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

AMBASSADOR FRANÇOIS M. DICKMAN

Interviewed by: Stanley Brooks
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 9, 2001. This is an interview with Ambassador François M. Dickman in his home in Laramie, Wyoming on behalf of The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm Stanley Brooks, a retired Foreign Service officer who has also chosen to retire in Wyoming. Ambassador Dickman, how is it that someone who grew up in Wyoming found himself in the Foreign Service?

DICKMAN: Well, let me give you a little bit of background. First of all, I was born in Iowa City in 1924. I came to Laramie in 1933 after my father was appointed as the head of the Modern Language Department at the University of Wyoming. Both my parents were language teachers. My father was born in Antwerp, Belgium. He survived World War I after six years in the Belgian army. After being demobilized in 1919, he came to the U.S. at the invitation of an older brother who was living in Waco, Texas and who was a cotton broker. But my father soon realized that he wasn't cut out for the cotton business, so he got his master’s degree in French and German at Baylor.

My mother was born in Tarbes, a city in the southern part of France. She came to the United States in 1920 as an exchange student at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. She had previously taught English in a French lycée. Although she had every intention of returning to France (I think she got a degree after one year at Millikin), she was offered a job as a French instructor in Baylor in 1921. It is there in Waco that my parents met.

My father got his M.A. at Baylor and then got a job to teach at the University of Iowa. So, my parents moved to Iowa City. There, my father obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Iowa in 1925. I think they went to Iowa about 1923 or thereabouts because I was born in Iowa City. My father remained an associate professor in the Modern Language Department until 1932 when he was appointed to be the chair or the head of the Language Department at the University of Wyoming.

I should also point out that I am an only child. Since French was spoken at home, I was raised bilingually. Of course, with both parents coming from Europe, world events were constantly discussed at home. My father had a passionate hatred for the Germans, which wasn’t surprising since he had barely survived as an infantryman during his six years in the Belgian army. On several occasions during the trench warfare, he had been buried alive. He suffered from a bullet hole through his upper calf. Although he recovered from poison gas attacks, it resulted in a lifetime of psoriasis causing him to have red blotches all over his skin. He used to treat these blotches with Lysol. I don’t know why Lysol, but that’s what he used.

Of course, my parents were very concerned with the rise of Hitler. My father spoke German fluently. I can recall vividly my father shouting back in German during Hitler’s radio broadcasts warning everyone who was willing to listen of the growing German danger and the need to treat “Mein Kampf” seriously. He would say, “Hitler has spelled it all out. We know exactly what his ideas are.” He quite correctly anticipated that Germany under Hitler would renew its war against Britain and France and that the Germans would invade Belgium using the Schlieffen Plan just like they did in 1914. In fact, when the war broke out, my father told me that he first entered combat at Liege where his unit tried to fend off the German advance and actually managed to delay the advance for a few days. As I recall, the Belgian army finally had to retreat to the Yser River, which is right on the French-Belgian border. That’s where a static line was established for the rest of the war and where my father spent the rest of the war in the trenches.
As for my mother, she was the intellectual in the family and did most of the work on the language textbooks that my parents prepared. My mother identified with and was very tied emotionally to her native France. Every three years, my parents would make a trip to Europe to visit my grandparents. The visits that I remember the best were the ones in 1935 when I was 10 and in 1938 when I was 13. At that time, it was possible to load the family car at quite a reasonable price on the transatlantic ship. This meant driving from Laramie to New York City, which took four or five days, and then taking the car to the dock to be loaded on the ship. Once you reached Le Havre, the car was unloaded and we just hopped in and that was it.

In 1938, we took the Normandie, which was a magnificent vessel. Even though we traveled third class, which was the cheapest class, it was a very comfortable trip. In 1938, for example, when we visited France, we drove to Boulogne, where my mother had an uncle and aunt. On this occasion, my father left my mother and me to stay with the uncle and aunt while he drove the family car to Belgium to visit an old friend of his, an academic at the University of Liege. The two took the occasion to make a brief visit into Germany where they witnessed the construction of the autobahns. I recall my father saying that these superhighways were all directed toward the French and Belgian borders. Since there was very little German traffic, he thought it was obvious what they were going to be used for military purposes.

After my father returned from his trip to Belgium and Germany, we drove to Paris and then south to Tarbes to visit my grandfather on my mothers' side. During that summer, accompanied by my grandfather, we all traveled in the family car to Italy, first to Genoa and then down to Rome. It was in August of 1938. What I recall vividly was the fact that Hitler had just made his visit to Italy. Everywhere along the highways, you could see the signs "Duce, Duce, Duce" painted along the highways. The other favorite sign on many buildings was the proclamation "Obedire, Credere, Combatere," in other words, "Obey, Believe, and Fight." After Rome, we visited Florence, Sienna, and Venice and then drove back to France. On our way back to the United States, we stopped in Saint Malo to visit friends who were later killed during the war. The discussion centered on the German threat and a statement U.S. Ambassador William Bullitt had made which seemed to imply that the U.S. was concerned by the German threat. By the time we had returned to the U.S., we learned of the trip by Prime Ministers Chamberlain and Daladier to Munich. My parents were convinced that World War II was going to start shortly, particularly with Hitler pressing Poland to relinquish the Danzig Corridor. I recall in Wyoming, as a High School, student attending a speech at the University given by a Polish diplomat on the Danzig Corridor and the threats that were being posed by Germany. The problem was that people in Wyoming were not concerned about this. The visit to Europe in the summer of 1938 had only redoubled my parents' concerns about the imminence of another world war, which isolationist Americans were indifferent to, especially in a landlocked state like Wyoming.

