Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR EDWARD BRYNN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is April 28, 2000. This is an interview with Edward Brynn. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart

Kennedy. Ed, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

BRYNN: I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on August 1st, 1942.

Q: Can you tell me something about your father and his background?

BRYNN: My father was born in Pittsburgh as well. His father had come from Norway. His father was an engineer who was hired by Westinghouse and worked on updating locks to be placed in the Panama Canal, and then my father's father settled in Pittsburgh. My father went to grade school and high school in Pittsburgh, but his father had a very serious stroke and died while my father was in high school. My grandmother took my father, the youngest of the four children back to Norway. She was of German background and got along very poorly with the Norwegian family, so she returned to Pittsburgh and the United States with my father. For financial reasons he did not go to college and started working for an insurance company in Pittsburgh. He had a very good math-oriented mind and moved up fairly quickly. He met my mother, who was a secretary in the same insurance company in Pittsburgh. They were married in 1938. My father went through the war period in Pittsburgh. When inducted for service the doctors determined that he apparently had tuberculosis, and it was recommended that he leave Pittsburgh, which was at that time a difficult place...

Q: It was a smoky city.

BRYNN: ...quite different from today. So they moved to Vermont, which, of course, was a state with old-line insurance companies. My father began working for National Life, which is located in Montpelier, and remained there for his entire career. I was four years old in 1946 when they moved to Montpelier, and I stayed there until I went off to college.

Q: What's the background of your mother?

BRYNN: My mother is from Dunbar, Pennsylvania. I guess the closest connection to the Foreign Service is that George Marshall's father ran the coal mine in Dunbar and they lived in Uniontown a few miles, something, of course, which never crossed my mind as a kid. She came out of a large Irish Catholic family. Her father was a coal miner. She did not go to college either and, as I say, met my father while she was a secretary in Pittsburgh and moved to Vermont in 1946.

Q: In 1946, could you talk about growing up as a kid, first elementary, but also family life in Montpelier.

BRYNN: Well, Montpelier was and remains the smallest capital in the United States of and with 8,500 people. I turned out to be the oldest of six kids. We were all two years apart one from another within a month or so.

Q: A Catholic family?

BRYNN: A Catholic family. In fact, my mother's family was Catholic. My father was quite devoutly Lutheran, which was always a point of some tension in the family, until fairly late when, I suspect mainly to keep the peace, my father converted and became a Catholic.

Q: One knows where the power is.

BRYNN: Absolutely. Looking back on growing up in Montpelier, it was in many respects an ideal place, a clean town, a fairly white-collar town because of the presence of headquarters for a couple of insurance companies. Crime was almost unknown. I went to a small Catholic grade school and high school, I guess most distinguished by the fact that I was three years behind Pat Leahy, our Senator from Vermont. We went to the same grade school and high school together. It was a very Irish Catholic community on the Catholic side and in constant distinction with a very congregational Protestant Waspish community on the other side, but in fact the values were very much the same. Perhaps the only real challenge was the growth of a parallel Catholic community forged when large numbers of Québécois came south after World Wars I and II.

Q: Did Catholic kids go with Catholic kids, play with Catholic kids, and Protestant kids play with Protestants, or was it pretty mixed?

BRYNN: It was pretty mixed. We referred to the Protestants at 'publics' because they went to the public school and the public school was at the bottom of a hill. After a big wet snowstorm we could roll large snowballs down into their play yard and watch them run for the building. But actually, because of the size of the town, we all congregated around the swimming pool in the summer, where I ended up being a lifeguard. I don't recall there was much division between the groups religiously. There was however, a small group of "establishment" families who ran the community discreetly, and I must say, intelligently.

Q: What about family life? Did you gather around and discuss things at the table?

BRYNN: Yes. My parents were both keenly aware that they had not been able to go to a university. My father took upon himself the task of reading the Encyclopedia Britannica from fore to aft over a period of several years and never forgot anything in it. He tended to be a little bit of a bore from time to time in reminding us that we had our facts wrong. My mother's technique was somewhat different. This became more obvious when we were older. She insisted as we went off to college that we never part with any of our textbooks. We had to bring them home at the end of the semester. She would then read them during the next semester, and at the end of that semester when we of course had forgotten much of what we'd learned, she would then sit us down for an afternoon and query us as to what we had learned a semester past, one of the more gruesome experiences. But through this process she became extraordinarily well informed, although I can't say that either of my parents was particularly aware of the world outside the United States. They were avid newspaper readers and book readers, and I think they did this in part to help us.

My father was a staunch Republican of a moderate stripe, which is what you had to be in Vermont because unlike New Hampshire there's not much extremism in politics. My mother was a staunch Democrat at a time when the entire Democratic party statewide was very small. But I think both of them looked up their common hero to be FDR and there was always a lot of reverential talk about FDR. I don't recall after that there was much reverential talk about any politician, but FDR was sort of a lodestone for both of them.

Q: Okay, elementary school: Catholic, run by nuns?

BRYNN: Yes, absolutely, the Sisters of Mercy, which may have been a misnomer, very strict, at least it seemed at the time. Classes were enormously large. I think I had sometimes 60 or 70 kids in a class under the control of the nun. I think looking back on it that I received a very, very good education in the fundamentals. I was always a very good student. Hours were long. We started school about 7:45 and really didn't peel out of there until 4:30 or a quarter of five. We had an hour for lunch, so this was a long day. We knew nothing else and, therefore never rebelled.

Q: What about outside events? The Cold War was developing and all this.

BRYNN: The first memory I retain of the larger world was seeing the maps pasted on the window of this news store downtown found the movement of the war front on the Korean peninsula in 1950 to '52. I think I was aware of my parents talking about the Rosenburg trial, which might have been about 1949. (I also remember the Nuns showing us a graphic film about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was out of character for them to let us see such footage.)

Q: That's Alfred and Rosa.

BRYNN: The spy case. That I remember. The first thing I ingested was the McCarthy hearings, because Ralph Flanders, who was then the Senator from Vermont, was one of the first public figures to stand up and say, "Enough is enough with Joe McCarthy." Vermonters felt very proud of Flanders for having done that. I can remember that as the first event that sort of permeated the classroom at school. It was an interesting thing because we were aware of the fact that McCarthy was a Catholic and therefore there was some consternation that how could a Catholic behave like Joe McCarthy, and - there was no doubt about it - we were all on the side of Ralph Flanders.

Q: Was there a strong sense of being a Vermonter?

BRYNN: Absolutely, and that remains. My next oldest sister was born in Pittsburgh just before we moved to Vermont, but the next three were born in Vermont and the youngest one was born in Massachusetts. We moved to Massachusetts just for two years (1952 – 1954), and then went back to Montpelier. But my wife and I have a farm in Vermont, a farmhouse and a lot of land, and I feel a certain sense of fulfillment when the farm comes into view after the long drive north. I remain very strongly identified with Vermont. I

worked for Senator Leahy up on Capitol Hill. My youngest brother is a state forester in Vermont and is very active in environmental politics, and we get together often. I regard Vermont very much as my home.

Q: My wife was born elsewhere but her family comes from the Northeast Kingdom. He grandfather was the town doctor in Sheffield, which is just above Lyndonville.

BRYNN: I know the Vermont landscape quite intimately. In fact, I got to know a number of the small towns quite well because I had a friend in grade school whose father was determined to visit every post office in Vermont on day drive, and although John Murtagh, my friend, was keenly uninterested, I loved it, so I would go with his father on these weekend excursions to find every post office.

Q: You know, one always hears stories about nuns, particularly past generations, about rapping your knuckles with rulers and all this. How did you find the nuns' influence?

BRYNN: I have a positive view of it, but I supposed it was because I was sort of at the top of the intellectual food chain. I was naturally interested in books and in learning, and that was cultivated at home. In fact, the strongest overriding influence I have regarding school work was not a compulsion from the nuns but from my mother. My mother was one of those people who was never satisfied with the grades that you brought home. An A-minus should be an A, an A should be an A-plus, that type of thing, so I don't really from my education experience in the primary and high school level any negatives from the nuns. Looking back at it with my brothers and sisters, we laugh about it but we think we probably got pushed too hard on the home front, at least from my mother. My father served as a brake on her passion for learning. But the nuns, I look back with absolute astonishment at their level of dedication and their very high standards. As a result, I think even the kids at the bottom of my class came out with a pretty solid education.

Q: Well, this, of course, was that system, which has unfortunately dissipated tremendously. Talking about elementary school - and then we'll move over to high school - do you recall any books that were seminal, either a book or books?

BRYNN: My father had a series of books from his childhood which I think was under the title or the rubric *The Sons of Liberty*. These were stories of Nathaniel Hale and the like. I look back now and realize I became interested in biography almost from the very beginning. I think there was a subliminal feeling that reading too much fiction was a waste of time, and even to this day I think I'm scarred a bit by that. I had a paper route and after collecting the week's fees on Friday I went to the local stationery store and put one dollar on the counter for a Landmark book. I must have bought 100 of them. I went from there to reading a lot of Walter Scott's stuff, especially the stuff that focused on the hero side of things. That was probably my idea of good reading in grade school.

Q: Well then, talk about high school.

BRYNN: It was also Catholic. The school was, in retrospect, actually almost in its last

days because my class had only 26 in the graduating class. It really was too small to meet socializing standards, and we had a good public high school. In fact, Montpelier High School, which was our cross-town competitor, has, I think, been widely recognized as one of the better public high schools even in the United States. There was a big article in *Smithsonian* several years ago about this particular high school, and of course all those who would have been at my Catholic high school now were going to Montpelier High. The curriculum was unabashedly classic. You were expected to take four years of Latin, or if you were really vocationally oriented only two years of Latin, four years of a modern language, four years of math, four years of science, four years of English, four years of history, and four years of what they called social studies, more like Vermont history. There wasn't much of a sense of political science. At that time we had a very long day, and again the standards were pretty high.

Q: Again reading, there did you move to a different...?

BRYNN: I think I just became more interested in biography. I found in high school I came to the conclusion that English historians tended to write better biography than American historians, and I became very interested, first of all, in Churchill's history of the First World War and then the great six volume series on the Second World War. I read everything in this repertory I could lay my hands on. I really felt the adventure that he imparted in his writings. I think also shorter biographies - I remember some earlier books by Charles Trevelyan and I remember Blake's *Disraeli* when it just came out - that may have been when I was just starting college - which I still regard as one of the finest biographies that I've read. But again I was very focused on biography and increasingly focused on biographies that were written in and therefore often about Englishmen. I also became interested in Lord Acton, perhaps nudged in that direction by nuns persuaded that you could be Catholic and an intellectual.

Q: You were in high school from when to when?

BRYNN: From 1956 to 1960.

Q: Being in Montpelier, did politics intrude at all? Were you sort of sitting there watching Vermont politics?

BRYNN: I don't think that I was very much focused on politics. In my higher years of grade school, I had a paper route and I had to deliver the *Montpelier Evening Argus* to the Governor's office in the State House. So intimate was the state that on those days I got a chance to chat with the Governor for a few minutes. He might ask me something like, "What do you kids think about this and that?" (It was probably the highest access I ever had!) But I don't recall any big issues. I remember the debate over the interstate system. There was controversy with New Hampshire over who really owned the Connecticut River, and the beginning of the ski industry in Vermont, which was really beginning to sensitize some environmentalists about what was going on in the state. I was absolutely oblivious to race issues. I don't think I had seen an African American until I was about ready to go to college. It really an almost isolated and bucolic type of situation, with two

exceptions: I was very active in Scouts and I became an Eagle Scout, and I was chosen in 1958 - I believe is was '58 - to represent Region Number One (New England and Puerto Rico) of the Scout movement at the Annual Report to the Nation program, which took us to Washington then to New York for meetings with a number of people. Twelve Eagle Scouts were involved, and I was chosen by the other 11 Scouts to present the Tiffany bowl to President Eisenhower. That became a big Associated Press photo in many of the papers. I must have copies of that picture from 50 or 60 papers. That was really the eye opener for me, and it was in fact the thing that kindled my interest in going to Georgetown, being in Washington. I spent some time with Senator George Aiken. This was a three-week program, so for me this was an eruption coming out of...

Q: First time really out of...

BRYNN: Really out of it. I was also active in the Catholic Youth Organization. I went to a couple conferences, one, in Kansas City in 1957. But except for going to see my parents' families in the Pittsburgh area in the summers, which we did as a ritual, I probably saw very little of the country.

Q: What about Canada? You know, there you are in Quebec sitting up beyond Vermont, and all that?

BRYNN: We were conscious that Montreal was the nearest big town, and I went up there occasionally. The Catholic population of Montpelier that was not Irish was Québécois, and therefore we heard a lot of French in the street. In fact, after the Second World War many farmers came down from Quebec and bought the farms that had been owned by the Protestant families whose offspring were not sufficiently numerous to make it possible to milk the cows morning and evening. So in a sense we were aware, I think, growing up in Montpelier that there was a Canada up there.

Q: How about New Hampshire? Was that considered sort of an evil state?

BRYNN: It was and probably is. It's interesting. I have laughed about this many times. I think that, apart from Maine, I have been in New Hampshire less frequently than I have in 40 of other 48 states in the United States. There seems to be the psychological barrier for Vermonters concerning New Hampshire.

Q: While you were in high school - this was a small town, small high school - what were you thinking about doing?

BRYNN: I was thinking about going to college because my parents admitted no alternative, of course. I played basketball probably pretty awfully. I was a lifeguard at the swimming pool in summers and continued to do that after I started college, but I don't remember articulating in my own mind or to anybody else a career plan. One little anecdote, though, does come up. When we were graduating and we had high school senior night or something just before the graduation ceremony, a few days before, the principal of the school made it her custom - something we would never do today - to

predict what each of the students would become down the road. In my case, when we were walking down the aisle one by one, it was announced that I would become a diplomat. I didn't think much about it at the time. Frankly, I don't think there were too many people in my circle who knew what a diplomat was. But some years it came up in a conversation with my mother, and I said, "Where did the principal of the school ever get that idea?" and my mother said, "Oh, she came to me, and I told her that that's what I thought would happen." But when I went to Georgetown, which I did in the fall of 1960, I really had no thought of entering the Foreign Service. I went principally because there was a prospect of a part-time job with Senator Aiken up on the Hill. As it turned out, it never happened. I became very involved up on the campus at Georgetown and I never pursued the option (which was, in retrospect, a mistake). I went to Georgetown partly because of the prospect perhaps of having that type of employment, that type of exposure. Secondly, my mother was very insistent that I go to a Catholic school, so even though I applied to and got into some good non-Catholic schools, that was never really a possibility and, interestingly, I never pushed back against it. Thirdly, wisely my parents said they did not want me to go to school so close to home that I would be on the doorstep too often. So in the end it came down to going either to Notre Dame or to Georgetown, and to this day I don't know why I didn't go to Notre Dame because I did have a Navy ROTC scholarship if I went to Notre Dame, which would have financially been a very good thing. But I did not end up in West Bend.

Q: You were, I take it, in Georgetown from '60 to '64.

BRYNN: That's right.

Q: What was your impression of Georgetown and the big city of Washington when you got there in 1960?

BRYNN: Well, of course, I first was actually awestruck by the encounter with African Americans. There was a wonderful and wealthy Black from Jamaica on my floor in the dorm, and a number of Catholic fellows from the deep South. I spent some time in Georgia and Tennessee as a Freshman and Sophomore. Coming from a state like Vermont, this was akin to going abroad. I was terrified that I would flunk out. I think the first two years in particular I studied too hard. But I did get involved in the glee club with at the time Paul Hume, who established a certain reputation for having criticized Harry Truman's daughter, in her opera debut about 1950. He was a wonderful and colorful man, and I enjoyed the singing and the glee club experience. We visited many Jesuit schools around the United States and went to Puerto Rico. All of this was an expanding experience for me. And I was involved with the yearbook. Those were mostly my outside interests. I studied damned hard.

Q: During 1960 when you arrived there, it was in the middle of the campaign with Kennedy. How did that engage? One, he was a couple blocks away; two, he was a Catholic. Did that engage you at all?

BRYNN: It did. I'm not sure it would have engaged me except for the fact that I was

taking a political science course with Walter Giles, a professor at Georgetown who was very active, I think very active, in the Kennedy campaign on his own. He did not involve the students that way, but he did gear the course so that we followed the debates and the issues during the fall, and on the night of the election he invited the best students – about ten of us to come to his house on M Street in Georgetown, right in the neighborhood, to watch the election returns all the way though. Well, as you know, that was a night that went on and on and on and on, and it was early morning hours before we rolled onto the curb and headed back to the dorm. And the second part that I remember from that was that our glee club was involved in singing at one of the inaugural ceremonies, and the snowstorm was enormous and we all ended up walking from Constitution Hall, which I think is where we were singing, all the way back up to Georgetown during the night in the heavy snow. I didn't become at any point at Georgetown actively identified with Democratic Party politics. In fact, I didn't really think of myself as a Democrat, I suppose, probably because I had some association with George Aiken. I was fairly apolitical.

Q: How Catholic was Georgetown when you went there?

BRYNN: It was much less Catholic than I had anticipated. It was really in some respects a club of relatively rich Irish kids who had all sorts of upscale experiences that I had never had. As a Freshman, the Catholic community in my class was expected to go to chapel in Loyola Hall every morning. I think we followed the conventional piety of going to church on Sunday, but I didn't get the impression that it was as enveloping a Catholic experience as it was a pervasive upper-class Irish social experience. And for those of us in the School of Foreign Service the Catholic atmosphere was leavened by a strong Latin input.

Q: Was Father Healy...?

BRYNN: Father Healy, was he there or was he there after...?

Q: Walsh?

BRYNN: Walsh was gone.

Q: I was wondering because there was a certain point - I think it was Father Healy who sort of decided he was going to turn Georgetown into the equivalent of an Ivy League school, which it is today. Were you there when it was sort of more the nice, rich, Irish Catholic school?

BRYNN: I think that was the case when it arrived. It was probably beginning to make the turn when I left. I think that admission standards anyway went up fairly spectacularly after I left. I have always remarked to my kids that I probably couldn't get into Georgetown today.

Q: What about the courses? What were you taking?

BRYNN: In the Foreign Service School there was very little wiggle room. We had six solids every semester for the first three years, and if you wanted to take electives, you had to take them as overloads. The first two years I took the absolutely standard curriculum, which I guess included, history, economics, English, philosophy/religion - you were either taking one or the other - a foreign language, and political science. There were six solids and there were no electives. For the first two years I followed the standard curriculum absolutely to the mark. In my junior and senior years when I became more interested in history, I took two electives each semester on top of the six solids. In my junior and senior years, I had a very heavy course load, too heavy probably in retrospect. On the other hand, they were courses that I really enjoyed, and my junior and senior years my grade point average reached a peak.

Q: You went to the School of Foreign Service right away?

BRYNN: Yes.

Q: Was this your mother? If you go to the School of Foreign Service, you might think that you might do something Foreign Service-wise.

BRYNN: Yes. Oddly enough, I have no memory of thinking that I was going to end up in the Foreign Service. When I graduated from Georgetown, I did not take the Foreign Service exam, which was really quite strange at the time. When I was at Georgetown, I was in Air Force ROTC, so I knew that I had a commitment afterwards. That may have taken some of the edge off my memory about what I was going to do afterwards. But, interestingly, by the beginning of my senior year at Georgetown, although I knew I had the Air Force commitment and in every respect wanted to fulfill it, I was keen about the possibility of going on to grad school. I applied to the Air Force to see if I could get a delay - they called it a Category C delay - to go on to school, and I received one. I applied in the fall of 1963 for a Woodrow Wilson scholarship, and I got that, and I applied to schools. I applied to Harvard and Duke and Stanford, and at the end of the day I decided to go to Duke. I remember vividly putting the envelope in the mail down to Duke, because Duke had offered a very good scholarship. I put my acceptance in the mail at the post box in the mailroom in Old North, and I then went and opened up my box. In there was a telegram from David Potter at Stanford saying they hadn't heard from me and they wondered if I was going to respond positively to the invitation to come to Stanford. I had not heard from Stanford beyond notification of acceptance. Potter's message said: "Please call immediately," so I got on the phone and called collect - I had no money - and got David Potter, a very fine Southern historian. He said, "Well, Mr. Brynn, we've been waiting to hear what your response will be." I said, "I'm sorry. I never received any information. What is this?" I asked. He said, "We have a very fine National Defense Education scholarship and we have an extra stipend on top of that if you're interested in coming." It was extraordinarily generous, and on the spot I accepted it, and I sent a telegram down to Duke that said, "Please don't open the letter that I sent down to you." One reason that persuaded me to go to Stanford was that just the year before, in 1962, my father had accepted an invitation from his company to establish new life insurance offices

on the West Coast, so they had moved to Los Gatos. Except to go out and visit them, I had no experience on the West Coast and I just thought that would be a fun thing to do. So the result of it was I went to Stanford for four years and then went into the Air Force.

Q: Still a Georgetown, did the world of foreign affairs intrude? '60 to '64 was the period of sort of the American discovery of Africa and a lot of excitement and all that, and also it was, particularly the first three years, the period of the Kennedy appeal to youth and engagement in world affairs and all. Did that penetrate?

BRYNN: It penetrated a bit. Of course, with the Cuban Missile Crisis we felt we were sort of on the cusp of current events. I was a diligent, daily reader of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, but I was not involved with any campus organizations that were really focused on foreign politics. I was involved in the History Club. I found myself becoming more and more interested in reading diplomatic history. I can remember being struck by reading Kissinger's book on the Congress of Vienna, *The World Restored*. That's the way I reacted to being on the edge of foreign policy process in Washington. It tended to reinforce my desire to look at the historical aspects of it rather than become engaged in issues of the moment.

Q: Then at Stanford - let's talk about Stanford - there you were out on the West Coast. How did you find it?

BRYNN: I loved it from the very moment I got there. It was a fantastic school. My advisor, Dick Lyman, had me, as it turned out, as his last grad student before he became vice president and then almost immediately president of Stanford for 10 years and then president of the Rockefeller Foundation. I enjoyed the classes. I was majoring in British history. I met my wife in class, in the British history class. I found it almost a golden experience. I can think of almost nothing that was on the down side of it. It confirmed that history was what I really liked. And I didn't miss the buzz of Washington and the political and the diplomatic side of it all.

