on the backseat and there was a MAC-10 in a special holder in the center console and there was a 45 in the door pocket. I remarked on this, I said, "Well, I see you're well defended here." He told me about an assassination attempt that had occurred and he said, in essence, that the only person you can count on to defend yourself in that circumstances is yourself. You can have all these armed guards, but they may think about their wife and kids, but you know that you're going to defend yourself. He wanted to have the means at hand to do it. He'd done it several times so his bravery really was unquestioned. Hassan had never had a similar opportunity, never been a military leader or been a military person at all. He occasionally wore a military uniform, he had military rank, but he always looked uncomfortable. He was a well-intentioned man certainly with the best interests of Jordan at heart. He understood the international environment probably better than his brother did or at least took a more analytical view of what was necessary for Jordan to do. He was very much a proponent of various schemes. He loved schemes. The scheme to pump water to the Dead Sea from the Red Sea for example to produce electricity and to recharge the Dead Sea which was drying up was one of his causes. He had a lot of others. He always had studies to back all of these things up. Initially my relations with him were good. In fact, he even came to the house for breakfast when a congressman came through, which he hadn't done for years and in fact he didn't do as a habit. They deteriorated I think. One reason was that in this period between the invasion and Desert Storm he conceived the idea of convening a conference to deal with the refugee problem. The problem from our point of view, of course, the Jordanians had just been dealing with the refugee problem out at the Gulf, but he explicitly made part of the agenda that the refugee problem from Israel, on the assumption that the Israelis would expel Palestinians from their territory and that these people would come to

Jordan -- which was a problem for us. He invited Dick Murphy and a lot of international figures. He convened a group of ambassadors to ask for their support. I queried Washington about whether I should give that support, whether I should attend, and was told I should not attend. Without my attendance this was not going to be a successful event, which the crown prince well knew, so he called to make a personal appeal to me to attend and I had to say no having been told by Washington not to go. Washington was worried about how this was going to be exploited to highlight the possibility of Israeli expulsion of Palestinians from Israel, which would stir up problems in Israel, which they were then trying to avoid. The crown prince really never forgave me for that. Dick Murphy, who was my houseguest, retired then, former assistant secretary. I had shared his dilemma with him and he told the crown prince what I had told him and the crown prince called me up in great anger to repeat what Murphy had told him -- what I had said and the things that I had said. It was actually the only time in my three years that my confidence was ever betrayed, and it was done by a Foreign Service Officer for whom I'd always had great respect. I immediately called Murphy back in Washington and asked him why he'd done that and he denied doing it. I told him that I had just been told by the crown prince that he had done it and that it had made my job a lot tougher, as indeed it did. Since the crown prince never forgave me for that, our relations were never amiable after that. I apologized to the crown prince and told him that I could have handled that issue better. I don't think that solved the problem and in fact, I didn't see much of him for my last two years in country, and events like his daughter's wedding I was not invited to attend. There was another incident with the crown prince later which I will recount later. That made it very difficult, but I don't think the crown prince had much influence on the king in terms of the king's relations with me, but it was an uncomfortable aspect of the rest of my tenure there. I think it exemplified for me something about the Foreign Service, which is very distasteful, I think. An organization I've belonged to for a long time, but in which I've found very little organizational loyalty. I think it appears very unfavorably to the military and they certainly have their own backbiting going on, but there's a sense of paternity in the military that doesn't exist in our business of which I have many examples of in my time of vulnerability in Jordan.

That's the crown prince. As I observed the cabinet in those days, the key figure was always Prince Zeid bin Shaker who was the king's cousin, now elevated to royalty by the king in his latter years, a very charming man. I liked him very much. He exemplified a kind of old generation charm that you don't see much anymore and had a great knack of making people feel comfortable in his presence, and a good sense of humor, a very nattily dressed dresser. Prime minister for much of my time and also to keep the royal court, but not a restraining influence on the king's darker impulses. He saw himself as a facilitator for what the king wanted to do, and when he was prime minister, demanded with his prestige and authority. He had been a soldier of some distinction, but in fact hated messing with politics and saw himself above the ruck of politics. I should mention that there was a parliament in Jordan for various periods, which included the Muslim Brothers. The king had created the parliament again and recalled it and it held elections. After the '88 riots it seemed some mechanism of the expression of populace with that. He had gerrymandered the districts and the representational formula so that the East Jordanians, who were his court constituency, were vastly over-represented and the Palestinians were overly underrepresented. The parliament did, in fact I think, play a very useful role as a safety valve of public discontent. I was regularly denounced in the halls of parliament. I remember once I went with my Australian colleague to an archeological site above the Dead Sea

and was then accused in parliament of having been on a spy mission. I was taking the view that I should be seen around town in this period and I should be highlighting the benefits of the good relationship with the United States. During this period I was constantly visiting aid projects. We aided a lot of businessmen to get started, so I went off to visit these businessmen and brought the media along with me. We built schools and I went to the schools. Here's a school we built; here's a new one we're building -- to try to give a positive spin to the relationship. There had been a lot of benefits to Jordan and I wanted to highlight them all. I must say nobody was ever very happy to see me at these schools or these business projects, but they didn't know how to say no. I would try to give as good a name to the United States as possible. That was a diversion. I was talking about the inner workings of the cabinet. Abu Oday was the Palestinian, was the kind of house Palestinian from the inner circle: speech writer, advisor and advocate and he always sat for the Palestinian cause in Hussein's court. The chief of the royal court was Bin Shaker in those days. "Yes, my Lord" is the form of address one uses with superiors and I never heard anyone use it. The fact that Bin Shaker did in his discussions with the king showed he was not someone who'd object to what the king wanted to do. Abu Oday claimed that he did object, and it was claimed even more vociferously since then, that he'd object. Whether he was in fact objecting I have serious doubts. A nice man. The prime minister's name, which is escaping me, who was the representative of the Saddam Hussein constituency in the country, no one, of course, had close relations with Saddam -- and with whom I never had any but the most formal conversations and meaningless conversations. The crown prince I think not as influential as he would like to project outside the family. There is a tension between the brothers that is always there. The king did not bring Hassan into the inner circle on debates on the key issues of foreign policy and did not have a lot of time for the various projects that Hassan had made his own.

The queen was undoubtedly at that point egging the king on. She was not a restraining influence at all from both her private and public comments, trying to, and I didn't complete this argument before, erase the sense that she was American. Of course, that never could be erased. In fact, Bin Shaker, I said once to him, that the queen has a very hard job. He said, "What's her job?" They worked very hard to freeze her out of any policy discussions. I think at that lunch I described before the king's trip to Baghdad, he was unhappy that she was there and that I was there. So that was a dynamic. The king in the end had developed the practice of never tipping his hand. I went, by the way, to one more cabinet lunch in that period which was as uncomfortable as the previous one had been. I remember the subject being the airline which was going to have to -- the Royal Jordanian -- close down because they couldn't afford to lose payments on the airbuses because they couldn't fly their airplanes. No tourist traffic and so forth. They had a lot of Iraqi planes at the airport then, too under embargo and ships in their port and every time those Iraqi planes would move from one place to another I was sent in to protest. There was a lot of attention being paid to that. All of this came to a head when Desert Shield became Desert Storm, 15 January '91. We were expecting this of course. I in particular had been telling the Jordanians that this process was taking the next course and that they should expect, in the absence of a very quick and unconditional change of mind by the Iraqis, that this military event was going to take place.

Q: Was the war being followed on TV in Jordan the way it was almost around the world using CNN (Cable News Network)?

HARRISON: Oh, yes, very much so. Although CNN was not widespread then. It was mostly the royal family following it on CNN. Everybody else had the Arab, in those days no satellite TVs. There was limited access, but most of those things were being replayed in any case on Jordanian TV. It all came to a head as I say in January when we unleashed Desert Storm. We were given the warning by the Department that this was about to take place. We had all kinds of contingency plans. We were down by the way to a skeleton crew. I should also talk about another great debate before we get to this, as we had gone through various stages of departure. There was a huge pressure on us to get down to eight people at the embassy, which I was resisting and this was coming directly from Secretary Baker. I never could figure out why because it would mean sending out my Marines, they would have to go to get down to eight given the people who had to stay. I wanted to keep the Marines there. Now it turns out of course, the Marines are not there to protect you, they're there to protect the classified material which is there, and could have protected us against any attack on the embassy. I thought the symbolic value was important and I was about to be disciplined for resisting sending them out when the war ended, luckily for me, quickly. It turned out that the reason that they wanted us down to eight people was because the evacuation plan for us involved the landing of a small aircraft at a prearranged site outside Amman where we would go and be picked up. There were only eight seats on it and the Pentagon had told the State Department that they would not be responsible for our lives in the event of war. That if the State Department wanted to keep us in Amman, any representation there at all, that was fine, but the Defense Department was not about to guarantee our safety, or rescue us if we were in trouble. They would have other things to do. The State Department had to have a credible evacuation plan, not credible in the sense that we'd ever actually be able to do all of the things that it described us doing. There was no possibility of government protection. If this broke down, that we were going to be able to get out of the embassy and go to the site and that the plane was going to be there and we were going to get on the plane, this was a fantasy. But a fantasy necessary to deniability by the State Department if anything happened to us. They had to be able to say that there was a plan in place and unfortunately it had miscarried, we hadn't been able to carry it out, whatever. They couldn't say that if they sent in an eight-person plane and there were 12 people. It was very much a cover your ass initiative in the Department, but they were absolutely insistent that we do it. So, that was another sort of bureaucratic battle I was fighting in those days. By then we were down to minimal staff. At any rate, we weren't told about the imminence of the invasion, but I was convinced that once the deadline passed there was nothing but harm in waiting, and as soon as the planes could get in after the 15th of January deadline had passed without Saddam's withdrawal, we would attack, which in fact we did. So I was kind of half braced for this. I got a phone call; my first knowledge of the attack was a phone call from the United States -- someone watching this on CNN. I think it was 2:00 in the morning. I was in my residence. I went to the embassy, there was a message to deliver to the foreign minister, so I got him out of bed and went over and delivered the message about 3:00 or 3:30 AM about what we were doing and went back to the embassy. We had a plan in place for everyone to come in from their houses to the embassy and the skeleton staff we had, and we did that. We slept there for a couple of nights until it became clear that not much was going to happen. This of course, was the land invasion; the air war had been going on for some time. Then we dispersed. We had a kind of operation center, but after a couple of days it seemed silly. There was nothing going on. The domestic situation had stayed calm so we all went back home.

Later that day I had a long message that had come in to deliver to the king. This was the 16th of January of '91 and it was very uncompromising, a very tough message, the essence of which was that we were now engaged in this military operation, and if the Jordanians impeded us in any way that we would deal with them appropriately. The message was basically you better stay out of our way. It was put almost as bluntly as that in the message and I think probably an appropriate thing so there should be no misunderstanding in circumstances like that. I called for an appointment with the king and was told that he was over at the office of the chief of general staff and indeed that's where he was with his brother. The chief of general staff was not there. We were in the chief's office with the king in his military uniform and his brother also in his military uniform. I sat down and delivered the demarche straight. This is not one of the ones that I had thought I should tone down anyway and the king accepted it calmly as he accepted everything. I got up to go and the crown prince charged me which was kind of interesting, snarling at me about the effrontery of all this, and I think he actually was still smarting from the fact that I had not been to his conference on refugees. At any rate, he tried to bump me and the king intervened physically between us. The king sort of broke up the battle. I said you know it was a good time to keep our heads here and then left. That was an interesting experience to have the king break up a fight between the American ambassador, me, and the crown prince. I think also a good short example of what my relations with the crown prince were like at that point although I didn't always have to fear physical violence from him. It was not something from which our relationship was going to recover. Then the war thankfully was over very quickly. The Jordanian public stayed calm as indeed when things got serious as I mentioned before, they did. It illustrated a sort of stability existed there. Soon after the war the king sent a letter to Bush, which I went over to get; it was very conciliatory on exactly the opposite tone than the one he'd been taking before the war. It was much too quick. It was received with some astonishment in Washington as being shameless and blatant and full of professions of friendship and so forth. And then, just as a sidelight, the Jordanians began compiling the history of the events leading up to all of this under the crown prince's direction, which was designed to illustrate the point that the king had made to me on the airplane on our first trip to Kennebunkport and that is that the Jordanians were not to blame, that their position was always beyond reproach, that they had warned everyone of this possible outcome, that their advice had been ignored, just awful stuff. I let it be known that it was awful stuff and would be seen as apologetics and would not have the effect that they wanted it to have. This was not something for which I had any particular influence and the issue was a white paper, later in the spring of '91.

Q: During the time when Iraq was launching scuds at Israel, obviously you had to go over Jordan, did this cause you any problems?

HARRISON: Well, the only problems we had since none of them fell short. Chinese colleague there, I liked him very much, an old Chinese diplomat who was very concerned about these rockets; he was constantly afraid they were going to abort in flight and fall short. No, they flew over.

Q: This is tape ten, side one with Roger Harrison.

HARRISON: A couple other things where he commanded the air force called me in to warn me that the Jordanians would have to oppose any Israeli attempt to overfly Jordan to attack Iraq, but

then pointed out that the Jordanian radars were malfunctioning in the south and wouldn't be able to see anything in the south, but by God if they did pick anything up on it they would certainly attack even though they realized they would be destroyed in the process. The other problem was if they came across, they would have to reckon with coming back for fuel so might have to take out Jordanian air defenses, which would be a terrible blow for the king and stability and so forth. So, that was one of the issues. The Scuds themselves were welcomed in Jordan. The attacks on Israel were never anything that would upset Jordanians. The only cause for concern was what the Israeli reaction would be. That was not a problem. Also there was an incident there, too where the CIA was very eager because they have psy-warfare at the CIA and psy-warfare operations have to conduct psychological warfare and I mean it's just a kind of thing. They wanted to drop leaflets over Baghdad

I should say something about the relationship between my station chief, the CIA station chief and me and between the station chief and the king. The CIA had a long tradition with the king. They'd once subsidized his operation and that was a thing of the past, but it was memorialized by the birthday gift they gave him every year. They would give him a Humvee or a satellite navigation system for his yacht. They'd give him something, it wasn't money anymore, but it was sort of a tied gift. There was a symbolic gift, which recalled that old relationship, and traditionally in Jordan the CIA station chief had independent access to the king. Most all station chiefs get really strange. I mean these are not normal people and he was one of the stranger ones around. It was true. He had independent access and the king tried to exploit that access. The CIA was happy with it obviously because it gave them influence and gave them information which they could report back. You soon learn as an ambassador you think you have control over what moves in and out information that moves in and out of your embassy, but in fact you don't. The CIA has their own independent means of communication. They have operations that you know nothing about and so there's a whole sort of sub-operation going on there. All ambassadors try to get in control of it and all station chiefs try to resist that and there's a kind of dynamic in all embassies, but particularly difficult in Jordan because of this whole tradition of direct access to the king and independent access. I was not invited to the meetings the station chief had. The interest of the CIA at that point was in exfiltration and infiltration into Jordan and its antics were to drop leaflets over Baghdad -- an idea they had. Their area director for our area came out. I remembered to have a meeting with the king and try to talk him into this idea. The king had played all that superbly well. He delayed it, he dragged it out. Eventually the war was over.

Q: We used to get balloons over Seoul from North Korea and we'd get leaflets.

HARRISON: Well, anybody peculiar enough to be in psy-warfare operations, you want them just out there for eight hours a day in the general population. I think it's probably a good thing to keep them occupied. The king was not about to let this happen and successfully put it off. He was very cooperative in terms of infiltration and exfiltration, which you know, his stock was high. Also, the CIA takes a very much more practical view of foreign policy than the State Department is forced to take now. State has to be the spokesman for all of the posturing of the administration, congress, and it goes on all the moral swaggering about the world that we do. All of that is for ambassadors to represent. The CIA is fooled by none of that and conducts none of it themselves. It makes their job a lot easier than ours. One of the things that they had no illusions about was the sanctions regime. I spent a lot of time, most of my time, going in to talk to those

people who came through about the lax Jordanian imposition of sanctions against Iraq, which I talked about before. The CIA did none of that. They treated that whole process with the disdain that it deserved. The king of course, welcomed station chiefs visits more than mine. He wasn't going to be hectored. He was somebody who wanted to talk about serious business in a serious way. This really became a problem after the war because the king conceived the notion that the State Department was his enemy in Washington and the CIA was his friend. The CIA understood and the State Department did not. He called in the station chief and gave him a message for the president to go around the State Department in that bureaucracy in which the station chief duly sent without letting me know. Ed Djerejian was by then the assistant secretary and I got a call, I discovered this for the first time because I got a call from Djerejian -- John Kelly thankfully was gone -- telling me that this had happened. This had come to Bob Gates of course, and Mr. Gates had not raised any...

Q: Gates, you mean the head of the CIA?

HARRISON: The CIA, yes. He was the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), an old friend of mine from our grubbing days at the NSC. But wasn't necessarily dedicated to protecting my interests, but certainly was dedicated to protecting his own through Secretary Baker, who was not about to go along with a message from Hussein for the president. He shifted it immediately over to Baker, who shifted down to Djerejian, who called me to tell me what the substance of the message was and to tell me that the State Department would not support me if I wished to react by removing the station chief -- which would be the appropriate thing to do in those circumstances.

Q: That they would not support you?

HARRISON: They would not support me. Although theoretically I had the power to do that because we had been all assured that our staffing of our embassies was completely under our control and we could send anybody home anytime we wanted. This was not in fact true and in this case I was sort of cautioned in the process of being told about this breach that I could not redress it in the way that would be have been appropriate under these circumstances. I reacted to this in two ways. I told the station chief that if there were any other repetition I would send him home anyway, and he pledged not to repeat what he had done, a pledge which he and I both treated with seriousness that it deserved. I let it be known to the power structure around the king that this had miscarried from the king's point of view, that you could not bypass Baker or the Department of State no matter how much you thought the CIA was actually your friendly source in Washington. In any case, it was not a good way to do business. As far as I know it never happened again, but I think the only reason that it never happened again was because everybody involved in it happening the first time realized that it was not possible. Bob Gates was not going to go behind Jim Baker's back. To think he would misconceive the power relationships in Washington was very naive on everyone's part. It showed, I think, the tenuous grip I had on authority where the station was involved. I think this was probably more of a problem in Jordan than in many places because of the traditional relationship between the station chief and the king. This is also true that the king used that channel much more extensively in the second two years of my tenure in Jordan than he had at the beginning. The station chief was really the favored guest in the palace I think much more than I was. I was received, but he was invited. He would

always come and brief me on his conversations with the king, but it was not a happy circumstance for me.

Q: Was this a message that was being sent to you, too?

