

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

AMBASSADOR FREDERICK IRVING

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: February 7th, 2013
Copyright 2014 ADST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background

Born and raised in Rhode Island	
US Air Force, WWII	
Prisoner of War experience	
Rehabilitation and repatriation	
Life on public welfare	
Brown University; Tufts (Fletcher) University	
Marriage	
Washington, DC: Bureau of the Budget; Junior Economist	1946-1951
President Truman's memoranda specifications	
State Department: Western European Bureau: Office of the Executive Director	1951-1952
Vienna, Austria: Deputy Director, Office of Administration	1952-1954
Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson	
State Department: Deputy Executive Director, Office of German and Austrian Affairs	1954-1957
State Department: Director, Office of the Budget	1957-1959
Loy Henderson	
Douglas Dillon	
State Department: Bureau of Political-Military Affairs	
Process of organizing bureau	
Jean Tarter	
National War College	1959-1960
Loy Henderson	
Use of nuclear weapons in future wars	

Wellington, New Zealand: Economic Officer Environment Surplus butter	1960-1962
State Department: Deputy Executive Director, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs Lucius Battle Staff Tom Stern	1962-1964
State Department: Special Assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary for Administration	1964-1965
State Department: Executive Director, Bureau of European Affairs Congressman Boggs' demand President Johnson	1965-1967
Vienna, Austria: Deputy Chief of Mission	1967-1968
State Department: Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations	1968-1969
State Department: Deputy Assistant Secretary for Education and Cultural Affairs Senator's daughter job seeker American Council of Young Political Leaders Grievance Committee	1969-1972
United States Ambassador to Iceland President Nixon NATO Base negotiations Wife's activities Icelandic language Remur poetry Nixon-Pompidou meeting Volcanic eruption lava flow Communist Party Wife's book: <u>This too is diplomacy</u> Heimaey Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Soviet nuclear submarines Personal presidential authority People's Alliance Embassy staff and morale Cambodia bombing United Nations Fishing Limits resolution	1972-1976

Assistant Secretary of State for Environmental and Scientific Affairs (Oceans and Science Affairs)	1976-1977
Shirley Temple Black	
Ping-Pong diplomacy (China)	
Relations with Congress	
Senator Ellender	
Ken Hechler	
Senator Fulbright	
Law of the Sea	
Fishing limits	
South Africa nuclear material sale	
United States Ambassador to Jamaica	1977-1978
Castro influence	
Harvard University	
Michael Manley	
Peace Corps	
Environment	
Dead bodies on doorstep	
US business community	
Security	
Wife's activities	
Castro	
Marijuana	
Ambassador de Roulet	
Confirmation hearings	
Political Parties	
Seaga	
Yacht Club	
Local "mafia" chiefs	
Anti-Americanism	
Castro	
Phone tapping	
Consular Section problems	
Joint US/Jamaican business group	
Brzezinski	
President Carter	
Jailed American tourists	
Resignation	
Harvard University: Assistant Dean; Director, Career Development and Foreign Student Advisor	1978-
Dean Graham Allison	
Rules and Regulations	
American Council of Young Political Leaders	
Resignation	

Volunteer work for the elderly
Retirement home

Additional comments
Voucher payment problems
Foreign Service wives
Michael Manley's ambassador preferences
Manley's views of Castro

ADDENDUM

The World War II Prisoner- of- War Experience

The Cat Whose Hair Did Not Turn Blue

INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 7th of February, 2013 and this is an interview with Frederick Irving. And this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.

IRVING: Yes.

Q: All right? Well, let's -- when and where were you born?

IRVING: 1921, May 2nd, 1921.

Q: And where?

IRVING: Providence, Rhode Island.

Q: All right. Well, let's start on your father's side. What do you know about the Irving family?

IRVING: Not much because he died when I was four-years-old. Left my mother as a widow with six children. I was the youngest. He died of a ruptured appendicitis, misdiagnosed. My mother was 32 at the time. We had to live on welfare for a while.

Q: Well, what was your father doing, do you know?

IRVING: Yes, he was a tailor.

Q: All right. And do you know where his family came from?

IRVING: Yes, Bessarabia. It's now called Moldova.

Q: Was he part of that -- sort of the great exodus of Jewish families from Eastern Europe and Russia?

IRVING: No. But why would you automatically assume he was Jewish? What has that got to do with my diplomatic accomplishments? I know in the early days it limited my overseas assignments -- I could not be assigned to an Arab country.

Q: Well, I try to find out everything I can about where people came from. But if you don't want to talk about it, there's no --

IRVING: Oh no, I just think it's an improper question, but I'm not ashamed of the fact that he may have been Jewish. I would like to know why would you automatically decide that he or I was Jewish. In your mind, is Judaism a nationality or a religion? I think of it as a religion. When I was a teenager I converted to Unitarianism.

Actually, if you want to be exact, he came to the United States alone, at age 15, I was told. My father was given the name "Irving" by the immigration people on board ship. I was told that a Scottish couple named "Irving" took care of him, the immigration people thought he was their son.

Q: Well, there's no -- actually a great number of our group who came in the Foreign Service came from that various exodus. My family came from sheep farmers who were kicked out of Scotland. I mean, you know, all of us -- most of us came to the United States got the hell out of the way from Europe from one reason or another.

IRVING: Yes, but I have no idea what brought him to the United States.

Q: It must have been rough when you think about it.

What about -- do you know anything about the background of your mother's family?

IRVING: My mother was Jewish, who came from Russia at age nine, with her family who were Jewish. That's about all I know.

Q: You grew up in Providence?

IRVING: Yes, I did.

Q: What was Providence like when you recall it when you were pretty young?

IRVING: It was a city of a couple hundred thousand people. It was just an ordinary city, the capital of Rhode Island. But it was known as the capital of costume jewelry manufacture.

Q: How did your mother get by in her widowhood?

IRVING: Well, as I say, we had to go on to welfare, which at that time was considered a disgrace. But all six of us children, five boys and one girl, started working at an early age. My first job was at six-years-old at a grocery store, peeling the outer skins from sacks of onions. I was paid 25 cents an hour. When I was of high school age I went to Providence Classical High School. I graduated summa cum laude. Met my wife there when we were both sophomores. . We were both in the honors group. Eventually we got married. We were married for 64 years when she died.

Q: Oh boy.

IRVING: Three years ago tomorrow. February 8, 2010 is the third anniversary of her death. She died of a sudden heart attack.

Q: Well now, as a boy in school, were you much of a reader?

IRVING: Yes, as a matter fact, I was a fencer on the fencing team. Usually if they had some committee or other like the prom committee or who knows what, I was always chosen to be on it. And I would say I was held in high regard then. I held an outside job while attending high school. 25 hours a week. Providence Classical was a very hard school with lot of homework, three hours a day. But I managed to make it. I the went to Brown University, where I had an outside job of 40 hours a week.

Q: What sort of work were you doing?

IRVING: I worked in a drugstore as a soda jerker during high school. You know what that is? At college I worked at the Hope Club, near Brown.

Q: Oh yes!

IRVING: Then when the war broke out I had just one semester to go, but all five of us boys volunteered to go into the war. I volunteered for the Air Force. The Air Force recruiter came to me and said, "The Air Force is very short of navigators," and if I would agree to become a navigator they'll let me take my last semester's college if I also accelerated and went in the summer. Since I did want to get my degree, I agreed.

Q: Were you good at mathematics?

IRVING: Yes. I was exceptionally good in mathematics. In fact, Brown University said they would promise me a fellowship if I would major in math. But I saw no future in math. That shows you how shortsighted I was at that time. I majored in political science. Because I thought I'd like to go overseas and maybe go in the diplomatic service. So I accepted the Air Force offer of being a navigator. Because at that time they wanted navigators to be college graduates.

Q: What year did you go into the Air Force?

IRVING: Well, I went into the reserves in 1942 and then went into active duty on March 7th, 1943 as an aviation cadet.

Q: Where did you take your officer training?

IRVING: First as an aviation cadet in Nashville, Tennessee. Then I had to take all sorts of qualifying exams. I qualified to be pilot, navigator, and bombardier. So they said well, I agreed to be a navigator -- will I still honor that. I said yes, indeed. So I got officer training at the navigation school at Monroe, Louisiana.

Q: What type of planes were you -- did you start on?

IRVING: B-24, heavy bombers.

Q: The Liberator.

IRVING: That's right.

Q: Did you get assigned to a plane there, or was that later on?

IRVING: No, after I finished navigation school, which was a 19-week course, navigators also had to be qualified as aerial gunners. I was then sent to Ft. Meyers, Florida for six weeks of aerial gunnery training. As an officer I had both aerial gunnery wings and navigation wings. Then after -- then all graduates, they put your name in a hat, and you picked where you would go to pick up your plane. I happened to pick Westover Field in Massachusetts, which meant that I would eventually be assigned to Europe. They also asked me if I'd be willing to be in an instructor at navigation school because I achieved an outstanding rating in training. I said, "No, I will not. I joined the Air Force to fight the war." So I was sent to Westover Field. And there I met the rest of the crew (10 men in our crew). We were then all flown down to Chatham Field, Georgia for I think it was six weeks, either four or six weeks training flying as a crew. We then had to ferry a plane from Chatham Field, Georgia to Brazil as a crew. Then as a crew we had to fly that plane from Belem, Brazil to Dakar, North Africa along the South Atlantic route. I was cited for meeting a target of arrival within a minute and a half of when we were supposed to. I had gotten a reputation of being able to arrive at the targets when we were supposed to. From Dakar, Africa we flew to Venosa, Italy, which was to be our base.

Q: Was that the Fifth Air Force, or the -- what Air Force was flying out of Italy?

IRVING: The 15th Air Force.

Q: 15th Air Force I mean, yes.

IRVING: On my 37th mission, I was shot down over Magyarovar, Hungary. Our target was an oil refinery in Blechhammer, Germany. Flak hit us and we were able to reach mid-Hungary when we encountered German fighters. We had to parachute out. I was taken prisoner of war for nine months altogether. When I hit the ground the first thing the farmers did was put a rope around my neck. They tried to hang me three times. But I managed to escape the noose each time. I was then put against a stone slab to be shot. The guns that were to shoot me somehow misfired. I was then put in -- I'm skipping quite a bit.

Q: Yes. Well, don't skip too much. Because these military experiences I think I'd like to capture.

IRVING: Yes. Well, I wrote this up, and I could send you the full story.

Q: If you would.

IRVING: Yes. I'm also a member of the writer's group here at this retirement home, which means that the members of that group write four stories a year, most of them write their own background and ancestors, but I chose to write about events in the diplomatic service that benefited the interests of the United States. I'll send you those also.

Q: Yes, please do. Well now, you were in a prison camp in Hungary?

IRVING: First in Hungary and then in Germany. In Germany I was in the camp with the British (Stalag Luft III) where the "Great Escape" took place.

Q: Oh yes, there was a movie of that.

IRVING: Yes. The part about Steve McQueen is false. There was no such thing. It shows him on a motorcycle being put in solitary confinement and throwing a baseball against a wall. That's phony.

Q: Well, I think Steve McQueen was a motorcycle --

IRVING: That didn't happen.

Q: No, I know. But the movie itself did show the --

IRVING: Well, the British actually made a better movie of it that was closer to the truth. But if you eliminate the Steve McQueen episodes you get the flavor of the experience. For instance, in Hungary they tied my hands and feet together, put me in the back of an open truck, and drove me through the streets of Budapest, calling on everybody to throw rocks at me, for an hour. And they practically killed me, in fact, they thought they did. But I came alive, just before they were to take me to the crematorium.

Q: How about the rest of your crew? Did you --

IRVING: Well, the tail gunner was killed in the plane. A fighter plane got him first. But he shot down two of the German fighters. The rest of the crew came out all right. We all came out suffering from malnutrition and the effects of mal-treatment. Also, I'm actually at this very moment suffering from pancreatic cancer. And they predicted that I wouldn't see my 91st birthday, and that was in May of last year.

Q: Well, good for --

IRVING: Shows you the docs were wrong.

Q: Yes, well good for you. Once you got in the camps, how did you feel you were treated?

IRVING: Horrible. It was horrible. They sent us -- they claimed that all they were required to do to keep us alive in camp and fee us only 700 calories a day. Sometimes they forgot to feed us. When the Russians broke through the Polish plains after we'd been there about three or four months, we had to leave the camp. We slept in the snow and marched and marched and marched. They forgot to feed us on the march. We ate what we could find, like grass. When we saw farmhouses we would steal some cabbages meant for the cows. If you weren't shot trying to steal a head of cabbage, you ate the cabbage. If you want to know one word to describe that nine months, I would have to say horrendous.

Q: Oh boy.

IRVING: After liberation I was in and out of hospitals and they attribute my back problems to the prison camp experience. And they attribute my cancer to malnutrition. That might give you an idea of how we were treated.

Q: Who liberated you?

IRVING: General Patton. He heard that the SS were ordered to assassinate all flying officers, so he deviated from his mission. We were liberated -- he came down by the time we were at a camp called Moosburg. We had marched actually from the Polish plains to Nuremberg to Moosburg. Moosburg is about 10 miles south of Munich. We marched all across Germany. If you did not keep up you were shot. We saw lots of red snow. We marched in the snow and slept in the snow. At Moosburg there was a two-day battle against the SS troops. General Patton won. There was also a camp full of Soviets. He liberated that section too, but they went wild and suddenly started attacking us Americans.

Q: These are Russians.

IRVING: The Russians.

Q: Uh-huh. Why were they attacking you?

IRVING: Because when we were -- because we were -- well, let me put it this way. American officers were not forced to work, but the Germans made the Russians do menial labor. And also, somehow or other they felt that the Americans should have come into the war sooner. So they just didn't like the Americans. They made that quite clear. There was a farm not far with a lot of horses. They got on the horses and went wild, tried to invade the American section. Tried to get the horses to attack us. We had to hide in the barracks. And General Patton had to subdue the Soviet soldiers, as well as the German.

Q: Yes, you never hear about that sort of --

IRVING: No, you don't.

Q: Well, did Patton send you all back to the States, or what?

IRVING: Well, we all had bloated stomachs and bloated cheeks and the U.S. Army, I guess figured they had to take care of us for a little while to see if they can get us to gain some weight. I was way under 100 pounds when I was liberated. After about two weeks they sent us to a camp called Lucky Strike, just outside of Paris, where they deloused us, gave us clothing, made sure that we were fed, but only very lightly. In fact, there were signs all over the camp saying, "Do not feed the Kriegies," short for Kriegsgefangener, which is the German word for prisoner of war. I remember following one GI that was in the camp. He was eating a Hershey candy bar. And I followed him and asked him, would he let me have the wrapper so I could lick it. We were all put on a restricted diet. We stayed in that camp for maybe two weeks. And then we moved to be nursed on a shipped headed for New York. From New York we were sent to Fort Devens in Massachusetts. Then we were told we could go home, but make sure we continued on a restricted diet. For the first, I think, five or six months my diet consisted of barley soup and toast six times a day.

Q: My God.

IRVING: And I started to gain weight.

Q: Well, how was your mother surviving in that period, that big brood of children?

IRVING: Well, she was a marvel. She was absolutely wonderful. To show you what it was like to be on welfare, on one hot summer day, when the ice cream truck came down the street and I was maybe six or seven-years-old, she thought that it's so hot she would like to buy a cone of ice cream for all six of us. That cost five cents a cone. Every week the welfare lady came and my mother had to give her a list of how she spent the welfare money. The welfare lady when she saw that my mother spent 30 cents for six cones of ice cream, our food ration was cut by 30 cents. My brothers and I when I was eight-years-old had a newspaper route for the Sunday newspapers. They were so heavy my mother thought that she ought to buy us a wagon that could support the newspapers. My mother would never lie. She put down that she spent X amount of dollars, something like three

dollars, for a wagon. The welfare lady decided that a wagon was a toy and she deducted food, six dollar -- or whatever, two dollars, three dollars value.

Q: God.

IRVING: Which provided some meat for, believe it or not, several weeks. So it was hard growing up. We all made something of ourselves. My mother said, "Be good students and learn all that you can. I want you all to go to college, get educated. They can take away a lot of things from you, but they can't take away what's in your mind." So she made sure that we got educated.

Q: Well, so how about -- you're saying you had three other brothers and a sister?

IRVING: The family consisted of boys and one girl.

Q: What did they end up doing?

IRVING: The boys all went into the army. When the war broke out we all volunteered. And one of my brothers was blinded in the army. My sister took care of my mother.

Q: Ooh.

IRVING: The rest of us came home. I was in a prison camp. All of us went through college. All of us had to work our way through college. I worked 40 hours a week for the entire four years. I decided that I wanted to go into the diplomatic service, Foreign Service. So I applied to go to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, which as you know is a part of Tufts, but at that time was a joint Tufts University-Harvard University Graduate School.

I was determined to make sure that there was not another war. But I failed in that. But then well, you know what happened. I went eventually into the Foreign Service, became Assistant Secretary of State, had two ambassadorships, and held several senior positions in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well now, let's talk about why were you attracted to -- how did you hear -- most people don't even think of the Foreign Service.

IRVING: I thought about it while at Brown University. It was very strong in my mind after being a POW (prisoner of war). I felt that I had to play a part in trying to prevent another war, to try to negotiate, instead of fighting a war. So I guess you have to blame my war experience.

Q: Had you ever run across anybody who'd been in the Foreign Service before you got in?

IRVING: No. Just thought it's a place for me.

Q: Well, Tufts. You were at Tufts for how long?

IRVING: Well, just one year for my master's. I had gotten married while at Fletcher. I had \$50 in the bank and my wife had \$100. Also, I did not feel like getting a PhD. It seemed a good time to get an income.

Q: What was Tufts like at the time?

IRVING: It's a very, very good school. I was at the Fletcher School, which is one of the colleges Tufts.

Q: What was Fletcher like?

IRVING: Oh, it was a stimulating experience. At the time there were only 38 students. And the rule was that 50% had to be women and at least 25%, hopefully, would be foreign students. So you had 50% women and 25% of the 38-student body hopefully would be from foreign countries. My best friend and classmate was from India. We were so close, actually, that we became good friends. My Indian classmate became my "best man". I've been to India several times since. Our families are still very close. Their children and my children are very close. The students at Fletcher make good friendships, and benefit from the closeness. If you're living with people of different cultures, you get to understand, for instance, what the Greek culture is like and their problems, what the Indian, Polish, Greek, Italian, Czech problems are like. I could go down the line. You discussed world affairs and you discussed how world affairs looked from a non-American perspective. It was good training for anyone wanting to go into the Foreign Service. Today Fletcher has, I think, over 200 students, and is considered one of the top-notch schools along with Georgetown University.

Q: Oh yes, very much so. It's still one of the prime places where Foreign Service people come from.

IRVING: Yes. Now, in April of last year our alumni association selected me to be honored and they had a profile of me. I was interviewed for an hour. I was honored for a lifetime of diplomatic achievements. I have had several interviews recently. The Library of Congress a few months ago video-taped me for my prisoner-of-war experience in World War II.

Q: Yes, they have this program on World War II.

IRVING: Yes. And then I was also interviewed for a long front page article by the largest newspaper in the Amherst-Springfield area. I was also interviewed by Brown University where I was elected as president of my class.

Q: You're living now in -- outside of Amherst.

IRVING: In Amherst. It's right in the center of Amherst. It is called "Applewood at Amherst". It's in the center of the five colleges area: Amherst University, University of Massachusetts, Smith College, Hampshire College, there's one more.

Q: Mount Holyoke?

IRVING: Mount Holyoke, of course. How could I forget that? My wife was a graduate of Mount Holyoke.

Q: I went to Williams so I would get down there obviously from time-to-time.

IRVING: Yes. This is an unusual retirement home.

Q: Oh.

IRVING: One hundred and thirty-three residents. Every single one of them, male and female, have college degrees. Its residents are retired professionals – mostly from academia. I am the only resident from the diplomatic service.

We're all widows and widowers, most are widows; except 10 couples who are man and wife. The oldest resident is 100. I'm in the middle at 92. And I think the youngest is 85. But every one of us has our faculties about us. We discuss world affairs and what's going on in the United States, et cetera. One can almost call it an intellectual institution. We are invited to attend lectures, etc. at the neighboring colleges. My apartment overlooks the Hampshire College campus.