Q: Was it a different attitude, more laid back?

BRYNN: It was more laid back, partly because I think I made it more laid back. I think I finally had gotten over the hump about feeling terrified about coming from Vermont and being in the big time. I will say I thought that the education I received at Georgetown in the Foreign Service School prepared me better for Stanford than was the case of almost all of the perhaps 40 students that entered the history program at Stanford at the same time, and I think it was reflected in the fact that I was the first in my entering class to complete my Ph.D. work at Stanford.

Q: Why British history?

BRYNN: I think it was completely shaped by high school reading of biographies. I don't there was anything more to it. At Georgetown one class I took for extra credit was taught by an ancient and elegant Jesuit English to the core. I came from an Irish Catholic

background and the implicit anti-English attitude of my mother's family should have worked against my fascination with Britain and the Empire. It did not.

Q: What focus on British history did you take?

BRYNN: Well, when I got to the point where I had to look at a dissertation topic, a certain practical aspect intruded. I recall my advisor suggesting that I get a topic that you can get through, you can find the material that you need, that will offer evidence of original research but isn't so exotic that you're going to become mired down in it and we won't see you again for years. I had become very interested in British government in 19th century Ireland, not the ideological issues of home rule and peasant rights and land issues but the way some of the more archaic institutions, including the established church, the Anglican establishment, in Ireland was used to provide a civil government role. This became the basis of my dissertation.

Q: Did this mean trips to England?

BRYNN: The first time I went to England and Ireland was in the summer of 1964 when my parents gave me 1,000 bucks and said, "Go to Europe for the summer," and incredibly I could. But it wasn't really until 1967 when Jane and I, having married on April Fool's Day in '67, almost went immediately to Ireland and were there for the next year.

Q: How did Ireland strike you at that time?

BRYNN: Ireland in 1967 was at the end of a long inward period. The Republic of Ireland had in a sense withdrawn from the European community, partly to spite the Crown, partly to avoid larger catastrophe in World War III, partly to reinforce the sense of Catholicism in Ireland. In 1967 Ireland was very poor. On the streets along the banks of the Liffey and the like, kids went without shoes, an begged for coppers. My wife became the first female bank teller in Irish history, and she worked in a very small bank where women, although they worked in the banks, were never allowed to work directly with the customers. Jane's female associates were not married; they would stop work when the got married. Life for them in their 20s and early 30s was really dedicated to scrounging together enough money to be able to help their fiancé - often they were engaged for many years - to buy a little house with the firm prospect of remaining there into retirement. For lunch hey would bring sandwiches made of potato and mustard and things like that. There as little salad and no fruit in their diet. It was the end of a very, very severe era. Dublin was a very grey town. It had escaped some of the wholesale destruction of its finer Georgian houses because no one had the money to tear them down. The image of 1967 and '68 is vivid because, as we went back many times afterwards, the metamorphosis suddenly became extraordinary. In fact, in 1967 and '68 Ireland had already turned the corner and was beginning get its economy back in shape, but we couldn't see when we were there. On my stipend on my fellowship and on Jane's very modest salary, we lived comparatively very well.

Q: How about the Catholic Church? Did you feel a heavy hand there? Was it Vermont again?

BRYNN: It was much heavier than in Vermont because it was much more ideological and much more doctrinal, I guess. There was a pronounced big brother aspect to it, and my wife was quickly alienated by the demeanor and attitude of the Irish clerics. (End of tape)

-for Jane, who really felt that there was a big-brother aspect.

Q: She was Catholic?

BRYNN: She was Catholic, yes. I was never much interested, and am still not interested, in matters doctrinal. I found it was very interesting being a Catholic studying the established Anglican Church in Ireland and looking at their archives and then using that as a basis for looking at Irish Catholicism. I found it from a historical point of view an institutionally interesting phenomenon. There was no doubt about it that conventional piety was very strong among Irish Catholics. Everybody was in church on Sundays, and there was a very strong feeling that if you said a certain prayer and you went to confession...

Q: And ate fish, not meat.

BRYNN: ...the doors to salvation would be open. It was a very unhappy church, I think, at the time. I didn't realize as is now clear, that we were looking the end of an era where the clergy in the Catholic Church in Ireland had such enormous control over the population.

Q: Did you pick up sort of the intellectual level of the Catholic Church there?

BRYNN: Well, not very much, probably because - and this is something I probably should mention - in order to get access to the sources that I needed for my dissertation, which were largely in the hands of the small Anglican community in Ireland, euphemistically called 'the other five percent' by Catholics because they didn't want to use the word 'Protestant'. I followed up on a suggestion from my advisor at Stanford, who got in touch with an old-line historian at Trinity in Dublin, R. B. McDowell, and I asked him if he could introduce me to some of the people that I needed to get these materials, and he said yes and he said but as a favor would I register for a master's degrees in literature. It was only a small expense, 100 pounds I guess it was, so I did, and when I got to Trinity, McDowell was there to make the introduction to all the dowagers that I needed, who kept these papers under their beds and in chests in their old houses. So Jane and I became associated very much with the very small Anglican community in Ireland than Catholic community.

Q: What was your impression of the Anglican Church? Let's take it back when you were looking at it, a century before. Was it sort of a mirror image of the Catholic Church, or

did it have a different thrust?

BRYNN: Well, it had a different cast. Historically it is interesting that the gulf between Irish Catholics and Anglicans in Ireland was never as deep as it was between the Presbyterians (or Dissent) in Ireland and the Established Church. The sense of hierarchy and bishops and ceremony that you found in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Anglican Church conveyed a certain similarity to their behavior towards each other, and reinforced their apprehension about nonconformist Protestant Churches.

Q: And they also followed the litany.

BRYNN: That's very much the case. So that wasn't so much a problem. The impression you did get from looking at the Anglican Church (or the remnants of it) in rural Ireland was fascinating, evocative or Rose Macaulay's book on The Pleasure of Ruin: type of thing, the buildings in gentle disrepair with almost no congregations. On the other hand, there was a very indulgent attitude by the Irish government towards the Anglican Church in Ireland because they wanted to counter the impression that Ireland was searingly Catholic and that it was unable to hold its own in the larger European community. It was an antiquarian's delight meeting some of the Anglican families that had remained behind in Ireland, a bit like Paul Scott's wonderful novel about "staying on" in India. They were delighted that I was interested in their heritage, astonished that a Catholic would be, and maybe a bit suspicious. They were the type of people who had beautifully preserved records, much richer than the public sources in Ireland because, when Four Courts were burned in the civil war of 1922, most of the civil records of Ireland were lost. So we had a great time getting to know the old dowagers in their decayed estates. I moved very rapidly through my dissertation because I was able to get the material very quickly Jane and I spent a fair amount of time in rural Ireland. I really came away with a very affectionate impression of what the Anglican establishment had tried to do after, let's say, 1760 when antagonism towards Catholics and was replaced by a much more tolerant and augustine attitude in the Anglican community.

All of this reinforced by my experience in Trinity College. In 1967 Trinity was still emphatically an Anglican bastion left stranded as the empire receded. Most students were English disappointed at their failure to gain admission to Oxford and Trinity. Catholics were scare, because the reigning Catholic Archbishop of Dublin slapped a ban of excommunication on al Catholics who entered Trinity. I enjoyed the "Brideshead Revisited" atmosphere: dank and cold classrooms, eccentric scholars, prankminded students, and some brilliant lectures.

Q: Did you get any feeling about a brain drain and all that?

BRYNN: Young Irish men and women, incredibly bright and well educated, were leaving for Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States.

Q: You finished your dissertation in late '67, and came back?

BRYNN: I finished the dissertation in February '68. I sent it back to Stanford and got a telegram back from my advisor Dick Lyman saying that the changes would be minor, very minor. So Jane and I were back in Stanford at the end of March of '68, where I made final changes. I then reported in at the Air Force Academy on April 22, 1968, an assignment I landed (with war in Vietnam, Colorado Springs was indeed a choice assignment) through the good offices of the then and now famous German historian Gordon Craig. Craig was my minor field mentor at Stanford and had served as advisor to Alfred Hurley, Chair of the History Department at the Air Force Academy. A very nice fit!

Q: It was an interesting time. You were there '68 to '72?

BRYNN: Yes. Vietnam was increasingly a point of concern by the spring of 1968. I was not pilot qualified, which removed me from priority listing for Vietnam. More important for me was the perception that the service academies needed more officers on the faculty who were young and "relevant"; cadets complained that the faculty was out of touch. The computer run identified a dozen or more of us as ROTC graduates pursuing advanced degrees on category C delay plans. We all ended up at the Air Force Academy. Almost all the young officers were soon transferred elsewhere. Two of us survived, and we had known each other since a shared childhood in New England! Bill McCaron and I were considered "safe" on Vietnam.

Q: I take it, one, by being in Ireland for sort of the time when the agitation was tight on the campus. You were not as affected by you might say the anti-Vietnam virus?

BRYNN: That's correct. I simply didn't become engaged in the anti-war protest. I remember at Stanford, before I went off to Dublin, rising sentiment and serious agitation on campus. By the time I returned in April of 1968 Stanford's campus was convulsed by the war. I went to Vietnam in the summer of 1969 on a research program, but only for six weeks. But I must say I just never crossed the line into deep involvement with the war issue.

Q: How did you find intellectual level at the Air Force Academy, particularly when you arrived?

BRYNN: There were 38 officers in the department of History when I arrived. I was the only lieutenant. My preoccupation was saluting everything was moved. In fact, of the 430 officers on the faculty of the Academy there were only, I think, two lieutenants. So I was not so much focused on anything except, simply getting through that first year in particular without making a mockery of myself. But it turned out that since I arrived as a Ph.D. and since many members of the faculty held only MA degrees, I quickly became the head of the European Studies program. So my experience turned out to be very positive and challenging.

Q: You know, in talking to people - I've never been involved in one of the War Colleges - one of the things that I've gotten from people who have is they found Army officers and,

surprisingly, Marine Corps officers, in fact Marine Corps officers who reach toward the top, seem to have much more an awareness for the Foreign Service point of view, political elements and all, but that with both the Navy and Air Force, maybe because they're more technical in nature, it doesn't seem to stick as much. Did you see any reflection either from the students or from the staff of that?

BRYNN: I think that was probably true. In my one year on the faculty of the National War College before I retired, I was very impressed with the Marines. Again, the Air Force and a couple of Navy officers were probably the least aware of global issues. They were very sharp in all other areas, but there was a technical sense to their view of the world.

Q: The fact you weren't a flyer - I assume you weren't a flyer - did that have any...?

BRYNN: I had thought at Georgetown that I would be a flyer, and one of the things that surprised me when I took the navigation and pilot's aptitude test the spring of my senior year, It was not that I did not pass. I apparently confused my motor skills and directional skills and all of these things simply didn't put me in that category at that time. Interestingly, when I came on active duty in April of 1968 and reported in at Hamilton Air Force Base near San Francisco, either there had been a weakening of the standards or I had improved. They said, "Well, Lieutenant Brynn, are you interested in becoming a pilot?" But by then I was not interested.

Q: History there, what were you teaching?

BRYNN: In my first year I taught World History and I taught history of science, while waiting for the specialist to arrive. After the first year I taught medieval history and taught several other courses. By the fourth year I was heavily into administration.

Q: I'm familiar with the Naval Academy. I used to live in Annapolis, where you were assigned inches in a textbook and all that, a lot of recitation. How did you fit in?

BRYNN: The Air Force Academy tried to fashion itself on being a very modern model, probably because it was founded in 1954 and partly because it allowed cadets to major in areas far removed from their technical specialties.

Q: You said you went for a summer to Vietnam. What did you do there?

BRYNN: Well, I went as part of a group from the History Department to write the histories on special operations in Vietnam. I worked on five or six of them partly, digging up the material in boxes that lay in boxes in Saigon.

My impressions were vivid, but disjointed: the frenzied traffic; the illumination bombs at night' the intense social life at the O Club at night' the decayed but beautiful French colonial architecture (to be rediscovered a decade later in Mali). I traveled infrequently

and witnessed only one outright artillery exchange with the furtive enemy.

I came back from Vietnam partly exhilarated by the adventure and partly filled with foreboding. I remember having a sense of conversation with a fellow officer (from the Philosophy Department at the Air Force Academy) about ethical aspects of our war in Vietnam. He raised troubling questions. At the Academy itself there were quiet expressions of unease inside the faculty, but they were muted. Cadets manifested no signs of angst.

Jane and I remain very close to a half dozen officers and spouses from our Air Force Academy days. We now talk about our deeper concerns about Vietnam, but I suspect that we still do not want to revisit that period in great detail. We taught, graded exams, went home, played with our kids, cultivated our gardens, and read books. We kept the war at bay.

Q: What about European history? Did that include the Soviet Union?

BRYNN: The Soviet Union was taught separately from "Europe". We were in the middle of the Cold War.

Q: Well, during that time what about the Foreign Service?

BRYNN: It never even came up on the radar until in the summer of 1971 my wife and I began to look over the horizon. I had a very handsome offer from the head of the History Department to stay in the Air Force and go away for a few years and then come back, with the real prospect of being a tenured professor at the Air Force Academy. I would remain there the rest of my days and probably become head of the Department of History. We were tempted, but we thought, well, let's keep the options open. So I decided really on the spur of the moment to take the Foreign Service exam in the fall of 1971. I took the written part up in Denver - I remember that. When it came time to take the oral part, and I remember I had to finish up my class, hopped in the car, to drive up to Denver and talk to the board while in my Air Force uniform. When I got back to Colorado Springs, there was a telegram form the panel saying I had passed.

Q: Do you recall the interview?

BRYNN: Very, very well.

Q: Let's talk about it. How did it work?

BRYNN: I was told when I got in there that they'd been on the road for some time traveling to various cities in the West. Denver was the end of the line for them and I was at the end of the day of their last day and they would be heading back to Washington. They were very professional. I was asked a lot of conventional questions that seemed to be more geared to how do your handle yourself. I was given a hypothetical question about Africa, and I remember thinking to myself, well, this is strange because I'll never

go there. They asked me a few questions about how I handled myself as a professor at the Air Force Academy. I came away after the interview feeling it had gone well but there was no chance I was going to get the nod.

Q: Well, then what happened?

BRYNN: Well, Jane and I made the decision in really one of those seminal moments. We were tempted to stay in the Air Force, but it meant an absolutely predictable career. I must say, when there were tough times in the Foreign Service, sometimes I thought I had made the wrong decision. But we decided to take the plunge. I patched together the exit from the Academy at the end of May, May 31st.

Q: '72?

BRYNN: '72. I graded my exams, turned in the grades at the Registrar's Office at the Academy, drove to Denver, got on the plane, flew through the night, and I was at FSI the next morning-June 1st I believe.

Q: You went into the Foreign Service in '72. Talk about your A100, the basic officer course, sort of the composition and the atmosphere.

BRYNN: Well, let me see. How many of us were there? 25 or 30. Sean Donnelly, ambassador in Sri Lanka, was probably my closest companion in the class. Because I spent so little time in Washington over the years...

Q: I was noticing that.

BRYNN: ...I can't say that I remained fairly close to the crew. Most of us were about the same age, that is about 29 or 30, and we had a little bit of experience of some type or other under our belts after we finished college. I had the impression that we would all give the Foreign Service five years and then look around for a career outside. I looked at the list of places to go. I was very interested in going to Sri Lanka just because it was in an exotic part of the world. It did involve taking the Consular Course, followed by Area Training. Then I plunged into language training. My wife stayed up in New York at her parents' place on Long Island with our two young kids. Every Friday afternoon I drove to New York, spent the week-end, and returned to the Capitol Hill apartment I borrowed from my brother-in-law. During the evenings I worked on a book which was published several years later in Dublin.

Q: Had you asked for Sri Lanka/Ceylon?

BRYNN: It was Ceylon that I accepted; it was Sri Lanka by the time I arrived.

Q: In your class, beginning class, how about women and minorities?

BRYNN: I don't recall any African Americans in the class. We had, I would say, a half

dozen women. Otherwise it was very much white male. When we had our little graduation ceremony from the A100 course, we were held up as proof positive because more than half of our class came from west of the Delaware River! Our class was a vindication of the new effort at nationalization of the Foreign Service. I remember the story vividly, but I have no idea whether it was true.

Q: Well, of course, they play these games. I came in back in 1955 and I was part of what they called a massive invasion of Main Street into the Foreign Service, and I had a residence in California at the time. I hadn't lived there in 15 years or so, I'd been in college and in the Air Force, but had a California address. This is something they go through to try to show that they're representative of the entire U.S.

You took Sinhalese. How long would that be?

BRYNN: I think we started in late summer, and I know I took the exam a week before Christmas. I did not find it an easy experience, and I did suspect that my proficiency level of 2-2 given to me was probably given to me more than earned on effort than acumen. The experience was exotic. To approximate "immersion" we spent one day each week in a viyhara on 16th Street. At any rate, the investment was suspect. In Colombo nearly everyone spoke English fluently, and they wanted insure that we knew this!

Q: When you went out what sort of preparation did you make? What were your interests?

BRYNN: I was excited about Sri Lanka. The A-11 preparations were informative, and I had encountered a fair amount of historical material concerning Ceylon during my studies at Stanford and in Ireland. We were given what I recall was a superb reading list.

Q: Sri Lanka doesn't come up much. It would come up in the news only when the ambassador designated didn't know the name of Bandaranaike or something.

BRYNN: I remember the story as part of the Foreign Service folklore. In Sri Lanka I encountered some daunting names, and remember clearly the moment of enlightenment when I realized that the most formidable Sinhala names were composed of polysyllables that could be combined in all sorts of ways.

Q: When you arrived there, who was the ambassador and what were you doing?

BRYNN: Christopher Van Hollen was there and remained the ambassador for the duration. He had arrived, I think, only six months earlier. The Deputy Chief of Mission was Patricia Byrne. The head of the political section was H. G. Wing. I arrived to be the junior political officer in a three-officer section. I was there only a few weeks, starting in late January of 1973, when the economic officer informed the ambassador that, having decided to get a divorce, he was disenchanted with life in the Foreign Service, and had accepted a good job offer in the U.S. His resignation was accepted, and he left very, very quickly. Ambassador Von Hollen calling me and he said, "Mr. Brynn, have you ever studied economics?" Well, at Georgetown I did because that was part of the curriculum.

"Excellent. You're now the econ officer. I then moved into that portfolio. It was a great deal of fun. I remained in that position for two years until Al Thibault, a very good friend of mine, a political labor officer, left and I was moved into his slot.

Q: How did Ambassador Van Hollen operate?

BRYNN: He was a supremely professional career officer, focused on his work and in touch with the troops. (End of tape)

I became interested in Ceylon's academic community at the University at Peradenija partly with the encouragement of Ambassador Van Hollen so that I could get some interfacing with members of the academic community up there, many of whom were very far to the left and who were driving Mrs. Bandaranaike down the primrose path. My contacts were genuinely Laskeyite. They were genuinely convinced that the appropriation of private resources into the public domain was really the only way to go. They were intellectually respectable people and well educated, and they were not malign in their attitude, but they were really right out of the London School.

Q: Why did this take so well, throughout Africa and the Subcontinent and all that?

BRYNN: I think it took especially well in India and Sri Lanka because it was the modern pushback against a caste scene. Oddly enough, of course, many of the people who were the most articulate spokesmen of the Laskeyite system were at the very top of the caste system, but that was the syndrome that always seemed to prevail. And it was also a way to attack the commercial community that was largely Tamil. Under the cover of socializing property, putting property into the public weal, you could attack an entrepreneurial class which had gained enormous power.

Q: During this time was the Tamil community sort of a self-enclosed one, or were they getting feed-down from India?

BRYNN: No, very much self enclosed. They, in fact, did not relate at all to the Tamil community from south India because those Tamils had come across as estate workers and formed a class so apart from the Ceylonese Tamils as to be not identified with the other at all.

Q: How about your contacts? Were we working both sides of the aisle on this particular situation?

BRYNN: I think we were. As it turned out, I think I was working the opposition side of the aisle better or more frequently than perhaps other people in the embassy. It happened partly because I was doing the economic agenda. That meant that my entree into the Tamil community was larger, partly by an accident - I think Jane's friends tended to be more from that side - and partly, I think, because I was interested in history and I tended to spend a lot of my free time talking to some of the older class of people, both Tamils and Sinhalese, who were at least mildly regretful that the British had left.

Q: What was your impression of the British rule during the colonial time?

BRYNN: I developed a quite positive attitude. I know that there was certain aloofness on the part of the British, which is part of the way of ruling the vast masses in South Asia with a very small number of people. But I think that the judicial system, the relative sense of fair play, and a very high standard of public probity by British officials was appreciated, all the more so because it was lost by the time we arrived in 1972. I think that many, maybe most, citizens of Sri Lanka, Tamils and Sinhalese, alike have a fairly affectionate and positive view of British rule.

Q: What were you getting from political contacts of both classes about India at that time?

BRYNN: Active, very interesting, very little. There was a subliminal feel that India would absorb Sri Lanka. Every cocktail party or every conversation that you had always featured the phrase "India's population growth in a year is the same as the entire population of Sri Lanka" - 16,000,000, I think, was the number at the time - and a feeling that at the end of the day this would pose a serious challenge to Sri Lanka. Interesting, there was an interpretation of India as a monolith largely orchestrated by the Tamils, because, of course, they were looking across at south India, that India carried a great deal of weight, and for this reason, even though the Bandaranaike government had many, many sharp-elbow contacts with the British, Sri Lanka was a very firm supporter of the Commonwealth idea and remained so because it provided some sort of a protection from its big neighbor.

Q: This was the - what do they call it; there was Tito, Nehru, and Nasser and all that - the Nonaligned Movement. Was Madam Bandaranaike in that?

