

Interview with Robert V. Keeley

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

AMBASSADOR ROBERT V. KEELEY

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Q: On behalf of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program, let me thank you for giving us your time to record these memories of your distinguished career.

Let me ask you, first of all, to give us a brief description of your background: where you grew up, your education and what led you to a career in the Foreign Service.

KEELEY: I was a Foreign Service “brat,” as some have called the children of Foreign Service officers. It was a term taken from the Army, and I must say that I do not cherish it. I therefore grew up in the Foreign Service. My father was a career diplomat from 1920 to 1960. He had a forty year career, six years longer than my own. He used to call it a “forty-two” year government career, because he included his World War I service in the Army Signal Corps. He entered the Service before the Rogers Act of 1924; he was recruited in Washington for a specific position as Vice Consul in Constantinople, as Istanbul was then called. He dealt mostly with shipping and seamen and those kinds of problems. He met my mother in Constantinople; she was there working with refugees. Constantinople was then the center of many refugee movements resulting from World War I, with refugees coming from Russia, the Balkans, Armenia, the Middle East, etc. She was working for the Red Cross. They married in 1922 in Constantinople.

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My mother had as remarkable a background as my father. She came from Wellsville, New York, born on a farm, part of a thoroughly German community. After her death I acquired her baptismal certificate, on a Lutheran Church form, and it was all in German. Unusually for a girl from her background in that era, she was college educated, at Alfred University, near her home town, trained as an English teacher. She taught at girls' colleges, coached sports (she was a good athlete as a youngster), and obviously had no intention of becoming a farmer's wife, which otherwise would have been her destiny. So after World War I she went abroad and worked for various organizations, the YWCA, the Red Cross, refugee relief. She had an adventuresome spirit, much like my father's, and it was clear early on that she was not going to spend her life in Wellsville, New York. After her marriage she became a typical Foreign Service wife of her generation, raising her kids, looking after her husband, entertaining the visiting firemen, coping with life in often primitive circumstances—the whole bit of that era. She was marvelously uncomplaining. She predeceased my father by about eight years, and the fact that he went into a decline after her death brought home to us, their sons, how much he had depended on her.

A couple of years after their marriage in Constantinople my father was transferred to Damascus; prior to that he had taken the Foreign Service exam. How he passed it was always a mystery to both him and me, because he had not then graduated from college. Later on, while assigned to Beirut, he received a B.A. in history from the American University of Beirut. His failure to go to college at a normal age resulted primarily from a break with his family. He had run away from his Washington home at the age of 12 because of a disagreement with his second step-mother; he went to live with an aunt on Capitol Hill, and later with the family of his Central High School fraternity brother, Bill Gates (I'm named after Bill Gates' father, Robert Gates; my middle name—Vossler—is my mother's maiden name). My father worked his way through Central High School and then held a variety of very strange jobs, like selling encyclopedias door-to-door in Pennsylvania, ending up enlisting in the Army during World War I. At first he mostly looked after Army mules, but then maneuvered himself into a more glamorous calling. He became a pilot

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during the War, in the Army Signal Corps; and after his discharge he worked as a stunt pilot with traveling circuses and at county fairs; then he became a barber and a carpenter; he owned a restaurant briefly; worked in the Texas oilfields and so on. He never had a chance to go to college although he did get to Princeton as a cadet at the Army Signal Corps flying school. He became the commandant of the cadets, and his flying skills were apparently so great that they made him an instructor, so he never got to France—much to his regret at the time.

He nevertheless was a very well-read person and, after passing the written test, returned to Washington for his oral examination, which he also passed, although that was very much a mystery to him, given his lack of formal higher education. He did of course have the advantage of having had some working experience in the field—in Constantinople—and that probably helped him with the panel.

After becoming a full-fledged Foreign Service officer, he was transferred to Damascus, which was considered the real “boondocks” in those days. There he found that a two man post had become a one man post because the senior officer, the Consul, had taken ill and had gone back to the States. My two brothers were born in Damascus. My dad was there during the famous Druze Rebellion and, as so many eager young Foreign Service officers will do, he jumped into his car and drove out to the Jebel Druze headquarters of the “rebels” and spoke to the leadership. He was thus able to send all sorts of first-hand despatches home, and these were warmly welcomed in Washington. However, at the time, as one might expect, the State Department had a very European orientation and did not view colonial uprisings with great enthusiasm. Dad's reports were leaked by someone in the Department to the French Embassy, which resulted in his being declared, in effect, *persona non grata* by the French authorities in Syria, which was a French mandate. He was not exactly declared *persona non grata*, but while he was on home leave the French let it be known that he was not welcome to return to Damascus. A compromise was then worked out with the French, who allowed my father to be transferred to Beirut, where they could watch him more closely. He of course did not foment the Druze Rebellion; he merely

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reported on it, but that is the kind of thing one can expect in the Foreign Service. The irony for the French was that the Syrian nationalist Arabs who ruled Syria after independence greeted my father as a hero when he arrived in Damascus in 1948 as the first resident Minister to the newly independent state. The French had really done him a favor back in the 1920s.

I was born in Beirut. Then the family was assigned to Montreal, where I started my education in a French-Canadian school. Then from 1936 to 1939 we were in Thessaloniki, Greece. By the way, these were all “French speaking” posts. In those days, at a time when Foreign Service officers were not assigned to study the so-called “hard” languages, their assignments were based on their knowledge of “world” languages, which in my father's case was French. So all the posts to which he had been assigned were considered “French speaking”—then and later, until his last post, Palermo. It was in Thessaloniki that my close connection with Greece started. My brothers and I attended the German school, which became increasingly hazardous for us as American kids; it became a thoroughly Nazi institution—it had a branch of the Hitler Youth Movement. At the time Greece was ruled by a proto-fascist dictatorship under General Metaxas. The political situation was very uncomfortable for American students in the German school, and we were the only ones there. If we had returned to the post after 1939 as we were assigned to do, after home leave, we would have switched to some other school, although the choices were not very good. There was and still is an excellent American school in Thessaloniki—Anatolia College—but it was a high school and we were too young for that. The other foreign schools were French and Italian and primarily Catholic, and run by nuns and priests; since we were not Catholics, my parents preferred the only available Protestant foreign school, which was the German one. We could have gone to Greek schools, because by that time we spoke the language. In fact, Metaxas had decreed that all schools—regardless of nationality of school or students—would teach a minimum of two hours of Greek every day. That in a nut-shell is a summary of my early education as the son of a career Foreign Service officer.

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When we were back in the U.S. during home leave in 1939, war broke out in Europe. My father was immediately assigned to the Department, which was short-handed at the time. He worked in, and eventually became the chief of, the Special War Problems Division, which later became known as Citizenship Services or Consular Services. It was the office that dealt with the problems of American citizens abroad during a war which we at first did not join, and then after Pearl Harbor the problems of Americans caught in enemy territory. My father had two main activities: a) exchanging diplomats and other interned civilians with the Japanese and the Germans via the neutral Swedish ships “Gripsholm” and “Kungsholm,” an activity that went on for a couple of years; and b) inspecting prisoner-of-war camps in the United States to make sure that we were abiding by the various Geneva conventions covering the treatment of prisoners of war. The family stayed in Washington from 1939 to 1944, when my father was assigned to Antwerp, Belgium, which post he reopened when the city was liberated by the allies. It was a difficult period for him and the post, because the Germans, through the use of V-1 and V-2 rocket bombs, tried to obliterate the port of Antwerp, which of course was critical to the shipment of supplies and equipment for the attack on Germany itself toward the end of the war. My father was one of the early recipients of the Presidential “Medal of Freedom” for his service in Antwerp—a medal which has since been considerably debased by being awarded to people such as Hollywood stars for services rendered under much less dangerous circumstances. I found the medal among my father's few personal effects that he kept in his retirement home room where he died in 1985—at the age of 89.

My mother and I went to Antwerp in the summer of 1945; both my brothers were serving in the Navy then. In early 1946 my father was transferred to Athens as the Executive Secretary of an outfit called AMFOGE—the “Allied Mission For Observing the Greek Elections” after liberation from the Germans. I spent about a year in Athens; my education had more or less fallen apart by this time, after so many moves and attending so many schools—a French Lycee in Antwerp, Athens College which was barely alive in 1946. So I came back to the United States and attended the Peddie School in New Jersey for one

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year, my senior year. I went there because the school administration had promised me that I could graduate from there in one year and also because it was close to Princeton University, which my two brothers had attended and which I would eventually enter. One brother was working in New York and would shortly be recalled into the Navy, and the other was a sophomore at Princeton, and they were the only family I had in the U.S.

I attended Princeton for four years as an undergraduate. I majored in English in the Special Program in the Humanities, which enabled the student to spend his entire senior year just writing a thesis. There were no other senior year course requirements and final exams were based on the thesis. For my undergraduate thesis I wrote a novel with a critical preface, the first time such a project was allowed at Princeton. The novel was very experimental (for example, it had chapters but no paragraphs) and I'm probably very lucky that my subsequent efforts to get it published failed utterly. I was very interested in "creative writing," so-called, at that time. I thought that I would be a professional writer; I had become very interested in journalism. I worked on *The Daily Princetonian* and eventually became its editorial co-chairman. Earlier in my life, I was much more interested in science and thought I would make my career in that field. By the time I entered college, my middle brother and I thought that we would become lawyers, but he became an English major and convinced me that is what I should do. By the time I graduated, I was headed for an academic career as a college professor of English, as my middle brother became after having gone to Oxford for his doctorate.

I went to the Princeton Graduate School with a fellowship in English studies for 18 months; became extremely bored. I was a very poor graduate student, in both senses of the word "poor;" I had a very good record as an undergraduate, graduated *summa cum laude* in fact, but that changed when I became a graduate student. I had married in the meantime; my wife Louise worked full-time, while I was working part-time, first for a public opinion polling service; then I drove a truck for a florist. I did some practice teaching at the Peddie School in the summer. It eventually became clear to me that I was not destined to be a teacher at any level. Somewhat in desperation, I decided that the immediate solution

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was to fulfill my military service obligation, even though I was draft exempt because I was married and my wife was pregnant. This was during the Korean war, in 1953. So I enlisted in the Coast Guard as a means of getting out of graduate school and doing something else. The Coast Guard had the best program of any service: four months of officer candidate school, two years of active duty and eight years in the Reserves. The Navy and the Air Force required three years of active duty. I never got anywhere near Korea. I did graduate from OCS, was commissioned, spent four or five months on North Atlantic weather patrol duty on a large cutter stationed near Greenland and Newfoundland; then I became the commanding officer of a small 83 foot patrol boat, the 83518, which was the assignment I had sought, stationed at Cape May, N.J. My boat did port security and search and rescue work. That is where I spent most of the Korean war. It was great duty, considering the alternatives. I learned a lot about piloting, celestial navigation, and boat handling, and sailing which became one of my hobbies to this day. I almost stayed in the Coast Guard; it is a very appealing service. I consulted my “creative writing” professor—Richard Blackmur, a well-known “new critic” who was my Princeton mentor who had supervised my writing efforts at college. He thought that the Coast Guard was a good solution for me because it was a steady job with a reasonable salary; you were not likely to get fired and you had plenty of free time while at sea to engage in some writing. He knew that I was not a good candidate for academic life.

Unfortunately, at the end of the two year idyll at Cape May, I faced an onward assignment such as to some remote Loran station on a small atoll in the Pacific with twelve enlisted men and no families. That was not the kind of duty I had had at Cape May; the probable new assignment was sufficiently unattractive that I decided not to stay in the Coast Guard. I took my discharge. At this stage in life, I had a wife and child to support; I looked for a job in journalism or publishing or editing. Those were my interests and I looked in New York, Washington and elsewhere. I had some very good contacts from professors and friends, but the best offer I had was to be the eighth-ranked copy boy sitting at the end of the bench at the Washington Evening Star or the Post or something like that. I had already

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worked as a journalist on The Vineyard Gazette (of Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard) during the summer following my university junior year. I had decided then that I liked journalism, despite the magnificent salary of \$30 per week, which was still about all that I could command, even after getting a B.A., attending graduate school, and after my Coast Guard experience.

I was by then 26 years old; I could not find a job that paid enough to support my family. And that explains in good part why I took the Foreign Service examination. In 1955, a few months before being discharged from the Coast Guard, I took the test, at that time primarily as a fall back, partly in desperation because I really didn't know what else to do. My father was still in the Foreign Service, but I didn't consult him until after I had passed the exam. I was somewhat surprised that I passed the examination because my education had been quite narrow, focused essentially on American and European literature and specifically on the novel. Because of the program I was in, I really had a very narrow education; I had not taken any of the subjects that one normally would be expected to study either as an undergraduate or as a graduate student which might prepare one for the Foreign Service. Economics was an absolute blank; I took hardly any political science or international law, though I had taken some history. I had of course traveled considerably. My advantage as an English major was that I was well-read about a lot of things in a lot of different subjects. Fortunately, the Department had just changed the exam; it was not the old three-or-four day exam which was highly substantive and focused on foreign affairs subjects, which would have been a real problem for me. The test I took was a new one which is still being administered today with some modifications. It was more like the SATs or the Graduate Record Exam designed to test general abilities, verbal skills, reasoning ability and general knowledge—a little bit of this and a little bit of that. I passed the written and the oral exams.

Meanwhile, I had consulted my father, and he tried to discourage me from entering the Foreign Service. He had become somewhat bitter toward the end of his career; although he enjoyed the post, he felt that he had been exiled to Palermo, Sicily, where he served

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for the last eight years of his long career. He had been a Middle East specialist, and had taken some strong policy stands while Minister in Damascus in the 1948-50 period which had not pleased some parties in Washington. After that tour in Syria, I guess his usefulness was deemed at an end and he was exiled to an area that he enjoyed, but for which he had no particular background or great interest. So there was that bitterness, but I think the real reason was that he did not believe I was suited for the Foreign Service by temperament and that furthermore he thought I might be taking this career course in an effort to please him. He wanted to make sure that I understood that my choice was not going to please him since he was so displeased with the Foreign Service by this time. But he didn't want to be too hard-nosed about it and so he sent me to see James Henderson, another career officer, whom he had known for many years and who was a close family friend. My father and Henderson had served together in Thessaloniki—my father was the Consul and Henderson the Vice Consul. In late 1955, Jim Henderson had been assigned to the Board of Examiners and was very much up to date on the so-called “new Foreign Service”—post-Wristonization, post-McCarthy. The Department had begun to recruit again. So my father suggested that I see Henderson and said that I should take his advice because he was a friend and wouldn't give me a bum steer. So that is what I did; Henderson was absolutely ebullient about the new Foreign Service that was developing—expansion, new opportunities, new vistas. He encouraged me to enter and that is what I did. I have never regretted it; I don't think that I was ill suited for the Foreign Service; I think I was suited for it, even though I had my problems in my career. Overall, I think I benefited from having a Foreign Service background; I had no illusions about what the life was like, although the modern Foreign Service was quite different from the one I had known as a child, in terms of size, of the support an officer receives—allowances, home leaves. In the old Foreign Service, you had to pay your own rent and your own way home—it was an entirely different world in financial terms. But you also served primarily in “civilized” posts, whereas today you might be assigned to places in which you would never have lived voluntarily.

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I joined the Service in January 1956. I started in the Foreign Service Institute taking the basic training course. At that time, the basic course was split into two six week packages, one which you took upon entrance into the Foreign Service and the other just prior to leaving for one's first overseas assignment. Because my mother-in-law was not well at the time, we felt that we should remain in Washington to look after her to some degree. So I opted for a Washington assignment, while most of my classmates went overseas. My class was about 20 people—all male, all white, ranging in age from 22 to 31. Bob Burke was the oldest at age 31. There may have been an age ceiling of 31 or so for new members of the Service. The youngest—Arthur Breisky—was just out of college. I was 26 and therefore just about average. The majority of the new officers had graduated from eastern establishments—the Ivy League—but this was not so exclusively. The class was not a cross-section of the American public by any means. We had two or three people who had “come up through the ranks”—they had already worked in the staff corps in the pre-Wriston days when it was a “less than officer” part of the Service. More than half of the class were veterans. Steve Low was a classmate who became a life-long friend, as did the late Bob Burke and Dirk Gleysteen—Dirk had older brothers in the Service—Charlie Marthinsen; they were all classmates.

Q: You had considerable knowledge of the Foreign Service by the time you entered. Did the course reflect your experiences? Was it a good course for new Junior Officers?

KEELEY: Yes, in general, we thought it was a good course. Even though I had grown up in the Foreign Service, I didn't know a great deal about the organization of our government and of the State Department. There was a certain bonding among the class; we got to know other people—our peers—which I thought was valuable; some of us became life-long friends. On the whole, it was good course; I was impressed by the caliber of the lecturers; for example, the Director General of the Foreign Service—Raymond Hare, a well known Foreign Service officer—came to talk to us. His son Paul now works with me at the Middle East Institute. We were told that we should stand up when he entered the

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room and that we should not sit down until he was seated. Hare was, after all, we were told, the most senior member of the Foreign Service and therefore should be treated with due respect; I would hope that we might have displayed those courtesies in any case, but I remember distinctly that we were admonished to behave. There is a tradition still alive in the Foreign Service today that, in an Embassy, when the Ambassador enters a room, everybody stands up. That is particularly true for staff meetings.

But I was impressed with the fact that senior career officers would come to talk to us new recruits. That made a lasting impression. Some, of course, I already knew, having grown up in the Service.

Q: You entered the Foreign Service only a couple of years after the “McCarthy purge.” Did that weigh on your mind and did you discuss this issue with your fellow junior officers?

KEELEY: The difficult period for the Department was in the early days of the Eisenhower administration, starting in early 1953. We didn't discuss the issue at any great length; we actually entered the Foreign Service in the post-McCarthy era. By the time I entered the Service—January 1956—McCarthy was really in decline as a result of the Army-McCarthy hearings, which were in the summer of 1955. I had spent a lot of time in front of the TV during this period, when I was not on my patrol boat. By the time we entered the Service, McCarthy was no longer a major factor. The damage done to the career Service, by the security zealots and by those who wanted to know “who lost China,” had pretty much ended by that time. We entered the Service brand new, with no history, cleared by a new system of security screening; so none of us had any concerns or fears because we hadn't done anything. We had not had time to be the “witches” of the witch-hunters. By 1956 there were still bitter memories from the “blood” that had been spilled in the Department, but it didn't affect us.

Q: So you started your career in Washington and were assigned to the International Cooperation Administration (ICA).

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KEELEY: That is correct. I had not expressed a preference; I don't think I had a choice. The reason why I was assigned to ICA was because the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, did not want to be personally responsible for operational activities. He wanted someone else to manage the foreign assistance program, even though it was under his purview. Dulles wanted to keep control of the program without getting involved in the managerial details. The decisions involving foreign aid were extremely important in the foreign policy context. So he wanted to have a policy making role, but not the administrative headaches. It was a dichotomy. One of the solutions to this dilemma, I was told, was for the Foreign Service to be infiltrated into ICA, and I was part of that movement. I was very junior—a brand new officer. Ten or twelve of us would be assigned initially to ICA; the plan was to increase the number later. It never happened, but we were the first contingent, although we were not all replaced by other Foreign Service officers. In this first group was John McDonald, who was my boss, who had worked in State's Executive Secretariat. His job was set up an Executive Secretariat in ICA like State's. That staff was to handle the paper flow for the Director; that is where I worked. I worked in the correspondence section; there was also a publications section, headed by Bob Brewster, another FSO. Foy Kohler was also assigned to ICA at that time.

I never again served in the aid agency, but in retrospect, it was a very valuable early experience. I learned about U.S. assistance programs, some of its people, its operating procedures, etc., which stood me in good stead later when I served in countries that had assistance programs.

Q: As a brand new bureaucrat, do you remember any impressions that you gathered about how a government organization works? Were you dismayed or frustrated?

KEELEY: Not particularly. I was very much in a learning mode at that point. I had only worked briefly at the Agriculture Department while waiting for the Foreign Service appointment. ICA and the State Department appeared to be a vast improvement over Agriculture, which is one of the most horrendous bureaucracies in the history of the world.

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I worked as a clerk-typist, mostly doing filing, in the Classification Branch of the Bureau of Personnel of the Commodity Credit Corporation, which was part of one section of the Agriculture Department. We had thousands and thousands of employees to look after, and it was not clear that many of them did any useful work. It seemed to be mainly a vast patronage network to provide jobs for constituents of Congressmen and Senators in the off-season when they weren't farming. We had four position or job classifiers, who spent most of their time betting on horse races by telephone; it was one of the most disillusioning experiences I ever had. It caused me to write a short story called "Barnaby the Bureaucrat" whose hero gets into big trouble because he tries to have his own useless job abolished.

So my reaction to ICA was rather upbeat; people were more "on the ball," more intelligent, more dedicated, more hard working. I was impressed by how well that bureaucracy worked, particularly the Executive Secretariat. I worked in an all-women office, which was a new experience for me. There were ten or twelve women in the office—some professionals, some secretarial— all civil servants. I had two female colleagues who performed the exact same work as I did; namely, controlling correspondence and paper flow. I was treated so well, as the only male in this female realm, that I thought I was in heaven. They loved having a man around. I spent a little more than a year and half in the Secretariat, until the end of 1957.

Then I returned to FSI to take the second half of the course for junior officers. I joined a new entering class which was then in the second half of their A-100 course. I left ICA because it was time for me to go overseas, but I couldn't do that until I had finished the A-100 course. We visited the Commerce Department and other agencies; had some consular training, although I never performed any consular work in my career; all this while awaiting an overseas assignment.

The second A-100 course that I attended was not much different in composition from my first. My colleagues were all white, all male. The Department was recruiting women, but they were very few; those who got married, like Phyllis Oakley, had to resign as soon

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as they married. Those became very short careers. Larry Pezzulo was a member of the second class; he was one of my colleagues whom I got to know better later on.

As I finished the A-100 course, the Department was entering into one of those famous periods of budget crunches and it had ordered a “travel freeze.” No one could move to an overseas assignment. So all of the members of that A-100 course were kept at FSI for language training. That gave the Department an opportunity to try to convince the Congress that it was doing something about the alleged language deficiencies of its officers. Of course, they assigned us to study languages that we already knew well in order to raise our levels of proficiency which would help the overall statistics, which were then provided to the Congress. Most of us were rather unhappy about this process; we wanted to learn a new language. I wanted to learn Spanish; I already knew French well; I had studied in French. I had reached a plateau in French, but nevertheless we continued our language studies for six more months. We studied week after week, with boredom setting in; the travel money never became available until we reached the new fiscal year. It was only after a new appropriation was approved, after July 1, that we were able to transfer to our overseas assignments. So I spent a full six months studying French even after having reached a plateau from which I couldn't make any progress. That often happens in language studies. Phyllis and Bob Oakley, and Ed Streater were in my class. I remember them clearly because we spent so much time talking to each other in French. My French finally improved to a professionally useful level after I was assigned to a French-speaking post: Bamako, Mali in West Africa, where there was one person literally in the entire local population who spoke English—Mohammed Keita—who was a nephew of President Modibo Keita. Mohammed was a Princeton graduate. Everyone else in Mali spoke French and only French (of the European languages); that is how I perfected my French, because I had to use it all day long at work, and after work socially; I even drafted a military aid agreement between the United States and Mali in French with the help of a dictionary and a military friend who knew the technical terms. That is how you learn languages, by using them; there is a limit to what you can learn at FSI or in any course.

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My first language was Armenian, although I can't prove it. When I was born in Beirut, my mother already had two young sons; so she hired a local nanny or nursemaid. In the Lebanese or Arab culture generally, the nanny tends to adopt the child she is hired to take care of; she will not look after a second child. So my mother had to hire a new Syrian nanny for each of my older brothers in turn. For me she found an Armenian refugee—an orphan girl, sixteen years old—living in one of the Armenian nunneries in Lebanon. That girl stayed with us for ten years until she herself got married. At first she only spoke Armenian and therefore that is what I had to learn. After that came English, then French Canadian when we moved to Montreal, and later on Greek, which I learned first at the age of six in Thessaloniki. I learned German at the German school in Thessaloniki and I think I was probably quite fluent in it at the time. But after our return to the States in 1939 and with Germany becoming one of our enemies, German was not a language that a child would be caught using. All three of us boys dropped German totally and therefore lost it totally, although I think languages may well be stored away in the back of your brain because if I am forced to use it, as in a German restaurant, I can order a meal, but I don't claim to speak German. The Greek also went moribund and I had to re-learn it two more times before I became at all proficient.

Q: After that six months of French language training, you received your first overseas assignment?

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

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

KEELEY: I guess that we had. I recall that I had asked for Cuba, a country which I have never seen in my life; in fact, I have never served in Latin America. My wife and I went to Mexico on our honeymoon in 1951 and that is as far south as I have ever gotten in this hemisphere. It was probably a good thing that we didn't go to Cuba. My wife is part Cuban in origin; her maternal grandfather was a Cuban-American. I thought an assignment to

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Havana would be interesting; I had a desire to learn Spanish; it was in a part of the world entirely unknown to me. That part of the world is still a complete blank to me. I put Greece on my list of preferences for about eleven years in a row until I finally got there. In those days, Personnel didn't pay much attention to junior officers' assignment preferences. In any case, I am pretty sure that Amman was not on my list.

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

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

I don't remember having any briefing about Jordan before leaving the States. I did meet the desk officer. During my Jordan tour, there were several Jordan desk officers. One was Talcott Seelye, one was Dick Parker, one was Roy Atherton;. Hermann Eilts was running the Near East Division. All of course went on to have distinguished careers. I met most of them, some before my assignment to Jordan, having been brought up in the Middle East through my family. But I don't remember getting a specific briefing before leaving for Amman. I was probably considered too junior to spend much time on; the attitude was probably that I would be told all I needed to know about U.S. policy when I got to the post. I did pick up some books. I had asked for some advice on reading material and I picked up about ten books. One was Glubb Pasha's memoirs, Lawrence's Seven Pillars, George Antonius' The Arab Awakening, one was on archaeology, and an area studies book on Jordan. I took all of them with me. We usually traveled between posts by ship in those days so there was supposed to be a long period of leisure which would give me the opportunity to read. That was one of the great benefits of the slow journeys of those days. It permitted you to ease into a post by reading about your new country of

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assignment while traveling at a leisurely pace. Later in my career, I went to a post without having the opportunity to read anything about it. If I had known a little bit about it, I would not have arrived completely ignorant of my new surroundings. That is not good. But in the case of Amman, the post wanted me there immediately if not sooner, because Walstrom was going on home leave as soon as I arrived. So we traveled by plane, one of the old Lockheed Constellations that took about 24 hours to reach Cairo. (My wife recalls the plane trip took 56 hours.) So most of my ten books about Jordan were unread when I arrived at the post.

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

KEELEY: I am not sure that I received any briefing whatsoever. It was an unusual situation; the post had a serious staffing problem because—as I said—Carl Walstrom, the head of the Political Section, left for home leave just as I arrived. We had no Ambassador; we had a Charg#—Thomas K. Wright (known as “Ken”)—who was the Deputy Chief of Mission. He had been Charg# for a while and remained so for a good part of my tour. This situation had been caused by the creation of the United Arab Republic (Syria and Egypt) and the counter-part Arab Union (Iraq and Jordan). In the latter case, there was supposed to be one capital—Baghdad—one embassy with two branches, one Ambassador. Amman was supposed to be a constituent post in this new Embassy. So the Ambassadorial position in Amman was not filled. At one time, Pete Hart was the candidate; at another time, it was Charles Yost. In any case, I literally became the acting DCM as soon as Duke Merriam left, which was about a month after my arrival. Six days after my arrival in Amman, the King was assassinated in Baghdad, the Iraqi revolution began; we went into a period of terrible turmoil. The American Marines landed in Lebanon; the British “Red Devils” commandos came from Cyprus to Amman to help save the throne, which was considered threatened. Jordan was completely isolated in the Arab world; the border with Syria was closed; the border with Iraq was closed; the Saudis were not being at all friendly because of the long-standing enmity between the Saudi and Hashemite royal families. The Israeli border was closed for all practical purposes; you could cross over

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at the Mandelbaum Gate if you had permission. We evacuated all of our dependents in that summer. They crossed over into Israel, went to Haifa to board a ship for Italy; it was a tremendous embarrassment, not so much to us, but to the Jordanian government, that the only way our families could leave that country was through Israel, which was the “enemy.” When my family returned from the exile to Italy shortly before Christmas, I was given permission to go to Haifa to meet them and bring them back. That gave me the only opportunity I had while serving in Amman to visit Israel and look around a bit there, in west Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

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

We arrived in Amman on July 8, six days before the coup. My family was evacuated in September. It was a “great” beginning for them in the Foreign Service. They went to Italy and didn't return until around Christmas. The ship from Haifa took them to Naples, where they were looked after by Consul General and Mrs. James Henderson, and then on to Palermo, where my father was the Consul General. I was so busy that I didn't really have a lot of time to think about my new career. It was a bit unusual to be thrown into such a key position as a first tour officer; I looked at it as a challenge to show what I could do. I got along very well with Ken Wright. I always had good drafting ability; after all, that is what I was trained in, both in journalism and so-called “creative writing.” There was a lot of writing to do—a lot of drafting, a lot of reporting. It was all crisis driven; it is the most interesting activity one can get involved in in a Foreign Service career. It certainly was not contemplative. We were very busy; kept long hours. It was a very small Embassy; we had

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one economic officer—Paul Hughes; two political officers when both were there; a single consular officer—Nick Heyniger; Charlie O'Hara was the general services officer. The latter two were contemporaries of mine; that is, on their first overseas tours. There was an administrative officer—Fred Cook. Then there was an aid mission, directed by Norman Burns, who had been my father's professor at AUB. The aid mission was somewhat larger than the Embassy, but not by very much. We had a number of technicians working in agriculture and infrastructure—animal husbandry, the East Ghor canal. We had an Army military attache, a Colonel, and an assistant Army attache. There were a few CIA people. That was about it. It was a very small embassy and we were all heavily taxed. That is the reason why I didn't get briefed upon arrival.

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

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

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

The King, as he has done so often, was skating on thin ice during this time. He was threatened domestically primarily by the Baath Party. We did not have any direct contacts with this suppressed, underground movement, but were kept current by our CIA people. This is the party that eventually came to power in Syria—where it is still the dominant party under Asad—and in Iraq with Saddam Hussein. There was a Jordanian branch of the

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overall Arab nationalist socialist party which had been founded by Michel Aflaq, a Syrian Christian. He has since died, but he was the ideological father of the movement. That was the most dangerous and subversive element, as far as King Hussein was concerned; it was socialist, nationalist, it was anti-monarchist, and as has developed subsequently, it was anything but democratic. There was a Communist party in Jordan and it had certain outside links, but we didn't consider it to be the main threat to stability.

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

The British had left a vacuum in Jordan when they left it. We consciously stepped in to fill it. The analogy that has struck me was the Truman Doctrine in Greece (and Turkey) in 1947 when the British in effect came to us and told us that they were not able to carry the burden of supporting Greece in light of their own post-war economic difficulties. Greece was at the time threatened by a Communist insurgency; it was devastated. The British in effect dumped Greece in our laps and we accepted the burden. Truman and General

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Marshall obtained funds from Congress—probably around 400 million dollars, three quarters of it for Greece—which doesn't sound like much today, but was enormous in those days. Then came the Marshall Plan. Our experience in Jordan was not dissimilar; the British also came to us a few years later and said that they couldn't carry that financial burden either and told us that we would have to pick up the tab. When it came to the military involvement, we sent our Marines into Lebanon at the request of Chamoun and his Christian faction; the British accepted the military responsibility for Jordan. They had a historic relationship through Glubb Pasha, they had created the Arab Legion, and they had provided officers to it and had made it into a British force with British equipment, British trained troops, but they couldn't pay the bills. So the United States paid for the Army—which at the time cost us about \$40.5 million per year. We purchased a whole army for that. And a very fine army it was. We literally were the paymasters.

I remember once complimenting Ken Wright on the ease and profound depth of his access to the leadership, not so much to the King but to Samir Pasha, the Prime Minister. Wright looked at me, a brand new recruit, and said: “Young man, if you were taking a ten million dollar check in cash every quarter to give to the Prime Minister, don't you think he would see you when you called for an appointment?” However, as the cost of that Army escalated, our contributions became slightly inadequate. So in the third month of every quarter, the Jordanians would run out of money and couldn't meet their army payroll. We had long discussions about the situation; I suggested that we give our money only on a monthly basis. I thought that was an intelligent approach, but the obvious answer from the Charg# was that the financial crisis would then arise every four weeks instead of every three months. It was he after all who got the calls about an empty treasury, and he preferred to delay the problem as long as possible, to keep it a quarterly problem instead of a monthly problem, which is what I was apparently proposing. Essentially, that became our role: to support and pay for the Jordanian Army, which was considered loyal to King Hussein and the single most important prop of the whole system. Our policy was successful, although it caused a serious dent in the assistance budget, leaving precious

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little for development efforts. However, our financial assistance was considered absolutely crucial; it was politically essential and we didn't have any choice once the British could not contribute any longer.

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

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

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

KEELEY: I did. My wife and I got to know the King quite well. There was a small social entourage made up of a few, very few Palestinians and several young foreign diplomats—British and Americans, who became quite well acquainted with the King. We used to socialize with him a good deal. One reason for this situation was that the King was then between marriages. He had divorced Queen Dina; he had a small daughter, Alia. This was before he married the British woman, Tony Gardner, who became his second wife.

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He was quite lonely; I would guess he was 23 or 24, maybe younger. He was restless by nature; he loved danger, dangerous sports—e.g., racing cars and motorcycles. He also flew airplanes, helicopters, and he water skied; he had to be active. He preferred athletics, particularly those with an element of danger. He was quite lonely. He couldn't socialize with his subjects; he was a King after all. There wasn't an aristocracy in Jordan as you might find in a country like Britain. I doubt that Prince Charles has ever needed to be lonely, unless he wanted to be, which he apparently does. He can associate with lots of people; he went to schools. Hussein, on the other hand, went to Sandhurst. He didn't have a real college experience. He became King at the age of seventeen—there has always been a dispute over whether he was 16 or 17 since birthdays are counted differently in Arab culture. The British and American Ambassadors, among others, thought it would be nice to find some companionship for His Majesty. The Keeleys fitted in more or less by circumstance because we were closer to his age than other Americans. So we saw a great deal of him. We had square dancing parties—known as Scottish dancing in Amman—together. He liked “parlor” games and all sorts of games; he liked to dance. Sometimes we would go to his home in the Jordan Valley and stay up until all hours of the morning—four or five o'clock. I found it sometimes difficult to go to work the next day, but Ambassador Sheldon Mills said that it was part of the job and that if I needed to sleep late, to go ahead. If I needed an afternoon nap, that was all right too. He even offered me his car to go home for my nap. Of course, he did that himself and he would just drop me off at my house on the way to his.

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

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

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

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were in racing shape. It was all supposed to be very educational, learning to be our own mechanics.

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

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

I was the first to leave the go-cart club and then some rules had to be made up. We decided you could sell your cart only to another member or to someone who had to be approved by the King and the others to be admitted to the club. I didn't know quite what to do, but Dagleish, as usual, took care of it, and told me that Colonel Gardner wanted

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to purchase my go-cart. Gardner was our time keeper; his daughter, Tony, was the flag waver. The cart was really being bought for her and I should have noticed the clue that some romance might be budding, which in fact it was. Gardner became the club member, but his daughter did the driving. Not only did she drive in the women's races, but she ended up marrying the King.

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

At the end of my tour in Jordan, I wrote a piece on the King. It was interesting in a couple of respects. I tended perhaps to over-rate the King, although in retrospect, in view of his survivability, I might not have been too far wrong. I had predicted that the King had a future, not only in Jordan, but as a leader in the Arab world. That was very much against the conventional wisdom of the time; the Department people in NEA, in a rather disdainful way, used to refer to Hussein as the “BYK”—the brave young king—mocking all the publicity about his having faced down his opponents in 1956 when he jumped up on a tank and harangued the Army in Zarqa. The Department tended to make fun of these histrionics and doubted his leadership capacities. I was convinced that this was a man

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of tremendous leadership and native abilities and charisma. All of that went against the conventional wisdom, which assumed that the King had only weeks or months at best to live because he had so many enemies eager to assassinate him. Furthermore, he was supposed to be out of the mainstream in the Arab world. He was not “Arab nationalist” enough, or at worst a puppet of the West. I tried to deal with that argument by making what was a ridiculous suggestion. I suggested that one of his advisors should urge on the King that he abdicate and run for President of Jordan; he would then be the elected leader of a democratic regime which would give him stature in the Arab world as someone who had been popularly elected, rather than someone who had inherited his position. The response from people who knew Arab culture well was that this was a foolish idea because he would be sacrificing the added benefits that a person has just by being a monarch. My counter-argument was to emphasize that he was still a descendent of the Prophet, which conferred great legitimacy, regardless of what his title was; he could, for example, be called Sharif Hussein, rather than “President.” Our Ambassador, Sheldon Mills, sent my analysis of the King's prospects in to Washington with a covering note which he wrote himself, dismissing the whole idea of a Hussein “presidency” as absolutely ridiculous because the King might have been defeated in a popular election or, if he assured himself of victory, that was hardly democratic.

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

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

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

Q: In 1960, your tour in Amman was over and you were assigned to Arabic language training.

KEELEY: There is a story in that. I may be doing an injustice, but I will recount it as I remember the sequence of events. I had been held over in Amman because again there was another staffing crisis. Someone was on home leave; the Ambassador had left; a Charg#—Eric Kocher—who was not very experienced in the area was running the Embassy (although he really blossomed while being Charg#). I was held through October—three or four months after the end of my tour. In addition to the staffing problems, there was a new crisis in Amman which ended with the Prime Minister, Hazza' Majali, being assassinated. I was again required to play a larger role than my position called for. I do not know whether that had an effect on my onward assignment, which was to study Arabic at our language school in Beirut. This struck me as extremely strange because assignment to that school was supposed to be from volunteers; I had not volunteered for it, not asked for it, never mentioned it. I really didn't want to go. It was never on my “April Fool's” request which every officer filled out annually on April 1—hence the name—giving the Department his list of preferences for a next assignment. The Office of Personnel never paid any serious attention to it; they assigned you wherever they felt like, particularly if you were a junior officer.

I wanted to get out of the Middle East because everywhere I went in the area I was known as “my father's son,” as “Jim Keeley's son;” he was well known in the region. My last name is unusual in the sense that it is not Smith or Jones or even Kelly, although some mispronounce it that way. My father, Jim Keeley, was well known in the Middle East, having served most of his career there, with his most recent assignment having been as

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Minister to Syria, where we had a legation. That was the equivalent of an Ambassador and therefore he was well known. I got sick and tired of being known as “his son;” at age 30 it was more bothersome than it would have been at 50 or 60. Now it doesn't bother me at all, but then it really did. I was sure that if I wanted to make my own career, I would have to leave the area; otherwise I would be known forever as “my father's son” and would carry all the baggage that goes with that; I would never be a person in my own right. So the last thing I wanted to do was to specialize in the Arab world. An assignment to the language school would be the beginning of an assignment pattern: first, Beirut, then Tunis, then Kuwait, then Damascus, then Morocco, then a Middle East desk in the Department, then Beirut again, etc. That was not for me; I had to leave the area.

So I returned to Washington, not knowing what to do. Hermann Eilts, who I believe headed the Near East office in those days, had been visiting Beirut, where I met him on a visit from Amman. I was driving back to Amman through Damascus and I offered him a ride. We talked all the way; he did most of the talking. He spent a day or so in Amman and then I drove him to Jerusalem. One of my responsibilities was looking out for the West Bank and liaising with our Consulate General office in East Jerusalem, which was then headed by Andy Killgore. I guess Eilts was sort of recruiting for his own area; he was looking for Arabists. So he promoted the idea of going to the Arabic language school and I, probably trying to be polite, didn't argue or disagree; I didn't necessarily urge him on, but he must have interpreted my responses as not being opposed to going to the language school. I may have even been proud that he thought I would be a suitable candidate. So I think he told Personnel to send me to the Beirut school and that is how the assignment was probably made. I never talked to Hermann about it specifically, but I guess that is how it must have happened.

As I said, when I returned to Washington, I did not know what I was going to do. I didn't know my way around the Department since I had never worked there. I went to the Personnel Office and saw a name on a door: Arthur T. Tienken, whose partner I became later on when we worked together on the Zaire desk. My older brother had had

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a roommate at Princeton by the name of Bob Tienken, who had a brother in the Foreign Service. I thought that was enough of a possible connection, so I went to see Art on the assumption that Bob was his brother. I didn't have an appointment, but I walked in anyway and sat down and waited. Eventually he saw me and then confirmed that he indeed was Bob's brother. So I told him my problem and asked him whether he could get my assignment changed. He said that would be no problem; he phoned someone in the training division and told the person at the other end of the line to cancel my assignment to Arabic language school. And so it was done. I was delighted and wanted to know how he had so much power. It turned out that at the moment he controlled first priority in personnel assignments because he was responsible for staffing the twenty new posts that the U.S. was opening in Africa that year. This was in the Fall of 1960. I did not of course know any of this; he showed me an airgram that had been sent to all posts informing people of the need for people to volunteer for Africa, but because I had been traveling, I had not seen it. The needs were in places I had never heard of: Fort Lamy, Abidjan, Bujumbura (then known as Usumbura), Niamey, Brazzaville. He said that he had to staff these new posts and asked me which one I would like. I told him I didn't have a clue; I asked him to suggest one to me. He said there were four qualifications for one of his assignments: a) if you speak French, you go to a French-speaking post; b) you can't have any very young children or high school age children for health and education reasons (my kids were three and seven, so that wasn't an issue); c) you couldn't have any known health problems; d) you had to have administrative experience because you had to open a post, which meant finding office space, renting housing, hiring local employees, etc. I didn't qualify on the last count; so he said: "We'll skip that!" He said that the fifth, last and most important qualification was that I'd be ready and willing to go. What could I say? We left the matter at that and he said he would be in touch with me in a few days. I gave him my father's address and phone number in Pennsylvania, although we went off to Florida, which was my home state, to take some leave. Tienken called my father the following week and said: "Keeley, I have assigned you to Elisabethville. Congratulations!" My father said: "In a pig's eye. I have just retired and you are not sending me anywhere. You must be looking for

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my son!" After that misunderstanding was cleared up, my dad wanted to know where Elisabethville was. It was in the Congo, Tienken said. My father was appalled; he wanted to know why the Department would send his young son to a God-forsaken place like the Congo, then boiling over with a civil war. In any case, I did not get to Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi) because this was the time of the Katanga secession and its leader, Moise Tshombe, had chased our consul, Dick Matheron, into Northern Rhodesia after having blamed him for some U.N. action or some other adverse event. In any case, the post was temporarily closed and the Department didn't know if and when it would be reopened.

After my father had imparted the news of my assignment to me, I called Tienken, who then told me that I was not going to Elisabethville, but that I was slated for Usumbura. I asked him where that was. Art told me that there were two pieces of territory called Rwanda and Burundi, which had been Belgian territories, but were now independent. The U.S. was about to open one Legation in Usumbura, Burundi, with a Minister to cover both countries. That didn't work out because there was a revolution in Rwanda; the small people—the Hutus—threw out the Tutsis—the tall ones—and we had to cancel my position in Usumbura and transfer it to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, because we now had to have two Legations; one Minister could not cover both countries because they weren't getting along.

In the end, I was assigned to Bamako, Mali, which was also unknown to me. The reason for that assignment was that Ken Wright, my old boss in Amman, had been assigned as Ambassador to Mali and had requested me. He knew I had good French from Jordan days, where I had to use it, particularly with the women, many of whom had been French-educated; most of the men, both Palestinians and Jordanians, spoke English.

This was in the Spring of 1961. Because of all my assignment uncertainties, I was put in the mid-career course as a holding action until a permanent assignment in Africa could be found. That was typical; I regret to say that most of my colleagues in the mid-career course were there, not because they needed the additional education or because they

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had been chosen for this honor or that the mid-career course might do them some good, but because they were in limbo; we were all in a personnel “parking lot.” I stayed there for about three months.

I also worked briefly on the Senegal-Mali desk. That was also a holding operation because of another travel freeze or some other administrative problem. There had briefly been a Mali Federation of Senegal and the former French Sudan (Mali) which broke up soon after independence. There was supposed to be an Embassy in Senegal, which was intended to cover both Mali and Senegal since both were part of the Mali Federation. We had a Consulate in Bamako headed by John Gunther Dean, who was later to be my Ambassador in Cambodia. His deputy was John Leonard, who was a contemporary and classmate of mine in the A-100 course. The two of them had opened the post; it was then elevated to Embassy status when the Federation broke up. Ken Wright was sent out as the Ambassador and I was sent out to replace Dean, as political officer. Eventually, we also got a DCM, Tom McKiernan. That is how I ended up in Bamako; it was a long story and tells you a little about how the Foreign Service operated. My experience was not atypical; why someone studies French, is then sent to Amman, and finally ends up in Bamako. It sounds clearly illogical, but it happened more than once.

Q: What was the situation in Bamako in 1961 when you arrived at post?

KEELEY: It was a brand new embassy, still quartered in the Grand Hotel. The hotel was grand by interior Africa colonial standards. Our offices were a suite of rooms that had belonged to the manager. I lived alone in a hotel room for approximately the first three months; the family did not accompany me at first because there was no housing when I left for Bamako. It was a very primitive operation; we finally found a bank building that we bought and renovated into a chancery—more or less adequately. We eventually acquired some housing; it wasn't too bad, but it has vastly improved since then. From the point of view of sheer living, it was the most difficult post I was ever assigned to. The Malians went off in their own direction; they nationalized their currency abruptly, without understanding

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the consequences. They took one economic decision that literally ended all imports. We couldn't get enough food and we had very difficult diplomatic relations. The Ambassador (a later one, Bill Handley) and I once ordered substantial amounts of food, liquor and other supplies from Peter Justesen in Denmark; this was a shipment of six months' worth of supplies for the staff and the families. By the time the shipment had arrived, the Malians had decided that diplomats did not deserve duty free imports. They insisted that we pay duty; we refused as a matter of principle. An impasse resulted. So the goods sat in a warehouse for a long time; by the time they were released, all was rotten and spoiled. After a while, we decided to send a truck down to Abidjan to load up with supplies. It was difficult living. Mali was a very poor country. It had poor relationships with most of the rest of the world, including the U.S. They were worst with the French, so we played an important role because the Mali-France relationship was so bad. The regime was socialist, headed by people who had been trained to be teachers by the French. It was almost the opposite of Senegal, which had and still has a good relationship with France, as did the Ivory Coast. Mali has gone through many vicissitudes, similar to Guinea. Sekou Toure in Guinea opted out of de Gaulle's "union" and led the way to independence for those West African countries.

Shortly after I arrived and while still living in the hotel, a union of Guinea, Mali and Ghana was created. The three leaders met; I watched the dancing in the streets from the balcony of my room. I predicted a very short life for that union because among other matters, they didn't have a common language. Toure and Modibo Keita would speak to each other in French and there was no one there to translate for Kwame Nkrumah, who didn't understand a word of what they were saying. We played a major role in Mali because the French were in such bad odor. The French quietly encouraged us to play that role. During this period in much of formerly French Africa, there developed a competition and even a hostility between the French and American missions. The French guarded their ex-colonial status jealously, trying to translate that into a position of privilege in the post-independence relationship with their former domains. They were very concerned that

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the United States might replace them; we came in with anti-colonial credentials and with President Kennedy's popular image because he was seen as having favored the Algerian rebels. You could see pictures of Kennedy even in the remotest parts of the African continent—in huts; he was a real hero. You could understand why the French saw us as a potential threat to their continued dominance. For some reason or other, the situation in Mali was different. We were very close to the French; they encouraged us to do all we could because they felt shut out; they believed that some mission had to uphold the Western position in Mali. The government was very close to the Soviets and the Eastern Europeans—the Poles, the Czechs, the East Germans—who were heavily represented in Bamako. The West was outnumbered diplomatically.

We did one interesting thing: the Malians wanted to break their military ties to the French; their troops had been trained by the French during the colonial period; they wore French uniforms; their equipment was French; etc. They did turn to the Soviets to some extent, but they didn't want to be beholden to any single nation. The Malians are very independent-minded people and quite admirable: they are austere, tall, upright, and good looking. They are in distinct contrast to the people of the coastal countries, who tended to be the exact opposite: short, round, happy-go-lucky, loving singing and dancing, drinking lots of beer, enjoying life and not worrying about the future too much; if you mentioned “austerity” they would ask “why?” It is an entirely different outlook on life and consequently produces a different life-style.

The Malians turned to us and asked whether we would train their paratroopers. Some of their military officers were apparently impressed by our capabilities in that area. We had an awful hard time selling that request to Washington. I was heavily involved in the process since there was not any one else—no attache, no military personnel whatsoever, in the Embassy—and it was not in the purview of the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), as the assistance agency was then known, which had a substantial mission in Mali. That is when my French became most useful because I had to draw up a military assistance agreement after we agreed to provide the military training. We established a

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military mission known as MALMISH—a typical military acronym, unfortunate in some ways, but that is what it was called. Colonel Frank Mahin, a wonderful character who became a close friend, headed up the mission. We brought in three DC-3 (C-47) aircraft and a training team which trained a company, perhaps even a battalion, of Malian paratroopers.

Our principal objective in providing military assistance was to prevent the Soviets and the Eastern Europeans from being the sole providers of military assistance to Mali. The French encouraged us to do so because they couldn't; normally, they would have been the providers of the assistance. They were doing so in every other former French African colony except perhaps Guinea; in some countries, like Chad, they had even left their own officers in place to command the local troops. In Mali, they were foreclosed from this pattern for political reasons; we jumped into the breach just to get a foothold and prevent a Communist monopoly.

It was a successful program. The Malians took to it marvelously. They were well trained; we supplied the boots and the parachutes; they learned to pack their own gear and they all made their jumps and qualified. They got their special parachute wings, etc. Colonel Mahin, who was not a paratrooper, took the training along with the Malians—he also got his badge. He even talked me into taking the course and gave me a free pair of boots. When the Ambassador heard about it, he called me in and absolutely forbade me to proceed, because if anything had happened to me, he was concerned that it would take the State Department at least a year to find someone to send to Bamako, and even then the officer would refuse to come to “this God- forsaken” place. Also, if I broke a leg, I would be out of action for a long time. He therefore denied me the opportunity to take the training. So I kept the boots, but never took the training. To return the boots would have created more red tape to explain whence they had come than was worth it. So I just missed becoming a paratrooper.

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The wonderful day came when this Malian paratroop group graduated. They all made a final ceremonial jump with the Malian President in attendance and won their wings. The three C-47s filed their flight plans to leave via Dakar and return to their bases in Germany, taking the American training team with them. The President, Modibo Keita, heard of that and sent word that he wanted to see the Ambassador. I normally acted as the Ambassador's interpreter, because his French was not really all that good, for all the meetings that he had held and all of the conversations that he had had since my arrival at post. I accompanied him to every meeting he had, whether it was with the President, a Cabinet member, the Soviet or the French Ambassador; I did the translating and wrote the memoranda of conversation after the meeting. My French was by no means perfect, but the Malians' English was non-existent. So I went with Ambassador Wright. The President said he had been told that our planes were leaving. He then asked what his paratroopers were going to use for their jumps. The Ambassador said that we had agreed to train the troops; we had not agreed to supply an air force. The President noted that we had supplied the boots and the parachutes; they would now be useless if the Malians had no planes. He wanted a battalion of paratroops who could be used to control the often dissident tribes—the Tuareg and the Peul and the Fulani and related Saharan tribes in the north and east. He had all sorts of tribal problems in the desert regions of the country; he viewed the paratroopers as his means to get those tribes back into line should they become unruly; they would jump out of the sky and frighten the hell out of them, which indeed would have happened. The tribesmen were people who rode around on camels, and certainly would not be expecting people coming out of the sky. President Keita said he could not send the troops by truck; it would not make the same impression. It had never dawned on the President that the American planes and trainers would come in, do their job, and then leave.

It became a very embarrassing moment for us; the Malians had gone to the Soviets for their air force support and had received a version of the Ilyushin transport, a turbo-prop plane. These planes flew too fast for paratrooper jumps; much slower planes, like C-47s

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or C-130s, were required—something that could slow down enough so that when the trooper jumps out of the door, he doesn't get knocked unconscious by the force of the wind. The Russian planes were just too fast. So the President had no planes for his troops to jump out of; we never did supply any. The Malians tried to acquire them elsewhere, but by the time I left, the problem had not been solved. When I returned to Washington, I had a very difficult time explaining why we had agreed to train Malian paratroops. Our officials wanted to know who the enemy was. I told them it was for internal stability; the paratroopers were to control the tribes. That didn't entirely satisfy my colleagues, but I added that if we hadn't done it, they would have turned to the Soviets. It was a typical East-West confrontation situation; to keep the Communists out, we ended up with the task and the military assistance. Of course, Washington had approved the program, on the usual basis of competing with the Soviets for influence in the Third World.

The issue of the planes had never arisen before. There was never any thought in our minds that we were doing anything else but lending the planes for training purposes; we had no idea of donating them. We hadn't considered it. I don't remember giving that possibility a moment's thought. Our job, as spelled out very specifically in the Memorandum of Agreement, was to train a certain number of Malian troops to a level of proficiency so that they could jump out of planes, without being killed and with all their equipment, landing safely on the ground, and so forth. That was as far as the agreement went and certainly as far as we had intended to go. We had in Mali an economic aid and technical assistance program which was just beginning; the French were still welcomed in that field, but less than others. We worked on the Niger project, which was a vast irrigation scheme along the Niger River which had been in the works for years under French supervision. The Soviets gave economic assistance. I had a tooth problem one day and went to the hospital where I was treated by a Bulgarian lady dentist. Different countries were staffing different Ministries and activities. The French had not literally pulled out wholesale; it was not quite as bad as Guinea; they hadn't ripped out the telephones,

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but the French had pretty much deserted Mali, mainly because the Malians wanted to reduce their ties to France.

I should also mention the schooling problem. My son was too young for school, although he eventually went to a play group, which had no teacher or equipment, and this didn't provide him a good start in school. No Head Start program in Mali. But my daughter was a second grader. There was no American school in Mali, of course; she knew no French—she had only studied in a very good English school in Jordan, taught by a Britisher—a Miss Webster, who was very famous. There my daughter received an excellent grounding as a student. In Bamako, there were something like 27 nationalities represented in the diplomatic corps—many with children—but the schools were all in French. Some ambassadors went to the Ministry of Education and pointed out that the kids could not follow the French curriculum. The Malians very generously set up a special class for diplomatic children with their very best French teacher—Madame Chalmeau, who became a life long friend, and who was a superb teacher. She was a professional teacher and her husband was an inspector of education, seconded by the French to Mali under their technical assistance program. She just taught French to these kids, about thirty of them, of some ten nationalities, who came from all the far corners of the world and of all ages from grades one to six. At the end of the year, she had all those kids studying all subjects in French.

Unfortunately for me, at that stage something happened to spoil our educational situation. We got a new Ambassador, the late Bill Handley, who then and later became a very close friend. He was a career USIA officer—he was the first USIA officer to be appointed as an Ambassador. This was the result of President Kennedy's intervention; he thought it a shame that there were no USIA career officials who had been appointed as ambassadors. He called Ed Murrow, who was then the head of USIA, and asked for a nomination for an ambassadorship. The name Murrow gave was Bill Handley and that is how he ended up in Mali. He had excellent French; he didn't need an interpreter. Therefore my role changed; one of the things he did was to assign me to start an American school because

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he had a son who knew no French. The Mali government's effort was terminated after one year. It was then up to the foreign community to sink or swim. Handley's son therefore did not have the opportunity to learn French with Madame Chalmeau; so he decided that his son and all the other children that had come after that one year's effort had to have some English language educational opportunities. Our aid mission was growing and American Foreign Service personnel were reluctant to come to Mali because of the schooling situation. AID had money and would be available to help. AID had an executive officer, Charlie Myers, who also became a close friend; he had no children but he loved kids. He saved my neck by giving me some space in one of his warehouses; he put air-conditioners in because Mali had a terrible climate—the worst I have ever lived in: very hot part of the year, very dry part of the year, then very wet, and around Christmas and New Year there are about six very pleasant weeks, but then the cycle begins all over again. We had enough money from AID to hire one teacher; I recruited a lady from Washington. She taught grades one through six—all subjects. Madame Chalmeau taught our kids French a few hours a week. We started with two kids—the Ambassador's son and my daughter. By the time I left, it had built up to twelve students and I understand it is still a going concern. It is called the International School or something like that; so it was a success. Although I put a lot of effort into it, I don't mention the school for that reason; rather I just wanted to provide an illustration of the kind of activity that the Department of State is not able to conduct; without AID money, support, interest and commitment we could never have started that school. State's attitude has been mostly that the Foreign Service is on its own and has to do the best it can without State support. If the children have to go to foreign schools, so be it. Of course, I did that as a child and never felt that I had suffered, but then I didn't live in remote places like Bamako and other similar posts in which I have served. As a child, it was Montreal and Thessaloniki and Antwerp and Athens. It is also an illustration of activities a Foreign Service officer becomes involved in, although certainly not part of the official job description.

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Q: Mali was the first country you had served in which had contact with the Soviet Bloc. Did you see much of the Soviet and Eastern European missions?