Q: Well, when you got out of Tufts what did you do?

IRVING: Well, I was going to go to take the FSO (Foreign Service Officer) exam. I actually took it and I passed every part but the multiple choice. The Board of Examiners encouraged me to take it again because they said I passed the most important parts. I learned, however, that the State Department had gotten a big budget cut and there would be a two-year wait to take in any junior officers. Well, having just been married and our joint funds were very slim we had to give priority to earning a salary.

Since we wanted to be in Washington, we went down to Washington for spring break to see what might be available for me the next couple of years. The State Department offered me a GS job in the economic section until I was able to take the Foreign Service Exam. But while waiting to get my plane back, I saw that there was a Fletcher grant at the Bureau of the Budget. And I wondered, "What in the world is a Fletcher graduate doing in accounting?" Well, I looked him up because I had an hour before my plane left. I found that the Bureau of the Budget, now called Organization of Management and Budget, is not just an accounting office, it's an organization that evaluates government programs. And it so happens that they had a vacancy for a junior economist in the international division. They asked me whether I would be willing to apply for that. It also happened that the salary was greater than what the FSO salary would be.

Q: Huh.

IRVING: I accepted the offer. They hired me to start one week after graduation from Fletcher. I couldn't believe the authority their employees had. The first week I was there I had to write a memorandum to President Truman forwarding a 15-million dollar check from the Shah of Iran asking for President Truman's endorsement of that check. President Truman would read only memoranda that had large margins, could not be more than seven lines, had to be simple sentences, unless that was impossible. It could then have compound sentences, and had to be understood on first reading. Several times I said it couldn't be done. But my boss said he was going to train me. I stayed at my desk for about 15 hours. I finally was able to do it. That taught me how to write telegrams overseas to Washington as an FSO to get someone in authority to read them.

Q: Oh yes.

IRVING: As a matter of fact, President Nixon personally complimented me, saying that I wrote the best -- the most knowledgeable and most cogent telegrams. The president had a habit of ever so often picking out a telegram and reading it from embassies. He told me that he picked out my telegrams every day and he really knew what was going on in Iceland, for instance, where he'd sent me as ambassador, to negotiate retention of the U.S. Submarine surveillance base there. A new Icelandic government threatened to force the base to leave Iceland. When things got a bit dicey during my negotiations and Nixon was in Iceland during the Nixon-Pompidou Summit Meeting, apparently the prime minister got a hold of him and said, "If you want to save your base, you better make sure that Ambassador Frederick Irving has all the authority he wants." Nixon then did something which was incredible. He issued a directive saying that Ambassador Frederick Irving personally will now handle all policy matters of every agency involved that might have an impact on the base retention issue. My views will be final. I will see to it that it's formulated and carried out. The admiral at the base, he said, had to report to me every day. The only authority that I didn't have was if there was a state of war, and then the admiral would take over.

Now, let me give you an example. The base had 13 fighter planes. I received a call one day from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asking whether he could borrow 10 of those 13 planes. He wants to send them to Vietnam. He said the Secretary of Defense told him that he had to get my personal approval for that transfer. I had to deny him that transfer. My decision prevailed. I will not go into the reasons in this open transcript.

Q: Well now, how long were you with the Bureau of the Budget?

IRVING: Well, I liked it so much I was there four and a half years. State, twice during the interim contacted me and said, "Come on over to State. You want to be a Foreign Service Officer?"

I says, "Well, I'm enjoying being a budgeter."

And then after I think it was January, yes, January 1, 1951, I decided well, if I want to enter the Foreign Service, I'd better move over to State. So I moved over and they said they'd have to give me a reserve appointment. They made me an FSR-4. And I spent, oh, about a year I guess -- yes, I think it was about a year -- as chief of the Western European Branch of the Office of the Executive Director. Then they told me that I need to have overseas experience. It happened that a job in Vienna was open at the combined occupation/embassy setup. I was to be the deputy director of the Office of Administration, which ran, among other activities, the food stockpile. I learned that the reason I was sent there was that the current director of administration, was ill most of the time. Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson was the ambassador there. I was told that I generally would be the acting director most of the time. As director or acting director I had a staff of about 145-150 people. I would be called into Washington to appear before the Budget Bureau and the Congressional Appropriations Committees for the appropriations and budgets for Germany and Austria, which had its own combined appropriation.

I was there two years until I was called back to Washington to be the executive director for the Bureau of German and Austrian Affairs. My job was to work myself out of a job and then be incorporated as the deputy executive director for European Affairs. Before I entered that new job however, I was offered the job of executive director of the Intelligence and Research bureau (INR). I thought that's not a bad position. And then the Executive Director of European Affairs, said that he was going to retire within two years and he wanted someone to be able to take over as the executive director. I did not personally know him, but he said that based on what he heard about me, I would be the ideal person to takeover. I told him that I had already been assigned to the job in INR and that I wanted that assignment to remain. Also, I pointed out, at that time that if an FSO occupied a job classified in the GS (General Services) system, they had to pay that FSO the salary of the GS's. In this case, it was \$1,200 higher than the European bureau job, which was higher than my personal grade. The INR job was \$2,400 higher than my personal grade.

Q: Oh yes, that was right.

IRVING: Something then happened that I could not believe. Loy Henderson, who was the Undersecretary for Management, set up a committee to examine, which job for me would be best for the interest of the State Department. I thought, "This is ridiculous. This is ridiculous." The committee decided that I should become the deputy executive director in EUR. They said they will pay me the differential that I would have gotten if I'd been in INR. But they downgraded it by one step, the Deputy Executive Director for EUR (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs). When Loy Henderson learned that he had promised me the INR salary, he changed his mind and manipulated the GS salary levels that he would only have to pay me the \$1,200 differential (by this time I was an FSO-3).

When I complained to Loy Henderson that he broke his promise, he pulled that "needs of the service" bit. It was either take the European job or resign, I was told. I had to take it.

After three years in the EUR job – most of the time as acting executive director of EUR – I was assigned to Seoul, Korea as the Deputy Chief of the Economic and Commercial Section, with the understanding, they told me, that I was going to move up to be the chief of that section. Ambassador Dowling, who was the DCM in Vienna when I was in Vienna had asked for me. My wife and I were getting ready to leave. We put our house up for sale. And then all hell broke loose. The State Department director of the budget contradicted Secretary of State John Foster Dulles before the Congressional Appropriations Committee. You never, never do this. Well, this FSO-1 who was Director of the Office of Budget did it. Dulles was furious. He issued an order saying, “I want that person out of that job. The Department of State will be given 24 hours to get rid of him and get a replacement.” Whom do you think they chose (*laughs*)?

Q: Well --

IRVING: I was it. They broke my assignment to Seoul and said I was going to be it. I said, “No, I’m not.” That was the second time they used “needs of the service” gimmick. And I said, “Look, you pulled this too many times on me.” I was told, “Just take this through one budget cycle, that’s all we ask of you.” That’s what Loy Henderson said. I have no choice, obviously. Now, it turned out that the Director of the Officer Budget was at the GS-18 level.

There I was, an FSO-3 by this time, and Loy Henderson said, “Oh, we can’t pay an FSO-3 at the GS-18 level. We can’t pay him a \$3,000 differential.” So that SOB downgraded the director’s job to match my FSO-3 salary for the duration of my incumbency. I call that pretty dirty.

Q: Oh, I do too.

IRVING: And in the job, I was considered a success. I reformulated the entire budget system in the State Department. I saved the organization two million dollars that first year and permitted that to be used elsewhere. When the year was up and I said to Loy Henderson, “OK, now I want to be put back in the pool to be reassigned.”

And he said, “You’ve got to be out of your mind if you think we’re going to release you after all the successes you’ve just performed. No way.”

I said, “You gave me a personal promise, Mr. Ambassador.”

He said, “Well, now you’ve learned a good lesson.”

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: “You’ve learned that a Foreign Service Officer has to lie when it’s to the advantage of the Foreign Service.”

I said, "I will never lie. I'm sorry. But you've just met a Foreign Service Officer who refuses to lie." And I called him a liar to his face.

And he said, "You're absolutely right." He said he was a liar and he'll continue to lie if it's to the department's advantage.

And then something good happened. Douglas Dillon, the Deputy Secretary of State, was having problems with the Department of Agriculture and other departments on certain policies. By this time Eisenhower was president. It seems that President Eisenhower approved recommendations from agencies that were contradictory. Dillon wanted to establish an organization within State that could control things of this kind. (I'm skipping a lot here.)

He said, "He wants to set up a new bureau," which still exists, by the way. I don't remember the original name, but it dealt with military policy and the foreign policy and --

Q: Oh, it's called Pol-Mil.

IRVING: What's it called?

Q: Political-Military.

IRVING: Yes, Political-Mil -- but it had another name too, but it's Political-Military. He said what he wanted me to do is to set up such a bureau. And he said by that he means actually set it up. He would tell me what he wanted in rough terms. I was to set up the number of people; to write position descriptions; write a budget and all that sort of stuff. Well, I succeeded in setting up what he wanted. What I did is I had a young FSO who I thought was as sharp as a tack. I asked him to join me and work with me in setting up this bureau, which I was to do quietly until I had it all set. I was to seek approval from the Civil Service Commission and write the memo to seek presidential approval. I did all that. This young officer I chose to help me really helped me. I made sure he got a lot of credit.

Q: What was the name of the officer?

IRVING: His name was Jean Tartter. Loy Henderson decided that same year that because of the budget situation he was going to cancel the FSO promotions for that year. I told him that morale would be horrible. He then said OK, if you think you know what to do about it, let me hear about it. With this young officer, again Jean Tartter, we worked nights and showed Henderson how he could proceed with promotions. Then he said, "Fine." He saw on the 03 to 02 list my name and it was pretty high up. And then he says, "FSO-2's, the average age of FSO-2's is 42 to 43." I'm too young to be an FSO-2. So he cut the promotion list just above my name so I wouldn't get promoted. That was another dirty trick he did, not only to me but a lot of deserving FSO-3s.

The deputy secretary was so pleased with what I had done he asked what I would like as my next assignment? He said I deserved a good assignment.

I said, "Well, as a matter of fact I'd like to go to the National War College."

So he said, "OK, you've got it."

He recommended me for the National War College. It had to go to Loy Henderson for just the bureaucratic OK. When he saw my name he vetoed it, saying I was too young. I was only 38. And he said, "You have to be at least 42 to go to the National War College. And you have to be an 02 at least." I was an 03.

So I complained to the deputy secretary who said that he keeps his promises. He overruled Henderson and said henceforth he wanted age eliminated as a consideration. Well, I got promoted to 02 just as I was entering the National War College. But Henderson never forgave me, and I still think of him as dishonest. I am mentioning this because you want me to be honest. So I'm being honest.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: Want to know how I got to be an ambassador? Because one day -- I'm skipping a lot, but I told -- I got a message from Nixon, whom I never met. And he asked me a certain question. And I said, "Mr. President, do you think I have rocks in my head?" And I thought it was somebody in personnel playing a joke on me and that question actually came from the president. To which I replied. And then when Iceland was available and the department wanted me to be the ambassador because the current ambassador was a political appointee who recommended to the president that the negotiation on the naval base retention issue needs an experienced Foreign Service Officer and a proven negotiator. The State Department in its infinite wisdom suggested me. Haldeman, or whoever Nixon's henchman was at the time, had a political appointee in mind. The State Department refused to budge. They still wanted me. And so the Secretary of State and Haldeman were called down to San Clemente to meet with the president. Each was asked to justify their choice. The Secretary of State mentioned the name "Frederick Irving". Nixon said, "That name is awfully familiar." He remembered that name as a person who asked him whether he had rocks in his head. And he said anyone who could send that kind of answer to the president is just the kind of guy we need to negotiate the base agreement. That's how I got my ambassadorship.

Q: Well, what was the situation in Iceland when you went there?

IRVING: A new government had come into existence made up of a communist affiliated party and two other parties that were also sitting on the fence on retention of the base. Now, the Soviets of course wanted us to be kicked out because the purpose of the base was to monitor Soviet nuclear subs coming out of the Kola Peninsula. In order to roam around in the Atlantic Ocean they had to pass within 200 miles of Iceland. So we had

nuclear testing devices near Iceland that could track these nuclear subs once they came near Iceland.

When I arrived in Iceland it looked as if the base was going to be kicked out. One thing Iceland valued was its membership on NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). But they didn't like any foreign troops on its soil. And they thought that Americans were stealing their culture by marrying their girls and taking them to the United States. When I looked at the base I saw that there was a big sign there that said "U.S. naval station". So I changed the name to the NATO Base; the name stuck for the rest of the time. That gained some believers because they believed in NATO. So that was one hurdle that I managed to eliminate. And then things got a little rough in that of the seven-person government members, three I could count on to save the base, three did not like the base, and one was sitting on the fence. So I had to target that one member. My wife played a *major* role there. We had no one who could speak Icelandic. So she learned Icelandic and became the translator for the embassy.

Q: How did she learn Icelandic?

IRVING: She hired an Icelandic teacher and some Icelandic children who lived across the street of the Embassy taught her phrases, etc. I insisted that any person the department send out go through language school at the Foreign Service Institute. Icelandic is a very difficult language.

Q: Oh yes, very ancient.

IRVING: The Old Norse. And my wife wrote a book. You should read it. I think it's some place in the State Department library. It's called This Too Is Diplomacy: Stories of a Partnership. Because she and I were partners in everything. You know, State Department said that you're not supposed to mention spouses in reports, etc. And I know what they're talking about because I was DCM to Douglas MacArthur II. He was a tyrant and his wife was an alcoholic, so I know why that was initiated, but they went too far.

My wife really moved in to Icelandic society joining this and joining that and getting to know the prime minister's wife, getting to know the members of the opposition as well as their spouses. One of the members she had connections with was a communist member of the government who was an expert on a certain kind of poetry called "remur poetry," R-E-M-U-R. It's where the last word of one sentence becomes the first word of the next sentence. It had to have a certain balance. And my wife, who wrote poetry at the drop of a hat managed to see him at a cocktail party and said she would like to learn remur poetry. So he said fine, he'll teach her. And they got to know each other very well. Let me tell you how that paid off.

When Nixon was coming to Iceland for the meeting with Pompidou, the President of France, the communist student body at the university called for protests along the route of President Nixon from the airport to the residence, where the President would be staying. I went to see this communist Member of Parliament. He and I had big arguments

throughout the year. I asked him to use his influence with the Communist students to call of the protest. He was really the mentor of those students and they would listen to him. He said no. He claimed that the student Communist group was independent and he had nothing to do with it. I failed. Well, when Nixon came there wasn't a single protest along the route. When Nixon left Iceland I contacted the Communist member of Parliament and thanked him because I knew that he had something to do with it. He admitted that he did not do it for me. He did it for Dorothy, my wife. That's the kind of influence.

Q: Ah wonderful.

IRVING: And another time, at another social event, my wife happened to be talking to the Minister of Labor, and somehow he asked her what she does back home. She said oh, she was a teacher. And he said that's interesting because his daughter is a teacher up in the north part of the island. "The two of you should get together." And the next day the embassy received a telephone call from the Minister of Labor asking for Mrs. Irving. So my secretary thought oh, she heard wrong, probably wants to talk to me. So I get on the phone and he says, "I don't want to talk to you, I want to talk to your wife." He said he's going to visit his daughter up north and asked how would your wife like to accompany me? So they formed a beautiful friendship. He was the one who was sitting on the fence. That shows you the influence that an intelligent spouse can have.

Q: Oh yes. That's remarkable.

IRVING: It is. She wrote a book of two and three-page vignettes on what she did in helping me further the interest of the United States and how other spouses can also do that. The book has been very popular. Also, before I was sent to Jamaica I had submitted my resignation because the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard offered me an assistant deanship, which I wanted. Also, the United Nations Association of New York told me that I was a leading candidate to be president of that organization at a fantastic salary. All of this when I received a call from Phil Habib. Did you know Phil Habib?

Q: I knew -- I met him once.

IRVING: He was the Undersecretary for Political Affairs. He said, "The Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, is afraid that because of Castro's influence on Jamaica, Jamaica might lean so far to Castro that the United States might have another Cuba on our doorstep. It might conceivably lead to a break in relations between Jamaica and the United States." He heard of the name of Fred Irving. He would like to send him as ambassador and his wife, because he understood they work as a team and together have a lot of accomplishments to their credit.

So Phil Habib called me and said Secretary Vance wants me to go to Jamaica as ambassador. And by this time Carter has become president. I said, "I can't because I've already accepted a job at Harvard and I had already submitted my resignation for retirement."

So he said, "Vance said that it would be in the interest of the country if I went to Jamaica." You know, if the Secretary of State asks you to do something, you tend to do it.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: And so I called Harvard and Harvard said it would give me a two-year extension before I had to come to the job. So I told Vance I will do it provided it does not exceed two years. He said "fine", because he said if I couldn't turn Michael Manley, the prime minister, around within two years it's hopeless. So we went to Jamaica. That was a dangerous place, where dead bodies were on the doorstep of the embassy every day. People were being raped. The Peace Corps director's wife was raped three days after they arrived in Jamaica. We all had what we called "rape gates" in our bedrooms. It was pretty dangerous. I got tired of walking over dead bodies. I was losing junior officers because the wives were scared and they wanted out. I couldn't blame them. So I decided I had to take drastic and immediate action. Each of the two political parties had its own military, which I called the equivalent of a mafia. So I got a hold of each -- I'll call them mafia -- and invited their leaders to the embassy because I wanted to talk to them. They and a few others came. But I said, "First of all, you have to leave your weapons with the Marine Guard." They left three pistols and 17 knives. I said, "Look, I'm not going to stand for this. You're going to have to stop killing each other, leaving the bodies on my embassy doorstep. And if you don't, I can assure you, you won't like what I can get done to you. And I threatened them. We ironed out an understanding. They had to promise that they would not harm me, my wife, my family, or anybody who is with me, whether it's a politician of the opposite side or not. And I got them to agree that they would honor this agreement. What happened was that every time politicians from one party wanted to traverse the territory of the other party, they would ask me to accompany them. I managed to get a truce going. Word got all around Jamaica. We got them to declare peace at least between them. There no longer were dead bodies on my embassy doorstep. You know, they heard that I was kind of "a nice guy" and not like my predecessors; that I can get something done even though it was out of the ordinary.

My wife was active in local community affairs. She was an expert on early childhood education. In one of her endeavors, she found that there was no such school in Jamaica, so she asked to see the prime minister, and said they ought to have such a thing in Jamaica. And he said, "Oh yes, it's in the fifth year, the third five-year plan." My wife told him politely, of course, that wasn't good enough. By the time she left his office he changed it to the first year of their first five-year plan and he wanted her assistance in establishing it.

The business community noticed improvements in U.S.-Jamaica relations. There was a saying that Castro built schools throughout Cuba -- throughout Kingston, there was Mrs. Irving who taught in them. And my wife got on friendly terms with a lot of opposition people. They kind of changed their mind each time, saying we are not such bad people.

The State Department was pleased. President Carter sent me a personal message when I indicated I wanted to leave. He asked me to stay, but I felt that it was time to leave.

Q: Well, what was your impression of Manley?

IRVING: I liked him. I really did. I found that I could talk to him. As stated, he was very friendly to Castro. As a matter of fact, when Castro -- one day Castro was making an official visit to Jamaica and Manley asked the diplomatic corps whether they would be at the airport when Castro arrived. He said that he would appreciate it. The diplomatic corps said, if the American ambassador will be there they'll be there too. Manley came to me and asked will I. I said "oh sure, but I don't want any conversations with him. If I have to shake his hand, I'll shake his hand, but I'd like to avoid it." I called the State Department and asked "what do you think of this?" I happened to get a deputy assistant secretary of the Latin American Bureau who was a political appointee who had just gotten the job, I think three months before.

And all I got was a, "Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, I don't know what to tell you."

So I said, "OK, I'm going to change what I'm asking. I'm not asking you anything, I'm just informing you."

And she said, "OK, thank you very much, I appreciate your changing that." Castro came, I shook his hand. Walter Cronkite, the TV nightly news program had cameramen in Jamaica. And I was the key story on his program. Secretary of State got a letter signed by 53 congressmen wanting to know why there is a communist as ambassador to Jamaica. Secretary backed me up completely. I was living dangerously during that period I guess.