BRYNN: Yes, she was absolutely in it, and she and Indira Gandhi, they were the women contingent of this crew. Oh, yes, Madam Bandaranaike played, and thought she played, a very prominent role in the Third World Nonalignment Movement. I think the resources of Sri Lanka were not so great as she had thought. But she traveled extensively and felt herself very much the carrier of the flame for the Nonaligned Movement.

Q: What were you getting from the ambassador and others, and your own feeling about Madam Bandaranaike?

BRYNN: I think Ambassador Van Hollen fairly early on, even before I got there, had something of a rude awakening when I think he was assured on some point of importance to us that the government of Ceylon would be supportive on a UN issue of importance to us. Mrs. B. (as she was called) violated her assurances to Van Hollen. I think that made him much more cautious. He was more cautious and less accepting of Madam Bandaranaike by the time I arrived. But he was extraordinarily even handed. He cautioned the young troopers like me not to feel that we would find any higher level of veracity in our contacts on the other side of the political blanket. We should really make sure we checked every point several places and put it into a larger context.

Q: I gather the United States didn't play a medium-sized role. In many other places the United States plays a pretty big role.

BRYNN: We were probably, of course, quite deferential to the British in that respect. We were interested in the possible use of Trincomalee the great harbor on Ceylon's northeast coast, by the Russians.

Q: That was the big port there.

BRYNN: That was the big port on the other side of the island. We were more wary of India than we were of Sri Lanka, and therefore our relationship in Sri Lanka was correct and even friendly but our expectations were rather low. Our economic investment levels were very low. We bought a lot of tea, but the tea was bought through London brokers, and our economic profile in Sri Lanka was modest.

Q: Was there a feeling - I won't say of rivalry; they were kind of on the other side - with our embassy in New Delhi?

BRYNN: Interestingly, this didn't come up in my consciousness very much, maybe because I was at the bottom of the totem pole. It came into focus only once and it did in a rather unusual way. At the very end of his tenure as Ambassador in New Delhi, Moynihan came down to spend a few days in Sri Lanka. When he came down - and he came down on the spur of the moment - Ambassador Von Hollen was away, and for the first and only time that I can remember, Patricia Byrne (the DCM) was ill. She was in the local hospital. I believe it was late 1974. But anyway, it fell to Jane and to me to put on a big party for Moynihan, which we did. The next morning we talked a little bit about the relationship between the embassies in New Delhi and in Colombo. I drove him around Colombo in my little mini-Minor. In fact, we drove around back in those days with not much attention to security; we just went down the street. He confessed that he was quite astonished that there was a Sri Lanka. It really just hadn't come onto his radar screen. He was quite open in saying, "I wish I had been more focused on what was going on down there."

Q: How about economically? Was India seen by the merchants and people you were dealing with as the colossus to the north?

BRYNN: No, it wasn't, and, in fact, I think the trade flows were still very much more in old imperial patterns. Much of what we regarded as state-of-the-art stuff all the way down to toilet bowls and sinks still came out of England. But the Sri Lankan economy had declined to the point where imports were almost non-existent.

Q: This was because of the trade policy?

BRYNN: That's right. Well, the coffers were bare, and Mrs. Bandaranaike was so keen on protecting start-up local industries, especially those that were now in the hands of the

Sinhalese as opposed to the Tamils, that it was pretty hard to find imported goods.

Q: Was there such a thing as the politics of tea, because there are in some commodities?

BRYNN: All that we knew was that there were representatives of a couple of the big American companies like McCormick who were in Sri Lanka to look at tea production and to monitor tea tasting, but I don't recall any big tea transactions.

Q: It's not like coffee and some commodities where it gets very political?

BRYNN: No, it was not. Of course, tea wasn't high on our radar screen as an American imports as coffee would have been. I just don't recall. I do remember going with representatives from some of the American tea importers to check on production and what was coming down the pike in terms of the quality of the tea.

Q: Who were the tea pickers?

BRYNN: They were Tamils from south India brought over by the British in the 1880s. Until then Ceylon had been a major coffee producer. Suddenly disease wiped out the coffee plantations within the space of two or three years, and they were replaced immediately by tea plantings which came down from the lower slopes of the Himalayas. They were planted in the upper slopes of the mountains in Ceylon up about 5,000 feet in particular, and within a period of five years Ceylon became a major tea exporter and the coffee crop had been entirely destroyed. When I was there, coffee was making a very modest comeback; I don't know what has happened since.

Q: You mentioned when we were talking about Moynihan that there was another incident you wanted to talk about.

BRYNN: Yes. It revolved around my appearance before Threshold Board. I was dispatched over to Bangkok to meet with the Board in the winter of 1974-5.

Q: You might explain what the Threshold Board was.

BRYNN: I don't know what the system is now, but at that time before you could get tenure in the Foreign Service, you actually met a board and the board was under an injunction to tell you where you ranked in performance to date relative to your peers, find out whether you actually had a strong career commitment to remain in the Foreign Service. Their findings were to be included in recommendation for tenure. I went over to Bangkok to meet the Board, and in the course of the conversation the head of the Board, whose name I do not remember, said, "Well, Mr. Brynn, on the basis of your performance to date, we would put you in the top 10 percent of your peers. But we are strongly persuaded that, because you had a career in the Air Force and you have a Ph.D. and that you are working on a second Ph.D.," (which was true,) "we suspect that in relatively short order you will make a decision not to remain in the Foreign Service, and on that basis we think we should knock you out of the top 10 percent and put you down

into the top 25 percent." When I got back to Colombo, I received a letter to that effect. I replied to the chair that the Board's observation was a self-fulfilling prophecy; if you really wanted me to think seriously about getting out of the Foreign Service, dropping me down in the ranking because I have these options on the outside was an effective way to reinforce it. Well, Moynihan arrived on the scene. He had scene just a couple days after I had received the notification and that I had replied. The ambassador, of course, was no stranger to festive evenings, and at the end of the evening - I had invited, in fact scrambled for, people to come to the house on very short notice for the dinner for Moynihan. A colleague at the Canadian High Commission was there - he has remained a very good friend of ours - and I apparently was telling him maybe not in an entirely *sotto voce* voice what had happened. The next morning when I went to pick up Ambassador Moynihan at our ambassador' residence, Moynihan said, "Mr. Brynn, what is the story you were saying last night to your Canadian colleague about a self-fulfilling prophecy? Tell me about it." I went through it, and he was understandably quite unaware what this whole process was about. He said, "Well, I find it absolutely unacceptable. Do you mind if I write a letter to Ambassador Davis," Nathaniel Davis, who was, I guess, the Director General at the time, "expressing my indignation." I said, "Well, that's all right." I didn't, of course, expect that he would send that letter. Moynihan then left for New Delhi a day or two later. In fact, while we were sitting there chatting that morning he got a news flash or something from the United States saying that William Saxby had been nominated as his successor as ambassador to India. I recall Moynihan saying that this was "absolutely unacceptable".

Q: His Attorney General.

BRYNN: Anyway, Moynihan went back to Delhi, and he was only there a few weeks before he terminated his stay and headed back to the States. But in the next week's packet there came a letter, a thank-you letter for Jane for hosting the two events at our house, and then there was another envelope addressed to me. I opened it up, and it said, "Dear Ed, I hope that you will find the letter that I sent to Ambassador Davis, a copy of which is enclosed, a full expression of my sentiments regarding this matter." I looked at the letter; it started, "Dear Ambassador Davis, you would not want it thought that," and it went on with two pages of praising my academic interests, stressing their relevance to the Foreign Service, and expressing his indignation with the Board's conclusion. Jane looked at the letter and said, "Well, Edward, I honestly believe this is the end of your career." I didn't know what to say, so I said nothing. A few weeks later I got a letter from Al Thibault, who had gone back to be the Ceylon desk officer in NEA, and he said, "Dear Ed, you may or may not be aware that Ambassador Moynihan has sent a letter of certain vigor to Ambassador Davis. Ambassador Davis gave the letter to the head of your Tenure Board in Bangkok and asked him to prepare a response. The gentleman prepared a number of drafts for Ambassador Davis, all of which Ambassador Davis rejected. The Ambassador has himself replied to Ambassador Moynihan's letter. I recommend that you drop this issue." Well, a few weeks later I got notification that I had gotten tenure, and on I went. I cherish my letter from Moynihan.

Q: Oh, yes. You were saying the political situation was extremely complicated: family,

clan, I suppose, social class, and everything else?

BRYNN: It was a microcosm of all types of third and first world countries. We had a country where the literacy rate was higher than that of the United States. We had an extraordinarily active press with many papers suspended for 24 hours at a time but no long shutdown. We had a large percentage of the upper class had been educated in England. I think there were more officer Ph.D.s in any given Sinhalese ministry than there were in Britain at that time. Ceylon has supplied more presidents of the Oxford Union than any country outside the United Kingdom. On the other hand, you had a very decaying and very weak economic infrastructure, increasing evidence of serious poverty and overcrowding in places like Colombo, a certain fatalism which perhaps you get in South Asia about whether anything could be done, and ominous threats about terrorism. We always thought that Sri Lankans were rather cowardly as individuals when it came to making a statement. When you got them in a mob, however all hell could break loose and they could really defy public order. I think the younger, more junior officers in the embassy found monitoring developments in Sri Lanka an adventure on a day-to-day basis without, I think, having an overarching view about the tragic road Sri Lanka had chosen. I guess that's part of the syndrome of being a junior officer.

Q: What about the Soviets? What was their presence like at that time?

BRYNN: Their presence was large on the ground, and I must say I had very little to do with it because I think we were expecting our friends across the river to take more of an interest there. They made a lot of visits, the military; a lot of ships came to Sri Lanka. On the other hand, my firm understanding was that they didn't feel that they were very well plugged in. Other than the fact Soviets posed as anti-imperialists, Sri Lankans simply didn't like them, and therefore I didn't get a sense that the Soviets were much welcomed.

Q: You were there during the Watergate period. How did that play?

BRYNN: Well, that was interesting. We were really at the end of the era where you didn't get the news in a very timely fashion. The State Department was being fairly brave about trying to send out some daily bulletins on this thing, but we waited avidly for the *Herald Tribune* to arrive, which would be mostly a week later. We followed this newspaper intensely. This is the very first time I can remember where I really became very focused on contemporary political developments. I found it an absolutely fascinating exercise. I know up in Vermont I have box which had the clippings of hundred of issues of the *Herald Tribune*. I also kept all of Herblock's cartoons from that period, pasted them into a book and gave it to Jane as a birthday present. The Ceylonese were very interested. They're very litigiously oriented and they have a very fine mind. Watergate became a dominating point of conversation. In fact, it was very distracting; it was hard to do any other business.

Q: How did you feel about the whole thing?

BRYNN: I felt that Nixon was a crook. I became very strongly anti-Nixon. I think this is

the moment where I moved more ideologically into the Democratic camp. As I say, I don't have a strong set of political bones in my body, but I felt that Watergate vindicated two things: one, that you can fool a large percentage of the American public much of the time; and, two, it brought home to me the virtues of a parliamentary system where you could divide political responsibility from the formal aspect of government. We found it so hard to get rid of Nixon, because we reverenced the Presidency. Yet at the same time our destination with Nixon the politician was enormous.

Q: Obviously it wouldn't be at your level, but you were at a small enough embassy. Did you have the feeling that Sri Lanka was not on anybody's radar in Washington, particularly Henry Kissinger?

BRYNN: No, we always thought that our reporting - that's the wonderful thing about being a junior officer, you think that what you were writing to Washington and spending so much on commanded an interested audience back home – and that supported my belief and, I must say, Van Hollen and Pat Byrne were really masters of the cable - that what we sent to Washington was important. I'm glad that we felt that way, because that's what kept us going and provided a lot of energy. (Nothing is so dispiriting serving as a desk officer and finding out how little attention was paid to most of our lapidary prose. That's why I always tell younger officers, "Don't be a desk officer first. Get out in the field and have a great time when you think you've got an audience in Washington." We thought that we were at the center of the world in our own little embassy, but of course we weren't. I think probably Van Hollen and Pat Byrne were right in not disabusing us of that notion; maybe they were persuaded that Sri Lanka counted for more than it did.)

Q: When you were there, were there from our embassy level there any serious issues that came up?

BRYNN: We were mobilized on one occasion - I do remember this. A group of Japanese terrorists had seized a plane either in Japan or in Singapore and were programming to fly via Colombo with hostages toward the Middle East or Western Europe. That's the first time I ever heard the word 'flash message'. We got 13 of them from Kissinger in one period of five or six hours. I was sent to the airport to work with the Sinhalese in security procedures and authorities so that when the plane landed the whole airport was to be cleared for the plane to be refueled. I don't recall that there were any Americans on the plane, but I remember getting to the airport, getting up into the airport tower. All of a sudden there was a general power failure, all the lights went out at the airport at the moment the plane was scheduled to land. I was convinced that terrorists would conclude that Sri Lanka's authorities were ready to assault the plane. Well, as it turned out, even though we were getting flash messages from Kissinger giving us point-by-point instructions, nobody had told us that in effect the plane had never left the runway at its previous point. I remember quite vividly that brief shining moment when we were on the Washington radar screen.

Q: What about the split-off of Bangladesh from Pakistan? That was on your watch, wasn't it?

BRYNN: It was on the watch. I didn't focus on it too much at the time, but I do remember Chris Van Hollen being very upset about it, I think probably because he had had previous tours in South Asia and felt that - I don't mean to speak for him, but my impression- the policy had gone the wrong way. But at my level really I don't recall having any strange feelings of my own.

Q: Did the American recognition of China, or reopening relations with China, have any effects in Ceylon, or was it just interesting?

BRYNN: It had an effect in that it gave at least a temporary lift to our credibility with the Bandaranaike government. We had walked away a certain distance from the old John Foster Dulles syndrome of containing the Communist behemoth. By recognizing we had demonstrated that we were moving into a reality-check phase, and they thought that was a pretty good thing.

Q: Is there anything else we should discuss there?

BRYNN: I don't think so. I think the only thing I recall that I was most proud about or happy about was doing some cables to Washington on poverty. The subject had nothing to do with politics but I do remember getting some accolades from people back in the Department of Navy who had quite enough all of the political reporting we were feeding them. I was very briefly, for reasons that are absolutely bureaucratic, the acting AID Director. I went out to look at some of our programs, and I came back feeling that we were really missing the boat. I wrote a couple cables, and at the end of the day, for my three years or two and a half years in Sri Lanka, I think they stood out as some of my best work.

Q: What were we doing aid wise?

BRYNN: We were at the end of the great-project era, building great roads into the jungle and building a large dam. When I was in Sri Lanka, I we were reaching the moment when we realized that these great projects, were probably very beneficial to some large American construction firm, were perhaps insensitive to environmental concerns and were putting an awful lot of money into infrastructure projects that were not terribly useful to the country. Ironically, of course, we then switched in the Carter period to helping the poorest of the poor where you had American technicians earning 100,000 dollars a year working with one peasant tomato grower, and that was worse. I swung back to the belief that if we're going to be involved in aid programs - it turned out, of course, by then I was in Africa - perhaps infrastructure was what we should be involved in.

Q: Anybody else doing things there?

BRYNN: The Chinese were building public buildings for legislators. The British had a number of smaller projects too, but I think the projects that I remember the most were

Japanese. They were deeply involved, I believe, with the Mahaweli Dam project, boring a huge hole through the mountain using Yugoslav construction firms. The project was quite fascinating, and I spent a fair amount of time going to mountains to inspect the tunnel. At considerable cost to the environment this rearrangement of the great central river system in Sri Lanka and to an enormous increase in rice production, coupled as it was - something that we did not get much credit for - the sharp increase in the productivity of rice itself coming out of the IRI laboratories in the Philippines.

And that, more than anything else, that we had a hand in, transformed Sri Lanka by enormously increasing food production within 10 years of my departure.

Q: Well then, let's move on. In '75 you left.

BRYNN: This is where personal considerations intrude. Jane and I arrived in Sri Lanka at the end of January of very beginning of February in 1973. On April 16 of that year we got during the course of the day a number of phone calls from the United States, but none of them remained connected. It turned out it was Jane's father calling to say that there had been a tragedy in the family. It turned out finally when they got the line through (Jane was the second oldest of eight children from a very prominent New York Irish family) the oldest sister and the oldest of the eight had been killed by her husband in what turned out in the *New York Times* to be a very prominent society murder. They had two children. Jane left immediately for New York. Everything went into a sort of semi-shock situation. At the end of the day - we had two children aged four and two - we ended up being awarded their two children that were seven and four. Thus after being in Sri Lanka for a very short period of time, our own life situation had changed enormously. The legal considerations were very interesting. The family on the other side - because the trial hadn't taken place so there could be no presumption of guilt - the family on the other side fought with its phalanx of lawyers against our getting the children. They used as their argument that since we were not in the United States we would not be subject to the Children's Court of the State of New York for the enforcement of the children's rights. Chris Van Hollen took the lead in going back to explain to the authorities in New York that we are in a diplomatic immunity situation, the laws of New York would carry the same weight as they would had we been in New York City. He was really magnificent. He did all this plus on the basis of our having been in Sri Lanka only a few weeks. In some respects it was the very highest point in our Foreign Service career to have people weigh in like that. Jane returned to New York for the funeral. Then Jane had to go back for custody hearings, and then I had to go back for custody hearings and to be interviewed. The other two children had not yet come out. We had a whole six months when we were on planes back and forth, and everybody in the community in Colombo gathered around and helped take care of our kids. Fortunately we also had the household staff. At the end of the day we ended up with four kids instead of two.

A year followed in which events in New York governed our lives in Sri Lanka. In the spring of 1975 it was pretty much certain I would become a desk officer in NEA/SA. I was strongly urged to do so, but I got a call from the head of the history department at the

Air Force Academy asking if I would be interested in going back to the Academy both to serve as a Foreign Service Officer on the staff and also to be a member of a committee that was looking at radical curriculum changes at the Academy in the wake of another and very severe cheating scandal. (End of tape)

One of the two children of Jane's sister was suffering problems in the wake of the murder. Jane knew some people in Colorado Springs who would be helpful with the child. So pretty much on the spur of the moment we decided to take that tour. Everyone in Foreign Service circles said, "It's the end of your career. First of all, you'll probably not stay in the Foreign Service; and, secondly, it's a severe setback in terms of career advancement to do this." But I think almost everybody who knew us well agreed that this was what we really should do. So in the summer of the 1975 we found ourselves ironically back in Colorado Springs. We had sold our little house in 1972 and therefore purchased a larger one. I found myself being back on the faculty in a more August status, I must say, and working on this committee and teaching and also teaching in the Political Science Department for three years.

Q: To continue this thing, how did the counseling and settlement..., obviously a very difficult thing?

BRYNN: The husband was convicted after a very difficult trial, convicted not of premeditated murder but of manslaughter. I think there was a feeling that there was an element of anger in there. But we were given custody of the children, and they came out with Jane's parents at the beginning of 1974, which was 10 months after this thing happened. And they've been our kids every since. Of course, they're all grown up and off and doing very well. And it turned out that going back to the Air Force Academy was the right thing to do.

Q: The sort of almost endemic cheating scandals, which are not unique to the Air Force Academy but to the Naval Academy and to West Point too, from your perspective looking at the ones at the Air Force Academy, what was the cause?

BRYNN: I think there were two reasons. One was the nature of the testing itself. If all testing, even in the humanities, was going to be based almost entirely on true-false, multiple-choice type things, it just offers a temptation for cheating which I think is in a procedural way too great. Secondly - and this is something which I think the Air Force Academy realized - with the course load the kids were exhausted. They had an enormous physical program every day, and yet they were trying to take a college curriculum which was as demanding at least in content and in number of credits as you get at a first-class institution. I think making a few changes meant that down the road really they were able to reduce the large-scale cheating problems.

Q: Did it mean an increase in writing skills?

BRYNN: Yes, and also the professors and faculty had to spend more time reading essays and judging essay and commenting on essays. On the other hand, it reduced the teaching

load of the faculty as well so that they could do this.

Q: This would be '75 to '78. Did you find yourself teaching foreign policy at that time?

BRYNN: I team taught courses on area studies with members of the Department of Political Science and Economics, but I did not teach foreign policy. One reason, of course, was that they had a Foreign Service Officer who was at the Academy, and this sort of fell into his bailiwick. I was there sort of in an extraordinary situation, so I didn't teach foreign policy. I in fact got more immersed in history. After finishing my master's and then the Ph.D. at Stanford, I had started on a Ph.D. at Trinity in Dublin and I was able to finish up all of my work and get the Ph.D. while I was at the Academy the second time.

Q: What was the dissertation at Trinity?

BRYNN: The dissertation at Trinity was on the rise of an Anglo-Irish family into Irish politics in the middle and later part of the 18th century and then into British politics at the beginning of the 19th century and really into the empire. The fellow that I focused on was Richard Wellesley, the elder brother of the Duke of the Wellington and the one who consigned Arthur, who became the Duke of Wellington, to the military because he wasn't smart enough to do anything else. But Richard Wellesley became viceroy in India, which of course was great in terms of my interest there, and then Foreign Secretary. He was foreign secretary when we went to war with the British in 1812. Later he was viceroy in Ireland twice, once in the 1820s and then in the 1830s, a fascinating guy who left 900 volumes of papers for me to look at.

Q: Good God! How was his handwriting?

BRYNN: A deputy's handwriting, Montgomery, was fine. Wellesley dictated for four hours every morning.

Q: You'd had what amounted to a relatively short stint in the Foreign Service. Did you feel you were back in that briar patch and going to stay?

BRYNN: Yes, I guess so, until one evening when the phone rang. The Foreign Service evaluator came through each year and looked, I think, a little bit skeptically at what was going on. But the phone rang one evening in February of 1978, and it was Pat Byrne, who had been my DCM in Colombo and who was now ambassador on Bamako. She was back in Washington for a conference and she called and said, "Ed, what are you going to do for your next posting? Are you coming back into the Foreign Service or not?" I said, "Well, gee, I really hadn't even thought about it." Of course, it was time to do something and in fact it was rather late to do something. So I said, "Jane and I are on our way to Washington next week. We were going to walk in to see what was available." She said, "I'm looking for a political officer in Bamako." I said, "I don't have much French." She said, "You'll learn it." "I would really like you to come." So Jane got on the phone and said to Pat, "What's Mali like?" "Well, it's Timbuktu and all that," which Jane thought

was sort of a figurative way of saying it's rather exotic. So anyway, pretty much on the spur of the moment we decided to go to Bamako. It's terrible to think you make these career decisions on the strength of so little planning!