So, to answer your question, it's little wonder that early in life I was aware of events in the world, particularly in Europe, and I'm sure it influenced my interest in making the Foreign Service my career goal. I remember obtaining a pamphlet on the Foreign Service issued, I think, in 1939, which explained the details of the career. In the back, there was a sample examination. I recall studying those questions very carefully and wondering if I would ever pass the test.

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor ended the isolationist period of America. My father eagerly volunteered his services to the U.S. Army. In October of 1942, he was commissioned as a Captain in military intelligence. I should have pointed out earlier that both my parents had become naturalized American citizens. My father was sent to North Africa in early 1943. He served initially as an American liaison officer with the Second

Moroccan Division, which saw action in Italy, including Monte Cassino. Then he was attached to the Third Algerian Division, which participated in the 1944 invasion of southern France and remained as the liaison officer with the Third Algerian as it proceeded north into Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria. He ended up with five battle stars.

Q. What about your military service?

DICKMAN: As for myself, I was drafted in July 1943 at the age of 18. I had five months of basic infantry training at Fort Benning. This was when the ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program] was still underway. After basic training, I was sent to Princeton in January 1944 for language training. There, I was told the only language courses that were available were Turkish or Arabic. At the time, I had no idea which to choose because I was totally unfamiliar with the Middle East. I flipped a coin and it came out Turkish. Because the ASTP program also included area studies, one of the classes at Princeton was given by Professor Hitti. Through his lectures, I became aware of the issues revolving around the future of Palestine.

I should point out that my stay in Princeton was short-lived. By March 1944, the ASTP program was disbanded because of manpower needs to fill a new infantry division. While I was in Princeton, we were given language tests. As a result, I ended up in Camp Ritchie, Maryland for training in military intelligence for a French interrogation team. However, I never got to Europe. Because the armored breakthrough in France in the summer of 1944 had been so successful, there was no longer any need for French interrogation teams. So, I became, if you will, a retread.

I was given lengthy training to become a member of the 46th Japanese Order of Battle Team which was activated on May 16, 1945. It consisted of one officer, a senior non-commissioned officer (me), and one junior non-commissioned officer. We were given Japanese language training but depended on a Nisei to serve as interpreter and translate documents. Our team was sent to the Philippines where we teamed up with Sergeant Kazuo Ibara. There I learned that our team was scheduled to be attached to one of two regimental combat teams that were to be part of the first wave to land on the island of Kyushu in early November 1945. I have no doubt that the decision to use the A bomb saved my life and that of many others. I don’t have any doubt about that.

With Japan’s surrender, I left the Philippines on a troop ship and landed in Wakayama, Japan on September 15, 1945. I might point out that Wakayama was a port city in southeastern Honshu that had been flattened by a single raid of incendiaries. But we did not stay in Wakayama. We ended up in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, where I spent nearly five months in occupation duty. Kyoto was the headquarters of the Sixth Army under General Krueger. Thankfully, Kyoto had not been touched by the war.

The time spent in Japan was devoted almost entirely to the preparation of a report on all the Japanese military units which fell under the Sixth Army’s zone of responsibility. The report indicated where the units had been located, the names of the principal officers, and their status. This was important for historical reasons as well as to make sure that all these units had been demobilized and their weapons had been stored.

In December 1945, I had the opportunity to make a brief visit to Hiroshima. Comparing it to Wakayama, I could not tell the difference between a city that had been destroyed by a single raid of incendiaries and one wiped out by a single bomb. But what impressed me was the awesome destruction that Japan had been subjected to by our air force and what it might have been like if the Emperor had refused to surrender.

In February 1946, the Sixth Army headquarters was moved back to the U.S.; our Order of Battle Team was disbanded. I sailed from Nagoya, impressed by the fact that I could already see thousands of houses that had been burned to the ground being already in the early stages of construction. I was impressed by the resilience of the Japanese people. Upon reaching the U.S., I was demobilized and returned to Laramie at the end of the month to resume my studies at the University of Wyoming and take advantage of the GI bill. At that time, the University had a quarter rather than a semester system so that it was very easy to register for entry in the third quarter of the year.

I should point out that before being drafted, I had entered the University of Wyoming in 1942. By taking courses when I was a senior in high school in 1941 and then taking courses in summer school, I had managed to earn over two years of university credit. This enabled me to graduate on June 2, 1947. The following day, I married Margaret Hoy.
We had met on the campus and had been engaged for a year.

Margaret was born and raised in Cheyenne. She had graduated from the University of Wyoming the year before, majoring in home economics. In order to be close by until our marriage a year later, Margaret had given up the chance to be an intern at the Henry Ford hospital in Detroit in diet therapy. Instead, she took a job teaching food and nutrition at the junior high school in Cheyenne. At the time, I thought that home economics had little relation to my interest in international affairs, but I would learn later that I could not have been more mistaken. I found out through Margaret's volunteer activities that food and society were very relevant in every country where we served. Since everyone is interested in food and how it's prepared, it's a subject that always evokes interest in other societies.