Q: Oh yes.

IRVING: But I landed on my feet. But I'll send you some of my stories, because it covers a lot of these.

Q: And we'll come back and talk some more. And we'll talk some more about, you know, think of anything you want to put in because I do want to get more out of you.

I would like to talk to you again about Iceland again, if we may.

IRVING: OK, go ahead.

Q: How, outside of the problem with the plane, the airplanes and all, did you get much in the way of attention in Iceland during the period that you were there from Washington?

IRVING: I got to Iceland in September 1972. And I was immediately immersed in the negotiations for retention of our naval station there, which the new government of Iceland's platform was to throw the base out. The new government included the

communist backed political party. I was advised that my chief job would be to negotiate retention of the bases. I managed to do that successfully.

Q: Well --

IRVING: I started a negotiation when the foreign minister and I came to Washington in January of '73. Then the volcanic eruption in Westman Island happened. We returned to Reykjavik immediately. I got personally involved in the volcanic eruption. I had convinced the prime minister over the objection of his coalition partners to let the U.S. get involved. Our involvement would benefit Iceland and NATO. Let me back up a bit. Iceland is a member of NATO and they pride themselves on having the base there without any cost to the United States government. Their attitude was that if NATO needed the base, then they would provide the property for the base at no cost to the U.S. Iceland was the only NATO member to ever do that. Iceland does not like to have foreign troops on their soil. A condition of establishing a military base was that only American military personnel be stationed there. I ascertained that culture would play a strong role in the retention of that base, so I immediately renamed the base the NATO Base. It had formally been known as the "U.S. Naval Submarine Surveillance Station". As soon as I renamed the base, tempers calmed down among the population and they said, "Well, for the time now we'll leave the NATO base there."

OK, let me then move forward to the volcano and then I'll move to the negotiations, because the volcano eruption played a role in my negotiations for the retentions of the base. I mentioned to the prime minister that there was a young Icelandic scientist who feels that he could stem the flow of the volcano with the use of special pipes and pumps that the U.S. used to use, but are now in various military establishments in U.S. warehouses. When the Communist Party members of the government heard of my involvements, told the prime minister, said that if the United States plays any role whatsoever in the volcanic eruption in stemming the eruption, they would leave the government and have the government fall. In my wife's book, This Too is Diplomacy, there are six pages describing what was involved in the pipes and the pumps and my personal role in it. In my conversations with the prime minister I was, in effect, interfering in their internal affairs by telling him that if he didn't let us play a role, the word will come out that he didn't give a damn about the Westman Islanders which happened to be the most important fishing area for the whole country. It provided 25% of their income on fish. I suggested to the prime minister that he should call the bluff of the communist members of his government because the two out-of-government parties were pro-base and would never invite the communist parties into a new government, should a new government be elected. The communists wanted to be part of the government; so they wouldn't leave the present coalition. The prime minister, whom I considered a patriot and had great love for his country, said that he was way ahead of me and spoke for the conscience of his country. "If three is a chance we can save Heimaey, we must do it." We agreed to work together to convince our government to cooperate. He said that he would commit the Icelandic government to do what this young scientist proposed. I, on my part would seek out the pipes and the pumps. We had an understanding that my role in this would be hidden. The solution to stemming the flow of the lava, was called "the

pipes and the pumps". I generated a search in the United States for these pipes and pumps and had them flown to Iceland. The upshot was that these pipes and pumps stopped the flow at the water's edge. My role was hidden. And as a matter of fact, I understand that in July is the 40th anniversary of that event. I received a call from the present ambassador, whom I do not know personally, saying that my role has finally become public and they want me to come to Iceland in July to be part of a group to be honored for saving that island. So that's one involvement that I had.

The other involvement was the actual negotiations. I would deal with one political party after another. My wife played a tremendous role. The admiral at the base when I got there, Admiral Beling, was wonderful. But like in the Foreign Service, time and grade, he was retired and a new admiral came in who was unsuitable as I mentioned earlier. In the meantime I dealt with Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, who was chief of naval operations.

Q: Elmo Zumwalt.

IRVING: Yes. Bud Zumwalt. Have you not heard of him?

Q: I knew Bud Zumwalt when I was in Vietnam.

IRVING: Yes, well that's the same Zumwalt. Well, his son was in Vietnam. But Admiral Zumwalt was the chief of naval operations at that time of Vietnam as well. He and I had a close association. The original admiral, when I came to Iceland, Admiral Beling, was a wonderful person. He was replaced by an obviously unsuitable admiral. Every time I would make, say, a foot forward in progress with negotiation, this replacement admiral would say something or do something which set me back at least a half a foot. And this became apparent to the friendly base members of the government. Now, when the Nixon-Pompidou summit took place in Reykjavik on May 31, 1973, the pro-base members of the government contacted President Nixon and told him that if we want that base saved, he'd better give Ambassador Irving 100% complete authority over the base. And any agency of the U.S. government that has any interest whatsoever in Iceland. President Nixon then contacted me and said he is giving me 100% authority. Every day the admiral had to report to me on any activity short of preparation for war that could affect my negotiations, as I determined, personally. So the admiral did indeed report to me every day. Zumwalt, on my request, moved out the replacement admiral. I was invited to Washington by the Secretary of the Navy and Zumwalt to go over the resumes of every rear admiral in the Navy to select a new admiral. I refused to do that and I left it up to Zumwalt.

Q: Well, when you say unsuitable, how did this reflect -- what was he doing that was causing problems for you?

IRVING: He would talk about -- well, let me give you an example that actually got him kicked out. At a dinner at the Officer's Club one day he announced that there was enough money in the recreation department of the base to buy new dishes for the Officer's Club, so that would let the club then use the old dishes for skeet shooting. He made this

announcement the very day the Icelandic Red Cross had a drive for used dishes. You can imagine the public reaction.

Q: Oh yes, oh.

IRVING: That was just one example. Another example is he would invite some Icelanders to the base. He would then talk about what the base mission was, telling them that in case there's another war, we would be in the forefront to fight. Whereas all along we've been telling the Icelanders that we're here to provide surveillance of the Soviet nuclear subs coming out of the Kola Peninsula. What he was doing was turning the target around, calling their presence an offensive force for NATO. Iceland would never buy that. These are the examples I'm giving you.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: He was an embarrassment. I invited Zumwalt to come to Iceland to hold some talks along with me. The foreign minister said, "Don't let Zumwalt or the base admiral wear their uniforms. They should come in civilian clothes." It was getting close to Icelandic Independence Day, February 17th. This would just create anti-base reactions if they saw naval uniforms in Reykjavik anywhere near that day. Zumwalt came in civilian clothes. We were in the midst of the meeting with the foreign minister, and who should show up? This base admiral in full dress uniform, including a sword on his side. The foreign minister hit the ceiling. I can give you a dozen more examples (*laughs*).

Q: Well, that's enough. You've given me excellent --

IRVING: (*laughs*) I really thought we had to get rid of him. And it's interesting, Nixon also directed all the agencies in Washington (State Department, Defense Department, etc.) that they could not take any action that affected Iceland without my personal OK. When I say my personal OK, he said "Ambassador Frederick Irving". Give you an example, the base had on the table of organization a certain number of fighters. We had the fighter planes there because the Soviet Union every now and then would test the base and they would suddenly invade Iceland's ADIZ (air defense identification zone). This was pretty stupid of them. We would then send up three of our fighters and chase them out of the Icelandic air space. Then one day I received a call from General Johnny Jones who happened to be a classmate of mine at the National War College. He was also Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He called me and said look, could he borrow some of our aircraft because he needs them in Vietnam. And I said, "I'm going to send you a telegram, but the short answer is not at this time." I asked him why he called me. He said the Secretary of Defense told him he cannot borrow any planes from Iceland unless he had my personal approval. I don't believe I should mention in this unclassified interview the reasons that I turned down General Jones.

Q: How did this connection with his young scientist on diverting lava flow come about?

IRVING: He contacted the Icelandic chief of the base fire department and asked whether

he could get the United States ambassador to get the Icelandic government to listen to him. So Sven Erickson, that was the fireman's name, came to see me at 10:00 one evening and asked that I listed to this young scientist's proposal. He explained he has this idea that the cold water around Iceland, which is frigid of course, is cold enough to stop the flow of the lava. The government official, with whom he spoke, contacted UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). The UNESCO member sought the advice of a scientist by the name of Kazarov, who was a world-renowned volcanologist. The later pooh-poohed the idea. He said they tried it in Hawaii and it didn't work. But this young scientist said that's because the waters around Hawaii are warm. You need this cold water and it has to be a certain flow per second, and only this type of pipe and pump can produce it. UNESCO said that's nonsense, you're just going to have to realize that the island is lost. The young scientist told the fireman he can't, he's got to try, that his last hope was the American ambassador because he understood the American ambassador was highly sought of by the government. I promised I would do what I could. That's when I got a hold of the foreign minister. I had gotten no place with him. I then approached the prime minister. I told him that I will see to it that the United States will help out. I never checked with the United States government, I just made that statement because I know if we saved the island it will sway a lot of public opinion toward us. But I put it on the basis, also, of humanitarianism. I told the prime minister I'll see if the U.S. government will pay for the search and the transportation of the pipes and the pumps. But I said Iceland will have to pay for all local costs, assembly, and all that. I then put the young scientist in touch with the prime minister. And everything worked fine. After the flow was checked, the island was saved. To my surprise, I personally received a bill from the Defense Department for \$200,000 saying, "We don't have that kind of money."

And I laughed my head off, "You got to be kidding." They maintained I have to pay personally because that money was in the "wrong pocket". So I told the Defense Department, "I accept the bill; charge my salary \$5 a week until it's paid off."

The State Department heard about this. They said, "That's the most stupid thing that's ever come out of the Defense Department, and State Department got AID to reimburse the Defense Department the \$200,000."

Q: Oh God.

IRVING: Isn't that ridiculous? Defense Department as part of the negotiation, which Iceland would not accept, offered to build a new commercial airport for Iceland to the tune of 25 million dollars, but they couldn't find \$200,000 to pay for something that played a major role in saving the base. All of this has now come to light, apparently, according to our present ambassador. And this is why I was invited to come there in July.

Q: Well now, you mentioned that there was a strong communist representation in the government of Iceland when you were there.

IRVING: That's right.

Q: How subservient were communist members to the dictates of the Soviet Union?

IRVING: Well, they took advice from the communist Member of Parliament. I would say there was an indirect line. If you looked into the bidding of the communist party, you could find it. You could not find a direct line, but you could find sort of a broken line. For instance, I had many, many, many discussions with the, the communist -- the name was the People's Alliance. The People's Alliance representative in government -- they were three out of seven members of Parliament. To hear them talk, hear them on the stump, you couldn't tell the difference between the Communist Party and the People's Alliance. Now, my wife played a big role in the community. My wife is an outstanding writer. She wrote poetry, she gets along with a lot of Icelanders. Now, the People's Alliance representative also was the tutor for the youth party in Iceland. There was a strong communist element in the University of Iceland. Now, this member of government of the People's Alliance was noted for his cultural activities. I think I mentioned all of this previously in this interview.

Q: Hm.

IRVING: He taught a certain kind of poetry called remur, R-E-M-U-R. It's where the last word of one sentence becomes the first word of the next sentence. So my wife went to him and said would he mind teaching her this new type of poetry. He was delighted for the attention. So he invited my wife to learn remur poetry. Now, let me give you the influence that that had on the Nixon-Pompidou Summit Meeting. The Icelandic Communist Student Party called for protests along the road from the airport, which was 30 miles from Reykjavik. And I said to myself, "Oh great, that's all I need." So I went to see this member of Parliament, will he please use his influence with the university students and get them to call of the protest.

And he said, "Oh no, they're independent, sir," he can't call it off.

Well, when the Nixon group came along the route that we mentioned, there wasn't a single protest. So the next day I went to see that communist and said, "I know you said you had nothing to do with it, but thank you anyway." And he said he didn't do it for me, he did it for Dorothy because she's learning remur poetry.

Q: (laughs) How wonderful.

IRVING: Yes.

Q: What did you think of the staff of the embassy?

IRVING: Outstanding, absolutely outstanding. It was a small embassy, it was the second smallest of our embassies. We had only one of each category, except two younger FSO's as consular officers. Oh, and let me tell you about them too. They were wonderful. Let me back up a bit and first mention my predecessor, Mr. Replogle, he's the manufacturer

of these Replogle Globes that every school system has. One day he had to make a call on the foreign minister, so he went to the Foreign Ministry and, according to someone who was with him, a so-called young man comes into the room. Replogle has a short conversation with him, then says, "Oh by the way, young man," -- and this is supposedly a quote, -- "I can't spend any time with you because I'm waiting for the foreign minister." Well, the young man happened to be the foreign minister.

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: Well, he was the one who, when the new government came in, and when he heard the base was going to be thrown out, wrote a letter to President Nixon saying in all honesty he could not handle the negotiations and recommended that he be replaced by a Career Foreign Service Officer. First time I've ever heard of any non-FSO saying that.

I was going to tell you about the two young vice consuls. The Communist Party at the university were always asking for certain things, like when I first got there I hadn't been at the embassy oh maybe six hours when I received a call from the communist students saying they assumed that I would not talk to them. I said, "Why won't I talk to you? Sure, come on up." And they said, "You can't, because we already published the article. It's appearing in the next day's paper."

I said, "Well, I'll just issue a press release saying you're a bunch of liars."

So they came up and they said, "Well, you don't talk Icelandic."

So I said, "I'll just call in an interpreter."

Well, about these young vice consuls. I received a call from the communist students -- and this was after I'd been here a year -- saying, "We're holding a symposium and we've invited two officers from the Soviet embassy and we'd like you to send two, but of course you will refuse," they said.

I said, "Of course I will send a couple of my officers." And so they had to accept that. And these two young FSO's -- they hadn't been on -- more than -- well, one I think was in the embassy seven weeks and the other one maybe 10 weeks. They came to me and said, "You've got to brief us. I mean we're going to confront experienced officers from the Soviet embassy."

And I said, "That's all right, I'm not going to brief you. You passed the FSO exam. You're Americans. So, go handle yourself. Take my word for it, you will do fine."

So when the symposium was held and they came back proud as could be, they said -- they answered all the questions and the Soviet officers, when certain questions came their way, kept saying, "We cannot reply because we haven't been briefed on that." And apparently that's how the symposium went. And our two officers were heroes. That increased the morale a thousand percent.

Now, let me tell you also what the embassy looked like before. Replogle was a Lutheran. That's the established religion of Iceland. Now, the chaplain on the base was a Lutheran and he invited him every Sunday to come to the embassy to preach, which he's really not allowed to do. He then assigned one member of the embassy to have the chaplain for dinner every Sunday. The embassy was made up of one of the Jewish religion, two Catholics, and I don't know what the other one was. But it wasn't Lutheran. During my first week as ambassador they all came to me en mass and complained that the ambassador is not supposed to do this.

I said, "Oh yes!" They said that they were afraid not to attend and participate in the religious ceremonies. I immediately cancelled all that. And then the chaplain the next Sunday came to me and said he didn't receive any invitation to preach. I said, "You're absolutely right." I said, "You know that's against the law and I've canceled all of that. And my staff will no longer invite you for dinner, unless they want to on a personal basis." That raised morale a thousand percent. We had a wonderful working embassy, absolutely top notch.

Q: What was the media like? I assume there's newspapers, broadcast, and that sort of thing.

IRVING: Oh yes.

Q: You were there during the time of -- well, when we were pulling out of Vietnam. How was --

IRVING: Yes, one of the things, I received a message from the department saying that Scandinavian countries have gotten together and plan to issue a joint release condemning the United States on the bombing of Cambodia and I am to see if I can get Iceland to not sign that joint community. That was next to impossible. But I got a hold of the foreign minister and then the prime minister and I came up with some wording that really was double talk on my part. I wish I could remember what it was. But the Icelandic government bought it as a compromise. And Sweden took that statement that I had prepared for the Icelandic government as contrary to the joint declarations they wanted to make. State Department gave me wholly hell for not following my instructions. But it's interesting. I received a message from President Nixon congratulating me for that statement because he took it as breaking up 100% of the proposed Scandinavian declaration.

Q: Well, you mentioned several times the role of President Nixon. I wonder, obviously he left office in a difficult manner, but what was your impression of President Nixon as a leader in American foreign affairs?

IRVING: Well, I learned he was dishonest domestically, but I thought he was very, very good on foreign affairs. I think most of Europe thought so too. And Iceland actually thought so. I had to tread lightly because I was a Democrat. I've never voted Republican

in my life.

I was the deputy assistant secretary of state for operations. I had just come from Vienna as DCM to a good job at OPR. My office was on the Seventh Floor. The new Deputy Secretary of State Elliot Richardson passed by. He stopped in my office and said, "Where have you been? The office of personnel has you still in Vienna."

I answered, "Well, I've been here for about four months. What's the problem?"

He said, "President Nixon's been looking for me."

I said, "I have no connection with President Nixon. I don't understand."

Mr. Richardson replied that, "President Nixon feels very strongly in the value of educational and cultural exchange. He understands that there is such a bureau in the State Department. He wants to make sure it's active. He feels the same way that President Kennedy felt when he came in, and he wants that bureau to be run on a non-political basis. Therefore, he wants the assistant secretary of that bureau to be a Foreign Service Officer, because he wants it to also play a role in foreign affairs on a non-political basis." And then he turned to him, Elliot Richardson who I did not know until that moment, and said, "Go find me such an FSO."

Elliot Richardson then consulted the Bureau of the Budget. Why I don't know, but they said there's a Foreign Service Officer by the name of Fred Irving who was the executive director of that bureau at one time and did amazing things and built it up. As a matter of fact, he was given an honor award for the work he did in promoting not only the Fulbright student program, but the non-Fulbright program, exchanges of cultural events and the like. He's some place in Europe, go find him, he's the one you want." So Richardson told me he then had told the president about me and the president had said get a hold of this fellow and tell him I want him to be the Assistant Secretary of State of that bureau. That's why he's now talking to me. Would I be willing? I said, "of course".

Richardson said, "Fine." And then he said, "We're putting you in now as acting until papers come through." So I was acting for a couple months and then I got a call from the Personnel Department, State Department, saying -- it was either Ehrlichman or Haldeman, I don't know which one, told the State Department to ask Irving whether he would go down as the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State because the staff reminded the president, that he had promised that job to an academic that was a Republican. And President Nixon said oh yes, he forgot. But ask Irving whether he'd be willing to be the Senior Deputy Assistant under him with the arrangement that for intents and purposes I'd be the operating arm. And I said yes, under the condition that I can work with him, I said I never undercut my boss, and I want to make sure that we have a compatible interest. I met this person and we got along beautifully. So I said yes indeed, I'm glad to be under this person. I continued to be acting in the meantime.

And then I got another call saying that Ehrlichman said that Shirley Temple Black wants

that job. And I think it was Ehrlichman who told the president, you know, the Blacks are very influential in Republican circles.

Q: In California particularly, yes.

IRVING: And you know, it's going to be tough to cross them. So we'll see if Irving will be willing to be the second deputy. And anyway, he told the president, "We found out that he's a Democrat. And if the Blacks figure out that he placed a Democrat over such a prominent Republican, it's going to be hell to pay."

So this message came to me in the form of a question from the Director of Personnel at State supposedly from the president, saying that he would ask me a certain question and on the basis of my answer he would make a decision. And the question was, if I remember it, if given the Senior Deputy Assistant job, would I promise not to do anything personally or in my official actions that would embarrass or dishonor the office of the president or the president personally? I think that's pretty close to what I remember. I thought that this was the State Department personnel people playing a joke on me. So I said, "Tell this to the president. And make sure you get it right. If given the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary job," -- no, that's the -- oh, "Please ask," -- that's right. It's -- trying to remember it. Oh yes, I said, "Please ask the president if he thought I had rocks in my head."

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: I felt that the answer to that question was obvious, and that question was so stupid it couldn't possibly have come from the president. And you know, to my surprise, I learned that it was President Nixon who asked the question. Had I known that, I wouldn't have been so flippant and rude.

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: And so Nixon is quoted as saying that -- Nixon put me in that job because I was also a realist who recognized that the question was a dumb one. He said the job was mine as long as I wanted. He said he would send Shirley Temple Black to Ghana as ambassador where the talents of her public relations were more appropriate. And you know, he did send her to Ghana. She did a *tremendous* job in Ghana.