KEELEY: We did, but only officially, not socially. They were not personally hostile, but contact was not extensive. I remember one event clearly and that was when our Ambassador called on his Soviet counter-part, which he liked to do periodically just to trade notes. We worked very closely with the British and French Embassies. We were sort of the Western triumvirate. But our Ambassador liked to call on the others as well and I went along as the interpreter. The Soviets also had an interpreter. It was interesting to note that the Soviets were having all the same problems that we were except worse. They had trouble staffing their Embassy; couldn't get new recruits, personnel didn't stay, education problems. For them it was even worse because they are racists—much more than we might be. The Soviet Ambassador was very frank about it; most of his staff felt uncomfortable being in a black country having to deal so closely with all the black people. What concerned him most of all—which tells you something about the Soviet attitude—was the terrible paranoia that he and his staff had about disease: fear of contracting terrible African diseases to which the Soviets thought they were very susceptible—according to the Ambassador—because they didn't have a natural immunity. He had all sorts of “scientific” explanations, but in any case, he kept losing staff who would just pack up one day and leave for home on “medical” evacuation. They were frightened that they would get some kind of infection for which there was no cure. (This was long before AIDS.) There was a leper colony near Bamako. Sensible people know that it takes a person half a lifetime to acquire leprosy, but the Soviets, much more than our people, were really fearful of “germs;” it was particularly a problem for them because many of them were working in the medical field; they also staffed many Ministries as technical advisors and had to work closely with the Malians. We didn't socialize very much with the Soviets. We didn't avoid them particularly, but they lived a closed existence in those days; they didn't travel about freely. They were always under KGB surveillance; they traveled in groups. If we found someone who was particularly outgoing, as we did later in Uganda where we met a very

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engaging young couple, you assumed that they were KGB people because they were allowed freedoms that others weren't, such as having dinner at our house alone without anyone else present who could report on them. In those days the surveillance was pretty severe. But for example, when our military group came, we formed a volleyball team and challenged other embassies, including the Soviets, to matches. Eventually we created a league. The Soviets were extremely good in volleyball; all the Eastern Europeans seemed to excel at volleyball. We didn't beat the Soviets but we put up a good fight. That kind of socializing did go on, but there were no close relations.

Our people never had the same reaction to the medical problems in Mali; we of course had people get sick. Our children suffered from many strange bites, lizard burns, unexplained fevers. My wife had a fever that lingered on for months. The leprosarium was the only place she could go for blood tests. She often took new wives to visit the leprosarium, which she had learned about from the French doctors. It was a struggle in Mali for our wives and mothers to keep healthy food on the table and the children free of disease. In our house we had only one air conditioner—that's all the Embassy allowed as our ration—so for all our tour all four of us slept in one room in the hot season, which was a good part of the year. We had no hot water in our kitchen, until Charlie Myers of the AID mission took pity on us and got us a heater for water. There were no fresh milk products, or eggs—I could go on and on, or even better, my wife could.

I had a medical problem—a fatty tumor on my back—and had to be evacuated about six months before my tour was to end. We had become very close friends with a French doctor—Dr. Rivoalen—and his wife. He was a fine doctor, military trained like many French doctors, but was in private practice and would come to see us day or night for any problem that we might have. He looked after all of the Embassy's medical problems; without him we would have been in dire straits indeed. I showed him my tumor; he felt around it and said that he could take it out. He asked me how much longer I would be in Bamako. When I told him that I would be there another six months, he said that he could send the tissues to Paris to be examined by a pathologist (there was none in Mali) but

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what if the tissues or the report got lost in the mails? Then I would have to worry for at least six months or more about whether the tumor was benign. He thought it would be better for me to go to the Army hospital in Frankfurt for the operation. So I was evacuated and had the surgery done there; fortunately, the tumor was benign and I returned to finish my tour. They were great bridge players, the Rivoalens. He later died of a strange kind of cancer, perhaps from a poison he picked up in Mali.

Medical care was at a level where you really didn't want to get sick. Tom McKiernan, our DCM, an extremely able officer, was Charg# for a period and he got shingles on his optic nerve. It was extremely painful; very difficult to treat. He was and has always been a very conscientious officer. I was the next ranking person. The poor guy couldn't stand light and had to stay in bed, in a darkened room. This went on for about a week while he was Charg#. He refused to be evacuated until the Ambassador returned. I couldn't talk him into it. I would call on him every two or three hours or so to get his instructions and to bring him up to date on what was going on at the Embassy. Finally, the Ambassador returned and we evacuated Tom to Germany. When he got there, he was asked what treatment he had received. Dr. Rivoalen had given him Vitamin B-1 injections. The Frankfurt medics said that that was exactly the right treatment, but they tripled the dose. Eventually he recovered, although he had severe scarring on his forehead as a result.

There were other similar cases. We had a young USIA officer, Phil Pillsbury of the flour-milling family, who while opening a beer can, nearly severed his thumb. The cut was so severe that we had to evacuate him; there was not a surgeon in Bamako who could deal with a severed tendon to save the thumb. Those are the situations that make a post like Bamako difficult to serve in. You are always a little bit on edge; not that you are afraid of black people or diseases, like the Russians, but there is a premium on staying healthy because if you get sick it is either evacuation or worse.

Q: Did the attitude of the Mali Government change while you were there?

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KEELEY: During the period I was in Mali the relationship mostly degenerated. As I mentioned earlier, the worst action they took was to issue their own currency. They left the CFA franc area, which was supported by France; by the time they re-entered it years later, they had to devalue by some factor of five or ten. It was a very dramatic event. Modibo Keita walked into Parliament one evening and announced that Mali would have its own currency; it had already been printed, with his own picture on it. Completely oblivious of what was about to happen, we were playing poker in the Central Bank Governor's apartment; he, the host, was a Frenchman because that was one position that the French held onto. Soldiers came to the apartment with guns; broke up our game; demanded that he give them the keys to the vault. They went to the vault, apparently expecting to find bars of gold and other valuables to support the new currency; they found nothing but some paper—communications with Paris. It was a shameful performance. The economy went into a severe decline. Eventually, there was a military coup and Modibo Keita was thrown out. He was a very honorable and admirable man in many ways, but he had certain *idées fixes* about economics and politics that were heavily ideological in nature and impracticable, but which he insisted on implementing. When the military took control, the new President was the commander of the paratroop battalion which we had trained. At this point, I no longer had to justify the training program; it was then considered a stroke of genius. It was believed by some that CIA had engineered the coup, which as far as I know was not true. Moussa Traore took over, but he has also been overthrown. It was one of the few instances in my experience where a little foresight paid off handsomely. Traore turned things around and our relationship with Mali became much friendlier; he was much more pragmatic. Mali was still neutral, but no longer “pro-communist.” Now, like most of Africa, Mali is privatizing and trying to establish a market economy and all the wonderful things that we have been preaching for these many years.

I should not finish this chapter without some further reminiscences. We had a visit by “Soapy” Williams, then the Assistant Secretary for Africa. He liked to go out and meet the folks, like any American politician. We took him to Timbuktu, which he had always

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wanted to visit. He must have had his own chartered or U.S. Air Force plane. We all flew up there; I have it on film. It was an extraordinary scene; the former governor of Michigan working the crowd in the main square as if it were Cobo Square in Detroit during one of his political campaigns for governor. He shook every hand of every person there; these were tribesmen coming out of the desert in full regalia with their swords and shields and spears. It was a sight to behold! Those are some of the moments you live for and never forget, unlike the much more sober and serious work of an embassy.

By the time our tour in Mali ended, my family was not in good shape healthwise. I myself was not well. I had lost a lot of weight—40 or 45 pounds—mainly because of the climate. I was down to about 125 pounds; much too thin.

Q: Then you were assigned to Washington to the Congo desk.

KEELEY: That is right. It was Congo-Leopoldville, which became Zaire in 1971. The desk was part of the Office of Central African Affairs, which included the other Congo (Brazzaville), Central African Republic, Gabon, Cameroon, Chad, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and Angola. The Office Director was George McMurtrie Godley ("Mac"); his deputies were Allan Ford and Matt Loram, who looked after the Portuguese territories—Mozambique and Angola. I was one half of a desk. Art Tienken and I worked as co-desk officers for the Congo. We were so busy with the Congo it needed two desk officers. Art worked on internal Congolese political affairs; I did the external side—i.e., the U.N. involvement, the Katanga operations, etc. Art and I replaced Charlie Whitehouse and Frank Carlucci. I went to see Frank, who was then working in Personnel, just prior to his assignment to Zanzibar. I wanted his advice and to learn something about the Congo situation. He had served in Leopoldville as well as on the desk. Prior to leaving Bamako, I had requested that I return to Washington via the Congo so I could get a feel for the country I would work on. I was turned down flatly; it was straight to Europe and then home. So I had never set foot in the country. A year later, in the summer of 1964, Mac Godley had become the Ambassador in Leopoldville; I then visited the post and Elisabethville,

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Rwanda and Burundi, and Brazzaville, all of which I was supposed to cover from the Washington desk. So I was actually half way through my tour before I could see what I was backstopping in Washington. This is a major defect in State's operations. It would have been so much easier and not much more expensive to route me through Leopoldville on the way home from Mali, just to meet the people in the Embassy and get a feel for them and a little bit of the country. Otherwise, the people at the other end of the communications line were just names. By a year later, I knew our Ambassadors in the two Congos, Rwanda and Burundi, and some of the other people in the other posts in the ex-Belgian Congo, because I had met them while they were in Washington, or I had visited their posts.

An assignment as a desk officer in the Department is an extremely valuable posting for a young officer, because it gives one the opportunity to learn first hand how the Washington bureaucracy works, how to get things done in the Department of State. It's a very intense learning process that everyone who aspires to reach the senior ranks ought to pass through, the earlier in a career the better. I'll give you an example, perhaps an amusing one, of just how much learning is involved. After a few weeks on the job as one of the two Congo desk officers, most of which time I spent trying to learn as much about the country as possible, a bright idea suddenly hit me, and without giving it a lot of analysis I went straight to the boss, Mac Godley, with my idea. First of all, there seemed to be mostly incompetent leadership at the top of the Congo government in Leopoldville—this was after Patrice Lumumba had been killed—whereas I had come to understand that the leader in secessionist Katanga, Moise Tshombe, seemed to be a highly competent and efficient and decisive leader, a clever politician who could run rings around his opponents in Leopoldville.

So I said to Mac Godley, why don't we solve several problems with one dramatic move, by having Tshombe moved from Katanga to the capital of Leopoldville and put him in charge of the whole Congolese government? This would end the secession in Katanga, because in effect Katanga in the person of Tshombe would have taken over the leadership

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of the whole country, and at the same time we would have installed the most competent leadership possible in Leopoldville to run the whole show. Godley stared at me in disbelief. I surely didn't realize at the time how naive I must have sounded. It wasn't that we were incapable of pulling off this scheme. The fact is that we were running the show in the Congo at that time, that is, in Leopoldville at least and the whole UN operation, though we were not running things in Katanga—Tshombe and his Belgian sympathizers and his mercenaries were running things there, in defiance of us and the UN and everybody. I suppose my proposal displayed my penchant for trying to solve big, complex problems with one grand gesture, but it must have struck Godley as crazy. He let me down gently by explaining that Tshombe was currently the enemy, our enemy, the guy whose secession we were trying to put down, and it was clearly a crazy idea to in effect surrender to him by putting him in charge of the whole country. He was the bad guy, and the guys in Leopoldville, though perhaps corrupt and incompetent, were at least our guys.

Well, I went back and tried to learn more about the Congo, perhaps feeling lucky that Godley hadn't sacked me on the spot. But I did have a small victory eight or nine months later, when I made my first visit to my posts, in the summer of 1964, going first to Paris and Brussels, and then to Brazzaville and Leopoldville. Who should be on the same flight from Paris to Brazzaville but none other than Moise Tshombe, on his way to Leopoldville to take charge of the whole Congolese government, at the invitation of his rivals in the capital who decided the best course for the country was to put him in the driver's seat. At Ambassador Godley's invitation (by that time, as I said, he had become the new American Ambassador in Leopoldville) I stayed with him while I was in Leopoldville, and I had the good sense not to remind him of my grand scheme of the year before to “move Tshombe to Leopoldville.” He had enough problems coping with the new situation created by Tshombe's “coup,” which I should add was not our doing but had been engineered behind our backs. Godley got along fine with Tshombe after he took over and in fact the installation of Tshombe as national leader solved a lot of problems in the Congo for a while, though this solution didn't last very long. Mobutu then took over, but that was after my time.

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Our Central African office was extraordinarily busy. It became so difficult that sometime later the Department set up a special task force, under Sheldon Vance, to handle Congo affairs. It was one of the major foreign policy problems of the Kennedy era, starting in 1961. By the time I got to the desk, in September 1963, it was just a few months before Kennedy's assassination, but the Congo remained a problem for a long time. The Office of Central African Affairs, with Jim O'Sullivan as its head, replacing Mac Godley, was left as kind of a shell after the Vance Task Force was established. I had about half of the residual responsibilities: Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda, Burundi plus some residual ex-Belgian Congo matters. Walker Diamanti was my colleague and he had the rest of the Central African states—Cameroon, CAR, Chad and Gabon. That was it! It became a very small office towards the end of my tour. During the Katanga war in the Congo, we were about the busiest office in the State Department. That is why we had two desk officers. Very little attention was paid to the other countries I was covering. There was very little interest in them. The desk officer in that situation becomes a key figure because he is about the only person in the Department, and much if not all of the government, who is giving any attention to those countries. If there is an assistance program, then AID has an office. But our interests in my other countries were quite minimal and the only attention paid to them was if there was a crisis.

Of course, we had a whole series of crises. One that occurred during my tour was in Burundi. A young Chinese diplomat walked into our Embassy in Bujumbura and defected. He happened to be the most senior Chinese communist official ever to defect to the United States up to that time. He was not that significant in himself; he was very new and young. He was on his first overseas assignment. But he was valuable because he had been assigned to language school and had studied French; our analysts were interested to learn how selections were made for the diplomatic service, how they were trained, what kind of ideological training they received; in general, he was very useful for learning something about a country which was essentially a big mystery to us. Furthermore, in those days, defectors were a major interest of our intelligence agencies and the U.S. government in

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general. So it was very important that the Chinese diplomat be well treated, on the theory that if he were well treated and the word got back to China, then there might be more defectors. There was certainly no chance if he had been mistreated. Our Ambassador was Don Dumont. I visited Bujumbura in the summer of 1964 while the defector was still in the Embassy. The whole episode took months because the Burundi government would not cooperate with us. It wouldn't let the Chinese official out of the country. We didn't dare let him out of our chancery; so he lived in the Ambassador's office. When I arrived in Bujumbura, I found a very upset Ambassador because the Chinese was living and sleeping in his office, using his bathroom and had just taken over the place. He couldn't be moved; there was no way he could be moved to another facility without leaving the chancery grounds. So the poor Ambassador begged me to get the guy out of there. We negotiated with the Burundis. The Chinese Embassy people surrounded our Embassy at one point. The Burundi government had threatened to come into our chancery and take him away; it was a horrible situation.

When I returned to Washington I convinced my bosses that we had to do something to get the Chinese out of the chancery. So we planned an operation with CIA, which was the executive agency. We in State did the planning and the preparation. We even established a task force—it was one of the first that operated out of the Executive Secretariat Operations Center. I was not in charge of the task force—Averell Harriman actually was—but I had most of the expertise about the country and the chancery building. Harriman would come in and visit with us every few hours during the critical periods. The full story has never been told. We literally shipped the Chinese official out of the country in a diplomatic “pouch.” That pouch was a wooden box with holes in it on its bottom side (so he could breathe) which we constructed inside the chancery, sort of a reverse Trojan horse. It was large enough for the Chinese to sit inside in a sort of fetal position—not too large. We spirited him out of Burundi and into Rwanda, where a plane was waiting to fly him out to Europe, probably through Nairobi. We took him (inside the box) out of the chancery in the middle of the night in the back of a small truck. The box was wrapped in canvas labeled

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“Diplomatic Pouch.” It had seals all over it. The truck traveled from Bujumbura to Kigali—about sixty miles—where we could let him out of his box. Rwanda was cooperative and really didn’t interfere. We brought him to Washington; I had lunch with him the following day at a restaurant on K Street, which was a very strange experience. We had a cocktail party scheduled at home and I invited him to that; he was one strange character for people to meet. Our friends had a hard time believing that here was a living, breathing communist Chinese diplomat. He spoke only French and Chinese, of course. We had sort of a reunion to celebrate the success of this escapade.

In my workshop in my basement I made a little scale model of the box used for the escape; I went to Chinatown and bought a Chinese doll that I put in the box, and then I presented the whole thing to Averell Harriman, when he called all of the members of the task force into his office to thank them for the success of the operation. Unfortunately, when he lifted the box up, the bottom with the holes in it swung open on a hinge and the doll crashed to the floor. There was general laughter. It may still be among his mementos. He used to keep it in his office, where it looked somewhat peculiar, sitting on a bookshelf. But I guess he showed it off to his visitors. I got a nice letter from him at the end of the affair. It was a serious business because had we permitted the Burundis or the Chinese or any other unfriendly power to get hold of the defector, he would have been killed for sure and that was not a precedent we wanted to establish.

It was only circumstances of that kind that brought any attention to the countries I was following. The rest of the time nobody cared much, except again Rwanda and Burundi over the years had terrible massacres of the Hutus by the Tutsis and vice-versa. Still today these two countries are ruled by competing tribal groups and that becomes a major human rights issue, although it is not necessarily solely a human rights issue. The upshot of the Chinese defector incident was of course that our Ambassador was declared *persona non grata* when the escape became public knowledge; all the blame was put on our Ambassador. That was unfortunate, but on the other hand, the status quo could not be maintained. We had to do something and those are the sacrifices you have to make. In

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fact, I don't think the Ambassador was too unhappy because it at least resolved his office space problem.

Q: Your comments are interesting because President Kennedy used to refer frequently to Africa in his foreign policy statements. The interest apparently did not apply to all countries.

KEELEY: The attention tended to focus on a few key countries that were sore points or were major players, like the former Belgian Congo. That interest has varied from place to place and administration to administration. I have worked in both kinds of countries. I worked in Mali, which was a backwater. Uganda was not much different, but because of Idi Amin it became a central focus of human rights issues. When I was working in Washington on Rhodesia, that had a very high profile in the administration because it was key to our African relations and was in fact one of the major foreign policy issues of the Carter administration. Carter considered the outcome of the Rhodesia crisis one of his successes; when he left office he wrote letters to the various leaders he had worked with and the one that went to Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe was one of the warmest letters and one of the outcomes he felt best about, not quite in the same category as Sadat and Begin, but right behind them. The outcome was generally seen as a success without too much dilution; it was certainly not a failure, like Iran and the hostage crisis.

In general, most of the African countries are only a concern to the senior officers of the government when there is a serious problem. I should mention another case: Congo (Brazzaville). That was a former French colony; we had a small assistance program there. When I was on the desk, it had fallen essentially into insignificance. The former French Congo had almost no interest for us; oil had not yet been found. Under Father Fulbert Youlou, who was the first President—a Catholic priest—it was rather pro-Western, but he was an eccentric character, mercurial and unreliable. He was finally thrown out and a semi-military and semi-ideological, leftist, pro-Communist regime came to power. Our relationship plunged at that point, but that Congo was still not a major interest of ours. I

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didn't spend a lot of time on it. It was mostly a matter of trying to help our Ambassador—Barney Koren—and the Embassy in general, which was dealing with some difficult problems.

Suddenly, a major problem cropped up. The Congo government changed its attitude towards us a little bit and invited us to resume our aid program. We considered it and agreed to a small program. All of our AID people had left; so we decided to send one AID officer from a neighboring post or from Washington—I can't recall which, but he was not a very senior official; he was a program officer who knew French and had served in Africa. His assignment was just to go to Brazzaville and talk to the government officials to see what was being proposed: what areas were of interest, was it technical advice or equipment, etc.? The Congo government had agreed to receive this fellow. He landed in Brazzaville, but his visa had expired that very day. So the Congolese threw him into jail. Mike Rives, who was our DCM at the time, and the Ambassador, both career officers and experienced, went to work on the problem. Mike had probably gone to the airport and had seen the AID man being arrested. Understandably, people in Washington were very upset. Here the Congolese had invited the U.S. to resume our aid program and then they throw into jail the official sent to discuss the matter with them. What kind of people were the Congolese? After three days or so, after loud protests by our side, the AID man was released and he left the country. There were no apologies made. We recalled our Ambassador for “consultations;” I went to Dulles Airport to meet him. Unfortunately, between the time he left the post and his Washington arrival, all hell had broken loose. The problem was raised to the highest levels; people were furious at the Congolese. As the desk officer, I was trying to explain the situation. When you are dealing with countries like that, no one knows anything about them except the desk officer. I tried to explain that the incident was the result of an internal power struggle between the chief of police and the political leadership, with both seeking power; this was an effort by the chief of police to sabotage the government so that the good relationship with the U.S., which the government was trying to reestablish, would be derailed. It all sounded very complicated,

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but it was rather simple. My argument was that we should not play into the hands of the chief of police; he was the “bad” guy in the play. He was stupid and nasty, but we should not let him derail our efforts at better relations. No one would, of course, listen; the issue went all the way to the Acting Secretary of State, George Ball. Dean Rusk was out of town. So I had to deal with George Ball. I didn't see him personally, but I got word that he wanted our Embassy closed and that the staff should all pack up and leave. He wanted to show the Congolese and others who might be watching that there were limits to acceptable behavior; we had to protect our people. Ball was interested in the larger picture and not the local Brazzaville scene. He wanted to send a message, because these incidents happened from time to time in other places as well, and he was fed up with them. He wanted the world to know that we would not stand for it. The U.S. would not tolerate all behavior. The counter argument, which I was making, which was more or less the position of the African Bureau, was that the signal that would be received would be seen as the United States, that “big bully,” picking on this poor, small, impoverished ex-colonial country, which may not have had good manners at all times, but then couldn't be expected to be experienced in the ways of the world in light of its history. These “small” guys should not be whomped when they just behaved foolishly. That argument did not win the day; the Embassy was closed.

When I met the Ambassador at the airport, I had to tell him he had just lost his Embassy. Mike Rives would be the last American out and would carry the flag with him. This was my first, but not my last, experience at closing embassies. The Ambassador was absolutely crestfallen and thought it was the stupidest thing we could have done. He took it personally, as you might expect. I got blamed for not being forceful enough. I mention it not because the incident was important in itself, but because it was an educational experience for a Foreign Service officer. I recognized later that George Ball had been right and the AF Bureau and I had been wrong. We should have closed the Embassy, for it might well have had an impact on other countries. It did send a good signal, and in fact Brazzaville was not that important to the U.S. A desk officer does suffer a certain

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amount of “clientitis;” not that you necessarily want to argue the case from the other country's point of view, but you do tend to exaggerate the importance or the significance of the thing on which you are working, even if it is small potatoes. We kept that Embassy closed from 1965 to 1977—twelve years. From 1977 on, our relationship has been very good—exemplary. The government hasn't changed, but the ideology has. It didn't cost us anything not to have a mission in Brazzaville for those twelve years. In fact it saved us some money. It may have caused the Congolese some pain; it was not a world shaking event and it may have helped to protect our diplomats; if that was the case, then it certainly was worth it. George Ball was right, even though I thought at the time that he was reacting emotionally and acting as the “big bully.” But that is the only time when a country like Congo (Brazzaville) gets any attention by senior officials.

This episode with Congo (Brazzaville) occurred at the very end of my tour in the African Bureau, in late July and early August of 1965. I guess it was a fitting end to that assignment, sort of going out in a blaze of disaster.

Q: While you were desk officer, G. Mennen Williams was the Assistant Secretary. What are your memories of him?

KEELEY: I had considerable contact with him, both during his visit to Mali and as a desk officer working for him. I always liked him; he was always very personable. He was fun to be with. He was a Princeton graduate so I had a personal connection with him. He used to hand out polka-dotted green bow ties, which were his trade-mark. He gave me a couple which I used to wear; I used to enjoy them. The morale of the Bureau, which was new and essentially considered inconsequential by other Bureaus, was very good. We attracted a superior caliber of officer; people who may have been more adventuresome, open minded or imaginative than the run-of-the-mill. Williams had parties where we square-danced and did other things like that, sometimes down in the cafeteria. He used to have a Christmas party to which we were all invited. Most of the career people in the other Bureaus didn't have that kind of leadership.

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Williams was a very warm person; he loved his job, but he had one defect as an Assistant Secretary. There were certain issues that he found so distasteful that he just wouldn't deal with them. Unfortunately, that is a luxury that an Assistant Secretary couldn't afford. He cannot shirk difficult or nasty problems; in fact, those are the ones that need his attention more than any of the others. One of these problems was the ex-Belgian Congo. As I have mentioned, I happened to be one of the desk officers; so I felt this neglect directly. The result was that "Soapy" was really never in the decision-making process on the Congo. He in fact took himself out of it because he didn't like the situation; the whole situation was distasteful to him. This was pre-Mobutu; it was under the Lumumba, Adoula, Kasavubu and Tshombe regimes. The Congo was a major problem. It eventually required the President's attention. Kennedy became personally involved, as did of course the NSC staff and apparatus. Williams' self-imposed absence changed the chain of command for this particular issue. The papers went from us on the desk—first Tienken and myself, later Bill Schaufele and others—to the office director, Mac Godley, to Henry Tasca, one of the two principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries (of the two deputies, Wayne Fredericks did the English-speaking parts of Africa, and Tasca the French-speaking areas, reflecting their language skills) to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Averell Harriman, who had explained to us that he had been given a specific brief for Africa by the Secretary or the President or somebody. If it had to go beyond Harriman, it went straight to the White House, except in some specific instances such as I mentioned when George Ball became involved in the arrest of an aid officer in Brazzaville. Normally, if White House involvement was needed, Harriman would take care of it because he had close contacts with the President.

Tasca was a great linguist; he knew German, Italian, French; I later served under him in Athens and therefore came to know him quite well; he is dead now. In Soapy's African Bureau Tasca was sympathetic; he would help us with our problems and would take the problems to more senior officials if necessary. Soapy was bypassed and essentially left out of the Belgian Congo problems. That happened to be the principal problem of the

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continent during this period. It was a bit strange to have the Assistant Secretary left out of the, or at least one of the major issues in his Bureau. This may have been one of the reasons that the Vance Task Force operated almost independently of the Bureau; I believe that it reported to Harriman. I was never part of it. Creation of the Task Force decimated our office; in fact, Jim O'Sullivan asked that I be left in the Central African office because he had no one who knew anything about the other countries that I was backstopping. That is how I became involved with Brazzaville, Rwanda and Burundi. Someone had to do that work; I think also that I only had a brief period to go before moving on to my next assignment. Because I was no longer directly involved in the Belgian Congo, I was not a participant in the famous Stanleyville operation in November 1964—the rescue of hostages and some of our consular people by Belgian Marines flown in by American planes. A separate group had been set up to handle that operation. I only participated marginally because Don Dumont in Bujumbura had volunteered to go to the Congo to negotiate with the guerrillas.

Q: What was your view of the importance to the U.S. of the African countries for which you were responsible in State?

KEELEY: These countries were not considered important by the Department's Seventh Floor. I did not consider them unimportant. I always tried to maintain an objective perspective about the order of priorities. Obviously, as the desk officer, “my” countries were the most important for me because I was working on them full time, but I would never pretend that they ranked high in importance in our foreign relations with the rest of the world. I hope I never lost that perspective, but, on the other hand, the desk officer, in State's organizational structure, is the key figure for those particular countries, even more so than an office director, who has a much larger domain to cover. So these countries are very important to the desk officer, who should be following every detail and should be doing the best he or she can to get people's attention to focus on any problems. But if the desk officer begins to believe that all events in these African countries are of a world

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shaking nature, he or she is soon going to wear out their welcome with their superiors because they know better.

Q: Let me ask you about some perceptions that people had about Africa at the time you served in the Bureau. One was that Africa was only important when seen in the context of the East-West conflict. What was your reaction to that?

KEELEY: In a very large sense, that is the way our relations with those African countries were viewed. I illustrated that point during my discussion of my tour in Mali. Our policy was based on the fact that the French had left, the Soviets were trying to fill the vacuum, and we were competing with them to uphold Western interests. Very little of what we did was purely for humanitarian reasons, although we did have an interest in helping those countries develop economically: improve their health services, their general administration, their agriculture. That was in part spurred by a humanitarian interest; it didn't contradict our role as protectors of Western interests. Both interests coincided, but aid levels would often be set on the basis of the East-West competition. It may, of course, work both ways. If the country is friendly to the U.S., there is an inclination to provide higher levels of assistance to keep it in "our" camp. There were other cases where we probably have invested far greater resources than we might otherwise because we were in a competitive situation. The classic example of such a situation might be Somalia and Ethiopia, where we changed sides as the Soviets changed. If you look at our aid programs to those two countries, you could just from the numbers tell when we were leaning toward the one country and when we were distancing ourselves and then back again, depending on that country's policy toward us and the Soviets. The economic circumstances in those countries had not changed that dramatically, but in Ethiopia there had been in 1974 a revolution that overthrew the Emperor and then leaned that country towards the Soviets. Somalia would subsequently not have rated nearly as much aid as it received if it hadn't been for Ethiopia's switch and the East-West competition.

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There are, of course, special cases like Liberia, which is considered a special interest of ours because of the historical ties. There are a few cases in the world like that. There is another factor that comes into play heavily for countries like Zaire, which was helpful to us in other situations, such as Angola. That involves intelligence cooperation and perhaps military as well, where other countries are rewarded for being useful to us in dealing with problems in neighboring areas.

Also votes in the U.N. can have an extremely important bearing on relationships. I remember that they used to be accepted as a guideline at certain points for passing judgments on the state of our relations with each country. In some cases, there were so few bilateral issues that how a country voted in the U.N. became the litmus test on the state of our relations. I will use Zimbabwe as an illustration. I served there later as the first U.S. Ambassador, when this issue arose. Their U.N. votes became the crucial factor in our relations in the fall of 1983. Zimbabwe had been elected to the Security Council, not particularly voluntarily, because they were still a new nation, having become independent in 1980. But it was a popular country. This selection caused us no end of trouble. The critical point came when the issue of the downing of the Korean Airliner 007 came before the Security Council. It came to a crucial vote on a resolution in which the U.S. in fact tried to have the Soviet Union condemned. We knew it would be vetoed by the USSR, but we wanted the nine votes to pass it in the first place. It was the typical situation in which we knew we could not actually get the resolution adopted but hoped to highlight the issue by forcing a Soviet veto. We were very angry about Soviet behavior. We had eight votes; we had to get one additional vote in order to pass the resolution. Zimbabwe was one of the undecided votes; abstentions did not count; we needed another positive vote. Prime Minister Mugabe was on his way to the United States for an official visit. I was in Washington preparing for it. He was to start his visit in Atlanta as the guest of Andrew Young, the then Mayor. I knew Young from having worked with him previously during the Carter Administration on the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe issue, and Namibia and other southern African issues. He invited my wife and me to come down to join him for the Mugabe visit

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to Atlanta, which was to last for approximately 36 hours. Mugabe would then come to Washington for a semi-State visit with President Reagan and Secretary Shultz.

When I arrived in the States, I realized how much importance Washington was putting on that U.N. vote. We were desperate for a ninth vote and the Administration had focused on Zimbabwe for that vote. I was assigned to work on Mugabe to convince him. I didn't have much hope. In Atlanta I enlisted the help of Andrew Young, which he was willing to give by simply explaining to Mugabe the importance to the U.S. of that Security Council action. Having been a former Ambassador to the U.N., Young could convey far better than most what all of this meant. Although Young was of course not close to the Reagan Administration, he could nevertheless describe to Mugabe the effect the vote would have in Washington. The Reagan Administration would not have asked for Young's involvement. I did because I thought that he would probably have more influence with Mugabe than most others. So Young tried, but didn't succeed. He came to see me late at night in my hotel room in Atlanta, after he and his wife had dined with the Mugabes, and told me that he had made his pitch, but he unfortunately had not been able to win the day. He said, and I am sure that it was true, that he had done the best he could. He did it primarily because he thought that a positive response from Mugabe would assist U.S.-Zimbabwe relations. I tried my hand on the same issue during the flight on one of the U.S. Presidential planes that brought Mugabe from Atlanta to Washington; I got absolutely nowhere. I then went to the back of the plane to make a phone call while still in the air to the Secretary. I explained to him that we were making no progress whatsoever and I suggested that the Secretary take up the issue with Mugabe in the limousine on the way from Andrews Air Force Base to the Madison Hotel, where he was staying. Shultz was going to have Senator Nancy Kassebaum with him (she was the chair-person of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on Africa). She had been at an African American Institute conference and knew and was known by most of the African leaders. That scenario took place; Shultz talked to him.

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At the hotel, we went over the schedule with Mugabe, who would be seeing the President the next day and would have lunch with him. The vote in the Security Council was to take place that very afternoon. Shultz was calling on Mugabe in the hotel suite while the vote was taking place. He made his pitch again, and it was again rejected, or rather ignored. I was getting increasingly despondent. Jeff Davidow, who was the office director (he had been my DCM in Zimbabwe and the liaison officer there prior to independence, and therefore knew the situation and the people very well) was outside the suite waiting for the meeting to break up. As the session ended, I went outside to talk to him. He then told me that in fact the resolution had passed (a ninth vote had been found) and the Soviets had vetoed it. He didn't know which country had provided the ninth vote, but he knew that it had passed. I assumed that Zimbabwe had provided the crucial vote because by this time my mind set was that that was our only possibility. I felt elated and was speculating about it with the Secretary as we rode back in his car to the Department from the hotel. When I got back to the Department, I found out that it had not been Zimbabwe; it had been Trinidad and Tobago—a vote that had been left out entirely from the calculations. Everyone was joking, asking how much that vote had cost us. Everybody assumed that T&T had had to be bought off by some amount of aid money. In any case, the resolution was passed and vetoed, so the U.S. had achieved its objective, but the wrath of the State Department and the White House really came down on Zimbabwe for not voting for the resolution. Zimbabwe had abstained.

I should at this point make the Zimbabwe case. One also needs to understand Mugabe and how his mind worked. Not too many people had that opportunity, but I did after having spent so many years in Harare and working with Zimbabwean affairs. Mugabe's position, which was genuine, was that Zimbabwe held the seat on the Security Council as trustee for the OAU (Organization of African Unity) and therefore was there to represent the African point of view. He did not feel that Zimbabwe was at liberty to vote its own interest or its own views in the Security Council; since Africa had only two seats—a country sitting in one of the “African” seats had to represent the consensus of the African nations. On this

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kind of issue, which was an East- West issue as Mugabe and the Africans generally saw it, the consensus was to abstain; Africa would not vote for the Soviets or the United States. It was not Africa's fight and as long as the issue was portrayed as an East-West issue, the African countries would maintain neutrality. Therefore, Zimbabwe would and did abstain.

The U.S. position was that the downing of an airliner was not an East-West issue, but a humanitarian one and one that touched on decent international behavior with respect for human life. The Soviet Union had shot down a civilian airliner and had killed a lot of innocent people because it placed a higher priority on such things as violations of air space rather than lives of innocent people. Such an action should be condemned regardless of which country had committed the atrocity; it had nothing to do with communism or capitalism or any other East-West issue.

I understood and sympathized with Mugabe's position, but I said that in a case like this, when the issue is crucial for the United States, Zimbabwe should not just be representing its African neighbors, but primarily itself. It would be Zimbabwe that would be held to account, not Africa, for the vote. If it did not vote with us, it would be viewed in Washington with great unhappiness and rancor. That argument did not sway Mugabe. In fact, I was right. Assistance to Zimbabwe was cut by \$35 million a year as a result of that Security Council vote. Before I left Harare, I gently reminded the Zimbabweans that their position had cost them considerable sums and that it was predictable. I would not have predicted the amount of the cut, but that some negative action would be taken was easily foreseeable.

This U.S. action was somewhat ironic, because in the pre-independence period we had worked very hard to get a substantial aid level programmed for the new country. That was in the last budget of the Carter administration, which had included a grant of \$75 million in cash for Zimbabwe. That was the most valuable type of aid that Zimbabwe could have used at that point in time; it was extremely generous and the highest level of grant aid to any country in Africa, all coming out of the ESF (economic support fund) appropriation,

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which was not project related, but given primarily for budget support and to provide desperately needed foreign exchange for imports of goods and services. With a change in administrations in 1981, we worked equally hard with the Reagan people to maintain that level of assistance. When Stockman became Director of OMB, he immediately announced that the whole Carter budget would be subject to review; all proposals were up for grabs and a new budget would be resubmitted. We assumed that foreign aid would be a target of the review because it was one of the few “discretionary” budgetary items which could be eliminated without creating any immense pain in the United States.

The Reagan Administration, like many of its predecessors, was looking for ways to save money and we were quite concerned about the Zimbabwe program. We had a pledging conference of all donors to Zimbabwe scheduled to be held in Harare; we had gotten agreement that the new AID administrator, Peter McPherson, would go to the meeting. It was to be held just after his confirmation; it would be his first appearance abroad. When he came to the conference, he showed me the text of his remarks; it said that the U.S. would provide \$75 million for the upcoming fiscal year and in addition would pledge the same amount for the following two years (a three year pledge which would provide Zimbabwe \$75 million for each of the first three years of independence, or a total of \$225 million during the period which coincided with most of my tour of duty). I was in seventh heaven; I could barely contain myself. I could hardly believe it because Washington had in fact made an exception for Zimbabwe and was very sincere about it. Zimbabwe's later refusal to support the United States in that one vote in the Security Council dropped the aid level to \$40 million in the fourth year of the program. It was a very costly abstention. I think it was a shame; I tend to blame both sides. It is not a proper way to make a determination on aid levels, but that was and is the way it works in specific instances in the real world. Q: The U.S. action could also be viewed as a symbolic gesture, i.e., to warn other countries of the risks of opposing U.S. policy. Did you see it in the same way as you saw the arrest of the aid official in Brazzaville?

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KEELEY: I make a distinction between a U.N. vote and the mistreatment of a diplomat. I should note that the arrest of the U.S. official was really a “last straw;” otherwise I don't think we would have reacted so strongly. The Congolese had been harassing us and giving us a bad time repeatedly over an extended period of time. The arrest was just one more aggravation; it was just the “last straw.” The U.N. vote is more abstract; it is a question of the value a country places on U.N. votes. With Jeane Kirkpatrick at the U.N., that issue became much more important. I was overseas in two countries during this period and felt the new emphasis. The administration's attitude became such that it was going to watch countries' U.N. votes closely; we would not excuse them. We would hold them accountable for their votes on key issues; when we considered an issue as being vital, it would be a litmus test. A country would be either with us or not. If it was not with us, then there would be a cost—a penalty. And that became the policy. I did not regret the U.S. position only because I was serving in Zimbabwe, but because I had become convinced that the success of the Zimbabwe experiment was really of vital interest to the United States, because of its effect on South Africa and on the evolution of the Namibia problem and Angola and Mozambique and the whole southern African complex of issues that I had worked on in Washington. I thought it was extremely important that the Zimbabwe experiment be a success; we should support it because that was a vital interest and was probably more important than a vote in the U.N. on a resolution that would be vetoed anyway. Simply twisting Zimbabwe's arm to get a “yes” vote and then punishing them for not cooperating was not really an honorable course, particularly when the position they had taken had some merit. It was not a hostile act on Zimbabwe's part; it was not an anti-American gesture. It was trying to protect an OAU principle which was not to take sides in an East-West dispute.

Q: There is one more perception on which I would like to ask your view. Can you comment on any tensions that may have existed while you were a desk officer between the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR) and the Bureau of African Affairs (AF)?

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KEELEY: There were always tensions between the two Bureaus, not so much related to countries with which I was involved, but there were other countries in Africa which did generate differences between the two organizations. This was particularly true for the former Portuguese colonies. There was a certain tension over Zaire because of the former Belgian involvement. We would clear communications and policy papers with the Belgian desk on any matters that might have been related to the Belgian colonial days or the large Belgian population still residing in Zaire. In fact, the Belgians continued to have major economic interests in Zaire which were at times threatened. There were accusations about Belgian manipulations of the Katanga insurrection. So there were tensions between the two Bureaus on Zaire issues. I make no bones about saying that the people in EUR with whom we dealt—the Belgian desk and the Western European division—were obviously much more sympathetic to Belgian interests than we were; we were working with the Zairian government and with the U.N. against the secession. There was undoubtedly a difference in sympathies between the two bureaus. It was not debilitating; it was the natural consequence of the responsibilities of each organization. I don't have any sharp recollections of any tensions and it may be that it was much more prominent than when I was actually involved. I clearly recall that the major European powers—the British, the French, the Belgians, etc.—still retained major interests in their former colonies. The messages coming in from our European Embassies would obviously be quite different from what we were getting from our posts in AF. As I mentioned earlier, in many of these former colonies we were in a highly competitive situation with other governments, particularly the French in their former territories. They were very jealous of any American involvement and I am sure when policies were being developed in Washington and when messages were sent out, the EUR people made sure that the concerns of their clients—the former colonial powers—were taken into account.

The differences in views became critical over the former Portuguese territories, where a real disharmony existed between AF and EUR. The people in AF were far more sympathetic to or concerned about the liberation movements and the rebellions in these

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colonies than were the people that dealt with Portuguese matters. Of course, the latter had to worry about Portugal in a total European context, including NATO, in a period prior to the revolution in Portugal. In that period, Portugal was giving every indication of being adamant about retaining those territories and not giving them independence. Lisbon viewed these territories as an integral part of Portugal, just as France had previously viewed Algeria as two or three provinces of the mother country. The preponderance of influence on our Angolan and Mozambique policies at that time—this was in the pre-1975 period before the revolution in Portugal and the independence of the colonies—was the European one. I was never a desk officer for these colonies, but their affairs were handled in the same office, so I know that we had great difficulties calling the attention of the leadership of the Department to developing problems in those territories. That difficulty existed even in the Kennedy era.

AF could foresee that a major problem was brewing and a major issue would be before us sooner or later. There were rebellions and liberation movements. We knew that there would be civil wars and that Angola, Mozambique and others would be hot spots in the future. The tendency in the Department was to side with the European point of view that everything was under control and that there was nothing to worry about. The exception may have been Rhodesia, which was already considered a problem from the mid-60s on. We closed our Consulate General in Salisbury. Of course, at that point in time, the British were on the other side. The whole weight of British diplomacy, and political efforts, were working against the existing (Ian Smith) regime, as were we. In the Portuguese case, we were in agreement with Lisbon that all was well in the colonies and that no change was necessary. That was true until the situation got out of hand. I think there was serious neglect by the U.S. administration of the problems developing in the Portuguese colonies. Matt Loomer was the officer who dealt with the Portuguese territories. He had worked in EUR before and therefore knew all of the people there. He had great difficulties convincing anyone to pay any attention to these brewing problems in Africa because the minute someone paid attention to them, it might require a change in policy. It might even require a

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high level official to fly to Lisbon to talk, to question the Portuguese about their activities in their colonies. We would have had to recognize that there were some serious anti-colonial movements that were causing problems and would have had to ask the Portuguese how they intended to satisfy the demands of the people in these territories.

Q: We are now in mid-65 and you were assigned to academic training. How was that assignment made?

KEELEY: It was very simple. I had heard that there was an organization called the National Institute of Public Affairs which was privately funded. It was run by a Mr. Stover and it was chaired by a Mr. Stauffacher. It gave several dozen awards every year to civil servants from Federal, State and local levels to study at four or five Universities. The awardees were mid-career officials. The awards were intended to give the civil servants an opportunity to return to academia to improve their skills. The awards were made through a competitive process which required, in addition to applications, oral interviews, and some support from superiors and colleagues. The candidates came from all parts of the government, not just foreign affairs. The universities were in different parts of the country and I chose Stanford—you had pretty much a free hand unless one university just became oversubscribed. I chose Stanford partly because of its reputation and partly because it was on the West Coast and away from the East Coast. It also gave the family the opportunity for a round trip by car across the country. My children could see some of their nation which they had not seen. It was in some respects a repeat of what my father had done in 1943 in similar circumstances: we made a long round-trip to the West Coast and back which gave my brothers and me an opportunity to see something of our country which had not previously been possible since we had essentially been educated abroad. It didn't work as well in my case because my children were younger than we were in 1943 and perhaps therefore we benefited somewhat more. But in any case, they were worthwhile trips. We covered twenty-five or so states; we took the slow way out and the slow way back.

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The Stanford program was a non-degree program, somewhat, but not totally, structured. It had a central seminar in which all of the NIPA scholars participated—there were about a dozen of us. One was from the prisons service of California, who took us on a very interesting visit to San Quentin Prison. There was a man from the National Parks Service, one from CIA, one from Defense, one who worked for the Mayor of Chicago, and so on. It was an interesting group, more or less of the same age, but with very varied backgrounds and experiences. I was the only foreign policy specialist; the CIA man was a technical computer expert. We contributed to the seminar by giving talks on our own experiences. I discussed public opinion polling, which I had learned about when I was a graduate student and worked for a polling organization. It was a subject with which the others were not very familiar.

My main interest was studying economics because I felt quite inadequate in that area, and I had realized that in the Foreign Service some knowledge of economics was absolutely essential to an understanding of political situations. A good political officer had to have a grounding in economics if one was to understand the forces that effected societal changes, and secondly, an officer was at an disadvantage with his or her colleagues who were far more expert in the field because you had to talk in their lingo. I thought I knew a lot about economics and I had my own ideas—although some may have been somewhat peculiar—but if you don't know the principles and the jargon, you are at a disadvantage in any discussions. So I wanted to learn the terms. I therefore viewed myself that year at Stanford as an economics major starting from scratch. I had some fine professors—Kenneth Arrow, who taught me Economics 101, which he hadn't taught for fifteen years. He later won the Nobel Prize in Economics. Interestingly enough, although we all had bought Samuelson's basic textbook, Arrow started his first class by saying that he would do something different; he would teach Economics 101 without Samuelson. He asked us to turn our books in and get another set. So we got another set, the first of which was on Price Theory. We went through all the books. I did some work on comparative economic systems, learning something about Russian communism and British socialism

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and American capitalism. I did work on economic development; I studied a variety of subjects, including something about computers—and this was pretty early in computer development. I took a course in the engineering school on pollution and the environment, out of sheer curiosity.

One of my professors from Princeton, Gordon Craig, had moved to Stanford; so I took his course in modern German history. In essence I took a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but basically I was into economics. I think I achieved an improvement in my understanding of economics. It was Jacques Reinstein, who was then at FSI, who was my mentor and supervisor from the State Department end. I had to report to him periodically on my progress and send him transcripts of my grades. I had some problems with Jacques because he thought that I was studying only economics; he thought he had found a Foreign Service officer who wanted to become a professional economist. He had a hard time therefore understanding why I was taking all of these odd-ball courses. I finally wrote him a long letter explaining that I was taking economics out of interest, but that I was not aspiring to become an economic officer. He then lauded my efforts to try to learn some things which might not be directly related to my work. Q: That brings us to mid-66. You were then assigned to Athens. I think you mentioned earlier that Athens was on your list of “desired posts.” So undoubtedly by mistake they assigned you to a post which was on your list of preferences.

KEELEY: It wasn't by mistake. It was the result, as often is the case, of good luck. The officer in Personnel responsible for my onward assignment was Robert Houghton, the late husband of my current executive assistant at the Middle East Institute, Lois Houghton. Bob Houghton had worked for my father in Damascus. My father had had a very fine staff there, made up mostly of younger officers; his DCM was Rodger Davies (later assassinated in Cyprus); others were Harry Symmes, Deane Hinton, Jim Leonard, Bob Houghton, etc. All went on to have distinguished careers, mostly in the Arab world. His CIA station chief was Miles Copeland.

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So I knew Bob, though not well; at the time of my assignment availability, he was looking for a candidate for a political officer position in Athens. The incumbent was an officer who had been there for five years, following two years in Salonika—seven years in a row in Greece. Orme Wilson, who had served in Athens, was the Greek desk officer. Both he and Bob thought it would be a good idea to inject a little new blood into the Embassy. There had built up a “clique” of Greek-language officers who had studied the language, mostly at FSI, who all seemed to think alike, who all knew each other. A “revolving door” had in effect been established with the same people moving in and out of the Athens Embassy. I did not fit that mold, but when the files were searched for a Greek-speaking officer, my name came up. In those days, you had to fill out a form periodically in which you mentioned any languages that you had ever spoken and stated to what degree of fluency. I had not studied Greek, nor had I been in Greece for twenty years, since 1946, although I guess I had visited briefly on a couple of occasions. In any case, Bob called me and asked me how my Greek was. I said that it was somewhat rusty, but that it used to be very good when I was younger. He asked whether I would have any trouble brushing up on it on my own. I said that I didn't think so. I then inquired whether there was an opening in Greece, since I had wanted to be assigned there for years. Houghton said: “Oh, you've asked for Greece?” I asked whether he had looked at my April Fool card. He said he hadn't and that his interest had only been stimulated by my Greek language knowledge. He then asked whether I would be interested in Athens. I said I could be on my way the following day or as soon as the orders had been cut. Of course I still had several months to go at Stanford, which gave me time to hire a Greek tutor and improve my spoken Greek. And so that is how I got to Athens, as a member of the Political Section of the Embassy in Athens.

That section had five officers. The Ambassador was Phillips Talbot, formerly Assistant Secretary for the Near East and South Asia. His DCM was Norbert Anschutz; the Political Counselor was Katherine (Kay) Bracken, formerly Director of the Greece, Turkey, Iran Affairs Office (GTI); the next ranking officer in the Political Section was Malcolm

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Thompson, a Turkish specialist who was doing an out-of-country tour in Greece (he did the politico-military work); and he was replaced by George Warren in 1967; we had a labor officer by the name of August (Gus) Velletri, who was an expert in Italian affairs; and then there were two other Greek-speaking political officers, one—John Owens—working on domestic Greek affairs, whom I replaced, and John Day, who was working on Greek external affairs, i.e., Cyprus, Greek-Turkish relations, NATO, Balkans—everything but domestic political affairs.

As I said, I was to replace Owens, but when I arrived at the Embassy, I found a rather unfortunate situation: Day had been switched to the internal affairs desk and I was assigned to the external affairs one. I didn't think that this was particularly to my benefit since it meant becoming almost exclusively involved in the Cyprus problem. I was a bit disappointed because my interest was far greater in the Greek political scene. On the other hand, I thought that since I knew very little about Greek domestic politics or Cyprus, it was probably wise to spend a year learning. After that year of apprenticeship I would be better able to fill either position and I certainly hoped to get a crack at the more important one, namely the internal affairs one. However, Day extended his tour, which was the custom of Greek language officers in those days and which was one of the reasons that Owens had been left in Greece for seven years. So John Day stayed two years longer; since I had a four year tour, I spent the first two on external matters and the last two on internal affairs. Actually I ended up as the acting Political Counselor because there was an extended vacancy. Bracken was replaced by Arch Blood, who stayed only briefly because he was assigned to Dacca, East Pakistan, as Consul General. So in the last six months of my tour, under Ambassador Tasca, I was the acting Political Counselor, and sort of his right hand man, because by that time I was the only officer in the Embassy whom he had known from previous assignments, from when he had worked in the Bureau of African Affairs.

As I have said, during the first two years in Athens, I was not responsible for internal affairs. I injected myself into them because I didn't like the policies we were following at the

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time, during and after the coup of 1967. I argued that, while we were not responsible for the coup, it could have been averted and should have been averted. When it did occur, we should not have accepted it; that is, we should have tried to overturn it or reverse it. I felt that we could have done that successfully, although that was never tested. Had we done so, the situation would have been quite different and would have changed our relations with Greece from that day forward. We had a difficult policy issue to face—the 1967 coup, its beginnings and its aftermath—in which different elements of the Embassy took differing positions. There developed at least three camps, maybe more; in the end, it was probably more like one and a half when you sorted out all the differing aspects. There were those who, although not welcoming the coup, found it a more favorable development than any other alternative that they could conceive. There were those who were disappointed that it had taken place; didn't welcome it, but thought that the best course was to accept the coup and make the best of it. That group wanted to recognize the government and work with it and hoped to change its means and manner of governing to a more constitutional and democratic process which would protect human rights. And then there were a few of us—two and a half people, really (Mac Thompson, myself, and one other partly)—who thought we should reject the coup and refuse to accept it and try to reverse it.

I said that I thought that the coup could have been averted. Briefly—and it is a very complex story leading up to the coup—there was first a Generals' coup developing (in contrast to the Colonels' coup that did take place). We were quite aware of the Generals' plot down to its last detail—its code names, its means of operation, who was in charge, its purposes, etc. The Generals were intent on preventing an upcoming election, which was to be held on May 28, or if unable to achieve that end, to overturn the results. The election had become in effect a plebiscite on the monarchy, namely a fight between King Constantine and George Papandreou, the head of the Center Union party. Papandreou had been driven from office in the summer of 1965 in a dispute over his son Andreas and over who could appoint the Defense Minister. There had also been defections from his party; it is a well known, but complex story. His departure from office

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didn't resolve the political conflict. Papandreou was replaced by what was known as an “apostate” government made up of defectors from his Center Union party which lasted until the beginning of 1967. There were about 45 “apostate” Ministers supported by the Conservative ERE party in Parliament; it was a government of ex-centrists existing on the support of conservatives.

The political situation was obviously very unstable and complex. It could only be resolved by elections. Such an election, if won by Papandreou, would have challenged not only the power, but even the existence of the monarchy, because the 1965 crisis and aftermath had placed the King and Papandreou in direct conflict with each other. The Generals were very pro-monarchy, as the military had always been in the post World War II years, although in earlier years a split had developed between the Royalists and the Venizelists in the military.

In any case, the Embassy was fully aware of the Generals' purposes and activities. The King had asked Ambassador Talbot how the United States would react to a coup. The Greeks tend to use euphemisms in their politics; in this case, the possible action was described as an “extra-parliamentary” or an “extra-constitutional” solution—a coup by other names. The government would consist of the Generals with the King's blessing. Talbot responded, even though he had no instructions (he didn't receive any real guidance even after the conversation with the King), that “it would depend on the circumstances.”

That is what set me off. When I read the cable, I began to consider what “circumstances” might justify a coup. My analysis was that such an event would only be a temporary solution; a coup couldn't last and would probably make matters worse, because eventually the Greek population would insist on democracy in one way or another and the end result would be even more damaging to the monarchy, the military, and the Greek relationship to the U.S. and NATO. So we had an opportunity to tell the King that a coup would not be an acceptable outcome. I think the Generals would not have proceeded if we had said “No.” They were after all operating on behalf of the King and in his name; he may not have

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known all the details, but he knew all about the Generals' strategy and objectives. I can't guarantee that the King would not have proceeded against our wishes, but since he asked for our views, as did the Generals in a less direct fashion, one can make an argument that he would not have proceeded.

After all, we played such a prominent role in Greece that our advice did not need to be sought so directly; we were in constant contact with the King, the government, the military, etc., so that our views could have been conveyed in many different ways. They would have listened; whether they would have accepted our advice, I cannot of course say. I should add that I am not saying that Talbot could have given a negative answer on his own; that would have required Washington instructions. But what upset me was that the answer given was so vague that I don't think the King understood it or that it was at all helpful to him. It just left him in a quandary. Partly as a consequence of this murkiness that we created, the Generals' coup never took place. It was preempted by a group of Colonels acting secretly. They stopped communicating with anybody—our intelligence service and anyone else. They went underground as of January, 1967. But they also went into action that resulted in their coup of April 21, 1967.

In retrospect, when you look back on the sequence of events, as I did, it is very interesting. Everything was cut off. My guess, which I couldn't prove without access to intelligence archives, is that the Colonels went into an “operational” mode and cut all contacts. They stopped talking to people, particularly those who might thwart them. They were after all not only plotting a coup; they were also preempting a coup that had royal approval, that was being conceived by their own superior officers, and that was apparently not opposed by the Americans. The Colonels were running tremendous risks; if they had been caught, they would have been in serious trouble. They probably would have been tried for treason, as they of course eventually were.

I didn't see the Colonels' coup coming. I saw the Generals' coup developing. My feeling was that this effort would not solve the political problem in Greece; in fact, it would

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exacerbate it. I thought that we owed it to the King, for whom I did not have any particular attachment, to give him appropriate advice as clearly and as straight-forwardly as possible. We, in fact, “copped out.” To say “it depends on the circumstances” was not very helpful to anyone. The circumstances in Greece at the time were dire. The forthcoming election had developed into a referendum on the monarchy and the whole constitutional system. We were caught in the middle because we had become, from the point of view of the center, the allies of the conservative party. The Center Union had begun to boycott us. Its members wouldn't attend our receptions; they would not deal with us. It was even very difficult to find any who would talk to us. I knew some personally, through family and other connections, but even I had difficulty and I was not the officer in the Embassy responsible for internal political issues. During this period, Ambassador Talbot had exactly two meetings with George Papandreou, who was the head of one of the two democratic parties in Greece. He was the probable winner of the upcoming elections; he would be the future Prime Minister, and we saw him just twice in a period of five or six months. That is a clear indication that something was amiss in our relationships with the Greek political spectrum. The American Embassy was being identified with the likely electoral losers and with those who were plotting with the King and the military leadership to prevent the election.

I think that Talbot may have tried to see Papandreou more often, but he and we were not welcomed by the center group because Papandreou really blamed us for what had happened in 1965. He thought that his demise at that time was a CIA operation and that we had bought off the parliamentary deputies who voted him out of office. When a government is created out of defectors—“apostates” from one party who gain power with the support of another party—tensions are severely increased and relationships tend to become nasty. It was much nastier than even if a rigged election were held. The shifts of allegiances are matters that impinge on personal relationships and create all sorts of accusations of bad faith. Greece has a very personalized political system in any case. The members of a party are viewed as “my members;” the deputies are chosen personally by

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the head of the party; they are elected together, so that defections are felt as personal betrayals far beyond just political or ideological shifts. They are “traitors and turncoats.” The emotional level was extremely heated during this period in Greece.

I really had no portfolio to become involved in these issues. I was responsible for external matters such as Cyprus, which I was covering, although in general external problems were pretty much under control. When I read about the Ambassador's exchange with the King, I thought I should do something about that. I consulted a close friend, Bruce Lansdale, with whom I had grown up in Salonika, who had lived most of his life in Greece and understood the Greek mentality. He was the Director of the American Farm School in Salonika at this time. He happened to be in Athens for a day; he didn't have much time for a discussion because he had a lot of appointments with government officials. But he did come to the Embassy and I offered to drive him to the airport so that I could talk to him. I would also have a few minutes while he waited for his flight. I told him point blank that I thought there would be a military coup and that it would happen sooner than anyone was expecting. He said that he had the same feeling. Then we pursued the idea and I found that his views and mine were so close that I was amazed. He was not working in the Embassy. He was sitting in Northern Greece with students and peasants and farmers, but, as I said, he had a great understanding of the Greek mentality.