By the time of my graduation from the University of Wyoming, I had gained admission to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. In 1948, I received my Master of Arts at Fletcher. But I continued my studies there with the expectation of obtaining a doctoral degree. The excellent education that I received at Fletcher was far superior to any of the classes that I had had at the University of Wyoming. My favorite professors were Ruhl Bartlett, who taught American diplomatic history, and Nicodemus Halm, who taught comparative economic systems and international finance. Professor Halm gave the best explanation I ever heard of Marxism and its weaknesses. Leo Gross taught international law. Paul Samuelson taught international trade. Samuelson as a teacher was not nearly as good as his basic economic textbook. But it was at Fletcher that I discovered that I had a real interest in international political economy. In particular, I was fascinated by the ideas of John Maynard Keynes, the British economist. Curiously, when I had taken a class in economics at the University of Wyoming, the professor never mentioned Keynes.

It was after my first year at Fletcher that I passed the written Foreign Service Exam. My score was 72, which was barely above the passing mark was 70. I realized that I would never have succeeded in passing the four day exam had I not attended the Fletcher School. In March 1949, I traveled to Washington, DC to take the oral exam. I passed and I was exhilarated at the prospect of entering the Foreign Service after completing my Ph.D. orals at Fletcher. By this time, budgetary stringencies were putting Foreign Service entrants on hold. At one point, I was told that there was a waiting list and I happened to be 141st on the waiting list.

In September of 1949, I passed the Ph.D. orals at Fletcher and started working on my thesis. The thesis focused on U.S. post-war economic assistance in Europe. By April 1950, my GI Bill had run out, so I was looking for a job. Of course, the thesis wasn't finished yet. But thanks to the connections of one of my professors at the Fletcher School, I was hired as a research assistant at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC for a salary of then $5,000 a year, which was a very generous salary. I worked with Leo Pasvolski, who had been very much involved with the creation of the United Nations; Redverse Opie, who was an Oxford Don; and William Adams Brown. It was on a project that focused on economic aid provided by the United States to Western Europe and areas occupied by the U.S. after the war. What was interesting was that it was very much in line with the Ph.D. thesis that I was preparing.

My expectation was that I would work at Brookings for a year or so until my turn to enter the Foreign Service would come up. However, it didn't work out that way. Two days after our daughter, Christine, was born (in Arlington, Virginia, on June 23, 1950), North Korea invaded South Korea. Upon being demobilized after World War II, I had signed up to remain in the inactive enlisted reserves in military intelligence with my non-commissioned rank of tech sergeant. But the reservists were the first to be called up as the Pentagon sought to have a rapid buildup of our armed forces. So, I was sent to Fort Campbell, Kentucky for basic infantry training. My military occupation specialty had been changed from military intelligence to reconnaissance platoon sergeant. I should mention that the training was an eye opener of how ill-prepared we were for this conflict. For example, we were initially issued only one set of fatigues. Each squad was allowed to fire only one bazooka shell. The same for the 60mm mortar. The training lasted six or seven weeks. Once it was over, I was very lucky not to be sent to Korea. By this time, a bureaucratic decision had been made to not send the first two ranks of non-commissioned officers to Korea in order to keep these ratings open for those already in the field. So, I ended up in Fort Bragg, where I was assigned to a finance unit. Margaret did not join me but remained in the small apartment we had rented in Virginia to take care of the baby.

With the outbreak of the Korean War, the State Department all of a sudden had money. So, I received a letter shortly after I returned to military service offering me entry as an FS-06. Actually, they were looking for Kreis officers at that time to go to Germany. I asked if the Department could help facilitate my entry into the Foreign Service, but I was told, no, they were not going to intervene. "But you'll get priority when you get out" is the way they put it. In fact, this is what occurred.

After being demobilized for a second time at the end of August 1951, I entered the Foreign Service on October 9, 1951, two and a half years after passing the oral exam. I soon learned that the Department had very cleverly delayed the entry of this Foreign Service class by a couple of weeks to avoid the nine months of service needed for time in grade promotion.

Q: So, finally, you're in the Foreign Service. What was your first posting?

DICKMAN: After three months of indoctrination at the Foreign Service Institute, I was told my assignment would be as vice consul in our consulate in Barranquilla, Colombia. I should admit that this was not my choice of area. I had assumed one reason for the assignment to Barranquilla was my knowledge of Spanish. I had minored in Spanish at the university and I guess I was reasonably fluent in it. But what I discovered was that another officer in the entering class had managed to avoid this posting, but for another reason. I learned the reason why. Vice consuls assigned to Colombia were denied diplomatic privileges for the entry of their cars. So, in order to bring our two year old Plymouth, I had to pay $900 in duty, which meant wiping out our meager savings. Three years later when we left Barranquilla, the car would be sold for less than the duty that was paid. I complained about this to the Department. Several officers were sympathetic with my complaint but offered no remedy. Barranquilla was the assignment. Take it or leave it. So, the thrill of entering the Foreign Service was marred a little bit. But it was further marred when I was told that taking one of the Grace Line boats that regularly stopped in Barranquilla was out of the question. First of all, the person I was replacing had already left the post, so I was needed urgently. Besides, the Department was stopping or trying to discourage travel by boat to cut down on per diem. So, we arrived in Barranquilla by plane in the first days of January 1952. I think it was about the third of January. These early disappointments made me wonder what I had gotten into and whether I should remain in the Foreign Service.