Q: Well, this is going to put you from the Air Force briar patch into the African briar patch. Had Africa crossed your radar at all?

BRYNN: When I came into the Foreign Service in the summer of 1972, they gave you a list on which you were asked to rate regions from 1 to 12 where you'd like to serve, and Africa as 12th, or the least attractive.

Q: You never caught that African fever?

BRYNN: Never.

Q: Well, you really hadn't had much time in the corridors of the State Department to pick up any feel for what was career enhancing or...?

BRYNN: No, I was completely naive. Except for being in the A100 and language courses, neither one of which was really in the bowels of the State Department, I had spent no time at the State Department at all. So that summer we headed back overseas.

Q: Before we leave this, I forgot to ask on Ceylon: Is there any connection between Ceylon and Madagascar?

BRYNN: The connection between Madagascar and the other side of the Pacific Rim is Malaysia and Indonesia in terms of a migration, the float of the people, but none between Madagascar and Ceylon.

Q: We now have gone to 1978 and you're going to Bamako, Mali. First of all, let's talk about the embassy. What was the embassy like and how did Pat Byrne operate?

BRYNN: The embassy was, to use Pat Byrne's phrase, the ugliest building that we owned overseas. It was an old French bank with walls as thick the width of these windows. You couldn't make any alterations in it because of the size of these walls. It sat right on the street downtown in a very congested part of the Quartier de Fleuve. It was a distinctly unwholesome place, but in a sense that was part of the charm of working in a place that was completely at variance with every safety precaution. Pat was and remains a diplomat who is dedicated to extraordinary detail. She was very, very focused on personal relationships with the communities wherever she served. Cables were the product of tremendous effort. She really believed that a misplaced comma might have a detrimental impact in Washington. That attitude, however, had been very good for me as a junior officer in Sri Lanka because it meant she invested an enormous amount of time in teaching me to learn to write to a Foreign Service audience. In Bamako she betrayed no particular appetite for day-to-day administration and, therefore, it was very important for her to have a strong DCM, which was fine. She tended toward a proactive sympathy for

the people of the countries to which she was accredited. She was quicker to understand and empathize. And she was in Mali in 1978 in the middle of what turned out to be a long and brutalizing dictatorship under the direction of Moussa Traoré, who was overthrown in 1991. Traoré had populated Malian prisons with all sorts of people who crossed his path. Many of them died in confinement. In retrospect all of us in the embassy should have been more outspoken in the defense of the American agenda on human rights and perhaps more openly critical of Moussa Traoré and his ilk. We were not in a high-stakes environment, and it would not have been to our serious disadvantage to have Mali fall under the control of the Soviet Union. Pat was also overly impressed with the successes of our AID mission, lead by an extraordinarily powerful and controversial figure, Ronald Levin. I found later on in my own capacity as ambassador that you really have to fight the tendency to see only the best side of what your AID director is going to show you.

I think I had a special relationship to Pat because she brought sort of a non-African breath of fresh air to the assignment. I embellished my career there in a rather spectacular fashion. Jane and I arrived, I think, on the 30th of July 1978 and within 48 hours Miss Lillian Carter, the President's mother, arrived on the last part of a five- or six-nation tour of Sub-Saharan Africa. By the time she arrived in Bamako she had completed her own Peace Corps stint in India as a very mature adult. I was assigned to the delegation as the country expert even though I had been in Mali only 48 hours and had been in Africa only 50 hours. Richard Moose, who was then the Assistant Secretary for Africa, was on the plane. Dick was suffering sand or asthma attacks by this time and had considerable headaches.

Our trip was bizarre. We boarded on the plane very early in the morning, before dawn, and headed toward Timbuktu, where - and I wish I had appreciated it as much as I would now - we were treated to the last great assemblage of warriors, all in their blue indigo, lined up to honor Miss Lillian. (This was one of a very few times when I traveled without my camera.) As the plane was about to land and dawn was breaking over the terrain, I heard Dick Moose say, "Who in the hell is the country expert on this place?" I said rather meekly, "I am." He asked, "How many people are there in Timbuktu?" Well, I hadn't more than the vaguest idea. I looked out the window and, of course, all you could see below was brown on brown. But I thought I had read somewhere, maybe in the *Guide Bleu* or something, that there were about 9,500 people in Timbuktu, so I said, "9,500." If I recall correctly, Dick pushed back by saying that "so famous a place must be more populous." When we landed on the runway, deboarded the plane, and queried officials gathered to greet us as to Timbuktu's population – 9500! That was the beginning of my life in Africa. I think that Mali became both the best and the worst of tours for us. It was a very hard family life. We had a large family for reasons we talked about. It was a heroic effort to find a house which would accommodate us, which meant we were pretty far outside town. It turned out we were very much outside normal water supplies or electricity supplies, things like that. In addition, the school situation was in our opinion highly unsatisfactory. The school was pretty much in the hands of a missionary group whose agenda was…

Q: Snake handlers?

BRYNN: ...yes, didn't want to see too much distinction between secular education and salvation. We made a decision, in our capacity as the young Turks at the embassy to establish a new school and get accreditation from the State Department. Well, that led to a great deal of brouhaha. Because of the number of American missionaries in Mali there was a split in the American community. We also wondered why we did not have a commissary. On this issue we had to fight the front office but at the end of the day we got the commissary. We wondered why there was no embassy in Bamako. Before we left we found a site for a club-with land to serve as a playing field, on an airy summit outside Bamako. So by the end of the two years I felt that we had really turned living conditions in Bamako in a much more positive direction.

The American community was short staffed on the financial side. My wife had done some work at a bank in Dublin and had worked for a brief time at AT&T, so she was recruited to become the local hire Budget and Fiscal officer, which in fact launched her career in B and F administration.

I learned to love camping and visited a lot of Mali that I think very few Americans have ever seen. I got a sense of the old Africa out there in the countryside before it was touched by French rule. My best memories of Mali are en brousse.

I came away from Mali with some heavy baggage. It was obvious that it was politically incorrect to suggest that countries like Mali were going to find it difficult to make their way in the new world order. There was an awful tendency to blame everything that was wrong in Mali on the colonial past even though we were now 28 to 30 years from independence. It was politically incorrect among the African Americans, when they came through, to suggest that there were elements of dysfunctionalism in this African society that meant that had to be sorted out by Malians themselves. Until that day came, Mali was going to continue its pretty steady downward direction. I was probably more candid than some of my colleagues in holding that blame for Africa's predicament must in fair measure be placed on Africans themselves. I had great personal relationships with the African Americans in the mission. And because I traveled a lot in the countryside and really saw the remote and exotic parts, my credibility was pretty high, but my pessimism didn't wash terribly well back in Washington.

Q: Tell me, what were the elements of dysfunctionality that you were seeing there?

BRYNN: My thesis goes something like this: The coming of the colonial era meant that, especially in the former French colonies, there was a concerted effort to strip away the indigenous institutions of social control, which had worked pretty effectively before the coming of the European period. They had stripped away the old order, but colonialism came to end too early even under the best of circumstances for a new social control order to be put in place. So you had a situation where the old order was gone and in the vacuum a small number of French-trained African with a Francophone mentality had appropriated an enormous amount of the national wealth. They thought of themselves as Frenchmen and exported themselves and their wealth to Europe at the earliest opportunity. That in a

sense was an overlay of corruption which was very, very pervasive. Secondly, I think there was a tendency to believe that any African who worked hard and succeeded and moved forward should become the target of the larger family's desire to appropriate all of the capital concentrated by that individual and to share it in the widest possible family circle. As a result, capital formation and capital concentration and investment became an almost impossible task even by the very many talented Africans who were willing to make the commitment. This diversion of capital reduced everybody to penury. This was an analysis which we didn't want to accept or to see accepted in Washington because it would undermine our efforts, that is the efforts of the African Bureau, to build up a larger and larger AID empire in all of these countries. But this dysfunctionalism was and remains an enormous drag on modernization in Africa.

Q: This idea of families absorbing the wealth of the better ones, it also sometimes works too in the United States, particularly in families coming from some Hispanic groups and others sharing it around and also meaning that you don't go for higher education because it's more important to get out there and earn money to help the family.

BRYNN: The other side of the coin in the United States, and which has benefitted the United States at the expense of the poorest African countries, is that Africans with ambition and talent and focus and goals leave their own societies in order to escape the dragging-down effect. So what we see as a reverse aid flow in which we here benefit from the best of Africa is talent. They do extraordinarily well here because they are disciplined, focused, energetic, and they know what they want to get done and know that it's so much more difficult to do that in Africa.

Q: There was the political section. Was that just you?

BRYNN: That was me.

Q: An economic officer?

BRYNN: There was no economic officer at the very beginning when I got there, but we did have one later on. My portfolio was the political reporting, which I think I grew into a bit slowly, partly because I had had rather little formal French before I got there. I spent a lot of time learning French in Bamako. By traveling a lot, I became sort of surrogate visitor to our Peace Corps volunteers who were scattered across the terrain. I was in charge of our little but growing IMET program, which was and remains for the most archaically organized.

Q: Would you explain what that is.

BRYNN: The International Military Education and Training program, through which we sent promising and talented mid-grade officers to the United States, usually for year-long training at certain military installations. The military services had selected candidates from abroad through a bureaucracy that involved an enormous amount of paperwork on my part. (We did not have a Defense Attaché Officer in Bamako.) Although it was not a

high-profile, strategic task, IMET probably took 20 percent of my time. For a fairly considerable period of time I was also the acting PAO.

Q: Public Affairs Officer.

BRYNN: ...Public Affairs Officer, partly because it was assumed that, since I had had so much education at the graduate level, I somehow was more qualified than someone else to serve as custodian of our country's public image. However, it gave me a heightened exposure to Malian culture. Mali is a vibrant center for African art and also a great opportunity to hear and to practice French. That was pretty much what my portfolio was.

Q: What was the government?

BRYNN: The government was as unabashed military dictatorship. Moussa Traoré had been in power for more than a decade. I don't think his regime, animated in part by a grasping spouse, was ever as ugly or as raw as it was under Sekou Toure in Guinea next door, but there was a climate of fear both pervasive and infectious. This fear didn't seem to carry over so much into the petty bourgeois who ran the small businesses around town, and frankly out in the countryside it probably had no import at all because the Malian government at the time was so focused on itself in a couple places like Bamako, Sikasso and Kayes that you didn't feel the weight of much of any government out in the far country. We were pleased with Moussa Traoré because he was on "our side". He was a careful, dutiful ally of ours in keeping Libya's interventionist tendencies at bay. He was also very close to the French, who regarded him as a reliable surrogate or partner in the Sahel. We were certainly fairly indulgent of Moussa Traoré and were prone to consider in a favorable light pretty much everything he did.

Q: This was, of course, the Carter Administration, and the Human Rights Bureau was quite powerful in this. Was it Africa or was it just Mali that was off the scope of the Human Rights people?

BRYNN: Well, it was, I think. I can remember on one occasion where we did put together a relatively critical draft for Washington on the human rights agenda in Mali. The vibes from Washington were that we were overly critical, not taking into account the extraordinary difficulties involved in a country with very, very minimal resources trying to govern an impoverished, illiterate people. Also, Mali was also a country coming out of the trauma of very severe drought, which was true.

Q: What was the background of the ruler?

BRYNN: Moussa Traoré was a professional soldier. He had early on in his career been trained in France. I think he was an infantry officer. He had not, to my knowledge, served in the military before independence in 1960. I think he became a young officer just after independence. He reminded Americans (not me in fact, it was interesting in my whole time there in Bamako, the two years, I never met him) that his intervention had toppled a regime which was showing very strong leftist tendencies. We should be grateful for that

intervention. And like so many of these military regimes, there was a sense of hope and optimism when they first came to power. There was some cleaning up of corruption. There was a pulling up of socks. There were some public projects that really did seem to be focused on the public good. This type of dynamism lasted a couple years before things settled into an all-too-traditional way, and Madame Traoré became deeply involved in the exportation of artisanal gold and going to Switzerland every couple of weeks loaded with jewelry. (It's a historical footnote, but Moussa Traoré and his wife were just a few months ago tried again and convicted.) He was convicted and sentenced to death in '92 for crimes against humanity, that is, the killing of school children but this time he was convicted of embezzlement and his wife was convicted at the same time. They've both been in prison for almost 10 years in separate parts of Mali. So in a sense the Moussa Traoré era is not finished.

Q: What about the role at that time, as you saw it, of the French?

BRYNN: Well, I have somewhat selective and vivid memories of the French. We were in Mali at the very end of the era where the French fell almost romantically attached to the people of the Sahel, an era where people on French administration remembered Antoine de St. Exupery. The Malians, and particularly the desert people to the north, especially the Tuaregs, were seen as heroic figures at home in the desert and endowed with incredible strength. We were seeing a new generation of younger French officers in the embassy coming in who did not share this type of romantic vision and looked upon their service in Bamako as a necessary stage on the way to getting something better somewhere else. We were also looking at the end of a period where certain French nationals still enjoyed the exotica of living in an African outpost such as Bamako. They were rapidly being replaced by the Lebanese, who were tougher and more focused and frankly, probably more avaricious than the French commergants. The French were abandoning Mali in steady and increasing numbers, leaving behind what became, I found in all my Francophone posts in Africa, a hard-core residue of French nationals who frankly possessed such antiquated skill or were really economically so dysfunctional that they couldn't go back and be productive members in France. As a result they were becoming almost psychologically inbred in these communities. I probably saw more of the French in Bamako, because it was still a relatively open society, than I would see of the French outside the very top as I went down the years in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Q: What was Bamako like?

BRYNN: Bamako was a congested, dirty town. That ancient quarter downtown was more charming, I think, than any town I have ever seen in Africa, partly because there had been no attempt to build Western-style skyscrapers. There were no tall buildings because there was no assurance of any electricity for elevators. On the best days in January and February when the climate is relatively cool and the trees with the purple flowers were out, it was absolutely elegant and you could see a hint of why Bamako had been called the pearl of West Africa. It was an extraordinarily lovely, sort of spare but lovely, setting. But when the rains set in later in the spring, the downtown became an almost impossible quagmire. The great drains and trenches, brick walls that had been built under French

discipline, had all filled as a result the water, instead of flowing through the great drains, flowed right down the center of the street. There were a number of very upscale houses built by the people who had commandeered more and more of the country's scarce resources, but they were all behind walls with a decreasing sense of community life. The parastatals, the companies that bought the peasant's grain at artificially low prices and stored it in warehouses, these governed the economy. This was the great age of socialism-socialism that favored Traoré's cronies. It was tough for business people, except for some of the very clever Lebanese who dealt in gold and dealt in some exotic imports.

Q: I take it there were no elections or parliament on anything.

BRYNN: No, there was a legislative council, and whole forests were cut down to provided paper to proclaim the regime's good work for the people.

Q: The Peace Corps: what was your impression of what the Peace Corps was doing, its effect, and how it worked?

BRYNN: I was a great admirer of the Peace Corps, probably for reasons, that are somewhat innocent. There was always sort of the constant wonderment and astonishment that we could find American who would live under very difficult conditions in Mali, more difficult than almost any other country I have been in, and do their damnedest to try to get some small projects, a fruit garden or a tree project, to work, even though they could see all around them that a few bigshots in the village were scraping off every bit of fat and putting it into their private coffers. I admired the volunteers enormously. They knew that the macroeconomic system in which they were laboring was really working against them, and they were content to try to make their mark in a small village environment or working to improve conditions for village women. To this day I admire them for doing it. The Peace Corps was at the very verge of moving into a somewhat more technocratic organization. In 1978 we were still pretty largely recruiting Americans who went abroad for the humanitarian vision of it rather than as technical experts. These were still hands-on people who went for the sheer love of doing something good. After Bamako I never saw an organization populated quite so much by innocents abroad. They were the last of the unabashed visionaries.

Q: How about AID? Did we have much of an AID...?

BRYNN: Oh, yes, we did. We had an AID empire there. I alluded to this a little bit earlier when we were talking about ambassadorial responsibilities. In the wake of the great drought in the middle '70s, we were salving our own conscience by pouring a lot of money into certain Saharan countries, and we got ourselves involved in some rather exotic projects, like growing rice in the Niger delta near Mopti, getting involved in cotton production in the southern part of Mali, and in building a small credit union in remoter villages, and simply getting involved with an awful lot of people. We had a very swollen AID bureaucracy of direct hires and contractors. Many were very fine people. But we had an AID Director who, I think it's safe to say, was very much impressed by the number of people you would have working in the country, and the AID mission became a monster

which was really out of control. And it led to a point where the AID operation in Mali was no longer under the control of the ambassador.

Q: Was that apparent to you in your position?

BRYNN: It was made more apparent to me not because of my position but because, as it turned, my spouse was doing the budget and fiscal work for the embassy. She became perfectly aware that there was simply a resistance on the part of the AID bureaucracy side to acknowledge the overreaching authority of the ambassador.

Q: You might just, for somebody who doesn't have a map at hand, say where the Comoros are.

BRYNN: Sure. The Comoros are four small islands in the Mozambique Channel with Mozambique directly to the west and Madagascar directly to the east. The channel is probably best known to ocean oil tankers because the great tankers from the Middle East come down through the Mozambique Channel and come past the Comoros Islands in order to make the turnaround at the Cape Good Hope.

Q: In dealing with this government, were you sort of dealing with a thugocracy? Was there much of a government?

BRYNN: There was not much of a government. The patina of civility was quite nice at the top, and the president was accessible and rather gracious. I think he was extraordinarily pleased to have a small American presence there, and I think I had a particularly good relationship with him. I think we just sort of hit it off very well. I can't say that the ministers in the government were ever very focused on ministerial concerns. They were merchants and men of other occupations for most of the day. In their defense, there was just very little money that could be used for anything and, therefore, very little incentive to be deeply engaged in the government. The role of the French was extraordinarily pervasive. It was an interesting relationship in that one of the four islands, Mayotte, refused to go independent. It therefore remained a French special territory and was host to a French Foreign Legion base. The government halfheartedly but constantly reminded the French that they had to turn over Mayotte to the Comoran Federation knowing very well that this would never take place. The French dominated the export economy, which consisted of the export of ylang-ylang, which is the fixative from squeezing petals of an exotic perfumed flower mixed into all perfumes so perfume will adhere to the face skin. All perfumes have ylang-ylang as the fixative. This was the entirety of the Comoran export market.

There were 400,000 people living in extremely tight circumstances, growing rice and yams on very, very small acreage and a very, very putative tourist economy. That was the whole thing. But the days were laced with wonderful stories of plots and counterplots and talks between Arabs and South Africans and Israelis and South Africans. In fact, a lot of that type of stuff did go on in the Comoros because we were out of earshot of CNN and other major news organizations. We were aware of lots of those types of conversations

were underway, taking place, and deals being struck. In my case the most exotic single point came when Yasser Arafat made a state visit to the Comoros.

Q: The head of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

BRYNN: That's right. I, of course, informed the President that I could not be involved in any way with this visit, and he assured me that he understood that this was the case. However, he convoked me to come to a dinner at his palace which just coincidentally happened to be on the day that Yasser Arafat was there. I found myself in a situation where, since Yasser Arafat spoke no French and Abdullah Abderamane spoke no English and the Arabic that they both spoke was so different that they were not comprehensible one to the other, I ended up playing a translator role between the two of them, and I thought, of course, it would be the end of my career. But I found, as it turned out after 15 minutes, the two gentlemen had nothing more to say to each other after dinner, so I had almost two hours of unbroken conversation with Yasser Arafat. I sent a long report back to Washington, and my wife was quite convinced that would be the end of my career. Interestingly the response from Washington - of course, it took a week or so to get back because we had no phone communications or fax communications - was full of excitement that this conversation had taken place and what I had been able to relay in terms of Yasser Arafat's feelings about the United States and about Arab lobbying ineffectiveness in Washington. Washington asked for more, "Can you remember more stuff?" Well, I thought I had pretty much drained the well dry, but Jane had played the same role as translator for the two foreign ministers of these entities, so we sent a second report, and that elicited the same type of enthusiastic response. So it may be that under these rather strange circumstances I was one of the first Foreign Service Officers to have had a long substantive chat with Yasser Arafat before later on we began to have systematic discussions in Tunis.

Q: What was the thrust of what...? Was he using you to convey something?

BRYNN: I think so. I can't say it had been premeditated. I'm sure he had no idea that this was going to happen. But there were three points that he wanted to make. The first was that he was well aware of the reality that we had special ties to Israel, that he was well aware that Israel's lobbying efforts in Washington were extremely effective and that the Jewish community in the United States played a role that simply could not be challenged. He recognized that moving forward in accommodation with Israel would have to take place on terms that were relatively well slanted in favor of Israel and our perception of what Israel had to have for its sense of security. Fine. Secondly, he was extremely open and candid, more than candid, about the ineffectiveness of Arab lobbying and diplomatic representations on behalf of the Palestinians in the United States. He thought it was a ham-handed exercise. He thought it was in some respects ludicrous and embarrassing and that simply cast PLO in a light that made it look like Yasser Arafat was not to be taken seriously. Third, he let me know by the way he talked about the United States that he was extremely well informed about American trends. He seemed to be able to indicate that he read American papers copiously. He had lots of contacts inside the Palestinian community whose families lived in the United States and liked the United States. He

really came across as being quite an enthusiastic observer, positively, of the way Americans lived and did their business, and I think that he wanted that impression to be sent forward.

Q: What was the role of the French?