Q: Yes, all accounts.

IRVING: And then she was brought back to Washington and appointed Chief of Protocol -- to another job where she did extremely well.

Q: Yes. She was later ambassador to Czechoslovakia and was also responsible for setting up the ambassadorial training course at FSI.

IRVING: The President was pleased with my performance. There were a lot of events

that brought me to his attention like ping-pong diplomacy. You want me to get into that?

Q: Yes, I would. I'd like to get as much as I can out of you.

IRVING: OK. Now let's see, when would this have been? Probably April. You know, there was a young group of ping-pong players who went to China.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: And this was all at their own expense, play against a Chinese team. They were warmly welcomed. This caught the State Department by surprise. So the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs decided that someone from the State Department should meet the team when they returned to the United States. And so they called a meeting the night before the team was to arrive back and they thought that they, they should start to discuss what all this means. They thought someone from the State Department should meet them and should make a statement. So they called me down to join them. And this thing -- this what to do was -- kept going back and forth. It was midnight and they still couldn't decide. I kept saying look -- at that time I was the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of Educational and Cultural Affairs. I said, "You know what we should do is protect ourselves and the president and Kissinger and have somebody treat it as a cultural event or a sports event. This way the president can move either way. If he wants to make something of it, a political event, he can. If he doesn't, he could call it a cultural event."

And they all thought that was a dumb idea. So finally at 1:00 in the morning they said, "Well, we'll neutralize it; maybe we'll call it a cultural event, maybe not, but we still have to make a statement. So I should go out that morning to Los Angeles, meet the group. There ordinarily will be a lot of press," which there was. "Call in just before the plane arrives and we'll tell you what to say."

And I said, "I still think you ought to give the president some leeway."

And they kept saying, "We don't know, we haven't made any decision yet." But if I say the wrong thing, "don't bother to come home." Let's see how The Washington Post plays it, if they play it at all. So I welcomed the group and I said something about we looked forward to China sending their team to the United States and that there will be further exchanges in the coming years. I called my wife and asked, "Can I come home?" She said, "Oh sure, the front page of The Washington Post has it saying "I hope the Chinese will soon reciprocate." Well, I came home and the State Department heard from President Nixon saying that fellow Irving did it again. He made a beautiful statement. It was smart and it was simple. Later I heard that that was one of the elements that lay the foundation for the recognition of China. So you know, it's strange how all these things fit together.

Q: Oh yes, well that's quite something.

IRVING: *(laughs)* I had a very anti-Foreign Service life, I got to tell you.

Q: Well also, you had a way with words.

IRVING: My wife's book is a compilation of short vignettes anywhere from one and a half to three pages long through her whole Foreign Service career and it mentions many of these events.

Q: Well, how did you find -- did you have much to do with Congress during this period?

IRVING: Oh yes, indeed. You know, as executive director, for the -- well yes, executive directors deal with the Appropriations Committee. So an Executive Director of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, I practically lived about six weeks every year on the Hill discussing the programs in money matters with the staff of the appropriations committees. I also had to do that throughout the year on CU matters at the Bureau of the Budget, of course.

Q: Well, how did you find the staff? I mean were they you might say with it as far as -- I always think that our exchange program is one of the most important things we've had over the years and it's -- but did the appropriations staff and all -- did they understand what we were up to?

IRVING: Well, we kept losing money because the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee, John Jay Rooney, from Brooklyn, disliked Senator Fulbright.

Q: Well, Rooney of course was a figure of infamy or if you want to say within the Foreign Service.

IRVING: He didn't like us because he resented calling the student exchange program the "Fulbright program". So I thought it best to deal mostly with his senior staff aide, Jay Howe, who was a nice guy; a reasonable guy. But I managed to get money that his boss didn't want to give. Let's say he used to say, "Well, just leave it to me." And then on the Senate I had to deal with Senator Ellender.

Q: Oh God, from Louisiana.

IRVING: Yes. Now, Senator Ellender every year made trips overseas. And what he did was he writes his reports while he was still in the United States, send it to us overseas and have us correct it before he even got there. He would have people think that he wrote it while overseas. His staff aides were friendly. We used to be able to get some money restored in the Senator Appropriations Committee at the Senate-house conference. Sometimes they split the difference.

Q: Well, I remember I was in Belgrade in the '70s and Senator Ellender came through and he wanted to go I think to Romania. He just wanted to get a stamp in his passport to have been in Romania.

IRVING: *(laughs)*

Q: Because Romanian embassy wasn't very cooperative. They didn't understand this. And we would tell them, you know, we had -- I mean we were, you know, putting in you know, you might say diplomatic, you know, "We have this jerk of a Senator, he's rather important for you and for us and for all sorts of reasons and please just let him go in. He'll just go in, cross the border and come on in. But he wants to tell his constituents he was there."

IRVING: Yes.

Q: Oh what a -- when you think about some of the things we go through.

IRVING: Yes. In the Appropriations Committee, Senator Ellender would change the wording of the questions to what he wished he had asked, and of course they didn't match the answers. So I would get together with Ellender's staff aides and I would change the answers.

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: So many times the written congressional record was no resemblance to what went on.

Q: Oh (laughs), oh God.

IRVING: Oh yes, I can also tell you about others.

Q: Well, tell me about some of these. Because while we've got this oral history program going I'm trying to pick up things that we can, you know, other people can read and use.

IRVING: OK. Let me tell you when I was Executive Director of European Affairs, we had gotten a big budget cut. So I had to cut the big posts of course, like London and Paris and Rome. So, I hated to cut several American positions out of Rome and I felt it was really going to hurt them, but I really -- my back was against the wall. And I got a call from the director general. What's his name -- it'll come to me. Joe Palmer. He told me that we have to do a favor for Congressman Hale Boggs of Louisiana. The congressman wanted to help an Italian cabinetmaker who worked for him who wanted to go back to his homeland in Italy. So he wanted us to give him a job in the embassy at the FSO-3 level. And I said to the Director General, "You've got to be kidding. I just cut the embassy five American positions and now you want me to tell the embassy they have to hire a cabinetmaker. No way!"

Palmer said, "Yes, we're telling you. We're not asking you."

And I said, "Well, I'll tell you what. I'm not going to do it."

So he says, "Who the hell are you?"

And I says, "I'm the Executive Director of European Affairs and we actually have a lot of autonomy."

And he said, "Well, I'll see to that." He was going to talk to the -- I think Bill Crockett, who was the Undersecretary of Management at the time, to order me to do that.

So Bill called me and said, "Fred, you've got to do this. Congressman Boggs is important to us."

And I said, "Bill, we're all going to look silly and the President is going to look silly too. Don't ask me to do it."

He said, "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you."

And I said, "Bill, you know I don't like to defy you, but I'm going to defy you and you're going to thank me later on."

So he says, "You know, I've got to report you to the Secretary's Office."

So sure enough, I get a call from the Special Assistant to the Secretary, whose name I don't remember. And he got on his high horse and said, "I am ordering you."

And I said, "You don't have the authority to order me. If the Secretary of State orders me, that's different. Is he ordering me?"

He says, "No. I don't want to get him involved," or something like that.

I said, "Then I'm not going to do it."

So he says, "You're going to hear from Marvin Watson, who is President Johnson's hatchet man."

I got a call from Marvin Watson in the White House who I've never met about two hours later, and he said, "Who the hell are you to defy this congressman?"

And I said, "Well, I didn't think it would reach the White House, but since it's gone to the White House I'll submit my resignation as an FSO as soon as we hang up, but I'm not going to do it."

So he said, "Well, the president is going to hear about this."

And the next morning, while I was writing out my resignation, President Lyndon Johnson called me and said, "We need more people like you in my administration.

Congratulations. You have my back. He said I saved his "butt". Can you imagine what the press would make of this? "And I ordered that you get the next ambassadorship that's

open.” And he said he didn’t care where it was, any place in the world.

Q: God.

IRVING: So then the next ambassador that came open was Addis Ababa. Well, I didn’t want to go to Addis Ababa because my wife can’t take high altitudes and I was not going to jeopardize her health. Joe Palmer, the director general, was so mad that I went over his head in the outcome that he passed word all the way to the White House that Haile Selassie spoke only French, which was not true, and Fred Irving does not speak French. And Johnson said, “Well, you know, I know the importance of language. But you make sure he gets the next one.”

And Joe Palmer told me, “That’s what you’ll get, you will get the next one for going over my head.” So the next one, of course was in Africa, where there were no proper medical facilities (my wife had recent surgery).

I’ve had a couple of other demands. Another congressman had a girlfriend whom he wanted to get rid of. Suddenly I get the word to send her to Paris. And I said no. Well, it turns out that she didn’t want to go to Paris, so I was saved that trouble. Another example -- when I was Executive Director of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs I interviewed the daughter of a very, very, very important senator who asked the State Department to give her a job. I was told to make her my special assistant. It so happened that there was a vacancy for a public relations job. So I said, “Sure, send her up. If she’s any good, that’s great.”

So she came in wearing a short skirt (at least in those days it was considered “short”), a very long string of beads that went down to her ankles, sucking a lollipop. She sat down in the chair next to me, put one leg over the arm of the chair, and said, “Now, tell me why you want me.”

So, I described the job and said, “Now, I want you to want the job.”

And she said, “Oh, it doesn’t sound interesting. Thanks,” and she walked out.

Q: (laughs) Well, you were safe.

IRVING: Safe. And I then got a call from someone in the Personnel Office, “For crying out loud, why didn’t you talk her into it? The senator’s important to us?”

I said, “She doesn’t want the job, and I don’t want her.” And again, I was saved.

Q: Well, how about with, I’ve talked to people in my earlier interviews, about John Rooney. People talked about having to go with him and go on trips and he always carried bottles of I think rye whisky with him and all --

IRVING: No. No, I never had much dealing with Rooney outside the hearing room. So

none of that I'm aware of. And my dealings were usually with Jay Howe who had a lot of influence over him.

Q: Were there any other congressmen, senators, representatives who, you know, stick in your mind?

IRVING: I'm trying to think. You know, when I was Assistant Secretary of Oceans, International, Environmental and Scientific Affairs I had to appear a couple of times at the substantive committee hearings. One I remember very vividly, Ken Hechler, of West Virginia who was chairman of the Committee on Science. He was very nice, very nice. And you know, my first job in government was as junior economist at the International Division of the Bureau of the Budget. And Ken Hechler was the Budget Bureau's personnel director. He hired me. So when he saw me and I saw him chairing this hearing, it was a cordial reunion. We got along beautifully. And of course my nomination hearing, my confirmation hearing before Fulbright went very smoothly, too.

Q: What about Fulbright? How did you evaluate him?

IRVING: Well, I'll tell you. I didn't particularly like him because when the civil rights bill was in the Congress, he voted against it. Even though he did good work as you know, I personally held it against him to vote against civil rights. He said he had to, coming from Arkansas. But I thought he could have shown some courage, which he did not.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: I got along very well with Senator Pell. I think that was because I was from Rhode Island and he was a senator from Rhode Island.

Q: Oh yes.

IRVING: Actually I got along with practically every member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I don't know exactly why. We had good conversations.

Q: Well --

IRVING: AT my confirmation hearings all the Senators seemed very interested in Iceland and Jamaica.

Q: Well, let's go back to the time when you were -- what was it, Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Science?

IRVING: Yes. I retired actually from ambassador to Jamaica.

Q: Yes, but when you were dealing with Oceans and Science.

IRVING: Yes.

Q: What were the issues particularly --

IRVING: Yes. Well, there were three main issues. One was Law of the Sea on the ocean; international environmental affairs; matters of pollution were finally coming up and on scientific affairs was, of course, the nuclear energy issues. I was particularly involved in the scientific side.

There was a civil servant by the name of Herman Pollack who actually established the Office of Scientific Affairs, which later became Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Pollack felt strongly that science was going to play a part in foreign affairs. Herman Pollack is now dead.

Q: Herman Pollack's interview is in our collection.

IRVING: I continued what he initiated. He actually should get credit for establishing that bureau. And of course they didn't give him credit because he wasn't an FSO. But Loy Henderson felt that FSO's should play a key role in everything. He always listed me as the first career head of the bureau. He refused to recognize that a "civil servant, Herman Pollack" was the first head. I'm not very fond of Loy Henderson.

Have you ever heard of the word exile?

Q: Yes.

IRVING: I got exiled to New Zealand as my assignment after the National War College.

At the National War College a half dozen students meet the speaker after the lectures for further discussion. One day we had Secretary of Defense be the speaker. And then I was chosen to meet with him along with the five other students for an off-the-record discussion. The Secretary of Defense's speech was about the new offense and defense, which he described as a greater use of nuclear armaments and a reduction of ground troops. So after I said, "I'm sorry, I disagree with you, Mr. Secretary. I don't think that's a good strategy. I think that all wars henceforth are going to be small wars, not world wars. In small wars using nuclear armaments -- as of now -- can't contain the demolition of countries, people killing. And anyway, the United States is a morale country and we would never do this in these small wars."

So he went ballistic. I mean he went *ballistic*. He called me a traitor. He criticized the FSO corps, said we take the side of the enemy always and never the side of the United States. There's always a senior ambassador who is a deputy commandant as well as a general. He then chimed in and said, "I want you to know that Mr. Irving does not speak for the State Department and I'll see to it that he never will."

I figured, "Uh-oh, they won't let me graduate." But they let me graduate. And my next assignment was coming and they had two things to concede, going over Henderson's

head and causing a bad reputation for the Foreign Service in the Defense Department, or just the -- in the eyes of the Secretary of Defense. So I was -- but the -- let it be known that I was being exiled for these two things. Well, I overcome all that eventually of course.

Q: Well, what happened?

IRVING: Well, I spent two boring years in Wellington, New Zealand.

Q: When?

IRVING: That was '60 to '62.

Q: Well, while you were in Wellington did the nuclear issue come up?

IRVING: Yes.

Q: Because later, I mean at some point the New Zealand Parliament would not allow nuclear propelled or nuclear-armed ships to come into port.

IRVING: Yes, that was about three years later after I left.

Q: What was your impression of New Zealand?

IRVING: Well, people were wonderful, absolutely wonderful. The country was beautiful. The job was dull.

I'd be making speeches all over the country. You know, and one stupid thing happened. I was invited to go to the South Pole by the New Zealand government. Just as I'm ready to go I get a telegram from Washington that Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson is traveling in the Pacific to try to sell surplus American butter and they're coming to New Zealand. I should set up meetings between Benson and the government of New Zealand and I should try to smooth the way for New Zealand to buy American surplus butter. And it's stupid because New Zealand is a major exporter of butter.

Q: Yes! Good God, yes.

IRVING: I had to cancel the trip to Antarctica. I begged the government to please, please, please meet with Benson, talk over butter. Do me a favor. By this time I'd gotten along very well with New Zealand government officials. In fact, we entertained each other. Our children played with each other. I arranged the meeting, but I was embarrassed to be in the meeting trying to sell American surplus butter to a butter exporter.

I finally got out of, out of New Zealand. Again the term "needs of the service" hit me. President Kennedy wanted to build up educational and cultural affairs. Lucius Battle who was special assistant to Dean Rusk who was the Secretary of State was chosen to be the

assistant secretary. And he needed a new executive director to help him, because somehow it had sort of fallen down. A lot of money was taken away. And what happened was that the office of personnel saw a place where they could store misfit employees and political appointees. They would load CU with them. So you had a whole crowd of misfits. They wanted Lucius Battle to clean house and start, in effect, a possible forward looking bureau. They needed a new executive director. So I get calls informing me my new assignment is going to be Executive Director to CU. I said I understood I was in line to be DCM in Malaysia. "Oh, we broke that."

I said, "What do you mean you broke that? Haven't I been in exile enough?"

And they said, "Yes, you can rebuild yourself by coming here."

And I said, "No, I don't want to come."

So then the "needs of the service" was tossed my way. So I had to go and become the new executive director. I was beginning to feel that I was being a patsy. It doesn't pay to have a reputation of being an able guy. That was my conclusion.

Q: Well, I think it's true. I mean you can be, you know, you're a Mr. Fix-It.

IRVING: *(laughs)* Yes. You know, when I was -- let me give you just one more example. When I became the Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs I was at the job maybe a month when there was a vacancy. I had five deputy assistant secretaries, one for each of the various units. I also found that I had 20 special assistants, believe it or not. I didn't know what they did.

Q: Were these sort of political jobs, or were these --

IRVING: Every one of them.

Q: -- misfit jobs, or what?

IRVING: They were all outside political jobs. And I had trouble, you know, one by one, getting rid of them. I had one legitimate vacancy. So the State Department, along with all agencies, always have a representative of the political party in power located in each department to look out for possible openings for non-career people. I got along with the one stationed in the State Department. The first thing I did was to call on him and say, "Let's make a deal. I will identify jobs that could be filled by either political appointee or Foreign Service. I would hire the better qualified or whoever can learn the job in short order. But take my word for it."

He said, "OK, I'll take your word for it. You look like an honest guy." So the international environmental affairs job was open. It is a big job, a good job, and an important job. And I checked and there weren't too many Foreign Service Officers frankly who had the knowledge and experience, and I know I didn't. So I let it be known

that I will interview someone from outside that is qualified.

I get a call from the director general. The director General said Senator Goldwater has proposed somebody and I better take him. So I said, "Let me interview him." Well, it turned out to be the guy who was the executive producer of that television program, "The Wild Kingdom" where, you know, all sorts of animals, elephants and all that, storming around. So I interview him, told him what the job's about. And he kept talking about how they trained elephants and this and that and tigers and all that. And I said, "No, no, you don't get the idea."

He says, "Yes, I get the idea. You know, we should be kind to animals and animals can be trusted."

So I said, "Well, you'll hear from me." And then I called the director general and said, "No, no, no, no. No, give me somebody else." I then talked to the political representative with whom I had a deal. He said, you know, "We don't want to cross Mr. Goldwater. Can't I sort of give him this job and then assign a deputy who will actually do the job?"

Guy said, "No, no, no."

So the next day I debated, "Well," to put in a call to Senator Goldwater.

And Mr. Goldwater said, "What? You even considered that fellow for the job?"

I said, "Yes, you recommended him."

"Well, I did this only to get him out of my office."

He said, "If you had hired him, I would submit a bill to abolish your bureau, because it can't be that important."

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: So I called the director general and said, "Thanks for nothing, let me tell you."

She got mad, said, "You went over my head."

I said, "Yes, I did. And you ought to be thankful." Well, she wasn't thankful.

And she said, "I'll get even with you." Well, we made up later on so everything was all right. I'm telling you (*laughs*). The political representative at State agreed with what I had done.

Q: It's a rough world out there.

IRVING: You're telling me (*laughs*). Yep. Oh my.

Q: I was wondering, somehow, I think talking to a friend of mine, was in management for sometime, Tom Stern. Did you ever run across Tom Stern?

IRVING: Oh, I sure did.

Q: Yes, because he mentioned you. He just died.

IRVING: Did he? Oh my.

Q: Yes, about three weeks ago. I used to see him, I used to go up and see him once a week at a rehabilitation place.

IRVING: Uh-huh. Oh, I knew Tom well.

Q: Yes. He was a fine man. He was my DCM in Korea when I was consul general there.

IRVING: Uh-huh. Oh, you know I saw a notice that Tom's dead and I wondered if that was the same one who was Bill Crockett's special assistant.

Q: Oh, it certainly is. Yes, Tom used to have sort of the same sort of stories that you have of --

IRVING: *(laughs)*

Q: You know, Washington -- the State Department is not, is not a place for shy souls.

IRVING: No, it isn't. No, it isn't. You know, here at Applewood I'm the only one who was in diplomacy. And I write these stories, and I build up the Foreign Service as a great thing.

Q: Well, I'm thinking, Fred, why don't we call it quits and set up another time, because we do want to talk about Jamaica.

IRVING: You know, every ambassador makes a call on the prime minister. Let me tell you about a previous U.S. ambassador's call on the Prime Minister.

Q: OK.

IRVING: And the fellow that told this to me escorted de Roulet to meet the Prime Minister. When Michael Manley put out his hand to shake de Roulet's our ambassador said, "Sorry Mr. Prime Minister, but I don't shake hands with a black man."