So after this discussion, I went back to my office and wrote a long memorandum to my boss. It was about twelve double-spaced typed pages which was entitled something like “Our current dilemma” or “The present political situation.” I started out by saying that I thought there would be a coup sooner than anticipated. Then I discussed a) the probability of a coup by some Generals, which I thought was not only possible but probable; b) the timing—and here I thought I was making a contribution, because although there was noticeable tension in the air, people were also relaxed because no one thought that something unexpected would occur prior to the scheduled election. But the logic of the situation, i.e., the reason for the coup, was to avoid the election. It didn't make any sense to assume that the coup might happen after the election, although that was the

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existing conventional wisdom. I didn't think that the Generals would permit the election of Papandreou and then have to step in to remove him. That scenario didn't make much sense to me; if the Generals didn't want a particular electoral outcome, they would prevent the election from taking place. Therefore, I predicted that the coup would take place well before May 28. I suggested that we would wake up one morning three weeks hence, say, and find a military government in power. And c) I discussed the possible consequences of a coup.

If Ambassador Talbot had read my memorandum immediately—it didn't get to him for several days—he would have been very annoyed because I criticized the view that the U.S. attitude toward a coup would “depend on the circumstances.” We knew what the circumstances were; we knew who was involved and why. That brought me to the question of the consequences, and I thought it would make matters worse rather than better. I finished this memorandum at around 8 p.m. on April 20. I then locked it in my safe and went home to pick up my wife to go to a shipowner's apartment in KolonakSquare for a cocktail party. At the function there was the usual talk about Andreas Papandreou and how awful he was. He had just given a speech in which it was reported he had said that Greece didn't need a King to swear in a government and that if his party won the election, they would swear themselves in; he was accused of challenging the entire constitutional system; he had in effect made the King the enemy in his electoral campaign and had the Center Union running against the King and not the conservative party. He had described all of the opposition as “one kettle of fish” and used his usual diatribes, according to the talk at the cocktail party.

My wife and I then went out to eat in a restaurant called “Vladimiros,” run by a Greek named Elias, who was probably an intelligence operative, or some service's agent. He pretended to be an ex-communist guerrilla who had fought in the mountains in the Civil War. He was a funny guy, but he was very well connected with the left wing party—what we used to call the crypto-communist party—the EDA, which stands for the United Democratic Left. I wanted to find out from this restaurant owner, who was probably my

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best source from that part of the Greek political spectrum, what the Left intended to do. It was critical to know whether the Left would support Andreas Papandreou and his slate of deputies in order to try to defeat the Right and the King, or whether the Left would support its own candidates. This was known as the “subsidy” factor for the upcoming elections. I did not get a very good answer that night; Elias claimed that the Left would support its own candidates. We went home about 1 a.m., went to bed, and the Colonels' coup happened that night. When I woke up in the morning, the tanks were in the streets. My son told me that I didn't have to go to work because the buses were not running and schools were closed. That was a clear indication that something terrible had occurred.

Colonel George Papadopoulos and his gang took advantage of the situation and all of the turmoil and the planning for the Generals' coup by simply preempting it. These Colonels had been plotting for years and years in the Army. They were fascists; they fitted the classic definition of fascism, as represented by Mussolini in the 1920s: a corporate state, uniting industry and unions, no parliament, trains running on time, heavy discipline and censorship, extreme nationalism, xenophobia, religion, regimentation; everyone was organized in some kind of group—youth, professional association, syndicates. There was no particular anti-Semitic component, because Jews were not a factor in Greece. In other words, it was not what we associate with Nazism; the national socialism part was adopted essentially from Mussolini's original program, not from Hitler—it was almost a classic fascist ideal.

Several weeks later, to the annoyance of some people, I sent around a memo with a short encyclopedia definition of fascism, pointing out that it was practically verbatim the program of the new government. I am talking about real original “fascism,” not the kind that developed historically in Italy or Spain or Germany, for example. The Colonels were students of General Metaxas, who had led a pro-German dictatorship from 1936 to 1940. It disappeared with the Italian invasion and he died shortly thereafter. That is the model that

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the Colonels, who were young men in the late 1930s, just in or recently graduated from the military academy, were trying to emulate. They were true believers.

I thought that the coup could be over-turned. The King was very unhappy with it; it was not led by his Generals; he didn't know any of the Colonels. They had monitored his movements; they had beaten up his military aide, Major Arnaoutis, which was humiliating to him, and they had in effect presented him with a fait accompli and had told him that "This is it. Take it or leave." The King didn't have much choice. We couldn't help him; it was the majority view that there wasn't much we could do. I thought that we could have worked with the King and with the Generals and reversed the situation. We didn't try; my advice wasn't accepted and was not even welcomed; it was probably considered much too radical and dangerous. I did give my April 20 memorandum to Kay Bracken the morning of the coup, but she probably didn't look at it for several days. I told her, when I gave it to her, that my thoughts had been overtaken by events, but that I thought the analysis still had relevance to the then current situation. It was obviously not the Generals' coup, but an entirely different one, but it was a coup nevertheless, which the United States had to confront. The King was asking for advice and help; he didn't know what to do. Mrs. Bracken returned my April 20 memo to me with a notation at the top that he had "noted" it. That was quite a put-down, as it meant that she thought it was entirely irrelevant.

The coup took place on a Friday. On the following Wednesday, John Day had been sent to Washington to try to find out what U.S. policy was or was going to be. We were not getting any inkling whatsoever; we had a lot of questions and no answers. It was one of those very difficult situations with no useful communications coming out of Washington, which seemed paralyzed by unexpected events. We in the field felt at the end of a very long cable line—kind of helpless. The Embassy was feeding Washington all the information it could; we were working over-time trying to figure out who the Colonels were; no one knew them. We had no bio-data on them; they didn't speak English; they were not part of

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our military circles. Only one had been trained in the United States—Brigadier General Pattakos—he even spoke some English. The other coup leaders had not been in the U.S.

I argued, as I mentioned, that we could reverse the coup. There is no evidence whether I was correct; we never tried, but I did have some evidence that some counter-action on our part might have succeeded. It was my view that we could turn events around because the Colonels were so shaky, but we would have had to work with the King. There would probably not have been much opposition and the reversal might have been bloodless. But who knows? There were no guarantees. I'll explain what I based my argument on.

I went with Ambassador Talbot to see the new Prime Minister. I was the note-taker because John Day, who would normally have filled that role, was in Washington. The Colonels had installed a civilian, a Supreme Court judge named Kollias, as the front man. All the decisions were being made by Papadopoulos and his military colleagues, but they wanted a civilian facade; the King might have more or less insisted on it. He had agreed, two or three days after the coup, to swear them in as a new cabinet. The principal Colonels held the key positions and while the King didn't exactly bless the new government, he did have his picture taken with them. That was published in the newspapers and therefore at that point almost everyone had given up and had decided that they would have to live with this new regime.

Talbot's meeting with Kollias was the first official American contact with the new government. Talbot was concerned with the usual issues: safety of U.S. citizens and security of our military facilities, which were important to us. He was not of course really overly concerned with these issues because as far as we could tell, the Colonels were not anti-American. They appeared to be pro-NATO and pro-American, violently anti-communist. They were not really a concern in terms of our East-West confrontation; to the contrary, the problem was really whether they could manage the situation. I went to the Ambassador's meeting with Kollias as the note-taker because I knew Greek, although there was an official interpreter present as well as our own, who was not used at all. The

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Prime Minister started out by saying: "Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much for calling on me. I wonder whether you could do something for me? There is a rumor circulating in town that the Sixth Fleet is on its way to Phaleron Bay [this is where it used to anchor near Piraeus] and when it arrives, it will demand the resignation of my government. Have you heard that rumor?" Talbot, an experienced diplomat, thought quickly and said that he had not heard it and that it sounded rather preposterous to him. Kollias said that he was happy to hear that, and he then requested that the Embassy issue a statement refuting the rumor. Talbot very quickly and shrewdly responded: "No, Mr. Prime Minister. There are a lot of rumors floating around this city and especially at the moment. I have heard some, but surely not all. If I start denying one rumor, then the one that I haven't heard and therefore haven't denied will gain credence. Heaven only knows what that might lead to. So I think denying one rumor is a losing proposition."

The Prime Minister said he understood Talbot's position, but he said that crowds were gathering at Phaleron Bay with binoculars waiting to welcome the Fleet ashore and to show the Marines which way to advance. I could barely suppress laughter at this juncture; the P.M.s' hands were literally shaking. So then the Prime Minister asked whether he could put out a statement, to which Talbot responded: "It is not up to me to tell you what you may or may not say, but you should not quote me." So the government did put out some kind of statement without reference to Talbot or the American Embassy. Of course, as is always the case, when a rumor is denied, people tend to think it is true and you get the opposite effect from what was intended. So word went around Athens that the Sixth Fleet was on its way to replace the Colonels with the Generals because we wanted the Generals and not the Colonels.

This conversation with Kollias led me to write another memorandum, or rather a whole series of memos, which in essence became the basis for a memoir that I wrote later on covering this period. In the memo I said to the Ambassador that the Prime Minister's performance (which we described in detail to Washington in a cable and which should have shocked the Department because it suggested that Greece had a very unstable

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government), which was so lacking in confidence and so worried, indicated to me that the coup could be reversed with “a flick of the finger” (as I put it none too graciously) if we just told the government that it was not acceptable to us. My note so energized the Ambassador that he called me in to ask me where I got that idea from. His secretary, whom I knew well, and who like all good secretaries read all the papers that went to the Ambassador and therefore knew what was going on, told the Ambassador that there was a certain amount of dissent within the Embassy and that there were people who disagreed with current policy, which was essentially a “hands-off, let's see what happens” position. These staff members, she told the Ambassador, were in favor of a much more activist policy which would have called on the U.S. to do something. So the Ambassador called me in and asked for a further elaboration of my views; he asked for all of my recent memoranda, which he took home over the weekend; he read them and then sent them back to me without comment a week later, by which time the coup was a permanent fact.

Q: This was the first time you encountered a policy issue which divided the Embassy. What comments might you offer on the perception of the local people to a divided Embassy?

KEELEY: You are assuming that the Greeks were getting mixed signals from the Embassy. I don't think that was the case. That had something to do with Foreign Service discipline. Foreign Service people, if under good discipline, generally do not take policy differences outside the compound. The differences are confined to internal discussions. Although I had a lot of friends in the Greek political world, particularly in what became known as “the opposition” for the next three years, and undoubtedly some may have had a general feeling that I had some doubts about existing policy, they didn't have any great details and not right at the beginning. As far as I know, none of the U.S. government employees, including the military, discussed the intra-Embassy debate with Greeks. If you are looking for hints and signs, maybe one could have concluded something when the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Network began to broadcast “rock and roll” music exclusively—no news, no talk shows. That was viewed as a precaution; under the circumstances, all officialdom

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tends to go into a shell and to stay out of things. If a bulletin is read over the radio, people are afraid that it will be misinterpreted that the U.S. was up to this or that. I don't think that even the Embassy's local employees were conscious of the internal debates; there is a tendency to keep one consistent public face while vigorous debate may be going on inside the Embassy walls.

In any case, the dissent was limited to very few people who were trying to influence their superiors; we were not trying to influence the Greeks, or any element thereof, to behave in a different way. Eventually, undoubtedly some of the debate seeped out and it became known that different Embassy officers had different attitudes. It depends in part on whom you see and whom you talk to and the kinds of discussion you have. You would be careful not to criticize your superiors or the policy, but you can't help expressing an attitude or point of view; that is just part of normal behavior. My wife and I tried to help a number of families whom we knew who had relatives and friends in prison. They were political prisoners and our actions certainly showed some sympathy for their point of view; the Embassy's and the U.S. government's attitude was entirely "hands off"—it was an internal matter. We didn't in those days—the mid '60s—have a major investment in a human rights policy as we have now and have had more recently.

In any case, our government's policy was clear; whatever differences there were, were on an individual basis. Some of this dissent has come out over the years because after all I have been dealing with Greece for many years and by now there are a good many people who know.

Q: Did you reach any conclusions about our intelligence capabilities in light of the surprises that arose in Greece during your tour?

KEELEY: That is an interesting question. I tried to analyze that problem in the memoir I wrote just as a point of interest. First of all, successful coups are often the ones that are not predicted. The unsuccessful ones obviously are the ones that become exposed and

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are therefore thwarted. So stealth is certainly a key ingredient in a successful coup and that is what happened in Greece. CIA has been blamed for engineering that 1967 coup or for fomenting it or for supporting it or for organizing it. I don't believe that for a minute. I have tried to examine it from a logical point of view. I know that the "station chief" and his deputy were not knowledgeable; they had run into the same military road-block as I had the morning of the coup as we were all trying to get to the Embassy. They were completely unaware of the coup and when we met at the Embassy, they had nothing to tell us; as I said, neither CIA nor we—nor our military attaches!—knew who these Colonels were. I have to believe that Washington headquarters was also in the dark. There is a possibility that one or more lower level people, particularly some Greek-Americans who worked in the intelligence services, both military and civilian, knew about it in advance, because they were very sympathetic to the Colonels and their approach. These staffers were very conservative, very anti-communist, fearful of the Papandreous regaining power; one might say even anti-democratic in some respects. It is possible that they knew about the Colonels' plot and failed to report it either because they were cut off from their sources or because they colluded with the Colonels by not passing on information which would have enabled us to predict the coup.

On the other hand, careers in intelligence services are often made by being the sole source of very important information and developments. You can become a hero by being the person who predicted an event when no one else had. In the Greek case, someone could have made a real career-enhancing move by predicting the Colonels' coup when everyone else was watching the Generals. That would have been particularly true if the agent or case officer could also have added that he knew the plotters and all their plans. So an intelligence agent would be motivated to tell all in the kind of situation we had in Athens. The question then becomes whether some of the agents were more strongly motivated by their own political leanings or by their career ambitions. I don't have the answer and I don't think it could be answered one way or another without access to their

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reporting, that is, to CIA's archives. Even then one couldn't tell if someone had deliberately not reported what he knew.

I believe that I do know that the reporting stopped in January of that year; there had been reports on these Colonels for many years, but they stopped in January, 1967. The State Department's intelligence analyst for Greece—Charilaos Lagoudakis—noticed that fact; he was very skillful and was the Department's institutional memory on Greek affairs. He was the kind of person the Department should have for each country in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research; he or she would be the one whose experience would go back so many years that everything would be known and remembered. When you have turn-over in those analysts' positions, it is an absolute waste and it creates an absolute bureaucratic nightmare. He or she would be the single person who would notice such events as the stoppage of reports because they had been coming in for years and all of a sudden, in January, there is nothing. That stoppage would be accentuated by the knowledge that rumors of and even reports on a Generals' coup were rife. The analyst would then have to ask why he was not seeing reports any longer on the Colonels. What are they up to? Are they part of the Generals' coup?

In early 1967, the INR analyst (Lagoudakis) did make some inquiries; he didn't get any answers and the coup took place. Then he had some big questions; they also were never answered. Did reporting exist which wasn't disseminated? My guess is that there was no reporting on the Colonels after January, but I don't know why. I don't know whether anyone has ever investigated that set of circumstances. I would have thought that someone might have wished to pursue this apparent coincidence. The reports on the Colonels had been intermittent; it could well have been that four months could have passed without contact, but because of the timing, my guess is that Papadopoulos and his group, which was about twelve to fifteen people—small enough to keep good security—went into an operational mode and cut off communications with all outsiders. Then they put the final touches on their plans and waited for the “go” signal from Papadopoulos. In the meantime, the Colonels were instructed to go about their business as usual. Most, if not all, of the

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Colonels were part of the Greek intelligence service, all of which was part of the military—their CIA, for example, was a military organization. They were not troop commanders, which was one of the reasons that we didn't know much about them. They had been principally in staff positions in personnel and intelligence; that was deliberate. They got themselves assigned to those areas because they provided the best base for plotting.

They did a very clever thing. General Spandidakis, who was the Chief of the General Staff—the senior military officer under the Commander in Chief, the King—called a meeting in Athens on Wednesday—two days before the coup. This I found out by doing some research on the events of that week because it interested me. He had all of his senior commanders present; most came from the North because that was where most of the Army was located—according to NATO plans that called for massing on the Albanian and Yugoslav and Bulgarian borders (and to some extent, the Turkish border). This meeting was a regular session that occurred every couple of months. There was an important promotion list coming up, so they had a number of issues to discuss. My guess is that Spandidakis also told his commanders that everything was in place for the Generals' coup, but that the time to pull it off had not yet been reached.

On Thursday, the Generals returned to their units. The following day, Friday, they receive orders to execute their coup. The field commanders obviously concluded that the Chief of the General Staff had changed his mind since Wednesday; something had happened—the King had given his approval or the Americans or someone had said “Go.” Also, George Papandreou was going to Salonika on Saturday to launch his electoral campaign. There would be a tremendous crowd; the atmosphere would be politically super-charged; there would be demonstrations and possibly riots. So some of the field commanders undoubtedly assumed that the leaders of the Generals' coup wanted to pre-empt the Salonika event; in any case there were a number of plausible explanations for the Friday order. So they executed it. They didn't know of course who had signed it in Athens; they didn't know it was a Colonel (Papadopoulos). So it was extremely cleverly done and I guess that is what the Colonels were planning to do all along. The Colonels may also

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have been even a little premature; they probably were waiting for the Chief of the General Staff to call for the coup and then they would pre-empt it. So they may have moved a little sooner than they may have originally planned, but they certainly did pre-empt the Generals, using the latter's plans. The Generals were caught flat-footed.

The worst episode from an intelligence failure point of view happened on December 13, 1967. The King tried to throw out the Colonels. That is known as the King's coup. All of this has been covered in other writings, so I will just be brief. Having failed in my efforts to motivate people to reverse the Colonels' coup, I returned to my regular duties, except that some ex-politicians kept contacting me, some directly and some through mutual friends. At one point, in mid-November, I was asked whether I was willing to meet with George Mavros, who had inherited the leadership of the Center Union party—George Papandreou having been jailed, as was his son (father under house arrest and son actually in prison). The government had threatened to try the son, but not the father. George Mavros was free and the nominal head of the party, although as a stand-in for George Papandreou. I said I would be glad to meet with him. I had always assumed that my responsibilities included reporting on what the ex-politicians were up to. They were no longer active—couldn't be. We should have been interested in what they were doing and thinking.

When I met with Mavros, a meeting arranged by mutual friends, he laid out a plan for the King's coup and actually gave me the date (December 13); it was an extraordinary meeting. He said the plan had been discussed with George Papandreou, and with Kanellopoulos, the head of the conservative party, who had both agreed and in fact had encouraged the King to proceed. The King said that he would appoint a kind of “service” government, which would be partly military and partly civilian. It would run the country for a year or eighteen months and try to calm the political waters. It would have been along the Turkish model, where the military usually steps in to restore democracy when the civilians get out of hand and become undemocratic and tyrannical and behave in anti-Ataturk ways. It is an entirely different approach from that of the Greek Colonels; the Turkish military are the protectors of the Constitution, the Ataturk revolution and democracy. When the

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situation is stabilized and the Constitution has been amended and fair elections have been held, the military retreat to their barracks. That is what the Greeks wanted to do with the King's coup; the King and the leading politicians had all agreed. A new Constitution was being drafted. The King would fly to Salonika with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; he would accept the resignation of the Colonels' government; declare amnesty and so on. The Generals—loyal to the King—were still in many commanding positions. It was all planned.

I went back to the Embassy and immediately wrote my report and sent it to the Ambassador through the hierarchy. They duly noted it and filed it; they paid absolutely no attention to it. It was truly amazing. But I must add that I had some doubts about the reliability of Mavros' comments because if this plan had been approved by all of the politicians and was a matter of common discussion and knowledge—after all, I had been informed—how was it that the Colonels, as professional intelligence officers who must have tapped everybody's phones, could not possibly know about these plans? It appeared to all of us as “pie in the sky.” I can't blame anyone else for not taking it more seriously than I did, although, as I said, I thought that the King needed some help, some sound advice.

On the night of December 12, our Ambassador saw the King at some public function. They couldn't really talk, but the King took him aside and asked the Ambassador to come to see him in the morning; the phrase was “early morning.” In response to the Ambassador's question as to the meaning of “early,” the King said: “How about 6:30?” When asked where, the King suggested his palace out at Tatoi, which was north of Athens. There was an airstrip there which was the original Athens airport. Talbot said that he would be there. He arrived the next morning at the palace at 6:30. He was met by the King, who announced that he was flying to Salonika with Mr. Kollias and a new Constitution. He said that he would accept the forced resignation of Colonel Papadopoulos and his entire government, proclaim the new Constitution and appoint a new cabinet—it was exactly the same scenario that had been reported to me by George Mavros the month before.

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Then the King gave Talbot a tape that he requested be played on the Voice of America, and then he handed over another tape that he hoped would be played on the BBC. These tapes carried an address from the King to his Greek subjects about what was transpiring.

The Ambassador wished the King good luck, got back into his car and drove back to the Embassy. The King's coup was launched. I found out about it when I arrived for work. We had a big staff meeting. All internal Greek communications were cut. The King landed somewhere in Larisa where the First Army was headquartered. He tried to broadcast from there, but the station was so weak that no one heard it. It was a total fiasco. Our biggest problem was trying to find out what was going on. We couldn't get through to our Consul General in Salonika, even over voice radio. There were rumors that the King was in Kavala. We sat around all day long, way into the evening. We had a military officer in the attache office who was close to the King—he played squash with him often. We thought of sending him out to try to find the King, but the majority opinion was that he was so well known, that he wouldn't ever get out of Athens. I volunteered to go. I had an old Volkswagen beetle without diplomatic license plates; it was very useful for meeting with people under the conditions of surveillance then existing. It also enabled me to park on sidewalks, which, although a violation, was customary in Athens.

So I went home to get some sleep; I was going to start early in the morning heading north. The next morning I stopped at the Embassy first, only to find out that the coup was all over. The King had flown off to Rome with his family—the Queen was pregnant, so that her obstetrician went along. The King's mother and twenty-eight trunks were also aboard. The Royal Family went into exile and the coup was a flop. I saw Ambassador Talbot later in the day and he asked whether I remembered the memo I had sent him a month earlier on the King's coup. He noted that the date of December 13 had been precisely correct; so it was obvious that the plotters—that is, the Colonels—knew exactly when all these events would transpire. I said: “Of course. Mavros was undoubtedly involved in the planning. If he knew the date, and told it to us, then many others must have known as well, and that is

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why the coup failed. Everybody must have known the date!" We agreed that the coup was bound to fail.

The next day or so, Ambassador Talbot had a very embarrassing moment. He was called down to see Colonel Papadopoulos. And there was no way he could avoid going. The Colonel wanted to know what the American Ambassador was doing at the Royal Palace at 6:30 in the morning. Talbot said that the King had asked to see him to tell him what he intended to do. You can imagine what the rest of the conversation was like. In fact, the Colonels had had the King taped—his phone had been tapped; they may well have bugged some of the rooms. The Colonels were willing to play their tapes, which they did, trying to paint the King as a terrible plotter, which seemed very silly to me since it was the "pot calling the kettle black."

Q: We had nothing to do with the King's escape?

KEELEY: No. The whole coup was a surprise to us. We had a lot of advance information on it, as I've explained, but the first we knew that he was actually going to do that was on the morning of December 13.

Q: But he must have known earlier that at least he should be prepared for that eventuality. Otherwise he would not have been so well prepared.

KEELEY: That is right, although I can't say that for sure. I think his intention, since he had control over military aircraft of various types with loyal pilots, was probably to be ready to send his family out because he might have been afraid that there could have been some bloodshed. There could have been some fighting; there were troops that were loyal to the Colonels. There could have been some conflict, so that he might well have been prepared to send his family to safety, particularly his wife, who as I said was pregnant and close to delivery time. No one could tell how the day's events would unfold. But the King was supremely confident. Many of the Generals who had been involved in their own coup planning were still in command positions; some had been retired, but not all by any

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means. Not all could be retired; there weren't enough senior officers to take their places. Papadopoulos was extremely clever; his people were clever. When the King launched his coup, his Generals' first mission was to arrest the Colonels' representatives in each military unit. The Colonels had placed at least one of their own men in each major unit as a watch dog to keep an eye on things. It was typical of that kind of military establishment. I am sure it is true today in Iraq, Libya, Syria—any place that has a military or quasi-military regime. They all have a system of human watch dogs. The King's Generals didn't impress us with their acumen. They immediately arrested the Colonels' men; these officers immediately professed loyalty to the King and the Army leadership and to all that the King was doing, whereupon they were all released. They returned to their barracks, collected a few officers and troops and proceeded to arrest the Generals. That was the end of the King's coup. All the Generals, except one perhaps, were immobilized within hours and were not functioning soon after the King's announcement.

These four years in Athens were the most difficult assignment for me personally in my career. I had a lot of troubles. I mentioned the memoir that I wrote about that period, that experience. It is a very sensitive document, although I read from it from time to time if I have to speak about Greek affairs. It deals in part with the personalities in the Embassy, not always in a kind or generous manner because we had serious policy disagreements. I don't like to personalize issues, but often people take things personally. I have outlined my views here and assume that some day my whole paper will be available for public perusal. I have only let about five or six people read it in total, mostly relatives of mine, because of the personal nature of some of my observations. When I lecture on Greek matters, I might just read certain portions, concentrating on the less sensitive parts. I don't consider it classified in the usual sense of the word although others might characterize it that way. I did not use official files, but used my own files. Much of the paper is based on internal memoranda, which were never sent to Washington, and by this time have probably been destroyed. I have referred in a very few places to official messages, but I was working from memory when I wrote about them. The paper has never been cleared with the State

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Department because I didn't use official material; I haven't tried to publish it nor do I have any intention to do so for the present. Eventually, I hope it will become public when some of its sensitivity has abated. I didn't write it to criticize or attack people; I tried to describe events as honestly as I could.

If the memoir were published today and translated into Greek, it would surprise many people who had no idea that there was a debate within the Embassy. They tend to view the U.S. government, embassies and other instrumentalities, as monolithic. That is their bias and they would be amazed. Some of them would think that my writings are fiction; that it was all made up to make an interesting story or that it is an attempt by the Americans to show that they are not monolithic and that they do have different views of the Greeks and Greece.

At the end of my tour in Athens in 1970, I had another sabbatical which I spent at Princeton. I was supposed to go to the Naval War College at Newport, R.I. I wasn't really attracted by that idea; had it been the National War College in Washington, followed by a Washington assignment, I would have been happier because my kids would not have had to change schools so often. Furthermore, I would have welcomed a Washington assignment. But as projected, we would have had to move from Athens to Newport for a year and then either to Washington or to another overseas assignment. We had already gone through so many moves—by the end we had moved in and out of our Washington house nine times in ten years. So I called a friend—George Lambrakis—in the Department, which is the way things are done, unfortunately. I had gone to Princeton with him. He used to give me poetry to be published in a literary magazine of which I was more or less the publisher at the time. George was responsible for training assignments. He said that he had arranged the Newport assignment. I told him that it involved just too many moves and asked whether he didn't have any other opportunities in the Washington area. He said that he didn't and didn't see any possibilities of any openings.

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In any case, I told him that I didn't want to spend my next nine months arguing about the Vietnam war with my military colleagues; I asked whether he didn't have an opening at a university because I still felt deprived in my education; there were more things I needed to learn about. He said that he had two slots at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School—we sent two mid-career officers there every year. They had not yet been chosen. He asked whether I would be interested in that. I jumped at the opportunity because I could return to Princeton to study all the things I hadn't studied as an undergraduate, but should have to be a proficient Foreign Service officer. George said he would propose my name. He did so and called me to say that the selection committee thought I was nuts since I already had had a year at a university, and I was refusing a military college assignment which was supposed to be prestigious. He said he had told the committee that I was forty years old and if I didn't by that time know what I was doing, I never would, and that I should be given the benefit of the doubt. Furthermore, he told them that I had some specific things I wanted to study; so they approved the assignment.

It was a very unusual situation. Not many officers have two opportunities for academic training, particularly so close together, as I did. The assignment to Stanford was won in a competition so that it was not really a State Department assignment, although it paid my salary. It had no other expenses for my year at Stanford—my travel, the transportation of my effects, was all paid by NIPA. So my year at Princeton was really the first fully State-supported academic assignment.

One of the courses that Foreign Service officers traditionally took at Princeton was Dick Ullman's course in "American Foreign Policy—Post World War II." It was a graduate seminar for students working for their MBAs. Ullman considered the Foreign Service officers a resource; that is, people who had some experience in diplomacy. He asked each FSO to teach one seminar session; he wanted one specific foreign policy issue thoroughly examined, principally from the point of view that Graham Allison and his Harvard colleagues were using. Allison had written a book in which he argued that foreign

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policy is what emerges from the interaction of bureaucratic competition among State, CIA, Defense, AID, USIA, the NSC and all the other agencies involved, and of course other institutions. In addition, policy also came out of the interplay between the Executive and Legislative Branches. He also acknowledged labor and business and other groups' pressures. What emerged from this interaction, competition, pulling and hauling was U.S. foreign policy.

Looking back on my service in Athens, I thought that this was a perfect case study of Allison's thesis. I have already described some of the intra-Embassy disputes. Our policy emerged from the bureaucratic battle among the Embassy's sections. I wrote my perception of that history as a paper for Ullman's seminar. I delivered it at one of the sessions. Ullman was impressed by it and suggested that it be expanded into a book-length study because he thought it was a very interesting examination of how foreign policy is made in the field. Allison had focused on Washington—at the large picture of the whole government. I had described the policy-making mechanism at the level of an Embassy. Of course, the Embassy's conclusions are then used to try to influence Washington, where another maelstrom is in play. Ullman thought that someone who had gone through such an experience personally and who had some documentary support—memoranda back and forth—should develop an analysis and have it published as a book.

When I went to Uganda, I had a little free time the first year and I used it to expand my Princeton paper to book length—it's about 350 pages double spaced, but there are a lot of appendices—memoranda and other papers which I didn't quote in their entirety in the text.

Q: Let me ask you a couple of more questions about your Athens experiences. Do you have any recollection about the feeling in the Embassy during your tour when the staff was divided on a policy issue, when it was lacking guidance from Washington, and when it was somewhat under siege from certain parts of the Greek political spectrum? How was the morale; how did the people in the Embassy feel under those circumstances?

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KEELEY: My sense in retrospect, and remembering that this was over twenty years ago, is that morale dropped. For some reason, morale has never been very good in Athens during all the years that I have known that post. I don't fully understand it; it may well be part of the general syndrome in the Foreign Service in which morale tends to be much better in smaller posts under extreme hardship conditions especially those that are going through turmoil and difficulties. People rally around each other; they also know that they have to get along with each other; they have to cooperate and work as a team, whereas in the more "lush gardens" of the world, morale tends to be lower because that sense of necessary solidarity or the "us" against "them" is absent, and people have greater opportunities to gripe and bicker with each other. Greece, in the pre-anti-American terrorism days, was considered a "garden spot." That was one of the reasons the post was so large, because it had so many regional installations—communications, security, immigration and naturalization, etc. These staffs were located in Athens because it had good living conditions, good schools, good climate, a friendly population—at least in theory.

But the 1967 events, as I recall it, had a much more significant impact on the relationships between the Americans and the Embassy's Greek employees. The latter were, by and large, very unhappy with what had happened to their country and its politics, and like many other Greeks blamed us—our policies, our lack of policies, our lack of intervention. I know that Ambassador Talbot sensed that, because he took a fairly unusual step. Some weeks after the coup, he called a general meeting of all our local employees—there were hundreds of them. He gave them an explanation of what had happened and our policy; in general, his theme was that events were not our fault, we had not caused them, and that we were working with them in the best way we could. In effect, he said: "Don't blame us for what has happened in Greece!" Although he was not very explicit, he certainly implied that we were not overjoyed with the situation; we were certainly not cheering, but trying to cope with it as best we could. He in effect expressed some regrets for the difficulties that every one was experiencing. He was trying to cope with the morale problem.

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Q: You had an opportunity both starting with your tour in Athens and later on to become acquainted with the Papandreous. What was your relationship with them, how you perceived them and their role in U.S.-Greek relationships?

KEELEY: I covered much of that in my memoir, which I hope will some day be published. Briefly, my wife and I did not know the Papandreous at all when we arrived in Athens in 1966. It was quite unlikely that we would have become acquainted in any serious way because of the mutual hostility between the Embassy and the Center Union party, particularly the Papandreous and especially the son. But through a mutual friend, Margie Shachter, whom we had met through other mutual friends—she was a close friend of Margaret Papandreou, the wife of Andreas Papandreou. Margaret was an American citizen and may still be—she may be a dual citizen. She and Andreas had four children who were born in the States—George, Nick, Sophia and Andreas, Jr. (called Andrikos). Mrs. Shachter one day explained to me that the Embassy had not been very kind to Mrs. Papandreou although she was an American citizen, and regardless of the politics she should have been treated better—according to Mrs. Shachter, who was also an American. Furthermore, the Papandreous had four American children. She gave me some of the details, most of which concerned Mrs. Papandreou's view that she was being harassed by the Greek government—this was after the Colonels' coup and the arrest of her husband, who was first kept in a hotel in Pikermi and later in the Averoff prison.

I don't know exactly what Margaret expected of the American Embassy, but she did complain that her phone had been cut off, which she thought was improper and wanted Embassy assistance to get service restored. She had been getting a lot of calls from friends in the United States who wanted to know how she and Andreas were. Most of the callers were economists and professors, although there were actually some U.S. government officials who called—these were members of the Johnson Administration who had been faculty colleagues of Andreas' at various institutions—people like Galbraith, Walter Heller, etc. They had taken up Andreas' case in Washington. Some of these people

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were sending mail, which was being intercepted; so they began to send messages to the Papandreou through the State Department and the diplomatic pouch, but that mail was not being delivered to Margaret since it was an improper use of the pouch, the Embassy thought. I am sure that there were explanations for all of Margaret's complaints, but I felt that her treatment both by the Greek government and by the American Embassy was not correct. I was concerned about the image of the Embassy and the State Department and the Foreign Service in general. I assumed that the criticism of Margaret's treatment would get back to people in the United States sooner or later if it had not already reached our shores. I thought that we should make what efforts we could on her behalf; we did. We got her phone service restored, but had not solved the mail problem yet when Mrs. Papandreou asked through Mrs. Shachter whether she could see me.

I went to see her and talked to her and listened to her grievances. I reported all of this to Kay Bracken, who was interested in how Andreas Papandreou was being treated, what his prospects were, and how he viewed the current situation. So I was partly collecting political information for the Embassy on a major issue. We had some questions at the time about Andreas: would he be tried and if so, would he be convicted and if so, would he be executed? There were a number of possible scenarios of interest to the Embassy. Some people were enthusiastic about such prospects; some were very concerned about the effect of any harsh treatment on American public opinion, on attitudes toward our government and the Greek government. To some degree, therefore, I was encouraged to maintain contacts with Margaret, at least at the beginning, but most of the relationship was developed by my wife, who would see Margaret from time to time and try to help her. That had an unfortunate consequence (which I cover at greater length in the memoir) because the Greek police were keeping Margaret under surveillance. They noticed my wife's visits; she went to see Mrs. Papandreou at her home in Psychiko, driving our Citroen car which had American Embassy license plates. The police reports were forwarded to the Embassy during the routine sharing of information between the Greek and American intelligence services. The next thing I knew I was called in to explain why my wife's car was parked

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outside the Papandreou's residence. I told whoever asked (it was probably Kay Bracken) that my wife visited Mrs. Papandreou from time to time to see how she was coming along. Undoubtedly, the police thought that since the car had U.S. Embassy diplomatic license plates, there was some deeper significance. At that point, the Embassy's attitude changed and I was told that my wife's visits were not a very good idea; her actions might reduce my usefulness because obviously we had become targets of Greek surveillance; it was most likely that the Greek intelligence services interpreted my wife's visits as some kind of U.S. machinations with the Papandreous, who were the government's enemy.

As I mentioned, this report changed the Embassy's attitude towards what my wife and I were doing. I thought it was legitimate for my wife to befriend Margaret Papandreou, but the car belonged to both of us—the license plates were issued to me, so that the police may well have reported that I was the one who was doing the visiting, although I am not sure that it made much difference. Andreas was in solitary confinement at the time; he was a man with a very active mind and an intellectual. He was deprived of any serious books to read as well as anyone to talk to. That treatment was repeated for our hostages in Lebanon; they were in captivity for many years, many without anything to read. Andreas was in “captivity” for about eight months. Nevertheless, it is instructive to learn what the hostages did to keep their minds active because idleness can be very destructive to a thinking person. The Papandreous had run out of books for Andreas to read; all the material that was being sent to him was being censored; the Greek police wouldn't let him read any economics material, which was his major interest, or anything involving politics or current events. So Margaret had exhausted their library. I then lent her some books that she had picked out from our library—books that would pass censorship. Andreas was very grateful when he found out about what we had done, although she didn't tell him while he was under arrest for fear of further endangering us—some of the books, however, may have had our names in them.

And that is how we began our connection with the Papandreous, which did not begin with Andreas, whom we were not to meet until many months later. When Andreas was

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released, just before Christmas, 1967, under a general amnesty decree which, however, was very much focused on him because of the intense interest in the U.S.—partly stimulated by his prominent friends in the field of economics and government—we were in Austria on a skiing vacation (I don't ski, but I went along with other people who did). We were watching the Austrian television news on Christmas Eve and on came a report from Athens indicating that Andreas had been released. It showed him arriving back at his house, being greeted by his wife and children. This was of particular interest to us because one of the things my wife did before we left for Austria was to buy a big fat American turkey from the PX at the American air base in Hellinikon for the Papandreous which she delivered as a present, so that the Papandreou mother and kids could have a very American Christmas dinner. When she bought it, we had no idea that Andreas would have been released. So while watching the TV report in Austria, we wondered whether he had been released in time to share in the turkey. In fact, he did and was very appreciative.

I should add a note to the history of this period. When we returned to Athens from Austria, Margaret called and invited us for dinner. Both she and Andreas wanted to thank us for what we had done to help her during the period he was in prison. She had never told him of her complaints and what the Embassy had done or not done and what role we might have played until he had been released. That was partly for security reasons, because she assumed that all her conversations with him would be monitored and recorded. She also didn't want to depress him or agitate him or anger him, but after his release, she told him and he was very appreciative. So my wife and I went to the Papandreous for dinner and spent a very warm evening there. He thanked us for what we had done; we said that that was the minimum an American citizen could expect from his or her Embassy; after all, one of the responsibilities of an embassy is to help its citizens in times of stress and distress. We had a long evening with Margaret and Andreas; I was fascinated, because it was my opportunity first of all to meet him and then to hear his version of his recent political history going back to his return to Greece: why he came back, how he got involved in politics, his relations with his father, the overthrow of the Center Union government in 1965, and what

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he perceived the Embassy's role to have been at that time, and then his views on events since then, including his time in prison.

He and Margaret also called on Ambassador Talbot and his wife to thank them for what the Embassy had done. I read the report on that meeting later and it was a bit strange because from my point of view, at least, we had been discouraged from assisting the Papandreu. I interpreted the Papandreu's motive in asking for that meeting in an entirely different way than Ambassador Talbot did—in his report. The Papandreu wanted to leave Greece and go into exile; they were offered that opportunity by the Colonels, but the Colonels also wanted assurance that Andreas would “behave,” i.e., that he wouldn't mount an opposition movement or make a lot of anti-regime comments. The Colonels were fearful that Papandreu would have a ready audience, since he was already well known in North America and Europe and had been a political prisoner. So Brigadier Pattakos, in various conversations, tried to get assurances from Andreas that he would “behave.” I have heard various versions. Andreas said that he would be true to himself, according to his version, which should not have been very encouraging to the Colonels. But I think he also convinced Pattakos that his main purpose was to return to his teaching and to the support of his family. So the Colonels took a chance and allowed the Papandreu to leave.

The call on Ambassador and Mrs. Talbot, as I interpreted it and I believe that this is accurate, was to assure that the Americans thought that it would be a good idea for them to leave Greece and that we wouldn't stand in their way or that we would thwart that in any way. From my perspective, I would have thought that that assurance would not even have been needed to be sought; it should have been assumed, since if we did anything to embarrass Papandreu, it would have caused major problems for the Embassy and the U.S. Government. I thought that we would be thrilled to see Andreas go into exile; we would certainly not have been an obstacle. But from his perspective and his attitude toward some Americans and the Embassy, he might have been concerned that somehow or other we would tell the Colonels “don't let him go.” So I think the purpose of their call

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was to make sure that the Ambassador, if asked by the Greek government, would say that the Papandreou's departure from Greece was a great idea—it was the best thing that could happen for everybody concerned. As it turned out, I don't think Ambassador Talbot was ever consulted by anyone in the Greek government, but I think the Papandreous were just making a precautionary move.

Everybody knows what happened. The Papandreous got their passports—he got his Greek one, and she and the children already had their American ones. They took off for Paris, where, upon arriving, Andreas gave a press conference and in effect announced that he was going to lead an opposition movement to the current Greek government. He was very nasty about Ambassador Talbot; he called him a “Gauleiter,” which was about the worst thing you can call someone, since it conjures up all the specters of the Nazi regime. Talbot became really irate and it just confirmed his negative view of Andreas Papandreou. In his report to Washington he recalled that only a few evenings before, Papandreou had been in his sitting room telling him how he intended to find a teaching job and how he would mind his own business. Then he went off and gave a press conference, denouncing the Greek government, the U.S. Government for alleged support of the Colonels, and the American Ambassador, whom he insulted. I think both Talbot and Papandreou confirmed their negative views of each other.

So that was the only contact I had with Andreas Papandreou until, while serving in Zimbabwe, we went through Athens in the early 1980s. My wife called up Margaret just to find out how she was doing. Margaret invited us out to their house in Kastri for lunch, primarily because Andreas had gotten interested in Mugabe. They had met at a Socialist International session or something like that. Andreas had taken an interest in him and he wanted to learn something about Southern Africa. Andreas was by this time Prime Minister of Greece. We had lunch together; I did my share of the talking, briefing Andreas about what was going on in Zimbabwe and South Africa and about my impressions of Mugabe. It was an interesting and pleasant conversation, but I didn't hear much about Greece from Papandreou. So those were the only two meetings of any kind I had with Andreas

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Papandreou. When I was appointed as Ambassador to Greece in 1985, the Greek press declared that I was “a close friend of Andreas Papandreou.” I had to deal with that and live with that throughout my tour in Athens. One dinner and one lunch over a period of twenty years a “close friendship” do not make, even with a Greek.

In answer to your question, I have never heard of any good biographies of Andreas Papandreou. There are some in Greek, but they are essentially campaign material and would not be at all objective. There are two books worth reading about that period—the coup, the imprisonment, and the exile—written by the Papandreous. The first, *Nightmare in Athens*, was written by Margaret and describes what it is like to be the wife of a political prisoner; she describes some of the events I have mentioned, but obviously in much greater detail and many more of them. Andreas wrote *Democracy at Gun Point*, which was in effect his denunciation of the coup and his commentary on the events that led up to it. So both their points of view are well expressed and available; I assume that there have been things written on the other side. I don't think anyone would call their books particularly objective, but that doesn't make them less valuable; they expressed their perceptions of events.

Q: Let me ask one final question about your mid-1960s tour in Athens. You mentioned Cyprus and suggested that it was a quiescent period. What are your recollections on that thorny issue?

KEELEY: It was entirely quiescent, with one important exception—the crisis between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus in late 1967. As I have mentioned, I dealt with Greece's external affairs during my first two years in Athens. I went to Cyprus once before the coup of April, 1967 (in March) to become familiar with it. I spent quite a bit of time there, maybe a week; traveled throughout the island, which is relatively small, so any part can be reached in a day trip—from and back to Nicosia. I talked to a lot of people. When I came back, I wrote a memorandum to Kay Bracken in which I concluded that the real problem in Cyprus was the presence of General Grivas. He was a trouble-maker. In my

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view, the solution was to get the General off the island—this was when he had created the EOKA B (EOKA II) liberation movement, which was harassing the Turks and causing a great deal of trouble. As usual, that was like most of the recommendations I made, in that it was allegedly way off base. Mrs. Bracken pointed out to me something that I was not aware of and had never been briefed on, namely, that in some way or another we were complicitous in Grivas' return to Cyprus because we had seen him as a counter-weight to Makarios, who at that time was being described by the State Department as the “Castro of the Mediterranean,” who was playing “footsie” with the communists. The Archbishop had the support of the Communist Party in Cyprus, the AKEL, which had about a third of the electorate. He had been buying arms from the Czechs and other Eastern Europeans. He was viewed as the “red priest” and therefore a very dangerous character. Grivas on the other hand was a strong anti-communist, a conservative, a right winger, as well as an ultra-nationalist; I thought that he was an extremely dangerous man. Bracken's point to me was that this was hardly the time to pull the General off the island when, if we did not arrange it ourselves, we at least had tacitly approved his return. That was my contribution to the Cyprus problem!

As I said, there was a crisis during the period I was covering Cyprus. It happened in the late Fall of 1967, probably in November, just before the King's coup of December 13. There was a flare-up of fighting; I am sure that Grivas had a hand in it. A couple of Turkish Cypriot villages were attacked; people were killed. The Turks in Ankara threatened to invade the island. These events have been written up by Pete Hart, who was then our Ambassador in Turkey. His book covers the perceptions and the points of view of both the Greeks and the Turks, as well as the Cypriots. I have not yet read the book, but I am sure it gives a full coverage of the events.

The person who was called on to defuse the crisis was Cyrus Vance, later Secretary of State and now the U.N.'s special envoy for all the crises in Yugoslavia, and South Africa. Vance was not in the government at the time; he had held high positions in the Defense Department, but was at the time back at his law firm in New York. Lyndon Johnson called

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him and said he was sending a plane to take him to Ankara, Athens and Nicosia. Some knowledgeable official—I think it was John Howison, who was the Turkish specialist in GTI, maybe the Country Officer for Turkey—would be on the plane to brief Vance. Luke Battle, the NEA Assistant Secretary, went up to New York with the Presidential plane to brief Vance before take-off. John Patrick Walsh, then in the Secretariat, also was along, as may have been one or two others. There was no time, according to the President, for Vance to come to Washington. So off he went in one of the President's planes to Ankara and then Athens and Nicosia. He did a “shuttle diplomacy” tour for a couple of weeks and defused the crisis.

I recall that when he arrived in Athens, we had a general meeting with the Ambassador and other senior officers. I was there as the guy who covered Cyprus and I was all prepared to give a briefing. I never had the opportunity because as soon as the meeting began, Vance said he didn't want to hear anything about the Cyprus problem; he was not in Athens to solve the Cyprus problem. He said that too many people, better qualified than he, had tried to do that over a period of years and had failed and he would, if he tried it, also fail. He added that he didn't even have time to understand it. He had just one mission from the President and that was to prevent war between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus. He thought he could not achieve his very limited objective if the Cyprus problem had to be solved first, but he thought there was a good chance of avoiding an outbreak of hostilities between two NATO allies, which would be a disaster for all concerned, including the U.S. Vance had no intention of trying to solve the Cyprus problem; all he wanted was advice on how he could get the Turks and the Greeks to cancel their military alerts and to compromise somehow the immediate issues which had given rise to the current crisis.

So the meeting turned to that issue, after which Vance took off for Nicosia. He then traveled around to the three capitals, mostly at night because the days were consumed by exhausting meetings with cabinet officials of one country or another. We didn't accompany him on his flights; we waited until he had returned to our posts. Eventually he solved the immediate problem and war was averted. He did achieve a compromise, but most

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of the “give” was on the Greek side. The Colonels had to agree to remove most or all of their illegal forces from Cyprus—forces that had been beefed up from the mainland way beyond what was permitted under the London/Zurich accords which allowed for 600 Turkish soldiers and 900 Greek soldiers to be stationed in Cyprus. The Greeks had built up the Greek Cypriot National Guard, assigned Greek Army officers to it, and had added thousands of mainland Greeks to their Cyprus force. The Turks claimed that this unbalanced the military situation on the island and posed a threat to the Turkish Cypriot community. In fact, the National Guard had been established and strengthened to balance a threat Greece and Makarios perceived as coming from mainland Turkey. So the Greeks had to diminish their presence and had to agree to comply. The Turks finally accepted the compromise since the alternative was war.

Makarios was extremely unhappy with the agreement and Vance had a difficult time presenting it to the Archbishop in a favorable light. It reduced military forces which presumably were there to defend the Greek Cypriots. Vance decided to ignore Makarios' protestations and declared a solution had been agreed upon. He accomplished the mission President Johnson had assigned him.

At our final session with Vance in Athens after he had defused the crisis, the future Secretary of State made a profound and accurate prediction which stuck in my mind ever afterward. He said that by making the Greeks stand down from their military build-up on the island he had been able to talk the Turks out of invading the island. “But watch out the next time,” Vance said. “The next time the Greeks provoke the Turks over Cyprus there will be no stopping them. They'll invade Cyprus and nothing we or anyone else can do will stop them.” This forecast became one hundred per cent true in 1974 when the Colonels in Athens ousted Makarios, the Turks invaded, and we're still living with the consequences.

Q: I would like briefly to return to your Princeton experience. I believe you did some work on terrorism. Why did you choose that subject?

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KEELEY: In part because in the Fall of that year (1970), there was a real resurgence of Palestinian terrorism. There were major incidents: the hijacking of several planes which were flown to Amman and destroyed; there was a major conflict between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Jordanian government, which resulted in a major defeat of the PLO, which was forced out of Jordan—they mostly moved to Lebanon. So there was a big flare-up of terrorism that year. It seemed to me that this problem of terrorism was beginning to dominate in many ways the foreign policies of many countries since it really had a world-wide character. The political dynamics resulting from terrorism were having a major effect on our ability to deal with problems around the world. Furthermore, diplomats were particularly vulnerable.

Since I was in an academic setting, I did not feel bound to study only current events. My assignment—in a Klaus Knorr seminar on strategic conflict resolution—was to produce a paper which was entitled Approaches Toward a Theory of Terrorism as a Mode of Political Action or something like that. In subsequent years, I tried to peddle that paper to various people including the State Department's Office of Counter-Terrorism, but no one ever took any interest in it.

At that time I found that there was very little literature on the subject of terrorism; my bibliography may have been a page long, but I had to really stretch to get enough titles of books and articles to fill that page. So I struck out on my own and developed my own theory of why terrorism occurs, what its objectives are. I tried to cover the points of view of both insurgent terrorism—groups out of power wishing to move in—and state or state-sponsored terrorism; i.e., the use of terrorism by governments against their own people as well as against foreigners. I tried to look at the issue from all angles. I don't want to claim that it was a major accomplishment, but very little had been done by the late 1960s, and there were very few people, even in government, who were willing to examine the sources and origins and uses of terrorism. Most people dealt with the consequences, i.e., with the problems like hijackings or assassinations or kidnappings or bombings. I went

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back into the Algerian experience, which had been studied at some length by the French. The best papers on that were in French. I also looked at Indochina, where terrorism had been used, particularly in Vietnam. I did not go back into the classical periods—the original assassins of the Middle Ages, etc., although some of that history is most interesting. The societies and political systems were so different in those days that they probably had little relevance to the present. I also did not look at anarchist terrorism, i.e., people who used to assassinate the Russian Czars just for the purpose of disruption or the fostering of anarchy and nihilism. I was more interested in issues like the Palestinian terrorism where there was a political objective, i.e., placing your name in public view because you stood for some policy or other. That terrorism had serious objectives and needed to be recognized for what it was.

The general conclusion that I reached which, as I have said, has never really appealed to many people because it has implications for how to deal with terrorism that they would rather avoid acknowledging, was that terrorism is the weapon of the weak. Any political group would rather have an army, an air force, a navy, etc., to attack their enemies. Any group that has to resort to terrorism lacks those assets. A political group which has no other avenues must have the ability to use violence, military and other, to achieve its objectives. So it tries to change the balance of power in its favor by frightening innocent civilian populations and governments that respect human rights and liberties. Terrorism can change the power equation dramatically. For example, the United States, despite all of its power as demonstrated recently in the Persian Gulf in the war against Iraq, is absolutely helpless in dealing with the problem of the hostages in Beirut. The U.S.'s military power is useless in a situation of that kind. The hostage taking was an act of terrorism which stymied the American government and made it look absolutely helpless. We, the military super-power in the world, are helpless in the face of these simple acts of terrorism. It is a very interesting phenomenon and that is why I studied it.

I was more interested then in the ideologically motivated terrorism because it had a great impact on foreign policy, on diplomacy, and on diplomats' abilities to perform their jobs.

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I must admit that I looked only at those terrorism instances that were of interest to me. It has become much more complex since the 1960s. For example, in the case of Lebanon, as Tom Friedman highlights in his book (*From Beirut to Jerusalem*), there were three guys who got together and set up a check-point where they demanded payment to let people through it. They may have shot people and perhaps taken people hostage, but their main purpose was to make money. They had no political motivation whatsoever. That is of course what created the utter chaos in a city like Beirut. Under those circumstances, anyone can become a terrorist for any reason whatsoever; many of those situations are economically motivated.

Eventually, there develop large terrorist groups that are mercenaries ready for hire by the highest bidder. So someone with a political point of view, or a grudge, hires one of these groups, which for the right price will blow up a plane or lob a grenade into a bar or whatever someone wants done, as long as the price is right. Unfortunately, a lot of the terrorism has been produced by these mercenaries. Some of that we encountered in Greece. In any case, not enough academic work has been done on the subject, although I think if someone were to do what I had done more than twenty years earlier, he or she would now find a vast amount of literature on the subject. At least, there has been that much progress and a change in our attitude toward terrorism. When I looked at it, it was not really deemed a fit subject for study. The attitude was that “terrorism is so terrible, so wrong, so immoral that we won't even look at it—its causes and origins.” My view was that because it existed, it had to be dealt with and it needed some academic work. I didn't like terrorism, I thought it was immoral, but I also thought it had to be better understood.

While at Princeton I also wrote the memoir on Greece, as I mentioned earlier. I look upon the work on Greece and terrorism as the two main accomplishments of my year at Princeton. I studied also a number of other subjects that were of interest to me: Beethoven, photography, social psychology, lots more economics.

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Q: Then in mid-1971, you were assigned to Uganda as Deputy Chief of Mission. How lucky can you be?

KEELEY: I felt very fortunate. It was a routine assignment. The DCM in Kampala was in his fourth year there and had been on the Uganda desk for the four prior years, so that he had too many years on that one country. It was time for him to move on, both from his point of view and that of the Department. He was the expert in the Department on Uganda, but enough was enough. The Ambassador was a political appointee, the late Clarence Clyde Ferguson—a black lawyer, Harvard trained, originally from Baltimore, from a long-time Republican family—an absolutely wonderful man. He was a renowned lawyer and law professor, having taught constitutional law, civil procedure, and other subjects at Rutgers and Harvard. He had co-authored a book on the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. He had previously served as the State Department's coordinator of the Biafran relief operation during the Nigerian civil war. My name was on the list of prospective DCMs given to Ferguson. Beau Nalle, the DCM, knew me and probably spoke well of me; in any case Ferguson chose me. He had been teaching at Rutgers at the time prior to his government service and had just returned to New Jersey for family reasons. I invited him to Princeton. I went to pick him up and we spent a day together. He spent the night with us, and we had a small dinner for him which included his friend, Princeton professor Richard Falk. We hit it off well and so he approved my appointment; that was around Christmas 1970.

That was my good luck; it was my first DCM assignment, which is a milestone in a Foreign Service career and is really a testing assignment. If you succeed at that level, your subsequent career is likely to be successful. If you fail at that stage, it often happens that that is the end of your career; you don't go any farther; you don't become an Ambassador or have another DCM assignment; you just drift until retirement. So it is a crucial assignment in an officer's career and not every officer gets the opportunity, although today everyone seeks to become a DCM, and with all the new embassies being

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opened in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, etc., there will be more opportunities than ever before.

My bad luck was that in January 1971 Idi Amin took over Uganda. That was about two or three weeks after I had seen Clyde Ferguson. He had gone back to Kampala. One day, I picked up The New York Times and read that some guy named Idi Amin had become the President of Uganda. The name didn't mean a thing to me. When I later took the DCM course at FSI before leaving the U.S., Ferguson was one of the lecturers—that was the second time I had met the Ambassador before arriving at the post. By that time, Amin was well established. Ferguson described what had happened. He said that tribalism, which was a major problem throughout the African continent, was probably more severe and savage in Uganda than anywhere else, including Nigeria (which he knew quite well and which had and still has a very severe tribal problem despite a new Constitution). Amin's take-over was not seen as that horrendous at the beginning. The British, the Americans, and the Israelis were, if not delirious, at least quite happy because they were very unhappy with Milton Obote, whom Amin over-threw. Idi Amin, who had impressed some as a buffoon in many ways, did not act in that way in the early days of his regime. He had trained in Israel as a paratrooper; he wore the Israeli paratrooper's wings very proudly; he claimed to be a very close personal friend of Moshe Dayan.

The Western countries—those that were major players in Uganda such as the British and the Americans—were deploring the tribalism—the tribal favoritism and persecution—that was being practiced by Obote. He had established more or less a one party system after a period of a multi-party, very democratic political environment right after independence. Obote had dictated an increasingly leftist economic policy, with more and more socialism and nationalization of private property; he was anti-foreign and anti-investment. So Amin's coup was initially seen as a welcomed change and an opportunity. Furthermore, Idi Amin thought that he could resolve the conflict over the Ugandan monarchies, particularly that of the King of Buganda, King Freddie, who had recently died. The Baganda cheered Amin on because he was going to bring their King's body home and was going to bury him in

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Bugandan soil. So Amin was seen quite differently at the beginning and was in fact quite popular in his early days. People marched and danced in the streets with their pom-poms and banana leaves, cheering him on.

Q: What were our interests in Uganda in 1971 and how did we protect those interests?

KEELEY: We didn't have major interests in Uganda. It is not one of the most significant African countries. We were major purchasers of coffee from there, but didn't have large investments. We had a large number of American missionaries working there and that was an interest. As conditions deteriorated, their well-being probably emerged as a more serious interest on our part. We were still playing second fiddle to the British; they had the major commercial and investment interests there. As the ex-colonial ruler, they had strong sentimental interests as well. The British had an interest in all of East Africa—Uganda as well as Kenya and Tanzania at that time. But we didn't really have any major interests.

Q: Did we have anything to do with fostering Israeli interests in Uganda?

KEELEY: I am not sure that we fostered their interests, although they quite clearly had them in Uganda. They were giving military assistance and training; they had a number of construction companies working there. It was one of the places that seemed to welcome Israel, even after the 1967 war, and I arrived four years after that event. Other countries with a stronger Muslim element—e.g., Senegal, Guinea and Mali in West Africa—like many of the Arab states, had broken or diminished their relations with Israel. Uganda had a different attitude, even under Obote. So it was a place the Israelis were more welcomed and could work. That deteriorated almost immediately after Amin took over. But before that, they were very active. Interestingly enough, of course, historians would point out that at one point, some elements of the Zionist movement had considered the idea of establishing a homeland for the Jews in Uganda. I think that was seriously considered also by the British, but was rejected in the end. So there may have been a sentimental

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connection of some kind for the Israelis with Uganda, which might have been their home if matters had worked out differently from the way they did.