The consulate in Barranquilla was a small post. It consisted of the Consul, Doug Flood, and two Vice Consuls. As the junior, I was the one responsible for issuing visitor and immigration visas, handling citizenship matters, protecting American citizens in trouble (such as American seamen who jumped ship, which was a fairly common occurrence) or dealing with Americans who were wanted for crimes in the United States who had fled to Colombia. This involved having to deal with the local police authorities. What also added to the consulate's workload was Barranquilla's geographical location. Under the 1952 McCarran Immigration Act, persons seeking to immigrate to the United States who had previously immigrated to countries contiguous to the United States were ineligible for immigration, much less for obtaining a visitor's visa, unless they had resided at least two years in these contiguous countries. Well, contiguous territory was defined to include Canada, Mexico, islands in the Carribean, and the Central American republics, including Panama. So, Barranquilla, as the nearest non-contiguous Consulate, became a real learning experience for a consular officer in citizenship and visa matters, especially in having to deal with pushy visa lawyers who were seeking to facilitate the entry of their well healed clients.

We spent three years in Barranquilla. No home leave was authorized during this period, again because of the shortage of funds. My assignment coincided with a major reduction in force (RIF) under the Eisenhower administration where a number of Foreign Service officers were pushed into involuntary retirement or were forced out. Our consul in Barranquilla was one who was affected. For several months, there was no replacement for the senior vice consul or for the replacement consul, who was Camden McLain, which meant that I was left in charge for several months.

This gave me an opportunity to do some economic reporting on the Magdalena River region, particularly focusing on coffee, fishing, and bananas, as well as doing some labor reporting. I enjoyed this opportunity since I wanted something else than just doing visa work.

Labor reporting was interesting because it had never been done before to my knowledge and it attracted some readership. Although labor unions were highly suspect by Colombia's ruling elite, I managed to attend several union meetings and report on their litany of complaints. Attending these meetings and dealing with local police authorities in the rundown barrios meant viewing the seamy side of life in Colombia and the extreme poverty of most of its inhabitants. In a society where there was virtually no middle class, theft was rampant. Unrest in the interior was spilling over into the major cities. Later, with the rise of Fidel Castro, I could appreciate the appeal that Fidel had for these poor people.

While I consider Barranquilla as the worst of our Foreign Service assignments, it's where our son, Paul, was born on August 19, 1952 at the Clinica Bautista. It is where my very resourceful wife managed to raise the kids, do the shopping, and develop a wide circle of friends. Since no government housing was provided in Barranquilla, we had to find a house that we could afford. In other words, within the rental allowance that was permitted. So, it meant that we found ourselves living in a not particularly affluent neighborhood; but the house did have room for a nursemaid and her young son, who was then going to the equivalent of the sixth grade. They stayed with us during our entire tour in Barranquilla. Margaret always made sure that the nursemaid's young man exited from the front door – not the side door – of the house as he boarded the school bus in order to avoid his being tagged as an "hijo naturale."

Q: So, that was your first assignment. After that, what happened next?

DICKMAN: Well, in December of 1954, word came that the next assignment would be Berlin. I did not speak German and this posting really held no interest for me. Subliminally, I may have also been influenced by my father's passionate hatred for the Boche. I had put in for a posting in Morocco or Jordan in the annual "April Fools Sheet." I had continued to follow developments in the Middle East with the creation of Israel and the awful plight of the Palestinian population. Before leaving for our first home leave to arrive in time for Christmas in Wyoming, I stopped at the Department and I approached Ed Mulcahy, who was a fellow Fletcherite and who was working in Personnel about a change of assignment. I told him I didn't want Berlin or another post in Latin America. Ed noted that I had studied Turkish in Princeton. So, he said, "Why don't you take Turkish? Class is coming up?" Well, I demurred because I knew Turkish was spoken in only one country. So, I asked about entering the forthcoming FSI Arabic language class. Ed told me that the class was already full with six officers who had been assigned, but he would try to make an exception by adding me as a seventh. This is what happened.

Early in March 1955, we came back to Washington after home leave. We found an apartment in Virginia and I began Arabic language training at the Foreign Service Institute. My fellow officers were Bill Crawford, Andy Killgore, Lucien Kinsolving, Earl Russell, Heywood Stackhouse, and David Scott. In the end, I would be the only one of the seven who did not later have out-of-area assignments, with the rest of my career devoted to the Arab world.