BRYNN: Well, the French, first of all, had the commercial tie based upon ylang-ylang, and these were largely French-owned enterprises, trading houses, that had been put in place at the end of the 19th century and remained absolutely undisturbed. Two, the French wanted the country to remain sufficiently tranquil so that there would not be excessive light thrown on the French Foreign Legion presence in the fourth of the islands, Mayotte. And third - and I think it was almost a driving force - because it was the end of empire experience for some French families, the French in a sense ran the Comoros in the way the colonies had probably been run way back: a few extraordinary individuals, very little direction from Paris itself, and living the good life, I think, in sort of a romantically adventuresome way. One fifth of all of the people who claimed Comoran nationality were actually living in France itself or in the French West Indies. The Comorians had almost a monopoly of one profession in Paris, and that was bartending. They came from the Muslim tradition, did not drink themselves and, therefore, were very reliable behind the bar. In Paris, later on when my wife was assigned there, we could go to any hotel and go to any bar and behind the counter invariably there was a Comorian dishing out the drinks.

Q: Was the Foreign Legion contingent sitting on one of the four islands there sort of a presence on the horizon - if thing got tough or something, it would come in?

BRYNN: Yes, I think that was the case. I made it a point of going down on Friday afternoon every week, or almost every week, to have a cup of tea and then a drink with the French ambassador. Oddly enough - his name, Henri Deschamps - his father had been a very prominent French historian of Africa and had been a resident governor in Senegal in the period right after the Second World War. Deschamps was extraordinarily well informed about this little archipelago, and I found him an amazingly open and warm figure. He had a droll sense about wondering why the Americans wanted to have any presence at all, but he was very supportive of us. He always said. “The Foreign Legion is,” as you put it, Stu, “on the other side of the horizon, but it will be here at a moment’s notice if things get out of hand.” We went over on personal business to Mayotte from time to time because there we could get French foods and we could make telephone calls, which we could do only very infrequently from Moroni. We went one time with a medical emergency for our youngest son to the hospital for the French Foreign Legion. So it was psychologically nice to have the Foreign Legion so near.

Q: How did you get around?

BRYNN: We had small private planes to rent for the day. It was just a question of hopping from one island to the other, and most flights were not more than 40 minutes or 30 minutes even in a very small plane. I tried to spend as much time as possible going around to different islands. We had some interesting programs. One was on Moheli

which was the last leper colony in the old French empire. There was an extraordinary American woman there from Nebraska, who had been working for 25 years with the lepers, very much like the Molokai venture of Father Damien in Hawaii. She had made an extraordinary medical breakthrough some years before. She had kept meticulous records, and she had determined that a primary vector for the spread of leprosy from generation to generation was lactation, breast feeding. Leprosy, I guess, is in the same family as tuberculosis but metastasises at only 1/16th of the speed of tuberculosis. People didn't make the connection between the fact that a mother who had leprosy in her system but with no overt signs of it would breast feed and through lactation, infect the child. The child, of course, would not begin to show signs of leprosy for another 10 to 12 years. She was able to make this connection, and this in a sense helped to revolutionize the whole leprosy phenomenon.

Q: Were there any fleet visits while you were there?

BRYNN: We had no fleet visit. We did have the air visit by the CINCPAC commander, whose son, Dennis, by the way, is in the Foreign Service and I think he still may be our ambassador in Guyana.

Q: Did either Mozambique or Madagascar play any role?

BRYNN: There was a strong sense of animus by the Comorians towards Madagascar, a feeling that Madagascar had, for the a century before the First World War, periodically raided Grande Comore and Anjouan for slaves. It was a touchy point that I formally reported to Antananarivo. The Comorians chose to ignore this and I chose to help them ignore it.

Q: Were you picking up anything about South Africa?

BRYNN: Yes, we did. We picked up quite a bit, first of all, because South Africans were active in the country, probably under the cover of the island's major hotel. They ran a communications facility up on the side of the volcano which we knew was being used for the government's communication grid. There were large subsidies coming from the government - of course, this was in the last years of apartheid – to the Comorian President and to his senior officials, who allowed South Africans to use the Comoros Islands for perhaps some military training purposes but certainly for making contacts and talking to other people.

Q: Were you seeing any connection there with the Israelis?

BRYNN: No. In fact, I don't recall that ever coming up on the radar screen. I believe - well, we know - that there were Israelis coming to talk to South Africans using the hotel facilities in the Comoros as a screen, but we were not involved.

Q: Were you around - I can't remember when it was - when there was this very suspicious flash and there was thought that South Africans may have had an atomic test?

BRYNN: That took place on my watch, yes. I remember that incident. I don't recall any particular connection to the embassy. I think the closest thing that we had to it was Haley's Comet, which turned out to be not so brightly observant. But in the Comoros did launch an expedition up the side of the volcano when Haley's comet was visible, but quite unemphatically so.

Q: What sort of a staff did you have?

BRYNN: It was great. They had me as the chargé. I had an administrative officer, Bill Carlson, a man of many talents and a fine musician. I had a most resourceful secretary, Elka Hortiland, who has just now retired from the Foreign Service. Her husband Charles was recently retired from the French military and had spent a great deal of time in Africa. In short order Elka and Charles knew everyone, including the famous (or infamous) mercenaries. I had a communications officer at the beginning, but we had no communications set-up. There was very little for him to do and that and for other reasons, I think personal ones, he transferred and prospered in other places.

We hired a small staff of Comorians. Interesting, a number of the people of Grande Comore in the northern part of the island actually spoke English because they had close ties through trading relationships with Zanzibar and Muscat and Oman in the old tradition, so we were able to get a bilingual staff, trilingual really: French, English and either Arabic or Swahili, as the case may be. It was an extremely efficient staff. Jane took on the budget and fiscal operations, a part-time job, and we added a couple other Americans who just happened to wash up on the shore when it came time to start serious negotiations for establishment of a Peace Corps operation.

Q: Were you there when the Peace Corps went in?

BRYNN: No, I signed all the papers just before I left in the summer of 1987, and the Peace Corps established itself early in the fall of the year. We did, though, establish an AID program. We ran an AID program through a contract with an NGO. That worked out well. Most of what we focused on was reforestation, because the islands had been terribly devastated by overlogging, and on improving the cultivation of rice and trying to get better strains in there. Interestingly, the Comoros had a long historical relationship with the United States, because Anjouan was a favorite place for New England whaling ships to come for water and fruit way back in the 1830s and '40s. It was fun; we found a lot of old records that were still in the Comoros, and I confess that I am sort of working on a book dealing with all of that.

Q: Mauritius, of course, was really a major counselor post way, way back.

BRYNN: We identified an American who came out to the Comoros in the 1840s and gave him a consular commission, which he exercised with great seriousness and purpose for about forty years.

Q: Were there any other major incidents?

BRYNN: I don't think so. I was informed at one point by a visiting Soviet diplomat the Soviet ambassador accredited to Comoros, who said that he was aware of evidence that I was going to be assassinated. Nothing came of that. And, I think, except for a couple of tragic accidents where a couple of Americans were drowned coming into the Comoros on a round-the-world sailing expedition, and the death of a child of a resident American missionary from malaria, I can't think of anything to tell you.

Well, then '87. Whither?

BRYNN: To Cameroon. I had not given too much thought about where to go after the Comoros, but Jane and I wanted to stay out of Washington. I cannot remember being involved in the assignment process until one of the efforts by Washington to get in touch by phone actually succeeded. Would I go as DCM to Yaounde? Jane and I were both quite happy to go there. I had not met the newly appointed ambassador Mark Edelmar before I arrived in Yaounde, in August of 1987. I had arrived in June. He had been there six weeks before I came, and by the time I arrived it was already apparent that he was concerned about several aspects of this whole diplomatic adventure. First of all, his wife Nancy, a very elegant woman, was very, very disappointed. She, I think, had come out of Washington on the strength of an assumption that this was a fairly grand life with lots of support, and she found Yaounde was a much more difficult post that she had anticipated.

Q: Had they been in the Foreign Service?

BRYNN: No. Mark had been the deputy administrator in AID. He was a political appointee. He came out of Missouri and had been the budget guy in the state government in Missouri under then Governor Christopher Bond.

Q: Well, it's pretty rough. This is not a normal place where you put a political appointee; put him into a small European or Caribbean country.

BRYNN: Yes. And he succeeded Miles Frechette, who was a man of considerable powers.

Q: I'm interviewing him now.

BRYNN: Oh, you are. He ran a very highly geared shop, I think that Mark simply was overwhelmed by the challenges posed by Yaounde and, I think, terribly distracted by his wife's unhappiness. I'll share a story because it's true. I don't mean it to reflect badly on Mark. Jane and I arrived, I think, on a Friday evening, and they were very nice. They were at the airport to meet us in Yaounde, a gracious gesture. Mark said, "We'll get together on Monday morning. I'd like to find out what our relationship should be." And I said, "Well, that's what I would like to do, too." I said, "You don't want to do it over the weekend?" He said, "No, my wife and I like to be left absolutely alone from Friday afternoon till Monday morning. If you have to evacuate the post or something, include us,

but otherwise...” I said, “Fine.” So I went in on Monday morning and I went into his office. I had gone in over the weekend just to see what the physical premises looked like and whatnot. I sat down with him, and he said, “Ed, I don’t know you personally, obviously. This is the first time we’ve ever had a chat. But you have a good reputation in Washington and I think we’re going to get along fine.” He said, “I’ve been here six weeks, and I’ll tell you I don’t have a very clear idea of what I’m supposed to do.” I said, “Well, I would say there are four areas that an ambassador should be focused on. One is representation, hosting events that will help Americans and Cameroonians get together.” He said, “My wife doesn’t like to do that type of thing very much. Would you be willing to take on a major responsibility there?” I said, “Sure, we’ll be glad to do that.” I said, “The second one is traveling around the country and showing the flag and visiting projects.” He said, “I get air sick, sea sick and car sick. I can’t do that very often-.” I said, “Okay, then I’ll take care of that.” I said, “The third area is to be involved in management of the post,” and he said, “From what I can see, the State Department is so extraordinarily badly managed that I really don’t want to have much to do with that. And anyway, I know that that’s a DCM’s responsibility.” I said, “Fine.” And finally I said, “Well, sir, there’s the reporting requirement. Get an overarching sense of what our relationships are in Cameroon and what our policies and objectives are and inform Washington.” And he looked at me - he had glasses that sort of magnified his eyes - and he said, “I hate to write.” So that was it.

Q: I assume you went home to your wife and said, “Look, you’ve got a job.”

BRYNN: Well, as a matter of fact, Jane soon had a job. After a very short stint in Yaounde she realized that if she did not work she would find herself spending a great deal of time at the Residence. When she was asked to be associate director for Peace Corps she accepted immediately. So we ended up having a very, very full schedule.

So at the end of my conversation with Mark, I said, “Well, sir, what do we do?” He said, “You’re very much in charge. All I ask is at the end of the day you let me know on a sheet of paper what decisions you’ve made. I may disagree with them, but I will never undercut you,” and he was absolutely true to his word. In some respects, it turned out to be a very fulfilling assignment.

Q: Let’s see. Just to get the dates, you were there from ‘87 to...?

BRYNN: To ‘89, August ‘87 to July ‘89.

Q: Was he there the whole time?

BRYNN: No, that’s the other story. I used to sit down with him every Monday morning. Obviously by the beginning of ‘89, January ‘89, he was very concerned about his wife’s unhappiness. They, in fact, had been taking longer and longer breaks, every three months going back to the States for a month. When I saw him on this particular morning - it was in February - I said, “Sir, you look very, very distressed,” and he was; he was really close to tears. He said, “We’ve decided over the weekend that we can’t stay for a full tour.” I

said, "Well, by this summer you will have been here two years, and that's not extraordinarily irregular if you decide you have to leave." He said, "I'm not communicating correctly. I promised my wife that we would be out of here in three weeks." And we met the deadline; we got them out in 18 days. We got Washington to agree, and we got the Cameroonian President to give him a medal. We wrapped up everything. They left at in the middle of February.

Q: Before we go to talking about the Cameroons, we might as well finish this. What was he doing?

BRYNN: He was religious about reading everything that was put on his desk, and we kept his desk full. He got his wife involved in an esoteric project to catalog and preserve a number of artifacts, statues and masks and things like that, that had been collected by a Benedictine monastery outside Yaounde. But that's it; that's about all.

Q: I thought he'd go out of his mind with boredom.

BRYNN: Well, he's a great reader. He's a very intelligent guy. I think probably, if he hadn't made the decision to leave when he did, he probably would have gone downhill pretty fast. But he was certainly in no sense ever an embarrassment to the community; he just wasn't deeply engaged.

Q: There is a difference between a DCM going to a reception or something and an ambassador. This can send signals. How did this work?

BRYNN: We were mildly successful in making sure that the ambassador went to some of the top things, made sure he did some of the National Day events, and to see President Paul Biya from time to time. I think we met the minimum there. I thought it was a little bit more painful that he was not more accommodating in receiving, in doing the entertaining. On the other hand, I think the Cameroonians accepted that this was the way things were and, after the initial shock of it all, accommodated themselves to the fact that this was the way we were going to run things.

Q: The Cameroons: what was the status there in the late '80s, economy, political?

BRYNN: It's an extraordinary country, partly because it is many countries in one. The small Anglophone community that had joined the French mandate in 1962 was sullen and upset that they had in fact been hived off of Nigeria and attached to Cameroon. Although the constitution stated that this was a bilingual republic and a federated state, it had in fact under Paul Biya become a unitary state and very much in the Francophone mode. So there was a constant sense of quiet alienation among the Anglophones in the western part of Cameroon, and we had to be very careful that we did not, because of our linguistic relationship, appear to the government to be favoring the Anglophone part. I was very strongly insistent that people that be sent out from Washington to be on our staff were very comfortable in French, and that worked pretty well. We were very concerned about corruption in Cameroon. It was big-time. President Biya had, I think, disappointed the

expectations of a vast number of people in Cameroon, especially in the western and business-oriented communities. They had thought that, after the regime of Hito at the beginning of the era of independence, Paul Biya, who came out of a seminary environment and was regarded as sort of a model of rectitude, would put Cameroon with all of its natural resources on a fast track direction towards economic development. That did not happen, and this was a sad development in a country so well endowed as Cameroon. People were not desperately poor - I don't mean to say that - but the population was small, relatively small, very much able to be accommodated to the resource base, and the country simply was distracted by corruption. Rather than broadbased development we had grandiose projects, a couple big roads, palaces here and there, villas in the countryside. It was much more distressing in some respects than Mauritania or the Comoros where the resource base was so limited. But the Cameroonians that we got to know were elegant, worldly wise, spent a lot of time traveling around the world, and obviously in their own context lived the good life. We had an overly large AID program there, I thought, which we finally were able to contract a bit. By chance the AID director was the same Ronald Levin who had run so autonomous an agenda in Mali some years before. He was a brilliant guy but we were into projects that were way beyond what was appropriate for our mission there.

We had an excellent Peace Corps program, one of the very best Peace Corps programs I've ever seen, and we had a large number of American missionaries, especially Protestant missionaries, who were engaged in Cameroon, most of them, I thought, on the social development side. Some of them, in addition, were considerable scholars. In Yaounde the missionaries were running a joint program to capture as many of Cameroon's 260 languages as possible by translating the Bible before these exotic languages faded away into those languages, I suppose as an academic exercise in addition to God's will. It was really quite fascinating.

Q: I would think, with this overwhelming fog of corruption, you would not be in a position of encouraging investment there.

BRYNN: We were favored by almost weekly visits by American corporations, because the landscape looked so promising for investment! Everything from oil offshore to rubber and banana plantations. Unfortunately we had to be fairly discouraging. I think the one area that we ran a successful investment initiative had to do with Dole, the pineapple people, who did establish some banana plantations along the coast. Other than that, although there was on paper what looked liked extraordinary promise for American investment, not much materialized.

Q: What was the government like?

BRYNN: Our task on any given day, to see if we could find out what on any given day was the relationship between the French and the Cameroonians. Cameroon was a hot-ticket item for the French. They had enormous economic interests there and were running a closed shop they did not want the United States to be too deeply involved, and frankly they were quite successful in this. A lot of Cameroonian ministers and French bigwigs

were running back and forth between Yaounde and Paris.

Q: This was a Mitterrand government.

BRYNN: That's correct.

Q: He was sort of Mr. Africa in the government with a real taint of corruption, diamonds, and also political support. Money was going into the socialist regime, wasn't it?

BRYNN: That's correct, and Paul Biya was a very active - probably still is - supplier of financial assistance to certain circles in France. Cameroon was a focal point for French attention. You had Centre Afrique, Central African Republic, to the east, which was always a pot boiler. You had Chad bordering on northern Cameroon, always in semi-chaos. In almost any direction there were adventures going on, and, of course, the Nigerians were never quite sure that the French were not again interested in a Biafra type of situation along the western frontier. I don't think we ever penetrated that veil. We thought we had from time to time some spectacular insights into the relationship between France and Cameroon, but I think at the end of the day we picked up some morsels and that's about all.

Q: How about dealing with the French embassy? Did they sort of keep you off to one side?

BRYNN: No. In fact, I think one of the most successful points of contact that I had was with my counterpart at the French embassy. Their DCM and his wife and my wife and I became quite close personal friends. Michel van der Porter, came from French Flanders right up on the Belgian border. They were bridge enthusiasts, as we were more in those days than these days, and he was very forthcoming in giving me a signal if something was coming down the road which might pose a problem for the American community or safety measures or reports of insurgency in parts of the north. He never touched on the direct central relationship between Cameroon and Paris, but for things that were of concern to our community he was very good.

Q: Speaking of the French connection, was Mitterrand's son down there a lot or not? He has run into a lot of trouble recently because of his dealings with Africa.

BRYNN: He was there at least a couple of times, perhaps more frequently.

Q: How about our embassy in Paris? Were they interested in this French connection?

BRYNN: Not particularly, no. I don't recall that that we were pressed too actively. Our embassy's interest from the Paris perspective vis-à-vis Cameroon was nothing compared to the interest in Burkina Faso when I was there later on.

Q: Were the Toyota wars going on in Chad at that time between Libya and...?

BRYNN: Yes, they were. I made a number of trips to the north. In fact, I made a number of trips to N'Djamena, partly because I enjoyed the north and partly because we were trying to get a sense of what was happening in the part of Chad that was outside the confrontation with the Libyans. Chad Utile, the southern part, was coming into focus because American oil corporations were beginning to realize that there were significant oil reserves in southern Chad, and this would require pipeline development. I got to know a lot about Chad.

Q: What was the American community like in Cameroon?

BRYNN: Large and fractious and multifaceted. Cameroon is a country that attracted a different type of Americans than one found in Burkina Faso or Mauritania. A lot of Americans came to Cameroon thinking that it was sort of like an American state with all the amenities and it would be a fairly soft life. They were quite terribly disappointed when they got to Cameroon to find that life could be tough with long periods without electricity, trouble with infectious diseases and very serious problems with malaria. Life was tougher in Cameroon than a lot of Americans had expected, and I think that this hit the morale button for Americans pretty severely. A lot of missionaries found that it was too tough for them, and I think a number of official Americans, especially in the AID community, felt the same way.

Q: Did you have a problem having this - I don't know how to put this - distant ambassador, aloof a bit, any a disengaged ambassador? It must have made it difficult for you dealing with sort of the American community and others, because there are certain things. People come up and say, "I want to see the ambassador," or this or that.

BRYNN: Well, it was. In defense of Mark, I'll say that on a personal basis he was polite and anything except dictatorial. He just wasn't there. 'Disengaged' is the right word, not 'aloof'; 'disengaged' is probably exactly the right word to put it. I found sort of in a country team situation, when you got all the AID people together and what not, out of all the people in our official community, if you're looking at your personal rank schedule, I was number seven on the totem pole, and there were people in the AID mission that found it at the beginning somewhat difficult to have somebody who was really junior to them in rank and length of experience to be their boss. Well, I was the boss, because there was no other boss there to be. I had a real tangle with a couple of them, but for the most part I think things went along pretty well. I was never satisfied that morale was as good in Cameroon as it was at other embassies where I was able to play a role.

Q: With AID what were they doing? If they have all this rank, was it just because somebody was building an empire?

BRYNN: Yes, I think so. Of course, I'm sure there will be other people who are in this who will talk about Ron Levin. He certainly cast an extraordinary shadow across the African landscape and elsewhere as well. He ran some good programs. We had a good agricultural training program in Cameroon. But we sent extraordinary numbers of Cameroons to the United States and to land grant schools, and many of them remained in

the U.S. We advertised that we were helping Cameroon reform their financial structure so there would be greater accountability. There was no will on the part of the Cameroonians to have any of these things succeed, and my arguments with Ron were that we were in effect abetting the corruption posture of the Cameroonian government by offering large levels of assistance that would be vulnerable to misappropriation.

Q: What about the French? They have a very active aid program. This must have been messing up their rice bowl a bit.

BRYNN: Well, we messed it up less than we might have, because the French were fully aware and probably complicit in knowing that Paul Biya and the ministers were not going to take too seriously the American efforts to reform the government or bring a sense of accountability. The one area that I think the French were most concerned about us was our AID profile in the Anglophone part, where we had a natural advantage because we had many Cameroonians from the area west of Douala went to the United States to school and did bring back some accounting and agricultural practices that were really advanced. That part of Cameroon wanted to stay out of the clutches of Paul Biya and his circle of corrupt friends. I think we ran some effective programs over there, and the French were moderately concerned that we might encourage separatist tendencies.

Q: Were the Libyans messing around there?

BRYNN: I don't recall that that was much of a factor, probably because Cameroon had established ties with Israel and the Israelis ran a security system for President Biya and the country. Libyans were well monitored.

Q: Were you getting any reflections from the Department of State about your disengaged ambassador?

BRYNN: Yes, there was some concern, not so much that we had an underperforming ambassador but concern that too much energy had to be devoted to him at the expense of other initiatives. I think that that's one reason that when he indicated that he wanted to leave in very short order that the Department really mobilized itself and got him out.

Q: Did you find within your staff that you had a problem? You were supposed to be loyal to your ambassador, but you've got this problem. Somebody who has the position of ambassador, if they've got a problem or something, okay, the DCM may sub, but at a certain point you want to appeal to the higher authorities. This must have cause problems for you.