Q: Over a period of time, Amin apparently deteriorated mentally. Do you have any theories on why that happened?

KEELEY: Yes, I have a very general theory that I can't really prove, but it results from studying him at close range over a rather lengthy period of time. I should say that I have written something about Uganda as well. It is the other Foreign Service experience that I have recorded extensively. I hope that will be available some day in published form. It is not, at the moment, complete. I intend to cover the period beginning in 1971 when Amin took over, up to November 1973, when we closed our Embassy. What the book is supposed to be is a close examination of how an Embassy operates, what it does in all of its functions—political, economic, consular, security, protection of American citizens, the administrative activities, AID, Peace Corps, USIS—everything. The reason I chose Uganda is that it was a period of heightened activity and tension, with a very difficult host government. The problems faced by the Embassy ran the gamut of everything the Foreign Service has to cope with in a heightened form, in a dangerous situation. It was a smallish Embassy, so that there weren't too many personalities to deal with. I also had a limited time frame to deal with, i.e., something less than three years. In the time I had, I was only able to write up the 1973 portion—from January 1 to when we closed the post. That was the most interesting period and the most difficult, when most of the serious problems arose, including the termination of the Peace Corps and AID programs and eventually USIA and the Embassy. I tried to cover all the attendant problems from finding a protecting power to turn matters over to, to getting everyone out safely without Idi Amin knowing about it. That was the challenge at the time because we were always concerned with his reactions.

But to tell the complete story, you have to go back to January 1971, when Amin assumed power. I have not yet written up 1971 and 1972. What I have written was based on the

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Department's files, mainly the Embassy files; so I stuck to what actually happened in its most truthful form as recorded at the time. Obviously, there are many gaps that I had to fill in from memory, but I have tried to limit those to matters of which I had personal knowledge. The point of my effort was to create a kind of textbook for new Foreign Service officers, and the American public as well—that is, for those who are interested in how we operate as diplomats around the world. I have never seen a book quite like what I have in mind, although Martin Herz did one about 215 days in the life of an ambassador in Sofia, or something like that. My book was not being written from the point of view of an ambassador necessarily, although I was the Chargé at the end during most of 1973. I tried to cover all the staff and all the work that was performed and all the problems they faced. It is much too detailed at the moment; it needs severe editing. But I tried to look at diplomacy from the point of view of the people in the trenches. Most histories of a war are written from the point of view of the generals, sitting back at headquarters and maneuvering their men around. My book is about the guys holding the rifles in the trenches, being shot at and shooting back. It doesn't have a lot to do with geopolitics, strategies, or what Henry Kissinger might have been thinking and planning or plotting. It has to do with people coping with difficult day-to-day problems on the ground.

To understand Amin, you have to look very briefly at his biography, his background. He was a Muslim born in the Northwest corner of Uganda, near the Sudan and Zaire borders, which is an area heavily Muslim populated. The British tended to recruit their African troops from the Northern tribes—Acholis, Langis, etc., because they were probably more war-like and therefore perhaps more reliable; furthermore these tribesmen didn't have competing opportunities. The Baganda in southern Uganda dominated the country; they are more numerous; they live in the southern part, around Lake Victoria, an area which is extremely fertile, and they have a surplus of agricultural production. They were also very good businessmen and most of them were interested in making money and in pursuing peaceful activities. The Baganda were also more easily converted to Christianity; that is where the missionaries established most of their schools. The railroad was in Bugandan

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territory as was the British administration; they had all the advantages, particularly in education. Missionaries also work in very remote areas. Traditionally the British would recruit their soldiers from more rural, less urbanized, less educated populations which have fewer opportunities so that the military becomes their profession and livelihood.

Amin, a poor peasant boy, was recruited into the army. He used to talk about serving in World War II; there is no way that that happened because he was too young. He talked about serving in Burma. That was a myth. He used to be very complimentary about Eisenhower because he fed the same rations to his black troops as he did to the white ones. He talked about all of these things as if he had personally experienced them. There was absolutely no way he could have fought either in Burma or Europe or anywhere else. I think he came to believe his own fantasies. He and others had repeated them often enough that he probably thought that they were actually true. Although on reflection I could be wrong about this: Amin may have been recruited into the army at a very young age, as a teenager, and it could be that some units of the King's African Rifles were shipped off to other theaters during the war.

Amin was recruited at a very young age. He had had only about four years of education, if that; he was barely literate. He could read, but without any great facility; he couldn't write very well—he always had help in producing documents. He could express himself in English and several local languages; he was not a bad linguist. Initially, I think he was a cook's assistant, which is really a low position even in an African army—the King's (later the Queen's) African Rifles. He essentially peeled potatoes. That would not be surprising given his level of education and general skills. He didn't stay at that level; he got promoted. His advancements came essentially through boxing. He was very tall with a tremendous reach and big hands; he was big and strong and tough in general. You could picture him in any culture as a heavy-weight champion and that is what he was. The Ugandans are very fine boxers; they still prove it to this day in the Olympics; they have a strong boxing

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tradition which the British encouraged. The main avenue for advancement in boxing was the army.

Amin became the Ugandan army's (that is, the African Rifles') heavy-weight champion. He had the physical attributes, the general toughness and courage; that is what it took to be a champion. His boxing prowess tended to get him promoted. I don't want to be excessively facetious about it, but I think it is descriptive that he worked his way up to sergeant because he could maintain order and discipline amongst rather unruly troops. The pre-independence colonial armies were officered by the British; they may have included some key British technical non-coms—warrant officers—but the fighting troops, the infantry carrying the rifles were Africans, and like most armies, but particularly in a race-divided environment, there were two classes of people: the officers sitting around in their mess and the African troops in the barracks. Idi Amin became prominent as the link between the two: the officers sitting around sipping their tea or their brandy or their port, upon hearing some noises and disruptions outside, would call in Sergeant Amin and tell him to take care of the problem. Amin goes out, there are some shouts and screams as he knocks some heads together and kicks some butts and then silence. The officers resume their sipping and are very appreciative of Idi's performance. They eventually promoted him to top sergeant.

Then comes independence. I don't want to ridicule anyone, but these are facts. The new government says that it can't continue to have its army commanded by British officers. It wants its own officers to command its own troops. Decolonization happened very rapidly. The process of transition was expedited and rather than establishing a long term, slow program of officers' training, the Ugandans promoted their senior non-commissioned officers—there may have been some African officers already by that time, but certainly not enough to fill the gap left by the British. The logical candidates for promotion were people like Idi Amin. He was promoted to the officers' ranks. He then worked his way to the top.

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People who have studied Amin's history have found that he advanced by eliminating his rivals in one fashion or another—either physically or by discrediting them or by scaring them or some way or other. His promotions came frequently. My conclusion is that Idi Amin had proven, as some people would describe it, the “Peter Principle.” When he was the top sergeant, keeping order in the barracks, that was his strength; he should have stopped or been stopped there. He performed in that role very ably and well. Had the British remained, all would have been well; that is, Amin would have remained in the barracks. Unfortunately, he was suddenly put in a command position. Psychologically, he probably felt inadequate; he was not dumb. He must have known that he was getting in over his head. On the other hand, this did not necessarily depress him that much because a lot of other people were getting out of their depth. Some of the other lieutenants and captains were no more qualified than he was; on the contrary, he must have known that he was bigger and tougher and stronger and more ruthless. So he decided to move ahead as rapidly as possible. The problem was that with each promotion he became increasingly incompetent.

Finally, he became the chief of the army. Now he was in real trouble. An army chief has to be something more than just rough and tough and brutal. He should have some understanding, some “smarts”—not necessarily education, but a realistic understanding of the world around. Uneducated people can be brilliant in some ways, particularly organizationally. There have been people in African history, before Amin, famous military leaders, who performed incredible military feats but had never gone to a missionary school, who had risen in the ranks by bravery and/or brutality. They were master innate strategists. For example, you just need to read about the Zulu wars in which tribesmen took on the British army. So I don't point to Amin's lack of education; but he was promoted out of his depth. He had learned to use his fists and translated that into how you hold your position, how you protect yourself. He applied all the brutal boxing lessons he had learned against his rivals.

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When he became the chief of the army, he became involved in the Congo rebellion. He participated in some shady deals; there have been accusations of thefts of gold, ivory, etc. That history is very complex and I won't tell the details here. But at the end, Amin took over the government out of fear that Obote would do him in. He did what he had done throughout his career; he said that he was in charge and that Obote was done with.

Obote was out of the country attending some conference—in Singapore, I think—when the coup took place. As he was flying back, crossing India, he was told that he had been thrown out and that Amin had just taken over. Amin's behavior after that follows a similar pattern. As head of state, and as head of the government, he was really out of his depth. Not only was he incompetent, but the title and perks really went to his head. He became much more irrational; he viewed himself in megalomaniacal fashion. He thought he could take on the world; he thought he could star on the international stage; he thought he could go to the U.N. and give an address that would make everyone take notice; he thought he could grand-stand anywhere and give speeches. He did become the head of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). He did say ridiculous things. He had T-shirts with his picture on them printed up, saying “Conqueror of the British Empire.” He had British businessmen carry him to a meeting in a sedan chair. He gave Nixon advice on “Watergate.” He offered to marry Princess Anne of Great Britain. He saw himself as a world class statesman. In the meantime he was making a fool of himself. But he was so vicious and brutal that no one opposed him or laughed at him because they feared for their lives. His goons would have taken any opposition out and cut them into four pieces. So you learned not to laugh, at least within his ear-shot. He became a buffoon-statesman in his own style—a ridiculous figure who caused all sorts of grief abroad and at home.

The world grand-standing was not that harmful. It was more a waste of time and tended to bring down ridicule onto organizations that might have done serious work if they didn't have to deal with people like Amin. The real crime was what he did to the Ugandans and his country. In eight years plus of rule, Amin left the country in an absolutely deplorable

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condition. The number of people he had killed was almost unbelievable. Many of the educated elite who survived fled into exile. He destroyed Uganda's economy, which had been a well balanced one with a very productive agricultural base. Uganda has never had a famine; you can just stick something in the ground and it grows. It has a wonderful combination of soil, sun, rain-fall throughout the year. From that point of view, it was and is a marvelous country. It has few minerals—a little copper—but it is ideal for some cash crops like coffee and sugar which have been grown there for a long time. These crops were primarily introduced by the British and gave Uganda a great future.

At independence Uganda inherited the finest civil service that I am familiar with that the British left behind in any of their former colonies. The civil servants had a high level of education; they benefited from the interest that the missionaries took in establishing fine primary and secondary schools. The country had Makerere University—the first and major university in East Africa—which trained the cadres of the civil service that ran all the former colonies when they became independent, including Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Kenya—all the British colonies plus others. Because the university was in Kampala, the Ugandans benefited; more than half of the student body was Ugandan. People talk about the ex-Belgian Congo, which had only 12 university graduates at the time of independence; Uganda had literally thousands. They had fine doctors, excellent lawyers, good accountants, teachers and clergy, able and clever businessmen—they had everything an independent state needed.

They also benefited from the fact that they were never really colonized. They had no white settlers. Originally the British went into Uganda to keep the French out. But when the early explorers, the military and the missionaries arrived, they found four very highly organized kingdoms in the southern part of Uganda: Buganda, Toro, Bunyoro and Banyankole. These tribes warred against each other; each had a king, a royal family, an aristocracy, a civil service and an army. They were all organized like a modern state.

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The British signed agreements with each kingdom, and with the other tribal chieftains—perhaps eight or ten—in the northern part of the country. One of the stipulations in these agreements was that all the lands remained in the hands of the local tribes. That is in contrast to the Kenya situation, where white settlers moved in, took the best land and colonized the territory. It is true that the settlers developed the land agriculturally, but Uganda didn't need that because it was already doing well in agriculture.

Kampala, the capital, was an African city—more African than most modern cities. People lived all over, regardless of race. There was a large group of Indians who were small merchants and businessmen. Some were very wealthy, some were not. There was no segregation; all people lived together. Kampala was not a city with a white center and suburbs and black slums like Nairobi and some other African cities. Entebbe was the British colonial capital; that is where the airport is. That was kept separate because the Ugandans insisted that Kampala be theirs and it remained so, as the capital of the Kingdom of Buganda.

I have painted a somewhat idyllic picture. Uganda was a marvelous country. Amin destroyed it completely. As I said earlier, he should never have been put in charge of anything, except perhaps a few barracks.

Q: Did the expulsion of the Indians have a major impact on the country's economic life? Was the expulsion racially motivated?

KEELEY: It was certainly racial and it did have a negative impact on the economic life of Uganda. The move was very popular among many Africans, although the more thoughtful realized that it would create a disaster. But in general, the expulsion was extremely popular because the Africans didn't like the Indians. It was not entirely a racial matter; it had economic foundations because the Indians were economic competitors. They tended to live on a higher scale than many Ugandans. They were the shop-keepers; they provided credit. Several of them, including the Madhvanis and the Mehtas, were major industrialists

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who owned large industries—sugar refining plants, mills, a steel plant, breweries, cotton growing plantations and many other things.

The expulsion had popular support. Amin was so simplistic in his thinking that he felt he could just kick out the Indians, appropriate their businesses and properties, and then their new African owners would make all the money that the Indians were making. The problem was that the new “owners” didn't know what they were doing. They simply sold everything on the shelves, but when the stock ran out, they didn't know what to do. They didn't realize that they had to order more supplies with the money they made from selling the old supply. The new “owners” just spent their money, mostly on themselves. They moved into new houses vacated by the expelled Indians, without realizing that they had to be maintained. They just thought that since they had suddenly acquired all this new wealth, more would automatically follow. A lot of the former Indian enterprises went to Amin's former army cronies. He favored them. For example, one day he would expropriate a hotel and give it to a Captain. So the Captain became a hotel owner. Like many of his colleagues, he got so interested in his new venture that he began to neglect his military duties. So the army began to fall apart.

Another person's biography could tell us the basics of what went wrong. I want to give one other example of the destructiveness. There was another person, perhaps a little bit older than Amin—he was then about 50—by the name of Ben Kiwanuka. He had the good fortune to be born near a missionary school in Buganda. He was therefore raised as a Catholic. He was very bright and took well to education. When he finished his first six or eight years of education, he was chosen to go to the premier Catholic secondary school. These schools were mostly used to train future priests, but there was no requirement that a graduate become a priest. Kiwanuka did very well; graduated at the top or close to it in his class. Then went on to Makerere University. Then he was granted a fellowship to a University in London, England. He graduated from there, went to the Inns of Court, got his law degree and returned to Kampala.

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He became a very fine lawyer. He also became involved in politics. His family was prominent in Uganda, but not of royal stock. Although having started in relative poverty, he became part of the aristocracy, certainly the educated elite. Eventually he became the head of the Democratic Party—the Catholic party—which won the early elections. Later, it lost the elections and Kiwanuka became a political prisoner, having been jailed by Obote, a tribal enemy, because Kiwanuka headed up a party primarily consisting of the Baganda and their King, though there was also an extreme royalist party, the Kabaka Yekka. In any case, Kiwanuka spent a number of years in prison. Obote was then overthrown by Amin, who immediately released all political prisoners. That was one of Amin's better moves. Kiwanuka was released and, although very reluctant, he agreed to Amin's request that he become the Chief Justice. Having been a judge before imprisonment, he was fully qualified; furthermore, he was a very intelligent and decent human being.

However, one day, Kiwanuka issued a ruling that offended Amin. It was on a case of nationalization of some British property. The Chief Justice ruled that some compensation had to be paid to the British owner, or something like that. When the word reached Amin, Idi was offended and decided that he could not tolerate such independence. The following day, while Kiwanuka was presiding in his court, in his robes, a number of Amin's goons entered the court, kidnapped the Chief Justice, dragged him out of the building, and he was never seen again. That sort of behavior went on all the time during my assignment from 1971 to 1973. In Kiwanuka's case, Amin decreed the end of a person who had developed over a fifty or sixty year period from a lowly, poor peasant boy to Chief Justice of a country. It was these sorts of actions that wiped out much of Uganda's educated populace. It was almost like Cambodia, except that in Uganda it was done person by person, thereby wiping out all the progress that an individual might have achieved over a sixty year period. That is what Amin did, thereby not only ruining individual lives, but the whole country. Fortunately, he did not destroy all of the educated people, but he was certainly working his way through their ranks when he was overthrown. In large measure he succeeded in decimating Uganda of its leadership. Uganda has not yet recovered from

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Amin's depredations and will not for a long time. A country does not recover quickly from that kind of regime.

Q: My impression is that Amin had no feel for international relations. He took what he wanted in Uganda without any regard to international law or even comity. Is that correct?

KEELEY: That is correct. His first target was the Israelis, on whom he turned soon after taking power. He blamed Uganda's and his problems all on Israel. He suddenly became a militant Muslim; that was a new development since he had not shown many signs of religious devotion before. He became very pro-Arab, partly by becoming a vocal Muslim and partly as a consequence of his anti-Israel attitudes. He lumped together Zionists, imperialists, Israelis, Jews, Americans, British—all those who in his mind were out to destroy him.

We didn't have any major interests in Uganda, as I said. Our problems were operational; how could we just function as an Embassy? We had a Peace Corps contingent of considerable size—mostly secondary school teachers making valuable contributions to the educational system by replacing a lot of the expatriates who had left. They taught math, science, English; the educational infrastructure was good in Uganda, but there was a shortage of teachers, so that the Peace Corps volunteers filled a critical vacuum. At one time, we had double contingents—over 200 volunteers, as I remember it. We had both the incoming group and the outgoing group. One day it was decided to close the Peace Corps program. We had had enough.

It is hard to describe Uganda without discussing events in some chronological order because as I mention various situations, they may seem arbitrary and precipitous, with decisions being made without provocation. In fact, the history of our presence is an accumulation of many events, some small, some larger. So when the Peace Corps program was terminated, it was an accumulation of a long series of many other unhappy events that had been forced on us by Amin.

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Uganda was at the time engaged in a mini-war with Tanzania and a threat of an invasion by the Tanzanians was being experienced. Two of our volunteers had been in Queen Elizabeth Park, a game reserve in western Uganda, for the weekend. They had not heard of the tensions with Tanzania. They were driving back to their schools; they came to an unmanned road block and had enough sense not to try to drive through it. They stopped and yelled out for an official so that they could proceed. No one answered; they waited for a while. When no one showed up, they assumed that the road block had been abandoned. So they drove around it. Immediately, they drew gun fire; they had in fact driven into an ambush, set up presumably to capture or kill Tanzanian guerrillas or whatever. One of the volunteers was killed, the other was wounded. That, as far as we were concerned, was just the last straw. The Peace Corps in Washington ordered the termination of the program.

We called in all the teachers from all over the country; many were in extremely remote areas. Many were very unhappy with the decision. Like most of the Peace Corps volunteers, they were very dedicated to their work and their students; they were being pulled out just before the end of a term and the exams. That meant that the students could not complete the courses and might have to repeat them. The volunteers pointed out that there were no replacements in sight and that their departure might mean that their schools might collapse. They saw the decision as an unmitigated disaster. We asked that Washington staff be sent out to help us deal with a very unhappy bunch of teachers. We counseled the volunteers; the Ambassador did some of it; I did some of it. We counseled them as a group, we counseled them as individuals, trying to convince them that they had to leave. It was a firm decision that they had to accept. We felt that the security situation had deteriorated, that their lives were at stake. Some, of course, with justification, pointed out that in their villages there wasn't any security threat; they were loved and appreciated. These volunteers felt that no one would harm them even if they stayed ten years. I am sure that many just viewed us as the worst kind of bureaucrat: arbitrary, people who couldn't be reasonable.

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They all had to leave; they had no choice. But some actually returned to Uganda as private citizens, without using their tickets back to the U.S., in order to finish their classes. They returned to finish their classes at their own expense. We tried to discourage them, but we could not prevent their return.

Our problems, as Americans, unlike those of some other foreigners, were not property or investment expropriations, with a few rare exceptions. Amin finally targeted the missionaries, to blame them for his failures and they became constantly harassed. He kept talking about the 22 or 23 sects that had been “imposed on” Uganda. Many of the missionaries represented evangelical churches with odd names that meant nothing to Amin. In his simplicity, he identified only three “religions” as he called them: Catholics, Anglicans—i.e., Church of England, Uganda branch—and Muslims. No one else was welcomed; no non-Anglican Protestants, no Jews, no Hindus, no Buddhists. That was very frightening.

Many missionaries are difficult to deal with. They believe they are doing “God's work.” They did not understand why they should worry about some crazy guy called Idi Amin who might be causing trouble; they were doing “God's work” and couldn't worry about temporal matters. They didn't worry about getting killed; they didn't think they would be, but if they were, it was all in a very good cause. They trusted in the Lord and went about their business. It is very difficult for an Embassy to have any effect on people like that. Try to explain to a missionary that the “Lord may be on his side, but that Amin was crazy.” Amin didn't pay any attention to the Lord; in fact, he preferred to go contrary to God's will.

So our interests and problems were essentially protection of American human beings. Just like with the Peace Corps program, we eventually had to terminate our assistance program since we couldn't protect the technical assistance personnel who had to go into the field to do their work. Their Ugandan counter-parts were being killed off or disappeared overnight because they may have said the wrong thing or looked the wrong way. Many of our friends and contacts were being eliminated; you would get to know somebody and

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three months later he or she would disappear never to be heard from again. It was an absolutely murderous regime.

Q: Do you have any recollections of personal contacts with Amin?

KEELEY: I had many, many encounters with Amin, particularly at the end when I was the Charg#. Then I would see him practically every two weeks because of his penchant for sending nasty messages to President Nixon. I would duly send them in with my comments. I would then receive an instruction to call on Amin to complain. I would then get an appointment and before I could complain about his last message, he would give me a new one, worse than the previous one. I would take it, because that was the only thing I could do, and then complain about the previous letter, which of course had absolutely no impact. I would send the latest letter in and then I would get another instruction. It was a never ending process.

It became serious toward the end of January, 1973 after the Vietnam cease fire agreement in Paris negotiated by Kissinger. Messages poured into the White House from all over the world- -from the head of the Soviet Union, from the Pope, from the Chinese, from all sorts of leaders—congratulating Nixon and the Administration for ending the war. One single message was received deploring Kissinger's efforts and that was from Idi Amin. He told Nixon that it served us right to be defeated by “those small, yellow people who carried spears against your mighty military machine.” The exact words escape me, but the essence was that it was only right and proper that the Americans should be defeated by a small country; the U.S. should learn that it can't bully people and pick on them. It was so negative and out of place that we responded by pulling out our Ambassador, Tom Melady. He remained the Ambassador until about September, although he never returned to Kampala. I became Charg# until we closed the Embassy in November. Relations continued to deteriorate.

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Sometimes Amin would change his tune and send Nixon a “Get Well” message; once he bid him “a speedy recovery from Watergate,” which was about the worst message he could have sent—Nixon didn't need to be reminded of that problem. You may remember that there was pressure on Nixon to resign after Watergate became so serious that it was leading to impeachment. So Amin sent him a message saying that he shouldn't resign, that he had been elected by the American people, that he should show his bravery and courage by staring down his opponents. Amin said that strong people like himself and Nixon should stand up for their rights. It was the usual crazy message; only Amin saw it as a positive motivational effort on his part. He wrote that message while I was outside his office waiting to see him; I waited for about an hour. I just reread it the other day; it was absolutely hilarious. The text had to be patched up somewhat by Paul Etiang, who was the Ugandan acting Foreign Minister. Amin's effort did not raise his stock in the White House one inch; but it had gotten immune to his rantings.

In September, 1973, Amin sent another nasty message. I can't remember exactly the subject matter; it probably had to do with the Middle East and events leading up to the 1973 war. I was recalled this time, “for consultations”—the standard formula. I came back and went to see David Newsom, then the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. I told him that I was delighted to be back and to be able to take a few weeks of leave, but I expressed the hope that my absence from post would not be too prolonged because we had real problems in Kampala. The Embassy, the last American presence, had shrunk; I was the only political reporting officer since the Department had never filled that position when it had become vacant. I also told Newsom that my absence would not make any impression on Amin; I doubted that he even knew I had left. Even if he knew, he would shrug; he could not have cared less whether the American Charg# was there or not. He might notice my absence if he had another message to send to Nixon and someone strange to him showed up to receive it. Then he might notice that I was not there. He didn't really care when the Ambassador was recalled; he may have been slightly annoyed, but I doubt that he understood the word “recall” or its significance. His annoyance had probably

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more to do with the possibility of the U.S. closing its Embassy; on a personal level, he could not have cared less who represented the U.S.

I returned to Kampala after three weeks with instructions to reduce the size of the post even further. Then the 1973 Middle East war started. Amin was on the side of the Arabs; we, according to Amin, sided with the Israelis and were therefore intervening in the war. He volunteered Ugandan troops—an offer that was quickly rejected by all Arab countries, or at least totally ignored. That humiliated him; he kept offering to fly them wherever they might be needed. The last thing any Arab state wanted was a horde of Ugandan soldiers, drunken and disorderly, descending on their territory, particularly if led by Idi Amin. He became very frustrated. He called me in and gave me a lecture about the Sixth Fleet, which was moving around the Mediterranean. He showed me on a wall map in his office how the Fleet was moving towards Israel so that we could intervene on its side. I kept trying to interrupt so that I could tell him that the Sixth Fleet had been in the Mediterranean since 1945 and it always moved. Its principal mission at that stage was to be prepared to evacuate Americans if necessary. At the end, he threatened me and all Americans by saying that if war broke out, we would all be viewed as belligerents on his enemy's side and therefore we would all have to be interned, starting with the American Chargé. He had come to believe, from the stories he had heard about World War II, that enemy aliens were taken and put into concentration camps. When the meeting finished, I shook his hand as usual and walked out.

I reported that diatribe to Washington and commented that Amin was once more grandstanding; he was dressed in his fatigues, ready to march to the front. He was frustrated because no one wanted his troops. He wanted to show that he could play in the “big leagues.” The Department, however, took the matter very seriously; it assumed, or feared, that Amin would carry out his threats. The last thing the Department wanted was to have some of its diplomats put behind barbed wire by Idi Amin; then it would have to do something to get them out, which would have been difficult, particularly in a remote place like Uganda and with a guy like Amin. Based on my frequent contacts with him, I

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believed that he wouldn't have done anything. He was just on a stage playing to whatever small audience cared to watch. He always had a TV camera and the press in his office when I met with him. He didn't single me out because he didn't like me, but because I was a convenient foil for his theatrics. He would do his histrionics, then feel better—just like a little child. In any case, he made Washington very nervous.

When the war broke out, Amin was again very frustrated; he didn't know what to do. He didn't lock anyone up, but he did kick out our six Marine security guards: i.e., the American “military force” in Uganda. He gave them 24 or 48 hours to get out. They went to Nairobi. At that point, the Department decided that this was the last straw. With the Marines gone, no one was really providing security for the chancery, so that our classified documents and communication codes were essentially vulnerable. That meant that we had to take turns sleeping overnight in the chancery because without guards it was easily penetrable. We immediately started a destruction program. Our lives were less than idyllic without the Marines standing watch.

We were ordered by the Department to close the Embassy and to leave the country. I was literally given 48 hours to do that. I didn't believe that it was possible in that time-frame. We had leases that had to be broken, property owned by the U.S. to be left in the hands of a protecting power—which we had to find—we had local employees who would have to be terminated and paid. We had less than ten Americans at this stage; the Department did send some administrative help—Jim Mark and Pat Kennedy. But I argued about the time-frame and finally was given two weeks, of which ten days were left.

The last persons out—me, with Pat Kennedy and Ed Nosko, our communicator—left on November 10, 1973. The date is fixed in my mind because it was the date of the annual Marine Birthday Ball. We were obviously not going to have a Marine Ball in Kampala, but we went to Nairobi to celebrate that event. We very much wanted to attend the Marine celebration in Nairobi, to honor our own Marine detachment. Not because Amin had kicked

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them out, but because they were such a fine bunch of young men who had helped take care of us under very trying circumstances.

I phoned my wife, who was in Nairobi, having been evacuated the previous month along with all the other dependents, and using some predetermined signals, since we assumed that our phones were tapped or at least that our conversations would be monitored, we discussed the final departure from Uganda and what to do about the Marine Ball. She knew we were going to close the Embassy, but she didn't know when exactly, and I didn't want to risk saying the date and time on the telephone. By talking around the subject, we came to the conclusion that the Marine Ball in Nairobi would start about 6:00 or 6:30. Our flight from Entebbe to Nairobi was to leave at 8:00 p.m. and therefore wouldn't arrive until 9:00. By the time we had landed, gone from the airport to the hotel, changed into a tux, the Ball would be essentially over. So I asked my wife to meet me at the airport; I would already be wearing my tux. We could then go straight from the airport to the Ball, getting there about 9:30 p.m. There were two other staff members with me—Ed Nosko, the communicator, and Pat Kennedy, our acting administrative officer. They didn't have tuxes because they were on temporary assignment. So they wore dark suits.

We drove to Entebbe the evening of November 10. I had the rotors from the code machines in my pockets. When we arrived at the Nairobi airport, we were photographed. There I stood in my tux, pockets bulging. People must have later really wondered. Here were the last American officials from an Embassy that was being closed, in their Sunday finest clothes.

Only one person saw us off at Entebbe Airport; no one from the Protocol Office. In the first place, they didn't know that we were leaving (or at least they were not supposed to know) and secondly, I was an anathema to the Ugandans and to all the other diplomats as well, apparently, by that time. The only person who came out was Henri Dupuy, the No. 2 official in the French Embassy, who was a personal friend, who brought me a little silver loving cup as a farewell gift. We drank a little champagne from it. He was the only one who

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had enough guts to see us off, although many in the rest of the diplomatic community were well aware of what we were doing. It wasn't that hard to figure out, although there was one person who didn't know and that was Idi Amin, whom we were anxious to keep in the dark, not knowing what his reaction might have been. He might have locked us up to keep us from leaving.

The whole evacuation process was thoroughly orchestrated. One of the most amusing incidents occurred the day before we left. I was having immense trouble getting the West German Ambassador to agree to be the protecting power. I was trying to get the appropriate instructions sent to him from Bonn so that he would sign the necessary documents (the Protocol de Remise). That document contains the inventory of all the property and all sorts of instructions about what to do with leases and other obligations. But the Ambassador wouldn't sign the paper; he wouldn't agree that I could say in my final note to the Foreign Minister, in addition to a statement that the Embassy was being closed and that we were leaving the country, that the Federal Republic of Germany would be the protecting power. The Ambassador refused permission for me to say that in my note. So we worked out a very elaborate scenario in which there would be two notes; the first would say that we were closing and leaving. Orally, I would then add to the Foreign Minister that I was still working on getting a protecting power. When I found one, I would tell the Foreign Minister what country it would be, because the host country has to agree to such arrangements. That conversation would have been just a charade because the second note, announcing West Germany's appointment as the protecting power, would have followed in a couple of hours.

But I was called in suddenly to see the Foreign Minister, the day before I was supposed to see him according to our prepared scenario. I assumed that he wanted to tell me to close the Embassy, to preempt us; so I typed up our note anyway and put it inside a newspaper that I would carry with me. I had in mind that if the Foreign Minister had asked us to leave, I would pull out the note informing Uganda that we were closing the Embassy and hand it to him. Of course, I didn't know what the Foreign Minister wanted to talk about, but I

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wanted to be ready because it was just possible that the Government had become aware of our plans. The second note I would have delivered later.

I walked to the Foreign Ministry, mentally “war gaming” all the possible eventualities. (I had just sold my car to a Ugandan buyer, so I had no transport.) All of a sudden, a car carrying a diplomatic license plate pulls up next to me, brakes screeching. Out pops the East German Ambassador, Hans Fischer. He walks over to me, takes my hand in both of his and launches into a short speech of regrets about what had happened. He said that I had been such a wonderful colleague, but that he understood that such events take place. I was absolutely flabbergasted. Before I could really respond in kind, the Ambassador got back into his car and drove off. Our departure was supposed to be secret; so much for that objective.

I deduced from this episode that the East Germans, well known throughout the world for their expertise in “bugging,” had done the same thing for Idi Amin—they may in fact have taped the conversations and listened to them first and therefore were fully familiar with our plans. Later on, I decided that that wasn't true at all, but that in fact it was the West German Ambassador who had “spilled the beans” to his East German colleague for probably intra-German reasons. That really blew my mind. Here I was trying to work a very elaborate secret scheme so that I, and our staff, would escape alive and the West German Ambassador blabs it all over town.

In any case, I met with the Foreign Minister—a poor guy named Colonel Ondoga, who had been the Ugandan envoy to the Soviet Union. The previous Foreign Minister, who had some kind of familial relationship to Amin, had fled the country. Then Amin decided to militarize his cabinet and called the poor Colonel back from Moscow to become the Foreign Minister. Ondoga was not dumb. He was from one of the Northern tribes—probably an Acholi. A lot of his colleagues had been killed; he knew what the score was. He reached Nairobi from Moscow and began to make phone calls to find out what his fate in Kampala was really likely to be—execution or Foreign Minister: those were the two

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choices. There was no third alternative, even though he would have preferred to retire to his farm. He didn't get a really good answer; so he just waited in Nairobi.

I was watching the news on a Friday evening, about three weeks before our departure. Amin went on TV, as he loved to do, and gave the Colonel an ultimatum. If the Colonel had not arrived in Kampala by midnight of the next day to be sworn in as Foreign Minister, his life would be in real danger. Ondoga must have heard the same broadcast. So he scurried to Kampala. He was sworn in right away. His first order of business, on instructions from Amin, was to kick our Marines out the following Monday. So I was Colonel Ondoga's first foreign visitor, to receive this order. That was not a good beginning for him.

So when he called me in about three weeks later, it was our second meeting. I was prepared to tell him that we were closing the Embassy. Now the worst thing a cabinet officer could do in the Ugandan government was to take bad news to Amin. That is what got ministers dragged out of cabinet meetings and permanently out of sight. Of course, that rapidly cut off much important information from the ministers to Amin, because none of them wanted to take the chance of making his last report. The country degenerated rapidly. So I felt very sorry for the Colonel and I wanted to make it as easy as possible for him, although my first priority was to get all the Americans out alive. I wanted to stretch things out long enough to get to the airport before he had to say anything to Amin. I was counting on the fact that the Foreign Minister would be so frightened by the news that he would procrastinate and not tell Amin anything until he really had to. Fortunately, Amin was in the North.

When I met with the Foreign Minister, he said that he had a complaint to lodge; Uganda felt that the security provided for its U.N. mission in New York was inadequate; the Ambassador's office or home had received a threatening phone call. The Foreign Minister went on to explain that he had been ordered to make this complaint. I was very relieved, because we were not being kicked out. I gave him all sorts of assurances that we took

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seriously our obligation to protect U.N. missions and that we would provide extra police and so on.

Then I made a sudden decision, mainly because of the encounter with the East German Ambassador. I felt that if I had waited another day, our plans would be all over town. So I handed the note over to him, which I had hidden in the newspaper. The Colonel read it; he obviously didn't understand it at all. It was all diplomatic gobbledygook to him. The Chief of Protocol sat next to the Foreign Minister and when he heard me say something about a "protecting power" he nearly fell off the sofa. He understood the content of the note. He turned to me and asked: "Are you leaving?" I said: "Yes, we are leaving." Both broke into a cold sweat; the Foreign Minister could just visualize his conversation with Amin reporting our departure. Amin would hold him personally responsible and vent his frustrations on the poor Colonel. There was nothing I could do to help him. I left his office.

As I said, all this took place 24 hours earlier than was intended by our scenario. Out of sheer fear, I moved out of our house; I was afraid, now that the news of our departure was disclosed, someone might come to get me. I chose to move to the Ambassador's residence, because I thought that was the least likely place that they would look for me. It had been vacant since March or April; there were no servants; no one occupied the house, but it was a place to sleep. Then I rethought my plans and went instead to the home of the West German Embassy's number two official, who was a personal friend. His views were 180 degrees opposite from his Ambassador's; he was ready to be very cooperative. We watched the news together at about 6:00 p.m. of the night we were supposed to leave. The commentator denounced me personally—about all the crimes I had committed, about what a coward I was, fleeing the country without telling anybody. It was a scathing diatribe against the U.S. in general and me specifically. The worst thing was that he injected into his commentary something about who was taking over our property; i.e., the West Germans—"those well-known Nazis and criminals of long standing," according to the Ugandan commentator.

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If I had not already gotten the West German Government's approval for the second note, which I had already delivered, I would have been in real trouble. The West German Ambassador would have accused me of having embroiled him and his government in our affairs. That also probably explains why no one wanted to see me off at the airport, because I obviously had become a pariah. A couple of weeks after we left Uganda we read in the Nairobi papers that a body identified as that of Colonel Ondoga had been fished out of Lake Victoria. As usual, Amin had punished the messenger for bringing him a message he didn't like.

As I said, I left Entebbe in my tuxedo so that I could attend the Marine Ball in Nairobi. As we walked into the Ball, we got a big cheer because, I guess, we had gotten out of Uganda alive. There were a lot of our Embassy people there who had left a few at a time during the previous days or weeks.

To go back in time—talking about “alive”—back in early March of 1973, our Ambassador to the Sudan, Cleo Noel, and his deputy, Curt Moore, had been murdered by the “Black September” group—the first operation for which that group claimed credit (they also killed the Belgian Chargé, Eid). After that event, Amin went on the TV and praised that operation as a blow for freedom for the Palestinians or some other kind of idiotic statement. There was a PLO representative in Kampala, and as a matter of fact, the PLO conducted some kinds of training for Ugandan troops. I considered them a very dangerous presence, although they never threatened us. I say this not because I lack sympathy for the Palestinians, but because of Amin's attitudes. I used to talk to the PLO representative—Mr. Sheik, I think, was his name—since we both had a Lebanese connection—I having been born there and he had some family connection, as well as being an engineering graduate of the American University of Beirut. I thought that the better part of valor was to talk to Sheik and try to stay on good terms with him; it was better than making an enemy of him. I obviously didn't do any real business with him, but we exchanged social pleasantries as we stood in various receiving lines. So he was not a problem, but when there is a Chief

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of State who is in effect praising a terrorist act against American diplomats, it gives you pause. Some terrorist groups, like Black September, could easily have interpreted Amin's comments as an invitation to do something in Uganda, since the Chief of State seemed to be so supportive. They could have easily assumed if they had killed someone in Uganda they might earn praise rather than jail. That was the danger.

Furthermore, we were very close geographically to the Sudan and “Black September” could have easily gotten to Kampala. After the murders in Khartoum, we of course received the usual cable from the Department instructing us to re-examine our security, which is one of the most annoying sorts of cables that one can receive, because, at least in all the situations with which I am familiar, an Embassy examines and re-examines its security all the time, particularly in a place like Kampala. To be instructed to do what you have already done over and over again is really annoying since you know that the Department's cable is only intended to cover its behind and has little to do with the Embassy's problems. If something should ever happen to an Embassy, the Department could always point to the cable and say that it had warned the field; if something happens, it must have done so because the Embassy had not re-examined its security or in some other way screwed things up. It is about the most annoying kind of telegram that the field can receive, and I can't tell you how many I have gotten. It should be obvious that an American establishment overseas does everything it can to improve its security; after all, it is the American employees whose lives are at stake. Our reaction was that we had re-examined our security and that in fact it was a hopeless situation. The last straw, of course, was Amin's public attitude toward the murders in Khartoum.

In the aftermath of that tragic event, I called everyone to a meeting—the Country Team at that stage was the whole Embassy. We may have missed a communicator who was on duty, but everyone else was there. We produced, after several long sessions, what became a famous telegram. In those days, we were so short-handed that I was often doing my own typing much of the time; at the end, all of my own typing, as my secretary had been evacuated. We had initiated a practice, which I had worked out with

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the communications officer, of putting an easily remembered number on key telegrams, so that I could refer to them in subsequent messages without having to consult a log. I wanted to keep them in my head, the key telegram numbers, rather than on a list, which we were not supposed to do for good security reasons. Keeping the numbers in my head saved me the trouble and time of going rummaging in the files. We had worked out a system which assigned an easily remembered number to a significant cable, instead of the normal sequential number.

In any case, the famous telegram was numbered “Kampala 900.” It was the 900th telegram from the beginning of the year. It reported our reaction to the Khartoum incident and discussed our security situation. Everyone was more or less in agreement on the conclusion, but they had different rationales for arriving at it. The conclusion was to recommend closing the Embassy about four months later, at the end of June. We concluded that Kampala was an absolutely impossible place to work. Our security was threatened; the assistance personnel couldn't leave town; a madman was running the Uganda government—he was entirely unpredictable. He had declared the U.S. to be the enemy. We had already been forced to send the Peace Corps home. The assistance program was to be officially terminated on June 30; we were going to so notify the Ugandan government, as required by the bilateral agreement, which I had, after much agony and pain, negotiated; it did require notification in case of program termination. We speculated that as soon as we had provided notification, we might be kicked out because Amin probably would not see any value in the Embassy without an assistance program. The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) couldn't operate. Our Ambassador had been recalled. Amin was sending a series of insulting messages to President Nixon. There was no good reason to maintain an official relationship.

We were essentially at that stage left with one *raison d'etre* as an Embassy, namely, protection of American citizens. Our other interests that might have needed protection were minimal. By this time we had informed all the missionaries of the dangers; the Ambassador and the Consular Officer had visited each and every one of them that they

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could find. They all knew what the situation was, but literally didn't care whether the Embassy continued to function or not. The only services that we provided that were of any concern to them were passport renewals, birth registrations, and other similar consular functions. All could be provided by our Embassy in Nairobi, a city they visited from time to time anyway to purchase goods that they couldn't buy in Uganda. Some even expressed the view that they might be better off without an Embassy in Kampala; it might lure Amin to look elsewhere for his scapegoats. Missionaries tend to look at things in a very personal, but not totally illogical, way. They have the strong faith that they can survive on their own without assistance or protection from a temporal power.

So there wasn't really any good reason to have an official American presence in Uganda. In "Kampala 900" we suggested that the Embassy be closed on June 30, concomitant with the termination of the assistance program, and the end of our fiscal year. (It might help the budget to close a post.) We expected that all assistance personnel would have actually left the country before then; at most, only the director and some administrative personnel would have remained in Kampala by the end of June. We would have had three to four months left to prepare for the closing of all American programs; that would have been enough for an orderly process.

Unfortunately, the cable included a paragraph, stimulated by the Khartoum incident, about bodyguards or Marine guards—requirements to upgrade our security situation. That paragraph was in direct response to the Department's admonition to improve security. The cable was finally ready on a Friday evening. I put an "IMMEDIATE" precedence on it. It landed in the Department late Friday afternoon. It apparently upset people because it sounded to them almost hysterical, as some have told me. I thought the telegram was a totally logical, cold-blooded assessment of a very unpleasant situation. We did include a variety of options and arguments pro and con for each. But apparently the conclusion that we should close the Embassy was so shocking that Washington people tended to interpret the whole message as somewhat hysterical. (Some months later, John Gunther Dean, who was considering me to be his DCM in Cambodia, checked with some people in the

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AF Bureau on my performance as DCM in Kampala. Someone told him that at times I had been “a little shrill.” My guess is that this was a reference to the Kampala 900 episode.)

The Department didn't focus on the June 30 target date. They read the message as a request for “immediate” termination. The reason I had slugged it that way, with an “immediate” precedence, was because I wanted an urgent reply on the Marine Guard issue—we had one Marine who was leaving and not being replaced. The “Gunny”—the head of the Marine detail—asked me to try to get an urgent reply because he was going to be short of personnel. He wanted the cable to be repeated to Marine Guard headquarters in Beirut and Frankfurt; he had been sending messages there without getting any response. But the cable's priority designation may have thrown the Department off the main conclusion.

The attitude in Washington was, in general, that “we open embassies; we don't close them.” The Department sent us an inspector; obviously he was sent to look me over because they thought I might have gone off my rocker. We were due for an inspection in any case, but the Inspector General, Tom McElhiney, had postponed it in light of the local security situation. He must have been impressed by the same things we were. In addition, he probably considered that an inspection at that time would have been very disruptive, as undoubtedly it would have been (although there were so few of us left that there would not have been much to inspect in any case). But after mulling over “Kampala 900,” the Department decided to send a special inspector; his only mission was to decide whether we were still sane.

The inspector decided not only that we had lost our cool, but that there had been a high level of disagreement among the Embassy staff on my recommendation for closure of the Embassy. We had a knock down, drag out argument. Wen Coote, who was our Washington office director, was in Kampala on a routine visit at the same time as the inspector, and he sided with me after his arrival. It was a very strange experience. The Inspector General had requested, as an exceptional matter, that we let the special

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inspector stay with us in our house. He didn't want his inspector to use a hotel—for security reasons; under normal circumstances, for obvious reasons, inspectors do not stay in any of the homes of an Embassy's staff, lest they lose their objectivity through accepting someone's hospitality. My attitude was that if an inspector couldn't stay at a hotel for security reasons, then surely our position had merit. After all, the inspector was an anonymous person; no one would go after him; no one knew who he was or why he was in Kampala—he could have been a tourist or a businessman or a journalist. If he were staying with us, the Ugandans would assume that he was connected with the U.S. government and would certainly at a minimum keep track of him.

I agreed to let the inspector stay with us. We fed him well (my wife was still at post)—these were pre-evacuation days (we didn't evacuate until four months later). We watched the TV news, which as usual consisted of Amin putting on one of his typical performances, raving and ranting. I thought it very amusing; the inspector was horrified. He had not experienced anything like that before; we were somewhat immune to the horrible aspects and concentrated on the humorous parts. When the program was over, the inspector said: “You know, I am proud of people like you who are willing to serve in posts like this. If it weren't for people like you, Bob and Louise, we wouldn't be able to staff these posts. These people are like monkeys who have just come down out of the trees.” Except for the unabashed racism, he sounded like he had come around to our point of view.

In fact, it didn't turn out that way at all. He went around to interview each of the staff members. Practically each person gave a different reason for why they had reached the conclusion to recommend closure. The inspector concluded from these varying judgments that there was great dissension in the Embassy. He failed to note that all of the staff had reached the same conclusion; they had just all reached it through different lines of reasoning. The aid director said that he had no reachable program objectives left and therefore had no reason to stay in Kampala; even with money (which was to run out in June), he couldn't get his technicians into the field; it was useless to provide assistance to Uganda under the circumstances. His technicians' counterparts had been killed; he had no

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justification for remaining and therefore he agreed with the recommendation to close his part of the mission.

Another staff member would note that although he had no fear for his own personal security—he could go about town without fear—he didn't like Amin's attitude. He didn't like the fact that Amin was constantly sending us nasty messages; there was no reason for trying to maintain a relationship under the circumstances.

As I said, we had a long and disagreeable argument with the inspector. He nevertheless sent a long message which in effect supported the Department's view that the Embassy should remain open. We of course were never given a real rationale. We were instructed to reduce the size of the staff; to end the assistance program; and to let any staff member, like the PAO, who did not feel comfortable, return to the U.S. In fact, the PAO remained almost to the end. We evacuated all families, closed the school, etc.—all of this was done gradually. But it was clear to me that the end was just a matter of time.

For me personally this episode with the inspector and the Department in general was quite ironic. Here I was doing a job as a long-term Charg# d'Affaires, in a highly visible position, in an assignment that one might think was “career-enhancing,” recommending strongly that my job be abolished, that the embassy I was running be closed, and with no prospects for an onward assignment for me. I was quite aware that a considerable number of eager beavers in the Department had already been maneuvering to replace me as DCM in Kampala, since my two-year tour was supposed to end in the summer of 1973, and my job was up for grabs. There were apparently a lot of officers who thought they could make a name for themselves as the Charg# dealing with Idi Amin. In the event the Department kept me on in Kampala, deciding I suppose that this was no time to change horses in mid-stream, so to speak, and that it made no sense to send someone new out to Kampala when the whole situation there was so tenuous.

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Do you remember my mentioning having written a short story back in 1955 when I worked at the Agriculture Department, a story about a bureaucrat who gets into a heap of trouble for suggesting that his own job be abolished? My view is that the Department ought to take seriously any recommendation by an officer that would result, directly or indirectly, in his own job being abolished. If he's willing to do that to his own career, well, his recommendation ought to be taken very seriously indeed. Balance that situation against the normal one in any bureaucracy, that is, the thousands of recommendations that come in which would have the effect of building up the officer's personal empire.

For all of us in the Embassy it was quite ironic that after Amin kicked out all of our Marines we were instructed to close the Embassy in 48 hours. These instructions went to the same people who months earlier had recommended a termination program to be implemented over a four month period. Had the Department taken our original advice, we would not have had to suffer the indignity of the Marines being kicked out. And we would have had plenty of time to close the mission in a leisurely and orderly fashion.

Q: Did you really have any hopes of closing the Embassy “voluntarily” and quietly as you had recommended?

KEELEY: We did. After all, there was only one person who mattered whom we wanted to keep in the dark and that was Idi Amin. We were counting on the fact that no one wanted to take bad news to him. In planning our scenario for the last ten days, we were very conscious of delaying as late as possible the official steps that an Embassy must take before it closes; e.g., official notification, the appointment of a protecting power, getting permission from the host government, terminating leases, etc. As I said, we were planning to do everything as close to the end of the period as possible so that we would not make our moves too publicly and thereby forestall any inclination, if any existed, for someone telling Amin what we were up to.

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As it worked out, we made it just by hours. The broadcast I mentioned denouncing Americans and me in particular was aired about an hour before we were scheduled to leave for the airport. As long as he was broadcasting, Amin would not have thought of impeding our departure. So we were close to the end; our main goal was not to give Amin a week to react.

I should mention another event in this period that should be more fully researched and documented. The back-up material is all in the Department's files. The most grievous aspect of our relations with Amin's government was the murder of two Americans by his troops in Mbarara Barracks (Mbarara is a town in southwest Uganda—one of the provincial capitals). The two were Nick Stroh, a free lance journalist, a stringer for a number of American newspapers, a member of the Stroh beer family from Detroit, and Robert Seidle, who was a visiting professor of anthropology and sociology at Makerere University and who was writing a book about the condition and status of aging missionaries in Uganda. These two were murdered around July 10, 1971. I had arrived in Uganda on July 7. I therefore had never met either one. I met Mrs. Stroh at a party being given by my predecessor on the 8th or 9th. It was a farewell party by the Nalles for their friends and an introduction to Uganda for the Keeleys.

The two Americans were murdered in rather brutal fashion. They had gone to Mbarara together. Stroh wanted to investigate a report that there had been a massacre in the barracks there—about 60 people killed. These sorts of things went on all the time. But it was an important story, he thought. He made a serious mistake. But that doesn't mean he should have paid for it with his life. He walked right into the barracks and began asking questions. He had planned to interview the commanding officer about this rumored massacre. Since it was a fact and not just a rumor, it was obviously not a subject for discussion. So Stroh was seized and the troops also went for Seidle, who was at a local hotel. Seidle had just finished his tour at the University and was about to return home. He knew a missionary in the area and had offered to introduce Stroh to him. The missionary

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was someone who was helping Seidle with his research; he was a good source for Seidle's study, and would presumably be a good source for Stroh on the massacre rumor.

They had traveled to Mbarara in Stroh's car. After a few days, their friends began to worry that they had not returned. They were missing. We were notified, probably a couple of days after their intended return date, most likely by Mrs. Stroh. Although I didn't know any of the people involved, I was assigned responsibility for the case. We eventually found that they were dead. At that point, our responsibility was to find out what had happened to them. We insisted that the Ugandan government conduct an investigation and hold a judicial inquiry so that the cause of death could be determined and to bring to justice the perpetrators of any crime that might have been committed. All of this was orchestrated by Clyde Ferguson, who as I mentioned was a very good lawyer. I learned a lot about the law from him and from this case of the two Americans. We were being encouraged by the families to seek a finding of “wrongful death” and compensation from the responsible party, i.e., the Ugandan government, if it were proven that it was in fact Ugandan soldiers who had committed the murders. I worked at least half time, perhaps even more, for the next year on this case, which eventually became a real thorn in our relationship with the Ugandan government.

Amin of course immediately denied that his military had been involved. We, rather soon, knew better because a priest came to us and told us what he thought had transpired. He thought that the two Americans had been seized, taken into the barracks and murdered there. Then the bodies and the car were disposed of so that no evidence would remain. The whole story is very long and contains many interesting aspects and that is why I think it should be fully developed and published some day. It reveals how an Embassy deals with a situation of this kind; in this case we were successful up to a point.

An official inquiry was undertaken by the Ugandan government under pressure from us. About a year later, a “white paper” was issued—a small booklet with a brown cover. I was the Charg# at the time it was issued. I was called in by General Amin and given four

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copies in front of the press. It was a complete whitewash. In effect, it concluded that the Americans had probably disappeared somewhere in Uganda, but that the circumstances could not be determined since their bodies had never been found and that no one could be held responsible. The implication was that the Americans might have run away and fled the country. There was no admission that there had been a murder. Amin was very proud of the report. Talk about a cover-up!

At that point, we decided to move the issue into the judiciary. We forced Amin to open a judicial inquiry. That was primarily Ferguson's work, although he left on transfer home just before the government had concluded its investigation. We forced the government to appoint a judge; they chose a British (Welsh) judge named Jones to preside over the inquiry. The Ugandans had been using British judges as senior judges, except for Kiwanuka, the Chief Justice; the Ugandans had not had an opportunity to train enough judges of their own to handle appeals. Like most British colonies, they had developed a small cadre of lawyers and some judges, but the development of a judiciary is a slow process after independence. So they had to use foreigners for their senior courts, who were seconded to Uganda, but still paid by the British government. These were good judges. The one appointed to conduct the inquiry was Justice Jones. At the request of the Stroh family, which was very wealthy, we employed a lawyer—Godfrey Binaisa—who later became President of Uganda after Amin's overthrow and before Obote's return. He was an interesting character, a Muganda and a very good lawyer. He was also a friend of ours, but he was chosen because a) he was willing to take the case—most of his colleagues would have shied away because if they had won they might not have lived to enjoy the victory, b) because he had a particular personal animosity towards Amin and sought this opportunity to give Amin a black eye, judicially speaking, and c) he had unlimited courage. The Seidle family was not represented. Binaisa in effect spoke for both families of the deceased; his fee was to be 25 per cent of any monetary compensation awarded to Stroh's widow and children. Seidle had been divorced and his family had no money; so they went along with the Strohs. Godfrey pursued the case very diligently; the judge did an excellent job. The

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main problem was that there were no eye witnesses or at least none who were willing to testify. The remains of the bodies had never been found, nor the car. So the case was shaky, although we were convinced that we knew what had happened. Stroh had gone into the barracks, explained that he was there to chase down a rumor that sixty people had been massacred. The troops took him into custody, then went to pick up Seidle, and killed both of them brutally.

I used to meet somewhat clandestinely with Godfrey and very clandestinely with Justice Jones. The latter meetings were arranged through an interesting channel. The Coca Cola representative, Nikolaos Calogeropoulos, known as Niko Calo, was a friend. We used to converse over the phone in Greek, which was unknown in Uganda. We would thus arrange meetings between Justice Jones and myself through messages passed from Calo to Jones—they were fellow Masons and used Masonic language to arrange these meetings. I used this channel to pass papers to Jones without Godfrey being involved because it would have been too risky for him to be involved and probably improper in any case—an Embassy can do almost anything legal it can get away with, because of diplomatic immunity.

By sheer luck, after the judicial inquiry had been going on for a while, a defector showed up. He had been a lieutenant in the Ugandan Army, who had fled Uganda, as so many of his compatriots had and were doing. He walked into our Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, where Tony Ross was the Ambassador. The lieutenant saw someone in the Embassy; he wanted money since he was practically starving. In exchange for that and for some help to become re-established, he was willing to tell what had happened to Stroh and Seidle. It turned out he had been the intelligence officer of the Mbarara army command at the time of the murders. It was the kind of luck that occurs only in fiction. Out of the clear blue sky, we got a message from our Embassy in Tanzania saying that the former lieutenant had walked in and had told the full story. We had never heard of this man and were wondering whether this was actually true. His name was Tibihika. The Embassy's report rang true and was consistent with all the other information we had.

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So we asked for and got an affidavit from Lieutenant Tibihika—signed and notarized. The Embassy wrapped it in red ribbons and pouched it to us. I took it to Godfrey, who presented it to Justice Jones in court. We alerted the Judge in advance. He was thrilled, because that is what he needed to break the case open.

The Judge—who showed tremendous courage during the whole inquiry—moved the whole court up to a highway in the Northwest part of Uganda, way beyond Mbarara, to look for the car. The Judge, the lawyers, the clerks, policemen, everybody went on this safari. The lieutenant had said that, although he had not witnessed the murders, he had been ordered to dispose of the bodies and the car. Soldiers under his direction had taken the bodies, burned them, and thrown the remains into a stream. They were burned in barrels, leaving only ashes and bones behind. The lieutenant told us exactly where the remains had been thrown, but there was little hope of finding anything more than a year later. The car, which was a small one, like a VW beetle, had been loaded onto a military lorry and driven miles and miles away in a different direction from the site of the disposal of the bodies. They set the car on fire and pushed it into a ravine; it didn't roll far enough down the hill, so they went down and pushed it some more. He told us where those events took place—a few hundred meters beyond a specific highway maintenance camp.

So the Ugandan group went looking for the bodies' remains. They found nothing; after all, this was more than a year after the event. Everything had been washed away; there were no traces at all. So the Judge and the group went looking for the car. They, along with some policemen and local people, searched along the highway, looking into ravines, but they couldn't find anything. They were all there tramping up and down this highway. It must have been quite a spectacle.

Finally, Godfrey spotted someone walking back from the highway maintenance camp. That fellow turned out to be a crew member of the highway repair operations. He lived in the camp. The worker came up to Godfrey and asked what all these people were doing. When he was told that they were looking for a car, he apparently immediately remembered

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an incident going back about 18 months, an incident which seemed very strange to him. He said that an army lorry had pulled up; on the back of it was a car—a perfectly good car. The soldiers had dropped the car out of the truck and poured gasoline all over it and then set it on fire. The worker could not understand why anyone would want to destroy a perfectly good car! He further told the assembled group that the troops let the car burn and then had pushed it down into the ravine. But which ravine? Where?