The first part of Arabic language training was nine months in Washington to be followed by a year in Beirut, Lebanon, where the Foreign Service Institute had its Arabic language school. As part of the training in Washington, we had area lectures. The most notable and informative ones were by Ed Wright. Ed had grown up in Iran of missionary parents and he spoke Persian fluently. I vividly recall Ed's lectures at the time. Several of the lectures came at the moment when Nasser had announced in September 1955 that Egypt would barter cotton for Czech arms. This had greatly upset Washington seeing it in Cold War terms of Moscow leapfrogging the U.S. containment barrier. What Ed pointed out, which was not reported in the media, was Nasser's resentment over the treatment of an Egyptian military team that had previously been sent to Washington to obtain weaponry from the United States because of opposition from Israel's supporters in the Congress and criticism of Nasser's role at the 1955 Bandung non-aligned conference. The Egyptian approach to the U.S. had come following a massive Israeli raid in Gaza and along the frontiers of the Sinai Peninsula. With the Eisenhower administration rebuffing Egypt's approach, Nasser felt compelled to act having no choice but to turn to Moscow for help.

In January 1956, we drove to New York to board one of the American Export Line's Four Aces, which was a combination freight and passenger vessel. There was space for 120 passengers and the seven of us with our families accounted for about a third of the passengers. It was one of the rare occasions when we were able to enjoy a Foreign Service perk. The travel lasted 16 days with stops in Barcelona, Genoa, Athens, and Latakia before the vessel arrived in Beirut.

In Beirut, we began our lodging at the American University of Beirut Alumni Club while each family started looking for an apartment. Eventually, we found a lovely apartment near Pigeon Rocks.

The Foreign Service Institute's Arabic training in Beirut was a most enjoyable assignment. While the language instruction was intense, the weekends were free. This gave us an opportunity to travel to different parts of Lebanon such as Baalbek, Byblos, and the mouth of the Adonis, with side trips to Damascus or visits to the Krak de Chevalier Crusader fort in northern Syria, or Palmyra (known as Tudmor), located in central Syria where Queen Xenobia once ruled. During the afternoons, particularly in the summer when classes had ended, we and our colleagues would go to the beach. We had rented a cabana where the children could enjoy swimming. Our stay in Beirut also gave Margaret an opportunity to do the first of her many volunteer activities by teaching diet therapy at Makassid Hospital in Beirut.

But this idyllic assignment coincided with rising tensions in the Middle East, especially after Secretary Dulles had called in the Egyptian ambassador in Washington to publicly withdraw the U.S. pledge to help finance the Aswan Dam. This occurred in mid-July of 1956. Clearly, the step was intended to publicly humiliate Egypt's president, Nasser. However, Nasser got the best of Dulles by nationalizing the Suez Canal a week later. Dulles then began scurrying around to try to fix the diplomatic damage that he had done. He came up with the idea of a Suez Canal User's Association. However, this initiative was bound to fail since it did not recognize Egypt's sovereignty over the Canal.
In September of that year, I along with several members of my class spent a week to 10 days in Israel and Jordan. To reach Israel, we had to fly to Cyprus. At the time, we remarked on the large number of British military transport aircraft at the airport in Cyprus, but we did not suspect that Britain and France were secretly conniving with Israel to retake the Suez Canal by military means. It so happened that we were in Israel the same time that Ed Wright was there. We hooked on to the small group he was leading. I remember Ed repeatedly correcting our Israeli guide on biblical facts. As the son of a missionary in Iran, he really knew his Old Testament.

Aside from visiting the Sea of Galilee, where Israel had resumed pumping water for its major irrigation program, as well as Haifa, Acre, Nazareth, Beersheba, and Jerusalem, we also met with Prime Minister Ben Gurion, who had come out of retirement. Aba Eban, who I believe was the foreign minister at the time, met with us, as did the head of the central bank. What I particularly remember is Eban going to great lengths to praise France for its political and military support. At the time, I was only vaguely aware that the French had sold Israel highly sophisticated Mirage aircraft. After our stay of a week or so in Israel, we crossed the Mandelbaum Gate into East Jerusalem, where we spent a day or two before going to Amman and then flying back to Beirut.

Israel's sudden invasion of the Sinai Peninsula in November of 1956, which I remember very well, was a very scary period. To punish Britain and France, Syria had blown up the Iraq Petroleum Company pipelines, which were carrying crude oil to the Mediterranean, primarily for Europe. Syria was also threatening to break diplomatic relations with the U.S. The headlines in the Beirut press were reporting Moscow's threats to use nuclear weapons against Egypt's aggressors. Our embassy dependents in Jordan and Syria had been ordered to leave immediately. Since only a few had Lebanese visas, I was sent to the Lebanese-Syrian border to facilitate the entry of the dependents who were coming in their cars primarily from Amman and Damascus. For the first time, I felt that I was making good use of my Arabic language training.

Q. What happened after completing your Arabic language training?

DICKMAN: In February of 1957, the members of our Arabic language class received their assignments. My assignment was Khartoum, Sudan. I was replacing Pat Cunningham, who happened to be a member of my Foreign Service entry class. We came to Sudan at a particularly interesting time. The Sudan had recently joined the family of nations. Under a United Nations sponsored plebiscite, the Sudanese had opted for independence in 1955 rather than uniting with Egypt. Earlier, it had been known as the Anglo-Egyptian condominium.