HARRISON: It may be. It certainly indicated that I was not in favor, and I was not in favor. That much is clear. Whether that was a reaction to me or whether it was a reaction to the general sense that the people I represented did not have the best interests of Jordan at heart. It may have been a combination of both. I had early in my study of foreign relations read Harold Nicolson's book on diplomacy and had been very influenced by his description of the professional diplomat as one who never makes a wink or nod when delivering his instructions no matter how ridiculous he thinks they are, that his job is to present them as forcefully as he can. I always did that. I didn't curry favor with my interlocutors in Jordan and I was often seen as abrupt and may have been abrupt in some cases because of that and not sympathetic. I guess it was true of me that I was seen as unsympathetic by the Jordanians, and overly sympathetic by my superiors in Washington, so I succeeded in pleasing neither side of my equation. Indeed, a little like the king during the war, I could please no one. In any case, that was the station chief. We embarked on that post war period and the issue changed very quickly from war to peace. I should say that we had taken a line against Saddam's attempt to link his invasion of Kuwait with the Palestinians, but there was no linkage, not transparently. It was a propaganda ploy on Saddam's part to appeal to the Arabs and particularly the Palestinians in Jordan, which he succeeded in doing. It just increased his popularity among them, but of course was a sham from the beginning and we pointed it out. We said that as soon as the war was over and this thing was disposed of we would reengage with the peace process very energetically. Of course, no one believed it and I must say that I didn't believe it either. The point of view from the Arabs was why would you do that, you have defeated the only Arab power with any military force and you have successfully co-opted the rest who will know that Iraq's memory will be long and therefore your protection will be necessary. You'll have the oil producers in your pocket and you won't care about the rest. Really, it's actually traditionally not a bad way of looking at matters in that instance, but of course the Bush administration, to their everlasting credit it seems to me, reacted in precisely the way that had not been predicted by that cynical theory, and engaged in a major way to reenergize the peace process -- beginning with a series of Baker trips to the region and him hammering out the preconditions for what became the Madrid conference. And to break through Israeli resistance, to establish contacts with Palestinians that were necessary in order to do this. That included of course, contacts with the PLO and with Yasser Arafat. I should say in this context that Arafat had been if anything more compromised by the Gulf War than the king had been. He had had even fewer illusions about Saddam than the king, who I think had had too many at the beginning of the war, but Arafat had none. He knew that Saddam was not his friend, in fact would dispatch him with alacrity if he should ever fall within Saddam's control and he was careful never to do so. The PLO also took a very skeptical view of the invasion when it first took place, not least because they got a lot of money from the Kuwaitis and were not eager to see that source of funds cut off by someone who was so ill disposed to them as Saddam was. The rank and file were overwhelmingly pro-Saddam, and Arafat very quickly found that if you wanted to be the leader of the movement he had to be out front. So he took himself off to make his peace with Saddam Hussein, which he did with a famous hug in Baghdad, and it was broadcast to the world and of course, put himself in a very bad position with the coalition which was about to depose Saddam

Hussein. After the war when peace was the issue, we needed Arafat again just as we needed King Hussein again so in spite of all their transgressions they were going to be players in this process, and Baker was the one who went out and rehabilitated them. I think he did a wonderful job; a very no nonsense guy, Baker, with very few illusions about anything really and earnestly committed to the cause, as was the president who sent him of bringing some final settlement to the Middle East. I think the fact that Bush I eventually sacrificed his presidency on the altar of Middle East peace because it diverted his attention from some domestic priorities which had he paid more attention to them -- had he sent Baker to Peoria instead of Palestine -- I think he would have assured his reelection. It would have preserved the popularity that he won in the war, but he did the selfless thing, unexpectedly from a politician, I think always unexpected from a politician. It's always reassuring and encouraging when that happens. Baker began a series of trips out to the region, six of them in the end, and meetings with the king to set out the preconditions. That was really the mechanism by which the king was rehabilitated. In this context he was eager to be of help. Our interests were convergent. He, too, wanted a settlement of that issue which threatened him in a variety of ways, military and other which kept his own Palestinian population on constant boil -- to bring domestic tranquility and consolidate his own legitimacy rule he needed there to be a Palestinian state on his border. Actually what he wanted was not a Palestinian state, but a Palestinian dependency, but still a settlement.

Q: The king, when had the king renounced control over the West Bank?

HARRISON: It had been what, eight years before?

Q: Anyway, it was, I mean it was something in that area.

HARRISON: '82. He had renounced his claims to the West Bank which of course arose out of the '48 war and which was a first step really to the notion of some kind of political entity. So that bunch of trips went on. My role in that was interesting. Secretary Powell is much beloved in the Foreign Service, and one of the reasons he is that when he arrives in a country as Baker did, he always rides to the hotel or to the palace for his meetings with the ambassador and consults with the ambassador. But, Secretary Baker always rode with the foreign minister. I actually didn't see much of him. I would shake his hand at the bottom of the ramp. I would sit through the meetings with him and through the lunch where I played my key role. I'll talk about that in a minute. Then he would ride to the airport with the foreign minister, I would shake his hand again and he would get back on the plane and that would be it. I would go about trying to find out what had happened in the daily sessions and waiting for any follow up instructions.

The only time I played a role was in the first meeting which took place in Aqaba and afterwards the king had said something about going ahead without Syrian support. Baker wanted to establish that that's what he really said. He sent me back to the palace to confirm that with the king before he took off and he waited on the runway. I was motorcaded over to the palace, talked to the king, motorcaded back, very dramatic, you know, motorcaded down the ramp at the airport. The whole crowd is waiting to say goodbye to Baker, run on up the steps and talk to Baker and tell him what the king said and then, just like the movies. But in fact, not much. Baker never seemed eager for my advice. Occasionally I would intrude it at the hotel or sometime when I could catch him in some formula like that, but often the visits were day visits, it didn't involve

staying the night, so I didn't see much of him. One morning during this session he had made what I thought was a mistake in his approach to the Jordanians. The only way I could see him was to follow him to the bathroom and take the adjacent urinal and tell him what I thought he should do, which I did. To his credit, he took the advice, went back into lunch, changed the position and I thought, got the agreement, which I don't think he would have gotten otherwise. He took good advice if you could show your way into the urinal next to him, but it was not something he solicited.

Q: Was Dennis Ross did you feel was the person, did you feel it was Baker doing this pretty much straightforward on his own?

HARRISON: I think Ross was his key advisor, Kelly was not in his time. Djerejian was much more influential because the secretary chose Djerejian, whom he liked and respected, to be his assistant secretary. Kelly had been put there as a placeholder, so he had no impact on the process. I think it was Ross certainly and then Ross and Djerejian in later years in my time. I knew also Margaret Tutwiler was important in that process, a kind of informal traveling partner. In spite of not being fueled by a lot of my wisdom, I think he did a marvelous job. He did achieve this breakthrough which led to great confidence and the Jordanians were in that process rehabilitated, as was Arafat. Our relationships changed very rapidly because the king's willingness to be moderate on this subject, as he'd always been, and now had the additional interest of trying to repair the relationship with Washington and so that was really the thing of my last two years.

Q: Did you feel any coolness towards you even more I mean as an aftermath I'm talking from the Washington State Department?

HARRISON: Well, I'm not so sure. You know, Djerejian certainly had known him a long time and he was a more sympathetic figure in general than Kelly had been, but I don't think ambassadors as a whole are seen as part of any decision making process. It's probably a failure on their part since you know something about what's going on. But especially in Baker's State Department, where power was all concentrated, he did not use the State Department much as an advisory mechanism, and those few State Department officers who were brought into the inner circle were not eager to serve as conduits to other colleagues. There's nothing more retentive than a Foreign Service with any real information. I always thought, by the way, that the political appointees were much more forthcoming with information than my colleagues were. There was a sense of detachment; there wasn't so much hostility. I was sort of operating as an independent subsidiary of a multinational without much corporate supervision. I remember once back talking to Ed, each of the deputy assistant secretaries was supposed to be in contact with the group of embassies there, and they sort of divided up the area. I said I wasn't getting any feedback from Washington on anything and he said, "You know I instructed my deputies to be in contact." I didn't know who my deputy was. This had been in place for six months and I had no idea who was supposed to be my deputy. I didn't have, I guess the bottom line, a lot of contact. I sent my cables in and said whatever I was going to say in them and sometimes used for specific points to clarify points that Washington wanted to clarify with the palace, continued to pay my calls, report what the king had to say and chat him up. But the two major issues in that period actually ran counter to each. One was this peace process which I was describing, the other was sanctions enforcement against Iraq, which was very lax, but which every so often there would be a report

and I'd be sent in doing this. One famous incident -- actually not famous except to anyone who reads this account -- Bob Gates came out for a visit. He used to come into Aqaba. They didn't like receiving Gates at the airport in Amman and in the course of his conversations -- we had had an intercept from the border post in Jordan to the effect that a warning had come out from Amman that Americans were coming to the border, so tighten the operation up here until they're gone -- Gates mentioned this. Not directly, but he alluded to this in conversation with the king. The next day there, was a thoroughgoing revamping of internal communications within Jordan. They realized from Gates' comment that their internal government communications had been compromised and they had changed them. We lost a huge resource in Jordan because of Gates' comment. We knew that the sanctions were enforced spottily at best for all kinds of economic reasons and also politic reasons for the Jordanians. They did as much as they thought was necessary to satisfy us, and they fielded my protests about this which were given on a regular basis both to the king and to the finance minister who is also the customs minister forever holding their feet to the fire on this. They were denying that this was going on and I always said the same thing. Whether or not it is going on, there is a perception in Washington that it's occurring with which you're going to have to deal. Yes, it was a difficult period and I was called upon to do a lot of carping which I felt duty bound to do in a serious way even though I realized that it wasn't going to have any substantive impact on the situation. Also, as the conduit for unhappiness on other issues. Human Rights reports are always something that the ambassador has to do, of course. So, I would have to say that my last two years there were much less eventful. The king, you know, I was out of that sort of lunchtime inner circle business. I was always received when I asked for appointments so I never lost access to him, but I lost that process of trying to, I guess, co-opt me into this sort of family environment that I'd had. My relations with the queen were always correct, my relations with the crown prince were virtually nonexistent for my last 18 months there, which wasn't necessarily fatal, but it was uncomfortable. There was one other incident with him, actually I was sent in when he was regent; the king was in Africa; to ask about a vote that they were going to make in the UN and I was told by the crown prince that they were going to vote with us even if the Syrians voted the other way. I forget what the issue was, which I duly reported to Washington. This was in my last year and USUN took this and waved it around at the UN to try to rally other Arab support, the Jordanians were going to vote with us. When the king came back, this was on a Friday I think, Thursday, it must have been, the king came back that weekend and on Monday the Jordanians voted against us in the UN causing great consternation in Washington.

One of my reactions to that was that -- I also wanted to illustrate a point to my staff -- was to send in a cable to Washington saying that this was my fault, as indeed it was. I should have confirmed the vote with the king. The crown prince was regent, he'd been very definite in his conversation with me. I suppose I could be excused for taking his word as the word of the government, but I realized the crown prince was not the final word on this and he might have been exceeding his authority only because it was the kind of vote that he would have supported, but which would have been a break in precedence for the Jordanians in general. Therefore, when the king came back I should have had the foresight and wisdom to confirm with him or at least to say in my initial cable that this should not be treated as a definitive Jordanian response. Neither of which thing I did. So, I sent a cable in saying that it was my impression that the Jordanians had not switched their position as they were being accused of doing, but that I had misreported it, that I should have done what I just described to you that I should have done. The blame was

really mine, and that they had undoubtedly had a consistent position and I'd simply misreported what their position was. One of the results of this was to bring great credit on me and -- to illustrate the point that I wanted to make to my staff -- which was that the key principle of bureaucracy is to take the blame. It saves a lot of time and you get great credit for it and people forget you are to blame. I always like using the example of Janet Reno after the Waco tragedy, which is antic and abusive federal authority as one can imagine in retrospect, but afterwards she took the blame. "It's my fault", she said and became a heroine of the cabinet members. People forgot that it was her fault, she was to blame and it was stupid and she'd done it. My experience in bureaucracy had always been that when a mistake was made there was great casting about to find someone to blame for it and until that happened nothing could be done. I always thought that if the Soviets ever did launch a preemptive strike, that we'd still be debating whose fault this was when the weapons landed. It's a great waste of life to have these debates in which everyone tried to avoid being the person responsible, and feckless conversations. Your days dwindle and your life drains. So I had already adopted years before that habit of raising my hand and taking the blame.

Q: You mentioned your staff. Could you talk a little bit about the role of your truncated embassy during the war and after the war, the DCM, political secretary, economic secretary, how did they operate?

HARRISON: Actually I think it improved our reporting. I think we did a lot better job with 12 people than we ever did with 80 or whatever we had. Especially, too, the political section, we got down to one guy, David Hale, whose now is head of Israel affairs at State and in the whole bureaucratic process in the political section and I got better reporting. He was a good officer, not everybody in that section including the chief of it was very good. I got more reporting and it was better. I didn't think our reporting suffered at all, I would have just assumed going on with 12 people. We had everybody come streaming back in after the war, but I did not feel advantaged by any of that. It just caused more administrative problems. I've always thought that if you want better analysis don't increase the number of analysts, decrease the number of analysts. I think our experience during the war was an example of that. Even Washington commented on our reporting improving. On the economic side, I don't think it suffered at all. I don't think we had any particular insight into the economic situation in Jordan that went out to the world and we weren't doing much on the economic side of it. It seemed to me we could have been much more compacted all along.

Q: Did you find yourself running into an exodus of Americans during the war when it was cranking up? I know in Israel their consular section was also overwhelmed by the number of Israeli Americans whose patriotism seemed to move toward the stars and stripes at this particular time.

HARRISON: No, our problem was being overwhelmed by Iraqis once the embassy in Baghdad closed down. The consular services for Iraqis: we were basically inundated with Iraqis who wanted various services and we didn't have the staff to deal with it. We didn't deal with it very well. We could have done better, but I think that we also weren't given any assets to it, so we were at cross purposes with the division of consular affairs for a while. I even sent my DCM down to be consular general for a while to run that operation because I didn't have confidence in

the woman who was in charge of it. We were seen in Washington as having done too little too late on that subject. That was the major event. The other thing that I think all ambassadors have to do in that circumstance is to provide some leadership to the American community because there were a lot of Americans in the community. Even the diplomatic community had also looked to us for leadership. My wife was constantly being asked about her plans for departure because our departure was going to be used by a lot of different countries as a signal for the departure of their dependents, too. There were few of the ambassadors in town who had access and therefore had access to me, but not to the palace. I was kind of a clearinghouse for them to give them something to report, come and talk to me. I saw a lot of my diplomatic colleagues in that period. The British was the exception of course because of their traditional ties and they had a very good man there, Tony Reeves in my early days and sent in not such a good man after him, but Tony was one of the top people. Besides the British not many people have good information, so we were sort of the focal point for that, too. I did some meetings with the American civilians, had those organized to tell them what our apprehensions were about the situation and so forth, keep them apprized and also met with the local employees a lot, so that we could try to keep a lid on the situation.

Q: How did your Foreign Service Nationals perform during this particular time?

HARRISON: They performed very well. I had no complaints on that score at all. Of course, these were very good jobs and they were eager to keep them, but there was more of a problem for them when the feelings in the stream are running so high among the employees. They were loyal and efficient and we counted on them when the Americans left of course, more than usual. All my bodyguards were Jordanians and my drivers. My bodyguards were never called on to be bodyguards, which I was thankful for. They never gave me a lot of confidence. Every so often there would be a particular threat which someone would pick up and we'd send a detail out from Washington, secret service people to enhance my detail and for a few days they'd be very much more professional than when those guys left; they weren't good. I'm not terribly convinced that they were going to take a bullet for me. Luckily that was never put to the test. A lot of restrictions on my movements. I always had to travel with a follow car and essentially six bodyguards. We couldn't walk around. We couldn't move intrusively. We always showed up with a great fanfare and so there was no privacy for us outside of the house. We didn't have too much ability to see. We did anyway, but going downtown or going out to the countryside, was always a huge enterprise and not much fun. So, not as enjoyable from that perspective as it might have been under other circumstances.

Really we come through that period to the end of my tenure of '93. I wasn't able to go to Madrid. I was supposed to go, we were all invited; all the ambassadors in the region. On the way to Madrid I was in a collision in an embassy car outside Jerusalem and ended up in the hospital and watched Madrid from my knees on my TV set at Hadassah Hospital. In fact I had gone to the foreign minister, as there were no direct flights from Jordan. The Jordanian airlines in those days had to fly outside Israeli airspace, so it was a difficult thing to fly to Madrid from there, but I said, well, give me a seat on your airplane and he said no, we couldn't have the American ambassador getting off our airplane. I had to go to Ben Gurion. I took a Jordanian embassy car, a U.S. embassy car down to the bridge and got in an embassy car and got up to supposedly the airport to hop on a plane to Madrid. This would have been '91, in the summer I think, when Madrid was.

There was a lady, a Soviet Jew as it turned out, who on this ring road around Jerusalem, a four lane undivided highway lost control and hit us head on. I ended up having to be operated on and was in the hospital for eight days and then in King David for another week before I could go back. I went back to Jordan and then should have gone back to the United States and taken a rest and forever blame myself for not doing that, actually went back to work. I looked awful. I had all kinds of scabs on my head because it had hit the front seat and it was really ugly. I looked like something out of a John Carpenter movie and beyond that I had lost 20 pounds. I'm not a fat man to begin with and I'd lost a lot of weight. I was bent over because I had all this abdominal surgery and also subject to abdominal spasms that could come on at any time including in meetings with various people. It was absolute folly to go back, but I did. I went back to work and sort of healed up on the job back in Amman. Then I guess it took three, four or five months and then I sort of went on with things. That was the reason I did not get to see the Madrid conference except secondhand. It was complete folly. I try to reconstruct now my state of mind at the time what I would have done. Absolutely one of the most antic things I did in my time.

Q: Well, then how did this reprieve recover then?

HARRISON: In the end there was a final trip to Washington before I left and the king coming back. As usual I was not on the plane. The only time I was ever on the plane was actually the first time, two days after I arrived. After that I had to fly by other means. I was in a meeting that he had. This was a new administration. He met with Clinton for the first time and then with Les Aspen who was briefly secretary of defense, but Collin Powell was there. The king was trying to explain his problem in building any kind of credible military, but not doing a very good job of it. I was sitting on the Jordanian side of the table for this meeting and which I think represented the defense department view if not in general, at least to me, so I kind of took over for the king and explained the Jordanian position, what the modern fighters cost, why they couldn't afford them, all of these things, which in fact I think meant that I left on a good note. The king was very grateful for that and we parted on good terms. I got the usual awards and so forth. I had by then come to be on very good terms with the foreign minister who had been so hostile at the beginning of my tour, but gave me a nice dinner when I left. I had been kind of accepted as you might accept an old, but familiar mole. I wasn't particularly liked and they would rather not have had that mole, but you know, after a while you get used to it. We all parted on good terms. I had decided in my last year to retire. I was going to be 50 soon after my departure from Amman and at that time the State Department was trying to shed as many senior officers as it could among other things because there was a congressional injunction coming about the number of senior officers they could have. They had the other problem of their agreement with AFSA, which gave me a certain sure tenure after I had achieved the rank of OC in the process. I'd become a senior officer, I had 14 years I think, by agreement they could not get rid of me except by low ranking people for 14 years and that would have been up in 1999. They were eager to shed anybody they could; especially anybody who'd had an embassy. The first sign of this, I came back in the spring of my last year and I had a meeting scheduled with the director general, but he had a guy to soften you up in those days. I was sitting out there with this guy who later became an ambassador.

Q: Who was this?

HARRISON: I'm trying to remember his name. He was whatever deputy, too.

Q: Who was the director general?

HARRISON: The director general was Perkins.

Q: Ed Perkins.

HARRISON: Ed Perkins, yes, with whom I had no particular in, so I had no personal basis on which to appeal to Perkins for a new job. I was sitting out with Larry somebody who is his softening up person and he said you know, he was telling me all sorts of stories about these ambassadors who came back and wanted to be country directors and didn't I think that that was hilarious that they would think such an exalting position in the Department should be available to guys like that. The Democrats were in. My record had been with the Republicans. I don't know what their final judgment would have been, but they would have felt some obligation to see me right after Amman, but the Democrats didn't. They're the new leadership at State. Warren Christopher, who I suspected had already died at that point, anyway kept moving, but only minimally. He came out. There were a couple of visits by Christopher, too. There was a man who you would not want to have a beer with and as far as I knew he never noticed me at all. There was no resource to call on and they were treating some people very shabbily. One of the techniques they were sort of humiliating people out at that point because obviously people wanted to stay, they wanted to shed them and they can't do it legally. One of the techniques was to send you down to Freedom of Information or off to the historian's office. There was an officer named Jack Moreska who preceded me in EUR, he was the political guy in RPM and had been well thought of for a long time, who was in this situation and said he wouldn't go down to Freedom of Information. They gave him an ultimatum and he resigned. Some of the people went and stayed around for awhile and then resigned, but that was not a happy process for me. I knew I was going to have to walk the halls for a while and didn't want to do that. I was probably overly pessimistic about my prospects at that time and I'd also had the experience of talking to people like Nick Veliotis, who had come through as a visitor with the previous assistant secretary ambassador in Egypt. During one lunch he discoursed on the theme that they screw everybody in the end, using Art Hartman and himself as examples. I always viewed the State Department, the Foreign Service bureaucracy, the personnel system in any case is an adversary, as it always had been. They were the people who were trying to keep you from getting the job that someone wanted you in, and that you wanted to have. They were people to avoid. I mean the last thing you wanted was to go before a panel without it all having been wired ahead of time. God knows what they'd do. After mid-career I never did, I never thankfully had to be paneled in anything where they were actually going to decide my fate in panel, but I was suddenly naked and alone on the process. I had been offered a chair at the Air Force Academy for a lot of money and my wife wanted to go home, was tired of moving, so I made the decision to retire. I did in fact retire three months after I was legally entitled to. I was 50 in 1993; somewhat before they started paying \$25,000 to encourage people to do what I did for free. As I say, I think I was overly pessimistic about that. I could have probably stayed in and it turned out that they had purged too many senior officers, the State Department personnel system by definition never doing things right. So, they ran short in the late '80s and were bringing people back in on new

contracts and so forth to try and make up the gap. Also, they ran short of junior officers, ran short of everybody, just absolutely.