The worker then volunteered to show everyone exactly where this had happened. When they got to the point, there was the car, covered with underbrush, but with its license plate still on it and the engine serial number still on it so that it was very easy to see, and to prove in court, that this was Stroh's car. Photographs were taken. For the Judge, that was sufficient evidence because this bit of evidence fully supported the lieutenant's affidavit. The bodies may not have been found, but now the Judge had sufficient evidence and the testimony of an eyewitness; he could finally make a finding. There was no longer any question that the original government story—that the two Americans had fled Uganda to go to Japan—just wasn't factually correct. The car was photographed; all other evidence was taken by the court. The highway repairman's testimony was taken.

So the court came back to Kampala and rendered a judgment. It held the Mbarara Barracks' commanding officer responsible for the atrocity. That C.O. was one of Amin's cohorts; in fact, he was not present when the Americans were grabbed because that morning he had been called to a meeting in Kampala of the Supreme Military Council, chaired by Amin. He had later allegedly checked with Amin personally on what to do with the Americans. He was given the order to do away with the Americans. That testimony, which came primarily from the lieutenant, pointed the finger directly at Amin, although the Mbarara commanding officer was held responsible for the actual murders. However, none of the perpetrators were ever punished; they got off scot free.

A local British lawyer, by the name of Wilkinson, was hired by Justice Jones as a sort of special prosecutor, representing the State. He also investigated events, in addition

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to Jones. At the end the judgment was an award of \$100,000 for the Stroh family and \$75,000 for the Seidle family. That was determined on the basis of the ages of the children who were left fatherless. The judgment was based on what the court figured out it would cost to raise them and to educate them. We have to remember that this was 1972; today the judgment would have run into the millions, but at that time it was the largest judgment that had ever been awarded in Uganda for anything. I actually got the checks, from Amin himself. I deposited the money in the bank for the two families and paid Binaisa his \$25,000, which we deposited in a New York bank for him.

The American families and their lawyers were much more interested in getting a guilty verdict and punishment for the perpetrators. But there were wills and trust funds involved that had remained unsettled while the judicial investigation and the trial were ongoing. If there had been no finding of wrongful death, a lot of the Americans' families financial questions would have remained unresolved. But we had insisted on some kind of compensation as evidence of admission on the part of the Ugandan government of wrongful activity. After the trial, all of the three principals—Jones, Wilkinson, and Binaisa—left Uganda. They had to, if they valued their lives. We helped the British Embassy spirit Justice Jones over the border into Kenya in the middle of the night. Before leaving he asked me to call on him in his chambers, and he surprised me by turning over to me his complete file on the inquest, for safe-keeping, he said, as he expected the Ugandans to destroy his files after he left. He then retired to Wales on a British pension. Kiwanuka should have been so lucky. The whole story was very interesting and should be told in its full details by someone. I'd like to write it myself.

By the way, when I closed the Embassy in Kampala I pouched Justice Jones' file to the Uganda desk in Washington. It sat in a safe there for some years, when I got word from someone that it was about to be tossed out—burned, that is—because of a general weeding-out of the files. The file still had my buck-slip on it, which is why I was called—to

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be asked if I wanted it—otherwise it was going to be burned. Needless to say, I went and picked it up, and I still have it. For safe-keeping.

Q: We are now at the end of 1973. At that time you returned to Washington where you were assigned as Alternate Director for East African Affairs.

KEELEY: Right. The Director was Wendell Coote. I was his deputy; the “alternate” was a slightly elevated title for deputy. I was really the Ethiopia desk officer because the deputy's primary responsibility was Ethiopia, which at the time was considered the most important, complex and active country in the East African Office. Essentially, the work of the office was split between Wen Coote and myself: I did Ethiopia and he did everything else. That happens in geographic offices in which one country consumes more time than the others. I stayed in that office for less than six months. I had to deal with one major event: the revolution that overthrew the Emperor. I had expected to be on the desk for two years, but in June 1974 I went to Cambodia.

I went to the East Africa Office because I was known there. Uganda was part of that Office's responsibilities. As I mentioned, Wen Coote, the Office Director, had been in Uganda at the time of the inspection. He engineered my assignment to his office. I had hoped to go to Paris as a member of the Political Section, but the officer in Washington who was handling Ethiopia also wanted the Paris assignment and he was closer to the assignment process in Washington. By the time I arrived in Washington, he had already moved on to Paris, which my replacing him on the Ethiopia desk had made possible.

The Washington assignment was kind of a shock. After leaving Kampala, I had visited all the posts in East Africa that I was supposed to back-stop in Washington, except for Dar-es-Salaam. I had already been there and furthermore the Ambassador, Beverly Carter, didn't want me there even for a visit because I had become so “controversial” after Uganda; he was afraid I might cause some problems. At least that is what I was told. I somehow had become associated with Idi Amin, who was the devil incarnate at least

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for the Tanzanians. I guess Carter felt that they weren't sophisticated enough to draw a distinction between Amin and Keeley. It seemed peculiar to me, but he must have thought that it would stir up some controversy in the press or that I might have to answer some questions; I guess he just didn't want to run the risk of stirring up any trouble. Since I had already been to Dar, it was not an important matter.

But I visited Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Zambia, and Malawi. Nevertheless, I knew very little about Ethiopia when I became the "alternate." No sooner had I found my new office, than the revolution broke out in Ethiopia, which effectively overthrew the Emperor. That was the critical event in modern Ethiopian history; probably the most important event since the Mussolini invasion. It was the end of an era.

I had a serious problem in that job because no one knew what was going on in Addis. I didn't know; the intelligence community didn't know; our military didn't know. It was initially one of the most mysterious coups that ever took place. We couldn't even find out the names of the members of the "Derg" (the coup group). They had a general as a front man. Mengistu's name never emerged during the whole period I worked on Ethiopia. And yet, he turned out to be the key figure after he eliminated his rivals. Our problem was that we could not tell our superiors, all the way to the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, what was happening. Kissinger showed a great interest in Ethiopian affairs because he had a tendency to personalize foreign affairs. He knew the Emperor, as did President Nixon. The Emperor had made regular state visits to Washington for many years. He was a major figure on the world stage and had been for many years, probably longer than anyone else at that time.

In any case, the Emperor was deposed and was under some kind of palace arrest. And we couldn't find out what his situation was. Our military had had very good relations with the Ethiopian military, whom we had trained for many years. We had a major base in Asmara. Yet the officers who made up the Derg were unknown to our people. The officers we knew well were not part of the conspiracy; they were loyal to the Emperor and could

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not tell us what was going on. I can only remember the immense difficulty we had in trying to figure out what was going on. I was given the assignment of writing a contingency paper or something like it; I wrote it over and over and over again; it never seemed to be satisfactory to my superiors including the Secretary because it simply lacked good analysis of what was happening in Ethiopia; we just didn't know and no one else knew. I tapped all the Washington sources I could think of. The paper was the result of a group effort. I was the principal drafter, but it was the product of a task force. We kept taking the paper to the Policy Planning Staff—I believe it was to Brandon Grove, who was a deputy in Policy Planning—but it kept being rejected because it was not based on any facts. The facts were just not available because the Derg was a very secretive group.

They were trying to overthrow the Emperor without appearing to do so. He was still around, but had lost power, although not completely. The coup makers kept matters deliberately very murky. The Embassy was in the dark; Washington was in the dark. A new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs had just been installed—Don Easum. He asked for a briefing, which I gave him. I am sure I didn't tell him anything that he didn't know already. The problem wasn't my fault or anybody's fault; there was just a dearth of information. Yet we had to propose a policy; we had a major military assistance program and an outstanding request for its renewal. The new Ethiopian government supported that renewal request. We didn't know how to respond since we didn't know the government or what it stood for. The Junta hid its Marxist leaning very well in the beginning, as well as its blood-thirstiness. They kept their ideology and approach to issues very murky.

I remember particularly a series of events which were most unpleasant. Don Easum was in New York, probably at the U.N. He returned and went to a Secretary's staff meeting where he was supposed to brief on Ethiopia. He couldn't say much because we lacked information. Secretary Kissinger was most unhappy; for weeks he had been sending messages and notes to us asking for information; he wanted to know what was going on; what was happening to the Emperor? What should we do about the military assistance? We couldn't come up with satisfactory answers. At the staff meeting Kissinger was rather

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sarcastic and, in my view, mean to Easum. He said something along the lines of: “Well, if we can't figure it out here in State, why don't we reconvene in the NSC [National Security Council] in the White House on Wednesday morning; maybe we can do a better job over there.”

So indeed we trooped over to the White House; I was not accustomed to attending such high level meetings, but I was the supposed “expert” in town or at least would have known as much as anyone. The CIA Director gave a briefing. Brent Scowcroft was the note-taker since Kissinger was at the time both the Special Assistant to the President and the Secretary of State. Kissinger was in the chair as the NSC Advisor. The military was represented and said that they had no more military assistance money; by the end of the meeting, they had found another \$20 million—a figure pulled out of a hat. Easum did the best he could; I was sitting behind him as staff support—I didn't speak. The outcome was that Kissinger said to “give the Emperor what he wanted,” which greatly depressed me.

I told Easum when we returned to the Department that I didn't understand how that could be the decision when we had been trying to explain to the Secretary that we didn't know what the status of the Emperor was, whether he was still in charge. We had no way of knowing what he wanted; he may not have wished that the new group get anything. It would not be under his control; the new money would not help his situation as far as I could figure out. I thought that the decision was an over-personalization of a situation. We were giving a foreign leader support that was intended to give him a boost when we didn't have the slightest idea what would happen to the money. We really didn't know whether we should increase the fire-power of that particular Ethiopian military organization.

I should add that Kissinger, in typical fashion, turned the matter into a sort of joke. He said: “Let's give the Emperor what he wants as long as he promises never again to give any of those long toasts that he usually gives at the White House.” Apparently the Emperor had made a state visit during which he had given a toast that had just gone on and on and on; no one could eat their dinner, or their dessert or drink their coffee for a long time. It was

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one of Kissinger's personalized jokes—something had to be done to shut the man up, the Emperor. My feeling was that we were unlikely to see the Emperor in the White House ever again.

I sensed that Kissinger wanted good information about the real situation on the ground, who was in charge, what their policies were likely to be, etc. Then he wanted good, sensible recommendations from us on what policies should be pursued. But we were unable to satisfy these requirements. For me it was an extremely frustrating situation.

Q: Did the United States have any interests in Ethiopia beyond the welfare of the Emperor?

KEELEY: Indeed we did. It was fundamental that we wanted to maintain the American position in that country. As I mentioned, we had an important military base in Asmara, which was still considered very important as a communications link and as an air base in an era when places for planes to land were still important. Ethiopia was considered a major U.S. outpost near the Middle East. Ethiopia had always been considered a friendly state, a pro-American state during the Emperor's reign. The situation changed drastically after 1974.

Earlier we had been close to Somalia; then it had switched to the Soviet side. Ethiopia was on our side; then it also switched, toward the Soviets, but when that happened, Somalia changed course again and became pro-U.S. The history of that part of the world has been horrendous and continues to be so. Many years later, while in another role, I flew into Mogadishu as part of a Reg Bartholomew entourage to negotiate and sign a base rights agreement with Siad Barre of Somalia. So we had basing rights there until recently; now we don't even have an Embassy there. Sides have been continually switched in the Horn of Africa.

Kissinger was interested in maintaining Western influence in Ethiopia and he hoped that this new military junta would find a role for the Emperor, would reconcile with him

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and would cooperate with him. We recognized that we would have a military regime to deal with, but then the Emperor's regime was hardly democratic. So the coup did not change the authoritarian nature of the Ethiopian regime. It did transform it from one man Haile Selassie rule to what eventually became a one man Mengistu regime—different personalities; same format.

Q: Did the intelligence that Washington was receiving improve over the following weeks and months?

KEELEY: Not during the period I was on the desk. By the time I left, the situation was still as murky as it had been in the days immediately following the coup. That was very frustrating. We had very little contact with the new leadership. The leadership group was very closed; they didn't volunteer anything; we didn't have any access. It was one of those terrible situations in foreign relations when you begin to realize that the most important tool a diplomat has is access. We had virtually none. We were considered hand-maidens of the Emperor and the previous regime, which the new group was in process of dismantling.

Our people on the ground, from all agencies, did not have the right contacts. This was one of the situations, which exist in many parts of the world, where our intelligence services were well locked in to an old regime—the power structure that existed before the coup—from the Emperor through to his military and his intelligence services. I don't know this to be a fact, but I assume that we had a very close liaison relationship with the Emperor's intelligence network and that we were very close to those people. We probably had very little contact with the opposition because it was a subversive, clandestine, secret opposition which succeeded in its coup. Those are the coups, as I said when discussing my experiences in Greece, that you always miss.

Q: This was your second “secret” coup. Can you draw any conclusions about our intelligence capabilities, particularly on other military services, from these two illustrations?

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KEELEY: It was not only the military. It was true on the civilian side, when there is an intelligence service involved, as was true in places other than in Greece. I long ago drew the conclusion that there is a peculiar relationship between the Foreign Service officers and the CIA staff overseas. In many cases, it is the CIA that has the better access to those in power and it is left to the Embassy people to deal with the opposition leaders, which might be done openly or somewhat clandestinely. It seems to me that that situation is the opposite of what it should be. The State Department representatives should be the ones with the close relationship to whatever regime is in power and it should be the intelligence community's responsibility to deal with the opposition, particularly if it is an underground one, because it has the better capability to do so. It is very difficult for a Foreign Service officer, who is an openly identified diplomat, to deal with an opposition which may be considered subversive by the regime in power. But that happens. There is a role reversal; you find young State Department officers who are ferreting out opposition members to gather information from them while the intelligence community reports on what the King or Emperor or President or Dictator is up to.

It is hard to generalize on our relationship with the host country's military establishment. If it is a friendly country with which we are working closely, access is available, particularly since in many cases we are providing military assistance and training. In such situations, we are likely to be working together. That is true in allied countries or in cases of civil wars in which we support the regime in power, even though it may not be an ally of ours.

Difficulties arise when there are elements in a military that may be hostile to its government. Those elements may be planning coups; in any case they are most likely to be very political. These elements would consider the U.S. to be part of the enemy's structure; that is, we are perceived as part of the ruling structure which would try to thwart their objectives. They certainly will try to keep us at arm's length.

Q: Then what happened to you in the Summer of 1974?

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KEELEY: I was rescued from that dismal Ethiopian situation by an old friend, John Gunther Dean. He had just been appointed as our Ambassador to Cambodia, after a tour as Charg# in Laos. With Dean's help the Laotians had just concluded a tripartite peace arrangement and therefore Dean was chosen as Ambassador to Cambodia with instructions to try to arrange a similar peace settlement in Phnom Penh. We called it "a controlled solution," meaning some arrangement to stop the fighting. We weren't very clear on what such an arrangement might look like, but its goal had to be peace for Cambodia without one side or the other being the complete victor. Dean asked me to join him as his Deputy Chief of Mission.

It was not a good time for me to leave because I had contracted malaria in March, which was not diagnosed because my doctor had never seen a case of malaria. I didn't believe it could be malaria because at least three or four months had passed since I had been in East Africa. I thought that that was just too long a gestation period. But it turned out that I had contracted malaria while in East Africa. It was my fault because I had stopped taking the quinine too soon; I should have taken it for a long time after my return. I was not accustomed to being concerned about malaria; Uganda didn't have it because it was too high; same with Kenya. We had been quite lax about taking our prophylactics. But on the coasts—Mombasa or Somalia—malaria is much more prevalent and that is where I got it, while visiting those other posts.

Because it had not been diagnosed, I finally ended up in the hospital. Fortunately, one day my wife and I heard through the hospital's public address paging system the name of a doctor who had worked in Uganda on an NIH-funded cancer research project. I had known him in Kampala because he had asked my advice on whether he as a Jew was safe in Uganda in light of Amin's anti-Israeli diatribes. I suggested that he leave Uganda—the sooner, the better. We asked the nurse in the Washington hospital to see whether she could contact him because I wanted to see him. When he came by, he immediately diagnosed my case as malaria. He took my hand and put it on my spleen, which was

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obviously swollen and proof of my illness. I asked him to tell his findings to my doctor, who had been unable to find the cause of my terrible fevers. He recognized my symptoms immediately as classic malaria. He said that in Uganda, he would have treated me first for malaria; if that didn't work, then he would have looked for other possibilities.

When Dean asked me to join him, I told him that I knew nothing about Southeast Asia. He said that he didn't care; he had served twice in Vietnam (once with CORDS), once in Laos, and he knew Cambodia; he had been at the Paris Vietnam peace talks; he knew the area thoroughly. He told me that he had a specific mission—trying to work out a peace arrangement—which would take all of his time. He needed someone to run the Embassy and he thought that I could handle that well. The fact that I spoke French was also helpful.

I was not enthusiastic. In addition to my physical condition, it meant separation from my family. My wife was not happy about the assignment. She had already been evacuated from Jordan, twice from Uganda. Our children had had their education interrupted several times—my daughter attended eleven schools in her first twelve years of schooling, my son went to fourteen by the end of his high school education. My family would have had either to stay in the United States or live in Bangkok. The latter was not a very good solution.

But I didn't see how I could tell Dean that I wouldn't go without sounding cowardly or uncooperative. I suppose I was somewhat motivated by my unhappiness with the Ethiopian problem and our inability to deal with it. Another assignment was a kind of solution, like Cavafy's famous poem, "Waiting for the Barbarians." By going into the fire, at least you escaped the frying pan. Going to Cambodia was a sort of solution. Furthermore, I wasn't certain I would ever get to Cambodia. The war was progressing very badly and there was a chance that the war might have been over before I ever got there. Of course, the war did not end. I told Dean to talk to my wife; he told me that that was my job, not his.

He did rule right then and there that officers' wives could come to Phnom Penh if they were willing to work. We had some "tandem couples" even then who were already in

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Cambodia with both husbands and wives working. He enlarged the scope of the rules to include non-employed spouses whom he would permit to come to the post under two conditions: a) that they do some useful work—e.g., with refugees, with orphans, with feeding programs, with some kind of relief program, all of which were desperately needed because Phnom Penh, with a normal population of maybe a million, now also held two million refugees, was teeming with people in misery whom we were keeping alive with donations of rice. In addition there were lots of wounded—war victims. The work requirement was a wise decision on Dean's part because the extra help was needed and also to keep the spouses occupied—the worst thing you can have in a situation like Cambodia is to have unemployed people hanging around with lots of time on their hands with nothing to do except complain. And b) that when the Ambassador gave an evacuation order, the spouses would get on a plane that afternoon and leave for Bangkok—no arguments, no ifs, ands or buts.

On the basis of those two conditions, seven or eight wives did join their husbands in Cambodia: Mrs. Dean (Martine), my wife, the major general's wife (he was the head of the Military Equipment Delivery Team and our senior military officer), the AID Director's wife—Martha Olmsted—and a few others. In general, it was the senior officers' wives who came, partly because no school age children could come, so that only childless couples or people with grown children or who had made other arrangements for their children were eligible. We did not leave our kids in Bangkok because the schools there left something to be desired and furthermore, they had a major drug problem already then. My daughter was in college by this time and my son stayed in the U.S. to finish his high school education at a boarding school. In light of these arrangements, I agreed to go to Cambodia.

Dean left for Phnom Penh in March; I reached there in the middle of June. I stayed ten months. When I arrived in Cambodia, the war was going badly. The government only controlled the Phnom Penh enclave and a few other enclaves, less than a dozen. The country to whose government we were accredited literally consisted of only pockets in a countryside most of which was either under enemy control or uncontrolled. All of

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these pockets had to be supplied by air—mostly old, decrepit planes, some of them by helicopters. Some were supplied by air drops. The American bombing had stopped in the previous August by Congressional directive. The prediction then had been that the Lon Nol government would collapse or that the war would be lost if the bombing ceased. That turned out not to be correct. The Embassy was prepared to close in the Fall of 1973, but events did not take as dramatic a turn for the worse as had been anticipated.

One of the important influences in the Cambodian war was the seasons: dry or wet. One season was advantageous for the government's side, the other for the opposition. The principal problem, as seen through my non-military eyes, was essentially that of supply. It was very difficult to get supplies into the country; it could be done by air, but that was extremely expensive. You could barge the supplies up the Mekong from Saigon, but that river was lined with opposition forces that shelled the barges.

We felt that we were very much an appendage of the Vietnam war. The Mekong barges were something to behold. They rode very low in the water, they were covered with wire netting to protect them from rockets and grenades which might explode on the edges rather than amidships. People were dying daily on these barge convoys. It was a terrible mess, but it was the only means of transportation for heavy equipment. We needed lots of war materiel—ammunition, weapons, rice to feed the population, petroleum to run the machines—war machines as well as factory equipment for the few plants still in operation, such as electric plants.

Our Embassy was completely under siege. We had heavy screens built over the chancery buildings so that rockets aimed at us would explode on the screens and away from the roofs and walls of the buildings. The city was rocketed throughout the period we were there. As the rockets came closer and closer from the other side of the river, I checked out our house, which we had inherited from Tom Enders, who had been my DCM predecessor. It was a lovely villa in downtown Phnom Penh. It had been beautifully and tastefully though expensively furnished and decorated by his wife. We hardly ever were

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able to use it for representational purposes; we did not entertain much there. I figured that by moving the bedroom one room away from the river side of the house it would be lots safer because the trajectory of the rockets would probably cause them to only hit a glancing blow to the roof and they might even go over the house entirely rather than go through the pointed roof into our bedroom. The idea was to put one additional wall between the river and our bedroom. The Khmer Rouge were rocketing the city from the far side of the river. Those were the kinds of security precautions one had to take in Phnom Penh in 1974.

I traveled in an armored car, followed by a jeep manned by four or five heavily armed Cambodian soldiers. Sometimes I had a motorcycle in front. The Ambassador had the same protection, although he usually had two outriders. Tom Enders, who was actually the Charg# from September 1973 to March 1974, had had a close brush with death. A pedicab, filled with explosives, was parked at a wall that he passed every day on his way to and from work. One day, as his car drove by, the pedicab was detonated by someone on the other side of the wall. It killed a couple of the motorcycle guards, heavily damaged Tom's car. Enders was barely able to crawl out because of the damage to his car; fortunately he was not injured and was able to walk the rest of the way to the Embassy, where he proceeded to chair his regular staff meeting. Those were the conditions we lived under.

We varied our routes. There were four or five different ways for us to get to the Embassy. I always thought this was a joke because you were bound to follow one of those routes and if they were plotting to get you, they would be patient enough just to wait on one of these routes until you did use it. It was a wonderful system that our security people designed, but it is utterly useless in my opinion. I had the same problem later in Athens; there security was also at a heightened state because our Defense Attache was killed by a terrorist bomb. He was blamed because he had not varied his routes from his home to the chancery. The Department convened an investigative commission after that incident—a new approach to dealing with terrorism. I told them that the varying of routes was a very

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good practice because it increases the terrorists' difficulties in planning their plot, but it was not an answer to the security problem, because to defeat our stratagem they only had to be patient and wait us out. Eventually, every employee had to come down one street or another so that it was just a matter of them waiting until we did.

In general, we did nothing in Phnom Penh except work. We worked seven days each week. We didn't have "office hours;" we rose in the morning, ate breakfast and went to work. We might return for lunch, we might take a nap (throughout my life, since I was a small child, I have taken naps after lunch; it had become part of my health regimen), go back to work, worked usually late into the night. Sometimes we ate dinner with each other; very rarely did we go out because it was very dangerous to be out in the streets both due to terrorism and the indiscriminate rocket attacks. Dinner would be eaten late and then we would go to bed. The next day was the same routine. Days, weeks and months went by without variation. There was no difference between a weekend and a weekday.

The living conditions were as severe as they could possibly be. The workload was very heavy. We were after all running a war, mostly in terms of supplies. We had some military attaches who were forbidden to act as "advisors" but who inevitably at least became consultants on occasion simply because they worked with various Cambodian military units; they attached themselves to these units and were in the normal course of events asked for advice. They were not supposed to be advisors but they just became involved as part of their "regular" approved duties. If a Cambodian officer asked for an opinion, could the American refuse to give it? Was that "advice" under the existing regulations? That was a controversial issue because the press used to suggest that we pretended not to be giving "advice." We obviously were giving all kinds of advice. We were not directing combat; we were essentially working at headquarters trying to bring into Cambodia all the materiel needed to keep the government alive—POL, ammunition, and rice.

The Embassy reported on events. We were dealing with the government. John Dean was working full blast for the whole time we were there trying to work out the "controlled

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solution.” It is something that he and I should write up some day; I have tried to talk him into doing it, but so far unsuccessfully. One day, he may decide that he is ready to do so. At the moment, he is back in Cambodia working for UNESCO, working there from time to time trying to help those people. It may be that the events of 1974-75 are still too close for him, but he would have a very interesting story to tell. Our efforts were ultimately a failure, as everyone knows. Some of the real story about Cambodia can be found in William Shawcross' book “Sideshow,” which discusses the real problem from our point of view. Cambodia was treated as a side issue to the main story of Vietnam.

No one would address Cambodia as a sui generis problem which merited its own analysis and which had its own dimensions that could have been dealt with on their own. It was, until the very last day, seen as an appendage of Vietnam. For example, our final evacuation was delayed for a week because Congress was about to vote on a Vietnam aid package—a large one—which would have enabled us to continue that war. President Ford and Kissinger believed—correctly in my mind, but very much to our detriment in Cambodia—that if we had evacuated Phnom Penh at that point, Congress would have refused to vote further assistance to the Vietnam war effort. It would have used the excuse that the Cambodian evacuation was proof that the war in Southeast Asia was over and that no further support was warranted. So we were held in Phnom Penh, in a very dangerous situation, for an extra week just in order not to influence adversely a Congressional vote on aid to Vietnam. That is just one bit of evidence of how Cambodia was seen in Washington, just as an aspect of the Vietnam war. In the end Vietnam collapsed so soon—a couple of weeks after Cambodia fell—that the timing of our evacuation and the Congressional vote were both totally irrelevant.

Q: Did we have sufficient interests in Cambodia per se to treat it as a separate issue?

KEELEY: It was not a question of seeing it as a separate issue; it was a matter of dealing with it differently, in our opinion, and being handled on its own terms. That is, it should not have been viewed as something that is a bother because it affects Vietnam. There were

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different forces fighting in Cambodia than there were in Vietnam. There were indigenous forces in Cambodia on both sides; there were no Vietnamese involved at the time. The opposing sides had different interests from the Vietnamese and the war itself had a different history. In fact, there should never have been a war in Cambodia. It was the Vietnamese war that washed over into Cambodia, but we had something to do with that. We should have done everything in our power to avoid this “spill-over” effect.

In order to do that, we would have had, from the beginning, to respect Cambodian neutrality, which is what Prince Sihanouk had done throughout his career to the best of his ability until he was overthrown in 1970. Perhaps war became inevitable after that, and maybe it was so important to deal with sanctuaries and the Ho Chi Minh Trail and all of that, that we were forced to enter Cambodia. We really brought the war to Cambodia. The overthrow of Sihanouk, which voided his policy of neutrality, also contributed to the war coming to Cambodia. Nevertheless, the Cambodian conflict had its own dimensions and it was not correct to assume that it could not have been settled unless the Vietnam problem had been resolved. The two wars could have been addressed separately, but that was never done. Laos was separated from other issues in Southeast Asia; the results were not any better from our point of view, and viewing Cambodia separately from Vietnam might not have improved the outcome there either, but it might have reduced the bloodshed.

I was responsible for the management of our Embassy. Congress had limited the size of the total staff—we were entirely integrated as an Embassy. The Military Equipment Delivery Team was part of the Embassy; they were housed together with the rest of the Embassy; they attended all our staff meetings. The Congress limited us to 200 people in an effort to limit our involvement in the Cambodian war. Congress was anxious to not have us involved in the Cambodian civil war as we had been in Vietnam, where we had become one of the combatants. It considered a manpower limitation a good way to reduce the risk of involvement, and it was. The limitation on numbers of people limited what we could do. Inevitably, it forced us to rely more on the Cambodians and not do things for them.

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The manpower limitation made for a much more efficient mission. If we hadn't had that limitation, we could well have had a thousand Americans in Phnom Penh. There would have been people running around without anyone knowing what they were doing; there would have been a lack of coordination and control—that would have been a tremendous problem, as I am sure it was in Vietnam. It would have resulted in an excessive militarization of our efforts. The manpower limitation kept the effort in civilian hands. The Ambassador was completely in charge; there was never any question about that. He used me as his agent to deal with all agencies' personnel. I never had any problems; Dean always supported me and all the staff understood that when I spoke, it was on his behalf; they knew that it would have been very imprudent to try to end-run him or me.

Prior to our arrival, the Embassy had been “cheating” on the manpower limitation. I am sure that our predecessors would not have called what they did in those terms, but that is the way I saw it and that is the way John Dean saw it. The Embassy had a plane—an old DC-5 (a very peculiar aircraft model that wasn't widely used—not many were made), or maybe it was a kind of DC-6. It looked something like a large DC-4. I guess it was actually chartered by AID. It would fly in from Bangkok every morning to bring people in to work in the Embassy and then fly out in the early evening, taking the same or other people out of Cambodia. The head count (or “head-room” count; i.e., can you bring someone else in under the 200 people limitation?) would be taken after the plane had taken off back to Bangkok. The 200 limitation was interpreted as applying only to Americans who were staying in Cambodia overnight.

That interpretation was an evasion of sorts because the plane would sometimes bring in dozens of people—sometimes ten, sometimes twenty, sometimes thirty or forty, all of whom lived in Bangkok. It was a very expensive commute. The people would be rotated; that is, people would be brought in who would stay for a few days to accomplish a certain task—e.g., auditors. When they would leave, another group might be brought in for a few

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days. These were people from all agencies—military, civilian, State, AID, all agencies. This process complied with the law because the count was made only of those who stayed overnight.

Dean and I decided that this process was too much of an evasion and that it might in fact back-fire. Congress could have accused us of evading the law and might well have further restricted the manpower limitation, thereby increasing our problems. You can't really run an Embassy if people are spending much of their time running back and forth across country boundaries. I was in charge of the daily head-count; I would send in a report every day on how many were working for the Embassy on that day and it had to add up to 200 or less. Ambassador Dean decreed that the head-count would be taken at noon, after the plane had disgorged its passengers and before it had taken off again for Bangkok. We continued to bring people in from Bangkok, but we required that any arrivals be balanced by departures the previous evening. That required coordination among all the elements of the Embassy. If the AID mission director came to me to say that he needed someone from Bangkok, he would also have to tell me whom he was sending out, unless I happened to have a vacancy from another Embassy element. I would check up periodically to make sure that there wasn't any cheating.

The new system worked well. We had fewer people and we were much leaner. One day, I took the count at noon and it turned out to be 201. I was a little upset and I went to see the Ambassador. I told him that we would have to report to the Department that we had exceeded our total for that day. I wondered what would happen in the Department. Would the overage be reported to Congress? He thought that it probably would be, since it was a violation of the law. We discussed it for a while; I was unhappy, although we had a good explanation. One of the staff took sick and missed his flight to Bangkok. He stayed home in bed and didn't tell anybody. His replacement, unaware of the illness, came in from Bangkok and made for the overage. It was a perfectly logical and reasonable explanation. Ambassador Dean didn't seem overly concerned.

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Then we decided that in fact this event could be turned into a positive asset. It would display our honesty. All our reports had been at the 198 to 200 level and might have been viewed as just a routine notice. The “blip” that we would be reporting would show that we were following the law conscientiously. We were always up to the maximum or very close to it because as soon as one agency didn't use its full complement for a day, another would immediately levy a request for an extra body. There were always people sitting in Bangkok just waiting for space on the complement so that they could get at their job.

So when we reported the overage, we suggested that the Department report it to Congress as an indication of our bona fides, unless of course the Department thought that Congress would become overly upset and might take some retaliatory measure, like reducing the assistance levels. We suggested that the Department report this inadvertent mistake, for which we apologized, but it did prove our honesty. The personnel limitation was maintained until the very end, when we began to pare down the staff in preparation for our evacuation. In general, the limitation was very annoying; it had been strongly opposed by the Department, but in retrospect, I think Congress had taken the right and wise course. It was a way of limiting our involvement; it made us leaner and more efficient; it kept us on our toes and certainly counteracted the tendency of bureaucracies in difficult situations to simply blossom and keep growing. Every time the bureaucracy faces a problem, its first answer is “more people,” which only creates more problems—more people to worry about, more security problems. Our operation in Phnom Penh did fail in the sense that the government we were supporting may have lost the war and we failed in our attempts to find a peaceful solution. But it was not a failure because of lack of manpower.

Q: Let me ask you a couple of questions at this stage. One, did you have a considerable number of Congressional visits?

KEELEY: Yes, we did. These visits were critical in our decision-making. In one instance, we had a major Congressional delegation in about March 1975 consisting of senior people who had been in Cambodia before and knew the situation well. They were also visiting

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Vietnam. It was clear from the conversations that both Dean and I had with the delegation that there would not be any further assistance which would be approved by Congress. That was important in our planning. There had been a lot of people who kept hoping that we could keep the war going through the end of the dry season at one time or the wet season the next; they lived in the constant hope that a change in the weather would make a difference in the war.

But that Congressional delegation made it eminently clear in their private comments that the war was losing support in Congress. Vietnam was a different issue. They made it clear that we would not be appropriated an additional penny and that when the currently available funds were exhausted, that was the end. That meant the war would be over, because without American aid the Cambodian government would collapse.

At that time we had already been in an evacuation planning mode for two months. Dean and I agreed, after our discussions with the delegation, that it was time to pick the final evacuation date.

Q: Then the second question: have you reached any general conclusion about Congressional involvement in the micro management of foreign policy in situations such as Cambodia?

KEELEY: I didn't sense any problems there. It was clear that Congress was having a major role in setting policy and in determining what we could do. I don't consider putting a staff limitation on an Embassy as micro management; it is a device to control certain outcomes. It can also be done by imposing a limitation on financial resources. I would consider it micro management if we had been told that the Attache Office could only have 25 people and the CIA station could only have 15 and State could only have 12, etc. That kind of detailed management has to be left to the Ambassador and his staff. But setting an overall ceiling—whether in personnel or financial terms—within which the manager had to accomplish whatever he could, does not seem to me to be micro management. Congress

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set a general policy for Cambodia, which undoubtedly made some in the Executive Branch very unhappy. The general Executive Branch attitude was that Congress had approved support for the Cambodian government and that it therefore had a responsibility for approving whatever funds and people the Executive Branch thought necessary to maintain that government in power. If Congress had not wished to support the Cambodian government, then that would have been another matter; then no funds or people would have been necessary. In fact, I think the proper Congressional posture falls somewhere in between these two extremes and that what it did in Cambodia was not micro management.

Eventually, of course, there were no further Congressional appropriations. We were also losing the war and that undoubtedly had an effect on the Congressional action. By the Fall of 1974, matters were deteriorating drastically. We were wondering how long we could hold on. We did have an appropriation and thereby had some funds left to support the Cambodian government.

The critical event was the loss of the Mekong. It was closed by the rebels, denying the river as a supply line from Saigon for the Cambodian government. That meant that all our supplies had to be airlifted. That became very expensive; for example, you had to bring in petroleum products in large rubber bladders carried by cargo aircraft rather than in tankers. The bladders only held a limited amount of fuel; nevertheless, they were very heavy and difficult to load and unload, not to mention that they were hazardous. Plane after plane would land and by the time they unloaded, all we had was a tankful of POL. The river route was a much easier supply route.

The government's enclaves got smaller and smaller. Supplies had to be dropped by parachutes because it was not possible to land planes in some of the enclaves. The government's territory was being squeezed. When you got to an all-airlift situation, the main airport, Pochentong in Phnom Penh, was critical; the rebels were starting to bombard it with rockets. That made the situation very dicey because airplanes are very fragile, particularly transport planes. When there is a risk of a howitzer shell or a rocket raining on

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the airport as the pilots are trying to land, you begin to face the end of the road. When the airport was no longer available, that would have been the end of our support line and we would be forced to leave or surrender.

Many of the enclaves were beginning to be cut off from airplane landings. First, we would turn to a short strip aircraft, then to a helicopter, and eventually we were forced to drop supplies by parachutes. The rice had to be packed with styrofoam under-carriages, because otherwise the rice bags would burst on impact, particularly since the drops had to be from high flying aircraft to keep them from being hit by ground fire. And we had to use high-speed parachutes to assure accuracy of delivery to small enclaves; otherwise we risked supplying the enemy surrounding the enclaves.

People have accused the Embassy of running the war. It wasn't true; that was the responsibility of the Cambodian military. I thought our military people in Phnom Penh, whose job was logistics, did an excellent job under the circumstances. More and more refugees were pouring into Phnom Penh, which was another sign that events were turning against the government. The U.S. military briefings were much more upbeat than they should have been. The briefer would usually come from Saigon, because that is where the military intelligence headquarters were. Sometimes we would be briefed by a senior officer from the Seventh Air Force in Thailand. I remember that once the river was closed, there was a change in the mood of the briefings; they were no longer quite so upbeat. The charts which showed the lines of progress suddenly turned down rather than up, and in general the briefers, although trained to be upbeat, tended to be much gloomier. I sensed that if they knew what they were talking about, we had crossed a watershed.

In December, 1974, there was a conference of all American Far East Ambassadors in Hawaii, I think. Ambassador Dean went. I had only made two trips out of Phnom Penh since I had arrived six months earlier, just for lack of time. Essentially, my trips had been limited to home-to-office and office-to-home day after day. I had gone south to a port (which had been known as Sihanoukville in earlier days) to dedicate a pier we had built

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for the Khmer Navy. The Ambassador was supposed to do it; he became occupied with some urgent matter. So I went down to cut the ribbon and ate a meal with the Khmer Navy people. The Cambodian Navy commander, an admiral no less, Vong Sarendy I believe was his name, was American trained; he was a jolly fellow and we were very friendly with him. He was in fact an outstanding officer.

My other trip was with Bob Miller, who was our Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Indochina, who had come to Cambodia on an orientation visit. He asked whether he could be taken to the front to see the war; perhaps it was the Cambodians who wanted to show him the war. He was a very experienced officer, who had served in Vietnam and had been working on Indochina affairs for many years. But he had not seen much of Cambodia. So I asked our military and they asked the Khmer military; they loved to show off to visiting firemen. So they selected a point not too far away from Phnom Penh which could be reached by helicopter rather quickly. The site they selected was particularly interesting because it was a hill top—called a phnom—on which stood a Buddhist temple. The Khmer Rouge had taken the hill, desecrated the temple and despoiled the site. They had subsequently been beaten off and had retreated. The hill top was still smoldering. So that was the site that the Khmer wanted us to see; it showed how irreligious and atrocious the rebels were. I thought it would be all right; it would provide a good view, because Cambodia is a very flat country and the hill top would provide a good observation point.

It turned out to be one of my worst misadventures. It was not my fault; I just happened to be an innocent participant. So we got into the helicopter; we had U.S. Marines, from the Embassy security detachment, and Khmer troops with us. We landed on the hill, which was just a little knob sticking up out of a flat plain. We looked at the burned-out temple; everything was black and charred—awful. Then we were supposed to take off and fly on to another town, an isolated enclave—I think it was Kompong Chhnang—north of Phnom Penh. We looked around and went back into the helicopter. The pilot checked his helicopter and said that it was carrying too much weight; he couldn't take off. A helicopter has to go down before it can go up; it doesn't rise straight up, as people think. It needs

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to put its nose down and gain some speed before it can really rise. Although we were on a hill, the pilot couldn't head down because there were trees all around and he would have hit them. So he said that some of the passengers would have to disembark. Bob and I were seated in the middle; we were flanked by soldiers with full packs. They opened the doors and jumped out. The pilot then took off, barely skimming the trees. He went a few hundred yards, maybe half a mile, and dropped down into a grassy field. He then instructed the remaining passengers to leave because he wanted to go back to the hill top to get the soldiers who had been left behind. So we jumped out; there we were in the middle of a grassy field in full view of anyone who might be looking, in no-man's land. We didn't really know where we were. We couldn't order the pilot to do anything else; he had to go back to get the soldiers who had been left behind.

His plan was to bring the soldiers back to the grassy field, where he would then pick us up and off we would go. It was a great plan; it left Bob and me standing in the middle of nowhere feeling very stupid and quite concerned about our lives. We thought we might be captured by the Khmer Rouge, which would have been the worst outcome of all. We might have just disappeared and the people at home would have wondered how stupid we could have been. We could just imagine the comments that would have been made about these “two stupid Foreign Service jokers who had just gone out on a joy ride to see a temple and then had been captured in an open field.” There would have been little sympathy for us! We spent a nervous few minutes while the helicopter went back up to the hill top and then returned to get us. It was a lesson for me. You are more effective in your office at headquarters, handling the telephone and the typewriter, than being involved in observing the war.

When I was in college, studying literature, I read Thomas Mann—it was he, I think, who said, “Anecdotes are not literature.” I do tell anecdotes, because I think they do give insights into situations which pure analysis does not. Analysis gives you opinions but no

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feel for events; analysis does not tell you what it was like living and working in Phnom Penh 1974-75.

The history of the “controlled solution” is John Dean's, although I worked closely with him on it. He worked full time on it, mostly with the leaders of the government. It is a very interesting story. The effort to find a solution was a clear indication that we thought that the war was not winnable; that it had to come to a conclusion and the way to avoid as much bloodshed as possible was to find a transition to a new situation which would not be a victory either for Lon Nol or for the Khmer Rouge. That was probably an unachievable objective, but the effort should not be criticized.

The problems from our perspective were several. For one, the Khmer Rouge were unacceptable; we could never convince the press on how brutal they really were. The press was a losing proposition; both Dean and I had a lot of dealings with reporters, usually separately. The press people thought we were manufacturing the stories of Khmer Rouge brutalities and atrocities; they thought we were spreading propaganda in order to maintain support for our war effort. They would not believe the stories we told them, but we had good intelligence on the Khmer Rouge's brutalities in the areas that they controlled. We knew how they treated the villagers from reports by refugees arriving in Phnom Penh from Khmer Rouge controlled territory. You could expect these refugees to tell you horror stories, but I think they were largely true. We were not surprised by the bloodshed that occurred after the government's defeat, but we were surprised by the wholesale forced evacuation of Phnom Penh and other cities that the Khmer Rouge imposed. It was a reversion to a medieval agricultural society. I guess we should not have been surprised if we had been better prepared; for example, I learned much later, after I had left Cambodia, that Khieu Samphan, the Khmer Rouge deputy leader, the man who was almost lynched recently when he returned to Phnom Penh, had written a dissertation while a student in Paris which, if read carefully and discerningly, would have provided a clue to the ideology that the Khmer Rouge supported—an agrarian primitive society, anti-merchant, anti-urban,

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anti-Chinese, anti-Vietnamese. We frankly didn't have time to read old dissertations, but someone in our government should have.

The “controlled solution” was probably not really in the cards, but from our perspective it was absolutely impossible as long as Lon Nol was in charge of the government we supported. It was not only Lon Nol; there was a Khmer Rouge list of seven people marked for death, including his brother, Lon Non, and General Sosthene Fernandez, the head of the Army, Sirik Matak, Sihanouk's cousin, and some others. They were known as the “Seven Devils” who had been marked for death. There was no way to create a new regime that would include them, but there were others who might have participated and who might have been acceptable. Similarly, a new government could not have included the well known Khmer Rouge leadership. We were not convinced that a solution was therefore possible, but we kept working for it. The key was the Chinese, because they supported the Khmer Rouge—much more so than did the North Vietnamese.

As we tried to work out the arrangements, Dean kept pleading with Kissinger to talk to the Chinese to see whether they wouldn't cooperate in trying to bring some solution to the Cambodian problem, as is being done now—many, many years later. We kept suggesting that Kissinger approach the Chinese to tell them that we wanted a peaceful outcome without the bloodshed that was being spilled and would continue to be spilled. We wanted the Chinese to use their influence with the Khmer Rouge while we would use our influence with Lon Nol and his group. Toward the end, there was a little more interest in Washington in working out a solution, but by that time Lon Nol's situation was desperate. Everyone knew by that time that Lon Nol would be defeated; it was too late for any accommodations. I am sure that the Khmer Rouge sensed the victory which they achieved; they would not have seen any necessity for compromise.

Earlier on, John Dean, and I agreed with him, thought it was possible to achieve some kind of compromise. But he had a very difficult time convincing Kissinger that he should intervene. I think Kissinger saw the compromise as an anathema because he probably

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saw it as an abandonment of an ally, which would have been a fundamental departure from his world view. According to this view, if your ally is Lon Nol, even though not the greatest guy in the world, he is nevertheless your guy and on your side. Lon Nol was accused of corruption, most of which was not true. When he was finally ready to leave, we offered him asylum in Hawaii, but he initially went to Indonesia. He said that he had no money, and although people had accused him of corruption, he said he did not have a dime. I think that was true; he may have had a lot of Cambodian money. I am sure he did; he used it to buy people's loyalty. We helped to arrange the transfer of \$500,000; Lon Nol wanted one million, but the other half never was transferred because the war ended in the meantime. So what had been transferred was all that he had to live on and he had an entourage of approximately 37 people, or some figure like that; \$500,000 doesn't go very far with a group of that size. So Lon Nol was nowhere near as corrupt as he was reputed to be. He may have collected Cambodian money illegally, but he was not like Marcos or Mobutu, who stashed millions or billions in hard currency overseas.

Lon Nol had to be removed from the scene. He could not be the catalyst for a new political situation in Cambodia. But Kissinger was not willing to consider such an outcome. He preferred to go down with Lon Nol than to torpedo him or to spirit him out of the country. Eventually, of course, Lon Nol had to leave under Khmer Rouge military pressure. But John Dean was forbidden to mention the possibility of a voluntary departure to him; even if Lon Nol had raised the issue, Dean could not have discussed it, which makes for a very peculiar situation. I think there was a lack of trust; the assumption was that if the American Ambassador was permitted to answer the question, he might have tried to stimulate the question. Every other ambassador in Phnom Penh, every other diplomat, every government official had come to the conclusion that Lon Nol had to leave before peace could be discussed and implemented. There could be no "controlled solution" with Lon Nol still around, because he had become the symbol; he was the hated enemy of Sihanouk. We all agreed that Sihanouk was the only solution. I realized that, after having been in country for a month or so. I suspect Dean knew it long before he got there. Sihanouk was

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the key to a solution then, as he still is today. He is the only Cambodian who can manage the country.

Lon Nol had overthrown Sihanouk and had forced him out of Cambodia. He was therefore an anathema; the two could not be put together. Eventually, Lon Nol left of his own volition; he was not kicked out. John Dean followed orders strictly. It was an extremely uncomfortable experience, because when everyone else, including the subject himself, was saying that the only solution was Lon Nol's departure, the American Ambassador, who represented the Cambodian government's principal supporter, couldn't discuss the possibility. When Lon Nol finally called Dean in to announce that in his view the only solution was his own departure, and to ask whether the United States would help, only then could Dean say "Yes."

Q: How was it possible for Ambassador Dean to find a "controlled solution," as apparently his mandate was, when he couldn't even discuss one of the key ingredients to that solution?

KEELEY: That is the very point I'm making. That problem became evident as time passed. I am not sure that in fact he had that mandate. Dean sensed that he had that mandate; he thought that he had been selected for Cambodia because of his efforts in Laos. Dean may have misinterpreted his appointment. He thought that he had been sent to Phnom Penh to repeat what he had done in Laos, where he brought three parties together—the Communists, the anti-Communists, and the neutrals—to form a coalition government. The Laotian government later collapsed and the Communists took over.

There were never any written instructions that I ever saw which gave Dean the mandate to find a "controlled solution." But Dean clearly interpreted his appointment as approval of his accomplishments in Laos and as an invitation to duplicate his Laotian efforts in Cambodia. I am sure he felt that if he could replicate the Laotian outcome in Cambodia, that would have been wonderful. He had not asked for written instructions; he just assumed that he

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had been chosen because the Secretary liked his approach and ideas. What he had done in Laos was well known and I think his assumptions may well have been justified. If one wanted to be really cynical, perhaps all the Administration wanted was for Dean to hold the fort long enough until the Vietnam situation could be sorted out. People are “used” in that way. He certainly was not instructed not to seek a solution in Cambodia.

But we made it eminently clear that there was no compromise or peaceful “solution” possible as long as Lon Nol was in power. The solution would have to come without his participation. The other obstacles might have been willing to stay out of a new government, if Lon Nol was not involved. But we could never explore those possibilities because we couldn't get over the first hurdle. We could never get a cease-fire and get all sides to talk because Lon Nol was still around. His relationship with Sihanouk made any progress impossible. You can't expect someone to deal with the guy who threw him out of office, particularly Sihanouk. He is called a “God man” or a “man God.” He is a different personality; he is a monarch, the son of a monarch. Lon Nol was a peasant who rose to power through the military. They were not in the same category. I learned to respect Lon Nol a great deal because at the end he saw the situation clearly and took the right action. He got out alive, fortunately. The others practically all died.

The situation changed drastically over the ten months we were in Phnom Penh. In the first place, we lost the use of the Mekong. In the second place, we had an answer from Kissinger after he eventually talked to the Chinese. He went to China and we placed a lot of hope in that visit. He went, he returned; we had no report on his trip. We begged for some information; eventually we got one line saying, “Chinese not interested,” meaning that they were not interested in discussing a Cambodian solution. That message must have been received sometime in January, 1975.

The situation also changed for me personally. As I mentioned, John Dean went to Hawaii for a Chiefs of Mission conference. I was left in charge; I got a duodenal ulcer—not because I was left in charge, but that is when it happened. It was in part from over-work;

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in part, it was self-induced, because I took too much aspirin. I had an upset stomach; I had diarrhea; I took a lot of Alka-Seltzer, which contains a lot of aspirin although I didn't realize it at the time. I thought I was taking an antacid, but in fact I was pouring acid on top of acid. Eventually, that punched a hole in my duodenum. Fortunately, it healed by itself, but I lost a lot of blood—perhaps as much as half of my blood. I insisted on waiting in Phnom Penh until Dean returned; I was in the local hospital there, under constant guard by members of our U.S. Marine detachment. I had a very fine doctor—a French military gastro-enterologist, who became a close friend. My code name for our Marines was “Locker Room,” so that the Khmer Rouge would not know who was in the hospital if they were listening in to our voice communications via walkie-talkies. They were only three miles away at that time and were monitoring our radio transmissions, we had to assume.

I thought that I had to stay in Phnom Penh until John Dean returned. As soon as that happened, he immediately evacuated me to Bangkok and eventually I was returned to the United States. The doctors didn't want me to receive any transfusions in Southeast Asia because the blood supply was suspect. But just for safety's sake, two or three Marines with my blood type and who had indicated a willingness to donate were standing by ready to provide their blood to me directly without going through any processing at the local hospital. That was fine with me, but the doctor didn't think it was necessary, because the ulcer had healed completely and the bleeding had stopped. I spent about a month away from Phnom Penh. My doctor in the States suggested that I build up my blood supply naturally; so I relaxed, ate a lot, exercised and went to a cold climate—cold climates encourage blood production. We went to the Catskills, where we have a family place. It had a lot of snow and ice.

When I returned to Phnom Penh around the 20th of January, three things had happened. The Mekong was closed as a supply line, as I have mentioned. The second was that the season had changed to dry, which favored the Khmer Rouge. And thirdly, there was the Kissinger message about the Chinese not being interested that I earlier described. Dean's view was, after that, that the war in Cambodia was lost. We would keep working and do

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the best we could to keep the war going and the government afloat. But with the money running out, the war was lost and any hopes of finding a solution had seriously diminished. It could have been that when matters really got desperate, the government would be more cooperative and willing to compromise; even if that had happened, the other side was becoming less and less interested in a compromise. One doesn't negotiate when one is winning; you only negotiate when you are in a stalemate.

At that stage Dean assigned me responsibility to plan an evacuation because he wanted the Americans to leave Cambodia alive. He saw no reason for any of us to lose our lives over Cambodia. He recognized that evacuation would be difficult because of the enclave situation and because the government was collapsing. He told me to concentrate on the evacuation while he continued to work on finding a peaceful solution. The military would continue to support the war effort.

We had always had an evacuation plan; it was very elaborate; it had a code name, "Eagle Pull." I took it out and read it again. I cranked up a committee. The plan involved the Seventh Air Force flying a certain number of aircraft into the Pochentong airport which would pick us up and fly us out. There were several critical elements in the plan. The first was who would be evacuated besides the official American community—the answer to that evolved over time. That clearly included diplomats of friendly countries—the French, the Indonesians, the Koreans, etc. In fact, I don't think we would have denied any diplomat the use of our evacuation facilities—there were only a few missions left, all of whom represented friendly countries. We would also evacuate the press—American and foreign. We would evacuate any American citizen. The only non-official ones were in the press or working for private voluntary organizations. There weren't any businessmen left, no tourists; there may have been a few hangers-on—drug addicts or pilots—soldiers of fortune—who were flying rickety old planes just to make money. They were American citizens and they flew even in the middle of the war. A war attracts a strange batch of characters. We had one consular officer who did nothing but look after these stragglers. He traveled around handing out bodybags just like people are walking our streets handing

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out condoms. In fact, we left two Americans behind because we couldn't rouse them; we couldn't even find them. That consular officer had the worst job of all. All of the staff were designated as “wardens” responsible for a certain group of evacuees. He had all these soldiers of fortune—the worst gang. He probably would have preferred to leave all of them behind, but his job was to get them out and he worked very hard. After the evacuation, when we had all assembled on the helicopter carrier, the Okinawa, he reported to me with a list of all of those he had evacuated. He told me then that two on his list couldn't be found. I told him we would report that if we could find any next of kin.

The critical matter in the evacuation was the timing. We were totally in the hands of the military. They would run the operation, but we had to decide the date. At an early meeting of the evacuation committee that I had formed—about 20 people, representing all agencies—I talked to the military representatives and told them that we had to choose a date. They thought that was not too difficult. In the first place, we had a limited amount of money; we knew when the various stocks—rice, POL, ammunition (the three fundamentals of the war)—would be depleted. The military representatives said they could have their logisticians go through their calculations again and would be able to tell us at the next committee meeting when the stocks would be exhausted. The final funds could be so allocated that the three principal stocks would be exhausted at approximately the same time. I thought that was great planning: the last grain of rice would be consumed as the last bullet was fired.

At the next meeting, the military had completed their calculations and thought that the stocks would be depleted on a certain day in mid-April. So we determined that the evacuation day would be April 12; in fact, Phnom Penh was over-run on April 17. During a following meeting of the evacuation committee, one of the military representatives said: “Mr. Keeley, I think you have to understand about how armies operate and how soldiers think. The important date is not when the materiel runs out; it is when the soldier senses that it is running out. The soldier doesn't know anything about Congressional appropriations or where the money is coming from or when it is running out or when a

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purchase order is sent in. He notices certain things; in Cambodia's case, in the kind of war we are fighting, the key date is not when ammunition deliveries stop to the front line troops; it is when it is no longer coming into the central supply depot. The word will spread very quickly that what is in the depot is all that's left. When we stop delivering to the depot, that is the key date; that is the last day to leave. That is when the word gets out and chaos ensues. So you want to leave a few days earlier. The same syndrome will be manifested with rice or POL; when they stop being delivered to the central distribution point, that's when the Cambodian soldier will know that it's all over". I will be eternally grateful for that piece of advice. So we reviewed the dates and selected an earlier date, the 6th of April, a Sunday. The planning thereafter went very smoothly. All of our lists of people to be evacuated were brought up to date. The wardens knew for whom they were responsible. The military worked on their logistics. They had beautiful plans. We consulted with the State Department. They approved the evacuation of our local employees, although they cautioned about over-loading the facilities. They set a ceiling on the number of evacuees, something like 900. We argued back and forth with the Department to some extent. We decided to evacuate local employees and their immediate families—not extended families, which in Cambodia might have meant a whole village. We could have had one employee with an extended family of fifty people. We used the American definition of "family"—spouse and children or something like that. There were of course problems with that definition, as there would have been with any. Someone had his grandmother living with him; she had no other means of support. Was she "family," or not?

The only serious dispute I got involved in with John Dean during my whole tour in Phnom Penh—which is amazing, given the conditions we were working and living in—was over the issue of the "family" definition. My driver—who had literally saved Tom Enders' life—came to me the day before evacuation and told me that he could not leave unless he could bring the other members of his family with him; that turned out to be nine people. Today, that driver is thriving in Salem, Oregon working for the Nintendo Corporation. He had several children, but he also had his parents and his wife's parents, I think, all living

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in the same household. Dean said “No;” he said that the ground-rules had to be applied strictly to all. He thought if an exception was made for the driver, then he would have many similar requests and we would be in trouble. I disagreed, because this was my driver who had risked his life every day driving us who were targets. He had saved Enders' life. Dean and I argued; we got into a verbal fight. I told him that I wouldn't leave without my driver; he said he would order me to leave and so on. He finally relented; I told my driver that his request had been approved, but I swore him to secrecy; I told him that if the word got out about the exception we had made for him, it would create havoc.

I have to tell you an amusing side note about the relationship between an Ambassador and a DCM. I was using the fully armored car—that is, the Ambassador's car. Dean had a Checker cab, which at that time the Department had provided to a few posts as the Ambassador's limousine. I had seen one in Kigali. But in our case the Checker had been assigned to the DCM. Dean liked the Checker because it had lots of leg room and it had jump seats, which he used for his briefcase. So he had appropriated the Checker for his own use. He traveled a lot in that cab because he did a lot of moving around. But the cab was not fully armored; not underneath, for example. It had plastic windows. I told him that he was crazy not to use the fully armored vehicle because he was the Number 1 target; the Khmer Rouge might have been happy to get me, but it was not like getting the Ambassador. Dean's response was: “You are about the dumbest guy I have ever hired to work for me. You are riding in the Ambassador's limousine; they don't know who the Ambassador is; they will target the car. It's you who is in danger, not me!” End of conversation!