But the early days of Sudan's independence had been marred by disturbances in the southern Sudan. During the time the country was governed by Britain, the southern Sudan had been separated from the Muslim north and left largely to Catholic and Protestant missionaries, who eagerly sought to convert the animist tribes of the south to Christianity. With the approach of independence, the Sudanese government had decided to send Muslim garrisons to the southern Sudan while stationing Christianized or animist southern troops in the north. While this move was intended to reinforce unity in this large nation (I think it's the largest in Africa), it would backfire. It was seen by the southern Sudanese as a move to restore Arab domination in what had once been a major slave trading area. The southern units mutinied at a place called Torit. Those who survived the "Torit massacre" were captured and sent to a prison near Suakin, a lonely spot on the Red Sea, which I visited at one point and where these prisoners remained for at least 20 years.

When we flew into Khartoum from Beirut, the embassy was getting ready for the visit of Vice President Nixon. He was making a swing through the region trying to win over several Arab nations to the Eisenhower Doctrine. The Eisenhower Doctrine offered economic and military aid to countries to withstand communist aggression. While the Sudan was a very poor country and the prospect of economic aid was very enticing, its leadership was not prepared to do battle with Nasser, who had denounced the doctrine as aimed against the Arab world. Vice President Nixon seemed not to appreciate the Sudan's delicate political position at the time. I recall that he left quite disappointed.

The arrival of our effects and our car to Khartoum were delayed for six months because of the closure of the Suez Canal during the November 1956 Arab-Israeli conflict. While we spent several weeks on a Nile steamer in front of the Grand Hotel in Khartoum, we were fortunate to move into an already leased and partially furnished house built on what had been a sheep's pen so that it was lousy with ticks. However, it was one of the few houses in Khartoum with modern amenities since the honey buckets had been replaced with a flush toilet.

Khartoum was a small embassy. Lowell Pinkerton was the ambassador. Art Beach was the DCM. Wayne Swedenburg was the administrative officer. Chris Reynolds was the public affairs officer. I wore three hats as the embassy's consular, economic, and commercial officer. Ambassador Pinkerton was an old-line Foreign Service officer. My impression was that he did not particularly share my enthusiasm for the Sudan and perhaps it was due in part to his southern background.

I did a good deal of economic reporting while I was in the Sudan including the preparation of many World Trade Reports for the Department of Commerce. But being a very poor country, my efforts at commercial promotion produced few results. However, the fact that we were only a handful in Khartoum and I being the only Arabist gave me easy access to virtually all the under secretaries of the different ministries. Shortly after arriving, one of the first issues that came up that I recall was Washington's decision in 1957 to dispose of the stockpiles of long staple cotton that had been accumulated during World War II. This was coupled with new protectionist measures for the less than 1,000 growers of long staple cotton in the United States. The result was to cause the price of Sudanese long staple to plummet. The decision was a purely political one that was intended to respond to domestic pressures from U.S. cotton growers. But I also suspect that it was directed at Egypt's President Nasser. Since long staple cotton was the Sudan's main export, and it was Egypt's as well, it was certainly a blow to its already weak economy…

Another major issue that I followed very closely and remember very well when I was in Sudan, and reported on in some detail, was the negotiations between Egypt and the Sudan for dividing the Nile waters. An agreement had to be reached because Egypt had started the construction of the Aswan High Dam since the Russians had replaced the United States to help build the High Dam. As the construction began in Egypt, it was putting pressure on the Sudanese leadership. The negotiations dealt not only with the division of the waters, but with compensation by Egypt to the Sudan for the flooding and relocation of the city of Wadi Halfa, which is located near the border of Egypt, as well as the creation and operations of the Nile Joint Technical Commission. An agreement was finally reached in 1959. I do not recall the amount of money that was paid as compensation to the Sudan. I should also point out that while these negotiations were underway, both Egypt and Sudan tried to get Ethiopia involved. However, Ethiopia refused to be part of any such agreement.

While I realize that access to the Nile was life for Egypt, I also felt that the Sudan did not come out as well as I thought it should. I regretted that a sensible plan could not be worked out to reduce the loss from the evaporation of water. Wadi Halfa was considered the hottest place on Earth. I've been there and, believe me, it is. It was estimated that evaporation would amount to 20% of the total amount of water that would be stored in Lake Nasser, the lake resulting from the High Dam. It would have made much more sense to build smaller dams upstream in Ethiopia and in Sudan. It would have reduced the loss from evaporation and given more water to Egypt.

Q: Who was the political officer?
DICKMAN: There was no political officer until Cleo Noel came in 1958, which is one reason why I did a lot of the Nile water reporting. The Noels came from Jeddah and arrived in Khartoum in the summer of 1958. We welcomed them. In the spring of 1959, Cleo was joined by Bob Gordon (Robert C. F. Gordon). In the summer of 1957, Ambassador Pinkerton had gone on home leave, but he would not return because of medical reasons. Art Beach, who had been the deputy chief of mission, was replaced by

Bill Cole. Bill became the charge for over a year until Ambassador James Moose arrived in the fall of 1958. Also arriving at that time was Bob and Phyllis Oakley. Initially, Bob served as general services officer [GSO], but as he developed good relations with the Sudan's political leadership, Bob also began to serve as Ambassador Moose's aide.