Q: Oh God, I can't --

IRVING: Yes. And this has to be true because the Jamaican chief of staff to Michael

Manley, also told this to me, so it has to be true. And why Manley tolerated him is beyond me. Also, about a year or so later, there was a hearing on a Jamaican bauxite issue, and also drugs, you know, because Jamaica was a hot place for marijuana. There was another job that was in my portfolio -- to get Jamaica to stop producing marijuana. De Roulet was called to testify at the senate hearing about this topic and about bauxite. He replied that we would have no trouble on bauxite and all that. So the stupid de Roulet says, "Don't worry about Manley. I've got him in my back pocket." And this was a public hearing, open to the public.

Q: Oh nice. Oh God.

IRVING: Yes, it hit the press (*laughs*).

Q: Well, of course.

IRVING: So when de Roulet came back to Kingston two days later, he was declared *persona non grata*, which was obviously what they should do, what Manley should have done, kicked him out right away. And another thing about de Roulet is that he had rubber stamps made up in the form of animals. Like he'd say, "The DCM, from now on when I want to send for you or send a piece of paper to you, you will be the lion. And here's the stamp." For economic officer, "You will be the tiger. Here's the stamp." And that's how he communicated to members of the embassy, with these rubber stamps. Also, the symbol of the embassy, you know, the big medal round thing, he took it off and put it on his yacht. He had a yacht in Kingston that was bigger than the biggest military vessel in Kingston. And that used to grate the government. Again, I was told this by the prime minister's office. So he got kicked out and who should he be replaced? By another guy, political, who was almost as bad. And that guy interfered openly and blatantly in local elections in Jamaica. And that didn't sit too well with the government. But they let him stay.

Q: How the hell did this happen? I mean I would have thought that after one disaster they would have spent some time making sure it wasn't going to happen again.

IRVING: Yes. And each guy said that they paid \$300,000 for the -- to the Republican National Committee. De Roulet said he thought he was getting Austria and I forgot what the other guy was supposed to have said he was getting -- I think France or something like that. And what did they do? They sent him to, quote -- well, I'll use the polite term -- "negro" country, unquote.

Q: Oh God.

IRVING: So this is the situation I walked into (*laughs*). You know, it's ridiculous. So then I was -- my name was sent forward. I had a very easy time in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee --

Q: Well, did they -- did the Foreign Relations Committee make any allusions to the

disasters and --

IRVING: *(laughs)* Well, I think one of them said, "Do you know what you're getting into, Mr. Ambassador?"

I said, "Just somewhat, somewhat. I'm not quite sure." And I related what I was told about what I'll be facing. They knew I was sticking my head in the lion's den.

Q: Well, the morale must have been awful.

IRVING: To be honest about it, it was a -- they all had a good time together. They couldn't care less about what's going on in Jamaica, as far as the United States was concerned. And I guess this was what Phil Habib was referring to. The agrément took a little while. And I couldn't figure out why. And then when the agrément came and I arrived in Kingston, I was told that because of the types of people that the United States had sent previously they asked Congressman Rangel to investigate me and my wife regarding our racial attitude.

Q: Oh yes, Rangel, from New York.

IRVING: Yes, yes.

Q: Black congressman.

IRVING: Yes, congressman, yes. And he, in turn, had Howard University, which was a black university, investigate my wife and me. And as far as our racial feelings were concerned and our opinion, and this I was told by Michael Manley, because he wanted to make sure that this time they weren't going to get the disasters that they had before me. Manley and I hit it off beautifully.

Q: All right. Well, let's talk a bit about the political situation when you arrived there.

IRVING: Yes. There were two political parties mainly, the National Party and the People's Party. The National Party, I think it was the National Party, was Manley and the other party, the People's Party, which was very, very much pro-American. I called on both party heads of course and when I met the party that was defeated, the People's Party, the first thing he said was, "I suppose we'll have the same relationship as my predecessors that I will keep him very much informed on at least a weekly basis if not daily on my conversations with Prime Minister Manley, and I would seek his advice on matters." That was Seaga. Apparently, our two ambassadors had a close relationship with Seaga and it was a question in my mind as to who is running the embassy, Seaga or our ambassadors. So I said, "Well, Mr. Seaga, I'm neutral when it comes to the political parties and I'm sure that you will know what I'm doing in the country, the same way that the government is knowing. And there are some things I'm sure of course that I will not tell you."

So he got mad and said, "Then you're going to have a hard time here, and I'm going to see to it," or something like that. So I figured oh boy.

I got invited by the yacht club for afternoon coffee. So I went. Made up of all white people. And they told me what a close relationship they had with my two predecessors and they assume I will continue the practice of any time a white person or white Jamaican or, or a member of the yacht club wants a visa, can they assume it will be automatic? And I said no, you cannot assume it's going to be automatic as far as I'm concerned. The ambassador cannot interfere in the issuance of visas. And whatever happened before I arrived, if it's legitimate fine, if it isn't, then forget it. And that was the last time I got invited there. So what I was doing is wanting to know for what basis my predecessors formed -- and it was evident that they would do anything that they thought maybe Manley didn't know to sort of thwart the current, the new government. Now, another thing on the political side, Manley said his government will be open to me. Interesting, as we were having a cup of coffee when I presented my credentials, Manley said, "Oh by the way, do I have a yacht?"

And I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, no, I don't. I have only a canoe. But don't get me wrong, I sure would like to have a yacht."

We both had a laugh and he said, "You know, I like you," (*laughs*).

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: And actually, this type of thing was written up and published in, I think in Harper's monthly magazine here. Well, anyway on my first day at the embassy there was a dead body on the doorstep of the embassy. And I said, "What in the world is going on?" So we had the body removed. The next day there was another dead body at the embassy. I figured, "Oh boy, here we go again. This must be a sign of anti-Americanism." And I had CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) do a little investigating, and they told me that the body of yesterday was a Manley's party body guy. The body the next day was Seaga's body guy. This went on, believe it or not, for two weeks. Each day a dead body on my embassy doorstep. So I figured, you know, this can't go on because I had suddenly two young FSO's wives are scared and they wanted to go home. And I couldn't really stop them because they were really frightened. So I asked the CIA who their leaders were which I then named the "mafia". And they gave me the names of the mafia chiefs, if you will, of each of the parties. Each political party had a military force or police force of their own. They were the ones who were leaving the dead bodies. So I called them to the embassy and the first thing I had them do is give the Marine Guards all the weapons they were carrying. And believe it or not, these guys had a total of 17 knives and three pistols -

Q: Good God!

IRVING: -- that the Marine Guard confiscated before they were allowed to see me. And I read the riot act to them. I said, "I am tired of your leaving dead bodies here. If you want

to kill each other, that's your business. But it's my business if you put them on my doorstep and I'm giving you a warning. You're going to regret doing this. Now, let's make a deal." And we had a long conversation.

I finally got them to agree that they will not harm me, harm my wife, my family, or any other person who was with me, politicians of any or both parties. Also, that they will no longer leave dead bodies on my embassy doorstep. It worked very well...! Sometimes a politician of one party wanted to go to another part of Kingston controlled by the other party. I would escort him. Formerly, if he tried it, he would find a knife in his back!

Q: Well, had these gangs displayed any anti-Americanism or was this sort of a local feud type thing?

IRVING: Well, it was a local thing, but they figured why not have it do double duty? Because there was a lot of anti-Americanism? And I think Habib and the Secretary of State really assessed the situation quite accurately. They didn't like Americans. Castro had a great influence on the government and somewhat on even the opposition party. So I at least calmed some of the anti-Americanism by the blatant members of the party that were the dangerous members of the party. And my wife moved in on the various organizations and they liked her very much. She was an early childhood education specialist -- well, my wife was a teacher of early childhood education. She discovered that there was no such organization in Jamaica. So she went to the Minister of Education and talked him into the need for that kind of a teacher's organization. He then said, "You've got me convinced, but she should see Manley." And so she made an appointment to see Manley and she talked to him and Manley said, "Oh, that's in his fifth year of the third five-year plan." And by the time she left Manley's office, it was moved up to the first year of the first five-year plan. That really impressed --

Q: Oh yes.

IRVING: -- the Teacher's Association. And Manley said he liked her and he would hope that he would have more contact with her. So right away we're starting to eat into the strident anti-Americanism.

Q: Well, how did you evaluate Manley as a leader? I mean, you know, he had this proclivity to look upon Castro as being a good model, but how did you -- what was driving Manley?

IRVING: Well, he felt that the bauxite people were trying to control Jamaica, point number one. Point number two, he thought Castro did a lot of good things, especially in the health fields for his people. And Jamaica was really suffering from health problems. When Manley came into office, the doctors made an exodus for from Jamaica. When I got to Jamaica I asked the Minister of Health what's the health situation. And he said, "They're all leaving. There are now only 63 doctors in the whole country." And he doesn't know how to stop them.

And I said, "Oh, I know how you can try, This may be interfering in your internal affairs, but, why don't you calm down? Why don't you listen to the pleas of the business community and the health community and all that?"

He said, "Well, well," well, he hmm-ed and hah-ed.

And I said, "Well, it's worth a try."

That helped the situation. I've also got to tell you that during my two years in Jamaica the government had my phone tapped. He knew I knew and I knew that he knew he was tapping it. So we were always careful what we said in our phone conversations.

And another thing, Manley saw that they were losing tourism. And I said to him, "You know, tourism is a big moneymaker in Jamaica. Has it occurred to you to say "please and hello" and all that sort of stuff?"

And he said, "Well, it's worth a try." And again, we moved in.

Manley still didn't admit that he was tapping my phones. When my staff and I had telephone conversations, I warned them, "Don't talk in specifics." Well, one day the AID chief and I had a disagreement during a phone conversation.

And then (*laughs*) a voice broke in and said, "You know, the ambassador's right. Because I'm the one monitoring the phone that day."

Q: (laughs)

IRVING: Then she says, "Oops!" And then she *begged* me not to tell the government.

I said, "Oh, I knew you were listening in, so forget it." Well, that won another friend in the phone system.

So you see, little by little by little we chipped away to a point where when we left, and I'm skipping a whole lot, of course, Michael Manley for the first time since he said he's been a prime minister, he gave a luncheon reception in honor of my wife. The foreign minister, when it was customary for him to give a luncheon in honor of a departing ambassador, scheduled one for me and my wife. When we got there, I looked and I said, "You know, I don't know these people."

And my wife said, "Oh yes," they're her contacts.

I said, "Oh, this is not for me. It's a scheme to have it look legitimate. It's really for her." And when it came to the speech by the Foreign Minister to which I was supposed to respond, I said, "Mr. Foreign Minister, you know and I know that this is really for Dorothy. So I'm going to let her respond to your speech," so we all had a good laugh and we all had a good time.

The Minister of Interior, who, you know, handles the police, also, had a reception in our honor. He made a speech saying, “We’re sorry you must go Mr. Ambassador, but must you take Dorothy with you? She is irreplaceable.”

So I said, “Fine. I agree with you completely. So Dorothy, you respond.” So we all had a good laugh. And she did. And by that time, within two years, I think I could say, the anti-Americanism did get lower.

On the marijuana issue, Jamaica was a major grower and exporter to the United States. Two of the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) people came down to see what they could do. They weren’t getting any place. They appealed to me. So I took them to the Minister of Health and said, “I want you to listen to them, if you don’t mind. It would be a personal favor if you would.” So the two DEA agents convinced the Minister of Health. Within two years, when I was leaving, Manley cut off the exports of marijuana to the United States. So I can say that we did something that Secretary Vance wanted us to do and so did our Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration. They gave me a citation for my work on that. Now, my last six months, I actually had trouble getting rid of the 8-Balls in the embassy. And I needed the cooperation of the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs.

Q: Who was that?

IRVING: The Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs came down, visited, saw the crappy place where people waited for visas, which was a disgrace. And it was always under criticism by the government and the opposition. Both parties said don’t believe what the U.S. government says about human rights, etc. They’ve denied visa applicants water fountains and they’ve denied them toilets.

Q: Oh God, yes.

IRVING: It’s true. I mean if you went into the ally, you had to hold your nose. So I said, “I’m going to improve this and I’m going to fight forever if I have to, because this also generates anti-Americanism.”

Now, Barbara Watson, the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs who came down insisted that I get rid of the consul general who was a racist, and he was. He was.

And I said, “Well, I’m going to need your help.”

So she said, “You’ve got it. You’ve got it 100%.”

So I started to make a move. And suddenly Barbara Watson did an about face. And I said, “What’s going on? I need your help now, I’m at that point.”

She said, “Oh, you’re going to have to rely on somebody else,” because she had been

notified that she's going to get an ambassadorship. She's going to go to, I think it's --

Q: Malaysia.

IRVING: Malaysia. Yes. I said, "Well, I'll be darned. You told me you're going to help me and I counted on it."

"Well, you're on your own. And you'll have to do it yourself because I'm not going to jeopardize my ambassadorship," that's what she told me.

I said, "Great."

So then I turned to the Office of Personnel. The guy who's in charge of this area. And we had served together actually in CU at one time. He was staff aide to the Assistant Secretary for Education and Cultural Affairs. Trying to think of his name. And I explained the problem. And what do you think he said? "Fred, we've known each other a long time. I know you're able. Don't count on me to help."

I said, "I suppose you're going to get an ambassadorship."

He said, "You guessed it." And he wasn't going to jeopardize his pending ambassadorship.

Q: Oh my God.

IRVING: I figured this is ridiculous. I can't get these people to help me get rid of these people. They were hypocrites. And so I started to get discouraged, to be honest with you.

Let me give you another piece of what they said regarding the physical conditions of the visa office that applicants had to tolerate. "If we improve the conditions for the visa applicants, we'll get more of them!" Our visa officers, of course, had air-conditioned offices, water fountains, toilets, etc. all visible to the applicants.

Barbara Watson was then replaced with Joan Clark, wonderful person. Absolutely wonderful. So I explained the situation and I said, "We need a new building. There's a new building going up. We could lease it. We're at the point, at the stage where we could specify what we want in it. Let's have some benches, let's have a water cooler, and let's have a few toilets for men and for women."

And Joan was a pretty practical person. And she said, "You know, I've heard about how rotten it is there. Give me a couple of weeks." And sure enough, she was able to get the money to lease a new building. You'd be *amazed* how the anti-American press became favorable to us. And I think we recaptured what we thought we had lost.

Q: Well, let me talk a bit about the Consular Section visas. Now, in Jamaica there are an awful lot of Americans who hire Jamaicans to do things and who come to the United

States essentially illegally by saying they were going to be tourists and are really going for jobs. Technically the ambassador can't do anything about that. But --

IRVING: That's true.

Q: But you do have the power of efficiency reports.

IRVING: *(laughs)*

Well, let's go on to another topic that did involve visas. Michael Manley was the leader of the group that opposed western world actions – the so-called neutral group -- the international group that opposed us on international economic issues.

Q: Yes, the Non-Aligned Movement.

IRVING: The Non-Aligned Movement, yes. They and India, yes, some of the others. The United Nations was going to honor Michael Manley. So the prime minister came to me and he said, "He's having visa problems."

I says, "Don't tell me you didn't get a visa."

He says, "Oh no, no, they wouldn't dare not."

But his assistant couldn't get a visa. I said, "You're kidding," *(laughs)*. So I called in the consul general and I said, "I heard that so and so, who is the prime minister's second in command was refused a visa."

So he said, "Yes, that's right."

I said, "What have you got against the prime minister's chief of staff?"

He said, "Well, how do we know that he's going to come back and doesn't stay in the United States?"

I says, "Let's be realistic. Do you honestly think that Michael Manley's chief of staff, the guy he relies on, the second in command, is not going to return to Jamaica?"

And he said, "Well," and he mentioned the FSO's name and said, "That he was not allowed to overrule him."

I said, "The hell you can't You're the Consul General. You can take the case away from him."

And he said, "Oh, that would create bad morale."

I said, "You know, I think I'm going to come over to the consulate in a couple of weeks

and just have a general discussion as to what U.S. policy is towards to Jamaica. And it's about time we discussed this."

So he said, "Well, then it might be considered as interfering in the rights of the consular officers." Nothing that I said should have been interpreted as violating actions by a visa officer based on concerns that a visa officer has about issuing a visa. But I believe I have a right to know what those concerns are, since, as ambassador, I am the one who has to defend his actions.

I said that this is incredible (*laughs*) and I decided that the next country team meeting will be at the consulate. As a matter fact, I always included the consul general in the country team meetings every week. And the consul general, a new consul general, came from London I think -- or was it Greece? One or the other. And the first thing he told me when he made his call on me was he wants me to know that the Consular Section is not part of the embassy. I said, "Where'd you hear that?"

He says, "Oh, it goes back to the law. There's a diplomatic law and a consular law."

And I said, "Oh, I've got news for you. I know that I can't interfere in visa issuance, but the consulate sure as hell is part of the embassy and don't you forget it." I asked him why we need a consul general if you had no authority to review contentious visa matters. I asked him was he aware that most, if not all ambassadors, are also commissioned as consul generals, as I am?

And then he changed the subject and said, "We work so many hours overtime, we need more people."

So I called in the embassy's administrative officer with the consul general present and said, "This may be true. Work with the consul general and make a survey for a week or two weeks, to make it even fairer, and have them jot down how much overtime each consular officer works." Well, the survey showed that not a single consular officer worked more than a half hour overtime total in any week, if that. And I didn't know what they were trying to pull, but I didn't let them get away with it.

I always felt that the rest of the embassy could learn a lot about the atmosphere in the country and what goes on because a consular officer, along with the administrative officer, is often the first contact with the citizens of the country. That's why I felt that it was important to have the consulate represented in the country team.

Now, I want to come back to the visa. What I had to do is -- I said to the consul general, "I will guarantee the return of the chief of staff and a few others in the prime minister's immediate office." And he said all right, if I will jot down that I will personally guarantee their return, they will issue the visas. And I did that and of course they all came back. The new consul general was starting a fight with me trying to say that I had no right to even call him to the embassy or even to invite him to the country team meetings.

Q: You know, I've been a consul general --

IRVING: Certainly the situation -- because I wasn't getting the cooperation of the office personnel, or the consuls in the office personnel.

Let me tell you one more, it deals with policy. There was a head of government meeting with President Carter and Michael Manley in the White House. Michael Manley's wife was the head of the anti-American party cell. She was so anti-American, it was dripping from her. And she also was a member of the government. Manley said he wanted his wife present because she's a key member of his political party. And I find that Washington said, "Well, there's no need for her."

And I said, "Look, she's a member of the political party. She's in Michael Manley's government cabinet. You cannot exclude her."

So I dealt directly with the White House on this one, because I wasn't going to let the Inter-American Affairs Bureau make that determination. I could think of nothing worse. The prime minister wouldn't come to Washington then if he couldn't take his wife in her capacity as the leader, leading person in the government. So now we get to the Oval Office. And then somebody, I don't know, some special assistant to somebody, and then Brzezinski suddenly decides that wives are not invited to the Oval Office for the meeting. So again, I had to get involved. And Terry Todman was the Assistant Secretary. He was a decent guy. And he said, "I'll take care of it." And there was a big hullabaloo about it almost in public in the public rooms. And finally Manley said, "She stays." So of course she stayed. I wrote some of the discussion points for the president and there was going to be cooperation on the business side. President Carter said he would like to suggest that there be a commission made up of maybe six American businessmen and six Jamaican businessmen to see how the trade between our two countries can be stabilized and then maybe increase to the benefit of both. And Manley bought it immediately. Terry Todman thought this was a good idea. Brzezinski was absolutely silent, which was rather unusual. And the bilateral discussions went very, very, very well. And President Carter said to me, "Fred, I'm going to hold you responsible to make sure this gets organized and this works well."

And Manley said, "I agree. Your ambassador, Fred Irving, is the ideal person because now Jamaica loves him and he's so friendly to Jamaica." That's a quote, end quote.

So when I get back to the country and about a week later I get a very short message. "Forget the president's proposal. Don't do anything about it." That surprised me. This was Carter's own suggestion. Something wrong, there's something wrong.

So after six weeks go by and Manley called me and said, "What's holding it up? Why are we not proceeding?" And he's already designated his six men. And I had to make up some cock and bull story.