BRYNN: Well, I was fortunate that I really had an extraordinary staff. In fact, key members of the staff in Cameroon have remained among my closest personal friends in the Foreign Service. It is very interesting that, when I was ambassador in Burkina Faso later on, I had three of those people from that staff came to Ouagadougou. I think, outside the AID contingent, that problem about appealing to a higher authority never came up.

Q: Everybody understood the situation.

BRYNN: Yes, and in a sense AID took care of its own problem in this area, because Ron Levin was so elevated in his own pretensions that he would not stoop to go to the ambassador.

Q: I take it that he quickly sized up and realized he was off on his own almost.

BRYNN: He was very much on his own, and that's an area that in my tenure I can say we just never really got under control.

Q: Well, you couldn't. In something like that, it takes the weight of the ambassador with so-called Presidential support and all to control somebody, and a DCM can't do that. It's just beyond one.

BRYNN: Yes, in that area professionally it was difficult, but I must say I had really handsome support from the rest of the community. I remember after one very confrontational meeting with Ron, I recalled Churchill's phrase about Stafford Cripps, I guess, who had his own highfalutin image of himself; I think Churchill said of him, "There but for the grace of God goes God."

Q: Well, then you left there in '89.

BRYNN: '89, July of '89.

Q: Sounds like you were ready to come back to Washington.

BRYNN: Well, we did. We came back but only for a year. I came back to Senior Seminar. Interesting, when we were inspected at the end of 1988, Ray Ewing came out as the head of the inspection team, and just in a casual conversation he said, "What do you want to do for your next assignment?" and I said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, what about Senior Seminar?" I frankly knew nothing about Senior Seminar. He explained a little bit, and I talked to Jane and said, "Yes, that would be fun to do," and then assumed that we'd have a follow-on tour in Washington. So that came through and I reported in August of '89 for the Senior Seminar.

Q: How did you find the seminar?

BRYNN: I liked it. I thought it was an extraordinarily valuable experience. I have stayed very close to some people in the seminar. I can't say that most of them felt that it was as valuable an experience as I did. I think it was very good for me because I had been out of the country so long and had been so focused on Africa that Senior Seminar for me was a genuinely valuable education.

Q: I went there in '74-'75. It really did get you out and around. It was mainly to expose you to the United States, as opposed to the War Colleges which really were to expose the

military to the international world.

BRYNN: That's right, and it was the exposure to the way the United States was ticking that was very useful for me in the Senior Seminar.

Q: Usually they make great promises in the Senior Seminar about, "You're the pick of the crew, and we'll have everything ready for you when you get out." I don't know if your experience was the same, but I know including my own it's: "Oh, you're getting out, and there's nothing down the road for you."

BRYNN: That was a real serious problem. Ironically, it was a serious problem for just about everybody except me. I was the only one who came out knowing in the latter stages that I was going to get an ambassadorial appointment. Mine was the only case where that sense of disappointment wasn't registered. It hit a lot of my colleagues hard. I think their expectations on assignments coming out of the Senior Seminar were higher than what happened. Now, in many cases later on they bounced into very good jobs and things went fine, but that was a tough point in the spring of 1990.

Q: In 1990 you went where?

BRYNN: Went to Ouagadougou.

Q: I always use Ouagadougou as sort of like that back of beyond. Talk about Burkina Faso.

BRYNN: I didn't arrive there until November 17, because, among other vicissitudes on the way, I was one of Senator Jesse Helms' hostages in his campaign to get USIS integrated into State. I had a fair amount of free time and in the fall I volunteered to do some speaking engagements around the United States. In fact, Jane and I just hopped into our car and we drove as far as Colorado, Utah and Arizona. We were in Phoenix when I finally got the call saying, "All is forgiven. Come on home." So we came back and went off to Ouagadougou. I had never expected to be there, but I knew the country a bit because I had gone to Ouagadougou several times to play softball over the course of some years. When I arrived there, the shadow of Thomas Sankara lurked on the edges of political life. He had been killed two years before. He was still a cult hero.

Q: He had been...

BRYNN: He had been President. He had been involved in what was the sixth coup, and Blaise Compaoré, who overthrew him in late '87 or early '88, was the seventh coup. There was still a lot of tension in the streets, a lot of feeling that Compaoré's days were numbered. Ironically, he has turned out to be an extraordinary survivor. The Burkinabé are extremely hard working. I must say I think the work ethic among the peasants in Burkina Faso is just the highest I've ever seen in any of my posts. The social structure is based upon the Mossi hierarchy. Interestingly, the upper class in Ouagadougou all went to Catholic prep schools together and are Catholic in a region which, of course, is very

largely Muslim. So you had at the top a fairly sophisticated, very focused ruling aristocracy, and then you had a plunge way down to an extraordinarily impoverished by hard-working peasantry at the bottom. There was not much in between, not much in the way of a middle class at all.

Q: What was the history of Burkina Faso? Under whom had it been during colonial times?

BRYNN: It had been a semi-independent Mossi kingdom very much in the same line as the Ashanti had been to the south. It came under French influence right at the cusp of the 20th century, really in January of 1901, I think. The upper class in Ouagadougou was quickly converted to Catholicism. It had always resisted Islam. The French established themselves very lightly in Ouagadougou but very, very forcefully in Bobo-Dioulasso, which is the major commercial city, located in the southwestern part of the country. It is the area where you get enough rainfall for settled agriculture.

Q: Looking at the map you see it borders on both French and English. You've got Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, Niger and Nigeria. What were the influences?

BRYNN: First of all, the overarching influence has been Cote d'Ivoire, because, although until World War I Upper Volta, as it was called - Burkina Faso was Upper Volta - had been an independent French fiefdom, it was fused with Cote d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast, in 1920, I believe, and remained so, remained a province or a stepchild of Cote d'Ivoire until after World War II. At that point the Mossi were able to convince the French that they needed their own identity back, and so in 1947 that Upper Volta regained its autonomy. But there was no doubt about it that Cote d'Ivoire remained a very, very powerful influence. Not only were some of the leading families in Burkina Faso very closely connected with families in Cote d'Ivoire parish but trade was absolutely governed by the trading houses in Abidjan. Every year Burkinabé men, partly because they had a reputation for being strong and good workers, filled the seasonal plantation jobs on the southern Cote d'Ivoire plantations: cocoa, bananas, pineapples, the lot. So Burkina Faso remained a surrogate in an economic relationship to Cote d'Ivoire. The other relationship was, of course, to Ghana directly to the south. This was a very testy relationship. From the time that J. J. Rawlings came to power in 1979 and then for good in 1981, tension levels between successive regimes in Ouagadougou and Rawlings were always very high. It was a very difficult border area. There were many small skirmishes along the frontier. There was a contest over riparian rights because the three branches of the Volta River came out of Burkina Faso and coalesced in Ghana. There was very little evidence of Anglophone commercial ties between Burkina Faso and Ghana. It was for the average Burkinabé as if there was no country at all to the south; so this was different from their relationship to Cote d'Ivoire.

Q: You get to Cote d'Ivoire, which under Houphouët-Boigny sort of went on almost forever, and you had seven coups up in Burkina Faso. Were the neighbors messing around, or were your people in Burkina Faso sort of coup prone?

BRYNN: No, I think the neighbors were messing around, and there was quite often an Ivorian finger in there, maybe acting as surrogate for the French, who I think tired of certain of the reformers, especially Lamizana. Lamizana really did effect some significant structural reforms in Burkina Faso, and I think this alienated some of the French trading houses up there. This was a field of play for the outsiders.

Q: Were you sniffing around and picking up the same French sort of corruptive influence that you'd seen in the Cameroons?

BRYNN: No, I don't think that we had the same level of corruption, probably because there was less to be corrupt about there. Interestingly, Henri Deschamps, who was the ambassador in the Comoros Islands when I was there, was ambassador in Ouagadougou during my tenure; we were something of a tandem couple. We started seeing each other quite regularly both at his place and mine. One day in a moment of great Gallic candor he said, "Ed, the French community in Burkina Faso is the lowest class French community that I have seen in Africa. The French who are here are so dysfunctional that they can't go back to France."

Q: Were they Corsican, by any chance?

BRYNN: I think there were some Corsicans, yes. They lived a pretty mean life, I think, and they were indeed a slice of French surete who couldn't go back and make it back home. He said - in fact, it was in the context of coming up for Bastille Day – 'It's a moment of extraordinary dread. We have to invite all of them, and they just sort of trash the place.'

Q: What were our interests there? What were you up to?

BRYNN: Well, Blaise had established - in fact, this is the post where, I suppose, the interests were most sensitive - Blaise had established a symbiotic relationship with Qadhafi and with Charles Taylor, and Ouagadougou was being used as a midpoint in arms shipments from the north to Charles Taylor. Taylor also kept a house in...

Q: You'd better mention...

BRYNN: The leader of the insurgency in Liberia had relied on Burkina Faso for structural support and arms that were channeled through Burkina Faso from Libya. Compaoré was paid in diamonds for his work and probably is still getting paid now with Taylor installed as president in Liberia. Taylor came to power just at the point of my arrival in Ouagadougou, and I would see Taylor from time to time because he would come up to Burkina Faso. I would get instructions from Washington to read the riot act about his role in the arms trafficking from Qadhafi. The most memorable point I had after reading a particularly nasty letter to him from Hank Cohen, who was then the Assistant Secretary in the African Bureau: I said to Taylor, "Do you have anything you'd like me to report back to Washington?" and he said, "Ambassador, no, nothing at all." So I turned and walked to the door. I always felt sort of like I was going to be shot from behind - the

atmosphere surrounding this Taylor was really pretty awful. I got the door, I put my hand on the doorknob and he said, "Ambassador." I turned around and he said, "I do have something I want you to tell Mr. Cohen. I want you to tell him that I resent the tone of the language that he uses in his communications with me. I want..." Then he stopped and he said, "Well, Ambassador, forget about it. If you had any influence in Washington, you would not be ambassador to a silly (shitty is the word he used)
little country like Burkina Faso."

Q: Peculiar place.

BRYNN: That's right. We were really concerned obviously about the relationship between Compaoré and Libya, because we knew that Ouaga was being used as a trans-shipment point for guns and other bits of armament from Qadhafi to elsewhere, not just into Liberia but into Sierra Leone and into Niger and Chad and points south. There was always something on the agenda about the relationship between Compaoré and Qadhafi, and I had a number of talks with Compaoré about it. To his credit Compaoré never said, "We won't do it anymore." He just listened, and he had that extraordinary demeanor where you couldn't see behind the mask. You would just register the points and he would say, "Thank you very much."

Q: Dealing in this part of the world, this was after Qadhafi had seemed to pull in his horns a bit after we had bombed him, and all of sudden there seemed to be something change, at least certain operations. What was your feeling and the analysis that you were getting from your colleagues? What the hell was Qadhafi up to in all this stuff?

BRYNN: I think, Stu, you're right. By the time I got to Ouagadougou I think we were looking at a relationship between Qadhafi and Compaoré that had built up a certain momentum over the years but had lost a lot of its purpose. There was still a need to supply arms to Charles Taylor because there was a traditional relationship there, but even there Taylor was moving to victory and his need to rely on Qadhafi was diminishing. But we were still into the period where there remained some obligation on Qadhafi's part to meddle in African affairs.

Q: Did you have a feeling that Qadhafi was no longer quite the force that he had been? It's very interesting. As we speak today Qadhafi has been very quiet while we're in Afghanistan and for some time. Really we're talking about somebody who in a way one night a bombing and all of a sudden he started to reverse himself very slowly.

BRYNN: Well, in fact, there's a perverse chapter to all of this. We watched Qadhafi supply financial assistance for schools in rural areas in the north in the profoundly Muslim areas, and the schools that Qadhafi was supporting went head to head with the fundamentalist schools that were receiving support from other parts of the Arab world, including from Saudi Arabia. The Saudis, I don't think, had the slightest idea how radical some of these schools were that they were so generously supporting. Qadhafi's schools were secular, vocational, and not abetting fundamentalist tendencies, something that was sort of in our favor.

Q: As we speak today in 2002, we're looking much more closely at many of these extreme fundamentalist schools because we're concerned about anti-Americanism, terrorism, creating of schools where they're sort of training martyrs to go out and blow themselves up and that sort of thing. Did you feel under any particular threat while you were in Burkina Faso?

BRYNN: No, I didn't. Maybe I'm just sort of insensitive to this, but I took all the normal precautions and went different ways to work. I could walk to work, and usually did. I traveled a lot in the country, and I never felt any threat in that area. I was recalled at one point by Cohen when his exasperation level with Compaoré's indulgence of Libyan arms trafficking was at a high point. Of course, it's easy to recall an ambassador, but it's very hard then to get him back if things don't change. I learned a lesson there. I think I sort of resisted going back, but I should have put more opposition because it was hard to get back into Burkina Faso afterwards.

Q: To me, it's always struck me as being one of the most nonsensical situations: when things get difficult, you pull your top man out. It may send a signal, but, hell, you can devise a special flag you can raise. There are other ways of doing this. This goes way back into antiquity, but it's stupid.

BRYNN: I think so. It's not a good option.

Q: How did you find society there?

BRYNN: First of all, we had a staff with extraordinarily high morale. It was splendid in that respect. My own personal circumstance was different because Jane, after having worked in contracts with the State Department and Peace Corps and all these things, actually entered the Foreign Service in early 1990. The Department thought it was doing a good thing and assigned her to Conakry because we'd be so close. Well, nothing is farther than Ouagadougou and Conakry, trying to get there to each other. So I was very much a bachelor on Ouaga, but maybe because of that I was very much a center of the social community. Every Saturday I had a community event at the house, and I was able to meet an awful lot of Burkinabé because I would on rather short notice go off to various projects and got involved in saving the elephants and all that stuff. I found the Burkinabé extremely open, and I had very solid personal relationships across the spectrum of the aristocracy. It really was; they were very emphatically self-defined upper class.

Q: Was Burkina Faso sort of divided? It seems like every central African country in that area has the north that's sort of desertish and in the south it's agriculture, and between Muslim and animist or black and Moorish or what have you.

BRYNN: The northern three-fifths of Burkina Faso was scrubland, pastoral, dominated by Fulanis, who are very enterprising, Fulanis on one hand and Tuaregs especially up in the northeastern part, who came down and whose presence was a source of considerable distress for the Mossi. The Tuaregs were coming into Ouagadougou and they tended to

crowd into the vacant areas of the parks and they were perceived to be trashing various neighborhoods. The southern two-fifths were a combination of animist and Muslim except for an area, a circle of about 15 miles around Ouagadougou and around Bobo-Dioulasso that was largely Christians, largely Catholic actually. The percentage of the population that was Christian/Catholic was probably only 20 percent but it absolutely dominated the country.

Q: Were we doing much aid?

BRYNN: We had a small, an appropriately small, direct AID program which was largely focused on agricultural development down around Bobo-Dioulasso, which was fine, but we had one of the largest self-help programs in Africa, maybe the largest. Because the Burkinabé were extremely dependable in terms of use of self-help funds, we ran a self-help program that I think was in the neighborhood of $400,000 a year. This constituted probably a fairly high-profile AID program. We were also very active in health measures, worked very carefully with the Carter Center on the guinea worm project- (end of tape)

We worked very, very closely with NGOs, TDOs, CARE, Africare, Catholic Relief, so our formal aid program was small, but our relationships with other organizations were very, very active, very strong.

Q: You mentioned family planning. This would be the Bush administration at that time, being Republican, and abortion was always an issue. Was this an issue?

BRYNN: We didn't really get into the abortion thing very much, probably because we were working with a country with a Catholic ruling class. There was a fair level of sync between the Bush/Reagan feeling on this and the leading Catholic community. But there was unexpected liberalism when it came to contraceptives and being forthright in talking about HIV AIDS and in other aspects of family planning.

Q: What about AIDS? By this time this was recognized as a full-blown pandemic, I guess, wasn't it?

BRYNN: It was. The first Peace Corps volunteer to be positively identified as an AIDS victim was a Peace Corps volunteer in Mauritania who had gone down to spend a month or so with friends in the Congo Basin. He came back, became very thin, was sent home, and died. He died in 1984 or '85. Then AIDS in terms of my experience didn't come up high again on the radar screen until I was back in Burkina Faso. It was not much of a feature in the Comoros Islands, and I don't recall it being at the top of the chart in Cameroon, although probably it should have been. But in Burkina Faso we had a situation where a large percentage of the male population would sign on for seasonal work down along the coast, and of course down there the men established anomalous sexual relationships. They would come back home after the harvest and we began to see in the late '80s, that there was developing high concentrations of HIV infections in certain areas along the truck routes and in the villages where large numbers of men were recruited to go south. We put into place in the embassy in the beginning of 1991 what

was, I believe, the first comprehensive testing program for embassy employees in Sub-Saharan Africa. I know that that is still going on in Ouagadougou today. It's one of the sad chapters in Africa that the number of people that are candidates for employment on local hire, nationals, in the embassy has gone up very sharply over the years from one or two percent up to 15 or 20 or 25 percent.

Q: I would think this would cause a real problem for people assigned in the Foreign Service and other things to parts of Africa where AIDS is high, because it's not just sexual relations but it's blood mixing with blood. You think about automobile accidents and things like this, emergency hospital treatment or what have you. I think this would make people very nervous.

BRYNN: It did, and that began to come up on the radar screen in Ouagadougou. We had a superb small clinic and we had a couple of nurses who came through on assignment from Med who were really superb. We had a permanent second nurse. Pauline Julia, who in fact just got Employee of the Year Award from the State Department last year. She, I think, provided a level of professionalism and reassurance that really contributed enormously to the high morale that we had at that post. I contrast that experience with what happened in Ghana a bit later when the AIDS thing was even higher on the radar screen and where we had many more families there with kids. Ouaga was a post where we had very few kids. Tom and Sarah Genton had kids and a couple others. We ran a fantastic school, but in the population of the school - I think we had about 65 students in the school - I'll bet only seven of them were from members of the official American community. We had very few other Americans with children in the country. Our community at the school was largely Dutch and German.

Q: Did you get many delegations or visits there?

BRYNN: No, it really was quite amazing that for my entire career in the Foreign Service prior to getting the Ghana I was never at post when we had a CODEL.

Q: Here you are ambassador. One of the things that ambassadors get is to go running off to the foreign ministry and saying, "Will you vote so-and-so in the United Nations?" How did you find this with the government there?

BRYNN: It worked pretty well. In fact, I think that Compaoré and his crew found that that was one area that they could be fairly forthcoming to the United States. In fact, Burkina Faso track record in supporting us in UN and other fora was really quite good.

Q: It was a throw-away.

BRYNN: It was a throw-away for them, and it was a way that, if they had any guilt pangs about Libyan arms, they could be assuaged by saying, "Well, we voted for the U.S. on this and that." Oddly enough, although we had very few high-profile visits of the normal type, we had a number of visits by people who had a high profile in another area. Jimmy Carter came two or three times, partly because of the guinea worm project and partly

because...

Q: The guinea worm being...?

BRYNN: ...being the worm, a long worm, I guess up to six feet long, that comes in through untreated water and develops inside the person. It does not kill you, but eventually it erupts through the skin and literally has to be pulled out. It's extraordinarily painful. But the cycle can be broken if you put a piece of a special type of nylon cloth, which Dupont has been providing free for years, over the aperture from the water supply. You can break the cycle, and once it's broken, unless you re-contaminate, then that village is free. The guinea worm must have human body as a vector. So we had Jimmy Carter and Rosalyn there. We had people from the Center for Disease Control because we were running projects on malaria testing and similar initiatives. We were host to anthropologists, geologists, and waters people that found Burkina Faso sort of an exotic and interesting place to visit, but we had almost no one from the regular government side of things.

Q: Was there oil?

BRYNN: No oil at all. There is some gold. Gold mining in Burkina Faso is done by individual miners digging holes in relatively soft sand which has a gold content, bringing the stuff up in little sacks, and then subjecting it to cleansing and melting and making it into gold bars. Some of the most horrific conditions that I ever saw anywhere were in the gold mine in the northern part of Burkina Faso near the Malian frontier. An area screened off or barb-wired off would enclose maybe a dozen young men. They had to be slim because they burrow down through narrow holes. They would work in this confined area for a week. Families would supply food. They would work naked under extremely hot conditions in the day and then they would wrap themselves in blankets at night. When they left the compound at the end of the week, they were paid a percentage, obviously a modest percentage, of the gold that had been made from their gleanings. They would have a week off and then they'd go back in. It was an occupation that attracted lots of strong young men because, relatively speaking, it paid well.

Q: You mentioned talking to the president and all. How did you deal with the government? How did you find dealing with the government?

BRYNN: It was an easier experience, I think than almost anywhere else in Africa, because the Burkinabé followed French forms very religiously. Appointments were kept. The minister with whom you met had an agenda, or if you would ask for a meeting on a particular subject, I found that the ministers had informed themselves to a certain degree about the topic. I found that, unlike in the Comoros Islands, papers that you needed for signing ceremonies were properly drafted. Indeed, Burkina Faso's bureaucracy worked a cut above what I found in other parts of Francophone Africa.

Q: You left there when?

BRYNN: All of a sudden I left there. I got a call from George Moose, who had been recently installed - this was in March of 1993 - he had just been installed as the new Assistant Secretary...

Q: Taking Hank Cohen's place.

BRYNN: ...taking Hank Cohen's place. I got a call from him in Ouagadougou asking if I would come back to see him. No other information was given. I went back and I arrived on a Friday afternoon. I had an appointment to see him on Monday, but because I got into Washington early enough on Friday afternoon that business was still open, I went to the African Bureau and asked his secretary, Claire Mueller, whom I knew a bit, if she could give me any idea what the meeting was about. She said, "Well, I do know what the meeting is about, but I'm surprised that you don't and maybe I'm not supposed to say anything." So she went into George's office and she came back out and said, "Why don't you go in and have your chat with him now." So I went in, and George talked about Africa and what he was trying to do and how he wanted to reorganize the Bureau. At the end he said, "Are you interested?" I said, "Sir, I don't know what I'm supposed to be interested in." He said, "I'd like you to be the PDAS."

Q: That's the Principal Deputy...