During the year when Bill Cole was charge, we received visits from AID officials, an AID team that was led by Bob Kitchen, a highly intelligent and motivated African-American. Unlike the previous year, this time, the Sudanese responded favorably to the prospect of economic aid seeing our approach in less political terms. So, during this period, I was involved with the charge in negotiating an AID agreement. The stickiest aspect of the negotiations was over the various perks and diplomatic privileges that would be accorded to AID personnel.

Shortly after the agreement was signed, Kitchen returned to Khartoum to become the head of the AID mission. Soon, we had a large number of AID technicians whose numbers completely dwarfed the embassy's. However, the large AID mission resulted in the embassy receiving a Marine guard detail. So, all of a sudden, the embassy in Khartoum had changed from being a very small one to a very large one.

Although our enthusiasm and interest in the Sudan was not always shared by my colleagues, we enjoyed our tour in Khartoum. It lasted nearly four years. Margaret as a volunteer taught diet therapy to the first class of women who had graduated as trained nurses in the Sudan. This was at the Kitchener School of Medicine under the aegis of the World Health Organization. In fact, she was cited in a 1963 State Department publication which included a section on the role of unpaid Foreign Service wives.

Personally, I enjoyed the easy access that I had to Sudanese officials – such people (and I recall them well) as Hamza Mirghani, who was the finance under secretary; Mamun Biheri, who was the head of the central bank; Wadi Habashi, who was the under secretary for agriculture; Abd al Bagi Muhammad, who was the civil aviation director; Daud Abu Latif, the interior under secretary; Charlie Antoun, head of the surveys department; and many others. One of our closest friends was Saad ad Diin Fawzi who chaired the Political Science Department at Khartoum University. His wife was Dutch. Unfortunately, poor Saad ad Diin died of cancer shortly before we left Khartoum, which was a very sad occasion. Another one of our favorite Sudanese was Mansour Khalid, who was then a young lawyer but who later became Sudan's foreign minister in the mid-1970s. Mansour as foreign minister managed to work out political arrangements whereby the authorities in Khartoum agreed to give the southern Sudanese a great deal of autonomy. Unfortunately, his valiant effort was latter destroyed by Muslim extremists in the north, resulting in a military conflict in the southern Sudan that continues to this day.

While I was in the Sudan, I had an opportunity to travel to most areas of this country including the south. I suppose our most memorable trip was in April 1958 when the family took the train from Khartoum to Wadi Halfa as the first leg of our way for home leave. We were accompanied by Saad ad Diin's family and FSO Les Polk who was pursuing Arabic studies at the FSI and was on an orientation trip. We got caught in a sandstorm that lasted for two days. Once we got to Wadi Halfa, we went by Nile steamer to Aswan and then by train to Luxor, Cairo and Alexandria where we boarded our only other boat trip on one of the American Export Line's Four Aces.

My travels in the Sudan, especially in the south, made me aware of just how arbitrary the European colonial powers had been in drawing boundary lines. The boundary between the Sudan and the Belgian Congo had been determined by the continental divide, not by where tribes lived. In fact, a number of tribes such as the Azande found themselves divided by two colonial regimes. Visiting the Sud, especially in the area near Wau, was also impressive. This vast swamp area that is fed by the White Nile has the potential for growing enormous amounts of rice to feed the world's hungry provided it can be farmed and reached peacefully.

My travels got me interested in Sudan's history, including books written by former civil war officers who had been hired by the Khedive of Egypt in 1866/1867. One of these civil war officers was Chaille-Long, who was sent by the Khedive as an emissary to the southern Sudan and Uganda in 1874 to negotiate a treaty of friendship with the King of Uganda. Upon his return, Chaille-Long is credited with being the first westerner to identify Lake Kayoga. In fact, I wrote a paper on the role of early Americans in the Sudan, citing Chaille-Long as an example. But I also cited the role of American missionaries in establishing what would eventually become Khartoum University, and the former president of Iowa State University at Ames, who introduced cultivation of long staple cotton in the Sudan in 1900 in Atbara, a city located 200 miles north of Khartoum. I presented the paper to the Rotarians in Khartoum, whose membership was largely British at the time. In any event, it resulted in an article which appeared in the local press.

Q: With the completion of your tour in the Sudan, you moved on to the first of what would turn out to be two tours in the Department.

DICKMAN: Right. In the fall of 1960, I received orders for a tour in the Department. By then, I had finally been promoted to class 4. Ambassador Pinkerton's evaluation of my performance covering the first four months in Khartoum in 1957 had resulted in delaying my promotion for a couple of years. When I left Khartoum, my consular, commercial and economic responsibilities were parsed out to three officers. Upon returning to Washington, our first task was to find a place to live. Margaret found a small townhouse in the Foxhall village area of Washington, DC which was two miles from the Department and within walking distance.

Initially, I was assigned to NE/ECON, which was part of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs. This was before the days of country directors. Bob Strong was the office director. Rodger Davies was his deputy. Randy Williams was in charge of the office's economic section with Enoch Duncan as his number two. The economic section also included Slator Blackiston and Ken Bevilaqua. As I recall, Lewis Jones was the NEA assistant secretary and Armin Meyer was the principal NEA deputy assistant secretary. Early in 1961, Phillips Talbot, who was a South Asian specialist, was appointed as the new NEA assistant secretary. My assignment to the Department came during the final months of the

Eisenhower administration and with the anticipation that new foreign policy initiatives might occur should Kennedy win the election in November. One of my first assignments was to prepare a memorandum for the front office analyzing the creation of OPEC which had just been formed in Baghdad by five major oil exporting nations. I hope they never find that memo in the files. I gave the organization little chance of success because of the competition that I expected would occur among the oil exporting nations to sell oil to the United States, where oil import restrictions were still in effect.