I said, "Well, I guess we're just having trouble identifying the best American

businessmen.” So then I sent an eyes only president, and I hear nothing. I tried to telephone the president. I was blocked and I was told I should call the Secretary of State’s office. So I called. Suddenly I could not get connected to him. So somebody was blocking it.

About two weeks after I tried to reach him, I get a call from Secretary Vance saying, “The President wants to know what’s holding it up, why am I stalling.”

And what I should have said was, “Brzezinski told me to forget it,” but I wasn’t that sure. But it wasn’t until I left the ambassadorship, made a call on Vance and he asked me why was I stalling. I said, “Didn’t he get my message?”

He says no. He says, “As a matter fact, I’m disappointed,” he’s disappointed because he was counting on me to send him messages on Castro because Jamaica was a good listening post.

And I said, “Mr. Secretary, I was sending you messages on Castro just about every third week.” And he said he never got them. It was later I found that there was somebody in Secretary Vance’s office who was withholding them. Now I cannot, you know, say it was Brzezinski. But I sure as hell think it was. And he had people all around the place that were blocking messages. Vance was so upset when I told him this that he asked me and my wife to come to his house the next evening for coffee and let’s talk. And we spent two hours with him and his wife. So now I suspect this was going on. Now Brzezinski’s policy toward not only Jamaica, but a lot of the semi-underdeveloped countries was if the country is opposed to any part of the United States policy then put them in the unfriendly category. President Carter told me just before going to Jamaica that his policy, Carter’s policy, was that there are all gradations of being against. If the country is doing something that has no adverse affect on the United States, then forget it. If the country does something that may have an affect on U.S. relations or activities in the area, then discuss it with the prime minister and let him know that we have some difficulty with that and won’t he consider some other activity. But, he said, don’t make a big production out of it. If the country does something that is clearly inimical to our interest, then move in with two feet and two hands and try to dissuade them of that policy and consider whether we should take certain actions or not. So there were three gradations President Carter personally told me as far as Jamaica is concerned. You could see how that differs from Brzezinski.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: And you know, when there was a chief of mission meeting in Washington, oh, after I’d been there a year, and he made it clear to all of us FSOs who were ambassadors that he doesn’t see the need for FSO’s. They’re just in the middle. They interfere too much. And he’s not sure that even we, FSO’s, know anything about the foreign policy of the United States. So that gives you some idea as to what I was up against (*laughs*). So, and there are a lot of other things that went on.

When Castro came to Jamaica on a state visit and Michael Manley asked me if I would be at the airport, of course all the other ambassadors said they would if the American ambassador would. So Manley said, "Please, please, we'll make it worth your while, interest in the United States."

And I said, "Oh, well what the hell." And I said, "Well, I'll call the State Department." This was on a Saturday morning. And by this time Pete Vaky took over, and he was out of the office that Saturday. And there was -- the deputy assistant secretary, she was a political appointee. And people who knew her said she was a birdbrain. And I figured well -- I told her why I was calling and did they have any ideas.

And the conversation went this way. She would say, "Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God. Do you have to -- did I," -- and all that sort of stuff.

I said, "I gather you would rather not tell me."

And she said -- well, she said, "No."

So I said, "Let me change the purpose of my call. The purpose of my call is to let you know that I'm going to shake Castro's hand. Have a good day." So I told Michael Manley, "Sure, I'm going to shake his hand. But I'm not going to smile. I'm not going to say anything, not going to say good morning. Just going to shake his hand."

She said well -- he said, "Well, fine." And of course when Castro came and shook the hands of everybody and he got to me and shook my hand, and what do you know? The press took a picture of me shaking hands. And Walter Cronkite put it up on that evening's television program news. 53 congressmen signed a letter to Secretary Vance wanting to know why the United States has a commie sympathizer as an ambassador to Jamaica, namely me. Vance just ignored them.

But I'll tell you what happened. The next day I get a message supposedly from Castro. He was meeting with the group of the young Jamaican political leaders, the Communist political leaders. And he told them, and obviously he leaked it on purpose to me, that if he had to do it over again, he would not be so vigorously against the United States, he would try to make an accommodation to the United States and Jamaica is -- Cuba is suffering because of his attitude initially. And if he had it to do over again he would do it less virulently, and he told the younger Jamaican leaders, "Take it easy. Think twice before you pull the tail of the Americans," -- so I sent this off. Vance never got it.

Q: Yes. Well, did you have congressional visits?

IRVING: Not in Jamaica, no.

Q: How about, were you getting all sorts of mail from congressional people saying their constituent was trying to get a maid and we weren't giving them visas and that sort of thing?

IRVING: No, I never got any of those, believe it or not.

Q: Because I'm told that that's pretty much stock and trade today.

IRVING: Oh, I wouldn't be surprised.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: No, I expected I would, and I never did. Which was surprising.

I used to get letters or telegrams from congressmen on visas, or some veteran living down there is having trouble with the Veteran's Administration, that type of thing. And the, you know, I would contact the veteran or have someone contact the veteran and, you know, have them call the VA and find out what the problem is. I've had more of those than any visas.

Q: Was it safe for Americans to come as tourists to Jamaica in those days?

IRVING: It was not, not good because they would get robbed. They would get put in jail, however, because they unknowingly brought in too much Jamaican currency. They'd get put in jail because the law in -- at least when I was there -- was they could only bring in five dollars worth of Jamaican dollars. Yet, in Miami all the banks advertise they have plenty of Jamaican money and American tourists not knowing the law, Jamaican law, would buy maybe 100 dollars worth in Miami. And when they come into Jamaica they would be asked, "Do you have any money to declare?" And they say yes, and they declare the Jamaican dollars. And bam, they're thrown in jail. And one day I discovered that the jail in Kingston, where they put all these people, was loaded with American citizens. And of course they're screaming. And Jamaican government keeps saying, "Look, please, can you make the American banks in Miami put up a sign or something that that you can't take any more than X number of Jamaican money?" And I'm told constantly by Washington the United States cannot do that.

So I tell the Jamaican government, "How about you making a sign and putting it there and trying to work with the banks in Miami. They said they tried that, but the banks say no. And why should they, because they want to get rid of the Jamaican money.

I tried to get our consul general involved, but he thought that would be interfering in the internal affairs of the Jamaican government!

So I then again got a hold of the Minister of Interior and raised hell. Every time I did I would get an American off and then I insisted that they not close the jails -- that they keep the door open so these Americans until they could pay their fine or something or we can straighten things out, they could walk in and out. And I got a complaint one day from the minister saying I must think they're running a hotel because they're just walking in and out. They're all eating meals being brought in from local restaurants. I told him,

“Well, I’ll tell you how you can stop that. Release them on probation and then forget about it,” which they then did. But I got a lot of complaints from -- oh yes, one, one was put in jail because the immigration official said he thought that the 100-dollar bill of an American tourist was a forgery. So I said, “I’ve got to be honest with you. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a 100-dollar bill.”

So I called a consular officer. And she said, “Does it say In God We Trust.”

I said, “I don’t know. Please go down there, if you will, and find out for yourself.”

So she came back and called me, “It’s phony. Because it doesn’t have In God We Trust.” Or maybe it was the other way around, I don’t remember. And he was screaming.

And I told her, “Call the United States and find out whether it says In God We Trust or it doesn’t say In God We Trust. And she said all right. And then two days went by, three days I think and I didn’t hear from her. And she said oh, she forgot. And I read the Riot Act to her, frankly, which the consul general thought I was stepping on his toes. So I told him, “Well, maybe I should read the Riot Act to you, Mr. Consul General.” This was a guy who also, by the way, said that he’s going to put in -- and he did -- all the vice consuls in the Consular Section that a condition of an immigrant visa, if the applicant can qualify otherwise, must agree to live in a certain part of the United States for a minimum of two to five years. I said, “You can’t do that!” And I had another argument about what the United States law is and who am I to interpret the foreign policy of the United States and all that. And of course they were -- whatever it was in God We Trust and all that. But whatever the visa officer who said it’s all right to put this tourist in jail, was wrong. Whatever, that tourist did not have a phony 100-dollar bill, and he was ready to sue the Jamaican government and United States government. I talked him out of it and wished him well.

You know, by this time my two years was up and I called. Meantime, Phil Habib had a heart attack and died. And I decided my two years were up and I’ve got to make up my mind, do I go to Harvard or not. I’m making progress, but I’m not satisfied with the pace. This is a lousy embassy. And so I wrote a letter of resignation. And I got the usual perfunctory one paragraph signed by -- this time it was Christopher who was the deputy secretary. And suddenly I was told the president wants to see that letter that supposedly went to him for his signature accepting my resignation. And then I got a call from a special assistant to the president saying the president decided that he’s going to write the letter himself personally. And boy, what a beautiful letter it was, I’m telling you. And he congratulated and thanked my wife as well. It also said, you know, I’m sorry that you’re resigning, but I want you to know should you decide to come back, I would welcome it. Now, isn’t that a sweet letter?

Q: Oh yes. What were you doing at Harvard?

IRVING: I was assistant dean and director for career development and foreign student advisor. And I was really disillusioned. I really didn’t know much about academia. I was

invited to join the faculty, but I said, “You know, I’m just disgusted with the caliber of people that are coming in to the State Department. I want to be part of an institution that would really educate the student body as to what government is really like. Well, the dean whom I did like didn’t know much about government, what experience they would need to succeed in government. The dean was Graham Allison. He’s no longer dean, but he’s head of one of the departments. He was a good faculty member, but not much of an administrator. The State Department and the Foreign Service Institute used to send six or seven midlevel students for a year study at the Kennedy School. And the second year that I was there we suddenly received a letter from the State Department saying, “We are sending you no more students.” And the dean was shocked. So I called into the State Department. I was still known in the State Department, still had friends. And said, “What’s the story on this?”

And they said, “Well, the rumor in the State Department is that it’s now called the Kennedy School of Mismanagement.”

And I said, “What got that name?”

They said, “Well, the students of the previous year said it was so poorly administered that they would not recommend sending anyone. And they blamed the dean.” So I decided well, you know, that the institution, is really a good institution. So I flew down to Washington, spoke to the Foreign Service Institute people and other people and six hours later when I caught my plane back. I not only got the seven back, but I got four more. I got 11 students.

So next morning at the dean staff meeting, we held a meeting at 8:00 every morning, I mentioned what I had done. And the dean said, “Well, where is my,” -- I forget what he called it. Which meant that on every action we took we had to have a memorandum divided into three parts. Approach one, pass/fail, approach two, pass/fail, and approach three, and approach four. And I said, “Oh, I didn’t do that. I just went down, talked to the right people, got it back on track, and that’s that.” So I got hell for not following the rules and regulations of Harvard.

Q: All institutions have got these.

IRVING: But the thing that really made me quit -- there were two things. There was one project when I was still in State. When I was at CU, I proposed at State was a summer workshop of some university, some graduate school applicants who intend to go into government, and I said let’s set up let’s say six spots in African embassies, let them get a taste of what Africa might be or some of the embassies might be, like it can’t all be France or Rome or whatchamacallit? So the dean heard about this and he sends me a memorandum saying he wants me to research this project and then I’m told in the same memo, “I’ll give you five weeks and a minimum of five pages to describe it.” So I sent it back that afternoon saying I was the one who proposed it at the State Department. It took me seven sentences on one page.

Back it came written across, “You obviously did not research this. If you need more time, you can have an extra month.” So I figured that’s even worse than the worst I’ve heard about academic administration. At that time I almost switched to become a member of the teaching faculty.

And then the other thing that really was the clincher, the president of Colby College and I, again when I was in CU, worked up the project “American Council of Young Political Leaders”, where we would send young American politicians to exchange with the equivalent in country X for two weeks each. And they had to be evenly divided by political parties. So just be non-political. And it was working beautifully. And usually the young political leaders were maybe 35-years-old, or certainly in their forties. And when I was in, again assistant dean, I get a telephone call from the State Department saying that China wants to participate in this and they would like to visit Harvard and get a briefing, would I please arrange it. So I thought well, this is would be great for U.S.-China relations, you know. And they said, “By the way, young in China means at least 50-years-old.”

I said, “Well, I assume that.”

And so I contacted Professor Fairbanks and the other experts on China.

Q: Oh yes.

IRVING: And I tell the dean that the State Department wants us to do that and I think we should. And I started arranging meetings here. And he says, “Is the State Department going to pay for this?”

And I said, “No, no, no. No, it’s good will. It would help, you know, exchange of views, exchange of policies.”

So he says, “Well, OK, since I already proved it, go out, buy the cheapest whisky you can find. Get ‘em drunk and they’ll think they had a good time.”

So I said, “Have you got a piece of scrap paper?” And I wrote down, “I resign,” period. And I did it, I resigned. So I spent just a little over two years there.

Q: Well, what do you ascribe that attitude of Harvard? Was that an individual or was that pervasive in the administration? In other words, not wanting to go the extra mile in making, you know, good relations say with China and all?

IRVING: I think that it was both Harvard administration and that dean because the faculty was outstanding. I was assistant dean and director for career development. I was on the acceptance committee. The applicants applying for Kennedy School were outstanding. One opinion, and it certainly was not mine, or many members of the faculty, it was the dean’s opinion. Let’s just take in those people who don’t really need the Kennedy School. But when they leave, they’ll enhance the school. I said, “I would

suggest that we take those people who have 90% of what an outstanding graduate needs and Kennedy School applies that 10% that they don't have but when they leave would have." Well, it was almost evenly divided. Most of the faculty agreed with me, but there were a couple of faculty members who didn't care less. And the dean's views prevailed.

Q: So after you left Harvard what did you do?

IRVING: I decided to do volunteer work with the elderly. My daughter said that I would enjoy it. My daughter is a registered geriatrics nurse -- she lives here now in Amherst and is a help to me -- got me involved in senior citizen matters. I worked on Meals on Wheels, I did tax returns for the elderly, I ran the local library a foreign affairs discussion group, and from time to time I would be invited to talk to various groups on foreign affairs, that type of thing. I've kept quite busy.

Q: Sounds like you have. You're now in a retirement home?

IRVING: I'm in -- it's called an independent living retirement home. I'm going to be 92 in a couple of months.

Q: Well, how do you find it there?

IRVING: Wonderful, absolutely wonderful. It's not a nursing home. You have your individual apartments. There are all sorts of events that take place here. I'm in the writer's group.

Q: Are there other people with foreign affairs interests at your place?

IRVING: They're all interested, but I'm the only one from the diplomatic service. There are 103 apartments, 133 residents. Most are widows. There are about 15 widowers. And would you believe 100% of the residents are college graduates who have at least a bachelor's degree? About 35, 40% have either master's or PhD's?

Q: Well, you're in an area where people with degrees end up.

IRVING: That's right. And many of them are tenured professors in the five colleges area, you know, Mount Holyoke and Amherst and University of -- Hampshire College --

Q: Smith.

IRVING: Yes. And we have good discussions. We have advanced discussions, we have lectures by professors, and lecturers, we have a new lecturer on Tuesday evening and Saturday morning. We have concerts, live concerts every Saturday afternoon. We have videocassette concerts on Tuesday. There's a full-length movie on Thursdays. I think there's too much to attend and I can't attend it all. I was told that I'm dying from cancer, that I have pancreatic cancer. I have a large tumor, several -- whatyoumacallits?

Q: Growths, or?

IRVING: They say there's no hope. It was discovered in November of 2010, I think it was, 2011. And they said it has grown too far. At that time -- they discovered it in November that year, and they said they I wouldn't see my 91st birthday. Of course I passed that. They then told me that they don't see how I could live to celebrate Thanksgiving, and I lived beyond that. I won't celebrate Christmas, which I passed. So they don't know what's going on. I don't know either.

Q: Well, I really appreciate your helping us with this program. You know what I'd like to do. I was just noticing. The recording wasn't working for the very first part of our interview. Could I ask you to repeat just a bit?

IRVING: Sure.

Q: Today is the 28th of February, 2013, this is an interview with Fred Irving. And Fred, I asked you, and you -- before you get to Jamaica, what did you do? You were in Oceans and Science, weren't you?

IRVING: Yes.

Q: What was that about?

IRVING: Well, Congress has set up a new bureau -- in 1974, I think -- to see if the world was coming to agree that there should be a 200-mile fishing limit and this was initiated actually by Iceland and also by Chile. And so the fishing interest decided that we needed an organization to police fishing limit and then there were scientific interests who said that we should recognize the importance of science in foreign affairs. And the Congress grabbed hold of this and then environmental interests said, "Well, don't leave us out." So eventually the bureau was named Bureau of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. But the scientific side, dealing with the -- not only the scientific community, but with nuclear energy and would set the policy for our delegation to the international atomic energy agency in Vienna. And the first assistant secretary they had was the very famous, world famous oceanographer, Dixie Lee Ray.

Q: Oh yes, from Washington.

IRVING: And she misunderstood what was intended by oceans. Because all -- apparently I'm told all she would deal with with the deep ocean, the different kinds of fishes, anything but, you know, fishing.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: And she never got along with Kissinger. She had these huge dogs, which she had in the office all the time. And Kissinger used to get pretty upset because the dogs would shed their hair all over in meetings. She would take the dogs all over in the State

Department. So finally they decided they had to get rid of her. And someone decided that they better have an FSO because the important thing is to merge oceans, the environment, and science into foreign affairs. And I think the Congress said, "Well, who's better to do that than a Foreign Service Officer?" So then they started searching for an assistant secretary.

And low and behold, here I am in Iceland being told that my next ambassadorial assignment will be in Europe, did I have a preference. And I said, "As a matter fact, either Holland or Denmark." And they asked me did I want to pick one, I said, "No, no, I just want to have -- just that's a good size for me." And next thing I know Larry Eagleburger called me and said I'm the new assistant secretary. "You're kidding?" I said, "I don't know anything about science."

And he said, "You don't have to. You're going to have a lot of help underneath in your bureau. And you're going to have help in the environmental side. All you have to do is make sure you believe in all these things."

I said, "Well, of course. I do, I believe in the environment, I believe in having been in the country for four years dealing with -- dealt with fisheries' interests." Eagleburger asked how soon could I arrive in Washington.

"Oh," I said, "Never, because I don't want it." I was told I had to get there within X number of days or else. So I got there.

Eagleburger told me that one sticky issue that I will have to deal with right away is fishing limits currently under debate in the Congress. This reminds me of the previous time I had to deal with this issue -- when I was in Iceland. "Fishing Limits" was before the United Nations under resolution by Chile and Iceland. The United States was going to vote against it. The prime minister called me and said he understood that the United States is going to vote against this resolution. I says, "That's what I understand. In the meantime I'm negotiating the base agreement, at least trying to."

And the prime minister says, "If the United States votes against it then come to my office the next day and I'll give you the 12-month notice to vacate the base."

I says, "Wait a minute, the two aren't the same. There's apples and oranges."

So I had a big argument with the Icelandic prime minister. Around the same time I got a call from the Icelandic desk officer in Washington asking me to see if I can get Iceland to vote against setting limits. Now, that's the most request I've ever heard -- to vote against their own proposal!

Q: Yes.

IRVING: So I asked the prime minister, "Suppose I can get the United States to just abstain." And I said, "That's the best we could do."

And the prime minister said, "OK, I agree that you probably made your best effort."

So I sent a telegram to Secretary of State Rogers who actually happened to be in San Clemente at that very moment and I sent it "Immediate". I recommended abstain. And back it came within a half hour, believe it or not, saying, "He agrees. He has not talked to the president, he agrees however. We'll abstain." So he instructed the UN ambassador to abstain and this mollified the prime minister. It was the Icelandic desk officer in Washington who resented my going over his head.

And I said, "Ugh, just take it easy. I'm interested in saving the base, and let's be realistic." But the United States abstained. Let me now go forward, because then a new government came in in Iceland and they extended it to a 200 limit. So the majority of the United Nations also changed 200. When I say majority, I should have said all but five or six.

I told all this to Eagleburger as almost a repeat of what I'll now be facing on the fishing limits issue, except now dealing with the Department of States pending action.

So when I did get to Washington, the very day I got to Washington I got off the plane and went to the State Department I learned within an hour that Kissinger sent a memorandum to the president recommending that he veto the fishing legislation. I told Larry Eagleburger who was not only the Undersecretary for Management, but also special assistant to Kissinger that this is our wrong move; I would like to talk to the Secretary. Eagleburger said, "He's on an airplane."