BRYNN: ...Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, and I said, "Yes." I caught a plane the same evening. I was back in Burkina Faso on Sunday afternoon. I had asked to be able to stay two weeks. He wanted me to start right away, but I stayed two weeks so that I could be there for the softball tournament in Accra, and then I got on the plane and was back in Washington by the beginning of April 1993. I found out, oddly enough, that, for reasons that again had escaped me, my name had gone forward very far to be ambassador to Zaire. I actually was at the point where I was going to receive a call from President Clinton. That was not what my wife wanted; she thought we needed to come back. So as it turned out this PDAS interrupted that, so I ended up back in Washington.

Q: Did your wife come back too...?

BRYNN: She had been in Conakry for two years and then she shifted up to Bonn, so she was in Bonn for the last part of my Burkinabé assignment, and she stayed in Bonn only one year, and then she came back to Washington.

Q: You were the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs from '93 to when?

BRYNN: Until July of 1995. During the course of that meeting, I said, "I would really like to stay only two years if that's okay, and then I would like to go back out to an embassy." The Assistant Secretary agreed. Later on - I guess it's a compliment to him and to me - he asked would I stay longer. I was keen to go back out, and so I finished up in the summer of '95, went to Harvard for six weeks for one of those programs, and went out to Ghana.

Q: In '93 to '95 what were your principal interests in Africa during this period of time?

BRYNN: George Moose had rearranged the top leadership in the African Bureau so that, instead of having the Deputy Assistant Secretaries being in charge of geographical regions in the Bureau - traditionally there had been a West Africa, South Africa and East Africa - he rearranged it functionally so that I was in charge of the management side. One of my deputies - or one of his deputies and working for me as well - Prudence Bushnell, was put in charge of human rights issues. Then another one was in charge of the political agenda, and then we had a fourth, I being principal and there were three other DAS's, one of those three, with a special focus on South Africa and southern Africa. So I was the plumber, so rather, at least on paper, than being involved substantively in the policy shaping, I was keeping the place going, getting new desk officers, working on budget issues. That's the way it looked on paper, but there were two factors that challenged that. One, George, because he was an extraordinarily effective speaker and the senior African American in the Bureau, was very much on call as a public speaker, and he also spent a fair amount of time traveling in Europe on issues that came up, for instance Rwanda. So I had charge of the thing for fairly long periods, so that, of course, meant that there had to be policy involvement too. Secondly, I think during the Rwanda crisis everybody was so extraordinarily taxed that responsibilities tended to become fudged. We just really had to back-stop each other a lot.

Nigeria was my baptism of fire. When General Abacha toppled Abiola, Moose was in Europe, and I led the charge to stop sanctions on Nigeria. We moved this through the State Department bureaucracy in one day, to the horror and astonishment of the powers that be. Secretary of State Christopher signed off the same evening. I was gently chided fro having moved so quickly.

Q: Before we move to the Rwanda thing, you were dealing, say, with the plumbing problem at an extraordinarily difficult time, and that was that the State Department, under the auspices of your Senator from North Carolina, Jesse Helms, and others, but also the lack of really strong leadership from the Clinton administration, was getting cut to the bone. I'm told by people who served as inspectors in Africa at that time that there were real, real problems. You had junior officers sort of tossed out there in a lot of these posts trying to cope with running things that they really weren't ready for. Could you talk about this?

BRYNN: You're right on the mark. When I arrived in March of 1993, we had only 75 percent occupation rate of our posts overseas. We had lots of posts that were definitely understaffed - and, I must say, underfunded as well - and this was a reality that I can't say we were able to do a whole lot about because funding levels were very low. Foreign Service Officers were becoming increasingly scarce as recruitment levels declined. Africa was the continent where you found a lot of the very junior officers; they would go out and cut their teeth on an African post. But in the context of the spread of AIDS and the deterioration of physical safety in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the sense, after the collapse of the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union, that Sub-Saharan Africa

ceased to be a field of play in the old strategic sense, younger officers who had fire in their bellies to be on the ramparts against the Soviet menace were no longer interested at all in going to Sub-Saharan Africa. The African bureau became a stepchild. I hear Africans all the time saying that one of the most horrible things that ever happened was the collapse of the Soviet Union because it just led to a level of neglect, and this was painful. I will say, though, that I concluded that it was better to send out younger officers, more junior officers, even if they lacked experience, if they had good health and good energy levels than it was to try to recruit more experienced officers who were reluctant to go, partly for family reasons, partly because of concerns about their own health. A number of ambassadors, some of the more junior ambassadors today who are serving in Africa, really got their start by taking on some considerable responsibilities in these posts. But the inspectors were right on; these were difficult times.

Q: Did you have the feeling that Secretary of State Christopher had much interest in this?

BRYNN: No, he did not indicate much interest. I'm in no position to be critical of him. I saw a lot of him when the Rwanda crisis came to the fore but frankly other than that I saw very little of him at all. I don't think that staffing, resource issues, finance, touching on Africa Bureau, made their way to his desk. I sat in on a great many of Strobe Talbott's nine a. m. meetings; Africa was barely tolerated.

Q: One gets very much this impression. Did you find that you were sort of working to recruit wives, children, almost anybody off the street at a post to take on responsibility?

BRYNN: We did. We were very conscious of that and, in fact, it often worked quite well. It was one way we were able to staff some of our more difficult posts, because we could offer a couple jobs so that they were really able to improve their junior officers' situation. I was very, very proactive in that regard, and I think it led to substantial improvements in the morale at a number of our posts by meeting the expectations of everybody who wanted to work.

Q: How did you find the system here for training language people and all that? Did this seem to work fairly well for Africa?

BRYNN: It seemed to work pretty well. I don't recall that being as enormous a problem as perhaps the health and energy levels. Again, I found that some of the more junior officers high with energy levels that and good health were better performers than some who were older and more experienced.

Q: The health factor: when you say this, what are you talking about?

BRYNN: I'm talking about fear of AIDS. Older officers with children who were reaching a point of being sexually active were very afraid to have family at post. We were also looking at a sharp determination in the effectiveness of malaria prophylaxis.

Q: It would scare the hell out of me.

BRYNN: It did, rightfully. This meant that we had a much smaller proportion of Foreign Service Officers with children in the Sub-Saharan African posts than anywhere else.

Q: Did you find this made for a tighter African corps?

BRYNN: I found it made for a very tight African corps, and for the most part I have an impression that morale was pretty solid in most places. Indeed, I found that morale tended to be highest at our most difficult African posts. In too many instances moral problems were associated with ambassadors, including some career officers, who worked too hard to maintain a certain level of elegance in their life styles in countries where this could be done only at severe cost to mission management priorities.

Q: Let's talk about Rwanda. Could you explain what the problem was and all?

BRYNN: As soon as I settled into the Bureau in the spring of 1993, we began to get reports from Dave Rawson, our ambassador in Kigali, a good friend whom I had known for a long time and in fact had succeeded as political officer in Bamako way back, that there was rising evidence of tension between the Tutsi and the Hutus. The Tutsi were historically the dominant tribe but the Hutus were by far more numerous. Dave warned that we should be aware of the possibility of a resurgence of severe ethnic conflict, which, had happened every 20 years from really the beginning of the century. I went out to Bujumbura in Burundi, the country just above Rwanda, in late 1993 to represent the President or the State Department or everybody at a funeral for the recently assassinated chief of state. The tension in the street - and this was in Bujumbura - was extremely high. The French had supplied soldiers that packed around us as the dignitaries as we walked from the cathedral to the cemetery, to the burial site. My only regret was that the French soldiers were about a head shorter than I was. But after that whole day of funeral ceremonies, I retired to the residence (we did not have a resident ambassador there). I invited members of the American community, the official community, to come up and have some dinner and brief me on what was going on. The theme of the evening was a message that within six months either in Burundi or in Rwanda there was extremely high likelihood of a major genocidal outbreak, that guns and weapons were being stored, lists made, and people identified. This was going to be a very serious situation. I sent a report back reflecting their concerns. I then went to do some other business in Africa including in Kinshasa, where I ended up having a long breakfast with Robert Kaplan, who has since come to prominence for other reasons.

Q: He's a writer.

BRYNN: That's right, the writer who talked about Failed States in Africa and elsewhere. By the time I got back to Washington, which was probably a week later (I think it was shortly before Christmas), I asked what had been the reaction to my cable. Well, there was no reaction to my cable, and in the press of business I didn't think too much more about it, I guess. But then on April 4th or 5th, when in fact I was in Florida for a few days…

Q: '93?

BRYNN: '94. I got a call from Pru Bushnell, the next ranking deputy assistant secretary, who said, "Get on a plane and get back here right away. We're just beginning to get the reports in from Kigali of enormous ethnic carnage." I flew back that afternoon, went immediately to the White House and into the basement there. It was Sandy Berger and Tony Lake and Susan Rice and General K. Shalikashvili were already there.

Q: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

BRYNN: ...Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and, down from New York, Madeleine Albright from her position at the UN to talk about Rwanda. Over the next few weeks I wrote in a little steno pad lots and lots of notes - they're all stuffed into a file somewhere up at the farm in Vermont, and I'd like to get it out someday - but the overwhelming impression I retain was based upon two things: one, a profound feeling in Washington that nobody had provided any forewarning that this was going to come, although in fact Dave and others and done some...

Q: This was Dave...

BRYNN: Dave Rawson, our ambassador.

Q: R A W S O N.

BRYNN: That's right. His post had contributed some quite focused reporting. But in Washington, especially at the White House, there was a persuasive impression, that State had failed, although it was interesting to note that in fact the National Security Staff, as far as I could see, really hadn't paid much attention to reports that had come in. Secondly, there was an overwhelming sense of fatigue in the wake of the Somalia adventure that we did not want to get involved. I think personally it was a very low point in the Clinton foreign affairs agenda. We really closed our eyes week after week in the aftermath of that April 5th/April 6th explosion. Meetings after meetings with these telecon sessions with the Pentagon and the White House and Treasury produced little more than handringing. Nobody, except for Pru Bushnell, really had a sense that this was a moral crisis, a moral responsibility, that we could not hide behind the fact that we simply didn't have "resources" or interests, strategic interests. We were very slow to get involved, and by the time we did get involved it cost us an enormous amount more financially, not to mention, of course, that the human toll reached 750,000 or, I suspect, closer to 1,000,000 by the time we engaged. It's an unhappy story, Stu, and I'm not sure anyone really has begun to tell it.

Q: In a way one can ask, "Why us?" Okay, here you have two tribes in the middle of Africa doing this, and is this sort of the white man's guilt and the American proclivity to have guilt? Start with that.

BRYNN: Well, I say, and I said at the time - why us? - simply because this was an extraordinary moral outrage, and I think we had the same responsibilities here as we did towards the Jews in 1940, '41, '42, where we did nothing either. I thought that the lesson of the Holocaust had to be that, whatever your political considerations and guilt feelings or lack of them, this was simply such a moral outrage that any civilized country should respond with the resources at its disposal.

Q: Initially when we were looking at this, was there a feeling sort of there's nothing we can do? And what about our allies?

BRYNN: I think there was a feeling that there was nothing we could do unilaterally, that we really felt that this was a "French and Belgian problem" and that the best we would do was to provide logistical support. Well, the French, of course, went at this tragedy with a pro-Hutu stance that really clouded the issue, and nobody else probably had the logistical capabilities to intervene. By the time we became engaged by providing logistical support enormous human damage had been done, and then we ended up footing a very expensive bill, $750,000,000 or $780,000,000 worth of fresh water and foodstuffs. This was fine but came too late to avert the tragedy. I remember so vividly many details. We sat in Washington anguished over the fact that, mobile radios, were being used by Hutu militants to organize genocidal activities, and we were saying we didn't want to suppress those radios because of a free speech issue. This was grotesque; it was really grotesque.

Q: How about leadership at the Presidential level? At a certain point it's no longer sort of an African affairs issue, this is a national issue. Did you have the feeling that the Clinton administration was...? Was Somalia still...?

BRYNN: Yes, Somalia remained the lodestar. The National Security Council became the forum for intensive debate and extensive inaction. There was much rending of garments but absolutely, absolutely complete disinterest in getting the United States out in front, on an issue when our vital interests were not engaged.

Q: There's a movie out right now called Blackhawk Down. It's about we lost 18 men on television fighting in Mogadishu, and that has until quite recently had a tremendous impact. I guess never again will we get involved with these native populations.

BRYNN: That's right. The transformation from September 11th is we have reversed our policy only because we took a direct hit. But there's no doubt about it; Somalia was absolutely the guiding principle over at the National Security Council. I went to many meetings over there, and every one of them was based on the premise that we would not put our troops, we would not put Americans in the line of fire. It's an interesting point, Stu. I remember the day that Dave Rawson led the convoy of Americans and several foreigners out of Kigali and into Burundi - I guess a distance of 100 or 150. We maintained radio contact, and at several points it looked like the Hutus militants were in fact going to massacre the convoy or drag out of the convoy large numbers of people they believed were not bona fide foreigners and kill them on the spot. Dave's role in bringing this convoy through, I think, is one of the great unsung masterpieces of our age. If he had

failed and we had ended up with a couple hundred Americans being killed in the process of trying to get out of Rwanda, would that have dramatically raised our appetite for intervention in Rwanda? I tend to think so.

Q: Was the situation in the former Yugoslavia playing a role in this? This was '94.

BRYNN: I don't recall that being a topic of point of departure.

Q: It was Somalia?

BRYNN: Absolutely Somalia.

Q: How about the role of Sandy Berger, the National Security Advisor?

BRYNN: Sandy Berger was the National Security Advisor, yes. I frankly am not a great fan of Sandy's. There was a screaming and headbutting atmosphere at these meetings, a lot of shouting, I thought, on Sandy's part. His level of unhappiness was raised by the fact that he knew that the leadership in the White House above him was absolutely against any involvement, and he was getting from us in the African Bureau the most grotesque information, all of it true, about the levels of killing, This was reinforced by what CNN was reporting on the floating of corpses in rivers and lakes. He was in an impossible situation, there's no doubt about it, but he tended to vent frustration by beating up on us.

Q: What was the role of Susan Rice?

BRYNN: She was a worker bee at the time. She, of course, subsequently came into much higher profile. It was probably good for her that Sandy absolutely dominated the meeting so that she didn't have to take many bullets.

Q: Was Prudence Bushnell...? Later she became ambassador to Kenya, and her embassy got blown up. She came out of that looking very tough and well. But how did she act in these meetings?

BRYNN: I think she was the single bright light in these meetings. She pulled no punches. She pushed the agenda that we had an overarching moral responsibility to be in there and to get involved immediately. I know her frustration level was enormous. I happen to be a very close friend and there were times when psychologically she found it very difficult to cope because you couldn't get the bureaucracy in Washington to energize itself and we couldn't get the leadership in the White House to see this as a great moral crisis.

Q: And George Moose? Where was he in this?

BRYNN: He was a facilitator too, but he was marginalized pretty much along with the rest of this, because this became a National Security Council phenomenon.

Q: Did you get any feel about the President?

BRYNN: The only time I got a feel about the President was when he came to the State Department one night shortly after (if I remember correctly), Rawson got all the Americans out. Hillary and he came over on their way to some other function in the State Department, I think. He went into the Operations Center and talked for about a half hour. By then all of us were so strung out. We had been working very, very long hours every day for weeks. I think he left the impression that he realized too late in the game that this was a crisis much larger than what he had been willing to comprehend before.

Q: Later he apologized.

BRYNN: He did, and I actually- (end of tape)
-to Ghana on my watch in March of 1988. We had a private chat and that's one thing that came up, said - he was on his way, and it turned out that they were making a detour in his itinerary to go to Kigali - he said that was a low point in his administration's handling of this foreign policy crisis.

Q: For somebody who's not familiar with this, could you explain how this thing worked out? What was done?

BRYNN: At the end of the day the French went in unilaterally and established an area in the southwestern part of Rwanda as a refuge for the Hutu populations fleeing a Tutsi offensive form Uganda and northern Rwanda. Following the massacre Tutsi leadership that was in Uganda began forcing its way from Uganda, with substantial help from Uganda, into northeastern Rwanda. This offensive pushed many thousands of Hutus ahead of advancing Tutsi forces. At that point the French intervened because they were afraid that the Tutsi dominance would end up in the massacring a million or more Hutus. We moved structurally with rebel supplies into areas pacified by the Tutsis and established bases for humanitarian relief. We supported Paul Kugami, the Tutsi leader, in his bid to take control of the governmental apparatus. We did not put much pressure on Kugami to be very accommodating towards the Hutus. In fact, as the Hutus fled across the frontier into Zaire, the Tutsis chased them. Having made a massive intervention on a humanitarian level we concluded that Kugami was able to take charge of the situation, and we bowed out. The French remained much more active, partly, I think, to protect the Hutus. To his credit Kugami discouraged large-scale revenge against Hutus who remained in Rwanda.

Q: By the time this was over was about the time you left again?

BRYNN: In some respects it the tragedy's repercussions remain with us. I left the Bureau in July of 1995. I had a fairly long gestation period, again because of the confirmation process. I went to Harvard for six weeks and then came back and worked a little bit on the Rwanda task force. In September, I accepted some engagements. We arrived in Ghana, I think, almost five years to the day, November 17, 1995, after Ouagadougou in 1990.

Q: And you were in Ghana from '95 to...?

BRYNN: Until the summer of '98. I left Accra shortly before the bombing of the embassies in Dar Es Salaam and Nairobi.

Q: Before you left the State Department, did you feel that there was a new mood within the Clinton administration? Was it going to react more strongly, do you think, if something happened of this nature again?

BRYNN: I sensed a new mood, and I think that if we had had a resurgence of Hutu-Tutsi genocidal tendencies, and it was quite possible it was going to happen in Burundi, we were psychologically prepared to intervene in a more timely fashion and with military muscle.

Q: Let's turn to Ghana. Ghana has always had sort of a special place in our foreign policy really from Nkrumah, and he was the fair-haired boy, to use that expression, at the beginning of the opening to Africa. He and Nyerere were sort of the two people, particularly because they're Anglophone - the French had their own group of French speaker leaders... How were relations with Ghana, and what was the importance we saw in this '95-'98 period?

BRYNN: I think there were probably three points to consider. There was, of course, this Nkrumah ambiance which governed our bilateral relationship. He went to school in the United States. He established a relationship even with Eisenhower. And then, of course, he collapsed into gross dictatorship...

Q: And also teamed up with Nasser and Sukarno...

BRYNN: That's right with every suspect character on the block. The whole U.S.-Ghanaian relationship from the '60s was colored by the fact that Nkrumah had taken a wonderful state, an almost model colony in the British crown, and had destroyed it. This element of pain is still part of the relationship between the United States and Ghana. The second element is a feeling among African Americans that Ghana is the best place to rediscover their African roots. It is Anglophone. It has a relatively developed physical infrastructure, so you can get around the country. It's got the slave castles on the coast, which are a poignant reminder of the slave trade. It's got a population that, despite the economic vicissitudes of the country, has sent a lot of its people to study in the United States. Many Ghanaians have remained here. So there is among the African Americans a sense of affection for and understanding of Ghana, a sense more highly developed than it is with any other African country. That contrasted with the conviction in Washington that Ghana had gone to hell in a handbasket because of what had happened with Nkrumah. The third point is J. J. Rawlings. What an adventure. A young pilot takes control of the country, turns it back to the civilians, finds that corruption levels remain high, takes it back again and executes seven of the leading Ghanaians (including three former heads of state). He embarked on aggressive rationalization. Suddenly about 1982 he finds that the

country has declined to such low levels that he makes an absolutely dramatic turn opts for privatization. He opened a dialogue with financial institutions, investors, and the West.

J.J. never understood the ideological implications of all this, which is probably just as well. He just decided Option A didn't work, so Option B was what we were going to go for. This put us into a remarkably stormy but productive relationship with Ghana. One level he remained deeply suspicious of the United States. We had CIA problems. In the early '90s Rawlings persuaded himself that we wanted him out. On the other hand, he responded handsomely to our pressure that he submitted himself to elections in 1992 and in 1996. In the year 2000, when we fell in love with him in a certain way, warts and all he honored the 1992 constitutional prohibition against a third term.

He certainly is the most fascinating character that I ever encountered during in my years in Africa, and I think a high point for me in my professional career in the Foreign Service was working very hard to help Ghana stage what could credibly pass for free and fair elections in 1996. I am full of praise for the very costly electoral management and monitoring program that we put into place. And I think the election provided an element of dignity for Rawlings during the next four years of his term. The 1996 election process also empowered Ghanaians to see that their country might look forward to a future a little bit different from much of the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. It's been especially an element of pride for African Americans. African Americans need, as we all need, some concrete evidence that this circumstanced continent can escape a troubled past. We've seen the end of apartheid in South Africa on one hand, and we have, in Ghana - in a less dramatic role area but still very important - another major achievement.

Q: Let's talk about going there. What was your embassy like, and how did you find relations at that point when you were there?

BRYNN: Relations were good. Ken Brown, who was my predecessor, had established an extraordinarily wide-ranging and sensitive and deeply planted relationship with the ruling caste in Ghana. I suppose it's always easier to see what the negatives are from your predecessor, but there were really rather few. He may have been inclined to be more pro-Ghanaian, a little bit more myopic on the side of the Rawlings regime than I was, but he left a very fine relationship with the government.

Q: From where you came from, you had been looking at Ghana. Ghana was one of the African countries, and so you can't help but carry the Washington view with you. So let's talk about, first, Rawlings. Was Ghana Rawlings, or was there more to Ghana by this time?

BRYNN: There was more to Ghana by this time, but there's no doubt that the energy force of Rawlings was still so great, especially when I got there in '95, that ministers were afraid to be too proactive on their own without getting into trouble with Rawlings. Rawlings came to Washington on a state visit while I was in the confirmation process here, and he cut an extraordinary figure. He was late for his meeting at the White House, which ruffled feathers. I was not directly involved but I heard all these stories and

thought, my God, are we going to survive it. At the end of the day, however I think he made of positive impressions around town. I don't think I had the same informal relationship with J.J. that Ken Brown enjoyed. I think there was a chemistry between the two of them that made that part of their relationship. On the other hand, I think that my relationship across the board with various elements in Ghanaian society may have moved our interests forward, partly because, of course, everything was working through the election of 1996 and working up to Clinton's visit in 1998. Ghanaians were determined to mobilize the country's resources to make the Clinton visit a success, and as a result of that vector I got to know an enormous number of Ghanaians across the board, all the way from literary figures to musicians to the local government people and parliamentarians. I was helped by having an extraordinarily good staff. Ghanaians deserve enormous credit for bringing off a very fine visit for Clinton.