DOUGLAS R. KEENE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Amman (1991-1994)

Mr. Keene was born and raised in Massachusetts and graduated from Colby College. He joined the Foreign Service in 1967, serving first in Viet Nam and subsequently at Middle East posts including Jerusalem, Karachi, Cairo, as well as Amman and Muscat, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. His Washington assignments also concerned primarily Middle Eastern matters, including the Arab-Israel problem. Mr. Keene was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

KEENE: I spent nine months in the Senior Seminar and then went to Amman. Jordan.

Q: You went there in '91, and you were there from when to when?

KEENE: '91 to '94.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

KEENE: Roger Harrison for most of the time. I was chargé for about eight months and then near the very end, Wes Egan arrived.

Q: I've interviewed both of them. Can you describe the attitude towards Jordan when you went out there, at the time?

KEENE: Oh, it was bad times; it was a very strained relationship. They had opposed our invasion of Iraq, and there were demonstrations outside the embassy. People didn't want to deal with us on the ground there. Things were not good.

Q: Were they beginning to settle down, because I would have thought, you know, after time, a lot of the Jordanians, and particularly the Palestinians who worked there, the Kuwaitis had been kind of beastly to them.

KEENE: Yes.

Q: But after you put a half a million troops into Kuwait and all that, I would have thought that they would have sort of bowed to force majeure or something like that. Is it okay or not?

KEENE: No. I think the government was interested in maintaining a relationship and probably interested in gradually improving it; but the war had been so unpopular domestically, that they

were not in a position to move too fast. Jordan did something like 80 per cent of its trade with Iraq. So, they were hurting financially, too. And they were hard put to get any oil, for that matter. Iraq had supplied virtually all its oil.

Q: When you got there, what were you getting--before you went out, actually, about King Hussein. What was the feeling towards him?

KEENE: I guess it would depend who you spoke with, but there were a lot of people who were bitter, who felt that he had betrayed us; an old ally and friend should have been more forthcoming. There were those who understood that he was in a hard spot, too,

Q: Well, he really was.

KEENE: Yes.

Q: I've seen this happen at other times. This is a Washington syndrome, where if somebody, particularly a small country, does something at a time when we have great interest in a situation, and one of the small countries doesn't go along with us, we get not only bitter, but there are people who are trying to take it out on them. I imagine you've run across that.

KEENE: Oh yes. There's that, for sure, and it's always somebody on the Hill who wants to make a few political points. It's the nature of the beast.

Q: You were DCM again? What was the embassy doing?

KEENE: Well, they had actually cut way back on the number of people who were out there. It was felt that with so many demonstrations and so much bad feeling, that it was dangerous. So it was kind of small. I got there and the next morning there was some high level visitor coming in. So they were starting now to try to put things back together; just at the very early phases of doing that. Which was good for me; I mean, first day there I met the foreign minister and this guy and that guy and got going pretty quickly. I found that they were, well, so many of them *were* Palestinians, but the Jordanians, too, were like them—hospitable people, even though they might not like your policies. Bound by that Arab hospitality, and they loved to talk, and it was just easy to meet people and start picking up on what was going on.

Q: Was there concern at the time and while you were there, that King Hussein might be overthrown and something of a radical government might come in?

KEENE: Not really. There always was the chance that he might be assassinated, but not that he would be overthrown. The military was viewed as loyal to the king; they were really the only people who could have done that. Of course, he paid a lot of attention to his military, too. The King was really, genuinely very popular. But, for its size, it's a pretty impressive country. Education is a high value; a pretty literate population. Some pretty impressive ministers and generals.

Q: Maybe in some ways they've been sort of blessed by not having oil, which seems to basically create a wealthy, indolent class.

KEENE: Yes. No oil, no oil at all. And not much else. There's a little phosphorus, phosphate, but not much.

Q: Well, I mean, I would have thought that the Jordanians must have had a rather heavy exodus of Palestinians who had been working in Kuwait.

KEENE: Yes, they did.

Q: Who had basically been a pretty spoiled group. I mean, they'd done very well for themselves there, and all of a sudden, here they were, destitute.

KEENE: Yes, there was a large number. I forget the figure now, but it was significant. And that put further strains on a not all that wealthy social net there. They seem to have—and this was a big issue at first, but by the time I left it wasn't much. They seem to have been absorbed, at least in an acceptable way. Anyway, I think it was Baker who visited, because I think he had said he would make good on his pre-war promise to try to reinvigorate the peace process, and he was making the rounds.

Q: This was moving up to Madrid?

KEENE: Yes. The first steps

Q: Baker came to Jordan, did he?

KEENE: Yes, several times before I was finished.

Q: The first time after the war...was it sort of a frosty meeting, or how did it go?

KEENE: It wasn't too bad, because of the subject. They were interested in seeing the peace process revived, so they welcomed this initiative. Baker was very good; he seemed to be able to get along with people pretty well. He knew his stuff, made good presentation.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Jordan and the West Bank...I mean, now you're looking at it from the other side of the river.

KEENE: Right.

Q: What was your impression?

KEENE: Well, realistically, I think the king had his supporters, he had several on his payroll, but he had lost it, and it wasn't going to revert to Jordan. And I think they recognized that, but they still wanted to play those games to keep up whatever amount of influence they could. They hated Arafat.

Q: Well, they'd been through the Black September, back in 1970.

KEENE: Right. And they tried to kill the king. I used to play tennis with a former primer minister who would show you the bullet holes that he got in that assassination attempt. No love lost. Nevertheless, for their own reasons, they wanted the peace process to succeed; and it was hard for them to move without some Palestinian movement. With a population over half Palestinian, they are very sensitive to the public opinion in that part of their population. Within Jordan, there are significant strains between Palestinians and others: and there's discrimination and fighting for power, influence, and all these kind of things that they try very hard to keep below the surface, but it's there. So for their own reasons, they wanted to see some movement on this. You couldn't cut a separate deal.

Q: Well, were you aware of Jordanian-Israeli relations at the time. I mean, apparently it had been going on for years.

KEENE: Yes, and it went on during this period. The king would get in his helicopter and fly over for the meeting. From time to time, he'd smuggle in some Israeli officials for meetings. I don't know that we found out about every one of them, but we knew what was going on.

Q: Did congress people come over to Jordan while you were there?

KEENE: Yes. After the peace process started up again, they did. Right after the war there really weren't many, but then they started coming again, in increasing numbers. And so eventually, it was pretty heavy.

Q: Was there a pretty heavy divide between sort of the Palestinians and the, I guess you call them the Bedouins?

KEENE: East Bankers, yes. A lot of them originally were Bedouin, originally tribal, but modernized. Yes, that was real serious difference—many cutting remarks, in private.

Q: Given the situation there, was the PLO...had they made any sort of amends, or was there any reconciliation at all between the Jordanian government and the Arafat people?

KEENE: At an official level there was; Arafat was being received again by the palace and was speaking to the king. No love lost, but as a practical matter. So he would visit Amman every couple of months. The PLO had an embassy.

Q: What about the other Arab states: Egypt, particularly, Saudi Arabia, Syria? What were they doing in Jordan?

KEENE: I don't recall that they were all that active. The Egyptians are always good and professional. Despite the chaos of their country, they have a pretty good foreign service. I didn't see a lot of the Saudis.

Q: Did Iraq have representation?

KEENE: Yes, oh yes. For sure.

Q: Could we deal with the Iraqis?

KEENE: I think for a while we couldn't, at least until the peace was agreed, if I remember correctly. And then we didn't see them much, except at diplomatic corps gatherings. They weren't a big player, but after awhile they became important again to the Jordanians, because they started providing oil again, as they had prior to the war—mostly trucked in. I guess some went down to Aqaba by ship after they cleared the channel out, which took a while. So that by the time I had left they were providing about 100 percent of their oil—88, 85, or 90 percent of their oil.

Q: Was Iran at all a factor there or not?

KEENE: Not a big one. They did have a mission, were suspected of occasional nefarious dealings, but they didn't have a big impact.

Q: Was Syria causing trouble or anything?

KEENE: Not at that time. They had, earlier. It wasn't too bad with Syria then; the border was open—it was a bit chaotic, but lots of people going back and forth.

Q: How about for you all; could you get around to various places?

KEENE: Yes, we used to go up to Damascus, Syria and other places.

Q: Did we have much of a, say, like a USIA organization there in Amman?

KEENE: In Amman, yes, we did, definitely.

Q: A library and all that?

KEENE: We had the library, the speakers, the programs, the international visitors—a full gamut.

Q: By the time you got there, had we a pretty good cadre of Jordanians who had been to the United States on visitor's visas, or educated there, come back?

KEENE: Yes—It's known as the Georgetown (Georgetown University) mafia. I think half the cabinet was educated at Georgetown. We have a lot of students here, yes.

Q: They ever have Georgetown alumni gatherings?

KEENE: Actually, they did, every now and then. They really had some pretty talented people.

Q: Well, in a way, it must have been at least more intellectually stimulating than being in Oman.

KEENE: Oh yes, for sure, it was. These were very cosmopolitan people who were well informed...and liked to talk!

Q: From your Jordanian contacts, was there any particular feeling about how the Arab-Israeli—well, the Arab-Israeli problem was not yet settled. I mean, was there a feeling of hope because of Madrid and all that, or not?

KEENE: There might have been a little hope, but there was no euphoria. The road was rocky. And they needed the Palestinians to at least do enough that they weren't looked at as being betrayed by unilateral moves.

Q: How was Arafat viewed that you get from your contacts?

KEENE: Very negatively...and that includes Palestinians. He was a symbol, but he wasn't viewed as a very good leader or very good administrator, and he was very corrupt. And they knew it.

Q: Was there any major incident or visits while you were there? I'm just wondering, you know, if either political...I don't think you had a presidential visit?

KEENE: No. Secretarial: five, six, ten, I don't know how many there were—a lot.

Q: But these were of such a nature that it was shuttle type?

KEENE: Yes, a lot of it was.

Q: So that didn't—you know. Put quite a burden on you all.

KEENE: Oh yes, sure. You know, it takes a lot of work to support those things. No. One incident stands out that...toward the end, the king got cancer and went to the Mayo Clinic for treatment. And the word was that he had substantially recovered—it turned out not to be true, but that's what people thought. And when he came back, it was like something you'd never seen. I mean, millions of people turned out into the streets. And he rode through the crowds; he got out of his armored car and got on the roof of the car and drove. A tumultuous welcome. Quite moving. And then, of course, later, it recurred, or whatever, and he passed away.

Q: Well then, you left there in 1994? Where did you go?

KEENE: Back to Washington. No, actually, no. Before we leave Jordan, I guess I should mention that I did go to Madrid for the peace conference.

Q: What were you doing there?

KEENE: They brought all the DCMs (deputy chiefs of mission). And then Roger got in a traffic accident on his way to Madrid and never made it. And because of the fact that nobody recognized the PLO at the time, we had to set up the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in Madrid, which was a very useful diplomatic device, but it meant responsibility for two delegations instead of one. So that was interesting, too.

Q: So what were you doing?

KEENE: We were assigned to the delegation as their liaison with the conference and with the secretary's party.

Q: You were sort of carrying messages back and forth?

KEENE: Yes...and actually negotiating arrangements. You know, "If he gets an armored car, I want an armored car. If they get an office with three rooms, we want an office with three rooms." And the politics of it—"Please don't say this in your speech. We want everybody to get along at least well enough to get through this so we can get the process going." And advising the Jordanian prime minister to shake hands with him--the Israeli—he didn't want to. This was not going to make a very good photo op. In the end, they did shake hands for the camera. It was very intense; it was about ten days, I think. There was a lot of back and forth. The delegations were in hotels, and we were in another hotel, and shuttling back and forth; and then setting up the venues, which were in a palace—a Spanish palace. Getting the delegations settled in, getting the Palestinians to talk to the Jordanians. I had, I think, a real advantage there in that I had known, in my previous incarnation, about three quarters of the Palestinian delegation personally, so that helped a great deal. That all worked out, and in fact you can see in retrospect that we didn't get the deal we wanted, but it actually did lead to the Israeli-Jordanian agreement. And then the work afterwards on setting up all those interlocking committees that we had....you've probably had somebody describe all of this before, so I don't need to go over that ground. We had the joint committees for water and natural resources and refugees and economic development, and, I don't know—there were a lot of them. And the idea there was just to keep everybody talking to each other constantly—at various levels, technical levels, official levels.

Q: Well, did you find both sides—Israeli and Jordanian sides—wanting to get into, I mean, were they on board with the idea, you know, that the more we get together, the better, the easier things will work out, or not?

KEENE: Yes. It was important to them to reach an agreement on things like water and right of return and trade and all the modalities of what peace would really look like. So that really also was a major undertaking and took a lot of time.

Q: I would have thought the right of return would have been a real sticking point, because to my mind, it's just not going to happen, really, except in isolated incidents, the same way that probably the settlement issue...You're really going to have a settlement--- if they don't return the settlements with some exception, maybe, they're not going to be there.

KEENE: I think that's right. We need to find...Really that's what we've tried to do for years, find some face saving answer where both sides can claim victory and not a whole lot happens...probably involving some payments to the people who aren't getting back.

I should also mention the Multinational Interdiction Force or MIF. This naval force was put together to enforce the sanctions on Iraq during and after the war. After Jordan began cooperating with us again, the virtual embargo of Aqaba, Jordan's only port, became a major irritant. I worked for many months with the Chief of the Royal Court, Marwan Kassim, to work out an agreement whereby Lloyds of London would have a team in Aqaba inspecting all cargo and certifying that it met the terms of the embargo.

LUKE KAY
Fulbright Scholar, University of Amman
Amman (1994-1995)

Luke Kay was born in Greece in 1969. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in 1991 and attended the School of International Studies, Bologna. After joining the Foreign Service in 1998 he has held positions in Brazil, Ethiopia, and Uruguay. Mr. Kay was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in June 2004.

Q: While you were there, did you run across anybody who worked in the State Department?

KAY: A few, but I can't really name names. There wasn't any specific incident, but a few. In fact, I did have a stint at USIS at Embassy Amman when I got a Fulbright Scholarship. I was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Jordan in Amman. And I didn't mention that back in high school I was named a National Merit Scholar, i.e. a scholarship finalist. As a Fulbrighter, I went overseas to Amman, Jordan to study Arabic and the Arab-Israeli dispute for the academic year. I was there during the time of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. So I assisted the U.S. Embassy at the peace treaty signing ceremonies in Aqaba, Jordan.

Q: How did you find Jordan? What was your impression of Jordan?

KAY: It was nice. It was very nice. But makes you kind of feel it's almost like a "fake kingdom" in the sense that it really didn't exist. It's created by the British--as many things in the Middle East are--to the chagrin of Syria which has a very ancient history. Also, as you know, two-thirds of the people of Jordan are from Palestine. Palestinians. So, it felt almost fake in the sense almost like a country created for a monarch with people imported from the other side of the river. But it was still very nice. The people were very nice and friendly. The university there was great.

Q: After those studies, what did you do?

KAY: After the summer of '93 in Syria I had the Fulbright in Jordan (Fall '94-Summer '95). I was there for the entire academic year. Then I went back to Washington. Actually, I remember

now, I took my second Foreign Service exam overseas. I can't remember, I think at Embassy Amman in Jordan or at Consulate General Florence in Italy. Of course, I took the orals in Washington.

ROBERT M. BEECROFT
Deputy Chief of Mission
Amman (1994-1996)

While Ambassador Beecroft served as Political Officer at a number of posts in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, his primary focus was on Political/Military Affairs, both in Washington and abroad. Later in his career he served as Special Envoy to the Bosnia Federation and subsequently as Ambassador to the Office of Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) operating in Bosnia & Herzegovina. A native of New Jersey, Ambassador Beecroft served in the US Army and studied at the University of Pennsylvania and the Sorbonne in Paris before joining the Foreign Service in 1967. Ambassador Beecroft was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Okay, you were in Amman from when to when?

BEECROFT: '94 to '96.

Q: First, I just talked to Egan two days ago. We've been doing a series of interviews then he went off to Kenya, but now he's back. We'll be continuing this, but what was his background and how did he operate?

BEECROFT: Let's see, Wes had been ambassador once before, in Guinea-Bissau, in the '80's. Wes is a person of very high standards and great integrity, a superb reader of people – fundamentally a realist. He likes an embassy to work well. He cares about his people and he has a great sense of humor. He has a marvelous wife, Virginia. They are a great couple. My wife Mette and Virginia had known each other from Family Liaison Office, so that was a good fit. As I said, the four of us met in Washington spring on 1994 and agreed, okay, let's do it.

Q: You got out there in '94?

BEECROFT: Got out there in the summer of '94, just in time to become control officer for President Clinton's trip to Jordan in October to sign the Jordan-Israel peace treaty. That brought the president and 800 of his closest friends in four jumbo jets to Amman.

Q: How did that go?

BEECROFT: Oh, it was quite spectacular. The signing of the treaty took place at Wadi Araba, which is an open flat area just north of Aqaba and Eilat, the twin cities on the Gulf. Fortunately it was October, so it was only about 95 in the shade rather than 115. They had set up bleachers on a

recently tarred parking area right on the Jordan-Israel boundary line, where the customs posts were later set up. El Al Alia Airways supplied lots of little spring water bottles and Royal Jordanian Airways provided baseball caps. Here you had Bill Clinton, Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein up on the podium, and the atmosphere was great. Rabin and King Hussein had a terrific relationship, and Clinton was basking in the spirit of the moment.

Q: Had it been one that had really gone back for some time?

BEECROFT: Oh, yes.

Q: I mean they had been meeting clandestinely kind of. Everybody knew it, but.

BEECROFT: Correct. To this day, on a hill just north of Jerusalem on the Ramallah road, you can still see the palace that King Hussein had half-completed when the 1967 war broke out. King Hussein flew clandestinely to Jerusalem in his helicopter to meet with Rabin and set the stage for the peace agreement. It was based on the Oslo Accords and the concepts that had been worked out in Madrid by Secretary Baker. Now Warren Christopher had taken the next step. We had a control office in a hotel right down on the beach, a hotel that was owned by somebody in the government's uncle or nephew, I can't remember. We had the usual White House advance people who came in, and everything was timed. We had tested the motorcade on a dry run, reconnoitered the road to the airport, etc. We were in pretty good shape. President Clinton's huge aircraft had landed at Aqaba Airport, they weren't even sure the runway would handle it, but it did. Then the King comes with his plane and Rabin in his, so here are these huge birds lined up. And Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev arrives comes in this little trimotor jet. Somehow it was symbolic of how the Russian position in the world had shrunk. Yes, they had been sponsors of the Oslo process. They had been at Madrid. He was there, but he was irrelevant. He got no respect.