I drafted a telegram to Kissinger on the plane giving him my arguments for recalling the veto recommendation.

And back came Kissinger's reply, "OK, let's change." I was told I better make sure that I know how to protect American fishing interests, which in our regulations subsequently with other countries we did. That was my introduction to that bureau.

The next day, I learned that there was a consortium of Canada, the United States and the Netherlands to sell South Africa a billion dollars worth of nuclear energy equipment. I asked the African Bureau assistant secretary -- mind you, I hadn't been sworn in yet -- why are we selling nuclear material that eventually can be built into an atomic bomb. I told them I'm opposed to it because here Kissinger is supposedly going to start paying attention to the other African countries, and he was actually flying over Africa, going to visit some of the other African countries. And I said, "If you don't mind my saying so, I don't think it'll go over well with those African countries that you're going to sell to South Africa this stuff to make an eventual bomb. Maybe they won't. I think we ought to pull back the approval." Well approval hadn't gone forward yet, but Kissinger had signed off on it and the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs heard that I was trying to make an effort to get the consortium to cancel the sale. Boy, did I get hell from everyone. I got hell from the Commerce Department who saw a billion dollars sale disappearing. The

Defense Department saw a station disappearing in case they ever needed one in South Africa. Everyone was against me on it. I then contacted the American representative of the consortium and pointed out that it's quite possible that the other African countries will become prosperous some day and they'll have long memories. I think if you're thinking of that billion dollars divided three ways, that's shortsighted.

And he said, well, I might have a point. He will discuss it with the company. I got a call the next day. Again, I hadn't been sworn in yet. He said, "You know, you may have a point." He talked to his counterpart in Canada and the Netherlands. And the next day he called me and said, "You have a good point, we're going to vet the proposed sale a bit longer." Well, I had a lot of enemies after that.

Q: Ah yes (laughs). How did you find working with that bureau?

IRVING: You see, a new administration came in, so I only stayed there about ten months. But I had a big load to get personally involved in. Fortunately I had good staff. I spent most of my time on the scientific side. And I pushed the establishment of scientific attachés in our key embassies and made a few speeches, which of course scientists would write for me. And the environmental -- I was having some hard times because when I was finally sworn in, I found that I had I think 20 special assistants. And I said, "What in the world does anyone need 20 special assistants?" Well, I soon found out. I think State Department was using that bureau as a patsy to place political appointees. And I spent some time during the year either giving them jobs, meaningful jobs, or trying to get rid of them.

Q: Did you find that the scientists that you're dealing with, sometimes these are people -- I mean they know what they know and they're very much absorbed with it and don't always see the bigger picture. I would think they'd be very difficult to deal with.

IRVING: You're absolutely right (*laughs*). But I started to make acquaintances with certain well-known inventors, scientists, and the like. So when I get cockeyed ideas from scientific attachés that we sent out, I had something to fall back and use as a sounding board. We would get along, we got along.

Q: Did you have problems with their trying to send you people who are not really much of a scientist but had strong political connections?

IRVING: No. No, I could say that the scientists that I dealt with, my people dealt with, and the scientists to whom we gave reserve appointments were outstanding in every sense, but every so often they would think that they knew better than everyone else. But we managed to handle that. But I would say it worked out fine.

Q: How about the Law of the Sea? I mean this was an era when there was a lot of talk about mining.

IRVING: Yes.

Q: Under the sea. How did you feel about that?

IRVING: Well, it was necessary. In fact, it was such a problem that a special unit was set up outside my bureau to deal with Law of the Sea. And I would have to, from time to time, deal with the person who was put in as head of that office. It was a separate office and every so often if there was some problem that we could handle like dealing with the foreign government we would get involved, but mainly it was a secondary responsibility. From time to time I would have to go up to the United Nations and serve as a support to the fellow who headed up the Law of the Sea negotiations at the United Nations.

Q: Well, you've already talked about it, but I didn't get it recorded and then we can -- but could you just go over how this Jamaica thing came about?

IRVING: Oh sure. I planned to resign from the Foreign Service. I had been offered a job as assistant dean in charge of career development and as foreign student advisor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. I was becoming disenchanted with the quality of Foreign Service Officers of the State Department. And this was the era where I believe the -- oh -- you know, the alpha -- where you could complain.

Q: Oh yes, the dissent channel and all.

IRVING: Yes. Well, and the --

Q: We're talking about the leftovers from the '60s, which was -- made quite an impression. You know, the don't trust anybody over 30 and all that sort of stuff.

IRVING: Oh. In what context are --

Q: I'm saying, the generation of new Foreign Service Officers coming in were part of sort of the rebellion of the '60s.

IRVING: Oh, the dissention and all.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: Yes. I didn't have anything to do directly with them, but I was asked to set up the grievance committee.

Q: Yes.

IRVING: I was asked, along with a labor union official, to set up a grievance committee. And he and I worked after hours and we established a set of rules. And I think we developed a monster. Any time any Foreign Service Officer saw reasons, legitimate or not, would bring up some of the most cockeyed reasons, also even contrary to law. And anytime anyone was told he or she was graded in the low 10% or 5% there would be a

grievance. And we were trying to say you can't do that. One basic rule was that we were not supposed to handle actions by promotion boards unless obvious personnel discriminations were present. Well, it got to the point that the provision was signed, I helped set the committee up and then I had nothing to do with it. Well, I did a little, but it almost cost my ambassadorship to Iceland. It got to the point that anybody who didn't like anything, policy or not, or anybody, could file a grievance. There was one complaint that was referred to me when I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of Operations. That complainant was a career FSO-minister. He has a bookcase of bricks and he wanted the bricks sent to his new posts via air. He admitted that they were ordinary building bricks, not antiques, not heirlooms, etc. He was turned down, of course, saying he could buy bricks at his new post. *Bam*, their goes a grievance. That's how stupid some of them are. Some were legitimate. I could have had one, but I never did. When I was transferred to New Zealand we hired a taxi in Los Angeles to take my family: three children, my wife and me from the hotel to the airport on our way to New Zealand. It cost eight dollars and 25 cents. So I submitted a voucher. I put down eight dollars and 25 cents. I claimed only eight dollars because that apparently was the limit. I'm told the whole thing is going to be disallowed. I asked why. Because when I claimed eight dollars instead of eight dollars and 25 cents, then I'm not being truthful. I had signed the voucher saying that this was a true submission. So I said, "You're crazy." And it went back to the State Department for audit. The Office of Finance, the State Department, disallowed the entire thing because I wasn't telling the truth. They admitted that my family and I could have taken two taxis from the hotel to the airport, thus costing more than \$8.25 but I did not, thus, not a voucher that was true!

Then when I broke my leg in a couple of places in Vienna and I had to come back to Washington to appear before the Appropriations Committee because Austria had its own appropriation, it was cheaper to go by taxi than to walk three blocks and then take a streetcar or a bus. And the whole amount was disallowed because regulations said I had to go by the cheapest available vehicle, which with a broken leg I walked from C Street all the way to Pennsylvania Avenue and 21st Street to take a streetcar. Which of course I didn't, it'd be stupid to do. It's the kind of thing I kept saying. And then in Jamaica when I saw the incompetence of some of those people, and the sort of -- what they're there for was only of secondary interest, and I just didn't want to be part of that anymore. That's when I decided to leave the Foreign Service. I would have resigned anyway, had my two years not been up.

Q: But now you told me about this Jamaica thing. You were getting ready to retire and all of a sudden Jamaica came up. How did that play out?

IRVING: Well, you know, I went to Jamaica because Phil Habib and Secretary of State Vance both personally called me and asked me to go and he said he needed me and he needed my wife, because he's heard about how we worked as a team, how we worked as a team in Iceland. We worked as a team in New Zealand. And you know, I always think about you're not allowed to mention a spouse in any efficiency report.

Q: Yes. That changed, yes.

IRVING: I know how that came up, because we worked under such a person's wife. That was MacArthur, and they were both ogres. But why penalize all the others who want to do something. And I felt that if they do something that can demonstrate, that can be demonstrated in the interest of foreign policy, interest in the U.S. government, why not say so? And what I did before I went to Jamaica, I held them up. I decided in my own mind look, State Department, I'm going to make sure they recognize the work of my wife. And the only way I think I could do it is to demand that she be given a security clearance, same as an officer. The State Department said, "We do not give such clearance to spouses." I said, "Well, I'm going to take her in all my confidences. We work as a team. I'm not going to go to Jamaica unless she gets that clearance." So I had them over a barrel." So they gave her a security clearance, the same as an FSO. She was the only one. She may be -- well, maybe one of the only ones, I don't know, who ever got security clearances. I figured since the State Department says they give security clearance only to the officers and official staff, the fact that she got a security clearance, so they had to recognize the work she did. In other words, I held them up with blackmail, if you want to call it that. And we went to Jamaica.

Q: Well Fred, just one thing I'd like, could you put -- you've already told about this, but I didn't get it taped so I'd like to get it now. What was -- they were saying, "We need you to go to Jamaica," but why -- what was the situation in Jamaica that called for a professional to go there? You talked about the horrible ambassadors we'd had before, political appointees that didn't like to deal with black men, you know?

IRVING: Well, Michael Manley said he would not accept anyone other than a career Foreign Service Officer.

Q: And were we concerned about Manley's attitude toward Castro?

IRVING: Oh yes indeed, yes indeed. Yes, we were quite upset. We were even afraid the worst case scenario would be that they would do things that would -- could cause a break in relations. And that's what I was told. I said initially, you know, there must be at least 100 or more that could do the job that you see has to be done. And he said, "But you also have to do something to gain the confidence of the people. You know how to work with people. You have a wife who knows how to work with people. You work as a team. You have the right attitude toward black people. In fact, you're very active in black associations." He also said I have demonstrated that I have all the qualifications and we -- my wife and I -- know how to straighten places out; as that I am a Mr. Fix-It. And if anyone can do all the jobs required, it's me.

So please, Habib said. I said, "You're not pulling needs of the service, are you?"

He said, "Well, it's the equivalent to that. But we know that if the Secretary of State asked me, that I would go." And that's how I got there.

Q: Well, that's it. I think -- so Fred, I want to thank you very much for this.

IRVING: OK.

Q: And of course for that, given your medical thing I want you to hang in there. We need your help.

IRVING: Oh, it's the only thing I can do. You know, it's -- I'm a freak. You know, three weeks ago I had an eye exam and they said my left eye, the pressure is kind of high, not too high to be worried about, but let's, let's relieve the pressure. And he wanted me to OK a, a laser surgery.

And he said, "It's really nothing, they just have to poke a hole in the eyeball." So I said OK. And something went wrong and yesterday I had a check-up. And instead of the pressure going down, it went up. And the doctor said, "That's impossible."

I said, "Well, you're the one looking in the scope."

And they can't understand that. They said, "It's never happened in his career." I must be a freak.

Q: OK (laughs).

IRVING: *(laughs)* Well, good talking to you.

Q: It's great talking to you, Fred. And take care. And you'll be hearing from us shortly.

IRVING: Well, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.

ADDENDUM

THE WORLD WAR II PRISONER-OF-WAR EXPERIENCE OF FREDERICK IRVING

Written for my children and Grandchildren on November 29, 2010

When the prisoners of war were liberated, the Army told us not to talk about our experience in captivity, not even to our spouses. I ignored that advice, and never hesitated to talk about it when asked, but I did not write about it. Now that I am almost 90 years old, I am putting my experience on paper so that future generations learn about this aspect of war.

I was the Navigator on a 10-man (4 officers, 6 enlisted men) long distance B-24, four engine bomber, flying out of Venosa, Italy. It was designed to fly long distances at high altitude, over enemy territory. It carried a heavy load of bombs, and was easy prey for enemy fighter planes because it was not very maneuverable. It was the duty of the

Navigator to get the bomber to the target and back from the target, under all circumstances, through the safest route he could devise.

On the morning of August 07, 1944, when we were assigned to bomb the synthetic oil fields of Blechhammer, Germany, about 4 hours from our home base, I had a queer feeling about both the mission and the condition of the plane. We were briefed by Air Force Intelligence that the target was poorly protected by German anti-aircraft guns and that it would be a “milk run” (i.e., an easy mission). Having been on 4 Ploiesti, Rumania oil field raids, and knowing how important oil was to the German war machine, I could not believe that any German oil field raid would be a “milk run”. Attacking oil fields is where we lost several of our planes to enemy aircraft fire. This was to be my 37th mission. Also, in all the previous missions I never experienced a plane in worse condition. Only one of the six machine guns was operational. When the pilot and I complained to the Commander, we were told that we would not need the full complement of weapons on this raid. We were ordered onto the plane. En route to the target we managed to repair all but two of the guns. Intelligence was quite wrong. There was heavy ground fire over the target and German fighter planes were waiting for us. We were hit by anti-aircraft ground fire; one engine caught on fire; and we began to lose altitude. We had to leave the formation. Before that, however, I was glad to have had the foresight to drop the bombs, which often the Navigator did instead of the Bombardier under certain circumstances. If I had not done so, a hit by a German fighter plane, which came soon, would have caused our plane to explode, instantly killing all of us. I then started to direct a route to return to our base.

Our co-pilot was hit in his thigh and our tail gunner (age 20) was killed, but not before he shot down 2 German lighters. I managed to direct the plane as far as mid-Hungary when we suddenly encountered more German fighter planes. They shot out another engine. The pilot gave the order to hail out. The co-pilot called for help because he could not move. When no one came to his assistance he called for me. I left my compartment in front of the aircraft, crawled to the pilot's cabin to give the co-pilot first aid, and got him to his escape hatch. I was about to bail out with him, when I suddenly wondered whether the nose gunner had left the plane. I pushed out the co-pilot and crawled back to the nose of the plane only to see that the nose gunner's turret was at a 45 degree angle. He was paralyzed with fear. He refused to move his gun so that I could eject him from his position. I finally got him out of his position as the aircraft was spiraling down and German planes were approaching. He put on his parachute upside down. He fought me while I was righting his parachute. I then kneeed him, put my hand on his parachute ring, pushed him out of the escape hatch, and pulled his chute ring. I then jumped, but with difficulty because gravity was holding me down in the plane. I fell about 3,000 feet before I realized that my parachute was not opening. The automatic open-flap had been shellacked shut. I ripped it open with my hands. The German fighters, now nearby, were purposely blowing me towards the fire that was burning on the ground from our plane that had fallen. I managed to elude them by maneuvering the cords of the chute. I landed on my neck with a heavy and painful thud. The grass was too short to hide my chute, so I crawled with it to a nearby bush. Luckily, 4 Hungarian farmers on the ground had gotten

to the bush first and peppered it with gunfire. Had I gotten to the bush first you can guess what would have happened to me.

I could have left the plane with the co-pilot after I had taken care of his wounds and assumed that the nose gunner had escaped, but my conscience would not let me make that assumption. The nose gunner was only 19 years old; I was 23. I could never have lived with myself if I later found that I could have saved him and did not try. After the war I was told that I was going to be put in for a medal for helping the co-pilot and saving the nose gunner, and for good judgment in dropping the bombs before leaving the target. I told them to forget it!

I would like to digress to praise the Black Tuskegee Airmen Squadron, a segregated fighter pilot group who came out to protect us as we entered Hungary. They fought the German fighter planes and shot down two of them. They had to leave us shortly, however, in order to protect the formation. The German fighters were afraid of the Tuskegee group. The latter had a reputation of being expert and fearless fighters. It was a disgrace the way the U.S. military treated them. We treated German prisoners of war held by Americans in the U.S. better than the Tuskegee Airmen.

After being captured by the farmers, and not knowing what they were talking about, I soon got the idea when they brought me to a large tree and put a heavy rope around my neck. They tried to hang me 3 times. The first time they failed to tie my hands and my feet. I kicked myself loose. The 2nd time they tied my feet but not my hands. As they strung me up, I pushed them away. The 3rd time they tied my hands and my feet and started to pull the rope. It was very tight around my neck. I was told my feet were just about being lifted from the ground when 2 German soldiers appeared, claimed me as their prisoner for interrogation, and made them release me. I was also later told that the Hungarians became frightened that I was not dead when I was cut down because they thought some supernatural being interceded and saved me.

While all this was going on, other farmers found 3 of our gunners. They and I were then herded into a shed with only a narrow slit for air and light, and crawling with bugs. The nose gunner and one other were crying. In order to calm them down, I decided that we should play tic-tac-toe against a wall, using the blood of the insects as ink. Then to my surprise, and strictly against all military rules and common sense, I discovered that the nose gunner had with him a small address book full of names. I ordered that we chew and swallow the pages.

The next morning we were taken out of that shack. The enlisted men were led elsewhere. It wasn't until the end of the war when I next saw them. I was herded out with a rifle sticking in my back and directed to a stone wall. I was made to stand at attention against that wall and they took an ID photo of me. I was then told that I would be shot. I do not know exactly what happened next, other than I was still alive.

Later on that 2nd day I was transported via cattle car to Budapest where there were about 15 other American prisoners. I was put in solitary confinement in a cell for almost 3 days

without food and water. Loud church bells were ringing constantly, day and night. I had secreted between my fingers a tiny compass, but it was soon discovered, and I was beaten.

On the 2nd day of solitary a supposedly another American POW was shoved into my cell. It was obvious that he was a German plant. He spoke perfect English and was dressed like a movie version of a glamorous pilot -- leather jacket, white silk scarf, etc. We on a mission flew in comfortable sweatshirt clothing. He started to ask me about my plane, the equipment I had in the plane, and so on. He had gotten nothing from me, so he was yanked out.

On the day of my release from solitary, when I did not die from previous attempts to kill me, I was tied hands and feet, put in the back of an open truck and driven through the streets of Budapest for about an hour, with a loud speaker blaring "death to the American gangster", and bystanders were urged to throw rocks at me. My captors thought surely I would die, this time a violent death. Again, I disappointed them. I was hurt so badly, however, that I had to be carried out of the truck. I was in a semi-conscious state.

The Hungarian guards did not care whether I needed some medical assistance after that experience. In fact, I felt that they wished I would die so that they would not have to bother with me anymore. They "tossed" me into a large room where there were about 15 other Allied Air Force officer POWs. There were no beds. Every POW slept on the floor. The other POWs did not care either; they were in no better condition. For the next day or two, I did not know whether I was dead or alive. I suddenly came to life and decided I was not going to give the enemy the satisfaction of dying. I decided that I joined the Air Force to make the enemy miserable, and that is exactly what I was going to do from there on in!

A few days later, I was taken to be interrogated again, this time, to my surprise, my interrogator spoke perfect American English and looked like an American. He was wearing a German Major's uniform. To my question, he told me that he was an American. When I asked him the reason for becoming a traitor, he remarked that there were 2 reasons: one, because the Germans were going to win, and two, because his father was in the first World War in the American Army, and the U.S. Government promised the veterans a bonus, but never gave it. This made him never to trust the American Government. He further said that if his side loses, he will then change into an American uniform which he has hidden in his belongings and will be sent back to the United States with whatever group was heading home. The "stupid Americans", he said, would not know that there was one soldier too many. I told him that I have a good memory and at that very moment, I was memorizing his face and features. He laughed and then said "let's get on with the interrogation, and by the way," he was supposed to be asking me the questions, not the other way around. Whatever he asked me, I gave him the standard answers, namely name, rank, and serial number. He said that he already knew a lot about me. He then told me from what high school and college I graduated, the name of the street where I lived, when my father died, when I received my wings, etc.! When I asked him how he knew all of this, he said that sooner or later, the Germans knew that they

would be fighting the Americans, so they were placing “sleepers” in lots of cities in the United States. These “sleepers” subscribed to lots of local newspapers. Then when something good happened to them, such as graduations, weddings, etc., it would appear in these papers. They were particularly interested in flying personnel and made an index of them. He mentioned that my engineer was to be interrogated next. The interrogator was so pompous that I asked whether I could be present when he interrogated him. He agreed, saying that he would not learn anything from him that he did not already know, but he still had to go through the routine. He was bragging and I suspected that he was about to spring a surprise on me.

When my flight engineer came into the room, the interrogator asked him whether he recognized him. It turned out that the interrogator lived a few houses away from him in Long Island, New York! He then told my engineer all about him! I was, indeed, surprised!