Our evacuation was near perfect, particularly when contrasted with Saigon's, which was immensely difficult and a mess. Ours was as perfect as one could hope for in a war situation. Saigon had much more difficult problems; they had enormous numbers of people to be evacuated, including a very large number of Vietnamese; they had last minute problems caused by the collapse of the government. They may have delayed unnecessarily; they might have started earlier, but it is not really my role to criticize. In any

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case, our problems were much smaller. By evacuation date, we only had about seventy-five official Americans left in Cambodia; we had managed to send about two-thirds of the 200 out long before the final days. We had local employees to evacuate, but many fewer than in Saigon. At the last minute, we received permission to evacuate all the press, regardless of nationality, and their local employees—if they would vouch that they were “legitimate” local employees and not girl- or boy-friends or people trying to buy their way out. We were permitted to take any foreign diplomats who wanted to go. Then came the question of Cambodian citizens. We communicated back and forth with Washington, which is interesting in itself, if ever published, because although not lengthy or numerous, the messages covered the key issues fully. I think it was one of Dean's phrasings, which was included in my drafts, which became critical. His position was that it was improper for him or for me or for anyone to play God in the situation we had in Cambodia; we should not be called upon to decide which Cambodians lived and which might not. Those were decisions for the Cambodians to make. It was the U.S.'s responsibility to inform key Cambodian leaders—the seven marked for death on the Khmer Rouge's list—and their associates of our evacuation. It was up to them to decide who would go. We knew we could take up to 900 people in total. There were 75 Americans; then also diplomats, the press, our own local employees and their families; nevertheless, that was probably no more than half of the allotted number. So there was plenty of room for the senior Cambodian leaders, those who would be in greatest danger.

We worked out a rather elaborate plan, which Dean himself had designed. There was an acting President after Lon Nol's departure, Sak Sutsakhan, there was Long Boret, the Prime Minister, there was the Foreign Minister, the senior army commander. We decided we would inform these four of our evacuation decision and would ask them to tell us which Cambodians were to be evacuated with us. We gave them very little time for decision, in order to minimize the potential wrangling that the issue might engender. We told them that the decision had to be made by a specified hour; otherwise they would be left behind. We

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didn't need to give them a lot of warning that the war was over; everyone knew that it was winding down and that one day the Americans would leave.

We prepared letters (in both French and English) to the four key Cambodian leaders saying in effect, but of course with great politeness, "Sorry; the game is over; we are leaving. Please be at the Embassy by 9:00 o'clock, Sunday morning, for evacuation. Bring anyone you want with you." The letters weren't that blunt; the wording was much more diplomatic, but that was the message. The leaders all got along with each other, but each had his own constituency and a piece of the country's political power. About a week or ten days before the end, Dean realized that we had left one person off the VIP list and that was Prince Sirik Matak, the cousin of Prince Sihanouk. He had been central to the 1970 coup that had brought Lon Nol to power and had overthrown Sihanouk. He was key because he was out of the power structure at that point. He had been in the government earlier, but had resigned and therefore was not on very good terms with the four leaders I mentioned earlier. We had to assume that he might not be told by them about the evacuation and would be left behind as a sacrifice; that was not fair. We had worked with him closely after the coup. In this instance we did in a sense play God.

Dean and I went to call on each of these five people. We didn't deliver the letters. Dean told each one that we would have to evacuate Cambodia some day; we were well prepared for that day and could leave safely. We invited each to come with us; it would be their decision. We could not tell them when it would happen, but told them that they would not have much warning. We asked each to send a trusted envoy to the Ambassador's house early (7:00 a.m.) each and every morning from that day on; one morning that envoy would be told that we would evacuate on that day or the following day and they would have to be ready in a hurry. They were all very appreciative. The Prime Minister thanked us and said he would be sending his young nephew as his envoy.

The morning of the evacuation came. We told the press at 7:00 a.m., and they were furious. I ran into Ed Bradley, now of "60 Minutes," in the chancery compound that morning

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and he gave me literal hell because he had not had enough advance warning to get some extra film into Phnom Penh so that the evacuation could be captured on TV tape in extenso. That got me rather upset and I told him that if he preferred to be left behind, he could call for his film; by the time it arrived, we would be gone. He said that if he had been advised one or two days earlier, he could have had the film. I told him that if I had warned him earlier, we would have had a mess on our hands—sheer chaos. He was absolutely furious; he said he could not explain his failure to capture the evacuation thoroughly on film to his superiors. In the end we did a big favor for Bradley and the other TV people. They got the story of the week, live, with lots of great action shots, and they got flown out with us on the Marine helicopters to the carrier Okinawa. They were stuck on the carrier until it got to port in Thailand, but Dean and I and our PAO—Jim McHale—took their TV film with us to Bangkok, to which we flew immediately courtesy of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force, and the TV story of the evacuation (including Bradley's story) was featured nationwide on the evening news that very night.

Several things helped us immensely in the end. One was that Danang in Vietnam—far north of Saigon—fell first, before us and well before Saigon. The reports and pictures of that operation showed planes coming into Danang's airfield and many being unable to land. The airstrip was covered with people. You may recall the picture of the guy who ran the chartered airline during the evacuation punching out a Vietnamese who was trying to get into the plane. There were pictures of Vietnamese hanging on to aircraft wheels. That was the last plane out which probably knocked down some people when taking off. It was an absolute mess—a fiasco—and the pictures were very graphic and taught us a lesson. We saw the pictures in the “Stars and Stripes.” I immediately called a meeting of our committee and we discussed the Danang nightmare. We also were going to use fixed wing aircraft; the Danang experience suggested that we might have the same problems. The American planes coming in would attract plenty of attention, and at a certain point that strip would also be covered with people, blocking all other landings. As I said, Phnom

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Penh was housing a million people and two million refugees. The airfield was surrounded by tents and shacks and was under constant rocket attack.

So, after consultation with the Seventh Air Force, we redid the evacuation plan entirely, post-Danang. We went to an all helicopter lift from a field about ten blocks from the chancery. It was a soccer field that we chose, because on one side were three or four tall apartment buildings—eight stories tall—on the river's bank. That protected our activities on the field from the view of people on the other side of the river. The Khmer Rouge were only one mile or so away. We assumed that as soon as they found out what we were up to, they would fire rockets and mortars; we wanted the landing area protected and the buildings would help do that. We changed the deployment zone to the chancery itself; we would transport people in cars and trucks for the ten blocks to the soccer field, where they would pile into the helicopters and fly out. That also meant that we would not fly to Bangkok, as we had originally planned with fixed wing aircraft. Now we would fly instead to a helicopter carrier cruising off the coast in the Gulf of Siam.

The whole evacuation had to be done in one airlift. We brought in about 360 Marines to secure the soccer field. There had to be enough helicopters to take out our 900 people and the Marines back to the carrier. It was done by about twelve helicopters, all in one lift. The critical point was that it had to be done in one trip because once the word got around as to what was happening, everybody would converge on the soccer field, essentially closing the landing field for a second round of airlift. The Khmer Rouge would also figure out what was going on and would begin to shell the field. That probably would have meant considerable loss of life.

There was also the psychological issue. Most of the people in Phnom Penh assumed that we were landing troops, when they saw the helicopter fleet landing, not to evacuate but to save them. They considered this the first wave of an American military rescue effort, that is, an American military intervention to win the war! This we learned afterwards. The Khmer psychology is very peculiar. I was in Bangkok about two or three days after the

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evacuation in an Embassy office when I received a call from my former office in Phnom Penh. It was a senior man in the Cambodian government calling and telling me where and how to drop the rice supplies. He wanted to have them dropped in the Phnom Penh stadium because it was a big, protected area which could be used easily for that purpose. I just couldn't believe what I was hearing. I finally had to tell the Cambodian that the war was over; that there would be no more rice, no more supplies. Nothing else was coming. All the Cambodian would do was to repeat: "Just drop it into the stadium!" The mentality was unbelievable; it was so detached from reality.

The third thing that helped us in bringing off this operation successfully was the Khmer reaction to the evacuation offer. Almost nothing happened when we made it. The Acting President showed up with his immediate family and was taken to the landing zone. The Minister of Education and one other Minister showed up with their immediate families and they were evacuated. No one else showed up. It was about 9:00 o'clock, which was the deadline for beginning the departure. All of the five Cambodian leaders had gotten their letters that morning, but only one showed up. So we sent our Political Counselor, Ray Perkins, to Long Boret's house; he was known as a guy who would work very late into the early hours of the morning. We thought he might have overslept or someone had just put the letter outside the bedroom; they might have not wished to disturb the boss.

So Perkins sped to Long Boret's house, knocked on the door and entered. He thought he would wake the Prime Minister and help him get out. Instead he found the P.M. chairing a cabinet meeting around a table in the dining room. Long Boret had gotten the letter; he had read it; he knew that this was the day. But before taking any personal action, he decided to call a cabinet meeting to discuss the situation. He came out of the dining room to talk to Perkins. He said that the cabinet was debating what to do; the consensus, with which he agreed, was that they would all stay and fight it out. Perkins tried to explain that it was all over; the war had ended; there were no more funds or supplies and we Americans were leaving. The Prime Minister said that he and his colleagues had gotten the country into the mess they were in and somehow they would get it out of it. The

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cabinet had reached a collective judgment to stay and see the matter to its end. Perkins did not mention that two of the cabinet had already decided to evacuate. One cabinet member came out and told Perkins that he had to stay with his colleagues, but that he would appreciate it if we could take out his family. Perkins said “OK,” but that the cabinet minister had to get word to them immediately.

I won't recount the story of Sydney Schanberg and his local employee, Dith Pran. It did not happen the way it has been presented in “The Killing Fields” or in some articles. In any case, in the end only a handful of Cambodians came out with us in the evacuation—probably no more than a couple of hundred—and practically none of the senior leadership.

As I mentioned earlier, our evacuation date was moved back by a week, that is, postponed, because of Washington's concern about Congressional action on the Vietnam appropriation request. We also shifted from a Sunday to a Saturday at the last minute because it was considered that local employees coming to the chancery on a Saturday would raise fewer eyebrows than if they had come in on a Sunday. The shift of a week was very nerve-wracking; we had all the plans in their final status, in great detail. Everything was timed down to the last minute; all the groups knew when they were to move; the helicopters knew when they had to land and when they had to take off. It was very painful to then shift the dates, even if it was just for one week later.

The week's delay did give us a chance to review all of our evacuation planning once again, but if my memory serves me, we didn't make any last-minute changes other than the one I've just mentioned, shifting from Sunday to Saturday. We had already done so much fine-tuning, leaving nothing to chance, that we risked getting lost in the details. I tried to lighten up—if that's the correct term—one of our last evacuation committee meetings, perhaps the very last one, by reading to the staff a famous poem by the modern Greek poet Constantine Cavafy, perhaps my favorite poem of his. One of my brother Mike's specializations is the translation of all of the major modern Greek poets into English, and

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I had been reading some in his “Collected Poems” of Cavafy in those final days in Phnom Penh.

I won't quote it all to you now, just the final bit. But what made it seem relevant to me was this theory of Sydney Schanberg's and the rest of the press people that if only the Americans would get out of the way, the Cambodians on the two warring sides could get together and settle the thing peacefully, in a thoroughly Khmer manner. In other words, the press wasn't looking at the situation as one in which the barbarians were storming the gates, planning to massacre one and all inside as soon as they breached the walls.

Cavafy's poem is set in the “decadent” late period of the Roman Empire, when the barbarians coming down from the North—the Goths and the Visigoths and so forth—were besieging the Roman cities. The poem uses the repeated refrain, “because the barbarians are coming today,” to emphasize the apprehensions/expectations of the citizenry, and describes all the preparations the citizens and the leaders of the city are making to greet the barbarians, with the emperor “sitting enthroned at the city's main gate,” and the consuls and praetors wearing their embroidered togas and bracelets and rings and other jewels and “elegant canes beautifully worked in silver and gold.” All of this is to “dazzle the barbarians” when they arrive.

Then suddenly the streets empty and everyone goes home “lost in thought.” What has happened? This is how the poem ends:

“Because night has fallen and the barbarians haven't come.

And some of our men just in from the border say

there are no barbarians any longer.

Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

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Those people were a kind of solution.”

Yes, the Khmer Rouge were a kind of “solution,” but I won't claim to have anticipated, or predicted, just how “barbarian” they would turn out to be.

Before leaving the subject of Cambodia I should recount one other event, especially because so far as I know it's never been written up anywhere, and it ought to be in the record somewhere. I hope someone, sometime will be able to convince John Dean to write his own memoirs of his diplomatic career, and this item would be one of the many fantastic stories in that account.

The night before our very last night in Phnom Penh John and I had dinner together at his house, one purpose being to drink up some of the last of his fine French red wine, so that he would have to leave as little as possible behind for the Khmer Rouge to consume. We did justice to a bottle and for reasons I can't recall we got to reminiscing about events of the past, including the famous televised Army-McCarthy hearings of the summer of 1954, and specifically the unforgettable exchange between Senator McCarthy and the Army's chief counsel, lawyer Joseph Welch from Boston, after the Senator had made some scurrilous charge about a young lawyer in Welch's firm being a Communist or something, with Welch intoning, in words separated by pauses: “Sir, have you no common decency? Have...you...no...common...de-cen-cy?”

Anyway, the evening before the evacuation—that is, the next evening—John and I were in our offices in the chancery cleaning up last-minute business (I remember Sid Telford, the security officer, came in at one point and reported that all the remaining official files had been incinerated), when suddenly a high-precedence, highly classified cable was delivered, the action copy to John and another copy to me. It was one page long, five paragraphs, as I recall. I read it and I was stunned. John came into my office holding the cable, and I could see from his face that he was even more stunned. “What does this mean?” he asked. I had the same question. The cable was from the Department, but gave

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no indication of who in the Department had authorized it, or drafted it, or whose idea it was. It was addressed to Dean personally. It suggested, in very polite and somewhat bureaucratic language, that it might be a good idea for Dean to stay behind in Phnom Penh when the rest of the mission evacuated the next day—and there was a suggestion that the DCM stay behind with him, to keep him company I guess, so he wouldn't be lonely—the purpose being to try at the last minute to work out some sort of solution short of a surrender by the Cambodian government and a victory by the Khmer Rouge. In other words, Dean was supposed to act as a broker between the two sides and work out a peace agreement.

What this meant to us was that Washington had finally agreed to Dean's long-standing proposals about a “controlled solution,” but the absolutely crazy part of it was that this was very late in the day (to put it mildly), with the Khmer Rouge battalions a mile or so outside the city gates, and surely in no mood to talk about anything on the eve of their long-sought victory. I won't even mention the insanity of proposing that Ambassador Dean remain behind after the evacuation. He, if anyone, was on the Khmer Rouge “death list” and would be shot on sight if not sooner. What upset me most of all, but perhaps not John in equal measure, was that at the end the telegram left the decision up to the Ambassador, that is, the decision whether to remain behind or not. John said to me: “You'd better get Phil Habib on the phone. There's no time to send cables back and forth.” Phil was the Assistant Secretary for the Far East, and was the “point man” in the whole government for Indochina, Vietnam, Cambodia, everything.

So I placed an urgent phone call to the Department via our still-excellent voice communications system, and at the other end I was told that there was a meeting in progress which included all the principals concerned with Cambodia, probably some sort of task force back-stopping our evacuation. Did I want Bob Miller called out of the meeting? Sure thing. I began talking to Bob about the cable, but I'm sure I was mostly incoherent. Among other things, we'd had no sleep for more than a day and were

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extremely fatigued. After listening to me for a minute Bob said: "You'd better talk with Phil." I agreed, saying the Ambassador wanted to talk with Phil.

When Habib came on the line, I started in berating him, with no doubt an extremely angry tone, making the point that an ambassador, an experienced, trained, disciplined, career officer, can be counted on to carry out the Department's instructions, but that it was unconscionable for the Department to place its ambassador in the position where the decision was left up to him; if he decided one way he would be labeled a coward, and if he decided the other way he would be blamed for getting himself killed. I said the Department should tell the ambassador what he should do, and he would do it, but the responsibility for the decision would be the Department's, not the ambassador's. Habib must have been totally mystified by this tirade, because his only response was: "Who am I talking to?" I replied: "This is Keeley speaking, the DCM, and I'm putting Ambassador Dean on, and I am hanging up!" Whereupon I slammed the receiver into its cradle so hard I nearly broke it.

Dean had been listening in on his extension. I walked into his office. After a pause I heard him say, imitating Welch's slow intonation: "Phil, have you no common decency? Have...you...no...common...de-cen-cy?" Well, the upshot was that Habib explained to Dean in very guarded language that he should carefully read the cable again, keeping in mind (and this was of course new and important information) that the first four paragraphs of the cable had been drafted in the White House, "at the highest level," meaning by the President himself or by someone acting on his behalf, with his ideas, and that the fifth and final paragraph had been added in the Department, by Habib himself, presumably with the approval of higher authority, meaning Kissinger or someone acting for him.

While holding Habib on the other end of the line, Dean and I slowly reread the cable, and it all began to come clear: with Habib's gloss we were able to understand that President Ford had at a very late date (hours before the scheduled evacuation) become enamored of the idea of Dean's "controlled solution" and had offered the Ambassador a chance

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to try out his idea by staying behind in Phnom Penh to “work with” the two sides. Habib obviously thought this was an insane idea, but he had no choice except to send the cable, since it was the President's wish. But he had the good sense, and bureaucratic savvy, to add the fifth paragraph, which said in effect, if you wish you may ignore all of the above, or in other words, don't do it if you've got any brains. It was not a case (as I had alleged in my tirade to Habib) that the Department was pushing the ambassador out on a limb where his two alternatives were to display either cowardice or stupidity. Read with this background, Dean and I understood that what the cable meant was: the President thinks it would be a dandy idea if you wished to take a chance on working out some peaceful transition, with the Department adding, “Don't take this seriously. Proceed as planned. But we had to send this.”

So Dean told Habib that we understood, thanked him for the explanation, and closed out the conversation jocularly by saying, “I'll call you from Bangkok.” Habib wished him good luck. So far as I remember, we didn't bother to answer this last cable from Washington. Dean probably still has the incoming cable in his personal files. It's a classic. We can laugh about it now, but in our agitated and fatigued and worried state of mind that last evening in Phnom Penh, we didn't find it at all funny.

The evacuation went off beautifully, without major hitches. My hat was and is off to the military for the smoothness of the operation. No one was lost, no one was injured. We all got out safely to the carrier; a few of us then flew out by helicopter to Uta Pao Airbase and from there by fixed wing aircraft we went to Bangkok. We immediately “opened for business” in our Embassy in Bangkok. We were able to telegraph Washington within hours that we were all out; we could report who came out and who stayed behind—such as Sydney Schanberg and some others. We explained each of the situations; then we spent the rest of the week closing the Embassy—accounting, report writing, efficiency reports, etc.

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Q: The famous "New York Times" picture of you and Dean getting off the plane with you carrying the flag was taken where?

KEELEY: That was taken at Utapao, in Thailand. Let me explain that briefly. It wasn't me carrying the flag. It was Ambassador Dean. It was sort of like Andy Warhol's prediction that everyone would have fifteen minutes of fame. I suppose that the pictures in the "Times" and on the cover of "Newsweek" and elsewhere that week was our fifteen minutes in the limelight. The picture showed Dean carrying the American flag in a plastic bag, with me walking beside him, my body cut in half on the "Newsweek" cover so that the flag was in the center of the picture.

Just before leaving the chancery in Phnom Penh at about 11:00, I went into Dean's office. I told him that the car—my fully armored car—was waiting downstairs and that it was time to leave. The wardens had reported that the place had been cleared out and that it was time to catch the last helicopter. When I entered the office, I found Dean kneeling on the floor cutting his ambassadorial flag off the pole with a pair of scissors. He couldn't get the brass eagle off the top of the pole so he could slide the flag off; it was supposed to unscrew, but it wouldn't budge. So I helped him cut the flag off. Then we took the American flag off its pole and took both flags with us to the car. We had a fully equipped Marine with us as a guard in the front seat and another Marine was driving. We drove by Dean's residence and saw that the American flag was still flying over his house, on a pole in the yard actually. We couldn't leave it that way. So we decided to take it down as well; in any case, Dean wanted to say goodbye to his household staff one more time.

Our original plan had been to evacuate both of our household staffs because they might well become Khmer Rouge targets and could have been in considerable danger. He had invited all of his staff to be evacuated, but some had refused, which made us very suspicious about whom they might be working for. We got out of the car, pulled the flag down, and put it in my briefcase, which was essentially empty. Dean went in to say goodbye to the servants and then we got back into the car and went off to our helicopter.

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When we got to the carrier, Dean was still carrying the office flags. Our senior American military officer in Cambodia, General Jack Palmer, pointed out that the American flag was getting all dirty, because helicopters have a lot of greasy areas. We too were filthy by the time we got to Bangkok.

We were sitting in the officers' wardroom. In the galley Palmer found a big plastic bag which had been used to keep bread that is made in the carrier's bakery. He folded the American flag very carefully and put it in the plastic bag and gave it back to Dean. That is the flag that Dean is carrying in the "New York Times" picture, with its golden fringe—an office flag. This explains the plastic bag in the picture. I was carrying the briefcase which held the Ambassadorial residence flag, which I gave to him later. He was more interested in the Ambassadorial office flag, which he planned to keep as a memento. The chancery flag was turned in to the Department so that it could be used again whenever the Embassy in Phnom Penh was reopened. That is what was done in Kuwait in more recent history.

My household staff had all agreed to be evacuated except for a young woman who worked as a maid-laundress. She was married to a Cambodian soldier and felt that she could not leave him behind. He, being a soldier, could not leave and his wife wanted to stay with him. She had no other family. I told her that once I had left, she could take all the supplies she wanted out of the house; there was a considerable amount still there. I told her to go to a pagoda and to explain the situation and to throw herself on the mercy of the monks. I thought they might take her in and protect her. She did survive. We learned much later through some of our household staff who did evacuate that the maid was OK and was working in a hotel in Angkor Wat. The rest of our staff came out along with their immediate families; they are all here. I mentioned the fellow in Oregon; one of them is in Texas. They are all doing fabulously. They own taxi-cabs, nice houses, etc.; they have all done brilliantly, in the traditional fashion of hard-working American immigrants.

There is one more amusing story about the household staff. When we got to Bangkok, John and I and our wives moved into the Ambassador's residence guest house. It was

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offered to us; there was no American Ambassador in Bangkok at the time. The Embassy offered us the guest house, which was certainly more comfortable than a hotel. It was very near the chancery. We had a pretty good time there; there was a swimming pool, which was made available to all the people in the Embassy. We had a nice party around the pool for all our Phnom Penh Embassy staff.

One day, while the four of us were eating lunch, I turned to Dean and said, "John, this soup reminds me of something which I had not had an opportunity to tell you earlier. I have to tell you now. About two weeks before we left Phnom Penh, our security officer—it was Sid Telford—came to me and told me that we had to do something about your servants. He thought that one of them was trying to poison you. I told him that this was a serious accusation, particularly since you were ill at the time, as you will remember. You were having stomach trouble, your blood pressure was rising, and so on. We all knew that. So I asked Sid what made him think you were being poisoned. He said he had just finished investigating a situation in your house. Your head steward had reported to Sid that the assistant steward, Son [who, by the way, we evacuated and who is now working at the Capitol Hyatt Hotel as a cook], had been spitting in the Ambassador's soup sometime between the time he picked it up in the pantry and the time he served it to you."

Dean, who was eating soup at the time I was telling him this, stopped and said, "He did not spit in my soup. I would have known it! But why did the steward make that accusation?" I said, "That is just the point. We think the head steward was just trying to get his assistant fired, because the assistant had reported that the head steward was working for the Khmer Rouge, and was actually trying to poison the Ambassador through the food he prepared for him; the head steward was a Khmer Rouge agent who had infiltrated the residence, according to Son, the assistant." Dean couldn't believe it. I pointed out that the head steward had not evacuated with us, using the excuse that he couldn't leave because of his loyalty to his country. He had been provided an opportunity to leave Cambodia just before it was to be taken over by the Khmer Rouge and he hadn't taken it. Whom was he loyal to?

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The assistant steward did come out and was in the refugee camp. It seemed obvious to me that the assistant was loyal to us and had been falsely accused by the head steward.

Then Dean wanted to know how we had handled the matter. I said I had told Sid Telford to stay out of it, that is, the dispute between the two servants; that this was no time to upset the Ambassador. He was already sick; if he were told that his soup was being spat in, that would not speed his recovery. I thought that Dean might have fired the whole household staff and then would have to cook for himself. As for the idea that he was being poisoned, I thought that was far-fetched, and in any case the head steward would now be inhibited, once the accusation against him had been made by his assistant. That episode is just an illustration of how some of the staff came out with us while others didn't. Maybe it explains why.

Q: Let me ask a couple of questions about Cambodia during the 1974-75 period. First of all, was the Khmer leadership relatively competent?

KEELEY: I don't think competence was really the issue. The issue was whether they could command the loyalty of their own people and whether they could deal with the Khmer Rouge. They all had in common, as do all Cambodians, a hatred for the Vietnamese. The issue which was basic to Lon Nol's coup when he overthrew Sihanouk was essentially an anti-Vietnamese issue. He accused Sihanouk of having permitted Cambodia to be overwhelmed by Vietnamese— Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese as well as some South Vietnamese. The Cambodians don't distinguish between North and South; they hate all Vietnamese. This is a hatred of long standing. The Khmer used to be the dominant power in that part of the world, when they had their great empires back from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries—the Angkor Wat period. They eventually were squeezed between the Vietnamese and the Thais, both of whom were more aggressive and war-like. The original Khmer were very war-like also, but they had turned into a peaceful agricultural culture. After the end of their empire, the Khmer had to pay tribute to both Thailand and Vietnam for centuries and were dominated by both. So there existed and still exists a

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great mutual hatred among the people of the region. Eventually, the Khmer developed a major animus against the Vietnamese; there were massacres of tens of thousands of Vietnamese after the Lon Nol coup because that was what the Khmer had been told the coup was all about—"Sihanouk had sold out Cambodia, ended our peaceful existence, had gotten us involved in the war." It was an unfortunate emotion for Lon Nol to stir up. The unsettled situation in Cambodia after the coup gave the Khmer Rouge an opportunity to become active with the support of North Vietnam originally and later of Red China. That was a political mistake by Lon Nol, but it was not an issue of competence.

Lon Nol was a military man. There were a lot of stories about him which I can't really judge because I met him very late in his career. He had had a stroke by that time and was physically and mentally not very strong. He was not very alert. He has been blamed for badly mismanaging the military campaign; for being corrupt; for making very strange and incomprehensible decisions, based on astrology and signs and fortune-tellers' advice. People would tell him that he needed to launch a campaign on such a date and in such a place based on some signs; all those decisions were militarily wrong. He was obviously very superstitious and used strange decision-making practices that led him to actions which had no relevance to modern warfare. But all Cambodians believe in the influence of signs. Perhaps the Khmer Rouge didn't, and that would have given them an advantage, militarily speaking. From my reading of the history, Lon Nol did some very strange things, against the advice of his colleagues, strictly because his astrologer said that "this was a lucky day" to undertake whatever was the main initiative at the time. Very strange stuff! (But let's not forget, when we criticize, the role of astrology in the Reagan White House!) There were accusations that Lon Nol was deliberately hood-winked and used by enemy agents. Therefore Lon Nol's reputation was not all that good.

Long Boret was a very capable Prime Minister—a good administrator. I don't know if he was honest—no one in that government was very honest. But I looked at the situation in a somewhat different way. I didn't suspend my own morality, but the situation was such that people literally had to have command of a lot of resources to fight the war. They had to

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pay for their own troops; they had to buy to feed their own troops. In an economy that had totally collapsed, there were no tax revenues, no real government budget. When you order a commander to go defend a front, he will take the resources he considers necessary from wherever he can—he steals, he buys, he deals. He doesn't necessarily put it in his pocket, but he spends it because that is his job. He had to keep his men alive. And Lon Nol did have some very competent military officers.

Lon Nol was heavily criticized for the “phantom troops” matter; criticized by us, I should stress. That was a genuine issue. People—military commanders—would report that they had a certain number of troops, which in fact they didn't have. The figures were invented, inflated. They were ordered to recruit a certain number; when they couldn't meet the target, they would bill for the maximum. They would take the salaries for the “phantom” soldiers and use the money to buy supplies and things that they needed, and to bribe people. Everybody had to be bribed; you had to bribe someone to take you across the river. In a war like that, all normal rules are dispensed with. We would say, “Eliminate the phantom troops!” The Cambodians would eliminate the existing ones and create new ones. It was simply a device to allow people to get their hands on resources which would otherwise not be available.

The country was in a state of total inefficiency by 1974. You couldn't really talk about competence and efficiency. “Competence” was defined as someone who did well in the war as opposed to someone who did a bad job. By 1974 there was no time or interest in looking at the means used. It was a matter of life or death. Some of the military were extremely brave and very able commanders, but corruption was rampant, as it was in Vietnam. It was corruption by any standards, but these were people who ended up losing their lives; I don't think many are on the Riviera in their palaces; they didn't end up with much, if they survived at all. The resources were all local currency; there were no means of acquiring foreign exchange or of smuggling money out of the country or of salting it away in Switzerland or any foreign country. It was not like Marcos in the Philippines—a peaceful atmosphere where the kick-backs came from contractors and fees from

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anyone who wanted to do business. Even the Cambodian rubber was mostly under Khmer Rouge control. What little was exported by the government was handled by a French company, which as far as I know deposited the foreign exchange earnings in Paris in the company's accounts. I don't think the Khmer government got any of it. They probably got paid something in local currency, but not in francs.

Q: Tell us a little bit more about an Embassy's relationship with the press under the 1974-75 circumstances in Cambodia?

KEELEY: I personally followed the rules that I had always followed and that was to talk to the press; some FSOs avoid the press because they don't like to deal with them. They don't trust them. I began my life with a strong interest in journalism and thought that that was going to be my career. So I have always had some affinity for those who worked as foreign correspondents, because that was more or less what I had wanted to be. I also strongly believe in the principle that if you are interested in the policy you are pursuing, if you do not deal with the press you are in effect abdicating any possibility of having any influence even to the point of educating them—making them understand better what you are trying to do. If you deal with the press you perhaps have an opportunity to influence what they are writing, to help them do better, to increase understanding. I am not talking about propagandizing them in favor of a certain policy, but if you don't talk to them, they are going to write something anyway and it is more likely than not to be hostile to the U.S. government or the Embassy.

So I have always seen press people; have always talked to them. I have tried to keep certain matters “off the record” because they had to be handled in that fashion; I talked to them “on background” at times, although my limitation was not always honored. But I have not had any particular bad luck with that; I do not regret it. I have never gotten into serious trouble for talking to the press. The most difficult experience I have had was in Cambodia, because the press corps in general was extremely hostile to our policy, even to our involvement in Cambodia. They were hostile to the Khmer government; they focused

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on the corruption and on the errors people made, such as the bombing of a town loyal to the government when they should have been bombing on the other side of the river, etc. That is the way “The Killing Fields” story starts; it was not a true depiction, because the guy who plays my role as DCM, Spalding Gray (although I was not in Cambodia when these earlier events allegedly took place), is pictured talking to the press, saying on the one hand that “it’s a tragedy that the village got bombed, an accident,” but on the other hand siding with the press and giving them the low-down on what really happened, blaming somebody else, I guess. That’s not the way I would have handled it.

The problem with the press was that they didn’t accept our information on how brutal the Khmer Rouge were and what a tragedy it would be if they won the war. They thought we were simply propagandizing to continue the war. We couldn’t talk to them about all that we were doing to try to arrange a solution because the surest way to torpedo that process would have been to have it become public. For everyone to know that we were maneuvering in ways that might have meant Lon Nol’s departure, or a cease fire achieved in cooperation with the Chinese, would have been greatly counter-productive; those were processes that had to take place in secrecy or they would simply not work. So those were matters that couldn’t be discussed. So we projected the image of people who were in Cambodia just to fight a war or to keep it going—a war that “should have stopped a long time ago,” which was “far beyond comprehension” and just “plain awful” and just an “appendage of the Vietnam war, which also should have been terminated a long time ago.” The Cambodian war was viewed as a sideshow which was not important to the people in Saigon, where “the real action was.”

The press also succumbed to the myth that somehow it was the Americans who kept the war going far beyond what the Cambodians, even Lon Nol, wanted. That was personally painful, because I was never able to convince them otherwise. The press line was that if we Americans would just simply leave Cambodia, all Cambodians would get together, regardless of ideology or history or prior behavior, sit down together under a banyan tree, smoke a peace pipe, and arrange things in the Khmer way amongst themselves, because

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they were all members of one large happy family. The theory went that the Khmer were a distinct culture whose first love was for their fellow Cambodians; it was we Americans who stood in the way of a peaceful settlement. If we would just leave, it would all be over and peace would reign.

That attitude explains precisely why some of the press people stayed behind, including Sydney Schanberg. He was an advocate of the view I have just described. I had dinner with him many times in our last days in Cambodia and I knew precisely what his views were. I read them later on. He was representative of his peers and not unique. They seriously believed that as soon as we would evacuate, the Khmer Rouge would march into Phnom Penh and would hold a palaver with the leadership of whatever power establishment might be left. They probably didn't think that the process would proceed entirely peacefully, especially for people on "death lists." They may have assumed that those would escape with us or after us; in fact, some did and some didn't. Long Boret, in his peculiar way, after the Khmer Rouge were reported on the outskirts of town, instead of going to the stadium to get into a helicopter to fly out with his friend, the chief of the air force, Long Boret said that his duty required him to go to the radio station to broadcast a message to "his people." He wanted to explain what was happening and to appeal to them to stay calm and reasonable and to do the right thing. So he made his broadcast and then went to the stadium where his wife and children were supposed to meet him. He couldn't find them and wouldn't leave without them. He was captured by the Khmer Rouge and shot on the spot. That was the end of Long Boret. That was not the way I would have behaved, but I guess it might have been predictable in his case.

In fact, the Schanberg scenario did not develop. The Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh, herded all the journalists, including Schanberg, into the French Embassy compound. There were no peace meetings; they went around shooting anybody they could find who may have been an official of the previous government. Then they forced everyone to move out of Phnom Penh; killed everyone who had any education; then they forced all the Khmer citizens out of the French compound. They dragged Prince Sirik Matak, kicking

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and screaming (I hope), out of the compound and killed him. He was the one who sent the famous letter that Kissinger used in his Congressional testimony. That was the only written response that we received to Dean's letters to the five Khmer leaders informing them of our evacuation plans. The Prince's letter, on blue paper and in a blue envelope addressed to John Dean, written by hand in French, which said in effect (I'm paraphrasing only a part of it): "Dear Friend and Excellency, thank you very much for your kind offer, but I have to stay behind. [Here I'm quoting from a translation I made of the letter at the time] I never believed for a moment that you would have this sentiment of abandoning a people who have chosen liberty. You have refused us your protection and we can do nothing about it...I have only committed this mistake of believing in you." And he ended the letter by wishing Dean "goodbye and good luck," or something like that.

Dean handed me that letter, which I translated into English, and we sent it in to the Department that night from Bangkok. Kissinger used it the next day or the day after during his testimony in support of additional appropriations for Vietnam. He was trying to make the point that the United States should not abandon its friends around the world. When you make a friend, when you help him, when he believes in you, you've got to stick with him and not walk away. That was Kissinger's argument to the Congress. I don't know that the letter had any impact. When Kissinger was writing his memoirs, he had one of his assistants try to get that letter, the actual document. I was called and he got my wife, who said that the letter belonged to John Dean, who considered it personal correspondence. He had kept it and my wife doubted that he would release it. But we also pointed out that a translation was available in the Department in the cable that we had transmitted from Bangkok. The French version had never been forwarded because it wasn't necessary. So I presume Kissinger will use that translation when he gets around to publishing the third volume of his memoirs, the part that will cover the fall of Cambodia and Vietnam. I assume that he wanted to check the translation for accuracy, or to make his own. But that's just a guess.

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Q: Did we have any contact or communication with the Khmer Rouge? Not through Beijing or in any other way?

KEELEY: Not as far as I know. I suspect that any communications would have had to go through Sihanouk. When we speak of the Khmer Rouge, we should understand that the government's opposition was broader than that. Sihanouk was supporting the Khmer Rouge at the time and when they took over, he came back as Chief of State. Then they began to kill members of his family. He stayed around much too long.

I don't remember all the possible scenarios, but, according to our theory—primarily Dean's—if the Chinese had cooperated it would have been to restore Sihanouk with support from all factions. There might have then developed a national unity government on the Laos model. But Sihanouk could not have worked with people like Lon Nol or anyone in the Phnom Penh leadership. But there were a lot of other people, not part of the leadership, who could have spoken for the government party and who could have worked with Sihanouk. Of course, the Khmer Rouge would have had to be part of the national unity structure; in fact, we are seeing today what Dean hoped might have been achieved seventeen years ago. It is true that there are different factions today than there were then, but the situation was comparable. In lieu of the Khmer Rouge, who were thrown out, now there is a faction of principally former Khmer Rouge people who are supported by the Vietnamese. Then there is a pro-Sihanouk but independent group, led by Son Sann, and Sihanouk's group, and the Khmer Rouge. In effect, today there are four major factions. In 1974-75, there were two principal factions plus Sihanouk, plus others on neither side. But the solution would have been roughly the same as is being developed today. Had Dean been successful, Cambodia might have been spared millions of deaths. I am not saying that it was possible, but that is what we were trying to accomplish.

Sihanouk was the center-piece. He had to be restored as head of the country; he was the lynch-pin of the whole structure. He was, and still is, the single Cambodian whom all respect, despite his checkered history, his shifts from one policy position to another. Even

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today, he is loved and respected by all ordinary Khmer people; from that point of view, he is quite an extraordinary figure.

A few years ago we went to the Cambodian New Year celebration with our former household staff, which was held in a high school auditorium in Arlington. Everyone was very excited because Sihanouk was in town, had been invited, and in fact came to the celebration. Two of our former household staff from Phnom Penh, dressed in natty suits, were on the welcoming committee, standing on the sidewalk to greet Sihanouk when he arrived in a long limousine accompanied by his French wife, Monique. I had never seen Sihanouk in person before, but on that night I was introduced to him. We chatted briefly. He went around and talked to his former countrymen. They all made their bowing, respectful gestures with hands clasped to face and forehead, with each one trying to bow lower than the other. Sihanouk is rather short, forcing some of the guests almost to the floor in an effort to be lower than him. He then sat down and talked to people of all stations of life; they were all one happy family. He then showed a film—he used to be a film maker and he had brought one of his films. He had also brought a projector, ran it himself, fixed the reel when it broke, and commented on the film. It was an extraordinary performance; I can't imagine any other national leader performing as Sihanouk did that night. He has a common touch with his people; he has enormous empathy. I guess it's what we call charisma in a politician. That is what is being capitalized on now. If he lives for a while and is left alone, he may be able to put Cambodia back together.

Q: I believe that after your short tour in Cambodia, you returned to Washington to work with the Indochina Refugee Task Force. Tell us a little about that.

KEELEY: All the Embassy staff from Phnom Penh were “over-complement;” in other words, the evacuation of a complete mission had not been anticipated and therefore there were no permanent positions for us to fill. To our surplus was then added the whole Saigon Embassy and the Department had a huge surplus of people all unassigned. It seems a little strange in retrospect that people hadn't anticipated the exodus from

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Indochina, but I guess the downfall happened rather precipitously. I was told, after my return to Washington, that Dean had recommended me for the DCM position in Paris, which, however, in the meantime had already been filled. I certainly would have been interested in that; that would have been a great assignment for someone with my background. But Eagleburger told both Dean and me that he wanted to appoint me to an ambassadorial position, which was also entirely acceptable, regardless of where it might have been, particularly in light of my age, rank and experience. In the meantime, he wanted me to become the deputy director of an inter-agency task force on the Indochina refugees. I wasn't thrilled about that at all, but he made it clear that I would have to take it regardless of my own wishes. Otherwise I'd be left "to swing in the wind."

That task force had been set up in April 1975 as the refugees began to pour out, particularly the Vietnamese from Saigon. There was a tremendous exodus of Cambodians and Vietnamese in the wake of events in Indochina. We had about 150,000 to deal with by the time it was all over. They came by plane, boat or any other way they could get out—some even over-land. I knew nothing about Vietnam; I had never gotten there. I thought the refugee operation was primarily for Vietnamese and I knew that there were a lot of other people who knew a great deal more about Vietnam and its people than I did. I knew nothing about refugee programs; it was indeed an "out-of-area" assignment. In fact, it turned out to be one of the more fascinating assignments of my career. It was certainly one of the more rewarding in retrospect, although it surely did not appear that way to me when Eagleburger sent me to work there.

Strangely enough, I had great difficulties in subsequent years getting that assignment listed on my personnel record. It is still shown as "over-complement" for the East Asia Bureau, even though I worked in the job for nearly a year. The way the record reads suggests that I was unemployed and unassignable—really in limbo; it looks terrible, as if I had done something wrong and had been put on a shelf. I complained in writing on a couple of occasions about this listing and would always mention it yearly when we were asked if we wanted our personnel records corrected in any way. It was explained to me

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later by Art Tienken, whom I knew well and who was at one time in charge of personnel assignments, that because I was on detail to another agency—and there wasn't any code for that agency in the Department's computer programs, because it was a very temporary agency—the computer could not record my correct assignment. That is just a footnote, but it tells you something about the condition of the Department's record keeping.

As I mentioned, I was the Deputy Director of this Task Force. I replaced Frank Wisner, who had been recruited by Dean Brown for it. Frank had had a lot of experience in Vietnam, and was the real spark plug of that operation from the beginning. He was particularly important to the evacuation from Vietnam. By the time I took the job in July 1975, the operation had begun to be primarily concerned with refugee resettlement. The evacuation was essentially over; those who had gotten out were the last. They had been brought to four camps in the U.S., and to Guam, the Philippines and some to points in between. Our job, as assigned to us by President Ford, who had set the Task Force up at the beginning, was to empty the four camps in California, Pennsylvania, Arkansas and Florida by Christmas. That was the specific time-table. The camps were populated primarily by Vietnamese; of the total number of refugees, less than 5,000 were Cambodians.

We succeeded. The camps were all empty by about a week before Christmas. Some people accused us of putting the last few in buses and driving them around the environs of the camp so that visitors could see that the camps were empty. That was a canard; all were resettled one way or another by Christmas. It took us several more months to close down the Task Force. The Director of the Task Force was Julia Taft; she was from HEW, which was really in charge of the operation because it was a refugee resettlement process working with voluntary agencies—both religious and secular. They did the actual resettling: finding places for the refugees to live and jobs for them. They were all over the country. We had a lot of major problems, not the least of which was the fact that many communities did not want to accept these people. That was partly prejudice, partly fear. Rumors circulated that these refugees carried strange Asian diseases from which

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Americans had absolutely no immunity. People were saying that epidemics would ensue. There were stories that all the refugees were criminals of one sort or another. We had a major public relations problem.

On the other hand, there were many communities which really broke their backs to welcome the refugees. This was particularly true of church groups, who sponsored some refugees, took care of them, and in some cases housed them. I regret that there never has been a detailed write-up of that operation. We did some reporting on it, particularly to the Congress, which had established a number of oversight committees. The chief one was the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Senate Committee was the primary sponsor of the legislation authorizing the Task Force and it received a lot of interim reports as well as the final one. So there are documents available, but little has been written about the human side of the operation. There were obviously some press accounts, but I wish someone would have been assigned after the end of the operation to write a history of it, because it was interesting, with a lot of lessons to be learned which would indeed be very helpful if there were a similar crisis again.

Q: What was the State Department's role in this operation besides providing manpower?

KEELEY: That was the reason why I was assigned to it. The Deputy Director of the Task Force was a State officer. The Department was interested in three matters. The first was the success of the operation for foreign policy and public relations reasons. So it wanted someone at a senior level to keep an eye on the proceedings and to make sure that the process went smoothly, and to report back to the Secretary, through Eagleburger, who was the Under Secretary directly responsible for the operation. The Department was also interested in assuring that foreign policy aspects were taken into account. Furthermore, the original concept assumed that some of these people could be settled abroad in "third" countries, as we called them: France, for example, which had had long-standing ties with Indochina, perhaps even some countries in Africa—we resettled a group of fishermen in Gabon, for example. My main job was to find these opportunities abroad. I worked

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through our Embassies, but I must say that this was not a very successful part of the operation. Very few countries were willing to accept any significant numbers. They would take them if they had had a previous connection with Cambodians or Vietnamese; e.g., if there were some relatives of now-established residents, who could sponsor the new refugees and provide for them. But very few governments volunteered to take any large numbers. It was a disappointment, but by this time, the whole Vietnam policy had become very controversial and countries were not enthusiastic about bailing the U.S. out. These refugees were seen as our responsibility, created by “our” war, and so on. The Task Force was made up of people from a large variety of agencies. Many came from AID, particularly people who had served in Vietnam, and people who had served in CORDS. There were USIS officers who handled the press and public relations. There were people from HEW who knew resettlement and social welfare issues.

Finally, there was also a specific problem that was assigned to me. Julia Taft asked me to take charge of it, which made sense because it was essentially a foreign policy issue. There is no record of this particular story, which was an interesting one. The problem concerned approximately 1,600 “repatriates” as they called themselves. It was a made-up term, but it had a real meaning. These were Vietnamese (and a small group of Cambodians, about 25 of them, whom we handled separately) who had left Vietnam in the panic exodus at the end of the war, involuntarily from their point of view. They had been swept up in the mass departure; they included crew members of evacuated aircraft or ships. Somehow whole units of people got swept up and fled with the rest, in fear for their lives. Once they had left Vietnam, they had second thoughts; they had either left involuntarily or left in a panic and changed their minds later. The Vietnamese, as well as the Cambodians, had a strong sense of family—the extended family in the Vietnamese culture. These people went into a psychological depression; they felt they had abandoned their families. These were mostly single men, mostly ex-military (army, navy, air force), but not all. They had left their wives and children behind and also their parents, brothers,

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sisters, etc. They felt somehow that they had betrayed their family responsibilities and wanted to return to Vietnam; they were determined to get back to Vietnam.

When people of that mind-set turned up during the interview or resettlement process (and these incidents were already happening by the time I arrived on the job), they were all assigned to one set of barracks in a former army camp on Guam. There were, as I mentioned, about 1,600 of them. They were kept in a fenced-in area; well looked after from the point of view of food, health, recreational facilities, etc. But no one knew what to do with them. Since their requests were not being addressed in any meaningful way, they became increasingly depressed and increasingly angry and began to misbehave (to put it mildly). In fact, they began to burn their barracks to attract some attention; they hoped to get some results. The problem was a political one. The governor of Guam became very upset with these Vietnamese because they were causing trouble; he wanted them transferred from Guam. He also considered them traitors—according to his sense of right and wrong—because they wanted to return to Vietnam rather than resettle in the U.S.

So we were faced with the dilemma of having on the one hand a screaming governor, and on the other a rioting group of refugees who were threatening to tear down the fence and march into the city. Julia Taft told me to go to Guam to deal with the problem. She was going to go herself, but I think the White House decided it would be better if a lower profile official went instead, someone less “political” (Julia was a political appointee at HEW; her husband Will is the great-grandson of President Taft). It was clearly a nasty situation that no matter how it was resolved wouldn't do anyone much credit. I had never been to Guam. We had a local representative of the Task Force there, Colonel Herbert, a retired military officer. I conferred with him and with an American admiral, who was the senior military officer on the island. I spent several days looking into the situation and became convinced that the refugees had a valid position. They should have had the right to return to Vietnam if they so desired, although I and many others thought they were crazy for doing so. They would probably be killed upon return, since from Vietnam's point of view they were the traitors, particularly those who had been in the military services. They had fled and that

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would have been considered very disloyal. But the key element in my thinking was that these people were so determined that they had developed what I considered a fairly sensible plan. They wanted an opportunity to repatriate themselves without any assistance from us. There was a Vietnamese-owned cargo ship in Guam's harbor which had been commandeered during the Vietnam exodus. Hundreds or maybe thousands of people had arrived on that ship; it was anchored in the harbor. It actually had belonged to some Vietnamese trading company. The Vietnamese "repatriates" had organized themselves and had selected a crew, a captain and other ship's officers, from among themselves. Everything had been well organized and they presented their plan to me, as they had done to Guam officials previously. All they wanted from us was permission to board the ship and some supplies; they would then sail away.

Washington considered this a crazy idea. When I returned, I talked to Mrs. Taft and convinced her. She told me that I would have to convince the Secretary of State, who would have to approve the plan; it had to be done by someone senior to her. I wrote a much-too-long memorandum analyzing the whole problem, presenting various options, and concluding with the simple proposition that the U.S. Navy should be assigned responsibility and given the necessary resources to fix up the ship as a passenger ship by putting in bunks, galleys, toilets, an infirmary, and other facilities. The ship should be fueled and stocked with an adequate amount of supplies and charts so that it could sail back to Vietnam. I sent my paper to Secretary Kissinger through Eagleburger. A series of meetings were called to discuss the idea; I felt in a very lonely minority. Our intelligence people were unanimous in saying that my scheme was absolutely insane because the ship would become a modern day "Flying Dutchman." It would be sailing all over the Pacific for the next ten years; no country would permit it to land; no one would want these 1,600 people. Eventually the ship would run out of supplies or run aground somewhere. The plan would produce a scandal making the U.S. look sick as the country that went along with such a crazy scheme. They thought that Vietnam would not accept the ship and its

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passengers and if it did, it would kill them all and we would be accused of helping these murders. That was the position of the intelligence community.

The arguments went on and on. The paper finally got to Kissinger; it was probably much too long for him. I don't know if he read it. It was in the typical State Department format with the "approve" and "disapprove" boxes at the end, where the decision-maker could render his verdict with a check-mark. No boxes were ever checked; I got the paper back unmarked. The whole issue was then sent to President Ford; he apparently read my paper, and he didn't mark it either, but he did approve the plan. The word came down to us that the President had decided to go ahead. I had drafted the paper in such a way that I didn't think there was any way it could be disapproved because there were just no other valid options. The result of maintaining the status quo would be potential riots, and bad publicity stemming from a visit of the Governor of Guam to Washington to raise hell; there was no good escape for the administration.

Having obtained the White House's approval, we told the Navy to proceed. With their own existing resources and perhaps some of our Task Force money, the Navy proceeded to fix the ship up in a magnificent way. Dormitories were installed in the cargo holds, toilets built in along the gunwales, the new galleys were equipped with the finest stainless steel appliances, the Navy trained the crew (the ship was taken out to sea on a couple of trial runs), they checked the engines, they loaded it with fuel, food, and medicines. There were some nurses and doctors among the refugees who knew how to use the medical supplies. It was a major operation and the Navy rightly so was very proud of what it had done. I went back out to Guam to launch the ship on its voyage and to wish the refugees "goodbye and good luck."

Some people still had very cold feet about the whole operation. They were principally concerned by the possibility of a group psychology having developed among these people; some of them may just have fallen victim to peer pressure and had agreed to return to Vietnam although they may not have really wished to do so. They may have even been

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afraid to say “No.” There was a lot of tension in the barracks and the potential for real violence. Our group of counselors—a very fine group headed by Lionel Rosenblatt—who has left the Foreign Service and is still working on refugee issues today (he heads up a Washington group called Refugees International)—were sent to the barracks in Guam. We set up an elaborate scheme which permitted each refugee to go to a counselor in a private room for an interview in depth so that we could verify what he or she really wanted to do—return to Vietnam or resettle in the U.S. Each of the interview rooms had two doors: one led through a hallway down some steps into a bus which when filled would take the refugees down to the ship; the other door led to a holding room from which we would take them to another site so that they would not need to see their former colleagues again. We would resettle that group in the United States. We planned to be scrupulous in following the wishes of each individual.

We conducted 1,600 individual interviews with six or eight interviewers on hand. It took us all day. All 1,600 stated that they wanted to return to Vietnam; not a single one of them wanted to stay in the United States. That relieved our fears, but also made us feel a little foolish. We had gone through a costly operation to assure that not a single refugee was being coerced to return to Vietnam. In retrospect, had we not done that, we would have had to live with a doubt in our minds that we may have forced a human being to take an involuntary action that might have cost his or her life. So we did the right thing, because we had no way of knowing what the eventual outcome would be.

I did have considerable discussions with the elected leadership of the Vietnamese group. They had elected their own leaders, although I will not vouch for the democratic nature of the process they used. We discussed all the alternatives, what might happen, etc. They made one major request, which was very intelligent on their part. They did not want any vessels escorting their ship; no American planes or ships were to go with them, because they were afraid that that would not be very well received in Vietnam. They wanted to sail alone; they were confident that they could make it on their own. They were well equipped; they had their charts and navigational instruments; they had been well trained.

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We warned them to avoid Philippine waters, which would have been the shortest route, but the Filipinos had heard of our plan and were not at all happy with the prospect that the ship would be coming through their waters, because they were afraid that it would stop there and the refugees would become their problem. So we advised the refugees to go around the Philippines, which made it a longer, but safer journey.

As I said, they wanted assurance that we would not accompany them. I so assured them. But my superiors thought that we should at least keep them under surveillance to make sure that they didn't stray from their objective, or that if they got into trouble some rescue effort could be made. We would observe them from a distance from the air and by other means. We did that.

We went out to see them off. They boarded the ship accompanied by their own cheers. They had earlier built a model ship which they had placed in a square in their barracks compound as a sort of shrine; I had seen it on my first visit to Guam; now it was lit up and they held services in front of it—like religious services. I had a meal with the refugee leadership, at the end of which they presented me with a painting, done by one of their group, which had just been finished that morning. It now hangs in my house. It's a Vietnamese river scene with fishing boats and has in one corner an inscription that it was “honorably presented” to me by the painter “and 1,600 Viet repatriates. Guam, Oct 1st 1975”—so I can't forget the date.

Colonel Herbert and I and the senior Navy officers boarded the Admiral's barge; we watched the repatriates' ship sail off out of Guam harbor. Within minutes of leaving the pier, they hoisted the Vietnamese flag on the stern of the ship, the North Vietnamese flag. The U.S. Navy people on the Admiral's barge were livid and they turned on me, wanting to know why we had let these Viet Cong people escape. They wanted to know how they got to Guam in the first place and why had we done anything for them anyway? The Navy people were very upset. I suppose the repatriates could have waited to raise their flag until their ship was over the horizon. But they didn't, and I suppose there was some symbolism

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in that, or perhaps they were thinking ahead and wanted it reported in the press that they had sailed away from Guam under the North Vietnamese flag.

I suggested to my Navy colleagues that they cool down. These repatriates were not likely to be Viet Cong; they were mostly South Vietnamese military people who had fought side by side with us, but they were returning to their country, which was now under the control of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. They were going to sail into a Viet Cong harbor; what other flag would we have them fly, besides their own? These people wanted to go back and be accepted. I told the U.S. Navy officers that I didn't know what the repatriates' true loyalties were, but they were probably very mixed. Their main concerns were their families and staying alive. It seemed to me that flying their own flag was quite natural under the circumstances. There was absolute silence; everybody was glum. The barge turned around and went back to the pier and that was the last we saw of the ship.

Everyone wants to know what happened to the ship; is it still floating around the Pacific? In fact, it originally tried to land in Cam Ranh Bay, which was the largest naval port that we had built in South Vietnam. The ship was turned away—gunboats came out and chased them off. So they sailed down the coast and landed at Vung Tau, the port for Saigon. This time, instead of waiting for permission, they sailed right into the port and dropped anchor. They announced their presence and their determination not to move on. That created consternation and there was apparently a lot of discussion. We got much of our information through satellite intelligence and other means. Eventually they were permitted to land, but were taken immediately to detention camps. Later we learned, through some very sketchy intelligence, that they were sorted out into various categories: those who were fully released, those who were considered war criminals, those who needed “re-education,” where some languished for a considerable period. In general, they were treated by the North Vietnamese, as far as we could determine, like most South Vietnamese, according to their records, their military rank, their prior performance, their service, etc. They were probably thoroughly interrogated and many undoubtedly suffered.

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As far as I know, none were killed outright and they were treated like functionaries and officials of a defeated regime—no better, no worse.

There was no effort to involve either the American judicial system or the Congress. We kept the Congressional staff advised on what we were doing. They didn't object and probably viewed it as an Executive Branch responsibility. We did become involved in a peculiar problem. I was sued along with Julia Taft and a lot of others for commandeering the ship. The former owners or their heirs or some other company claimed ownership of the ship. We had sequestered it and had taken legal title to it because the U.S. Government viewed it as an "enemy alien" asset. We thought we were on safe grounds using the ship, because by the time we used it, it belonged to the U.S. Government. But a suit was lodged, although it didn't have any merit. I never had to go to court or testify, but that was the only judicial involvement, and that was on the property and not on the action itself.

I found the Task Force experience very useful, even though I was a Foreign Service officer and the resettlement was essentially a domestic operation. As I said earlier, it was one of the more interesting and rewarding assignments I ever had. It enabled me to learn more about my country. For example, one of my responsibilities, which I shared with Mrs. Taft and others, was to supervise the four refugee camps. I went out to Camp Pendleton, in California, Fort Indiantown Gap, in Pennsylvania, and Fort Smith, in Arkansas, on several occasions to observe the operations. I spent several days in each place, watching how the voluntary agencies did their interviews, how the refugees were being taken care of—the messing and medical facilities, etc. These are the kinds of experiences that very few Foreign Service officers have opportunities to have, so that my tour with the Refugee Task Force was very educational. It was a kind of social welfare effort in which I participated in a minor way, which was a new and fascinating lesson. I had an opportunity to travel around the country, to meet different people, to see different kinds of work; all of that I normally

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would not have experienced in a pure Foreign Service assignment. I was proud to be part of that effort; it was very successful.

One of the most unusual aspects was that we did not spend all the money that had been appropriated to us. We turned back a substantial amount of money. We may have asked for too much money in the beginning, because we were anticipating working for a year. Then President Ford said that he wanted all of them resettled by Christmas, at the end of six months. The fact that it was speeded up saved us money. I think our appropriation was somewhere in the \$300-400 million range and we returned at least 10% to 15%.

Q: You finished your tour as Deputy Director of the Task Force in 1976. Then what happened?

KEELEY: While I was on the Task Force, the Department decided that I should be appointed as Ambassador to Madagascar. I thought that was great; although I had never been there, it was in the African Bureau in which I had considerable experience. I thought it would be an interesting assignment; although it was not a major country, it was significant. Most people in the Foreign Service like the idea of being an ambassador at some point. Unfortunately, I never got to Madagascar. The instructions to the post to seek my agreement were not very good. Subsequently, on two occasions I tried to help the Department improve its instructions in this process of getting foreign government approval of an ambassadorial appointment. In 1976 the Department just sent the name with instructions to obtain agreement. It is a standard telegram that is used for all ambassadorial appointments, which refers the Embassy to the then existing "Biographic Register" for any details of the candidate's career. The posts were supposed to make up a curriculum vitae of the officer from the very sketchy and often erroneous material in the "Biographic Register."