Anyway, we had this big ceremony at 3:00 in the afternoon. A platform was set up for the VIPs – Clinton, King Hussein, Rabin -- with bleachers for the invited guests. The ceremony was not too long and well organized. As soon as it was over, all the dignitaries, plus the invited guests and the press, scrambled to get back to a plane. The reason was that President Clinton was scheduled to speak that evening to the Jordanian Parliament in Amman. He was the first American president ever to speak to a Jordanian parliament, or to an Arab parliament, not just Jordanian. No one knew who was going to get on what plane. It was literally a royal scramble. Rabin did not come to Amman, but my wife and I ended up on a Royal Jordanian Airlines plane full of sheikhs. We actually took off before the president's plane, which was a good thing because we got to Amman Airport in time to be there when the president arrived. It was entirely luck. Talk about playing it by ear. All you could do was enjoy the ride and keep your fingers crossed. We had a motorcade ready at Amman airport to take the president to the guest palace he was staying in. We were concerned that King Hussein would do what he had done with the Queen of the Netherlands a couple of weeks earlier, when she arrived at the airport for a state visit, and he drove her personally to the palace. We could just see him drive up and say to the president, "Hop in, Bill!" This terrified the Secret Service people because Bill would undoubtedly have hopped in. The king also had a half a dozen Harleys. The Jordanians, who are among the world's most hospitable people, really couldn't fathom that the Secret Service would not let the president ride

with the king. After the visit, it took all the Embassy's diplomatic skill and six months of careful stroking to mollify Royal Jordanian Protocol. Anyway, we got the president's car at the front of the queue and he went in his own car, which had been flow in for the occasion. The president's motorcade drove directly to the royal guesthouse, which is right on the edge of the escarpment that looks down on the Dead Sea. When you look west from this palace, you're looking right at Jerusalem, 50 miles away as the crow flies. The presidential party was very impressed, and Jordanian Royal Protocol did a superb job, as usual.

We got to the Jordanian National Assembly about an hour and a quarter late, about 9 pm, but no one cared. It was great. Clinton is masterful at working a crowd, including parliamentarians. He had them eating out of his hand. His speech was excellent. I have to say that the people from the White House were very impressed with Jordanians' superb organization. King Hussein and his son and successor Abdullah both attended Sandhurst. When I was in Amman, Abdullah was the head of the Jordanian Special Forces. What really mollified Jordanian Protocol was that the visit had gone so well and they'd gotten a lot of good international coverage. Clinton's speech to the Parliament was a smashing success.

Q: You were there from '94 to '96?

BEECROFT: Yes. Two years.

Q: What was the situation in Jordan?

BEECROFT: Well, things were basically looking up at that point. You still had the phenomenon of a country whose population was 50% Palestinian. You had an economy that was none too strong, because their main trading partner had been Iraq and that option was now closed off with a few exceptions, which I can speak to. That was one reason why Hussein finally decided to take the leap with Israel. The old joke about Jordan being located between Iraq and a hard place had a lot of truth to it. King Hussein was looking for alternatives. Egypt, the biggest and most important Arab country, had long since signed a peace treaty with Israel, although it was a cold peace, and had been readmitted to the Arab league. Basically, Hussein didn't see a downside. I have to say that for the first year or so after the treaty was signed, the signs were positive. Just to give you an example, the Israelis opened a blue jeans factory in Irbid, which is the northernmost major city in Jordan, near the border with Syria. Jordanians were making blue jeans which were then being shipped to Israel, with labels on them that said "made in Israel," and everyone was happy. There was work for the people of Irbid and good quality blue jeans being exported from the region as Israeli. There were other courageous people, lawyers, local entrepreneurs who were looking for ways to open doors with the Israelis, and a few courageous Israelis trying to do the same thing. In late October of '95, the first annual Middle East/North African Economic Summit was held in Amman – something the U.S. had been pressing hard for. King Hussein was the patron. The Gulf States and North Africans were well represented. Arafat was there. Rabin and a big delegation came from Israel. Secretary Christopher led our delegation. The Europeans were there in force. There were more than a thousand businesspeople there from all over the region. It went so well that even the organizers were surprised. Perhaps the liveliest debate at the whole conference may have been who would host it in 1996; Egypt got the nod, with Qatar in 1997.

The U.S. Embassy had a big display at the Marriott Hotel with all kinds of state-of-the-art computer stuff. I took Arafat around to see our displays. He was fascinated – he kept saying “I want this” to his staff. Then, one week after the summit, Rabin was dead.

Q: How did that hit you, the embassy and all when you heard that?

BEECROFT: I think we all felt that he was so crucial to providing the political will necessary to drive the process. You may recall that King Hussein went to the memorial ceremony in Israel.

Q: Yes, I remember.

BEECROFT: And cried. He had good reason to cry. There was simply no one who could fill his shoes. No one else had his combination of vision and credibility. Rabin was a general. He fought in the 1948 war and was Army Chief of Staff during the six-day-war, so his domestic credentials were impeccable. Here he was in 1995, leading the charge for reconciliation with an Arab king whose country was over 50% Palestinian. By the way, one of the things we at Embassy Amman did during that period was to help facilitate the opening of the Israeli embassy in Jordan. Many Jordanians were fascinated by the fact that an Israeli embassy was opening, because so many Palestinians living in Jordan saw it as an opportunity to get visas and go visit family, and they did just that.

Q: Was there an immediate shut down in everything?

BEECROFT: No. It was a gradual tailing-off. Here's an example of how promising things had seemed. This was, oh, I guess a couple of months after the peace treaty had been signed. Both our children were in school in the States, and came over for Christmas '94, a couple of months after the peace treaty was signed. I managed to make arrangements with the Israelis and the Jordanians to drive my private car into Israel with Jordanian license plates, Jordanian dip plates. We had a Peugeot 505, good robust simple car. I knew both bridge commanders at the Allenby Bridge, the one on the Jordanian side and the one on the Israeli side. The one on the Israeli side happened to be the commander at the entry point at Rafah, Gaza ten years earlier, when I had been assigned to Cairo. The commander on the Jordanian side came from a town called Salt. The Saltis are show me, the Missourians of Jordan. It's where the first capital of Jordan was located before it moved to Amman. This guy was always looking for green cards and visas for his relatives. Anyway, we drove our car down the great escarpment, across the Allenby Bridge, which included separate coffees with each commander. Then through Jericho, up the western side of the escarpment and right into Jerusalem. You should have seen the double-takes. We drove from Jerusalem down to Tel Aviv. We drove all over Israel with Jordanian plates. It's unthinkable now, but this is less than 10 years ago.

Q: When you got to Jordan, what were you picking up from the desk and the bureau and all of Hussein, King Hussein? I mean what kind of a person was he.

BEECROFT: I just can't find superlatives enough. Hussein had his human weaknesses, of course, including mistresses in places like London. But he was also a man who had devoted his entire life to making Jordan viable -- a real country, in spite of the fact that its population is split

between East and West Bankers and has few natural resources. He also felt that as the sole Hashemite still on the throne, he had to protect and preserve his family's role in the Middle East. First the Hashemites lost their historic position to the Saudis as the keepers of the holy places of Mecca and Medina. Then the Iraqi branch of the family was slaughtered in 1958, with one exception, Prince Ra'ad, who lived two blocks away from us in Amman. Ra'ad was studying at Oxford when his family was killed and has never entertained thoughts of reclaiming the Hashemite throne in Baghdad. Hussein was very careful to groom a series of sons as potential successors. His brother Hassan was the crown prince, but as you saw, when the chips were down, Hassan was brushed aside. Hussein was married four times and produced a number of sons as well as daughters. The children were urbane, well educated, and thoroughly inculcated with that it means to be a Hashemite prince or princess. They all had a strong sense of responsibility. Anyone who had any dealings with King Hussein came away feeling that he'd been in the presence of somebody very special. He always called you sir -- how are you today, sir? He had a house in Potomac, Maryland, and came here often.

Q: His mother was here.

BEECROFT: His mother?

Q: His wife.

BEECROFT: One of his wives.

Q: One of his wives.

BEECROFT: There were four wives, but seriatim. Noor, of course, was an American. The second, Queen Alia, was the love of his life. She is buried in a beautiful mausoleum at one of the palaces, just outside of Amman. Although Hussein wasn't always faithful, he was always devoted. And he was amazingly deferential. I'll give you an example. When Ambassador Wes Egan paid his initial courtesy call on the King, Hussein asks him, "Sir, would you mind if I smoke?" And the ambassador replied with a smile, "Your Majesty, it's your kingdom. You can do whatever you want." Hussein had a warm sense of humor. He appreciated that. There was an immediate bonding. Hussein's connections with the U.S. Embassy were very close. Earlier in his reign, the U.S. had helped sustain him when the going was rough -- not so much with Israel, although of course he had been one of the big losers in the Six-Day War, but with Syria. The Syrians had tried more than once to eliminate King Hussein. They tried to shoot his plane down in the 1970's. That's one reason he was always closer to the Iraqis than he was ever to the Syrians.

Q: What about relations with Iraq at the time you were there?

BEECROFT: Hussein, as you'll recall, did not support the United States during the first Gulf War. He felt that he had no option but to stay neutral, because he knew that Saddam Hussein had an army that could easily punch its way to Amman, and he also would have risked surrounding Jordan with enemies on all sides. This came into play again during my time in Amman, when two of Saddam's daughters and their husbands crossed into Jordan in the summer of '95. The

husbands were senior military officers and well informed about his clandestine programs. King Hussein put them in a guest palace for the better part of six months, the same palace, ironically, where Bill and Hillary had stayed the previous year. As you can imagine, U.S. and Jordanian agencies debriefed these guys at length. Meanwhile, Saddam's daughters are growing increasingly restless in the guest palace. They had had visions of going on to the great shopping spots of Europe, and here they were, birds in a gilded cage -- a beautiful palace, but what are you going to do there? So, after several months passed by, Saddam's son Uday arrived with a message: all is forgiven, please come home. Initially, they didn't bite. As I understand the story, the sons-in-law went to King Hussein and said, Your Majesty, we appreciate your hospitality, but we think the time has come to move on to Europe. Hussein responded, Absolutely, go with my blessing. Only one thing: your wives may not go with you. The outcome of all this was -- after what I'm sure some very interesting conversations between the husbands and their wives -- the decision was taken to go back to Iraq.

Q: Back to Iraq.

BEECROFT: Based on the assurance from Uday that they would be pardoned. So in the winter of 1996, they went to the border crossing on the Baghdad road. Across the border, there two motorcades. One for each couple, right? Wrong. The two husbands were put in one motorcade and the two wives, the daughters of Saddam, in the other one. Both motorcades left for Baghdad. The husbands were never seen alive again.

Q: Why didn't Hussein allow the wives to go?

BEECROFT: There are claims that he felt he had some kind of blood debt to Saddam. For whatever reason, the King felt that he could not and would not offend or provoke Saddam Hussein by allowing the couples to go on. My understanding is that Saddam did a very Arab thing. He did not take out the two sons. He simply made it clear to their families that they had better deal with the two sons, and they did. Meanwhile, Saddam's daughters are back in Jordan, this time as refugees.

Q: Were there, what were we doing with Jordan vis-à-vis Iraq during this time because there was an embargo on and all?

BEECROFT: Let's say that there was quite a bit going on, but I can't talk about it. We certainly were paying a lot of attention to what was happening to the east of Jordan.

Q: Was terrorism a concern of ours?

BEECROFT: Not so much. There was concern about what was then called security. Remember that we had had a very significant presence in Amman. An embassy that was one of the first purpose-built, security-reinforced Inman buildings. It's actually a rather handsome building, built of white stone, like virtually all the other buildings in Amman and Jerusalem, on a hilltop which at that point was pretty much empty. It's now been surrounded by palatial houses, including the residence of the Israeli ambassador, which was always seen as not a coincidence, although it was.

In fact, there were rumors of a secret tunnel between the American Embassy and the Israeli ambassador's residence. Absolute nonsense.

Anyway, it was one of the first Inman buildings, with thick bulletproof windows. You couldn't open them, of course. As DCM, I spent a lot of time dealing with the RSO --

Q: Regional Security Officer.

BEECROFT: -- Regional Security Officer, checking out at the housing of our staff. Looking back, I wouldn't say we were nonchalant, but we were a lot less paranoid than we are now. There wasn't the sense of imminent threat that's an everyday reality now.

Q: How did you find were there any oh, incidents, problems or anything like that during the time you were there?

BEECROFT: In short, no. When did the Khobar Towers get bombed? Was that '96? I think so.

Q: I'm not sure.

BEECROFT: Looking back on it, I was there at the last golden moment. We left Amman in the summer of '96. We drove back to Israel once more in my private car after Rabin's assassination, so things were still good enough in the spring of '96 so we could do that then. Try parking a Jordanian-plated car in Jerusalem now.

Q: How about relations with Saudi Arabia?

BEECROFT: Jordan's dealings with Saudi have historically been fairly chilly because of bitter memories of the expulsion of the Hashemites from the holy places, but also because the Jordanians tend to look at the Saudis as a bunch of country bumpkins who lucked out in taking over the holy sites and then in finding oil. There's no oil in Jordan -- no natural resources of any kind to speak of. The one time every year that the Jordanians were compelled to deal actively with the Saudis was when the Hajj came around, because there were always negotiations about arrangements for bus and air transit. You'd see pilgrims from Turkey, Syria and Palestine. Then in the summer you would see some Saudi cars, when they took their vacations. You'd see cars from the Gulf and Saudi, because there were plenty of relatives working in the Gulf who had come back, but Jordan was also seen as a nice place to go -- which it is. A great tourist destination.

Q: The Jordanians are they basically Sunni or are they Sunni or Shiites?

BEECROFT: Overwhelmingly Sunni.

Q: So, there was no Iranian connection?

BEECROFT: Absolutely none. We had nothing to do with the Iranians. They had no influence in Jordan.

WESLEY EGAN
Ambassador
Jordan (1994-1998)

Ambassador Wesley Egan was born in Wisconsin and raised in military bases both in the United States and abroad. He attended the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and served in the US Air Force. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971 and held positions in South Africa, Portugal, Zambia, Egypt, as well as an ambassadorship to Guinea-Bissau and an ambassadorship to Jordan. Ambassador Egan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: Where did you go from Cairo?

EGAN: I was ready to leave Cairo the summer of 1993 and Ed Djerejian, who was assistant secretary at the time, put my name forward as the next ambassador to Kuwait. It went so far that I was even asked to select a DCM and a public affairs officer for Kuwait. But then because of other moves among American ambassadors in the region, I was also asked about going to Jordan. When I left Cairo, what I knew was that I was either going to be nominated as the next ambassador to Kuwait or the next ambassador to Jordan. I got back to the States in the summer of 1993 not knowing and I didn't know until September or October.

Q: Okay, so we'll pick it up then. Great.

Today is the 17th of December, 2004. Wes, let's talk about, what was the situation with Jordan internally in Jordan and also with the United States in '94 when you got there?

EGAN: My predecessor in Amman was Roger Harrison.

Q: I've interviewed Roger.

EGAN: Roger and I met at least once back in Washington before I left. Roger had arrived in Amman two or three days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He arrived in Amman at the same time I arrived in Cairo and because of King Hussein's decision not to be part of the coalition that President Bush and Secretary Baker had put together to push the Iraqis out of Kuwait, Jordan was in very bad repute in Washington. My sense was that the authorities in Washington made it very clear to the King and to his government and probably to any other Jordanian official who would listen, that the White House was extremely displeased at the position the King had taken. That permeated every aspect of Roger Harrison's tour in Jordan. I don't think it was a particularly happy tour for him and I think his relationship with the King and with the King's government as a result was very strained.

After the Gulf War U.S. navy ships began inspecting commercial carriers on their way to Aqaba, which is Jordan's only port. They would stop ships in the Gulf before they arrived in Aqaba and

search them for what U.S. authorities were concerned were sanctioned goods being shipped through Aqaba to Iraq. This was a dangerous process because it took place day or night depending on what the intelligence indicated and depending on where the ships were. There were boarding parties. It was a difficult process physically to inspect cargo on ships on the high seas underway. The Gulf of Aqaba also gets very rough very quickly. It was a dangerous procedure and it was politically offensive to the Jordanians because they considered it an affront to their sovereignty. The practical impact from the Jordanian perspective was that not only were shippers of legitimate goods reluctant to ship by sea into Aqaba, but the cost of such shipping went up because the insurance companies demanded a premium for cargo bound for Aqaba. The combination of the position that the King took before the first Gulf War and the harsh feelings about Jordan as a result of that and the suspicion in Washington that Jordan was a sanctions violator and finally the fact that Jordan was still 100% dependent on Iraq for petroleum products gave Roger a very difficult assignment. It was a difficult atmosphere in which to have very productive relationships, so things were not good. The King was unhappy. Washington was unhappy. Everybody was unhappy.

Q: I understand in an interview with Roger that he was saying he kept getting sort of instructions to go and beat up on the King and much of this seemed to be, I mean the King was in a, we'll come to I think, you'll go through it again, was in a very difficult position because he couldn't take a pro-allied anti-Iraq posture at that point because it would have maybe destabilized the position of power. He said he had to try to deflect Washington he'd be told to beat up and he wouldn't beat up, that sort of thing. Were you sent there, when you went there, were we taking a new look at this? I mean we had you talked about being in the Madrid conference and all, did you have the feeling or were you told let's do some kissing and making up or not? What were you getting from Washington before you went out?

EGAN: Not exactly. Like most previous assignments, the substantive preparation for post, and I don't mean the sort of background reading that you do, but the specific policy guidance and instructions were pretty thin. There was a feeling both in the White House and in the State Department that this relationship was too important to just allow things to fester in this way; that the King had an important and influential potential role to play with respect to the peace process. As you said this was only three years after Madrid and during that three year period there had been all sorts of Jordanian-Palestinian and Jordanian-Israeli discussions not just on peace process issues, but more broadly between Jordanians and Israelis on the shape and nature of what a Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty might look like. The King I think felt politically that once the Palestinians had made their own move and once Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat had stood on the stage in the south lawn of the White House with President Clinton, after the famous handshake that everybody recalls, that the way was then open for the Jordanians to do the same thing. Although the issues were slightly different and the nature of the discussions were different, the end result was similar. Of course we wanted to encourage that.

I think there was also a feeling that there needed to be a broader regional approach to these issues and it was about this time that the first of the Middle East North African Economic Summits, the MENA summit process, took place in Casablanca in 1993 or 1994. It was an essentially political gathering, but it was a political gathering of the Arab states including the North Africans and the Israelis to look at the economic, trade, and development issues that faced the region. The

principle behind these meetings was that by getting people together and focusing their attention on practical economic and development issues, that those conversations would lead to increased commercial relationships and those relationships would rub off on the political players. The idea of dealing with Israel would become more and more thinkable and more and more palatable. The King had an important role to play in the peace process narrowly defined with respect to the Israelis and Palestinians, but Jordan would potentially also be an important player in some larger regional economic security and development issues. For all of those reasons, although it was never really stated quite that way, it was very clear to me that I had some fixing up to try to do.

Q: Nobody was telling you to per se to go out and make nice or anything like that?

EGAN: No. The most pointed element of my instructions was actually framed in the negative and not in the positive. That was that we were concerned about sanctions violations through Jordan and were concerned about Jordan's continued reliance on Iraq as a supplier of fossil fuels and on Iraq as a market for Jordanian pharmaceutical, agricultural, and some light manufactured goods. There was an existing semi-barter arrangement between Jordan and Iraq and Iraq supplied Jordan's petroleum needs at a highly concessional price and the Jordanian liability for those fuel imports was met by exporting medicines and foodstuffs and other non-sanctioned manufactured goods. This was an arrangement that everybody knew about. The United Nations knew about it and we collectively understood the need for Jordan to do this. We wished they wouldn't politically, but economically we understood their need to do it and so we let it pass.

Q: Well, I would think medicines are pharmaceuticals.

EGAN: Those were non-sanctioned goods. It wasn't the export, it was the importation, it was the marketing of Iraqi oil because this was before oil for food. This was before '96 and before that program existed so the objection was that it was an export market for Iraqi petroleum products and of course those were sanctioned. I got to Amman, met the folks in the embassy, settled in, and presented my credentials very quickly. I think I presented them within a week of our arrival. I had a very nice short hand written note from President Clinton that he asked me to give to the King when I had my first long private session with him. That first long private discussion was in fact immediately after I presented my credentials. I expect Martin Indyk had suggested that the President do such a note which basically said that Egan was a good guy and you can deal with him.