Q: How did you feel that the economy was doing at this point?

BRYNN: There's no doubt about it that Ghana's economic progress, which had established a certain momentum in the early 1990s after the first big wave of reforms were put in place, began to flag just before my arrival. The biggest challenge was the inability of the Ghanaian government, the Ghanaian political system, to move more briskly on privatization. Many families were deeply invested in the grossly underperforming parastatals. They were willing to see some smaller parastatals sacrificed as part of the enticement to get larger loans from international financial institutions, but at the end of the day really couldn't see their own deeply cherished cash cows brought to the table. But secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Ghana failed to attract large scale U.S. investment. Part of it dealt with the land tenure system, American investors could not always be confident that they could control of land or other resources without being harassed for annual presents. Corruption, although not nearly as high as you found in Cameroon and perhaps not higher than you found in Cote d'Ivoire, was high enough to discourage American investment. Middle-level entrepreneurs in the United States, especially African Americans, who came with money in their pocket were often were the first to be alienated. They found that their African brother would put his arms around them figuratively and in effect remove their wallets in the process. We ended up with many disillusioned Americans, especially African Americans, mid-level investor types, who came to Ghana with a dream and with some money in their pockets. Big-ticket investors, such as Kaiser Aluminum, which had been in Ghana since the late '50s, or investors planning to come in to help tap offshore natural gas and some oil reserves, or some big-ticket American investors who focused the agricultural center, were less vulnerable to harassment and the corruption, and they've done a bit better. (One prominent player on the scene for a while was none other than Enron, but Enron cut such an unattractive swath across the Ghanaian landscape that J. J. Rawlings asked them to leave.) But even the large-scale investors encountered substantial inertia in Ghana's swollen and lethargic bureaucracy.

Q: Right now they're going through a major scandal, the collapse of this firm Enron.

BRYNN: I think, that Ghana's economy, with all its warts and all its problems, is now

sufficiently broad based and is sufficiently privatized to sustain a moderate growth rate of three and a half or four percent, barring some real collapse in the political leadership. The heady days of eight percent growth rate to nine percent growth rates we saw for several years in the late '80s and early '90s put Ghana back in comparatively decent shape by African standards. Those growth rates are unlikely to return in the near future. But there is an enhanced level of political maturity. Ken Brown deserves a lot of credit for that, and I think that in my watch we were able to help that along, too. I think if the political institutions continue to take root and to mature, down the road Ghana's prospects look pretty bright. Its big, big Trojan horse is a problem over which Ghana has little control. If you have an implosion in Nigeria, you may see just lots of Nigerians crossing Togo and Benin flooding into Ghana. Rawlings never tired of saying how much he feared this "million man march" from Nigeria to Ghana.

Q: What were the main sources of economic support in Ghana?

BRYNN: Gold production, in the first instance while gold prices were quite high, when I first arrived and it looked like this was going to be a very big-ticket item. Gold prices have been more depressed recently, although I think they're firming a bit. The most spectacular good news story was the recovery of cocoa. Ghana had been the world's leading producer of cocoa on the eve of independence, and then through nationalization of cocoa and paying below-market prices to cocoa cultivators, the cocoa production sank by, I think, 80 percent by about 1985. But cocoa has come back, and in the long term, even though prices there are not top class, there is promise of greater growth. Ghana has also done a fairly good job in the recultivation of natural rubber, which is coming back into its own after a binge with synthetics. Ghana stands to benefit from increased sugar and palm oil extraction.

Q: Ground nuts, are they still...?

BRYNN: Ground nuts are okay - it's a feature in the north - but the world overproduction of ground nuts is legion. If you produce ground nuts, you'd better think mostly of eating them at home.

Q: Was AID busy there?

BRYNN: I think we had a good AID program. I've been rather negative in some aspects about our AID program in Cameroon, positive on our very flexible one in Burkina Faso. I thought in Ghana we had a highly structured, formal AID process but on balance our program functioned fairly well. I think we had identified the right targets. We were strong in vocational training and secondary-level education. We were very strong in health care and health-related issued, and we had some, I think, quite good programs in increasing the productivity of small-scale agriculture. We also had 54 NGO/PVOs in the country, an extraordinary presence. I emphasized was the need to get these people to know each other, and hosted monthly or late afternoon work and socializing sessions at the residence. So often we saw that several different NCO/PVOs were doing exactly the same thing and had no idea who else was involved. And we had a really top-of-the-line

Peace Corps operations; the oldest worldwide. We celebrated a big anniversary while we were there, forty years.

Q: What were they doing?

BRYNN: The PCVs were very heavily in education. In Ghana's an educational system weak but well established, so it was relatively easy to put volunteers into schools and have them raise the quality of the education without having to worry about building a schoolhouse to get the whole thing started.

Q: What about the Ghanaian military at this point? What sort of a role were they playing?

BRYNN: I got the impression, and I think it was vindicated, that by 1995 the military had no appetite to get reinvolved in politics. They had been there, done that, and it had not been a happy experience. I thought that the Ghanaian military had decided to return to the barracks. The leadership was professional. Most U.S. military bigwigs who came down from European Command in Stuttgart liked what they saw in the Ghanaian military. And also, a very high percentage of the officers and men had had some exposure to international experience in UN Operations. I think Ghana had the highest percentage of its military involved in UN peace-keeping missions of any country in Sub-Saharan Africa and maybe one of the highest in the world.

Q: Were we encouraging or seeing a development of an African military group that would go around and squelch problems?

BRYNN: Oh, yes, we did, and I was very active in this area. We were able to get a defense attaché reinstalled which had been closed some time ago. We had an active ACRI agenda- that's the African Crisis Reduction Initiative. Ghanaians played a central role. They and the Senegalese were sort of the war horses. Both militaries were relatively well trained and well led. I pushed very, very strongly to have this new pan-African self-help military program headquartered in Ghana. I came away with a positive impression of the Ghanaian military. J. J. Rawlings was aware that I had been an Air Force officer, and therefore he assumed I was a pilot. Of course, J.J. still flies, and many times he would say, "We're going up, going to fly together," and I kept saying, "I'm not pilot qualified." "Oh, we'll go anyway." I kept thinking of all the people I might want to put on that plane to have it go down with me. Fortunately it never came to pass.

Q: How did you deal with J. J. Rawlings?

BRYNN: I saw him frequently and realized that you had to be willing to go over every issue every time. He liked to call me to see him about six o'clock in the morning, and I sometimes would see him in, to put it mildly, very informal circumstances. He might have been up most of the night, had a bit to drink, or was jazzed up on coffee and Coca Cola and was energized. He often called about five o'clock in the morning and said, "Could I see you right away on this." By the time I got there, the crisis of the moment

might be, was usually settled, but there were always many things to talk about. He was fixated in conversations with me on three things. The first was deep-seated feeling that the French were going to try to overthrow him. He thought there was a Gallic conspiracy on all of his borders, that the French were animating Eyadema in Togo, to oppose him, or that Blaise, up in Ouagadougou, was being programmed by the French and of course the Ivorians. So quite often there had to be a conversation about the French and I had to give assurances that the French did not plan to topple Rawlings. Secondly his real distress that American big business wasn't pumping a lot of money into Ghana. We talked frequently about corruption. Of course, he prided himself on not being corrupt. He was genuinely not corrupt and I am satisfied will not die a rich man. His wife was much more mischievous than he. He would get really roiled about corruption and even as we were sitting there he would call people and say tell them to stamp out corruption. The third thing was his absolute desire to have Washington see that he was an important player. He wanted to visit Washington frequently, and we were fairly accommodating on this score. He wanted to start his trip in Africa by coming to Ghana. This happened. Those were always three big themes that dominated my conversations with him. But we also had lots of conversations which were prompted more by our, asking Ghana to take a lead in the Liberian conflict and in getting Ghana to talk to General Abacha in Nigeria, and to play a moderating role whenever there were African summits.

Q: What about this Nigerian connection? In a way these were the two centers of Anglophone, and Nigeria was going through a nasty time with Abacha, wasn't it?

BRYNN: It certainly was until the "poison mushroom" intervened. I still think Abacha was poisoned. Abacha came over to Ghana twice while I was there. I met him once. It was clear to me, in looking at the body language between J.J. and Abacha that J.J. was in deadly fear that Abacha was up to no good and was going to do harm to Ghana. Rawlings would always talk about the million-man march, and he didn't mean the million-man march in Washington; he meant a million Nigerians coming across
Benin and Togo either because of chaos at home or aggressive designs abroad. He genuinely feared the mischief that Abacha could do. We knew that no non-Nigerian really had much influence with Abacha. Although we asked J.J. to help Abacha see wisdom, I'm not sure that much came of that. He did, in fact, though, have a much better relationship with the Nigerian military involved in Liberia experience, and I think J.J. was pleased to think that we valued Rawling's role.

Q: What was Ghana doing in Liberia?

BRYNN: The Nigerian-led African force was sent into Liberia as a peace-keeping mission to prepare for the free and fair elections we were hoping for. After Taylor had overthrown - what was the name?

Q: There was Doe.

BRYNN: Samuel Doe, yes, that's right. The Nigerians were there in a peace-keeping mode, but in fact fighting was intense on occasion. The Nigerian-led operation had

attained some level of credibility, but in fact we believed that the Ghanaian troops were by far the best disciplined and the most effective foreign troops in Liberia. We supplied the Ghanaian contingent with military equipment, up to helicopters. We put or money on the Ghanaian horse. Meanwhile Rawlings constantly reminded me that Liberia was "our" colony, and that twelve marines could establish a preserve in Monrovia that would restore peace. I suspected that Rawlings was not far off the mark.

Q: What about the role of the British? One thinks of Ghana and their military as being a very British-type outfit. The British turned out a pretty good army at one point.

BRYNN: Yes, we played a very limited role in terms of the Ghanaian military in Ghana itself. We were much more focused on Ghana's role either in the UN peace-keeping operations or in Liberia. The British played, I thought, a very constructive role in the training for Ghanaians. They ran an academy just outside Accra - and I spoke at it many times - where they brought officers from other African Commonwealth countries. I think the British relationship to the Ghanaian military was not only constructive but probably reinforced rather fond memories of the old empire.

Q: How about African Americans there, people coming back to look for roots or investment? Did you find yourself dealing with this particular element of American society?

BRYNN: Yes, quite a bit, partly because a number of them who came back got involved good philanthropic or social work and partly because we had a number of African Americans who were victimized. Many African American groups were drawn to Ghana by the country's rich cultural traditions, and by their search for roots. I hosted many of them at receptions and lunches at the residence, and put on my professional hat to provided guidance for visits to the castles and forts along the coast. A great many African American educators came over to Ghana. The De Bois Accra house and library needed a great deal of work, and I tried to stimulate interest among African-Americans. I found this was an enriching part of my life in Ghana.

Q: As an embassy in a place like this, particularly with African Americans coming there, were we able to get African American officers? I think this would be very important to show that...

BRYNN: We did. We had an African American AID director. We had an African American, for part of my tour, Peace Corps director. On the embassy staff, African Americans were well represented, as well as in the Consular section. Most of the American NGOs/PVOs in Ghana, I think, probably had African Americans at the helm. My DCM was an African American woman.

Q: Were things changing or were you noticing the phenomenon that I mentioned before about the starvation of the Foreign Service under the auspices of Jesse Helms and the lack of willingness of the Clinton administration to fight this? Or was it beginning to turn around?

BRYNN: I don't think it began to turn around in a meaningful way while I was in Ghana from '95 to '98. Ghana was an easier place to attract Foreign Service Officers, probably because living conditions compared favorably with other parts of Africa, there were many interesting things to do, and it was Anglophone. We had a very fine school. On the other hand, we had a real crisis in the consular area. Our consular operation was growing substantially - at a rate of 10% year by year. We were, more vulnerable than some other embassies to counterfeit and other scams associated with certain Nigerians. In one month - I picked out a month in early 1996 - and we ran a check on all documents that came across the consular counter to try to test for veracity, an interesting exercise. We found that well over two-thirds of the documents presented at the windows, of all different types, were counterfeit or fraudulent. This is the underfunding the foreign affairs agencies come in. The antiquated nature of our equipment, our extraordinarily compressed and tight physical facilities, and our lack of staffing challenged our consular operation's effectiveness. Out of embassy funds, we undertook considerable expansion of physical facilities. I got rapped on the knuckle because they said this expenditure was not authorized. But at least the rapping came after the work was finished. You just couldn't have people working in an office where there was no place to sit. You've got to have a place where they can do their analytical work at a table. I just have to wonder, looking at American embassies in these third world countries, how many people got visas and came to the States because of the fatigue factor.

Q: You mentioned the election of '96. Could we talk about what we were doing there?

BRYNN: The election of '96: We established, and spent about a million dollars in so doing, a comprehensive nationwide election monitoring system right down to providing plastic ballot boxes for the votes. We hired poll watchers. We rented vehicles so we had mobile teams to go to places where we forecast. We established a radio network. I had really fantastic officers at my elbow. Geeta Pasi and Jim Donegan were stellar performers. We received tremendous help through AID, which provided an election dimension; Ghanaians knew what they were voting for and could use a ballot. We had excellent cooperation from the government, partly, I think, because the private polls indicated that Rawlings was going to win the election. It was very much in his favor to have an honest election. These were long-term results; standards were raised in the election of 1996. This held Rawlings to a level of accountability in the election of 2000 where his handpicked guy lost, in effect a peaceful regime change. I just had a very positive sense - and Ken Brown had started this before me – that we had made a large but very worthwhile investment.

Q: The Clinton visit, could you talk about that?

BRYNN: Well, like all of these visits, there are so many bruises all over the place. The team that came out at the beginning of 1998 to look at Ghana as a place for a visit - I'll say this even with my own Democratic Party leanings - this was the biggest bunch of amateurs that I ever saw coming down the pike. Many of them were young. Very few of them were paid. I really think if you're going to have a White House staff, for God's

sake, focus on a smaller but better trained staff. Some of them were arrogant. They looked at Accra and concluded that it was a dirty and unphotogenic city and therefore not a very good place for the President to visit. Well, I said that we had to have Ghana on that list. I touched base with the African American community back home. "You're going to have to pick this one up. We need to make this work." I contacted a couple of the Senators, including Pat Leahy. And I assure the White House that we would guarantee that we will get an enormous audience to come out and hear Clinton give his inaugural speech in Africa. We had to have him come.

At the end of the day, things moved in absolutely the right direction. First of all, a professional staff came out, took a second look, and persuaded themselves that the President should come to Ghana. They asked the right questions. We got our priorities straight. It was an exotic experience watching the advance team get the Black Star Stadium ready for the Clinton visit. But his entourage was so large that we did not have enough hotel rooms in town to accommodate them all unless we were willing to use a hotel which is half owned by the Libyans. In the first staff visit a White House staffer had said, "We can use it," and I had said, "No, we can't." We finished the lodgings problem by having the President arrive from Washington at six o'clock in the morning on Air Force One, and leave at six o'clock in the evening. We had him for one 12-hour, fun-filled, jam-packed day, and the whole schedule went extraordinarily well. The Ghanaians really got their infrastructure right. We had 180,000 people in the stadium on an extremely hot day. The President's speech and J.J.'s speech, which we were afraid would go on and on and on, went very well. We got Mrs. Rawlings to cut him off. The visual effects were fantastic. By keeping the entire visit in Accra we avoided some daunting scheduling nightmares. The crowds were enormous and ubiquitous, and they were extremely well behaved. I suppose that probably President Clinton said this to many others but before boarding the plane he said to Jane and me that this had been the most satisfying day he had ever had overseas. I think the visit was a spectacular success. It even reached the point of being an oversuccess when the crowd surged at him when he was down "doing the ropes" and it looked like they were going to overwhelm him. Well, they didn't, there was enough protection, but it gave the impression that he was absolutely loved, which was true. Of course, he himself was extraordinarily focused. It's hard to believe, in the context of what was going on with the scandal inside the White House...

Q: Monica Lewinski.

BRYNN: ...with Monica Lewinski, that he could be. But every Ghanaian he met and every Ghanaian to whom he talked told me afterwards that for that one brief moment it was clear to them that they were the only important person in Clinton's life.

Q: He has that... How about Mrs. Clinton?

BRYNN: Jane was with her and had a separate schedule for part of the day, and that went very well. She had many of the same qualities. I was extraordinarily impressed with both of them. It was an unusually hot day in a hot part of the year. President Clinton changed

his suit four times, and the suits were just destroyed. The visit went very, very well.

Q: Rawlings, I assume, was delighted.

BRYNN: He was. He was transported with delight, and it led to a somewhat bittersweet aftermath. Mrs. Rawlings never liked me and for very understandable reasons. Before my tenure she had been a major beneficiary of American self-help funds, which went into an organization that she had which was ostensibly designed for women's empowerment, but in fact it was very clear by the time I arrived in Ghana that the money was going into her political hatchet campaign. I paid a call on her and told her that I was cutting off the funding. That put her at loggerheads with me. It never affected the relationship between me and J.J. Of course, the relationship between Mrs. Rawlings and her husband was never that close. They didn't live together. She did think that I was a very good dancer. Whenever there was a dancing partner, she always asked me to dance with her. But at the end of the day, of course, after the visit by President Clinton, Rawlings said, "We will be giving you a big award," which I didn't welcome. I'm of that group of diplomats who don't think we should be taking awards from foreign governments, and over the years I had avoided being a beneficiary. I got a call from the chief of protocol a couple days later and he asked whether he could have a chat with me. I said, "Sure, I'll be over." He said, "No, I don't want to do it here. I want to do it at your residence." So he came to the residence, and he said, "The President has made a commitment to you for an award, and I'm afraid we're in terrible trouble because Mrs. Rawlings is absolutely opposed to this." I replied, "Consider it a non-event. I frankly am honored that the president thought this was a good thing to do, but I don't think this is a good practice and I will feel no pain to be excluded from the awards list." So, despite the afterglow of Clinton's visit, I left Ghana unbemedaled.

Q: In looking at it all, by the time you left in '98 how did you feel about whither Ghana?

BRYNN: Whither Africa?

Q: Yes.

BRYNN: In the eyes of Susan Rice, I was a pessimist because I had over the years, and I think quite accurately - maybe not pessimistically enough – I had taken the view that we needed to be more hard headed about looking at the structural deficiencies in Sub-Saharan Africa, and it was false to say that an African renaissance was underway.

Q: There was this movement, talk a lot about this.

BRYNN: Africa had turned the corner and all this stuff. I'm sure if Susan Rice were here, she would second what I'm going to say- (End of tape)

Q: You were saying you didn't buy into this renaissance...

BRYNN: I didn't buy into this, and my relationship with Susan Rice was never very

close.

Q: Susan Rice was the Assistant Secretary. She had taken...

BRYNN: She took George's place, yes. It was an honest difference of opinion, but I know that that was the case. It came to the fore sometimes when we would have these African chiefs of missions meetings, especially one that we had on Chesapeake Bay.

Q: Easton or...

BRYNN: We were at Easton. At that point my permission surfaced in a fairly public discussion, and I know that Susan was not pleased with my being on a somewhat more negative side than she was. But at the end of the day, that was fine. It probably expressed itself in what was going to happen after Ghana. I was reaching a point of deciding whether to come back to Washington and think about retirement and going into another job or looking at the prospect of another embassy. I'm quite confident that I can say that I could have had another embassy if I had wanted one, but my wife more than I felt that maybe it was a good time to back to Washington and think about life after the Foreign Service. As she put it fairly baldly, it would be best to be on the job market for another job while you are still young enough so that you have some marketability, and it ended up she was probably right on that. So I came back in the summer of 1998, and I spent the next year at National War College, which, of course, was another delaying pattern. I thought if something comes up that was attractive outside the Foreign Service, I would jump to it. If not, there was a number of jobs that I could take inside the Foreign Service but probably would stay in Washington.

Q: How did this play out?

BRYNN: Well, I loved the National War College. I was only there a very short period of time before I was asked if I would like to stay on for another year as the senior State representative to the National War College or whether I would like to retire and become a permanent member of the faculty there. Both of those were attractive options. On the other hand, I was sort of keen to think about something outside Washington. I never was a terribly comfortable inside-the-Beltway guy, and so when the North Carolina option came up, which surfaced very soon after I arrived at the National War College, with a convenient date of starting in the summer of 1999, I looked at it pretty seriously.

Q: What is the North Carolina...?

BRYNN: I am the associate provost for international programs for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and I have a faculty appointment in the Department of History. We run, I think almost uniquely in the United States, a package of programs that includes everything from admission of international students, taking care of foreign students on campus, running our study-abroad programs, running an international outreach program where we work with the banks in Charlotte and with Duke Energy, which is very big in Brazil, to run programs, intern programs, for students from schools

to go overseas and students from overseas to come to us. We have one of the largest English-as-a-second-language programs in the United States down there. And we also run a very comprehensive program to try to get international studies into the curricula on the high school level in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg area. I find that my own personal responsibilities have moved in two other directions. One, UNC Charlotte is a relatively young school and it doesn't have a very big endowment, about $80,000,000, and they would like to raise about $100,000,000. They have launched a campaign, so I've become a big-ticket speaker on behalf of the University to talk with various corporate groups and civic groups. Next May I will become the Chair of the Charlotte World Affairs Council, which is a moderate-size operation and getting bigger, and we're going to try to move this thing to the next level. In that capacity I am essentially becoming a known figure in Charlotte, and I'm satisfied it's been a good move. I enjoy coming up to Washington, I enjoy the State Department colleagues, but I always go back to Charlotte saying I think we did the right thing.

Q: Well, I think this is a good place to stop.

End of interview