My engineer and I were then escorted back to the separate rooms from where we came. The treatment that half hour was the most humane I received during the week since I was shot down. A colleague-POW in the room, who was crying, told me that I should not get used to it. He told me the story of a colleague who recently left:

His B-24 was shot down near Budapest. His 6 gunners and co-pilot landed on a small island in the Danube. He and the rest of the crew landed on the mainland. The Hungarians decided to have some fun. They decided to pretend our men on the island were animals and to have a contest as to how many of his men could shoot and kill the most. The pilot tried to stop them. He was horribly gun whipped. His men on the island ran around like animals. They eventually were slain, but not before being shot, purposely, on several parts of their body. They did not want the men to die too soon. The Hungarian shooters then made the pilot row out to the island and retrieve the bodies. They spit on each of the dead bodies as they were brought ashore and they beat up the pilot again when he protested.

Another colleague was also crying. I was told his story of a different kind. He was a bombardier, also on a B-24. His plane was hit by flak from the ground and from German fighter aircraft. When the pilot gave the order to vacate the plane, he forgot to release the bombs before he parachuted out. German fighters hit the plane. The plane exploded, the 6 gunners who did not have a chance to leave the plane all died in the explosion. He realized what he failed to do. He kept calling himself a murderer and wanted to commit suicide. There was bedlam. The rest of the POWs in the room were trying to stop him.

I came across a 3rd POW who was crying. He was praying to GOD, asking why GOD had let him be shot down. He told GOD that he went to church every Sunday, that he was a good Christian, etc. I am not much of a church-goer, but I told him not to blame GOD. GOD did not do this to him; it was the enemy who did it; that he should be a good soldier, etc. He turned to me and about to hit me, and said that I should mind my own business; if he wanted to blame GOD, that was his business! Maybe he was right.

Everyone handles adversity differently. I certainly feel pain, but I suspect it was my upbringing that gives some people the impression that I don't.

In this room with the other POWs we were allowed to go outside the room twice a day for 30 minutes each time and we were fed somewhat meagerly, that is, whenever our guards remembered to feed us. One day one of our guards said that he needed 2 men to help him unload a truck full of bread. I happened to be near the guard when he made this announcement. I and another POW stepped forward to help him. To drop off the bread where the guard wanted it, we had to pass a certain hidden dark corner. By the time the truck was empty, we "managed" to empty every other load into that corner -- enough bread for every POW to hide, without the guard knowing about it.

A few days passed when we were advised that we would be leaving for our permanent POW camp. We were herded into a box car that still smelled of the animals it previously held. Sixty persons were crowded into space meant for forty. The box car door was then locked. Some of us had to sit down; some had to stand up. I was one of the lucky ones. I had to stand up. We were headed for Sagan, Germany (on the Polish Plains), by rail, a trip of more than 2 days, via Vienna. It was 24 hours before the train stopped. The box car was uncoupled. It was left standing all alone in the rail yard. There was an air raid going on by the American Air Force. Luckily, they bombed all around us, but not the box car. They obviously knew that we were in that car.

When we finally arrived at STALAG LUFT III, the flying officers' POW camp, the Germans took the bread that we still had with us that we stole, and displayed the meanness that we were to experience the rest of our stay --- if we try to escape we will be shot, if we misbehave, we will be shot; if we destroy property, we will be shot. We will be fed daily enough to keep us alive, which they said was 700 calories a day. They did not mention that was counting the worms and bugs swimming in the soup.

We were then assigned to the compounds. There were 3 compounds: North for British POWs; South and Central for American POWs. I was assigned to the North Compound, the British compound of the "Great Escape". I arrived there when the Germans brought in the ashes of those 50 POWs who were shot. I was assigned to a room where the British flyers had been shot down within a few days of the beginning of the war. The occupants were a Welsh Major, a Czech Major in a British uniform, a Scot Captain, 2 London Captains, and an Australian 1st Lieutenant.

For a month the British gave me the silent treatment, until I blasted them! They finally told me the reason. On their clandestine radio they were advised to beware of an American traitor who was a German "plant" coming in just about when I was coming in. The Germans were suspicious that a new escape was being planned, and that the group of men with whom I was assigned to live were the leaders of the new attempt. Likewise, since I was the only one of the new group of POWs assigned to the North Compound, the group of men with whom I was assigned to live thought that I was the German "plant".

The German ration per POW twice a day was a slice of bread (50% sawdust), a teaspoon of jam, a cup of warm water called soup, I suppose, because there was usually something swimming around in it, and one small potato, half rotten. This was augmented by half of a 10 lb. American Red Cross food parcel per week (we shared the other half of the parcels with the British whose parcels were never received). The 5 lbs. consisted of 1 pack of cigarettes, a 4 oz bar of dark chocolate, a 12 oz can of ground corned beef, and a 12 oz can of milk powder called "Klim". Since I did not smoke, I traded my cigarettes for a bar of chocolate within the group. It was from this 5 lbs., despite its meagerness, we had to donate some to be held for a possible escape.

We attended roll call twice a day. It snowed in October and almost every day that month and since -- or else it rained. The temperature was consistently below freezing from late September. The room temp was never higher than 50 F.

The new Escape Group built a new tunnel in an ingenious place, which I shall describe shortly. We had a secret radio, a tailor shop, a printing press, a map making facility, and everything else required to make us appear to be German civilians. In addition to the food, each member had to give up four of his seven bed slats. How we were able to deceive our guards 3 regarding the bed slats was through a magician's "sleight of hand" trick which the British POWs taught us. Doing the latter went a long way toward each member of the group ultimately suffering from severe back pain. The newest members' duties started from the bottom. We each were assigned to watch a couple of barracks. When a German guard came nearby, we had to call out "goon in the block!". We did this for every building, whether something was going on in it or not.

When I was asked whether I wanted to join the Escape Group, I was told that they wanted to give me a free choice, but if I declined and said "No", I would still be shot with my roommates. I replied that given the so-called "free" choice, I gladly will join. Their reply was "We thought you would see it our way ---" They could not let anyone loose, knowing the information that I would pick up living with them.

We took turns having one of the beds having its full complement of 7 slats. At night just before the guard shone his flashlight on a bed we would very quickly "accidentally" knock the guard's light askew and 4 slats would be shoved into the POW's bed immediately, before the guards could see what was happening. The guards never caught on. We learned to do this with lightning speed.

My British roommates every so often displayed some humor to keep from going "stir crazy", I suspected. One night when we had the lights in our room out (all 2 of them) our Leader suggested we sit up in the total darkness with a book in front of us as if we were reading it. When the German guard shone his flashlight in our faces, we looked startled as if to say "why are you interrupting our reading?" The guard was really startled. Here were the POWs reading in the dark!

As time in the camp went on, except for being constantly hungry, and cold, we were bored. As officers, unlike the enlisted personnel, the Geneva Convention would not allow

our captors to make us work. We all wanted to work. It was a way of getting outside the camp, perhaps, getting some extra food from the farmers or from whom we would have been forced to work. All of us officer POWs could not imagine a worst manner of death than hunger. One day I discovered a pile of potato skins in the garbage. I collected them and what little fire I could muster, I heated the skins and ate them. I mentioned this new source of food to my starving colleagues. Result: That was the last of the potato skins in the trash. It was a race as to which POWs would get to them first. I shared this information willingly. I was asked by many of my colleagues why did I do that; I could have had a pile of extra food all to myself if I kept quiet. My explanation: My father died when he was 36, when he died my mother was 32, I was 4, and I was one of six children. The oldest was 12. We had to go on welfare, which, at that time, was considered degrading. My mother always said to us when we were growing up, that there will always be someone worse off than we are. Share, if it would make those someone feel better. I remembered what my mother said.

The attitude of our British colleagues against the Americans was getting hostile. We had since increased to about 100 total Americans living in the North Compound. It was as if they resented us. The British who were shot down very early in the war had been treated better by the Germans, especially when the Germans had many successes. They let the POWs receive lots of blankets, sports equipment, books, and food to be sent from home. The British POWs were generally well-supplied with equipment (except food, of course). I suspected the cause of irritation was a clash of cultures. They never did share with us, and we did not have anything that we could share with them. Our Australian roommate, was an extreme example. He was an unusually short person. He had accumulated 7 wooly blankets from home. He was smothering in them in the winter's worst weather in 30 years. He paid no attention to the pleas of any in the room for just a half hour under one of his blankets.

Our lack of sufficient food to sustain us was getting to be noticeable. I guess I weighed less than 100 lbs. by the end of 1944. Also, I started to have stomach problems, puffy cheeks, and a prominent belly.

In the early days of the war, the Germans let the British build a theater for plays they wanted to put on. After the failure of the "Great Escape" escape effort, the current committee decided to put the entrance to the tunnel in the theater, under the seat where the German Commander of the POW camp sat during performances. The Germans let the British have some loud musical instruments. When some loud actions in the tunnel had to take place, the plays had scenes that required loud noises. The Germans never caught on. The British POWs never lost their sense of humor.

Every day the Germans beamed a radio news program at us in English. Most of it was nonsense, such as German bombers annihilated New York City and it is now rubble, that they will next destroy Chicago and San Francisco, etc. We were able to get the truth from our clandestine radio. However, on one day, near the end of January, I believe, both radios broadcast the same item. Namely, the Soviet offensive in the east had started, and they were about 20 miles from us. All of us in camp dreamed of liberation. But it was not

to be. The Commandant issued a statement from Hitler directed toward us. He wanted us to join the German counter offensive against the Soviets, saying that we had more to fear from the Soviets than from the Germans. We, of course, refused. We were then told by the Commandant, quoting Hitler, that he will never give us up to be in a situation where we may be recruited to bomb Germany again. We were ordered to vacate the camp within 30 minutes, and if we stalled, we would be shot.

We could only take what we could wear or carry. Everything was in chaos. We were each given a Red Cross food parcel by the Germans and were on our way. It was very cold, well below freezing, and the snow was thick. No one, not even our German guards, knew where we were going. All that we knew was that we were running from the Soviets. We were forced to march for 24 hours steadily. The first night 4 German guards, we were told, froze to death. The second day we had a blizzard that made it tough going. We were marching in circles until the Germans sighted a huge barn. They ordered us to stop for the night in that barn.

After 4 days we stopped at a French prison camp in Muskau, because the guards were collapsing. We stayed there for 2 days, I believe. My feet were so swollen that I did not dare take my shoes off. At Muskau there was a German medical dispensary. One of our guards on the march kept uttering that when given the opportunity, he was going to kill us. We had to watch him closely. When this particular guard noticed the dispensary, he wanted to stop in there. He ordered 2 of us to take him there. I used to work at a pharmacy after high school hours. I noticed our chance to get rid of this guard. In the dispensary I saw a bottle of Cascara Sagrada (a chocolate coated laxative pill that looked like M&Ms). I swiped it and then let the guard catch me putting it in my pocket. When he caught me, he asked me what it was. I told him "Chocolate". He demanded the bottle, poured a handful in his hand and swallowed all of it! That was the last we saw of him! For all I know, he is still squatting in a ditch going to the bathroom.

After 2 weeks we were still on the road, marching and sleeping in the snow. Still seeing red snow and knowing what that signified. One day we saw a column of American POWs coming down another road. Without permission from the Germans, but without their interference, we American POWs attached ourselves to the American column. That was the same day the British POWs told us that on their secret radio they heard that President Roosevelt had died. We Americans were stunned and saddened. The American and British POWs stopped to pray. The German guards cheered. We were ready to revolt against them. It was all we could do to control ourselves.

As the march continued, the British column going down one road and we another, we saw a lone American fighter plane overhead. We cheered, but then realized that he was strafing us. We immediately formed ourselves along the road spelling "USA POWs". The plane made 3 passes over us, still strafing, despite the sign we made with our bodies. After the 3rd pass, there was then silence. We were pleased to hear that he was shot down. The pilot probably did not know what the spelling meant.

On the march we saw a farm where there was a large pile of cabbages stored for the cows. We broke discipline and ran toward the farm. The German guards started shooting, but we still managed to get some cabbages. It was the first food we had in more than a day. I saw a chicken while I was escaping from the farm. I remembered someone telling me that if you sharply strike the rear of a hen, it will lay an egg. I tried it. It worked! But, unfortunately, I did not have a chance to eat it. It was that or get shot!

After about another 8 or 10 miles we arrived at Nuremberg, which was our destination. There we were billeted in a large structure which was once a German Army barracks. We were so cold that we tore down our wooden bunks and burned them for heat. Within an hour there was not a bunk standing, but lots of smoke. We gave no thought to the possibility that we might have set the structure on fire, too.

I was so full of lice, that I undressed completely and showered outside under the open water faucet (cold water) which once was housed inside a wooden hut before we tore it down. The outside temperature was definitely well-under freezing and the wind, fierce. Naturally, I soon came down with a high fever. In another building there was a medical dispensary, solely for the Germans. I sneaked into it. I asked the doctor for medicine. He spoke perfect English. He at first refused and tried to call the guards. I threatened him and told him that if he wanted to stay alive, he had better give me some medicine. I must have looked crazed, so he probably figured that I would do what I had threatened I would do. He said that I had pneumonia; that I was in such bad condition that it was a waste of scarce medicine to give me because I was dying. I replied that if I was dying I would take him with me, so he better give me some anyway. He then gave me 10 aspirins. I let him go and sneaked back to the barracks. I nibbled the aspirins a little at a time. I recovered!

Our barracks where we were billeted was near the railroad hub (the marshalling yards). It was such an important transportation center that Americans bombed it by daylight and the British bombed it during the night, almost round the clock. The bombers must have known in which building we were billeted because they purposely avoided bombing that particular structure. One night we stood in silence to honor a British bomber pilot whose aircraft was on fire. He died in his plane so as not to crash into our building. He could have parachuted out and saved himself, but he stayed in his burning plane in order to clear the building.

After 2 months at Nuremberg, we were suddenly given 30 minutes to pack up. We were leaving. An American Army unit had broken through the German line and was heading toward Nuremberg. The German high command still refused to let flying officers be rescued. It was now toward the end of March. The weather was improving, although there was still snow on the ground. It was evident that the Americans and the British had command of the skies.

In April, American planes dropped leaflets warning the German population not to harm us. One German guard tried to surrender to me. I told him to give me the ammunition from his rifle, but he would have to carry the rifle. I was not going to do it; it was too heavy.

At Nuremberg about 4 or 5 POWs cracked under the constant day and night bombing. We protected them from being harmed by the German guards -- and from themselves.

It was now mid-April 1945, when we arrived at Moosburg, about 20 miles away, and about 10 miles north of Munich. Located at Moosburg was a huge POW camp. There, divided by compounds, were Americans, Soviets, French, et. al. A few days after our arrival, the German Commander announced that the German High Command ordered him to have all POWs shot, but he refused to carry out the order. He further stated that the SS were headed to the camp to carry out the order and to kill him, too.

General Patton also heard of this order. He deviated from his original route in order to intercept the SS. They met at Moosburg. A heavy battle took place at the camp that lasted 2 days. We dug trenches in which to lie to avoid the bullets that were flying overhead. General Patton won the battle. We were liberated! The date was April 29, 1945.

The ordeal was not over. The Soviets went wild. They assassinated the German Commander of the camp. There was a stable of horses nearby. They rode them in a wild manner. They invaded our compound. General Patton ordered us to hide in the building. The Soviets showed signs of hostility to us Americans. It was another 2 days before General Patton felt that matters had gotten calm enough for us to be considered safe.

About 10 days later we were flown to Camp Lucky Strike near Paris for de-lousing, then to Le Havre to board a ship (named Lejeune) for New York City, and then HOME!!

The Cat Whose Hair Did Not Turn Blue March 14, 2011

This is a story about a cat in Vienna in 1968 whose hair was supposed to turn blue, but did not, but almost created a military crisis in Greece. It is a true story.

The wife of the American Ambassador to Austria also plays a major role. She can best be described by all who knew her as an ogre and an alcoholic. Not an ordinary alcoholic, but one who drank only champagne. Not just any champagne, but only Clicquot champagne. Because she was the daughter of the Vice President of the United States (Alben Barkley), she thought she could be demanding to the wives and to the officers of the Embassy. Her husband, whose name was Douglas MacArthur, nephew of the General, and a very senior career Foreign Service Officer, was not an alcoholic, but otherwise just as demanding to the male officers of the Embassy with the exception of his Deputy, who, with his wife, spent almost as much time defending the other officers and their wives as the time spent on substantive foreign affairs activities. I was the Deputy, and during the period of this story, was the Chargé d'affaires. I was not happy serving under this Ambassador, but in those days, a career FSO went where he was assigned, or resigned his FSO commission. So much for the introduction.

Mrs. MacArthur had a cat of which she was very fond. The cat was sick at the time the MacArthurs were invited on a two-week cruise in the Greek islands by some of their Greek military friends. They did not want to turn down the invitation so Mrs. MacArthur put the cat under the care of one of her maids. If the cat had gotten worse, she was to turn the care over to my wife with the proviso that under no circumstances was the cat to have an operation without first consulting her, even if she was sailing in the Greek islands. She was adamant about that.

As you might have guessed, the cat had gotten sicker so the maid turned the matter over to my wife. My wife consulted the vet who said that the cat would surely die within days if it did not have the surgery he had recommended. He said that he had often felt the wrath of Mrs. MacArthur, but he would not want to face the wrath of what she was capable, if the cat died. The MacArthurs did not advise anyone at the Embassy how to reach them.

My wife tried several possible sources in Vienna and also in Brussels where their daughter lived, but none of them knew. She then tried the American Consul in Athens. He did not know either. She then asked me if I had any ideas. Since they were the guests of an officer in the Greek military establishment, I called in our Embassy's Defense Attaché, and without telling him why I wanted to talk to Ambassador MacArthur, I asked him if he could consult his counterpart in Athens on the possibility that he could find the answer. I purposely did not tell our Defense Attaché why I wanted to reach the Ambassador because it could have gotten out of hand. Later thinking about it, consulting our Defense Attaché was a bad move on my part. I should just have suggested that we give up and authorize the surgery. If word had gotten out that all of this was because of a cat, Ambassador MacArthur would be ridiculed all over Europe.

Thinking that he would be a hero, our Defense Attaché contacted the Austrian Army Chief of Staff. The Austrian Chief of Staff wanted to know the reason. Our Defense Attaché replied that he could not say, meaning that he did not know -- a poor choice of words. The Austrian Chief of Staff thought the worst scenario. He put the Austrian army on the alert, and called The Greek Army Chief. Fortunately, I heard about this before the press could have gotten wind of it. I was able immediately to straightened things out, without mentioning the real reason why I was trying to reach the MacArthurs.

The cat had the surgery. It was successful. The vet said that recovery would be quicker if he could give the cat certain pills, but he did not think it was available in Europe. He asked my wife if she would get some in the USA for him. A former secretary of mine in Washington had several cats. I volunteered to call her and asked whether she would do me that favor. She consented. The next day she telephoned me to say that those particular pills required a prescription and her vet said he would have to examine the cat first. I thanked her, but told her to forget it because there was no way that I could ship the cat to her. Two days later, I received a package of the pills. I did not dare ask her how she had gotten the pills, and I did not want to know.

The next day, I received an excited call from her. She said that the vet had called her that morning to advise her that the pills usually caused cat's hair to change to bright blue, temporarily! By this time my wife and I were so tired of hearing about the cat, that my comment was "GOOD!" Regrettably, its hair did not cooperate; it did not turn blue.

After a long two weeks, the MacArthurs telephoned us from Trieste. The first person on the phone was Mrs. MacArthur. She wanted to talk to my wife to ask about the cat. When my wife told her about the operation, but not about the possibility of a hair change, you did not need a phone to hear her! The Ambassador then got on the phone, and among other choice words, said that if I had reached him over a G.D. cat, I would rue the day. Mrs. MacArthur and the Ambassador then started shouting at each other. The Ambassador then asked me whether I had mentioned to anyone that I wanted to reach them over a cat. When I remarked "of course not!" he calmed down and said that he was pleased that I was his Deputy. Under my breath, I remarked, "Well, I'm not."

When the MacArthurs returned to Vienna, Mrs. MacArthur said to me in a loud voice that she had a lot of clout in Washington and would see to it that I would never become an Ambassador. On the wall in my apartment at Applewood, are hanging five Presidential commissions -- all earned since the cat incident. I want to believe that the cat that did not turn blue had something to do with it.

End of interview