Q: Had you met the President at all and get your picture taken?

EGAN: No. As I recall President Clinton didn't do that. I did have a meeting with Warren Christopher who was then Secretary of State, but that was relatively pro forma. The only time, the only president I met before going out like this was President Reagan who loved to have not just the ambassadors, but their families into the Oval Office for a chat and a cup of tea and a couple of photographs. I did that back in 1983 before going to Guinea-Bissau and he was fantastic. My parents were there and my wife and children and even my brothers. We were a crowd of seven or eight Egans and the President had all the time in the world. They each got their own photographs chatting or shaking the President's hand. It was quite a thrill.

Q: Talk about an Irish gathering or anything?

EGAN: A little bit, you know, that kind of silly sort of ethnic stuff. He just bowled everybody over because he was that sort of a personality. It chewed up maybe 15 or 20 minutes of his time which as presidential schedules go that's a long time. There was nothing substantive about it, but it was a thrill for me and a thrill for the family. I don't think anybody since Reagan has done that as routinely as he did. I also had before going to Guinea-Bissau, this is retrospective, but before going to Guinea-Bissau had asked to see the Vice President who was George Bush at the time and much to my surprise not only did he ask me to come over to his office in the Old Executive Office Building, but we spent about an hour and 15 minutes talking about, if you can believe it, Guinea-Bissau which could not have been terribly high on the list of things to do for the Vice President. He had smart questions and thoughtful comments. As I was getting ready to leave, he said, "Now, Wes, here's what I want you to do when you get there and keep me posted." I think he meant it. I don't know how many vice presidents have done that to 36 year old ambassador going to a very far away and small place, but I don't think that sort of thing happened after the second Reagan administration. I don't believe it happened as a routine matter at all with Clinton except for people going to the most important posts or people who were close political chums and friends.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs?

EGAN: Ed Djerejian was the Assistant Secretary when I went. Martin Indyk became the Assistant Secretary while I was there and as I recall, was the Assistant Secretary throughout my time in Amman, which was through about the end of July 1998, over four and a half years.

Q: What was your impression of the King and his attitude towards the situation when you arrived there because in a way you were ushering in a new era.

EGAN: He took advantage of that. In that first of many very private and in some cases very lengthy conversations between us, he said two things of particular importance. He said he didn't feel that he knew President Clinton. He was proud of the fact that, as he used to like to say he had strong personnel relationships with every U.S. President since Eisenhower, but that he didn't have one with Clinton. My response to that was that that was one of the things I was there to work on.

The second point he made to me was that he regretted that we had had a misunderstanding about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. I said to him that I didn't think it was a misunderstanding. I thought it was a disagreement. I told him I would always rather deal with a disagreement because at least in the case of a disagreement, you can figure out what's wrong and what to do about it. A misunderstanding can linger for ages and sour all sorts of aspects of the relationship. I don't think we had a misunderstanding. I think we understood perfectly clearly, we just didn't agree with the position that the King had taken. So, we talked a good deal about that. Towards the end of that conversation, the King said he had thought that we and the Europeans had not recognized that there might still have been a way to negotiate the Iraqis out of Kuwait and to address some of the security concerns the Kuwaitis and the Saudis had with respect to Iraq's future intentions. He said he thought there were opportunities for discussions that were never pursued and that he

regretted that. He said there had been domestic Jordanian issues that he had to consider, but that his greatest concern was that the coalition had not given Arab negotiations enough of a chance to succeed. We agreed that that was one of the unknowable issues, but we also agreed that we needed to find a way to put our bilateral relationship back together. Its one of the things that I think made my four and a half years in Jordan as satisfying as they were: both governments, however articulate or inarticulate they may have been at certain points, were interested in the same thing. That combined with the fact that things were sort of ripe for happening in the region with respect to Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians and more broadly in the context of other bilateral tracks and perhaps most importantly from time to time the multilateral tracks that grew out of the Madrid conference. All sorts of people and groups who had not had much to do with each other before were sitting down to talk about issues that were important to them.

The positive inclination in the U.S. Jordanian relationship and the optimistic atmosphere in the region were very encouraging. Its hard to remember now, to look back a decade and realize or remember, how optimistic people were. From Madrid and from the 1993 Israeli Palestinian handshake in Washington things that had been inconceivable for years were now suddenly possible. Everybody felt it and wasn't just because of Yitzhak Rabin. Even though for King Hussein, Rabin was the Israeli leader with whom he had the easiest and most productive personal relationship. That was an important part of it, but it wasn't all of it. It was a sense that the parties to the conflict and the people outside the region who could make a difference in whether that conflict was resolved or not, principally the United States, were engaged, were serious, were ready to commit political and financial resources and wanted to get this damn thing resolved.

Q: In this initial talk with King Hussein, did he discuss Israel?

EGAN: Only in the sense that he and Rabin had an open channel, that they talked frequently, directly, that his younger brother the Crown Prince, Prince Hassan, was also involved in those discussions. And that his security officials and Israeli security officials had an open channel and dialogue. There was a man, Ali Shukri, who had been on the King's personal staff for years who had originally joined the palace staff as a communications specialist because King Hussein was an avid amateur radio ham.

Q: They talked to him from all over the world.

EGAN: All over. He'd send out CQ cards to people and he loved it. There was a very small building not much larger than the first floor of this ADST house that contained the King's radio room, not his official government communications office, but his own personal radio room and a private working office. Ali Shukri was the man the King used to maintain and to facilitate all sorts of back channels that he had, not just with the Israelis at various levels including the political, the military and the intelligence side of the Israeli government, but also, on occasion with me. If there was something that the King thought he needed to communicate to me that he for some reason didn't want it known that we had met face to face, his majesty would call me and ask me to stop by. Maybe 10% of the time the conversation was not with the King, but was with Ali. It worked very well. It was very effective. It bypassed a lot of bureaucratic stuff and was a useful channel. He had channels with the Israelis at many different levels and got a lot of

business done in those channels. There were very few obstacles. If the King needed to, he simply picked up the telephone and asked Ali Shukri to put him through to Rabin.

Q: Just to put it in time perspective, at that point Jordan and Israel had not signed the peace treaty. No relationship technically.

EGAN: Well, there was a book written some years ago and published in this country by Columbia University Press by an Israeli historian named Avi Shlaim. Avi is now working on a biography of King Hussein. I've met with Avi Shlaim couple of times to talk about this biography project, it's an authorized biography. The title of his earlier book is Collusion Across the Jordan and it traces I think very accurately the nature of the quiet relationship between the Hashemites and various Israeli governments since the time of King Abdullah, Hussein's grandfather. It's a fairly rich and dense historical survey. Perhaps unique in the Arab world, Jordan has always had a way to deal with the Israeli authorities in whatever sector was required and they've had those channels for 60 years. You know, it's interesting in a demographic sense and in a communications and commercial sense, if you take the area west of the Jordan River, what is now Israel and the occupied West Bank, and you take the area east of the Jordan River which is now mostly Jordan, family linkages communications channels and commercial relationships in that area have always run east west and west east. In some cases, towns in the north of what is now Jordan have closer ties with towns in the northern West Bank than they do in the towns of the south of Jordan. This isn't just because the West Bank was Jordanian until 1967. It's that the demographics of the region are such and the Palestinian portion of the Jordanian population is such that most of those relationships are across the river rather than north south. So, you'll find a Jordanian in Irbid in the north whose got more ties to the west across the Jordan River than he may have with the capital in Amman and certainly than he may have with Jordanian cities in the south like Aqaba and Maan. The historical setting is such that given a desire to have those channels back and forth, it was not a particularly difficult thing to do and as I said I think you can trace it back to the very beginning of Transjordan under Abdullah when it was carved out of the old Palestine mandate. You couldn't say that about the Syrians or the Lebanese or the Egyptians or the Saudis or anybody else.

Q: I thought while we're there, why don't we do a little bit of talking about the relationship, you got there and you can allude to later on how it changed, but what about with Hassan and Syria at the time you got there?

EGAN: In the course of my time in Jordan one of our initiatives was to help demine parts of the Jordanian border. The Jordan Valley, because of the conflicts with the Israelis, and the Jordanian-Syrian border are heavily mined. The Syrian armed forces actually moved into Jordan in 1970 during Black September. Syrian President Assad, who was chief of staff of the air force at that time, did not play a direct role. It was a land invasion, but the Syrian-Jordanian border is heavily mined as a result. When the design of the demining program began we had to decide what areas we were going to work on first with the Jordanian armed forces. The obvious answer to that was the Jordan Valley, principally the area between Lake Tiberius and the Dead Sea. At one point I asked the army general in charge of the program about the north, along the Syrian border. He said they wanted to leave those mines in place. That reflects that traditional security anxiety the Hashemites had always felt towards the Syrians. The Syrians of course look at Jordan

a little bit the same way the Spanish look at Portugal wondering why the other state even exists. To many Syrians, Jordan is all part of greater Syria, which is what it was as a province under the Ottomans. You will remember that after the war Ali's son Faisal, a Hashemite was placed on the throne in Damascus. The French objected and the Syrians objected. So, Faisal became the first king of Iraq. So, you had this Syrian antipathy towards the Hashemites as well.

Hamas and other Palestinian rejectionists, those who did not accept the existence of the state of Israel received whatever training and financing they required often on Syrian soil and then entered the West Bank through Jordan. They'd be smuggled across the border, the Syrian Jordanian border, make their way south and then cross into the West Bank either just north of the Dead Sea or between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. There was a flow of Palestinian rejectionists determined to commit acts of violence against Israelis in the West Bank. The Jordanians of course knew that if any of those operations were traced to somebody who had crossed into the West Bank from Jordan that the Israelis would retaliate against the Jordanians. There was a defensive rationale for the Jordanians to maintain as tight a control over the Syrian border as they could. If you went to visit the head of Jordanian intelligence in those days, one of their proudest exhibits was of things they had seized from people trying to get across the border from Syria into Jordan. Bazookas, automatic weapons, knives, explosives, all the hardware that a Palestinian militant, rejectionist or a terrorist would use. It was a relationship, for all of those reasons, based on suspicion.

In the four and a half years that I was in Amman, the King never went to Damascus and Assad never came to Jordan. They did talk occasionally by telephone or through intermediaries, but they didn't have much of a relationship. The King was intent on trying to keep the peace process focused on Israeli-Palestinian issues. I think we, the United States, made a mistake several times when we flirted with the idea of an Israeli-Syrian track first, thinking that if we could resolve the problem between Israelis and Syrians, including the status of the annexed Golan Heights, that that would give the rest of the process a big boost. Well, the King never saw it that way because to him that was a sideshow. That was not the real issue, but if you could resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue, then he thought other things would probably fall into place. Of course he looked at his own actions as an example of that because it was only after Arafat and the PLO and the Israelis made the moves that they did in 1993 that King Hussein felt that he was then in a position to proceed toward a peace treaty himself with the Israelis.

If the Oslo agreements and the Israeli-Palestinian relationship in 1993 had not evolved as they did, you would not have had a Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in 1994. There's no way any Arab front-line state leader was going to take that step before the Palestinians. When Assad died and his son the ophthalmologist became president, I think initially it was difficult for the Jordanians to take this young man seriously. He had been out of the country for years. He had none of the, he didn't appear to have any of his father's charisma or leadership characteristics. I think there was a feeling that the old guard in Damascus would coopt him very quickly and that there wasn't much likelihood that Syria's domestic or foreign policy would change very much. I think that has eased a bit since the King's death and Abdullah's ascension to the throne if for no other reason the fact that Abdullah and Bashir are of the same generation. Like the view towards Morocco where you have a new, young king, there is a feeling that these guys in their '30s and early '40s are in a position to cut through some of the problems their fathers and grandfathers could not.

The Jordanian-Syrian relationship has traditionally been a very strained uneasy one, anxious and built on a record of suspicion between the two.

Q: How about the King and Arafat and the Palestinians at the time?

EGAN: Well, I don't think the King or his younger brother, who was then Crown Prince, Prince Hassan, I don't think any of them liked Arafat. They knew him as a thug, as a killer, as a man whose movement threatened the Hashemite throne directly in the 1970s when there were armed clashes between Jordanian armed forces and Fatah. It was from Jordan that the PLO moved to Beirut and then eventually to Tunis. They recognized Arafat as the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and they recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, but they had no love for Arafat. They weren't going to spurn him or shun him or give any overt display of displeasure or opposition to him. He was a political fact of life and they dealt with him for that reason. There was no love lost among them. I think they thought he was a bumbler. I think King Hussein would have shared the view that many people now hold that Arafat had spent so much of his life as a PLO leader that it was almost impossible for him to really imagine a state in which his resistance was over and a state of an independent Palestine might take its place and live in some secure relationship side by side with the state of Israel. I think it was very difficult for him to imagine the transition from freedom fighter to the head of a state. Now, however ex officio or honorary that title may have eventually been, the apparatus of running an underground resistance movement and the apparatus of running a civil government are rather different.

Q: Yes.

EGAN: I think that deep inside the Jordanians were suspicious that he was not up to that challenge.

Q: Were there PLO representatives in Amman?

EGAN: Oh, sure. There was an "ambassador".

Q: What about the Saudi connection at that time?

EGAN: Well, you know, the Hashemites are all from Saudi Arabia. They're not Jordanians. I mean they're not from the region of Transjordan. They're foreigners in that sense and I was amazed at how often the Saudis would express to me what they claimed was their fear that King Hussein had designs on reestablishing Hashemite rule in Mecca and in the Hejaz in western Saudi Arabia. The Saudi ambassador and others said to me more than once that this was a real concern. They didn't like the King. In fact the King never had very many close friends among the heads of state and heads of government or monarchs in the region. It was as true of the Saudis as it was of the Egyptians. The Egyptians, I think, thought he wasn't serious, that he was troublesome, too independent minded, not rich. The Hashemites are not a wealthy family. I never felt that there were particularly close ties between his majesty and any of his counterparts in the region. Absolutely including the Saudi. Certainly including the Kuwaitis. Nobody could stand the Kuwaitis. Most people in the Arab world can't stand them. When the first Gulf War began

and 7,000 or 8,000 Kuwaitis on holiday in Cairo had taken all of the presidential suites and the swankiest accommodations in the city, there were lots of Egyptians delighted to see Saddam Hussein give the Kuwaitis a bloody nose.

The most practical irritant I think in the Jordanian-Saudi relationship was the way the Saudis, and the Egyptians too, have always considered themselves the leaders of the Arab world. I think they resented any moves or posturing or event that put Hussein in a prominent and positive light with respect to Arab affairs. There were certainly Arab governments who criticized the King for his signing his own peace treaty with Israel, even the Egyptians. The Egyptian-Israeli treaty was signed 30 years ago, but they're totally different arrangements. If you read the text of the agreements that came out of Camp David and the agreement that became the Jordanian-Israeli Treaty of Peace, they are totally different documents and they tell you a lot about the fundamental nature of the relationship between those states.

Q: Well, while we're at it, could you explain what are the basic differences?

EGAN: If you look at the Camp David agreements, they are essentially a cessation of hostilities, a cease-fire and a schedule of withdrawal, military withdrawal from the Sinai. It's a tremendously important, but a fairly narrow set of agreements. Their implementation required the creation of a multinational force, the MFO based on the Mediterranean coast of the Sinai Peninsula led principally by us, but I think with 15 or 20 other nationalities participating to monitor the cease-fire in place and the schedule of withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai. The MFO still exists. It was in my view a fairly narrow set of agreements focused principally on the disengagement forces. If you look at the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, its focus is how they're going to cooperate with respect to water, security, communications, cultural and artistic exchanges, trade, border demarcation, landmine removal, intelligence exchanges. It's all about how they're going to do things together. It reflects the fact that at war or at peace the Jordanian-Israeli relationship is a much more complicated, intertwined set of relationships. If it works, then it sets the stage for a very warm and productive bilateral relationship. If it doesn't work it sets the stage for a lot of frustration on the part of people who had hoped that the signing of that treaty would change their lives in some important ways.

The Egyptian-Israeli treaty doesn't inspire much and whether Egyptian-Israeli relations are up as they seem to be a little bit now or whether they're down as they have been recently, doesn't depend very much on the nature of those Camp David agreements. Whereas in the Jordanian case, the warmth or the lack of warmth, cold peace versus warm peace as journalists like to say, depends a lot more on people's expectations given what was a very broad set of agreements on a large range of issues that affected a lot of people's lives very directly.

Q: Then the last one, Iraq at this time, the relationship there.

EGAN: I think King Hussein was willing to give Saddam Hussein more of a benefit of the doubt and for longer than almost anybody on the region. Large sectors of the Jordanian economy had been expanded and developed to supply the Iraqi market. This was particularly true in pharmaceuticals. There is a huge Jordanian pharmaceutical industry and that industry lived and died on its ability to export to Iraq. And as I said before, Jordan was totally dependent on Iraqi

oil. There is also the sort of fuzzy, very subjective fact that there was of course a Hashemite on the throne in Baghdad until the royal family was liquidated in the 1950s. The man who is to this day the grand chamberlain of the royal court, Prince Ra'ad, was I believe the only member of the Hashemite royal family in Baghdad to survive the coup. He was in Europe at school. There are familial feelings about Iraq, not in the sense that the Hashemites would ever return to the throne in Baghdad, but simply based on the fact that they once were on the throne in Baghdad. Third, the size of the, the percentage of the Jordanian population that is of Palestinian origin as opposed to East Bank origin is probably 60% or more and the PLO and the Palestinian movement in general had been beneficiaries of Iraqi largesse for years. Finally a large part of the Jordanian intellectual and artistic elite is in fact Iraqi. And you remember one of the immediate results for Jordan of the first Gulf War was this huge flow of Palestinian refugees out of Iraq and Kuwait into Jordan. It's a relationship with a complicated history. Prior to the Gulf War, Jordan's relationship with Iraq was much closer and more intimate than Jordan's relationship with any of her other neighbors. They did military training exchanges; their economies were linked; fuel supplies were a dominant factor; the export market was a dominant factor and there were many Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin who felt that Iraq was an important patron for their resistance movement.

Q: Well, during the time you were ambassador.

EGAN: Let me just finish that because the essence of your question, did this change and what was it that changed? Yes it did and the change in the King's mind I believe took place when Saddam Hussein's son-in-law defected.

Q: Two sons-in-law, wasn't it?

EGAN: Two in I want to say '95, late I think it was '95. Hussein Kamal defected on the grounds of the royal palace in Amman. That's where he held his first press conference and he and his entourage and wives were all put up in the royal guesthouse. We and the Jordanians began a period of intense intelligence debriefings of Hussein Kamal. I remember when he first defected within a matter of days the then deputy director of operations at the agency and a team and flew to Amman, stayed with us in the residence and we had several meetings with the Jordanians to talk about how we were going to exploit this defection. Things that came out of that with respect to what Saddam Hussein's assets were, what his weapons program had been and might be in the future, and what his domestic rule really was like with respect to Kurds and other minorities and the brutality of the regime, I think really struck the King. It wasn't too long after that defection that King Hussein said to me privately, he had been mistaken with respect to Saddam, his regime, and the threat he posed. It was from that point on that Jordan began to play a much more important role with us in support of not only maintaining sanctions, but also flying southern watch missions in southern Iraq which we had previously based out of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. We actually had a squadron of F15s and F16s in Jordan flying into Iraq almost every day.

Q: I didn't realize that.

EGAN: Very few people do. Flying southern watch missions into southern Iraq. Probably couldn't have managed that with the Jordanians before Hussein Kamal's defection. The number

and the size of our joint military training operations in Jordan increased substantially. The number of port visits increased substantially. Our intelligence exchange, which had always been very robust, got even stronger. So strong and so close that by the time I left in 1998 if you had asked me with whom in the world we had the closest intelligence sharing relationship, I would have said first the United Kingdom and second Jordan. Closer, more productive intelligence cooperation than I have ever seen, than I had ever seen anywhere. I think the turning point in the King's mind was the picture that Hussein Kamal painted of the Saddam Hussein regime. If King Hussein had ever any doubt as to the nature of the Iraqi regime, those doubts were dispelled listening to Hussein Kamal. Now, of course the irony is that some of the stuff that we got from him was rubbish.