In the case of Madagascar in 1976, the post, perhaps not unnaturally—although I might have done it differently (particularly in retrospect)—began with my most recent overseas

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assignment, which was Deputy Chief of Mission in Cambodia—the Khmer Republic. That is, the biographic sketch accompanying the note requesting agr#ment began that way. The agr#ment request went all the way to the President, Didier Ratsiraka (who is still the President today, although in considerable difficulties and potentially to be overthrown any day as we speak), as often happens in small countries. He refused to grant the agr#ment “because his government had not recognized the Lon Nol government;” he implied that I had in effect been working for the Khmer government. Madagascar recognized the opposition—Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge. Ratsiraka didn't specifically refuse the agr#ment; he asked for another candidate, suggesting that my name be withdrawn. Kissinger would have no part of that and the matter dragged out for months. I was busy of course during this period working at the Refugee Task Force, so that I wasn't really concerned about the delay.

Joe Mendenhall had been our Ambassador in Madagascar, but he had left the post sometime earlier. He had retired and was living in Italy. The Embassy was being run by a Charg#, whom I had actually chosen to be my DCM when the previous one was killed in an auto accident in Kenya. Kissinger's response was that we would not send another name. If Ratsiraka didn't like the candidate we had chosen, then Madagascar could do without an ambassador. And, in fact, no one went for two or three years. Then a fellow by the name of Mike Crosby was nominated, but he also didn't get there. His agr#ment was granted, but between that time and the time that he was supposed to leave the U.S., the Madagascar government kicked out a couple of our diplomats on completely trumped up charges; they were supposed to have given rides to a couple of students who were hitchhiking, at a time when there were demonstrations and rioting at the university, which the government blamed on us. The two American officials were supposed to have instigated the ferment and therefore the Madagascar government expelled them. In retaliation we canceled Crosby's appointment. So the Crosby appointment fell by the wayside, and then another few years passed before another ambassadorial appointment was made.

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I have never visited Madagascar, because I have not felt comfortable going there, although I would have liked to make a visit. It is supposed to be an interesting place and some day I hope to get there. I think the Madagascar government was probably very surprised that they didn't get another name from the U.S. after they had made a request. They do have the right to refuse an agreement request, but it is not usually exercised for that kind of reason. There was controversy over Cambodia and Vietnam; I was closely associated with a government that they didn't like, and that made me, in their eyes, "unacceptable." A similar event had taken place earlier in Madagascar, which had refused the agreement of an Italian diplomat because he had served in South Africa, which had a regime of which they didn't approve. In that case, I was told, the Italians just stood their ground and waited and eventually the Malagasy changed their minds. The same thing happened with a Japanese nominee as ambassador. Japan insisted and won the point. We later met both the Japanese and the Italian when they visited Mauritius. Both of them envied our wonderful posting in Mauritius.

Eagleburger told me that if I didn't mind the Department intended to just let the matter ride and was not about to send another name. It would not insist on my appointment because it really couldn't, but it just intended to let the matter rest where it was, totally forgotten. I said that was fine by me. He then said that he would find another post for me, which was also agreeable to me. He was looking around in Africa since I was considered an "African hand." He gave me three choices, which was rather unusual—sometimes things like this happen. One was Liberia, another was Chad, and the third was Mauritius. I checked out the post reports of all three places. The only one of the three that I was reluctant to accept was Liberia, which I had visited previously on a couple of occasions when I was working on West Africa. That country didn't appeal to me very much, although it was probably the most important of the three posts. We had a large American presence there until recently because of our communications stations there, Roberts Field, VOA transmitters, etc. But that assignment didn't really appeal to me. It would have involved a lot of administrative

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work, because it was such a large mission. Furthermore, the climate left something to be desired.

After weighing the other two, I decided on Mauritius, which some people would say was the least significant. John Dean advised me to take Chad. He said it was “in the center of things.” Yeah, I said, it's in the center of Africa! Chad eventually did get to be a big deal, but not in 1976. On the other hand, Mauritius was real garden spot. I was tired by this time; I had had a series of difficult posts and the Task Force had sapped a lot of my energy. The Mauritius assignment was supposed to be for two years and looked just right at the time. It was a very small Embassy consisting of perhaps nine Americans and twelve locals. No major problems. Mauritius was not in the geo-political loop. In fact, I had a very interesting and enjoyable two year tour. The tour actually lasted 27 months. I have never regretted that choice.

It was an interesting society, particularly racially. Mauritius has a mixed society of about 1 million people on a very small island. Something like 51% are classified as Hindus, about 29% are Creoles—mixed African-French going back to the early colonial period—about 17% are Muslims—formerly Indians of Muslim persuasion and mostly from what is now known as Pakistan, and the remainder, about 3%, are the original Franco-Mauritians consisting of perhaps 30-40 principal families. The 3% also includes a few Chinese. All the people, strangely enough, get along together. They have a very complex, difficult to understand, political system. They published about 14 daily newspapers, all of them of course very small—four to eight pages. I used to read them all; some were in English, some in French, some partly in Creole. I actually studied Creole a bit on my own and got at least to understand it, but I couldn't speak it at all except for some common phrases; all the politics were conducted in Creole. The political speeches on TV were for example delivered in Creole; I used to watch the TV and eventually got to understand what was being said. Creole is the family language of Mauritians of all races and categories, what they speak at home.

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In Parliament, two official languages were used: English and French, which were used interchangeably. All the asides, the jibes, the raucous behavior which is typical of English Parliamentary tradition, all the amusing things were spoken in Creole and were not recorded in Hansard's. So a member could say almost anything he wished in Creole—terrible insults and vulgarities—but the record included only the official statements which had been given in either French or English. So the record sounds much more uplifting, enlightened, and dignified than the proceedings were in fact.

The Mauritian system is very democratic. The British had worked out a complex Constitution which seemed to be working remarkably well. There were some difficulties while I was there; there were elections which were a very serious matter and which came close to stimulating physical confrontations. The economy was quite depressed at that time. Some 70% of the people, when asked by a pollster if they wished to emigrate, responded in the affirmative. When asked if they wished their children to emigrate, 90% responded in the affirmative. That meant only 30% would stay if they had a choice, and they were probably primarily the elderly, and only 10% wanted their children to stay. Now the situation has turned around. Mauritius has had an economic boom and is turning into a mini-Singapore or Hong Kong. Some Chinese entrepreneurs have joined them. The Mauritians established a tax free export processing zone in which they bring some products in duty free and make something else out of them and then re-export the finished goods. They knit sweaters; they make digital watches; they are now involved in a lot of manufacturing activities. In my day Mauritius had essentially a one crop economy—sugar. It is the only crop that survives their periodic cyclones. But the manufacturing effort enabled them to transform their economy and now it is really booming.

It is one of the world's more interesting success stories. The racial situation is calm; they may not all like each other, but have somehow learned to live with each other. Their choice is of course limited; they live on a small island and their alternative is to jump into the sea. That may be the reason they all get along. In any case, Mauritius is a fascinating place.

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Q: What did you think Washington expected from you while you were in Mauritius?

KEELEY: I don't think Washington expected anything. They expected me to rest for a couple of years to restore my health and morale, to get a better outlook, and then to move on to other things. Mauritius was considered a backwater, a nice place for me to be. I probably took the assignment more seriously than I should have. I got very interested in the political process and the elections. You get to know everyone because it's such a small place. The American Ambassador is known by everyone because there are only about a dozen embassies there. I did an awful lot of reporting. I was the principal reporting officer of the Embassy. I don't think we had a full-time political officer. We had a consular officer, an economic officer, a USIS officer. I just bombarded the State Department with political reporting from a place I don't think anyone was interested in. I am not sure anyone read my messages. Maybe the desk officer and someone in INR who specialized in that part of the world. The CIA liked it; whenever I returned I would be invited out to Langley to debrief them on the personalities; my briefings were always well attended; a lot of people taking notes. These were specialists who had the time to follow things closely. As far as "the powers-that-be" in the State Department, I doubt that any of my reporting got above the Office Director level. At some point, I was mildly admonished to reduce the volume of my reporting because I was clogging the communication channels, or something like that. I didn't mind. It was fun; by profession, I am a political reporting officer and here was an opportunity to practice my skills. I took full advantage of the opportunity. I knew it was not a world shaking situation, but I found it enjoyable to write about things like Mauritius.

Q: Beyond your personal satisfaction, did you reach any conclusion about the need for the U.S. government to have permanent representation in Mauritius?

KEELEY: I think it was important for us to have a mission there. There were only about twelve embassies, as I have said. But they represented the principal powers. There was a Soviet Embassy, a British, a French, an Indian one; the Dean of the diplomatic corps was from the Central African Republic. He was there because his famous Emperor, Jean-

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Bedel Bokassa, had once visited Mauritius and opened an Embassy on that occasion. He of course completely forgot about it subsequently, which is no doubt why the Central African Ambassador stayed there for so many years that he became the Dean. There was a Malagasy Charg#. As I said, most of the principal world powers were represented. We had naval ship visits occasionally and then there was the issue of Diego Garcia. We were in the process of building a major military base there. Diego Garcia had belonged to Mauritius earlier. At independence, the two islands were separated and the British kept Diego Garcia. They leased it to us. So there were reasons for our presence.

The size of our Embassy was about right. It was small and it was not an expensive operation. I thought it was worth that much of an investment. To eliminate our presence or to reduce it to a legation or a Consulate General would not have been acceptable. To have French, British and Soviet Embassies and not an American Embassy would not have been in keeping with our status as a great power. But we did not exaggerate our size or expense. We had about the right presence. Mauritius could not have been easily covered from another post. We were thousands of miles from anywhere else in the Indian Ocean.

We had some fall-out from the Diego Garcia negotiations because the inhabitants of that island had to be moved to Mauritius. They were destitute people. I frankly don't think anyone did a very good job of caring for them. They were basically coconut pickers; that is all there was on Diego Garcia, coconuts.

We had a minor assistance program in Mauritius. We had had a small Peace Corps program. We tried to help in a minor way. The international assistance had to come essentially from the British and ourselves. I believe that in return for leasing us Diego Garcia, the British had been excused from paying all or some of their share of the development costs of the Polaris submarine nuclear missile. There was some sort of a deal between us and the British. There was considerable resentment in Mauritius over what had happened about Diego Garcia. The Mauritians were basically exploiting a typical situation; if there is an issue on which you can lambaste a great power, you do so. It is

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an opportunity to be taken advantage of. But it was not really a serious problem. Except that no one had taken proper care of the displaced Diego Garcians—primarily a British responsibility.

I went to Rodrigues Island on a visit because it was part of Mauritius. It's something like 800 miles east of Mauritius, and very neglected. I went with a guy named Gaetan Duval, who represented the principal political party—the Mauritian Social Democratic Party (PMSD)—there. Despite its name it was the conservative party. We spent two or three days there and talked to the local people. They told me that they were in a depressed condition. There were maybe 25,000 people on the island. It was a rather barren place. The head man asked me whether we could help him. He said that they needed coconuts. He wanted to plant a large number of Indian Ocean variety coconut trees.

So I developed an absolutely crazy scheme in my head and sold it to the U.S. Navy. I asked that the next time a U.S. Navy ship came to Mauritius for a ship visit, would it be so kind as to pass by Diego Garcia and pick up several thousand coconuts—if possible not rotten ones lying on the beach, but ones picked from trees which might produce a coconut palm on Rodrigues. I further asked that they pass by the island of Rodrigues on their way to Mauritius and dump their coconut cargo there, if necessary into the sea. The Rodriguans were prepared to sail out in their boats and canoes to herd the thousands of floating coconuts to their shores. The head man there wanted to plant them to restore the local economy.

For some crazy reason the Navy agreed; it considered it a good will gesture for which it could take credit and earn some good publicity. A ship on its way to Mauritius scheduled a stop at Diego Garcia; the crew ran up and down the beach collecting all these coconuts (4,000 or 5,000 of them). They had no storage area, so the Navy built big wooden bins on their deck and dumped the coconuts in them. They got to Rodrigues but could not enter the harbor because it was too shallow. So they dumped the coconuts overboard. You can just picture these American sailors heaving these thousands of coconuts into

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the sea; they probably couldn't stop laughing—I wish someone had photographed it. The coconuts did float—contrary to some predictions—and the islanders got all their boats out and went after all of these coconuts. They herded them onto the shore. I don't have the slightest idea whether a coconut industry ever sprouted on Rodrigues, but I know they were planted. If the program was successful, the economic development of that island must have been wondrous to behold.

At the end of my first year in Mauritius I got a message from Assistant Secretary for Africa Dick Moose. I knew him from when he had worked for Senator Fulbright, and I had helped him and his partner Jim Lowenstein with an inquiry they had made for Fulbright's committee into the situation in Greece in 1971. I had seen him at a Chiefs of Mission Conference in Abidjan. He told me that I would have to come back to Washington to help him in the African Bureau as one of his deputies. I told him I would be very happy to do that, but that I had been in Mauritius for only one year and I thought it was wrong to shorten tours too greatly. I was just getting to learn something about the place. I told him I would be delighted to return to Washington if he let me finish my full two years. Sure enough, just as my second anniversary was about to come up, I got a message from Moose telling me to get back to Washington. He wanted me to take over supervision of the southern Africa office as his number two deputy. Bill Harrop was number one deputy and Lannon Walker was number four. Number three was Vernon Johnson, who had been our AID director in Uganda when I served there. So I returned to the Department and was in that job in the AF Bureau from late 1978 to mid-1980.

Q: That Office covered which countries?

KEELEY: The southern Africa office covered South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia, Namibia (or Southwest Africa), Zambia and Malawi. I was primarily concerned with three of them: Rhodesia and Namibia (both were decolonization problems) and South Africa. Marginally I was also involved with Angola and Mozambique. The others were really not on the front burner. To divide it percentage-

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wise, it was 60% Rhodesia, less than 30% Namibia, and about 10% South Africa because South Africa was not progressing very rapidly, though we had continuing problems over sanctions, possible nuclear developments, human rights issues, and a lot of other things.

My focus was essentially on Rhodesia because there was a war going on there and we were engaged in a major effort to try to find a solution to the problem. That solution was eventually found, not by us so much as by the British. In the summer of 1979 Dick Moose told me that I would also have to take charge of East Africa, in addition to southern Africa, because Tanzanian troops and Ugandan exiles had marched into Uganda and had thrown Idi Amin out. As I had been the last American official out of Uganda, Moose wanted me to return to that problem to figure out what we should do.

It was a very sticky situation. We had to decide whether we wanted to reopen an Embassy in Kampala. I got stuck with that problem. I explained to Moose that I had one major problem with his reorganization: I not only inherited Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, but Somalia and Ethiopia as well. Also, there was always a threat of a civil war in the Sudan. I thought that the span was just too much; I was covering all of Africa from the Sudan and the Horn down the East Coast to South Africa and up through Namibia and Angola. That was a major part of the Continent. As it turned out, I still had to focus primarily on Rhodesia and to a lesser extent on Namibia because they were the "hot spots."

Q: What were our major interests in Rhodesia in the late 70s?

KEELEY: In the first place, there was a war that was threatening to spill over into other areas. It was, to some extent, part of the East-West conflict in that the guerrillas, ZANU and ZAPU (the Mugabe and Nkomo people), were getting most of their assistance from the Eastern Bloc. Nkomo and ZAPU were headquartered in Zambia, Mugabe and ZANU in Mozambique. Mozambique and Angola were considered Soviet satellites at that time. So the struggle was seen as an East-West issue, though that was a serious oversimplification.

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One of our main concerns was the effect the Rhodesia situation would have on South Africa. Looking at it in perhaps a somewhat idealistic perspective, we thought that if a solution could be found for Rhodesia which might transform it peacefully and democratically into a black-majority ruled country although still populated by some whites, that this would be an example for potential developments in South Africa. South Africa was the dominant country in that part of Africa and was of greatest concern to the U.S. because of its size, its wealth, its strategic location and its strategic minerals. In terms of the rest of Africa, it is the major country. It is the industrialized country; it has an enormous mining industry; it is rich agriculturally; it is rich in human resources. I don't want to say that Rhodesia was a sideshow to South Africa; on the contrary, it was the immediate problem.

The British had major responsibility for the problem because Rhodesia had been a British crown colony, which had declared its independence against Britain's wishes. We worked closely with the British. The issue attracted the attention of the new President Carter, who may have been somewhat influenced by Andrew Young, who was close to the President and was our Ambassador to the U.N. The U.N. played a role in the Rhodesia affair via international sanctions, and an even greater role in Namibia, because the latter was really a ward of the U.N. at the time. So there were a lot of reasons for being interested in Rhodesia.

Q: In retrospect, what lessons did you draw from the departure of colonial powers from Africa, with particular reference to the way it was done and the problems that created?

KEELEY: That is a major subject and has no easy answers. For one, the transition from a colonial regime to an independent one ruled by an indigenous majority is much easier if there is no settler population. That is not strictly a racial issue, although the settlers were generally white. Serious problems have arisen universally in the decolonization process under those circumstances. Take Kenya with the Mau-Mau rebellion: large settler population, difficult transition. Uganda had no settlers: easy transition. Angola and Mozambique required actual civil guerrilla wars and revolution against Portuguese rule

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because there was a very large settler element, despite its non-racist character. Algeria is an even better example; it was actually a part of France, governed out of Paris; that was an extremely difficult separation because there were two resident populations struggling against each other. There are other examples of the same sort of situation.

The most difficult, because of the racial composition, is South Africa. On the other hand, the Afrikaners are not “settlers” any more because they have been there for centuries; they were settlers at one time, very early on. But Rhodesia really had a white settler population who engineered the UDI and resisted black rule. Their arrival in Rhodesia went back to about 1890 when Cecil Rhodes sent an expeditionary force into that territory. So the whites had been in Rhodesia approximately 80 to 90 years; they were not exactly recent arrivals. The issue in Rhodesia was who was going to rule: the white minority or the black majority.

The outcome in those countries that the French and the British left abruptly, as in Guinea, for example—which according to Charles de Gaulle voted wrong when given the option of independence or continuation under French control—where the French left abruptly —“ripped out the phones in anger as they left,” according to some observers—was not that much different from those countries which opted for independence later on, allowing an orderly European withdrawal. Some of them did choose to keep their ties to the European ex-colonial power, through such devices as the French Union and the British Commonwealth.

It wasn't a British departure from Rhodesia that really caused the problem. Rhodesia had already been a self-governing crown colony since 1923; it had an indigenous government and had not really been ruled from London since 1923. It was called a “colony,” but it was really not. The British were represented by a Governor General; Rhodesia had its own government, its own Parliament, its own existing local political institutions. When Rhodesia declared its independence, not much changed in terms of institutions. Around 1917 or 1918, a crucial vote had taken place in Rhodesia to determine whether it should join South

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Africa as the fifth province; the population had voted negatively and determined to stay independent of South Africa. Then, a few years later, they were given their own status. So the Rhodesians were accustomed to self-government. That is, the white Rhodesians were.

The pressure to change the system really came initially from the British, who wanted the franchise extended to the black majority prior to the granting of full independence. There was a long series of efforts to thwart that. First came the Central African Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland under Roy Welensky. There were many other steps suggested. Then Zambia (ex-Northern Rhodesia) and Malawi (ex-Nyasaland) broke away and Southern Rhodesia was left to the rule of the white minority.

Zambia and the other new countries of the area had been ruled as colonies. Southern Rhodesia was unique in its history of relative independence. The British withdrew rather suddenly from Zambia and the other former colonies. There was no extensive transition. It was almost like falling dominoes. In the early 60s, the French went first, followed by the British, one by one starting in 1960. Kenya was the last and Zambia just a bit earlier. It was not very gradual.

After the departure of the colonial power, the vacuums created generated a lot of conflict. They are now beginning to settle down. Some people would say that it has taken too long. Others point out that it took us in the U.S. decades to sort out our post-colonial problems; that it really wasn't until after the Civil War and the settlement of the slavery issue that we achieved a stable domestic situation. There was a lot of turmoil in the United States in the first half of the 19th Century. In the Middle East, particularly in Palestine, the British withdrew precipitously, without leaving any kind of governmental structure in place. Israel just grew up in that vacuum.

The country—or territorial or colonial—borders were drawn up by the colonial powers as they occupied various parts of Africa and as they fought with each other. Eventually, the borders were agreed upon, more or less permanently, at a conference in Berlin in 1884

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and 1885, I believe, followed by a good many bilateral agreements among the colonizing powers. Almost all the major European countries had a colony or colonies in Africa; so they got together to draw the boundaries in order to stop wars among themselves on the African continent. The de facto borders became permanent and de jure by means of these agreements among the Europeans. Of course, the Africans were not consulted.

The African countries, as they gained independence, made what I consider a very wise decision. They said that although the borders were irrational, illogical, made no sense geographically or tribally or linguistically, they were willing to accept them; otherwise there would be constant wars and turmoil over borders. So they accepted the existing lines of demarcation, with a few exceptions, like the border between Somalia and Ethiopia in the Ogaden, which has been a constant source of friction. There have been other struggles, but the remarkable fact is that the irrational borders have been accepted by and large by the new countries as legitimate borders.

One of the things that was done by the colonial powers—which may appear obvious but isn't given much consideration—was to use rivers as demarcation lines because a river is the most easily observed natural feature. That does not make it necessarily a logical border, however, because most rivers are traversable even if not navigable and the same tribe may well live on both banks, and usually does. A line drawn in the middle of a river will divide a tribe into two nationalities. That was the worst thing that was done. What should have been done would have been to go 40 to 50 miles inland and draw the border there and then the same tribe would have belonged to the same nation. But that is not what was done; the rivers became the borders. Or in some cases, other natural features were used. A large mountain makes sense because the same people will not tend to live on both sides of it. More likely, one tribe will live on one side and another tribe on the other side. It's stating the obvious to say that the borders were drawn for the convenience of the Europeans, not the Africans. But the Africans did a wise thing by accepting the existing

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borders, illogical as they may have been. If they had begun to draw new lines, they would have started never-ending quarrels over these divisions.

As I said earlier, on Rhodesia the British rescued us in the end when Margaret Thatcher came into office. The Conservatives had in their platform, and I think she strongly supported it, that sanctions against Rhodesia would be discontinued. They were going to expire in November 1979. Thatcher said she would not renew them. Our Congressional situation was somewhat different; we did not have to renew sanctions from time to time because our legislation had not set a time limit. But in the British case, when sanctions expired, that was the end of the process; in our case, Congress did not need to take any action, unless they wanted to change things.

That was the biggest fight that went on in our Bureau, the Department, and in the Administration in general, over the sanctions issue. Lord Carrington became the Foreign Secretary; then there was a Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka, Zambia. Carrington had convinced Mrs. Thatcher that there was a way to resolve the Rhodesian problem through negotiations. A group of Commonwealth leaders were appointed to work as mediators. Carrington took charge of solving the issue and in fact relieved us from further responsibility. We had been pretty much the lead country, although it had been worked essentially as a combined Andrew Young-David Owen operation during the previous year. The responsibility for solving the Rhodesian problem became pretty much a British one. The meetings of all interested parties took place at Lancaster House, and the new Constitution was named after that location. The November deadline for the expiration of British sanctions was useful in that it placed pressure on all sides—Ian Smith, the two guerrilla groups, the British and U.S. governments—because if some solution had not been found by that time, there would have been a settlement one way or another. It might have been settled more favorably for Ian Smith and the Rhodesian whites.

Our problem was that pressure was building up in our Congress to lift sanctions earlier than the British deadline—in June or July. We had quite a fight on our hands, because the

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Administration's Congressional relations staffs, particularly the White House one, predicted that we would lose if the issue would come to a vote. We, in the African Bureau and in the State Department generally, considered the end of U.S. sanctions as a disaster. My role was primarily to prepare position papers, write memoranda and recommend appropriate actions. Dick Moose was able to convince Secretary Vance that the lifting of American sanctions would be disastrous and Vance in turn was able to convince President Carter that it was essential that we maintain the sanctions in order to give the British time to resolve the problem before their own sanctions expired in November. That was a short time frame; nevertheless, Carter's political advisors were opposed to any effort to extend U.S. sanctions. I think Brzezinski sided with the political types, who were really opposed to the President getting personally involved in what appeared to be a losing cause—on the unpopular side of the issue, which seemed to be a sure loser in the Senate. The battle began in the House; we had already written off the Senate; but if we won in the House, that was sufficient for the legislation lifting sanctions to fail.

The President worked very hard for the maintenance of sanctions. The critical factor was the Congressional Black Caucus, who, although not numerous, felt very strongly on this issue, as one would expect, because they viewed it as a human and civil rights issue concerning blacks—Africans in this case. They lobbied intensively. They approached any other Congressman who might be wavering and issued a thinly veiled threat—something like, “In the weeks before your next election, how would you like it if 25 black preachers came into your district to give Sunday sermons in your black churches on how you voted on the Rhodesian sanctions issue?” Most Congressmen would of course prefer that that would not happen, particularly if they were running in a marginal district. The Black Caucus swayed a lot of votes in that way; they felt very strongly about the sanctions. In the end, the Administration won by only a few votes in the House and sanctions were maintained. From that point, the British carried the ball. Lord Carrington was very effective.

We did a couple of things which were, in a sense, compromises with our opponents. We agreed, for example, to send an observer to Salisbury (now Harare) to set up an office—

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not a Consulate or an Embassy—but just one person, attached officially to our Pretoria Embassy, to observe the situation in Rhodesia. Rhodesia was going to go through an election. It was a very complex story. The idea was to show that we were not completely ignoring Ian Smith and Muzorewa and his colleagues in power and that we were going to have an election observer. Our presence would also give us an opportunity to pass some judgment on the fairness of the elections and the validity of the results and of the transition, if there were to be one. So Jeff Davidow became our observer in Salisbury. We also had another officer in our Embassy in London, Gib Lanpher, who later became my second DCM in Harare, succeeding Jeff Davidow, and who has just become our Ambassador to Zimbabwe, the fifth ambassador, and the second career officer to occupy that post. Gib was our observer at the Lancaster House conference. So we took some small actions, and they were done primarily to satisfy the opposition that we were not completely ignoring their point of view.

Q: You had a wide area of jurisdiction as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the African Bureau. Were there any other issues that arose in your domain that were of interest to the Department's leadership?

KEELEY: Certainly Namibia, although we were not the “action” office on that issue. Namibia was a ward of the U.N. and therefore the responsible office was the Bureau for International Organizations, headed then by Bill Maynes. Tom Niles was the key officer; he really was “Mr. Namibia” and did most of the drafting on this subject. We worked primarily with our Mission to the U.N. in New York, first Andrew Young and later Don McHenry; they were our Ambassadors to the U.N. The African Bureau played a role in the Namibia problem and worked also with the people in the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff who were active both on the Rhodesia and Namibia issues. They were major issues at the time; Namibia was not resolved during my tour in AF; as a matter of fact, it took another ten years after I left before any solution was found—it was just last year that the problems were solved. Interestingly enough, we were wrong in our prognostications at the time. All of us who worked on both issues in the State Department thought that Namibia would be

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solved first and Rhodesia second (or not at all). In fact, the reverse occurred: Rhodesia got solved and Namibia did not. One reason was that Namibia was actually a decolonization issue—Southwest Africa was a colony, a mandate; it had not been absorbed by South Africa. The problem was to obtain the agreement of all the parties concerned—the South Africans, the Namibians, and later, in the Reagan administration, the Angolans, which also then brought the Cubans and the Soviets in. We thought that decolonization was easier than the Rhodesian situation, which was already a state that had declared its independence, had abandoned its British tie, had its own government, and had claimed its own international standing, although it was only recognized by South Africa. But we thought it would be easier for South Africa to compromise on the Namibian issue than on the Rhodesian one; we were wrong. It took many more years to solve the Namibian problem; it became much more complex than Rhodesia.

Q: Did the U.S. government have a general policy toward the area for which you were responsible or was it a country-by-country approach? I am referring for example to the general pressure that was being applied during this period by Pat Derian and her Human Rights Bureau which was, according to some observers, being applied across the board without reference to local circumstances or cultures?

KEELEY: I don't think we felt any particular pressure from Pat Derian's office, because we were more or less in agreement with her fundamental approach. We were trying to achieve settlements that would bring about black majority rule, as in Rhodesia, which was a basic human rights issue for that country. We were also applying pressure to South Africa. In general, my sense was that we looked at the problems similarly, but that they had different time frames because of the varying complexities. For example, the South African problem was extremely complex because of its history, because of the forces at work, the balance of forces within the country, our own domestic politics, our international standing, the East-West competition. So while we worked on South African human rights problems, we didn't have any high hopes of resolving that situation any time soon. We were certainly right about that. It looked like and in fact was a long range problem. As in other cases, we were

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looking for a solution that would bring political rights to the majority population. That was also true for Namibia. That was generally our position throughout Africa, at least during the Carter Administration.

Problems did arise in countries with which I had very little to do. For example, Zaire, which did not and does not have a good human rights record, to put it mildly. Zaire was regarded as a key ally, a country that was important to us, a country that was playing an important role in other problems that the U.S. was involved in; e.g., Angola, Namibia, and in general the East-West dimension in Africa. For Zaire, allowances were made for its poor human rights record; I am sure that Pat Derian and others were horrified, but the exceptions were made. I was not personally happy with our policy toward Zaire and never have been since the time when I was the desk officer. In any case, there were cases that received special treatment and for which we deviated from the general concern for human rights, and in fact thereby diluted our general concern for the sake of other national interests.

There was of course an East-West competition in Africa; it played a role in many of the situations we had to deal with; e.g., Mozambique and Angola, the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. At one time we were closely allied with Ethiopia; we tried to be friendly with Somalia, but it allied itself with the Soviets. Then there was a war, after which the combatants switched sides. Mengistu came to power in Ethiopia and in fact turned it into a Soviet satellite. Somalia then switched to the West; it was a complex business. It was all due to the East-West conflict being projected into Africa. We did not deal with Somalia or Ethiopia on their own terms. There were other illustrations, like Libya later on and the whole Chad situation. There were quite a few situations where the East-West competition played a dominating role.

As 1980 began, Dick Moose asked me to become his principal Deputy, to replace Bill Harrop. I had been the second ranking Deputy. Harrop was going to Nairobi as Ambassador. That move would have changed my responsibilities considerably, even though Moose wanted me to continue to follow Rhodesia and Namibia. But I would have

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done quite a few new things, including personnel and administration of the Bureau, which in AF in those days were basically done by the Assistant Secretary and his principal Deputy. They were the only two, for example, who were involved in the choice of career officers to be recommended to the Secretary for ambassadorial appointments.

As it turned out, I acted as the principal Deputy for only about a month or six weeks, because all of a sudden a Rhodesian solution was effected. The new Constitution was approved; elections were held. I made a couple of visits to Rhodesia and South Africa to observe the situation during the pre-electoral period. A new government was installed and all of a sudden we had recognized the new country (Zimbabwe). We opened an Embassy—Jeff Davidow and I opened it on the morning of the independence ceremony on April 18, 1980. I was part of the U.S. delegation to the independence ceremony. The delegation was headed jointly by Averell Harriman and Andrew Young. I was a member both because I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary and because my nomination to be the first American Ambassador to Zimbabwe had just been approved. The announcement of my nomination was made by Harriman as we raised the flag over our new Embassy. The agreement took all of two hours. It was a brand new government that hadn't yet learned that you are supposed to sit on those requests for a week or two or more just to show your independence and that you are taking it seriously. Jeff Davidow went into the new Foreign Ministry-to-be with the note, said it was our request for agreement, and they said, "O.K." So Harriman was able to announce it at the flag raising ceremony.

That made my tour as principal Deputy very short. I didn't get to Harare until June, after obtaining Senate confirmation. I then spent nearly four years in Zimbabwe, until the Spring of 1984.

Q: You happen to be one of the few Ambassadorial candidates who was actually qualified for his position since you had been working on Rhodesian-Zimbabwean problems for a number of years. Were you at all surprised by what you found when you actually took over your job in Harare?

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KEELEY: Let me first say that my appointment came about because Dick Moose, in consultation with others, thought that I would be the ideal person for the job because I had worked on the Rhodesia problem intensively for two years and knew as much about it as anyone in the U.S. government. Moose felt strongly that the appointment should go to a career officer because, first of all, this was a newly opened Embassy, which always has a lot of administrative problems best handled by an experienced Foreign Service professional. There were rumors that the White House had a political appointee in mind—a prominent African-American. I think the Department's support of my appointment was a counter to that in some respects. Moose made the case to Cyrus Vance, who supported the argument that a professional was needed as the first ambassador. He didn't have any particular feeling about me, but accepted the premise. He went to the President and the whole appointment was wrapped up in one day. That was unusual; normally the candidate, even if a Foreign Service officer, usually doesn't happen to have been the Deputy Assistant Secretary handling the affairs of the country to which he or she is going to be nominated.

The appointment was processed expeditiously, in part to preclude the possibility of a political appointment. In all honesty, there was a hidden agenda. One of our major concerns was that we wanted the whites to stay in Zimbabwe after independence. We believed that a mass exodus would have been disastrous. They might have fled out of fear or disgust or hatred or uncertainty about their future. In fact, at an earlier time, we had worked out an evacuation plan with the British. They had asked for our help because the situation in Rhodesia had been very dicey from time to time leading up to the elections. There was a feeling in many quarters that there would be a mass exodus—sheer flight—of a couple of hundred thousand people over the border into South Africa. None of that happened. But there was a feeling that the U.S. had to work hard to reassure the whites in Zimbabwe about their future. To be brutally frank, there was some concern that if the U.S. were to send a prominent African-American, who was a leading political figure—someone like Andrew Young, for example—it would send a bad signal to the whites. They

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might have perceived the appointment as a signal that the U.S. considered the future of Zimbabwe to be solely for the blacks, and that we didn't care at all about what would happen to the whites.

I was written up in the “Style” section of the Washington Post. The story was written by a black reporter—Jackie Trescott—and it was published just before my departure. I gave her a lengthy interview and she talked to many other people—members of the Black Caucus and people who knew me like Andrew Young and Don McHenry and others. Our hidden agenda was hinted at in the story; the story indicated that I was not really a significant or well-known person or prominent enough to undertake this very important assignment. While the article treated me personally in a very favorable light, the suggestion was that it would have been wiser to send a prominent political figure—perhaps a black. I mention this because this issue was not discussed even behind the scenes at the time, but I believe it was a factor in my appointment. The decision-makers, I guess, decided that the emphasis should be given to sending a white professional rather than someone else, as a signal. I don't think that people like Young and McHenry were objecting to my appointment—they said nice things about me—but there was some feeling that we should have sent a different signal.

I happen to agree with the decision that was made, because when I got to Harare, I felt that one of our major roles, as a new Embassy and as the representative of the U.S. government, was to convince the whites that they had a future in Zimbabwe and that the election results were not a disaster. We tried to point out that we thought that Zimbabwe was a success and that there was no reason for white flight, particularly if it was to go to South Africa, which had major racial problems. I was frankly very disappointed that there was a steady trickle—certainly not a rush—of about 1,000 whites per month leaving Zimbabwe during the whole period I was there. There were probably only about 100,000 whites left by the time my tour was over. The exodus was not a panic, but it was steady; people went to South Africa, Canada, the U.S., Australia, Argentina, etc. Fortunately, the largest and most important white community—the white commercial farmers—stayed; in

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fact they increased in numbers slightly, as some who had fled from the fighting during the war returned to their farms.

By 1984, there were some faint signs of a reversal; some whites were returning because they had been unhappy with what they found in South Africa and didn't want to repeat their Rhodesian experiences there. They were tired of fighting the racial issue and Zimbabwe was after all a lovely country and they had had a wonderful life there. Some whites did suffer after independence because there had obviously been preferential employment in many fields for whites and they had lost that. Some of the whites who stayed claimed that they were economic hostages; they had made tremendous investments, particularly on farms—equipment, cattle, houses, barns and dams. They claimed they couldn't leave because all of their wealth was tied up in assets which they couldn't sell or at least couldn't sell for a fair price. Even if they had gotten a fair price, they probably could not have gotten their money out of the country.

I spent an enormous amount of time talking to those people. I accepted every invitation to talk to any farmer group; I must have addressed fifty or sixty of them all over the country. The farmers were very well organized geographically and by product. There were the cattlemen, the maize and cotton growers, the tobacco people, etc. I would spend a whole day with each group. I would leave my house early in the morning. Zimbabwe is a country where you can get almost everywhere from the capital and return in a day, if you start early enough and stay late enough. I would go out to see the chief farmer—the head of the group—lunch with him, meet his family, tour his farm, and then go to his group's regular meeting. I would listen to the Treasurer's report, then the Secretary's report, and all of that. Then I would speak for about an hour and then answer questions for another hour. Then I would have tea with them, get into my car and return to Harare.

I was very well received. The questions were usually very difficult because they reflected a very skeptical attitude. I was amazed that these people appreciated my efforts and viewed the U.S. as the last resort that would rescue them if all else failed. They believed that we

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would not let them down. That was the opposite of the attitude of most of them toward the British, because they felt that the British had let them down, had abused them, etc. And they were mostly of British stock, although a significant number were Afrikaners. Somehow the United States had not been blamed for having sided with the blacks; that blame was laid on others: the British and the blacks. That to me was a very strange experience, because I could see these whites just yearning for approval, support and help from the United States. They felt that “if the balloon went up” (as they used to describe it) the United States would be there to save them. I didn't deny it, although I also didn't make any promises. In fact, these farmers stayed, not because of my work, but because they felt they had no other choice.

I did not see a need for the United States ever to have to come to the rescue of these white people; I did not believe that the situation would ever deteriorate to that extent. I was essentially trying to convince them to be patient and to believe that Mugabe was something different from how he had been painted. It was a very difficult psychological situation. The Ian Smith government, for its own reasons, had painted Mugabe and his associates as the “devils incarnate.” They called them “Marxists-Leninists,” hard-line communists, racist sadists, murderers. Of course, there had been atrocities perpetrated by all sides during the conflict. There were tales of horror; in some parts of the country, there wasn't a single family—black or white—that hadn't lost somebody. So the whites saw Mugabe as a monster who suddenly becomes Prime Minister and is running the government. That makes for a difficult psychological situation. Very frankly, many of the whites had been brain-washed. To wipe that image out and to see Mugabe as a human being interested in the welfare of the country, including the white population, was very difficult.

Mugabe, very wisely, went on television the night of his electoral victory. Most whites had their bags packed just waiting for the electoral results to be announced, intending to get into their cars and drive over the border into South Africa, taking whatever they could cram into the car, if Mugabe won the election. Mugabe's speech that evening was

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extraordinary; allegedly he was helped by Lord Soames, who was the Governor General, representing the British crown. Mugabe said in effect that the struggle was over and peace and reconciliation were at hand, and that he wanted a non-racial society, not a multi-racial society. He had always made that distinction, which I learned he felt was very important. South Africa in his view was a multi-racial society, meaning that the most important aspect of a person was his or her race. Everyone would be pigeon-holed by that categorization. That determined their rights and privileges and how they fit in the system. You were white or colored or Indian or black. Mugabe said that Zimbabwe would have a non-racial society. The first question to be asked would not be what a person's race was; the first question was to be, "What can you do?" If the person could perform, he didn't care what the color of his skin was or what his antecedents were. That was extraordinarily reassuring to the whites, most of whom unpacked and decided to give the new government a chance. As I said, the disappointment was that there was a steady white exodus, starting mostly with those who didn't have much. The business people, the farmers, the asset-holders stayed because they couldn't leave. Many are still there; some, as I have said, actually returned. I think Zimbabwe has been a success.

Q: Did the government encourage you to talk to the white population?

KEELEY: No. I did that pretty much on my own. I took it to be our policy. I really didn't have to be told, having worked on the issue for a number of years. Our policy was to encourage everyone to stay in Zimbabwe—whites and blacks. We wanted people to stay and work together and make the new country a success. In my dealings with the government, I was interacting primarily with blacks. Mugabe installed the head of the Commercial Farmers' Union, a white man, Dennis Norman, as his Minister of Agriculture. Mugabe had the same objectives as I had. It was important to keep the confidence of the white community. He felt that if to do so he had to install a leader of that community as a Cabinet Minister, he would do so.

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My British colleague was a career officer whom I had known from a previous assignment. He made perhaps three appearances before white groups and was pelted with criticism and abuse. That was enough for him and he stopped doing it. The white farmers took out their hatred of Great Britain on him personally. I was amazed that I did not have any similar experiences. Well, I did have one, but it was my fault. I did make one serious mistake—the most serious mistake I made while in Zimbabwe. After giving these same speeches day after day, I guess I got bored with it. I thought I would do something different. I had accepted two invitations in Umtali (later called Mutare), which is in the East of Zimbabwe, near Mozambique, and in an area where the whites had suffered the most during the war. It was the area closest to Mozambique and therefore had been territory over-run by guerrillas before independence—raids, terrorism, attacks on missionaries, murders, rapes, disembowelments, all the atrocities that occurred during the war. So the whites in that area were particularly bitter and I was well aware of it, although I did not appreciate the depth of their bitterness.

Mugabe had visited Washington and I had been with him because it was semi-State Visit. This was in the fall of 1980 when Carter was still President. USIA had made a short film of that visit, which I thought was a very fine piece of work. I looked at it a couple of times. As I said, I had accepted two invitations in Umtali, one for lunch and one for dinner—one hosted by the Lions and the other by the Rotary Club, obviously both basically white organizations. I decided that instead of my standard talk, I would show the film. It was about a half hour long and it had not be shown in Zimbabwe before. I did not realize what the audience's perception would be; they viewed me as a Mugabe publicist and booster because after all it was a film about his visit to the U.S. I thought that they might be impressed by how their new Prime Minister had been received so well by the U.S. President. Most of the people in the film were American whites who accepted a black as a normal human being, not as a monster. He went to the Lincoln Memorial, Howard University, Capitol Hill, etc.—all the standard itinerary. He met with Congressmen, lunched with the President.

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There was one episode that was particularly telling and which became a highlight of the film. Mugabe went to New York, primarily to address the U.N. While there, he went to Harlem as part of his tour. I didn't go to New York with him because I stayed in Washington to do some work. While in Harlem, Mugabe met with the black community at an outdoor rally, a huge crowd, and gave a short speech in which he said at one point, while raising his clenched fist: "We won! We won! We won!" There was a tremendous cheer from the audience. It was an American black audience, but it was what he would have said to a ZANU rally in Zimbabwe during the electoral campaign; as a matter of fact, the Harlem speech was similar to one that he may have given before in Zimbabwe.

The impact of that part of the film on the white audience at the Rotary luncheon in Umtali was strong and visible. Some walked out immediately; others got very angry. The question period was very difficult. They resented that I had shown the film. At that time, their attitude was that Mugabe's statement meant that the whites had lost. I think that attitude changed over time, but it was certainly prevalent in early 1981. It is interesting to compare Mugabe's reaction to that of the whites in Rhodesia who never felt that they had lost. The Zimbabwean whites thought that they had been betrayed, and that if Mugabe thought he had "won," then they must have "lost" in the war between the whites and blacks. They thought I was deriding them.

That afternoon, after the film showing, I had a visitation at my hotel from the sponsors of my evening appearance at the Lions Club dinner. They asked me not to show the film or to censor it, because they had heard reports of its content. I was not inclined to do that. We finally compromised, which called for me to introduce the film in order to explain the circumstances and to try to soften the blow by explaining what the film was all about. It helped; the evening went much more smoothly. The questions were still hostile, however. There was one black in the audience who was a teacher. He had come from Western Zimbabwe—the Hwange National Park area—where he was a member of a Lions Club. He had simply transferred his membership to his new town, and the Umtali Lions

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had no choice but to accept him as a member. He stood up during the question period and gave the audience a lecture of a sort they had never heard. He had real guts. His comments silenced the whole audience, although they probably did not make them happy. Needless to say, I never showed that film again, but I learned from the experience what high emotions and deep-seated feelings existed in Zimbabwe. Those could be dealt with by talking to people, but you couldn't expose them to a visual experience which didn't allow for an immediate exchange; that was just too hard a blow for people who were still suffering psychologically from a civil war and who feared for their future.

Q: Did Ian Smith have any role to play after independence?

KEELEY: He didn't really have a role. Although his party won most of the white seats in the first election, he was part of a minority. He would attend Parliament and he would give speeches, but his party was always outvoted on the key issues. So he and his colleagues were more of an irritant than a help to the government. In the next election, other white candidates ran as independents or as part of the ZANU ticket and a different group of whites became Parliamentarians. Some joined the government; as a matter of fact, some of Smith's former allies defected. So over a period of time, Smith's influence waned. I had practically no dealings with him because he lived way down in the South on his ranch and only came to Harare for Parliament meetings; he didn't have any particular interest in us and I really didn't want to be perceived as being close to him. I met him a few times.

There was one interesting occasion. One day early in my tour I went to see Mugabe and Smith was in the anteroom, waiting. I introduced myself as the new American Ambassador and we sat and chatted. It was almost embarrassing, because I got called in first, although he had been there ahead of me. I think that happened because my appointment had been first, although he had come very early; in any case, it must have galled him that I went first. To make matters worse, I had a long meeting with Mugabe because I had a lot of business to transact. When I came out, Smith was still there. I said "Goodbye" to him and thought

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about how the mighty had fallen—from Prime Minister to just another citizen who had to wait for the American Ambassador to finish before seeing the new Prime Minister.

Smith was resented by the blacks; he was intransigent, unreconstructed. They resented particularly that Smith had gone to South Africa. He was married to a South African or at least his in-laws lived there. And while in South Africa, he criticized Mugabe and the new government in Harare. It was not the fact that he criticized Mugabe, because he did that all the time, but that he did it outside the country and especially in South Africa. They tried to punish him in various ways—did some nasty things in retaliation.

I have only one judgment on Ian Smith, which I had made long before I got to Zimbabwe: he was an unsuccessful politician who could have succeeded if he had had greater vision, because he did have the loyalty of his people. He was very effective; he won his elections honestly, which admittedly were “for whites only.” He appealed to his constituency; he took a hard line, but the elections were always fair. But he failed to show any leadership, in my opinion, because he negotiated with the British government over a period of fifteen years (from 1965 to 1979) and never solved the problem. The British tried various formulas over and over again; there were eight or nine different successive scenarios to resolve the outstanding issues, each named after the places where the British had advanced them. The final one, as mentioned earlier, was the Lancaster House Constitution.

Most of the schemes proposed in earlier negotiations were designed to change the Constitution so that blacks could be enfranchised and to reserve a certain number of seats for the blacks or the whites or for veto powers. The number of plans that people had devised for Rhodesia was almost infinite. Ian Smith was always willing to accept one of the schemes, but it was always the last previous one after it was too late; in other words, he was willing to accept a plan that had been proffered two or three years earlier, but he would refuse the scheme offered him that day. Then another two or three years would pass and he would be willing to return to the one he had turned down earlier. He never had the vision to see that the situation would progressively deteriorate and that time was

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not on his side; he should have stopped at some stage and accepted whatever had been offered at the time. He had many, many opportunities to do that; he was always flexible, but always too late. He didn't understand the course of history which leaves one in its wake; you have to catch up with it or look ahead and say, "I don't like the scheme that is being offered, but if I don't accept it, the next one will be worse." So I don't view Smith as a statesman, nor as a successful politician.

Q: Let me ask you a question about a "one party" system which is encountered often in Africa. What are your views about the nature of a "one party" system?

KEELEY: I have thought a lot about that question and it is one that I have often addressed because it is important in Zimbabwe. In general, I am opposed to "one party" systems, not because I am a democrat, not because I am an American and thereby imbued with the beauty of our "two party" system; I am opposed to "one party" systems in general because they tend to lead to dictatorship, stagnation, immobility. That system has been rampant throughout Africa; most of the countries have "one party" systems either legally or de facto. What happens is that the same gang stays in power—often the same leader—year after year, decade after decade. It becomes impossible to change policies; the party becomes so entrenched that it cannot be dislodged. Its leaders and members become increasingly corrupt; the citizens become disaffected and lose interest in politics because there is no real choice. You invite violence and coups and overthrows because that is the only way to get rid of the power structure.

I am delighted to see that many African countries are now moving in the direction of multi-party systems. Senegal, I thought, did the best job of all. Senghor brought off a brilliant stroke: he created three parties—his own being in the center, then there was one on the right and one on the left. Obviously the center would win and stay in power, but at least people had choices. It was democratic. The same party is still in power, headed by his successor, but I prefer that situation to almost any other scheme—not because there are three parties, but because there is a choice. I am glad to see it happening elsewhere

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because that is the only way citizens are going to influence policies and get them changed. Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and other countries come to mind; they pursue discredited policies, but the people are unable to change them even though their countries are going deeper and deeper into a hole. There is no way to change things.

In defense of the “one party” system, it should be said that in a country like Zambia or Tanzania, there are so many tribes—100 or 200 perhaps—that tribalism, which is the most serious political problem in Africa, can run rampant. The “one party” system has succeeded at least in extinguishing or diminishing the effect of tribalism, because everyone had to work within the existing political system. Defendants of the “one party” system will argue that it is democratic because there is competition within the party. That is sometimes true. But sometimes the central committee chooses all the candidates. In other more democratic situations, anyone can compete for the party's slate; in effect, whoever wins the primary gets the approval of the party and wins the election.

Zimbabwe is a special case. Through my experiences there, I became a defendant of its “one party” system, but not for Mugabe's reasons, which were not the whole story as far as I was concerned. He was concerned that a multi-party system would eat up too much energy, that too much effort and national vigor would be consumed in the competition for offices. People would become too partisan, too nasty; he was afraid that the important issues would be neglected in the scramble for power. The winner would have to make demagogic promises, thereby “buying” votes. He thought Zimbabwe did not need that; it was a young country that had to develop economically and had to focus its energies on serious issues. Everyone could work within one party; everyone had a chance for elective office. Interested individuals would come up through the party's ranks and then move to leadership positions. That was Mugabe's case for a single party system.

My rationale is somewhat different. Zimbabwe's black population is essentially made up of two tribes: the Shona and the Matabele. The latter are one cohesive group living in the Southwest. Nkomo was their leader although he was part Shona. The Matabele or

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Ndebele are a Zulu tribe which was not originally native to Zimbabwe; they had migrated north from South Africa during the Zulu Wars. They are a very hierarchical tribe by tradition. They had a King, or Chief; one leader who was the boss; what he says, goes.

The Shona are divided into essentially three major groups along with a number of smaller groups. They all speak a common language. They all have lived in their areas for a long time and they all identify themselves as Shonas. There were two African political parties before independence: ZANU, Mugabe's party, and ZAPU, Nkomo's party. That created a permanent minority. The Matabele were about 20% of the population or a bit less; since people tended to vote strictly along tribal lines, ZAPU would always gather about 20% of the vote. Mugabe's party would always get 80%; it is not possible under those circumstances to have a "loyal opposition;" it would have to be a disloyal opposition.

The truth of that observation was proven after independence when Matabele guerrillas were causing all sorts of problems: murders, pillaging, abductions in the Southwest of the new country. They knew that they had no chance of attaining real power; they were locked into a permanent minority position. So I concluded that it was better to have one grouping within which the Matabele—Nkomo's people—could become a faction where they could make alliances with others, particularly the southern Shona who were in part related to them. This gave the minority an opportunity to jockey for some power and obtain some ministries, and would give one of their own a prominent position in the country. They could also aspire to some appointive positions rather than being shut out entirely from the power structure. In other words, it was much better to bring them into the tent than having them always looking in from the outside. That is my view and I think that is what Mugabe was striving for, without saying so directly.

Eventually, the two tribes did form a political union within a single party. Now I expect they may head in the opposite direction; they may well go multi-party. Most of Africa is heading in that direction and that is positive if they can somehow break down the tribal barriers. The Zimbabwe problem was that there were essentially two tribes of very uneven size and

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therefore the “one party” system, if not a panacea, was at least a palliative that could help temporarily until people learned to identify with other interests besides tribe. It could be that a tribe itself might become multi-party eventually; the Shona, for example, could break up into their three component units. They could operate within one party or break up into three. But they have to be careful; they cannot afford to pile tribalism on top of geographic sectionalism. There could be an escalation of tension.

Zimbabwe is unusual in that the Shona tribe is the most democratic of all the African tribes with which I am familiar. I don't know the reason. Anthropologically, they were a settled group in one geographic area; they were agricultural; they were generally peaceful. They didn't raid their neighbors. They were not herders; they didn't steal cattle. They were organized by families, each of which belonged to a larger clan which would elect a leader—leadership was not hereditary. It could have been a relative of the previous leader, but it could also be someone from a different family entirely. There seemed to be no rule about succession. It was usually an elder, a more senior person who was considered wise. It was practically always a male, but someone experienced who commanded respect. He would tell the clan when to plant, what ceremony to perform if the rains didn't come, etc. He would also represent his people at the next higher level council; then he might be chosen to represent a larger group in the next higher level council and so on. But there was no King or Chief; there may have been a tribal leader, particularly in time of stress such as war, who would have been elected democratically from the grass roots. There was always a Council of Elders representing all the clans meeting together in a democratic fashion to decide some policy or action by consensus. The decisions would be transmitted back down to the lowest structure—the clan and the family—through this system of elected officials. The Shona structure was completely opposite from the Matabele, who had a King who had complete sway over the tribe's policies and actions. He decided when to plant; if his commands were not obeyed, death was the punishment for the offender.

Mugabe came from the Shona culture. I can understand that in light of his experience he did not see the disadvantages of a “one party” system, particularly if the party were run

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like a Shona tribe. In fact, he operated very much as a Shona council did, by consensus. He was clearly the leader and the boss, but he was not dictatorial. He would hold cabinet meetings, which he probably viewed as the equivalent of the supreme Council of Elders of a Shona tribe. In such a meeting, he would propose a new policy or he would pose a problem such as the lack of investment in private enterprise. Or he would talk about owning only one house, because he didn't like corruption—a multitude of houses was probably a sign that the owner was corrupt. The cabinet might grumble because some of them may well have owned more than one house; some of them would moan and groan because they felt that they had to take care of their families or one might have an elderly mother for whom he had bought a house in the countryside. If there was enough grumbling, Mugabe would recognize that he had no consensus. So he would say that the issue would be taken up the following week. During the next week, he would take a few people aside and lecture to them; he would work them over, asking them whether they wanted to be perceived as honest men or as crooks. Sooner or later, he would develop a consensus, he would call another meeting and put the issue on the table again. This time, Mugabe would get a lot of approvals; there might still be some grumbling, but it would clearly be a minority. That was his style. I don't consider that undemocratic; it is something like Lyndon Johnson's "Let us reason together," except perhaps with a little more authority and a lot more muscle behind him. Really not unlike Johnson's Presidency, or the way he ran the Senate.

Q: That brings us now to 1984, when you returned to Washington for an assignment to the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs at the Foreign Service Institute. As you discussed earlier, it was during this period that you wrote about your experiences in Uganda. You were at the Center for fifteen months and then you were nominated and confirmed as our Ambassador to Athens. How did that come about?

KEELEY: When I returned from Zimbabwe, I went to see Ron Spiers, who was then the Under Secretary for Management. He and George Vest, the Director General, together pretty much determined the assignments of senior Foreign Service officers. I knew both,

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but not well; I had not worked directly with either of them. They were primarily experts on European Affairs although Ron had also been in Turkey and Pakistan; George had been in EUR for most of his career. I told them what I was doing and they thought that FSI was a good assignment for me. I talked to them at considerable length about Zimbabwe and about the issues that concerned the Foreign Service. Soon thereafter, Ron told me that he thought I would be the Department's candidate for the Athens ambassadorial position when it would become vacant. He told me that of course the White House might have its own candidate and therefore the assignment could go to someone else. He told me that the Department had just succeeded in extending Monty Stearns for another year, which meant that the position would not become vacant until at least the Summer of 1985. But, although the vacancy would not occur for nine months or a year, he said that unless other matters intervened, the Department would propose me to replace Monty. He did point out that there was an ambassadorial selection committee, chaired by Deputy Secretary Dam, and that the Secretary had the final say, and that therefore he couldn't assure me of anything. But he thought that in light of my background and career, I had a good chance of becoming the Department's candidate. I told him that I would be thrilled if that were the case; it was the job I had been aiming at for all of my career.

I heard nothing more about it throughout 1984. I have never lobbied for any assignment and I wasn't about to change my modus operandi, even for Athens. Then, in around February or March of '85, Ron told me that the Department would proceed to send my name to the White House for approval, but that there was no way of knowing whether the White House would go along. There were a lot of rumors, as there are always, that the White House had its own candidate. There was a Greek-American, a Mr. Sotirhos, working in the White House personnel office, who was supposed to be close to George Bush, having worked for him during his campaigns. Sotirhos had been the White House's candidate the previous year, but had been thwarted because Stearns was extended for a year. I kept track of my nomination in a relaxed way, but really didn't think it would be

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approved. I assumed that the White House would choose its own candidate; I didn't really have much hope.

In fact, I learned from Spiers that my name had been approved by the White House when I phoned him to inform him of a new development affecting my situation. Early in 1985 I was approached by a number of senior Foreign Service officers, with whom I had worked on AFSA (American Foreign Service Association) issues. I had been meeting periodically with this group of senior officers. George High was the organizing officer, but there were also a number of others. They were concerned about what was happening to the senior Foreign Service, in light of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. They were concerned also by the “six year window” and the “threshold” and by the fact that people were being retired prematurely in their view. They felt that there were too many political appointees as ambassadors; the senior Foreign Service was suffering because of it and was being neglected. They also felt that the senior officers were not being well represented by AFSA, which had as its priority the interests of the mid-career officers. That is how I got involved in AFSA.

This group of senior officers decided to run its own slate in the upcoming election of AFSA officers, because the group then running AFSA was reluctant to accommodate the seniors on their official slate. They asked me to run for President of the Association. I thought, “Why not?” It would have been a two-year commitment. I thought that among other things it would permit me to finish my book on Uganda because I could have done that simultaneously. The Presidency is a full-time assignment, but probably not a full-time job. I was drafted to run on a slate that this group had made up. In the final analysis, the senior officers' group and the AFSA slate compromised; I was supported for President and most of the rest of the slate was made up of people who already held the offices for which they were running, but the President was retiring—that is, going overseas—and they were looking for a replacement. It was called the “Continuity Slate.” The decisions on the slate were made in what would have been called in the old days the “smoke filled room”—the

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old “democratic” ways. I had agreed with the rest of the slate on certain key issues and therefore accepted the “draft.”