Q: Particularly the weapons of mass destruction and that sort of thing.

EGAN: Oh, yes, chemical weapons programs and all the rest of it.

Q: I would think, you know, people defect in countries that claim to be neutral or neutral and they usually say, okay, you can stay here, but you have to take a low profile and don't mess around with other intelligence.

EGAN: His defection was not low profile.

Q: But I mean in a way it was an act, a very positive act by opening up this defector to our intelligence operation.

EGAN: Yes, but of course that cooperation was possible against the background of what had always been a very robust bilateral Intel relationship with the Jordanians. I mean going back years. King Hussein called me one night, and it was quite late, and I went down to the palace to see him and he handed me a cassette tape. He said it was a tape of a conversation between two heads of state in the region which he found very disturbing. I took it back to the embassy to transcribe and translate it. Three things surprised us: that this conversation had actually taken place, that the Jordanians had the technology to pull the conversation out of the air, and that the King would give it to me. That the relationship was so close and so trusting that they could do that. In a particular area that incident also led to even greater exploitation of certain technical assets that we had in the region that made an important contribution to our understanding of certain things that were going on at the time. My point is this took place before Hussein Kamal's defection. So, that defection did not create an intimate intelligence relationship, but it allowed some aspects of it to develop in directions and to a degree that not only might not have been possible before, but might not even have occurred to the two sides as something worthy of exploitation.

Q: This is tape eight, side one with Wes Egan. Yes?

EGAN: I need to back up a second because there are a couple of things that I've left out. After the first couple of private conversations I had with the King, one afternoon he called me and the British and the French ambassadors to his working office. He was there with his prime minister, Abdel Salaam Majali, who had been the leader of the Jordanian peace team negotiating with the

Israelis. He said our interdiction of commercial vessels bound for Aqaba by the U.S. navy with British and French support had to stop. He said it was intolerable and that he couldn't allow it to continue. It was an ultimatum. He told the three of us we had to figure out a different way to do this. His ultimatum produced what became the onshore sanctions inspection regime in Aqaba conducted by a British firm whereby ships would not be bothered while at sea, but 100% of everything that was offloaded in Aqaba was open to fairly easy inspection. It took the sting out of this affront to Jordanian sovereignty. It also, from a practical perspective, actually increased the volume of goods that could be inspected because it was done on the docks rather than on the high seas. I had argued at the time that if we were going to bring the inspections regime ashore, the place to do it was not so much Aqaba, the place to do it was on the Iraqi-Jordanian border because to try to figure out what really was on its way to the Jordanian market and what was going to be exported as a sanctions violation is sometimes a very difficult call and the process of implementing that inspections regime although it went fairly smoothly was always a potential irritant in the nature of our bilateral relationship. This was early spring of 1994. Again, one of the factors that I think motivated the King's thinking was the concern that so much of his domestic economy depended on trade with the Iraqis that it made the sovereignty issue even more of an issue for him.

I thought the object was to devise a system that allowed those inspections to take place in a way that was as minimally offensive and as practically effective as possible. I think eventually we got pretty close to that and it ceased to be much of an issue.

Q: Did the oil for food regime out of the UN with Iraq did that develop while you were there?

EGAN: It did in the last couple of years and from the Jordanian perspective, it was potentially a great opportunity. But the process by which contracts were approved in New York under that program was so slow that it created another whole world of Jordanian complaints. I would be called in and told that the Jordanian contract for Q-tips, for example, had been sitting for 11 months in committee. Why are you blocking this? The nature of the arguments that we had about whether particular contracts would be approved in the sanctions committee or not may have outweighed, in the final analysis, the benefit the Jordanians got from participating in the program. The biggest benefit they got was that their petroleum needs were supplied and there was some counter trade. The strongest argument we could have made with the Jordanians to wean them off Iraqi petroleum exports would have been if somebody in the region, like the Saudis, would have been willing to offer petroleum to the Jordanians at a concessional price, close to what they were getting from the Iraqis.

There's the pipeline that runs from Saudi Arabia through Jordan into Syria which was full but the Saudis were simply unwilling to consider supplying Jordan's needs on a concessional basis. We never really pressed the Saudis very vigorously on this.

Q: Well, you've got the tap line.

EGAN: Yes, tap into the tap line, but over three or four years that never got anywhere.

Q: Wes, that brings up a question. What about your relationship if any with our ambassador in Riyadh, our ambassador in Tel Aviv and our ambassador in Damascus and maybe Lebanon, too? I mean was there, were you able to talk to our guy in Riyadh and say, hey, how about this tap line deal?

EGAN: I didn't do it. I didn't deal with Riyadh, but I did have that relationship with my counterpart in Damascus, Chris Ross. Chris used to come to Amman occasionally and stay with us and chew on issues that we had different perspectives on or a common interest in pursuing. I had an equally good relationship with the ambassador in Tel Aviv, the consul general in Jerusalem, and the ambassador in Cairo who for most of that time was Ned Walker. We didn't do it so much by phone and e-mails were still a rarity in those days. I did not even have e-mail in my office in Amman, but we went back and forth very freely in cable traffic in official-informals and we also saw each other periodically. Those relationships were very close. We were a pretty tight group and I think worked very well together in those days.

Q: How about with the Near Eastern bureau?

EGAN: Ed Djerejian was the Assistant Secretary. Ed was somebody I had known for a long time and that relationship was very easy. When he left, you remember Ed went to Tel Aviv, I think within about a year of my arrival in Amman, a move that kind of surprised everybody, and he didn't stay long. I don't think he stayed 12 months in Tel Aviv. He took a job as the director of the Jim Baker center at Rice, which is where he's been ever since. Ed was a good friend and the tooting and froing with him on these issues was a very easy and natural one.

Warren Christopher was the Secretary of State when I started and he was a regular visitor to Jordan. I liked Warren Christopher. I thought he had a modesty about him that is not common in American secretaries of state. He had a proper and good relationship with the King and with other members of the royal family and when necessary the Jordan government officials as well. His visits were always productive and useful. What I used to like about him was that if he didn't understand something, he asked. King Hussein had a large estate in Surrey. The King was there at one point and Warren Christopher was going to be in London and it was, there was a reason, I can't remember what it was at the time, but there was a reason that the Secretary needed to see the King. I went to London for those meetings and in a dinner conversation with Secretary Christopher the evening before the meeting, and with Bob Pelletreau too, who by that time was Assistant Secretary, Warren Christopher asked why the Jordanian Royal Family were called Hashemites? I can imagine a lot of secretaries of state not knowing why they're called Hashemites, but I can't imagine many of them being so straightforward and honest to say, I just don't understand this, what does that name mean? We explained it to him and I respected that in him. He was a very easy man to deal with and as I said he had a sense of personal modesty that I always appreciated and it worked very well with King Hussein because King Hussein was not an arrogant man. He was extraordinarily gracious, almost to a fault.

Q: Somebody, I can't remember who dealt with him, said he always would call him sir.

EGAN: Absolutely.

Q: And would say, do you mind if I smoke?

EGAN: Absolutely. He said that to me. We were sitting in his office one afternoon and said to me, "Sir, do you mind if I smoke?" I said, "Your majesty, this is your country. I think you can do pretty much as you like."

It's a lot easier to deal with a monarch who is really in charge than with a messy democratically elected government that's got an obstreperous legislative branch and government views of its own. When we really needed something important done in Jordan, or with Jordan, it was often simply a matter of my sitting down with him and explaining our need. That's not to suggest that he always agreed, but when he did, it happened like that and when he didn't agree there was no way around him. There was no other point of power or influence in that system that you could leverage to get the King to change his mind. It either worked with him or it didn't. But it was a very efficient process. I would get an instruction from Washington on whether the Jordanians would agree to this or that and I would often be back to them in 24 hours with a cable that said I spoke with the King last night and here's what we can do or here's what we're not going to be able to do and here's what I think about how we should proceed. It was a lot more efficient than dealing with a lot of other officials. He was always an extremely articulate, civilized, gracious, and modest man to deal with in that way.

On the other hand, his accessibility sometimes meant that Washington officials took him for granted. But even with those people, he was always very solicitous, gracious, and accessible. Sometimes I think accessible to a fault. I'm not sure every visiting official should assume that he or she will be received by the head of state. There was often a presumption that almost any official out of Washington could ask for and get time with the King. I think he was often too polite to say no, although he did occasionally, but generally he was too polite to say no. I also think it was very calculating on his part because I'm sure that he sensed that American officials who had time with him expanded his influence or his impact on the diverse and decentralized nature of our own government. Some official from the Department of Commerce could meet with the King and when the Jordanian ambassador in Washington then needed something from that Commerce official, the door opened a little more easily. Occasionally there were people in State and at the White House who grew patronizing about the King. I did not find *it so* much in CIA or DOD.

Q: Did you in your embassy have any problem with as has happened in a good number of our embassies where the CIA has a very close relationship with the intelligence apparatus of another place. You see what I'm getting at? I mean sometimes the relationship almost bypasses the ambassador; well, there's a problem there.

EGAN: No, I did not. There was a period not just in Jordan but throughout the region in which our own intelligence services put money in the pockets of several monarchs. They were rented and in some cases the amount of money that flowed was not insignificant. Those days are by and large gone. The bribery aspect of the relationship was no longer a factor. I had always also made it a point to make sure it was understood both by station personnel and by non-station personnel that the intelligence staff was a fully integrated and important part of the embassy. It was not some separate operation anymore than the defense attaché's office was a separate operation or

the AID mission was a separate operation. These agency heads were fully integrated members of the country team and they all worked for me. That was not difficult in Jordan, in part because of the nature of my own relationship with the King, other members of the royal family, including the Crown Prince, and government ministers from the prime minister down. One of the advantages of having developed a good relationship with King Hussein was that his ministers knew what access I had and knew how the King felt about his relationship with me and what role I played in the bilateral relationship. So, there was never an issue of somebody else in the embassy being able to deliver on something that the ambassador couldn't. I will give you a couple of examples.

The Crown Prince at one point decided that he wanted to get a special briefing from us on a weekly basis, an intelligence briefing from us on developments in Iran. He raised this desire with me and I said, sure. The COS and I reported this request to Washington and said we wanted to be responsive. The first two or three times the briefing was done I attended. I didn't say anything. I sat while the COS briefed the Crown Prince. After I'd done that two or three times, I no longer went. The point I was trying to make to the Crown Prince was you're getting this briefing because I think its useful and important to do. With respect to the armed forces chief of staff and with respect to the director of Jordanian intelligence, particularly with respect to the latter, I made a point of developing a very close personal and operational relationship with them too.

When the DCI came to visit and wanted to see the head of Jordanian intelligence, it was the American ambassador that took him. It was the American ambassador who knew the GID director's family and the circumstances of his life. The important thing to do when you manage a relationship like that is to make sure that your presence is never an obstacle to getting the business done. I tried to make sure that was never the case. I led those relationships not because I was sitting there in my office saying, by God I'm the ambassador and these things don't go on without me. I was able to do it because the Jordanians knew that if they needed something, that their chance of getting it was far greater when I was the one they approached. My presence was, in their mind, to their advantage.

Its not unlike a point I made about what makes an effective DCM. That DCM is going to be useful in playing the DCM role if the other senior staff see him or her as an asset and not as an obstacle or liability. One of the odd results of this was that I would sometimes be asked by a Jordanian official if I could help them persuade the King of something. At one point, I ran the risk of getting sucked into the relationship between King Hussein and his younger brother, Crown Prince Hassan. Hassan asked me to intervene on something with the King for him. I said "no."

Q: All right. Well, I think we're going to stop at this point. A couple of things I wanted to mention and you'll have other things, too. Did water come up as a problem that you got involved in, water rights? I mean, you know the Jordan River and all that. So, I'll ask about that.

EGAN: This is next time?

Q: Next time. Rabin, were you there during the assassination of Rabin? All right. You talked about the Crown Prince and how did you see him, what roles he was playing and also other political currents that were going through there, the queen and her role.

EGAN: It's important we talk about that point.

Q: Obviously the peace treaty when we get there and I'm sure there are other things you might think about and make note of.

EGAN: Let's make sure we touch on all of those the next time.

Q: Okay. Also, military equipment. Were there any developments there?

EGAN: There's military equipment, there's debt forgiveness, President Clinton was the first president of the United States ever to speak to an Arab legislative body and he did that in Amman. There were lots of those.

Q: How about Madeleine Albright? You've talked about Warren Christopher and how you saw Madeleine Albright and her, and also as there developed in the or seemed to develop in the Clinton administration an increasingly focused group on Israel and a sense at least I saw it as sort of a sense of isolation of you might say the Arab side of things. I may be wrong on this, but it seemed to have an Israeli bias there.

EGAN: Maybe we're going to need two more sessions.

Q: I mean this is fine. Look, this is extremely important.

EGAN: Is this interesting?

Q: Oh, very interesting. So, we'll talk about all that.

Q: Today is the New Year. It's January 3rd, 2005. Wes, I had mentioned a few minor little things there, so if you want to, you said you'd like to continue on talking about the Crown Prince and the relationship at that time.

EGAN: Just to wrap that part of it up. King Hussein had two brothers. His younger brother was Prince Hassan and he had been the Crown Prince when I was there. He'd been the Crown Prince for 34 or 35 years. The King also had an older brother, Prince Mohammed, who unfortunately suffered from the same emotional instability that the King's father, Talal had suffered from and it had made his father unfit to govern and that's why Hussein became king as such a young man. Prince Mohammed was I think the president of the Jordanian chess club, but was not otherwise particularly involved in affairs of Jordan. Crown Prince Hassan of course was. He was an extremely well educated man, very thoughtful, widely read, very literate, fluent in several languages including Hebrew. At the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in 1994 he made several of his remarks in Hebrew at the podium. He stayed in quite close touch with the Israeli intellectual elite and spoke widely in Europe and was a regular attendant at gatherings like

the World Economic Forum. He used to speak at Oxford and at St. Paul's and was very active in interfaith dialogue on an international basis. He was probably the only member of the Hashemite family who I would call a real intellectual, and he prided himself in that. I think it's probably hard for any of us to imagine how difficult it must have been to be the younger brother of an iconic figure like King Hussein. It's just a huge; it's a large and deep shadow to live in. Hassan's role was complicated by the fact that he'd been made Crown Prince so early and he was in that position for so long and yet under the Jordanian system, under that constitutional monarchy, except when he was regent when the King was out of the country, he has no real executive authority. He couldn't actually give instructions to ministers or to officials of government or to officials of parliament. He could make his views plain to them and he certainly had a following and there were people who if they had a call to see Hassan or a discussion with Hassan about one thing or another would follow up on it almost would follow up on it as a wish expressed by the palace as they used to say, but it didn't really have any institutional weight in the system.

The tragedy of that I always thought was that he therefore never had very many opportunities to demonstrate to the people of Jordan what kind of a monarch he would be when he succeeded the King and that worked to his disadvantage. People didn't feel they really knew or trusted him with those authorities and he never had the opportunity to learn from the exercise of royal authority for more than brief periods as long as his older brother was alive. His life was also complicated somewhat by the fact that he was married to a woman who was extremely well educated and intellectual in her own right and a very strong personality. And there were many people in Jordan who were not terribly fond of Princess Sarvath. She was the daughter of a very senior Pakistani diplomat. She was also Oxford educated and she just rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. I think there were serious questions as to what kind of a queen she would make.

When the King was near death in January and February of 1999, his decision to make his son Abdullah, his oldest son by Princess Muna, king, his successor rather than the Crown Prince, there was a lot of head scratching outside of Jordan. But I think in Jordan itself, a lot of people were relieved. It's unfair and unfortunate for Hassan because he's such a decent guy, but his relationship with his older brother was up and down. I think relationships between or among brothers are the most difficult blood relationships for people outside the relationship to understand. I think King Hussein had some longstanding concerns about what sort of monarch Hassan would be. I think when he was back in the States getting medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic, he was hearing things from Jordan about how his younger brother was comporting himself as Crown Prince that bothered him. That's not to suggest that everything that he heard was correct or true because Hassan certainly had his detractors, but his decision to pass over his younger brother in favor of his oldest son was an enormous political and family decision for him to take. I believe that one of the contributing factors also was that Hussein wanted his oldest son by Queen Noor, I wouldn't say wanted him to be king, but I think that son was a real favorite. As I watched that young boy grow up, when I first got to Jordan he was only 14 and when I left he was almost 19, those are formative years for a young man, and I think I mentioned earlier that the King routinely brought him to Washington for meetings with the President and DCI and the Secretary of Defense and the rest of it. So, he was clearly showing this young boy how you do it at that level. I think he wanted from Hassan some sort of assurance that his oldest boy by Noor would be Hassan's successor, would be Crown Prince and be Hassan's successor rather than Hassan's own son. I suspect that he did not get the level of assurance that he felt he needed

before his death for the transition to Hassan to take place and it was one of many reasons, but one of the important reasons, why he turned to Abdullah who is now King Abdullah II. Nobody could have been more surprised at that turn of events than Abdullah himself. He had never expected to be king. He, I think, saw his future as a military officer. When I got to Jordan he was the head of Special Forces. He then became the King's military chief of staff, not chief of staff, but advisor, but he fully expected his life to be spent in uniform in the service of the Hashemite kingdom and the people of Jordan. He was astounded when this all happened. I think he's probably, of all of the potential successors to King Hussein who were of age, he is the man who will follow best in his father's footsteps. I think the record since 1999 has borne that out.

Imagine how hard it must have been to be the Crown Prince of 35 years, imagine how equally difficult it must have been to be King Hussein's successor. Like his father, Abdullah has sustained a very close relationship with the United States. In fact I suspect there are some in Jordan who feel his relationship with the United States is too close. I think the Crown Prince's dismissal about a month and a half ago, was related to the fact that some in Jordan felt that Abdullah had been too supportive of the United States in Iraq and was too close to us politically. It was one of those very delicate nests of relationships to manage.

Obviously another important person in all of that was Queen Noor. I don't really know how most of my predecessors handled the relationship with her. I know that one or two of them had a difficult relationship with her. I don't particularly know why. She went through a period when she was not particularly popular in Jordan, when she and the King were first married. That was not so much a criticism of her or of a reflection of her as it was that her predecessor, Queen Alia, a Palestinian had been such an enormous favorite. I think that passed and certainly in the period that I was there you did not hear people speak poorly of the queen. She had foundations and activities and initiatives particularly related to the role of women in development, and human rights. She was a very talented, is a very talented woman. She was one of the first women to take a degree in architecture at Princeton.

My wife and I called on her shortly after we arrived. It was a perfectly normal, very pleasant conversation over tea for an hour or so. She could not have been any nicer, but for a variety of reasons it was clear to me that she didn't feel any particular need to have a relationship with the American ambassador. She had a reputation of being suspicious of the way in which the United States conducted itself overseas particularly in the Middle East and particularly in respect to the intelligence side of the operation. She was always quick to be anxious about or suspicious about what may or may not have been going on in the intelligence channel. Part of that I think was the result of the period in which she grew up in the '60s and '70s. So there seemed to be an inclination to maintain a bit of an arm's distance with the American ambassador. For my part, of course I was not there to have a relationship with Queen Noor. I was there to have a relationship with her husband, which is what I focused on. We saw each other often, particularly at palace events, and I sometimes sat next to her at concerts and fund raisers. It was a perfectly normal relationship, perfectly civilized. She was always very nice both to me and my wife and we called on her before we left and it was a very pleasant and personal farewell after four and half years. We have stayed in touch with her on occasion since then. There was no reason for U.S. representation in Jordan to be managed or for any part of it to be managed with any particular eye toward her and her role. I think that was very likely true of my predecessors as well. She was

certainly an important personality and she was the love of King Hussein's life at that time of his life and she played that role I think very effectively. She was certainly a very special representative for Jordan in Europe and the United States and is still active on lots of causes that today were important to her then.

Q: Did you see the Crown Prince the time you were there as someone to impart messages or to keep informed or how did we deal with the Crown Prince?

EGAN: Well, the Crown Prince when I was there was the heir to the throne. I mean the plan was and it was that when the time came, either at the time of King Hussein's death or the time of his incapacitation, that Crown Prince Hassan would become king. I was clearly interested in having a personal and professional relationship with him that kept him not just well informed, but kept him understanding of what we were up to in the bilateral relationship and on important regional issues, peace process principally. It's the same way, in a way, it's the same way anybody would be smart to deal with a strong deputy who had a confirmed future as the principal to do what was both necessary and natural to cultivate and sustain that relationship so that when the time came for him to become king, that in and of itself, did not produce some sort of hiccup or misunderstanding in the relationship. Now, King Hussein himself used his brother in lots of discrete and important ways. Several of the channels with the Israelis ran through the Crown Prince. There were a few relationships with the Arab intellectual community in the region and scattered globally particularly in Europe, which he managed for the King. He was often in meetings that the King was almost always in and at least one of the meetings that the King had had with visiting American dignitaries, not necessarily all of them, but at least one of them and there were occasions in which those visitors would also be a useful reason for the visitor to call on the Crown Prince himself, not all the time, but occasionally. We tried to stay sensitive to that. Of course he was not only his brother's brother, but he was also heir apparent and had a conversation with his brother on just about every subject you could possibly imagine that affected Jordanian internal or external politics, policies and relations. He was very much a part of that mix. He was rarely a decision maker. The King didn't go to the Crown Prince for decisions. I would sometimes go to the Crown Prince after I had a long conversation with the King about something and brief him on it. I think I mentioned at one point he asked if he could have a regular intelligence briefing from us on Iran and we did that. Of course he had his own contacts with influential Iranians and being part of the sort of international interfaith movement, there were lots of opportunities for contact. There was even a period in 1994 prior to the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, when we were trying to find a mechanism that could focus on some of the developmental and economic issues that were going to be important to the normalization of relations among Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians. We formed an interagency group that Hassan was part of representing the King on those issues related to economic and regional economic cooperation and development issues that affected the West Bank and Israel and Jordan. He was thoughtful and active on that. As I say, he maintained extensive ties with both Israeli and Palestinian elites, but I would say probably more on the Israeli side than on the Palestinian side.

Q: Now, let's turn to water during the time you were there, what about water?

EGAN: Water is the single greatest impediment to economic growth and development in Jordan and probably the second most sensitive point of contention between Jordanians and Israelis. I say second because I think cross border terrorism and the desire of Palestinian rejectionist elements to come into the West Bank and into Israel from Jordan were of paramount concern. Jordan has one of the lowest water consumption rates per capita of any country in the world. The single largest component of our non-military assistance program was in the water sector. The Jordanian problem is limited supply and a very creaky and leaky system for distribution. Jordan regularly went through a period of two or three months every year in which the city water system was simply shut down. There was no water for apartment houses and offices and residences. There was a thriving market in water that was trucked into the city from small springs. Every house and apartment building had a large galvanized tank on the roof for water storage. We used to estimate that if you put a cubic meter of water into the supply pipe you got less than half of that out the other end because the system leaked and because there were so many illegal taps into it.

Water was also and had been for years a major issue in Jordan's relationship with the Syrians, the West Bank and the Israelis. The Jordan River is a trickle by the time it actually gets to the Dead Sea. I don't think a bird could get its knees wet in it there's so little. Much of it is pulled out of the river for irrigation. There are to this day discussions that occur occasionally between Jordanians and Israelis on how best to manage the water resources of the Yarmouk River which comes down and separates the Golan Heights from northern Jordan. There is an enormous aquifer that lies under the Negev and Wadi Aqaba and the Jordan valley. There are several dozen Israeli farms on the Israeli side whose wells come in to Jordan underground at an angle. There is a constant argument about how rapidly you can lift the water out of that aquifer because if you lift it too fast, the saline water below will contaminate the fresh water aquifer.

The Jordanians have gone to such extremes that they are lifting fossil water out of large prehistoric deposits in Wadi Rum that are not replenished. When it's gone it's going to be gone. The lack of water is an enormous restraint on Jordanian economic development and it is a politically and strategically sensitive resource issue in Jordan's relationships with the entire region.

Q: Were there any major disputes when you were there?

EGAN: Constant disputes that the Israelis were lifting too much; that the tapping into the aquifer across the Jordanian border was not consistent with the treaty; that the Syrians were talking about building a dam in the upper Yarmouk that was going to reduce the flow into the area where Jordan had extraction rights; that the agricultural development on the West Bank and Israeli side of the Jordan River was too intense and was overusing the source, etc. The Jordanians were almost constantly on the defensive and they would discover things going on that they would often come to us to help resolve. When we felt we could play a constructive role in those issues we did. The problem of the encroachment of Israeli farms across the border in Jordan was an issue that they involved us in quite directly when negotiating the 1994 treaty. The final result was that the Jordanians and the Israelis came up with a device whereby Israel was allowed to lease from Jordan those portions of the farms that had encroached onto the Jordanian side. It was as I recall a no cost lease for 25 years. That allowed the border to be officially demarcated for the first time since the Palestinian Mandate. It allowed Israeli agricultural activity in that part of the

desert to continue unabated and it maintained the semblance of Jordanian sovereignty over the acreage actually involved. It will be interesting to see what happens after 25 years when those leases expire, but it certainly solved the problem at the time.

Q: Was there any other attempt to have a neighboring truck farm run by Jordanians or next to the Israeli one?

EGAN: No. Jordanian agricultural activity was concentrated in the Jordan River Valley except for a little activity at the southern tip of the Dead Sea. It was not only produce, but it extended to fish farms and processing.

Q: Well, moving down, what was your view of experiences with the Jordanian Israeli peace treaty, which was signed when by the way?

EGAN: Signed in the fall of 1994. The issues that needed to be addressed in a Jordanian-Israeli agreement had been known for a long time and there had been on again, off again discussions between Jordanians and Israelis about how those issues might be resolved for many years. But they were, they could never go very far prior to the PLO decision at Oslo to begin the Oslo process. As soon as Arafat made that decision, as incomplete and as tentative as it may now look in retrospect, as soon as it was "legitimate" to have such negotiations with the Israelis, the wraps were off the Jordanians. The King said to me more than once that the Oslo agreement opened the door for Jordan. The White House ceremony was in September of 1993, the famous handshake between Rabin and Yasser Arafat, very soon after that Jordan-Israeli working groups began to meet to discuss the components of a treaty and how the issues involved in that agreement needed to be handled. Many of those discussions took place in Washington.

We kept an eye on all of those discussions and negotiations, but the Israelis and Jordanians were no strangers to each other. They were eager to get this done. They wanted our help when they felt they needed it, but not otherwise, and they did quite an extraordinary job of coming to terms with all those issues by the fall of 1994.

There had been discussions in London between Jordanians and Israelis almost immediately after Oslo was agreed that we did not know about until after the fact which is fine. Majali was the prime minister of Jordan at the time and he was the leader of the Jordanian delegation in those negotiations. Someday he'll publish his book on those negotiations. It was never a case of our trying to crack the whip over two reluctant parties. They were ready. The objection to the treaty at the time was that it was a treaty the King had decided on negotiating and finalizing and that it was not a treaty between the people of Jordan and the people of the state of Israel, it was a treaty between the Israelis in the form of Yitzhak Rabin and the Jordanians in the form of the King. The Crown Prince was very involved in many of these negotiations. There was enormous optimism that the Palestinian-Israeli track, the other bilateral tracks that had been launched at Madrid in 1991, and the multilateral track that was designed to address water, security, economic development and not just the Jordanians, Israelis and Palestinians, but including the Syrians, the Lebanese, and the Egyptians, all those things were in play and I think there was, I know that there was a feeling in the region and it was very strongly felt in Jordan that this could actually work, that for the first time the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looked as though it could be resolved.

It looked as though its resolution was an extremely high priority for the United States and the Europeans, but mostly the United States; that we were actively and aggressively involved; that we would do everything we possibly could to make it happen and to support it after it happened. Even though there were skeptics, the underlying sense was one of optimism. As we got closer to the end of President Clinton's second term, some of the air was beginning to leak out of the balloon. Up until 1997 there was great confidence that this could work and things were changing. You had the creation of qualifying industrial zones in Jordan, the first of which was up north in Irbid and this was an essentially bonded manufacturing site that involved Jordanian and Israeli labor and capital. Manufacturing took place in Jordan. There were some 5,000 Jordanians employed when it first began and the products were mostly jewelry and lingerie for Victoria's Secret. It used to be incredible to go up there and see these very proper Muslim women stitching together scanty lingerie for Victoria's Secret.

Q: My understanding is that most Arab women of any pretension whatsoever will probably have those underneath anyway.

EGAN: I'd let that be your understanding, but as long as the final product contained a certain percentage of non-Jordanian input, in this case Israeli input it entered the United States duty free. There is now one in Zarqa just outside of Amman and one in Aqaba. It produces employment. It contributes to trade. It's good for Jordanians.

Q: The fostering of this in order to improve the economy of Jordan.

EGAN: We encouraged it because of a belief that the economies and therefore the development of Jordan, Israel and the West Bank were bound up with each other. There were some who talked about the region almost in the same way you would talk about the Benelux states. Israel relies on Palestinian labor. Jordan relies on regional trade patterns and Palestinian markets. Jordan is also in competition with the Palestinians in cement. Jordan can produce cement for the Israeli market cheaper than Palestinians can. Many of these things never came to fruition. Part of it was related to security concerns with the transport of goods particularly bulk goods across the border. Part of it was related to a heavily protectionist instinct on the Israeli side and part of it was related to a Palestinian authority that did not want to relinquish its market with the Israelis in things like cement. So, it proceeded awkwardly, but the intent was wherever there was an economic or trade advantage that you could exploit successfully to the benefit of the three parties it would be good for the region, for the parties themselves and for the progress towards peace. It was taken as a given that those economies needed to relate to each other effectively and if you did that effectively, political accommodation might follow.

Q: How did the peace treaty when it was signed and details were known, how did it resonant in Jordan?

EGAN: People at the outset, there was a fair debate about it in the Jordanian parliament and there were those who felt the treaty was a mistake, particularly those within the Muslim brotherhood and in some Palestinian quarters. There was skepticism about Israeli intentions and in some cases among people who thought that the King had done it under pressure from us which was not the case. But there was no thought that his authority to do this or the authority of his government to

do this could be questioned. It was approved by the parliament and I would say that most Jordanians even if they were skeptical that it would succeed and that it would be good for Jordan, said okay, let's do this. I remember many conversations with Jordanians in which they would say, all right we've taken the step. What do you think the situation is going to be like two years from now? How's it going to look three years from now? Is this really going to work? Is this really going to work on the security side? Are these trade opportunities really going to come to fruition? Will we really benefit from it? It was all in the context of the signed treaty. The agreement had been reached, let's go forward with it however skeptical some of us may be.

That was 10 years ago. The optimism has faded. Movement on many of those issues has either slowed considerably or stopped and there is no perception that the United States is really committed to putting its own credibility and resources on the line to bring the peace process to conclusion. That's a very sad and tragic development and it need not have been so.

I had been in Aqaba for several days before the actual signing was to take place. President Clinton was there, not as a signatory, but as a witness. The President was going to be coming to Aqaba from Cairo. I recall vividly several very long nights on the telephone from my hotel room in Aqaba to the party in Cairo going through all of the various details of the signing ceremony. The aspect of it that I never understood is that for whatever reason, the United States did not want a Russian representative to have any prominent role in the ceremony or even to sign as a witness and I can't tell you how many instructions I received from various authorities with the President or in Washington to try to persuade the Jordanians to make sure that he was not on the dais. He was and he signed as a witness. It happened and it was a great event.

Q: Let's talk about the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. He was prime minister, wasn't he?

EGAN: He was prime minister.

Q: You said president before.

EGAN: No, I meant the prime minister, the president of Israel, Weizman, and Shimon Peres were all there. Rabin was prime minister.

Q: Okay. How did that, we can talk about your reactions and what happened immediately when you heard about it and then its aftermath.

EGAN: I was at a dinner at the home of the Minister of Planning, Rima Khalaf. She's now the head of the Middle East North African division of UNDP. She was one of the principal authors of the first Development in the Arab World Report that UNDP published a couple of years ago and they're going to do three of them. Rima got a phone call from the palace telling her that Rabin had just been assassinated. There were several other members of the cabinet there, there was nobody there from the royal family. I think my wife and I were the only non-Jordanians who were there. We were absolutely stunned. The King was profoundly affected because he considered Rabin a true partner in the effort to find a way towards peace. He respected him as a military man. He thought that because he was a military man he could talk with him in ways that he couldn't with either the president of Israel or Shimon Peres who was the foreign minister.

King Hussein in fact didn't particularly like Shimon Peres, thought he was a professional talker. But he liked Rabin. He dealt easily and directly with Rabin, in person, on the telephone, whatever the circumstances were.

Q: They had been dealing off and on for quite some time.

EGAN: They had known each other almost their entire lives, both as enemies and as political figures and as men. It was a very real and special relationship. The fact that Rabin was the man with whom Jordan had negotiated peace, and the man to whom they would rely on for the implementation of the Israeli side of that peace treaty, and the fact that Hussein genuinely felt that he had a special relationship with Rabin and could deal with him in ways that he couldn't deal with any other Israeli political figure, particularly any other civilian political figure, made Rabin's assassination was a terrible blow. The King went to Jerusalem for the funeral, played a very prominent public role in that funeral, stayed in close touch with Rabin's widow. He wasn't politicking. These were very instinctive decisions and reactions. When Rabin was, when eventually Netanyahu became prime minister, this was a man who Hussein simply couldn't tolerate, didn't trust him, thought he was deceitful, felt he represented an element of the Israeli domestic politics that was contrary to the interests of peace and to Jordan's own stability. Whenever he could, he chose not to deal with him. When Barak became prime minister, the King felt that this was the closest he was ever going to get again to a personality like Rabin. Barak shared a military background and, at least in the early days, a military man's approach to these issues. He was eager to develop a relationship with the King. They worked fairly well together. I think had the King lived beyond February of 1999 certainly through the beginning of the second intifada in September of 2000, that his relationship with Barak would have deteriorated rapidly. Netanyahu was the prime minister when Mossad attempted to assassinate the Hamas political operative in Amman, Khalid Meshal. I think as far as the King was concerned, this was just the kind of stuff you'd expect from Netanyahu.

Q: This is tape nine, side one with Wes Egan. You were saying?

EGAN: There was never anyone who could have replaced Yitzhak Rabin in King Hussein's mind.

Q: Was that a feeling at the time, I mean was there a feeling?

EGAN: Yes, it was obvious. It was obvious. Every time you saw them together. Every time one of them would describe to you the conversation they just had with the other. Any time either one of them said to us and we're going to do this and he's going to do that, you could bank on it. It worked and the systems that flowed from those two, the civilian government, the officials, the folks on the intelligence side and the folks on the military side worked together in ways that reflected the empathy between Rabin and the King.

Q: Sitting in Amman, when Rabin was killed, was there a feeling, okay at least a great start has been made and shall continue or a feeling that you know.

EGAN: Yes.

Q: What's going to happen.

EGAN: In the King's mind and in the mind of many Jordanians, Rabin was critical to the success of that relationship and the implementation of the treaty. The first question in many Jordanians' minds was who was the killer? You can shudder to think what the repercussions had been if his assassin had been a Palestinian. Particularly a Palestinian rejectionist from Hamas or Islamic Jihad who had moved through Jordan on his way to Tel Aviv. I'm sure, I know, that for many Jordanians, including the King, one of the very first frightening questions within seconds of learning of his death was who did it and what the implications would be. There was great fear at the time that the good work that had preceded Rabin's death would unravel. They worked hard, the Jordanians worked hard on the relationships that followed because despite Rabin's death they obviously had an interest in pressing on. Things got so bad during the period when Netanyahu was Prime Minister that there were several occasions when Netanyahu would come to Amman and the King wouldn't see him. He would meet with the Crown Prince and that was it. And he wouldn't be in Amman for more than an hour.

Q: What was the feeling? Was it felt, was it Netanyahu coming from, well in the first place I think you better just for the record explain who killed Rabin and why.

EGAN: He was an extreme right wing Israeli who thought Rabin was negotiating away Israel's security, military superiority and political influence of the region. That he was negotiating away the future of Israel. As awful as it is to say, thank God it was an Israeli.

Q: Well, with Netanyahu, what were you getting from, talk during this time with your relations with our embassy in Tel Aviv, were you sharing the concerns about Netanyahu?

EGAN: Absolutely. The communication I think among the ambassadors in Tel Aviv, Cairo, Damascus and Jordan and to a lesser extent Beirut could not have been better. There was no obstacle whether I was talking to Ned Walker or Martin Indyk or Chris Ross. There was no obstacle in communications among us at all. Washington made pretty frequent use of the telephone. I've never liked it as a way to do business with the Department if for no other reason than it lends itself to unconsidered or ill-considered suggestions if not instructions and because there are no fingerprints. I know when I get, or I knew when I got a telegraphic instruction that however highly classified it might have been and however narrow and restrictive its distribution might have been that at least it had gone through some clearance process. I never had that confidence with telephones. I would not have that confidence if I had done much business by e-mail. We talked to each other a lot and of course you had several things that stitched us together, not just the substantive issues and the need to talk to all of those parties about moving those issues forward, but the constant flow of congressional delegations. The regular visits by the secretary of state, the secretary of defense and later in my time in Cairo with George Tenet, the DCI.

There were occasions in which Rabin would fly, would helicopter to Amman and the American ambassador would be on that helicopter with him and I would be on the ground with the King waiting for them and we would inevitably, not inevitably, but often there would be a first large

meeting that might include Martin Indyk and myself, Dennis Ross, and Aaron Miller and the special Mideast coordinator team. Then that meeting would break down and there would be a single meeting just between the King and Rabin or between the King and Dennis and I, or Rabin and Martin and Dennis, etc. So we saw each other a lot. Also, before each of the MENA [Middle East North Africa] Summits, my counterparts in Riyadh, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Damascus, Beirut and I would come back to the States as a team and spend anywhere from 10 days to two and a half weeks meeting with the business communities or the banking communities or the big commercial investment houses in New York or wherever the audience happened to be, all over the country to say this meeting in Amman is important. We would talk about it, each of us, from a bilateral perspective, from a regional perspective and from a peace process perspective. So we were a sort of, it was called a Middle East North Africa road show and we would do this in New York, Houston, Los Angeles, Atlanta, New Haven, Boston.

We were on the road and we were advertising the benefits of private sector participation in this economic summit process. You get to know each other. Not only do you get to know each other quite well doing something like that, but your success in doing it is to a large extent dependent on how well and sympathetically you work with each other. There was probably a closer bond both personal and professional among those of us who were stationed out there as ambassadors during that period than any time I can ever remember in my previous assignments. I suspect it was rather unique. I expect that although under different circumstances in a different environment that it continues today because if your hosts are in touch with each other so intimately on these issues, you damn well better be in touch with each other yourself.

Q: Were you sharing particularly with our embassy in Tel Aviv, were you sharing a sort of the concern about Netanyahu?

EGAN: Absolutely.

Q: Where was he coming from?

EGAN: What the King's reaction was, why he felt this way, how they were going to deal with Netanyahu on this issue, how they would respond to him on this issue, what I thought we ought to be doing about the relationship with these people. It was, as I said, there was no, I said what I thought in an analytic sort of way and I had never had any hesitation telling both Washington and my counterpart in Tel Aviv what was on the King's mind and why and what I thought the right thing to do about it was. I trusted them and I worked to protect the confidential nature of those relationships. When the King spoke to me about an issue, his feeling about Netanyahu for example. There's no doubt in my mind that he had every expectation that I would share that with Washington and at least with my colleague in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem. If he didn't want me to make them aware of that, he wouldn't have told me about that. I think we were all careful in handling those issues among those leaders and I never got burned, not once.