I called Ron Spiers to tell him about these developments. At that point, he told me that I had just been approved by the White House for the ambassadorial post in Athens. I was astounded. I had never really expected to be approved by the White House. Very frankly, sending me to Athens made too much sense, was too logical. The AFSA nominations were closed; I couldn't withdraw and therefore I had to continue to run for the presidency of AFSA even though if my ambassadorial nomination were confirmed by the Senate, I could not have served as President. I found out later from Spiers and Vest that in fact the White House staff had put Sotirhos forward as their nominee. George Shultz had gone to the White House with a list of five career officer candidates for five different ambassadorial vacancies; the White House had its own list of five, presumably all political appointees. Shultz lost the argument on four; the only one he won was Athens, which, it was said, was given to the Department as a “consolation prize.” Shultz was so upset by that experience that he refused to do it any more; he told Dam that from that time on, he would have to deal with the White House on ambassadorial appointments. He felt humiliated in a way. I don't really know whether they approved my appointment as a sop or whether the Secretary fought for it hard and won. I was told he did make the case that Greece was a difficult post; that Greece was going through a difficult period; elections were coming up; Papandreou was a difficult character. The White House candidate had no experience in diplomacy or foreign affairs and Shultz insisted he needed a career officer in Athens. He said that the Department had a highly qualified candidate. So the White House approved my nomination. Sotirhos was given the ambassadorial job in Jamaica, allegedly so he could gain some experience. After serving there for four years, he was nominated to succeed me in Athens and is now our Ambassador there. In a sense, the play was written and ended as the White House originally wanted. And that is how I got to Greece.

I didn't have any particular difficulty with the Senate confirmation although a number of the statements I made during the hearing were highly publicized in Greece, as I knew they

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would be. They caused some problems in Athens, but they didn't have any effect on my confirmation. Simultaneously I was elected President of AFSA, running unopposed, which is the easy way. I took office on July 1, 1985. I then had to resign as President of AFSA seventeen days after taking office. The day the Senate approved my nomination, I became part of management and therefore ineligible for AFSA office. In any case, I had to prepare for the Athens assignment.

Q: You had been away from Greek issues for essentially fifteen years. How did it feel to return to them? Had you during that period been able to stay in touch with Greek affairs?

KEELEY: In fact, I had been able to keep in touch because Greece was a country that I knew quite well. I have by now lived there for twelve years altogether, going back to 1936. My brother is very much involved in Greece because he has specialized in translating modern Greek poetry and he writes novels that are set in Greece. His wife was originally Greek, although from Alexandria, Egypt. They met at Oxford. He is bilingual in Greek. I have a home in Greece that I built over a ten year period starting in 1972. It never occurred to me then that I would return in an official capacity. Since I served mostly in Eastern and Southern Africa, our R&R point was usually Athens and we would always end up there during our vacations from Africa. One year, I was inspired to buy a little piece of land on an island that I liked. Eventually, we built the house that was finished in 1982, as I have mentioned. Habitually, we had gone to Greece practically every summer. I had a lot of friends there with whom I maintained contacts throughout the years. So I had managed to stay in touch with Greek affairs—certainly more than any other country I had served in. I knew the language. In any case, Greece is a place you fall into easily without too much effort.

Q: Do you have any views about the wisdom of sending officers as ambassadors of deputy chiefs of mission to posts where they served as lower ranking officers many years earlier? Do the lessons learned during a first tour color an officer's views during later tours?

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KEELEY: I think an assignment to a country in which one has previously served is a good one if otherwise appropriate, particularly if the local language is a difficult one and if the Department has invested time and money in teaching that language to an officer. I would think ideally, unless there is a concern that the officer becomes too closely identified with that country, he or she might well serve in the same country two or three times during a career. That could be as a junior officer when the local language is learned, then during a mid-career assignment, and then as Ambassador. I think Monty Stearns may have been the only officer who did that, at least in Greece—he served there three times. He was an experiment. Rather than teaching him Greek at FSI, the Department sent him to Greece and told him to learn the language. He was given about a year to live in villages and towns and to wander around the country; he had no work assignment. Then he did a tour in the Embassy. He learned Greek thoroughly; that is the way to learn a language, unless one does it as I did, namely as a child. Stearns later returned to Athens as DCM and still later on as Ambassador. I think that is a good use of talent and experience.

As far as one's views are concerned, you are bound to have your thinking molded by previous experiences. They will influence your thinking. That could be a negative factor, depending on the degree to which the officer can maintain his or her objectivity and open-mindedness, which is really a character question. But there are advantages that outweigh the potential problems. The officer who has been in the country previously has immediate access to a number of people—some even friends—whom he or she had met during a previous tour (if that tour had been successful). You know people in government, business, academia, culture, politics, media, etc. For most officers, it takes most of a tour to acquire these assets. For the one returning, that period of contact-building is already done. The returning officer also has a good feeling for the culture and how the people of the country think, which I consider to be vital for good political analysis. You have to know what makes people tick; that is where language knowledge is particularly important because people think in their native language. If you can mentally—linguistically—put yourself in their place, it is very helpful. You don't need to spend a lot of time familiarizing

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yourself with the country; you know its geography. You still have to leave the chancery to talk to people, but there is a certain amount of familiarization work that is already done. A good officer will know a country's history; he or she will just know things.

The downside is what your question alluded to. An officer can develop prejudices, biases, strong feelings about the country and its history and its culture. Sometimes those views are negative. Just because you know a country well does not mean that you love it. You may have negative views about it and its people and their behavior.

Q: That leads me to the question of what major differences you found in Greece between 1970 and 1985?

KEELEY: The major difference from the point of view of the Embassy was that when I left in 1970, the government was run by a military dictatorship with normal politics being suppressed—no Parliament, an unenforced Constitution, opposition leaders in prison or under house arrest, human rights violations. The government then was very pro-American, pro-NATO (to use shorthand), but was difficult to deal with because of their other problems. That government created U.S. domestic political problems—there were pro- and anti-government factions in the U.S. A lot of the internal Embassy turmoil that I described earlier (among Americans and between American and Greek employees) made for a very difficult situation.

By 1985, eleven years after the restoration of democracy in Greece, domestic Greek politics were very active. That was the normal pattern for the Greeks; they love politics. It is almost a national sport and far more intense than in any other country that I know. Everybody is involved in politics; no one is apathetic—even those who say they are, are really not. They say they are apathetic because they are disgusted with everything and everybody. By 1985 they had an electoral system that was working, a Parliament that was working, politics which were intensely partisan and, I suppose, a much more ambivalent

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attitude toward the U.S. and its Embassy. That made for an entirely different situation from what existed in 1970.

I have my own theory about Greece. I denied, not always successfully, that there ever was any serious anti-Americanism among Greeks, even though I have heard it constantly and therefore had always to justify my view. The average American believes that there is a lot of hostility towards him or her; I have never sensed that either as an official representative or as a tourist or in any other way. The Greeks are very sophisticated about distinguishing between people, countries, governments and policies. Just because they may not like our policies on Cyprus or because they believe that we are favoring the Turks or because we are doing something they don't like, it is never translated into hostility against individual Americans or against the United States, which to them is still an ideal country. If they can afford it, they will send their children here for higher education; they have immigrated to the U.S.; they have visited the U.S. They look on the United States in a much more idealized way than we look upon ourselves.

At the same time, they can become extremely upset by the actions we take or by the policies we adopt or by attitudes they perceive us having towards them or their country. When they get angry at us, their attitude becomes almost like one of unrequited love. They act as if they have been rejected lovers. They cannot understand why we "love" the Turks. The theory is that we should dislike the Turks if we love the Greeks. Everything is viewed in black or white. It is a national characteristic. So they are periodically disappointed with us when they think we could be friendlier or loving. That is quite different from an attitude of hostility. I can't believe that people are reluctant to go to Greece because they think there is rampant anti-Americanism. They may get "taken" by a Greek taxi-cab driver or by a restaurant waiter, but that is not because he dislikes the Americans, but because he considers them naive and ripe for picking. The Greeks think that all Americans are filthy rich and generous and easily duped, naive people. They have the usual stereotypical views about us, but it is certainly not hostility. I have never sensed that.

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Q: Did you have any specific instructions when you went to Athens in 1985?

KEELEY: I received the usual letter from the President which is sent to all ambassadors. It didn't contain any specifics about Greece—sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. I had some guidance from the State Department's leadership. By the time I reached Athens, a second election had been held which Papandreou had won; so he was still in power. We had had considerable difficulty with him in his first term and even prior to his first term in a whole variety of ways. We obviously wanted a better relationship with that government. We attributed a lot of our problems to Papandreou's leadership of the party and the government. It was therefore a matter of finding ways to improve the over-all relationship.

I had specific instructions about one important matter: the future of the American bases. We had four major bases in Greece: two outside of Athens and two on Crete. There were also a number of smaller installations—communications stations, etc. We had had difficulties over the future of those bases, which we had occupied even before the NATO period. Greece joined NATO in 1952. The bases were established when we were helping Greece in its civil war under the Truman Doctrine. We acquired the existing British bases; we expanded and improved them. So they were acquired under a bilateral relationship and only subsequently became part of the NATO complex, although they always remained U.S. bases, not NATO bases. We had agreements that governed the use of these facilities. During the Colonels' regime, the agreements went into limbo, although the Greek government certainly had no objection to our use of the facilities; in fact, during this period we extended our military dependence on Greece. We began a home-porting program with certain ships of the Sixth Fleet at Piraeus. I think home-porting in Greece was a terrible mistake, but I didn't have anything to do with it. It was done in between my two tours.

In any case, in 1985, we had four major bases. After the restoration of democracy in 1974, we had tried to renew our agreements for the use of those bases. Their use had been

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called in question not only by the old Papandreou regime, but also by the Karamanlis government as well. We had had two sets of negotiations, in 1976-77 and in 1980-81. Neither of those negotiations had resulted in final signed agreements. So the bases were somewhat in limbo. During the first Andreas Papandreou government, an agreement had been negotiated. Reg Bartholomew headed the U.S. team. Monty Stearns was the Ambassador and the agreement was signed in 1983 and was to last for five years, expiring therefore during my tour. By 1985 there was already disagreement over whether this was a termination agreement—as Papandreou and others had considered it (i.e., a five year extension followed by a close down)—or whether it could be renewed after the end of the five year term. Deliberately the negotiators had left the phrasing on this issue in Article XII of the agreement somewhat ambiguous. They used different words in the English and Greek versions, which I thought was a great mistake. I think issues of this kind should not be left ambiguous, although it was probably done so as to get any agreement at all. The negotiators may not have had much choice (I am not criticizing those who negotiated, because they may not have had any other choices), but they did leave a major problem.

I did have specific instructions about negotiating a new agreement. I was not to negotiate it, but everyone recognized that this was going to be an issue that would arise between the two governments and that it would have to be addressed sooner rather than later. We did not want to wait until the agreement had nearly expired; we needed to know well in advance what our options were likely to be—whether the bases could stay and under what terms. We had to start the process so that the Greek government could face the issue that negotiations for a new agreement had to begin.

There had been a paper prepared by the Pentagon which had gone through the usual governmental clearance process and had finally become an official NSC document. State had made its contributions. I read the paper carefully and thoroughly. The conclusion was that all four bases were “must have” bases. The U.S. had to have all four of them; none could be given up. The theory was that perhaps, under the new agreement, one might be given up by moving its facilities to another; there were a number of options which

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were essentially a matter of rearrangements, not a ceding of anything. I was told that the new agreement, which would hopefully be for a longer period than five years, was to be negotiated under the most favorable terms possible both for our personnel and in terms of financial commitments. As I said, I was told that all four bases were necessary. The agreement would have to be phrased carefully so that it would not cause us trouble with Turkey, as had been the case in the earlier one—that is, the previous agreement had not caused us major trouble with Turkey. The Greeks would obviously want to use the negotiations as a means of committing the U.S. to support them in their issues against Turkey—Cyprus, the Aegean Sea, etc.

I was not going to be the negotiator. I decided that early on and I am sure the Department fully supported that view. I had discussed this issue with one of my predecessors—Bob McCloskey—who had been in charge of an earlier negotiation while he was our Ambassador in Athens. It was an issue we had taken up at FSI during a seminar on base agreements negotiations. In response to the question whether it was a good idea for an Ambassador to be the base negotiator, McCloskey said then that when he was in Athens he thought it would be best for the Ambassador to be the base negotiator. Subsequently, he negotiated the Spanish base agreement and then he was not the Ambassador; at that time he thought it was best if the negotiator was not the Ambassador! It was the old adage of “where you stand depends on where you sit.” But as I said, I had decided early on that my being the negotiator would not be a good idea. The Ambassador should remain somewhat removed from the actual negotiations because (1) a lot of the negotiations have to take place in Washington, by the negotiator with our own various bureaucracies, to obtain their support for what is being negotiated with the other country—that would mean constant trips back and forth to the U.S. to the neglect of the Embassy and all of the other duties that an Ambassador has; (2) it is useful to have the Ambassador somewhat removed from the actual negotiations because he can then be used if an impasse is reached (he can be sent to see the Prime Minister to try to overcome a barrier by using a side channel or by appealing to a higher level to reach a compromise); (3) Ambassadors

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are congenitally viewed as being too friendly to the host country (that is what happened in the Spanish negotiations, during which Ambassador Terry Todman was unfairly viewed by some as being part of the Spanish negotiating team rather than working with McCloskey). It is usually an unfair charge, but it is not helpful in trying to sell the agreement to the American bureaucracies and constituencies, particularly if the Ambassador is the head negotiator. It will automatically be assumed that he is giving the store away. So in general it is better if the Ambassador is not part of the negotiating team, but is available to support the negotiator when a need arises.

Furthermore, in the Greek case, Monty Stearns had not been the negotiator in 1983, but he made his DCM, Alan Berlind, the deputy negotiator to Reg Bartholomew. I thought that was not a good idea because it would have meant the loss of the DCM for a protracted period; I needed the DCM to help me run the Embassy, which was very large (about 250 Americans and 500 Greek employees) and complex. I decided to make the Politico-Military Counselor—Angel Rabassa—the Embassy's man on the negotiating team, who would serve as the liaison with the Embassy and would also be the official left in Athens when the rest of the negotiating team returned to Washington, as it did periodically. He also kept me advised, saving the head negotiator some time which he needed to devote to a very heavy work-load. The head negotiator was to be Alan Flanigan, with Rabassa being the deputy; then there were three other officers from Washington on our team, including a legal adviser from State and two military officers from the Pentagon.

As I understood the Pentagon paper and my instructions, I was to create a better relationship with the Greek government and to maneuver that government into at least starting the negotiations. When I took over as Ambassador, we faced a Papandreou who stood on his position that the last agreement was the final one and that upon its expiration we would leave all the bases. In the fall of 1985 we were three years away from the termination date and we had not even reached the point of getting agreement from the other party that negotiations should be conducted. So the early part of my tour was primarily focused on the issue of getting Papandreou to agree to start negotiations,

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thereby accepting the fact that a possibility existed that the bases would stay, which would require a new agreement; we had to get the talks started sufficiently early so that they would not be conducted under a very short deadline. The military were always concerned that they might have to use the bases without legal underpinnings. One scenario could have been that the agreement would have expired, but that the bases could have been used with the blessing of the Greek government. The military don't like that situation for very good reasons: there would be no legal leg to stand on. So our position was to get the negotiations started as soon as possible.

Linked to that was another issue. Everyone believed that Papandreou wanted desperately to be invited to Washington for an official visit to see President Reagan. He wanted it for his own domestic political reasons. His whole history of difficult relationships with the U.S. created the need for some kind of American “seal of approval;” he needed to show his constituency that we worked with him and that we would and could deal with him. But Papandreou was not about to ask for an invitation, for reasons of pride. It was clear to me, even before I got to Athens, that there would be no invitation from Washington without a new base agreement. Reagan could not have invited to the White House a NATO leader who was kicking our military out of his country. That linked the two issues.

Papandreou had been reelected for a new four year term. The Reagan administration might have been very disappointed by that result, because it still didn't like him and still remembered all the statements—such as on the downing of the Korean Airliner—he had made about the U.S. both in office and before taking office. But Papandreou had given an interview to a New York Times correspondent in which he was quoted as saying that he looked forward to a period of “calmer waters” in his relationship with the U.S. I was told by the correspondent later that he had actually put those words into Papandreou's mouth; they were never really spoken as such. The correspondent used the term “calmer waters” and Papandreou had assented to the idea and the phrasing. Washington took the words at face value and assumed that this was an opening which might have meant a change of view on Papandreou's part. The administration decided that it would try to reciprocate;

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if Papandreou wanted a better relationship, the U.S. was ready to do its part. When I reviewed the history of Papandreou's record in the U.S.-Greek relationship, it occurred to me that people were still excessively focused on the main planks of the PASOK party's platform of pre-1981. That platform called for such things as "Greece out of NATO," "U.S. bases out of Greece," "Greece not in the Common Market"—this later amended to say that the terms had to be renegotiated with the EC; in general, it was a Third World neutralist position which was to keep Greece equidistant from the two super-powers. I observed that during Papandreou's first term all of these positions had been abandoned; the reality was different from the rhetoric. It seemed to me that by 1985 Greece was just as firmly in NATO as ever. I attributed that to the fact that once PASOK was in power, it concluded that a NATO which included Turkey, but not Greece, was not good news because obviously, should a dispute arise, NATO would side with Turkey. That would have been counter-productive.

Papandreou had negotiated a new base agreement, although, as I said earlier, the termination issue was left in limbo. But in effect, he had contradicted his platform by continuing the U.S. bases. Furthermore, he not only did not pull out of the Common Market, he didn't even hold the promised referendum on the question; he just got better terms. He kind of blackmailed the Common Market partners and got massive assistance by saying that Greece was a poor country that could not keep up with the other economies without external assistance. He gave his farmers a lot of subsidies obtained from the Common Market. All of these actions gained him a lot of support, even if they were contrary to the party's platform. As far as foreign policy was concerned, that also turned out to be mostly rhetoric. People thought Papandreou would move very close to Libya, Iraq and Syria; it turned out that that was mostly talk; there were no major changes—no significant economic agreements, no investment flows. At times Papandreou played on the international stage in a manner viewed as unfriendly in Washington, particularly on nuclear issues. He was very anti-nuclear. He once told me that in Greece his was the "Greens" party—in fact, green was PASOK's color—but he meant that they were the

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environmentalist, anti-nuclear group in Greece—much more so than the Communists certainly.

Having looked at his track record, I felt that Papandreou did wish to have a better relationship with the United States. I thought he was now more self-confident, having won a second election. I had read a good deal about that election; I had followed it closely, because by that time my nomination had been confirmed. I found that he had not run against the U.S. during that election; in fact, foreign policy had played a very minor role. It was the domestic social and economic issues that were at the core of the campaign, as well as the personality differences with Mr. Mitsotakis. Turkey was not really an issue; Cyprus wasn't. I felt therefore that there was an opportunity. Washington seemed willing to reciprocate.

We started by arranging a series of high level visits to Athens, which had been rare during the previous four years or even in the post-1974 period when Karamanlis had removed Greece from the military structure of NATO as a reaction to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. So the relationship with Greece had been difficult for some time, even with a conservative government in power.

The first high level visitor was Mike Armacost, the State Department's Under Secretary for Political Affairs, followed by Roz Ridgway, the State Department's Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, then John Whitehead, the State Department's Deputy Secretary, and then in March 1986, Secretary of State George Shultz came on a visit. Athens hadn't seen an American Secretary of State for a long time, although it is possible that Haig passed through briefly in 1981 or 1982. The last Presidential visit to Athens had been Eisenhower's; the last Prime Minister of Greece to visit Washington on an official visit had been George Papandreou in 1964; Karamanlis was the first official foreign visitor that Jack Kennedy had received in 1961. The gap between 1964 and 1986 was long one, particularly for a NATO ally. So George Shultz's visit was important and was the apex of our strategy of bringing high level visitors to Athens. We had intended for Armacost and

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Ridgway to come out first and separately to “feel the waters.” Shultz was going to Turkey and his trip had to be balanced by a stop in Athens. This “visitors” strategy was directed at getting the base negotiations started and to prepare the way for a possible Papandreou visit to Washington if those negotiations were successful.

We worked very hard on these visits, particularly the Secretary's. There were a lot of preparations; it was to be a two day visit. There were some trepidations about how it might work out. I was confident that it would come off well—knowing more by that time about Papandreou and his attitudes. He was very excited by it and hoped for good results, as did Shultz. The preliminary visits had gone very well; everybody was feeling good. When Shultz came, we decided we would face the two major issues frontally. We wanted to pin Papandreou down on starting base negotiations, and secondly, we wanted to work out the Washington visit invitation, which Papandreou of course refused to seek. Both were certain to become press issues because the press had been discussing them for months.

The Secretary and his party and I held a strategy session at breakfast at his hotel; Shultz was very willing to go along with the scenario that we had worked out in advance (Ridgway, who had previously approved our strategy, was with the Secretary). The only objections were raised by Bernie Kalb, the Department's press spokesman; he looked at the issues from the point of view of satisfying the press, while we were more interested in pinning Papandreou down on the two matters; Kalb's interests and ours were two different things. Kalb thought we ought to be as forthcoming as possible with the press. We wanted to obtain a commitment from Papandreou.

We decided on some interesting tactics, which Shultz approved. I had prepared all the necessary documents; I was amazed at how easy it was, except for the Kalb objection about our not being sufficiently forthcoming with the press. We agreed that Shultz would simply say to Papandreou that the base negotiations would have to start; he would give the reasons and the estimated time required, along with some suggestions on procedures to be used. I had of course previously discussed the subject with Papandreou, probably

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on more than one occasion; I had talked to the Foreign Minister and others. During their visits Ridgway and Armacost had also discussed the issue with Papandreou and others. The ground work had been laid, so that the Greeks would not be surprised.

Shultz was to tell Papandreou, depending on how the conversation had gone to that point, that he was intending to give a press conference immediately after his return to the hotel and that he was sure the first question would concern the base negotiations. The Secretary would then tell Papandreou how he intended to answer it and would ask him whether he had any problem with that answer. A brief text had been prepared for the Secretary, which he would read to the Prime Minister; Shultz's proposed answer to a question on base negotiations would in essence say that the negotiations would be started soon. If Papandreou assented to that answer, that would have been a commitment from Papandreou and a reversal of his previous position. At the actual meeting Papandreou agreed to the Shultz statement. Shultz passed the text over to Papandreou, who gave the paper to his aide, Christos Macheritsas, who looked at it, agreed there wasn't much that could be changed, and furthermore noted that it was an American and not a Greek statement.

So objective one was achieved. The more difficult issue was the Washington visit, because Papandreou had not requested it. Shultz handled it very expertly, as you would expect. He said he had noticed that there had been a lot of press speculation about a Washington visit; he then explained the circumstances and all but said that in the absence of a base agreement, we could not extend an invitation. It was not a threat or a promise. He then put a positive spin on the comment by noting that if there were to be a positive outcome to the negotiations, a visit by the Greek Prime Minister to Washington would certainly be in order. The Secretary said that he would certainly, under the circumstances that he had described, recommend such an invitation to the President; he could not of course commit the President, but he thought that the chances were good that the

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President would agree. The Greeks weren't very happy about our position, but they couldn't very well object to it because it was our statement.

Then we had a very warm lunch during which the Secretary said a few words in Greek, two words, to be exact. Melina Mercouri had—during the preparations for the visit—suggested to me the idea that the Secretary would make a great hit if he said something in Greek. Melina has always been a master of public relations. I asked her what the Secretary could say. She said, “Why not a toast to Greece, at the lunch? Just a couple of words.” So while we were riding in the car from the Prime Minister's residence to the hotel for the press conference, I made the suggestion, the Secretary agreed, and I had him practice the toast until he had the pronunciation down perfectly. As the luncheon began, Shultz raised his wine glass and said, “Yassou Elladha,” which means “To the health of Greece.” Shultz was delighted with his performance, and so was everyone else. I had been scared to death that it would come out wrong, but Shultz hit it right on the head; it was perfect. Everyone was amazed. They knew of course that he didn't speak Greek, but it was a hit. Papandreou said, “Next time we'll hold our talks in Greek!” I decided Melina was a genius.

By the way, that evening my wife and I hosted a dinner-dance at our residence for a couple of hundred guests in honor of Secretary and Mrs. Shultz. We had been told in messages from Washington that Shultz would be delighted to attend a dance, as he loved to dance, and though his wife had a bad leg and couldn't dance she didn't mind if he danced with other partners. The highlight of that dinner-dance was inevitable: the Secretary took to the dance floor with Melina Mercouri and the orchestra played “Never on Sunday” and everyone stopped in their tracks to watch that pair glide around the floor. Fortunately some amateur photographer had a camera handy and got a record of it. (To maintain an informal, friendly atmosphere we had banned official photographers from the event.)

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To go back to the press conference, the first question was not about the base negotiations, but probably about how Shultz found the Prime Minister or something safe like that. The second question was also not about the bases and I began to sweat bullets; I had predicted to Shultz that the base issue would be first; if not, certainly second. The right question had to be raised, because we didn't want the Secretary to volunteer his statement; that would have been the worst thing. Finally, the bases did come up; after that the same question came up at least three more times, because the Greek press did not like the American formulation which had been presented by the Secretary in answer to the first question. We had couched the answer in very diplomatic language; the press wanted a clear "Yes" or "No." (Kalb was right that the press wouldn't be happy with our answer, but the press wasn't the audience we were speaking to.) The press wanted to know: will there be negotiations? When will they start? Who will be doing the negotiating? They kept raising the issue from different angles. Shultz kept reading the same reply over and over again. The third time the question was asked, he said: "I have no different answer from what I have said before. I will repeat it once more." In answer to the fourth question, he said: "I'll give it to you slowly," and then proceeded to read the statement one word by one word. The press finally understood that that was all that Shultz would say and then they gave up.

Then there was the other question, from an Israeli journalist (I remember that specifically, because that is not where I had expected the question to come from). It was about the Prime Minister's visit to Washington. I think the reason the Israeli asked it is because the Greeks did not have full diplomatic relations with Israel at the time—now they do. They had Embassies, but the situation was somewhere between de facto and de jure. So the Israelis had an interest in U.S.- Greek relations; Greece was the only member of the Common Market that did not have full relations with Israel. My guess is that the journalist thought that Papandreou would enter into full relations with Israel before a Washington visit to avoid confrontational questions on the subject in the Congress and other places. So

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the trip was a matter of interest to the Israelis. Shultz gave him the prepared answer, so that that issue also got on the record.

Q: Tell us what, if anything, you saw as the political cost of maintaining American military bases in Greece?

KEELEY: It is a difficult issue and Greece is probably not a good illustration, because the Greeks have a very ambivalent attitude about those bases. When the bases were first established in the late '40s, there was considerable debate in the Greek Parliament, the press and in the body politic (there is a book on the subject). The pro-base side won the debate because Greece was afraid of certain countries—not Turkey then as much as other Balkan countries; e.g., Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, etc. The view was that if the Americans had their troops stationed on Greek soil, they would defend it if there were any attack on it. The Greeks therefore viewed the bases as a military/security benefit to them. As time went on, the Greeks felt less threatened from the North and concluded, somewhat viscerally, that the U.S. would not take sides in the Greek-Turkish dispute, so the bases lost their attractiveness. Then they had to be justified as a contribution to NATO, even though, as I said, they were bilateral bases and not part of the NATO structure. Nevertheless, they were justified as Greece's contribution to the alliance.

The problems arose not merely from the existence of the bases, which in some ways contributed to the local economy by providing jobs, construction contracts, purchases, etc., but because they might be used in out-of-area disputes; e.g., the Middle East or North Africa. That could have resulted in the United States using bases on Greek soil to support one party to a conflict which may not have had Greek approval. That was where the danger lay. Most countries like to keep control over the use of bases that are on their soil in order to keep some control over facilities that may be used in conflicts which they may like to stay out of, even if they are a U.S. ally (unless it is a NATO conflict).

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The utility of the bases for us became very limited because the purpose of having bases in that part of the world is to use them in some action less than a war with the Soviet Union. They could be used for resupply efforts, for intelligence collection, even if they were not actual staging grounds for force deployment and use. In the end, I think each base has to be viewed in its own geographic situation and one must decide whether it is worth the political cost that will have to be paid—and there is always a political cost. There are also financial costs, because to almost every country where we have bases we provide substantial military assistance. We did that in Greece. The aid was originally justified because of the civil war, the Communist threat, etc. Over the years, the assistance became a sort of rental payment. In the long run, the aid becomes part of a base agreement; they all tend to have some financial provisions in addition to some guarantees of the kind of equipment the U.S. is willing to supply (a sensitive issue as time went on, and the level of arms sophistication rose year after year). All these considerations have to be weighed against whether that base or complex of bases is important enough to justify the quid pro quo. In the Greek case, despite the fact that it is next to impossible for the U.S. to have other base sites in the area (i.e., close to North Africa and the Near East) except in Turkey, which also applied restrictions on the use of the bases on its soil, one wonders how useful it is to have bases which are so tightly restricted as to use in areas where they might have to be used.

But I must add two caveats in the case of Greece. One is that we have the Sixth Fleet operating in the Mediterranean. One of the bases and probably even a second—Soudha Bay and to a lesser extent Hellinikon—really support the Sixth Fleet in important ways. When that Fleet cruises in the Eastern Mediterranean, without those bases the supply lines would be very long; the capability of delivering necessities to the ships (including mail) is increased substantially. Furthermore, another one of the bases is a communications base, Nea Makri, for the Navy. It is now obsolete because communications have improved through the use of satellites and other long range unmanned means, so that land-based relay stations are no longer required. But at the

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time, that base was crucial for the world-wide communications system that a world-wide Navy required. We also needed the Greek bases for intelligence collection. If there are no other means of collection in a certain geographic area, it becomes obviously very important to have a facility. If you have several collection points, then you might be able to do without one or another, although the military people like redundancy—if one is good, then two must be better, because then you have a back-up should one fail.

That is why we had bases in Greece. Some became less important as time passed because of technological improvements. Of the two that we have retained under the new agreement, both on Crete, one supports the Sixth Fleet and the other is devoted to intelligence collection. Those two functions warrant maintenance of bases and the financial cost is not so great, because presumably we would be providing a certain amount of military aid to Greece in any case, to keep a balance with Turkey at least, and to keep the Greek armed forces at an acceptable level. With the reduction of the Soviet threat, all the rationales come into question, so that today an analysis of the need for and the costs of the bases might be entirely different from what it was just a couple of years ago.

Q: You mentioned arms sales. Tell us how you viewed arms sales as a tool for American diplomacy?

KEELEY: It has been one of our principal tools since World War II. We are in competition with other arms suppliers. There are a number of reasons for arms sales, only some of which are political. Arms sales help our manufacturers, assist in paying for R&D, boost our exports—if our businesses did not sell the arms, some competitor would. Sales of weapons, particularly advanced ones, overseas reduces the costs to our own forces because the development and production costs are spread over a larger production. If we sell 80 fighters to Greece and 160 to Turkey, which are added to the “normal” General Dynamics production for the U.S. Air Force, that obviously reduces the cost of each plane.

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Arms sales have been repeatedly used to achieve diplomatic objectives. When I was in Greece, a major sale of F-16s was approved. The Greeks bought 40 F-16s and 40 Mirage-2000s in a major purchase. It had been an ongoing matter which the Greeks had been studying for five or six years. It just happened to come to a conclusion while I was there. I had nothing to do with the initiation of the project. I had something to do with the completion of it. The main matter that you have to weigh in using arms sales—it is weighed very little in our diplomacy—is whether the sale simply fuels an arms race in a specific geographic area. Often you receive a request from a country, A, for certain arms because it is afraid of a neighbor, B, who may have received arms from somewhere. The U.S. then sells arms to country A to balance what country B had gotten. Then country B receives another, additional arms shipment; then you have to give more to country A.

The problem with dealing with a situation of this kind is that you have to get an agreement among all the arms suppliers. That is not limited to the U.S. and the old U.S.S.R., but it includes a lot of the Western powers. We compete with the French, the British, the Italians and even some neutrals. I went to an arms sales show while in Greece and I was astounded by the equipment being displayed which had been manufactured in Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Switzerland and Norway, for example. There were things there that I had never heard of. All the manufacturers were pushing their wares. Anyone who had the cash could buy any of that stuff, no questions asked. There were no aid agreements, no control over uses, no reporting requirements. Admittedly, the weapons displayed were not the most advanced, like jet aircraft and missiles, but they were certainly very lethal. Unless you get the arms producers to cooperate, you can't get control over the sales problem.

Q: Did we gain any positive political advantage from the sale of the F-16s?

KEELEY: I think it was half positive and half negative. If we had refused to sell them, we would have been in very bad odor. The Greeks would have sought out other manufacturers—the French, for example. In fact, had they asked for 80 planes from us, we

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would have sold them. Papandreou made the decision, primarily for political reasons, that Greece would give some of the business to one of its European Common Market partners while reducing Greek dependence on the U.S., which had been the major supplier for all of the Greek forces since World War II. He wanted to spread the “gravy” around. In the end, the Greeks were unhappy with the French planes and much happier with ours. They would have been better off if they had bought just one type of aircraft in terms of maintenance, pilot training, spare parts, etc. The cost certainly would have been less.

Q: Let me turn now to the Papandreous. We talked about the senior Papandreou in an earlier part of the interview. Let me now ask you about the son. I assume you got to know him pretty well.

KEELEY: We didn't socialize a lot. He didn't socialize with any diplomats. I suppose my wife and I saw him more than any other diplomatic couple, but that wasn't really very much. Our wives were friends going back to our first tour in Athens and they remained friends; they would see each other from time to time. We would occasionally invite her over for a meal or conversation or to meet with somebody. But it was during this mid-to-late-80s period that the Papandreou marriage was breaking up, so that they were not socializing together very much, particularly after 1986. Occasionally we would go to a social function where the Papandreous were also guests; later in our tour, we also met Andreas' new wife, saw her two or three times at social functions. So I didn't have much of an opportunity to observe Papandreou except in our frequent business contacts. I had many one-on-one meetings with him; sometimes there were others present; sometimes we met when I was escorting a visitor. I guess I knew him as well as any diplomat did. I did not make any special effort to cultivate his friendship.

As I said, I had frequent meetings with him; I never had any problem of access; he would always see me whenever I requested a meeting, partly of course because I represented a country that was important to Greece, partly because I knew him from earlier days, and partly because I knew his secretary. I would call her personally; I would never go through

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the Foreign Ministry. I would tell her how much time I needed. She would usually call me back within a few minutes with an appointment time. That was very useful, because sometimes you need an urgent meeting; for example, we had a Soviet defector whom we wanted to get out of the country clandestinely and in a hurry and I wanted to forewarn Papandreou about that so that he wouldn't be caught unawares and say the wrong thing.

The Foreign Minister did not seem to object to my direct contacts. He understood that there was a special relationship and he couldn't criticize the Prime Minister's judgment on an issue of that kind. What Mr. Papoulias, the Foreign Minister, resented was that often when I would take a visitor to see Papandreou, the Greek note-taker would be the Prime Minister's personal diplomatic advisor, Christos Macheritsas, rather than the Foreign Minister. It was partly a language problem because Papoulias did not speak English and therefore could not participate in the conversation, which was conducted in English. Macheritsas would take notes for the Greek side, I would take notes for the American side. Papandreou would always try to limit the meeting to four people—two on each side. He didn't like larger meetings unless we made a real case, as I needed to do occasionally. There was a change at a certain point: Macheritsas was fired and there was a general reshuffle in the Prime Minister's personal staff. The next time I saw Papandreou, it was the Foreign Minister who was the second Greek participant. I then realized why the diplomatic advisor had been fired; it had been a power struggle because he was getting between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. The Foreign Minister wanted to be in on the meetings even if he couldn't follow the conversation.

I would not compare my knowledge of Papandreou with that of his Greek colleagues. He did not have that many close friends; in fact, a good many of his friendships have broken up over the years, for one reason or another.

Q: As a general ground rule, what policy should an Ambassador follow in determining how he makes an appointment with a Prime Minister or a President?

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KEELEY: You use any technique you can. It depends on the local system and how you wish to work it. I operated similarly in Zimbabwe, because the Foreign Minister there was not all that friendly to the U.S. Furthermore, his Ministry was quite inefficient. I got in the habit of calling the Prime Minister's private secretary—a man I got to know in his role as note-taker. He had been with Mugabe throughout the civil war. I would call him directly and got much better results that way. I am sure that the Foreign Ministry didn't like it, but as long as the President or the Prime Minister doesn't object, the bureaucrats are in a difficult position to object. They might resent it, but my job was to see the principal when I had to see him and not to be delayed or blocked by ceremony or protocol.

Sometimes I would see the Foreign Minister and not the Prime Minister deliberately, knowing that the Prime Minister would be briefed. That procedure was used most often for more minor matters for which I didn't wish to take up the Prime Minister's time. You always have to be careful about the danger of wearing out your welcome. You can't seek appointments too often; you certainly can't schedule meetings for frivolous matters. I was always careful to specify how much time I needed so that the Prime Minister knew that I would not spend more time than required just for chit-chat reasons. If it was a ten minute matter, I would say, "I would like to see the P.M. today for ten minutes; if that is not possible, then no later than tomorrow. I promise I won't take more than ten minutes of his time." That approach was appreciated, I think.

Let me give you one example of what doesn't work. I think I knew it wouldn't work at the time I did it, but I tried it anyway. On most of the routine—and sometimes the not so routine—bilateral U.S.-Greek issues (matters affecting the bases—soldiers and airmen who got into trouble, other problems of that kind that used to get escalated into bilateral disputes), I would deal with John Kapsis, who was the Deputy Foreign Minister. He had responsibility for the U.S. portfolio on such matters, including the preliminaries to the base negotiations, assigned to him by the Prime Minister. He had been the base negotiator in 1983; he would not be the new negotiator during my tour for a number of reasons. He was

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the guy I was supposed to deal with on these relatively minor politico-military issues. He was often quite exasperating and difficult to deal with. He was a very prickly individual; he was neither a diplomat nor a successful politician, but a journalist—writer and editor—by profession. I think by the end of my tour, we ended up as friends, but we had many very difficult and drawn-out exchanges, including some critical ones when Greece and Turkey nearly went to war in March 1987.

At one point, I was trying to get an agreement on an issue related to the bases, probably permission for construction projects, and I was getting nowhere with Kapsis. After repeated tries and a good deal of frustration, I told him that I would like to take the issue up with the Prime Minister because the issue needed resolution and it was obviously not being solved at his level. I asked him whether he would have any objection if I did so. He said he did not. I didn't feel it would have been right to go over his head without telling him what I intended to do; that would have caused very hard feelings. I was of course not sure what the outcome would be. I made the appointment with the Prime Minister, using my usual personal channel to his secretary. I went to Papandreou's house and was waiting to be ushered into his office when Kapsis came in. He sat down and we talked. The Prime Minister's secretary came in and asked Kapsis to go into the P.M.'s office, alone. He stayed in the office for about twenty minutes. I then was called in; Kapsis was there with the P.M. I made my pitch. Papandreou listened politely, smiled, and said, "I'm sure that you and John can work this thing out." End of meeting. I had struck out totally because Kapsis got in first, made his case, recommended that the Prime Minister not give an inch—probably said something along the lines of, "I've got him where I want him, skewered to the wall." I lost the battle.

On the other hand, my options were very limited. If I had gone to Papandreou secretly, it could have caused a lot of problems for me. I might have won that battle, but Kapsis would have become unbearably intransigent on everything else I had to deal with him on. Obviously, Kapsis had called and had told Papandreou or his secretary that the American Ambassador would want to see him about something and that he would wish to brief

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the P.M. about the issue beforehand. In a situation of that kind the host government bureaucrats are in the driver's seat.

Q: Greece is one of the countries with which we have relations that has a very strong domestic constituency. Did you deal with the "Greek Lobby" at all while you were Ambassador? Were you pressured at all?

KEELEY: No; I was not pressured. I was of course aware of their existence.

Representatives of various Greek-American groups, including their leaders, would visit Athens. They would always ask to see me and I would always see them. Sometimes we entertained them at our residence. We tried to treat them well; we gave them briefings; we helped them set up appointments if they asked—most often, they had their own contacts and could see whomever they wanted that way. Some had their own channels to the Prime Minister and would see him independently without me being present. There wasn't anything I could do about that since they were not official visitors. As long as Papandreou wanted to work that way, that is the way it was done.

I never really had any major problems with any of these groups. I had one minor problem once. We had a group of U.S. Congressmen visiting—I think three of them—who were being escorted by some Greek-American lobbyists, heads of some organizations. The intent was obviously to influence these Congressmen to have views favorable to Greece, particularly on Greek-Turkish issues and Cyprus. As usual, I invited them to the Embassy and gave them a briefing—an absolutely standard briefing which I must have given hundreds of times. It was a very balanced briefing, giving the Greek point of view, but also the Turkish one, pointing out the differences and the points of contention, like Cyprus, and on Aegean issues. It was absolutely straightforward.

One of the Greek-American sponsors of the visit who attended my briefing returned to the States and told everyone in Washington that I was presenting both sides of the Greek-Turkish issues; he thought that the American Ambassador in Athens should only

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present the Greek point of view. His complaint was pushed up to higher levels and I got some queries about the briefing. When I explained what I had said, people in Washington understood exactly what I was doing and were satisfied. I heard nothing from the three Congressmen, who were much more interested in a balanced briefing than in propaganda. But that episode created a small problem for me because the one Greek-American thought my briefing was too balanced. After all, he and his fellow lobbyists had paid the Congressmen's way to Athens to hear the Greek point of view, not the Turkish or Cypriot one.

I gave a couple of informal briefings on the Hill while I was Ambassador. They were not formal committee hearings; they were open to any Member of Congress who might have been interested. I regularly called on some Congressmen and Senators, particularly people like Paul Sarbanes, who as a Greek-American is very interested in U.S.-Greek issues and whom I have known over the years. I did not testify formally.

I should mention that during my period as ambassador Cyprus was not a central issue. We were still living with the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish invasion and occupation. The Department has a Cyprus Coordinator who follows the Cyprus issue. During my time in Athens, that was Jim Wilkinson; now it is Nelson Ledsky; at earlier times it was Matt Nimetz and Richard Haas and Reg Bartholomew. The Coordinator would periodically visit Athens; since in my time he was also the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southern Europe, he had other business to conduct besides Cyprus. Today the Coordinator is only responsible for Cyprus; someone else handles other Southern European issues. Wilkinson would always visit Cyprus and Turkey as well on his trips. There were some conversations among the interested parties, but not much progress. Some observers thought, perhaps correctly, that the Administration had downgraded its interest in the Cyprus issue because it did not consider that much progress was possible. We did a good deal of reporting on Cyprus and occasionally we would send in a "think piece."

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The year before I arrived in Athens, the Embassy had recommended that we think “small” about Greek-Turkish relations; i.e., that we “cool” it and not be too active. A year later, we sent in a message which took the opposite point of view. We recommended that the U.S. become active on the various differences between Turkey and Greece; neither position was very appealing to Washington. With the beginning of the “Davos process,” which resulted from a meeting between Ozal of Turkey and Papandreou of Greece in Davos, Switzerland, things became more active, but not our involvement. The two leaders began a series of dialogues and exchanges of letters; they seemed to be talking to each other about Greek-Turkish issues, including Cyprus. We at that stage took a back seat, because we thought that the best way to reach solutions was to let that process percolate without our involvement. So we took a low key posture on Cyprus for the entire time I was in Athens. When George Vassiliou became President of Cyprus, there was a series of talks, by him with Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, which involved the U.N. mediation effort. There was a lot of activity, but not a great amount of work for the Embassy in Athens.

Q: Were there some difficult moments during your tour related to the Greek-Turkish tensions?

KEELEY: Yes, there were. It was almost constant. The relationship seemed to be deteriorating. That struck me particularly, because historically I could go back far enough to remember when Greek-Turkish relations were very good. I refer to the immediate post-World War II period. As I mentioned earlier, the Greeks at that time were more concerned about their Northern borders, not their Eastern. But by the mid-80s, the relationship had deteriorated as a result of Cyprus and other issues, such as the Aegean Sea. We became heavily engaged in the relationship when war between the two seemed possible, if not inevitable. That was in March 1987.

The tension at that time arose over a very dicey issue: the potential nationalization of the foreign petroleum exploration and production consortium in the northern Aegean Sea. The company that was doing the work was primarily Canadian owned, but also had

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two American investor partners and that made the problem of direct concern to us. This company had a concession near the island of Thasos. At a certain point in time, part of the concession was about to expire if the company didn't proceed to exploit it, and the company announced that it would begin to drill. The area of the concession was in dispute between Greece and Turkey, the continental shelf in that area. The Turks had threatened before that if there were to be any drilling that would be a cause for intervention to stop it. The history of the dispute and the concession is very complex. The Greek government threatened to nationalize the company to prevent the drilling.

We, by necessity, jumped in with both feet, trying to work out a compromise between the petroleum company and the Greek government. That intervention was eventually successful. I played a much greater role in that than anyone has realized because the Minister of Industry, Sakis Peponis, was a friend of mine from my previous tour in Greece and I kind of traded on that friendship (he was the official who had announced the potential nationalization of the company). We realized that the Greeks had arrived at that position because the company was about to act in ways contrary to Greek national interests and that might have started a war between the Turks and the Greeks. So the Greeks wanted to gain enough control over the company to enable them to make the final decision on where and when drilling would begin. From our point of view, the Greek action would have been expropriation, which had roused the ire of stockholders and may have provoked some U.S. sanctions.

After a lot of negotiations with the Minister, we agreed that the issue should be turned over to two mediators. Part of the problem, which went unspoken on my part, was that my friend, the Minister, did not get along at all with the Canadian company representative; they were just oil and water; they could barely speak to each other. So we hoped that if each could have a representative, that might make it easier to reach a resolution. The Greeks appointed George Koumandos, another old friend, who was a constitutional lawyer and a professor at the law school. He was also a friend of the Minister. The Canadian company chose Bill Vanden Heuvel, a former American Ambassador who had at one time

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headed our mission to the U.N. office in Geneva. He was a New York lawyer. The two mediators met numerous times. I sent Vanden Heuvel innumerable messages through the State Department. The negotiations took many, many months, but eventually they fashioned a compromise which settled the issue. Some additional shares were given to the Greek government; the company got its concession renewed.

But in the middle of all this, a terrible misunderstanding between the Greeks and the Turks arose. It was mostly the fault of John Kapsis, whom I mentioned earlier. As I have said, at one stage during this prolonged period, the company announced that it would begin drilling; the Greeks said "No;" the Turks threatened to take action. The Turks sent a ship carrying sonar equipment called the "Piri Reis" into the Aegean. In an earlier crisis they had used a ship named the "Sismik." The exploration was about to take place in the contested area. Within 48 hours, everyone was frantic; the Greeks put their military on alert and sent their planes to the islands. It looked like war was coming. I immediately engaged myself in the issue, under instructions from the Department, though I didn't need any instructions to do what I did. I raced around town; I talked to Kapsis; I talked to various Ministers; I talked to the Canadian Ambassador about what the company was doing; I even talked to the Turkish Ambassador.

All of that resulted in my being able to figure out that the tensions had arisen from a complete misunderstanding stemming from a meeting that had taken place between the Turkish Ambassador, Akiman, and Kapsis, the Deputy Foreign Minister. The Turkish Ambassador had reported to Ankara after the meeting that Kapsis had allegedly said that the Greeks would drill where and when they damn pleased and the Turks had nothing to say about it. This was understood in Ankara as a blatant threat by the Greek government to take unilateral action, which led the Turks to believe that the Greek government was ordering the Canadian-led consortium to drill. The facts, of course, were the exact opposite; the Greeks were ordering the company not to drill. But Kapsis, who was notoriously hot-tempered about Turkey (his family had fled from Asia Minor in the

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1922 debacle), was blustering and telling off the Turks via their Ambassador in Athens. So there was a complete misunderstanding about the true state of affairs.

At 3 a.m. I was awakened by a call from the State Department, telling me that war was imminent and that I should do something. Somehow, I got Kapsis on the phone; he was actually in his office at that hour. I had earlier reported to Washington what the Turkish Ambassador and Kapsis had separately told me. I told Kapsis, under instructions, what the Turkish Ambassador had reported to Ankara and explained that that was why the Turks were being aggressive. I pointed out that I thought that was not what Kapsis had probably meant to say and that therefore he should call the Turkish Ambassador and straighten things out. He did that and by 6 a.m. the misunderstanding was straightened out. We didn't get a lot of credit for our intervention, but it was a good illustration of the kind of matter you get involved in. Fortunately, Mr. Ozal, the Turkish President, then the Prime Minister, is a very level headed man. He certainly didn't want war; the Greeks considered him bellicose, but I thought he handled that situation very well. He happened to be in London at the time of this particular episode. We were able to contact him there and talk to him. He finally issued a statement on the critical evening that if the Greeks didn't drill, then the Turks would not need to take any action. That statement calmed the situation entirely. The Greeks called down their alert and the relationship returned to its normal level, hostile but at least peaceful.

That was the most critical moment during my tour. The rest of the time the Greek-Turkish relationship was marked by a lot of rhetoric, which seemed to get worse every month, until the "Davos process" started, at which time we really took a back seat.

Q: There was a USSR Ambassador in Athens while you were there. Did you have any relations with him?

KEELEY: They were reasonably good. The first one was a rather dour individual—not very outgoing—and rather hard-line. He was not very sympathetic. He was replaced in 1987 by

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Ambassador Anatoly Slusar, who was an entirely different person. He was a professional diplomat, out-going, spoke excellent English as well as several other languages. He had served a lot in Western Europe. His wife sang opera. They were very sociable and warm. We saw them quite a bit, usually at public occasions—national days and that kind of occasion. We didn't socialize much together, but we did have some mutual friends who would invite us together because I guess they liked the idea of playing the “middle man.” And we always got along well; he was a very easy going guy.

He topped me significantly one time, for which I give him a lot of credit. We were attending a ceremony in Salonika which was to celebrate a U.S.-USSR agreement on dismantling nuclear missiles. We both attended and gave speeches. There was a lot of ceremony. I didn't have anything from Washington to offer; he had great proclamations from Moscow that he read. But his coup de grace came when he handed out small pieces of aluminum from a Soviet missile that had been dismantled. Sort of souvenirs with inscriptions. He gave one piece to me and one to the host and then was handing them out to other guests; I had nothing to hand out. So he scored a real public relations coup. It was a smart move on the part of the Soviets.

Q: Tell us a little about the Communist Party in Greece. How would you characterize a Communist Party in a Western democratic country?

KEELEY: Greece has a complicated system. Originally they had two, or one might even say three, Communist parties. During my time, there were the KKE (the Communist Party of Greece) of the interior and of the exterior. The latter was the party dominated by Moscow; it took its orders from the USSR; it was part of the international communist conspiracy, if you will. It was an entirely outer directed party; it was probably the most conservative Communist party in Europe, the most Stalinist, run by people left over from the civil war which they had lost. They were very hard line, very doctrinaire Marxists-Leninists-Stalinists. It was curious that they had any support whatsoever, but in fact they had the support of 9 to 11 percent of the electorate whenever there were really

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free elections in Greece. There was one freak election in 1958 when the left in general, including the Communists, won about 25%, but that was a very peculiar situation. The electorate knew well what the Communists stood for; they would have taken Greece into the Communist orbit, like Bulgaria or Romania or East Germany. They were an illegal party until 1974; in the 1960s, during my first tour, they were a completely illegal, subversive, underground party. If you admitted to being a member, you were jailed. They had a front party, called the United Democratic Left, known as EDA (its Greek initials), and that was legitimate, which we characterized as a crypto-communist party because it was a front. Since its start, that party obtained much of its financial support from Moscow.

Then there was the communist party of the interior, led by Leonidas Kyrkos, a well respected lawyer, a leftist. The “interior” meant that it did not take orders from Moscow. The party was communist, but Greek—much more like the former Italian Communist Party or other communist parties not subservient to Moscow. These two communist parties competed with each other, but they were in agreement that their most hated enemy was Papandreou and the Socialists. That happens often, because all leftist parties are competing for the same votes. By the end of my tour, there emerged a new grouping which is known in shorthand as the “Synaspismos,” which means the Coalition of the Left and Progress (that is the literal translation of its name). That included everybody to the left of Papandreou's party, including the two communist parties. That is now splitting up. I can't believe that the “exterior” party has anything to say anymore; its sponsor has disappeared; the Communist empire has collapsed; what can these people now offer to the voters? I can't believe that they will ever get 10% of the vote again.

The other leftist parties may have a future, but they were very small to start with. I think there will be a reorganization and a re-emergence of the old United Democratic Left which will include communists, ex-communists, everybody to the left of the Socialists. Then Greece will have a three party system: the Conservatives (or Liberals, as they call themselves), the Socialists and the Left. The latter will not be that communist because without Moscow, there isn't much the communists can offer. Even the Eastern European

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Communist Parties are changing their names to Socialists or other strange names. So I don't know what appeal a Greek Communist Party would have. In the past, they have been a home for the protest vote, as is typical of many leftists in Europe; they also had a strong party structure, which went back to its beginnings in 1919. It was an underground party for many years, as I have mentioned, but it had organization and a social welfare element—it would look after people if they were widowed or became unemployed or if they needed help for health reasons. There are reasons to belong to a party of the left because it does look after its constituents. It might find you a place to live or work or give you a loan or get you on your financial feet. That develops strong loyalty.

That explains why the Cypriot Communist Party—AKEL—used to get 30% of the vote, for that reason; it was a highly organized, socialized party that looked after its constituents. In Greece, the two smaller communist parties didn't have the financial resources to run a social welfare system as the “outer directed” party did, and that is probably the main reason why they stayed small. The party members were ideologically leftist and saw some advantage to being called “communists” although at times they dropped the label entirely.

Q: Let me ask one final general question. This concerns political reporting. From your various experiences, do you have a “reporting” philosophy? What instructions did you give your staff on reporting in terms of what and when to report?

KEELEY: That is a difficult question. I am not sure that I have a philosophy of reporting. I tended to report whatever I thought to be significant that might be of interest to Washington, whether they were conversations with colleagues, politicians of the host country, anybody who had something interesting to say. A certain amount of reporting comes from published sources—from what you read in the press, etc. What you contribute yourself is what comes through personal contacts; I now refer to “spot” reporting, not analytical reporting.

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Every once in a while—and I must say that this has never been very well organized in my career—I began to think along certain lines, based on political or social patterns that I perceived were developing which were of interest to our relationships. Then I would try to put together the evidence for my perceptions, do an analysis of the significance of the developments, and submit it to Washington. That was a voluntary effort.

There are always a number of scheduled reports. I never got into the habit of doing an annual assessment, which some ambassadors do. I usually reported ad hoc whenever interesting things arose, unless there was a triggering event. For example, if the Secretary of State is going to visit your post, as he did, I would send in a number of messages outlining what meetings would be scheduled, what subjects would be discussed, what the other side wishes to achieve from the visit. In other words, I tried to help the people in Washington who were preparing the briefing book for the visitor. In cases such as this, I always wrote biographic sketches of the principal people the visitor would meet. I usually didn't like the product that came out of CIA or the State Department which would be included in the briefing book. I had certain insights of my own which I thought would be useful to the visitor, particularly when one had to deal with a complex character like Papandreou. I always hoped that the Department would take my comments and fit them into the briefing material.

Beyond that, there are certain periodic reporting requirements that have to be met. I did not take those on myself when I was Ambassador, but let the Political Section do at least the first draft. I generally reviewed most of the reports. That depended in part on how much confidence I had in my staff—the DCM, the Political Counselor—and the individual reporting officers. If I had a lot of confidence, I did not interject myself too much, unless I felt I had a contribution to make. If an ambassador lacks that confidence, then he or she is likely to do more of the reporting or to do a lot of heavy editing. I liked to see everything of significance that went out from my post, because my name was on the cable and I took

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a certain pride in the quality of the reporting, the writing, the analysis, from my post. I like material that is readable and to the point.

I used to issue some guidance to my staff on reporting, usually orally. These days the Department requires a reporting plan, which gives an ambassador an opportunity to get his staff together to discuss the special subjects that might be covered. The assignments are spread out through the year; we might believe that not enough had been done on the Greek military and its political orientation; we would then assign someone to have a first draft ready in March. We would run through various other possible topics and set up a schedule. If you are lucky, all your targets will be met. The reporting plan is sent to the Department, where it is sometimes amended by adding items the Department might be interested in and subtracting those matters which did not have any appeal. But a lot of the reporting of course is day-to-day and week-to-week because situations change; you can't always anticipate what will be timely and interesting.

Q: You just mentioned reporting on the military. Did you, at any of your posts, feel that the coverage of the military was inadequate?

KEELEY: I think it was inadequate in all the posts where I have served. We did not know enough about the inner workings of the military forces, either because it was difficult to find out, as it often is, given the closed nature of most military establishments, or because we had attaches who were active but not on the right subjects. They were not good at collecting information or intelligence of a politico-military nature, or in some cases we had no attaches. Then we had to rely on the political section, which had no means of penetrating the military. There are all sorts of explanations and reasons, but I never felt at any post at which I served that we had adequate understanding of the military. We should have had, because in many countries the military can take over the government. There are military coups all the time, particularly in the Third World. One may not need to worry about the British or the German military, but in most of the posts where I have served, the

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military is the potential next government, even if it is already a military one. There may be an internal coup or a palace coup.

So coverage of the military is important, but a difficult area to penetrate and to feel that you have an adequate grasp. I never found it personally very easy to penetrate the military. In most countries, the host government becomes very suspicious of you if you have close contacts with military people. It is not afraid that you are collecting information; it is concerned that you might be fomenting a coup or trying to inspire some kind of rebellion against it, even, as I said, if it is already a military government. It is a very sensitive area and I suspect you are better off relying on the CIA for information through their peripheral activities—cut outs, agents, secondary approaches. That is better than using an accredited diplomat known as such to the host government. It is not easy for such a diplomat to confront military officers and ask them leading questions.

Q: Thank you very much, Bob. This has been a most interesting oral history which contains a wealth of material. On behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, I want to thank you for all the time you have devoted to this history which I have found significant and most interesting.

End of interview