Q: Did you feel that Netanyahu was coming from a commitment for a greater Israel or was he a wily politician and what was sort of the feeling you were getting about him?

EGAN: You know, I only met Netanyahu personally once. That was during the Madrid peace conference in 1991. I think the context in which I met him was his role as spokesman for the Israeli delegation to Madrid. I don't have a lot of personal experience with him on which I can base my opinions of him. My opinions of him are based in large part on how the people I was closest to reacted in their relationship with him. That view on the Jordanian side was that this was a very smart, brutishly ambitious political personality who had zero interest in resolving any of the final status issues of the peace process: withdrawing from the West Bank, removing settlements, negotiating the creation and the sustained existence of the Palestinian state. That he had no hesitation about taking steps that undermined Jordan if they served his purposes and what he perceived to be the purpose of the state of Israel which is why when Mossad tried to assassinate the Hamas political operative in Amman during Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister, that kind of move didn't surprise the King or the Crown Prince or the head of Jordanian intelligence. That was to them very much in character. They did not like him. He had no redeeming grace as far as they were concerned and they did not think he was good for the state of Israel.

Q: This brings up another point. What about the team that Clinton put together particularly towards the end? As I mentioned before there was a feeling that outside observers like myself sitting there watching and hearing that the Arab specialists in the State Department or elsewhere were sort of excluded from the equation for the most part and that a team was put together very competent, but at the same time they were all Jewish or seemed to be all Jewish and so much is in the perception. If you're an Arab and all of a sudden you're facing the American team and they all are Jewish background, what are you going to think?

EGAN: One of the prime ministers of Jordan, said to me shortly after the arrival of the special Middle East coordinator, it was Dennis and Aaron Miller and I think Martin Indyk was part of that visit, possibly also Dan Kurtzer. The team arrived and we were on our way to the palace for the first of several meetings. I was walking up the stairs with the prime minister of Jordan, Sharif Zeid bin Shaker, a cousin of the King's, a man who had been a young ADC when the King returned to Amman after his father's institutionalization to become regent and eventually to assume the throne, and he asked me if there were any gentiles left in the Department of State? It was said in a light vain, but he was serious. It was one of those questions that of course I didn't have to actually answer. The fact that so many of the members of the team entrusted to conduct these discussions were Jewish was obviously noticeable to the Jordanian side. The King never said a word about it to me, but this prime minister and others did. It wasn't, it was an observation, it wasn't as if to say and don't you need to do something about that, it was an observation, but it was an observation bred of a certain I don't want to say suspicion, anxiety or sort of who are these guys really working for attitude that you sometimes come across. Whatever their personal or occasionally expressed private thoughts about that may have been, however, there was no question in their mind that this was the group the President was using and would continue to use for the conduct of those negotiations as the peace process was pushed forward. Keep in mind, this was a team that was working for a president who over time became very actively and personally involved and engaged with the process. There was no question that they spoke for the administration, not just for the Department of State, but for the administration on those issues. Whatever their other feelings might have been, they were the envoys. Over time, as issues were addressed and resolved in an atmosphere in which people were optimistic about

progress, whatever their reservations might have been became a non-issue. I don't think at least in terms of my involvement with Dennis and the rest of his team, whatever the sort of musical chairs it might have been, these guys knew the issues inside out and, particularly Dennis, knew the personalities, Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian. I don't think there's another American with the possible exception of Ed Abington when he was the consul general in Jerusalem, I don't think there is another American official who in those years spent more time with Yasser Arafat face to face on these issues than Dennis. When you get right down to it, that counts. I think they respected Dennis and his team for it. I think they knew that some issues were resolved in a way sufficiently positive for the Jordanian side that might not otherwise have been the case. They knew that that's all these guys did. Unlike the Secretary of State who had other issues on his plate, this is all these guys did and the fact that they represented an administration that was as committed as it was on policy issues and on assistance issues to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is what determined in the end how they dealt with them.

Q: Was there concern in Jordan giving the way you were towards the end about the weakening influence of Clinton in his fight with the Republican control of congress and well the sex scandal, but I mean there were other issues, too.

EGAN: The best illustration I can give you of that was the visit of an enormous congressional delegation led by Newt Gingrich. The Jordanians handled congressional delegations extremely well. They had a lot of practice.

Q: A lot of practice, watching the Israelis and learning from the masses.

EGAN: I don't think they learned from the Israelis. There was no doubt in their mind how the system worked. Don't forget the King was a man who dealt with every president since Eisenhower. He was not a neophyte. Hussein and the people around him were instinctively gracious and civil. They knew that there is something even the most egalitarian American seems to hold in some awe with respect to royalty.

Q: Oh, yes, no doubt about it.

EGAN: Whether it's the prince of Monaco or the royal family in Riyadh. Hussein knew that perfectly well. Gingrich's delegation, I think there must have been 35 or 40 members, started in Israel for three or four days. Gingrich himself made several public statements that just drove the Jordanians wild. They were very partisan, very ideologically driven. They were unhelpful with respect to the peace process itself and what people were trying to do. He was very public and very prejudiced about it. I met him and his delegation at the Allenby Bridge and they were passed off to me by I think it was probably Martin Indyk and Ed Abington who was the CG in Jerusalem and we had this routine down very well. They'd sort of be offloaded on the Israeli side of the bridge and they'd all come across and they'd get on our bus on the Jordanian side and we did it the other way as well. Of course the Allenby Bridge is nothing to write home about. It's a little World War II fjording bridge essentially and the river itself is probably not more than 12 feet wide at that point. You don't feel like you're crossing the Mississippi there.

We got them all on the bus and I always used to use the time it took to drive from Allenby up the escarpment to Amman. That was my time to stand at the front of the bus with a microphone and tell them what I wanted to tell them and respond to whatever questions they had. It was the first time I'd ever met Newt Gingrich. He's an aggressive intellectual and he's one of these men who seems to me anyway, one of the first things he does when he meets you is make a series of decisions in his own mind about whether you are worth paying any attention to or not, whether you know what you're talking about, whether you have the strength of your convictions, whether you're important, whether you're influential, whether you can make things happen, whether you can't, whether you're a jerk, whatever. He goes through a series of little tests on you and then he makes a decision pretty quickly I think and I doubt that he changes his mind easily with respect to first impressions. We had a long discussion all the way up to the palace. It took about 45 minutes and this delegation was immediately received by the King, the Crown Prince and I think every member of the cabinet in a sumptuous conference room. Received, briefed, fed a little bit, not entertained because it was a business meeting, but given ample opportunity to respond to any question they had. The Jordanians were extremely well prepared, not just as individual ministers, but as a coordinated cabinet this is the message we want this man to take away from Amman.

As we had planned for this trip, one of the things we wanted to do, was for Newt Gingrich to visit a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. There are more Palestinian refugees in Jordan than anywhere else in the world including Gaza and the West Bank. A million plus in 10 UNRWA camps. We wanted, we thought it was important for the Speaker to actually get a sense of what these camps in Jordan were like. The Speaker's office and the Speaker himself wouldn't have anything to do with it. I think they felt that they would be set up, that there might be a demonstration, that there would be embarrassing questions, that it would somehow tarnish his visit. In the end that was not included in the program.

After this very comprehensive and very well done and stimulating briefing at the palace, the plan was that the entire delegation was going to move to the King's out of town residence where he would host them and their spouses for dinner. So, we're talking about 100 for dinner and a meeting as well, a small meeting with the King. As we were organizing ourselves to leave, the Crown Prince, I'm standing there talking to the Speaker, the Crown Prince and I and the Speaker are talking about something and Hassan says to the Speaker, "You know, rather than go out to my brother's place on the bus, Mr. Speaker, why don't you come with me? Let me drive you in my car. I'll take you out and we can talk a little bit more in the car."

So, the Speaker thought this was a wonderful thing to do and the Crown Prince got behind the wheel of his Land Rover and Newt Gingrich sat in the passenger seat in the front and I and the sergeant-at-arms sat in the back, just the four of us. Rather than taking the gate, I knew as soon as this started, I knew what Hassan was going to do. Rather than take the gate that would lead out to the King's residence where the dinner would be held, Hassan drove out the gate on the opposite side of the palace grounds which empties out right into the city of Amman and proceeded to drive through the oldest of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Hattin, in downtown Amman. It's a very urban part of town. The Crown Prince is talking away about the city and the population of the city and the Palestinian issue and kids are coming up to the side of the car and waving and he stops and shakes hands and talks with some shopkeepers and stuff and after about 15 minutes of this the Speaker says to me and to the Crown Prince, "Well, what part

of town is this? It looks like a very poor part of town. What's this part of town called?" The Crown Prince looks at him and says, "Well, this is the oldest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. There are 89,000 Palestinians in this camp." The Speaker said, "Well, where's the barbed wire? Where's the gate? Where are the guards? Where's the wall?" The Crown Prince told him, "That's not what refugee camps in Jordan are like." We then had a long proper discussion of the refugee component of the Palestinian population and what goes on in this particular camp and what some of the other nine are like. And the Speaker, who was a smart guy, just sucked all this up like a sponge. We got to the King's residence, the delegation and I met with the King for an hour and then the King and Queen Noor hosted a wonderful dinner for the delegation and their wives.

Two days later when the Speaker was getting ready to leave and I was taking him back down to the Allenby Bridge and we were sitting together in the front seat, he said, "You know, maybe I should have started my first ever visit to the Middle East in Jordan rather than Israel." I said, "Mr. Speaker, maybe you're right." The Jordanians did a superb job. He was a very good and smart listener and he learned something and his delegation learned something in the process. It's just an example of how skillful the Jordanians could be. I'm never sure whether the Speaker really knew the little trick we pulled on him to get him into a refugee camp, but once there, he took full advantage of it and learned something from the experience. Jordanians knew how to deal with Americans and particularly knew how to deal with the Congress. They knew where certain authorities and power actually lay and who they needed to persuade to their views to accomplish their objectives and by and large they were pretty good at it. Take note for example that Jordan is today I think the third or fourth largest recipient of U.S. bilateral assistance in the world. This is a small, but very strategic and important country. They were declared a major non-NATO ally in the mid '90s. We provided them with a squadron of F16s. We do an enormous amount of joint military training in-country with them and as I said earlier, we had to my knowledge the second most intimate intelligence liaison relationship that I know of with any country in the world. They're very good at it and Dennis and the peace team crowd represented a part of Washington and the Jordanians understood and they dealt with it appropriately.

Q: How was Sharon viewed at that time? Was he the boogie man?

EGAN: He was not in power.

Q: He wasn't in power at the time.

EGAN: He was in disgrace living on his farm. This is the man that fell from grace at the time of Shatila and they didn't have much time for Sharon, but he wasn't a factor. He wasn't something they had to deal with.

Q: Madeleine Albright. Did she come or Warren Christopher?

EGAN: She came often. She came first when she was still the perm rep in New York. I think we knew that she was to be nominated. I don't think she'd actually been nominated as Secretary of State, but we all knew it was going to happen. She came to the region to begin to get to know some of the players and of course in our case that was principally the King and the Crown Prince

and the prime minister. We hosted a dinner for her with most of the members of the Jordanian cabinet at the residence and I took her to see the prime minister. Sharif Zeid bin Shaker was one of the most gracious, debonair, suave men you would imagine. Sort of a Jordanian Maurice Chevalier. He was just wonderful. She was intrigued to meet such a man, a type I don't think she'd come across before in the Arab world. I also took her to meet the King.

It's hard to imagine two Secretaries of State more different than Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright. Christopher was a prominent and experienced attorney and a former deputy secretary of State. He was a very low key, modest, self-effacing man, a very easy person to deal with and to get to know. Madeleine Albright had a very different background, much more political and with quite a different personality and style. Warren Christopher was always extremely well prepared. He had internalized whatever it was he had to say or wanted to get and would sit with the King and others and have a real conversation, sometimes a debate on points that we disagreed on. The King never had a scrap of paper in his hand and didn't read the papers, didn't read briefing papers. Warren Christopher to the best of my recollection, never had a piece of paper in his hand. The thing I noticed about the change between Christopher and Madeleine Albright was that when she was in that same circumstance, she always had a set of three-by-five cards and she had them in her hand and visible. Sometimes it was almost as if she was reading the card or reading the bullets on the card to the King or whoever. They found that unusual and I don't think had had much experience with that sort of obviously scripted presentation. I think it left a question in their mind as to how carefully the Secretary of State listened to how they responded and it was therefore a narrower, less free flowing, less natural feeling in those discussions. And I think it had an impact on how their relationships developed. There was no question that she was the senior member of our cabinet. There was no question that she spoke for the President. Those were not issues. Jordanians were too smart for that, but it was I think a very different, I think those questions of style made it difficult for their relationships to ever become particularly natural or warm. I don't think it had a substantive effect on what was accomplished. I think it was a factor that the Jordanian side simply kind of absorbed and dealt with and proceeded as best they can. To the best of my knowledge neither one of them ever went back to Jordan after they left office.

It's difficult for me to judge which one was more effective in Washington. The Department of State was important in the U.S.-Jordanian relationship, but not critical. They were important things in the relationship with Jordan that the Department in some cases had very little to do with and there were some good important things that happened despite the Department of State. But the Jordanians were magnanimous with the Secretaries of State because there were so many things that tied Washington and Amman together in those days.

Q: You mentioned military equipment and all that. Did that play much of a role?

EGAN: Huge. Both with respect to equipment and to training. The Jordanians had long been asking for a squadron of F16s which eventually, in I think 1997 we finally found a device by which we could provide them with a squadron of F16s as a no cost lease. The terms of the agreement were that after a certain period of time the aircraft title was actually transferred to Jordan. There were some costs to the Jordanians on the training side and spare parts and maintenance, that kind of stuff, but we were able to find a way to satisfy that. We ran the largest

international military and education training in the world with Jordan. We trained an enormous number of Jordanians in the United States. Air force and army. An extensive schedule of port visits and two or three huge in-country joint military exercises every year, not as large as Bright Star in Egypt, but very large.

We also found a way eventually to forgive about \$700 million in official debt. This was about 10% of Jordan's entire debt burden. When I arrived in 1994 their outstanding debt was about 96% of GDP and servicing that debt was a huge drain. What a lot of people including a lot of Jordanians didn't realize is that we had to find our own budgetary resources to buy that debt back at a discounted rate, like 28 cents on the dollar or 10 cents on the dollar, whatever the figure was, you had to get it out of our budget for the purposes of treasury's books; you had to actually find the money to buy back that debt at a discounted rate and I think a lot of people in the States and in Jordan didn't realize that you can't just sign a piece of paper and say the debt's forgiven.

Q: In training, one of the things I've read about an American military man who worked with the Egyptian army and was saying a real problem in dealing with any and he used the term Arab, military is that there was not the desire to share knowledge. In other words, if you became the tank repairer for a certain type of tank you weren't as an Arab non-commissioned or even an officer, did not feel it was a good idea for your own personal advantage to train the people under you how to do this. In other words, you accumulate knowledge and this is very Arab.

EGAN: It's very Egyptian.

Q: It's very Egyptian. Did you find that with the Jordanians?

EGAN: Not particularly, but I certainly did find it with the Egyptians. There were the famous stories about spare parts in Egypt because we built a huge tank plant outside of Cairo. So, the issue of inventory of spare parts was always a big deal. You would find supply controllers, inventory controllers who a division, the quartermaster for a division would come to the inventory to the supply quartermaster's office and say, you know, I need six new tank treads or whatever it was he needed and the guy wouldn't issue them. It wasn't because he didn't have them. It's because if he gave them to that division then he wouldn't have them anymore and his stocks would be down. There was no concept that these things are only useful if they're put to work in the field. I did not, I believe we did not find that with respect to the Jordanian army forces which were much smaller and were almost entirely East Bank Jordanian, very few Palestinian-Jordanians in the armed forces. The King was a military man and his sons were all military men.

Q: Oh yes.

EGAN: There's a long history of training and education, both in the UK and in the United States. That's not characteristic of the armed forces in Egypt, but it is in Jordan. Those problems, those sort of personality, psychological issues were not a significant factor and were certainly not an obstacle to the success of our bilateral military relationship.

Q: Would you, you've talked about Clinton. Did Clinton come often?

EGAN: He came only once. He came when the treaty was signed in 1994. The King went to Washington two or three times a year, routinely two or three times a year and would meet with the President and the Secretary and the Secretary of Defense and DCI and do the rounds on the Hill. He understood the importance of maintaining those relationships. From saying he didn't know or understand President Clinton their relationship evolved dramatically to the extent that in 1998 after I had left, the King was at the Mayo Clinic desperately ill and the President called him and asked him to come to the Wye plantation to try to push the Israeli and Palestinian negotiations to the point of closure. You may remember photographs of the King in those days. He looked like a ghost. He was in the last three or four months of his life. Nobody knew that at the time. He may have known it at the time, but the rest of us didn't. When I had I can't remember whether we had talked about this before, but in the spring of 1998 I had flown back to the Mayo Clinic with the King and spent about two weeks with him in Rochester, Minnesota while he went through what we all thought was a final stage of his treatment. After that...

Q: Excuse me, what would you be doing with the King?

EGAN: I was in constant touch with Washington about his health, how he was doing and what the prognosis was and the plan was that when he finished this period of treatment and examination at the Mayo Clinic, we were then going to come to Washington for a meeting with the President and others. I would have been back in the States with him anyway. I simply came back two weeks early and was invited by him to go with him to Rochester and be there through this period. The prime minister, the foreign minister and much of the cabinet were also there. His doctors gave him essentially a clean bill of health. Their view was that he was going to be okay and he felt pretty good and he looked pretty good. He flew because he always flew. He always did the takeoffs and the landings. After their meeting the President and the King spent a little time with the press on the portico of the West Wing. After the King and his party drove off, and I found myself standing there with the President who didn't seem to be in any particular rush to go off to some other meeting. I said to him, I said, "You know Mr. President, this will probably be the last time I'm going to have the privilege of joining you in a meeting with the King because I'm leaving in July. That's the end of my assignment and I want to thank you for all the help that you have been in the course of this relationship and on issues related to the peace process over the last four and a half years." He and I wound up sitting down in the Roosevelt room completely alone for about 30 minutes talking about the King and about Jordan. It was in that conversation that he said to me that he thought the King was one of the most fascinating, interesting men he had ever met. We talked about the peace process and we talked about Jordan and the bilateral relationship. I just thought this was terrific. At the end of 30 minutes I said, thank you very much Mr. President and got up and left. He was the only person in the United States government, the only person that expressed any interest in talking to me about Jordan after almost five years of duty there. They got to know each other quite well and it was a very constructive relationship.

Q: Well, you're putting your finger on something and in a way these oral histories are quite a bit after the fact and they're not basically sponsored by the U.S. government or State Department.

EGAN: This is your disclaimer for the afternoon.

Q: No, no, but I'm saying it represents a terrible oversight in that we do not take have people who have performed in a job and then.

EGAN: Competently or otherwise.

Q: Yes. That has nothing to do with it, but it has to do with passing information on. The State Department is particularly egregious in this.

EGAN: Stu, it's the entire, I'm serious. The President is the only person in government in any agency of the executive branch who had any interest in sitting down for a short period or a long period of time and talking about Jordan. Not to sound immodest, but I was there for four and a half years during a period which some good things happened, not because of me, but because they were ready to happen. It is a puzzle why we don't do this as a matter of routine.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a good place to stop.

EGAN: Good.

Q: Wes, we will pick this up the next time. I think we have something in two days or something like that and we'll pick this up just put at the end where did you go?

EGAN: I left Jordan in July of 1998 and came back to Washington to be the Deputy Inspector General of the Department of State, the Board for International Broadcasting and what was still then ACDA. In the '80s the law was changed so that the inspector general with the Department of State could not be a Foreign Service Officer. The deputy inspector general is the senior career official in the IG office and I came back to do that job for two years in the fall of '98.

End of reader