Another responsibility, which would also follow me during my second tour in the Department, was keeping track of the activities of the Arab boycott of Israel and its headquarters in Damascus. There was a primary and a secondary boycott. The primary boycott prevented any direct commercial contact by Arab nations with Israel such as Egypt's ban on Israeli flagged vessels seeking to transit the Suez Canal. The secondary boycott blacklisted companies or individuals that had invested in Israel, negotiated licensing agreements with Israel, purchased Israeli savings bonds, or other activity which benefitted Israel's economy. Merchant vessels of third countries that had a prior record of calls on Israeli ports were also denied entry into Arab ports but not denied transit through the Suez Canal, a distinction which Israel's supporters continually fuzzed over. Also objectionable were boycott questionnaires concerning the religious faith of company officials or individuals. Thanks to vigorous demarches by our embassies in the Arab world, we managed in most cases to have these offensive questions removed from boycott questionnaires.

Except for a few companies that were on the Arab blacklist, U.S. interests really were not affected. However, the boycott resulted in many letters to the Department from members of Congress and also from personalities like the AFL-CIO's George Meany, which demanded that economic aid to Egypt end. Our replies emphasized that the United States did not condone or recognize the Arab boycott. The U.S. supported the freedom of transit through the Suez Canal for all nations, including Israel. At the same time, we believed that unilateral termination of U.S. assistance to Egypt would only create additional problems in our efforts to bring a relaxation in Israel-Arab tensions which the Soviets would exploit. We also pointed out how the presence of the UN emergency force, which was protecting the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, had allowed for a rapid growth and development of Israel's Port of Eilath. In crafting replies, I recall the difficulties I had with the assistant secretary for Congressional Affairs, Fred Dutton, who would often return my letters with scrawls: "This won't do." I found myself often having to try and negotiate language with his aid, Winston Lord, that would be more acceptable to the member of Congress' constituent.

In July of 1961, after an orientation trip to Egypt and Syria, I was shifted to be the number two on the United Arab Republic desk. The United Arab Republic was created in January of 1958 with the union of Egypt and Syria. The desk was headed by Bill Brewer, who was shortly succeeded by Ralph Barrows. By this time, the non-aligned movement in the Third World, which had originated at the 1955 Bandung Conference with Nasser as one of its leaders, had caught fire in the non-aligned world. In the summer of 1961, there had been a preliminary conference in Cairo to set the stage for what was to be the

Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference, which took place early in September 1961. Tito and Nasser were serving as co-hosts. All neutral Third World countries were invited to attend. The Kennedy administration and many members of Congress were suspicious of the non-aligned movement, seeing it as being a dupe of Moscow. Although policy guidance and reaction to the Belgrade non-aligned movement involved many bureaus in the Department, especially IO [International Organizations], it was thanks to Bill Brewer's activism that the UAR desk became the focal policy-making office preparing virtually all the paperwork, remarks for the President, and orchestrating the guidance. Basically, it avoided negativism and implied that the United States could understand the desire of most Third World nations to avoid being identified with either the East or the West.

At the end of the conference, the President of Mali, Sekou Toure [President of Guinea], and Sukarno of Indonesia were sent to visit Washington, DC. A similar delegation was sent to Moscow. President Kennedy agreed to meet the two heads of state and greeted them in public remarks which followed almost verbatim what the UAR desk had suggested. Bob Komer, who was the Near East man in the National Security Council, remained to be convinced. Komer was especially concerned over the conference's criticisms that were directed against wealthy developed countries for their trade protectionism and insufficient foreign assistance. I recall him complaining to me over the phone that I was not summarizing fast enough the reactions from the Third World capitals to the Belgrade Conference on economic issues. But what is important is that Brewer and Barrows deserve credit for getting the administration to adopt a kinder and friendlier face toward Third World's political and economic concerns.

Nasser's triumphant return to Cairo after the Belgrade Conference was soon dashed when dissident Syrian army units undertook a bloodless coup on September 28, 1961, which terminated the union with Egypt. This of course was a major blow to Nasser's prestige. During my orientation trip in July, when I flew from Port Said to Damascus, I recall sitting next to Egyptian officers who were being assigned to Syria. They told me their presence was part of a rotation arrangement with Syrian officers being posted to Egypt. Since the Egyptian officer corps was much larger than Syria's, I guessed that the presence of a large number of Egyptian officers in Syria could be a source of tension. But I assumed that the union would hold.

Another piece of bad news for Nasser that came about this time was to learn that the United States had decided to provide Israel with the Hawk anti-aircraft ground to air missile. Since this was the first time the United States had agreed to provide Israel with state-of-the-art weaponry, my recollection is that Bob Strong was sent on a secret mission to Cairo to inform Nasser of the decision. It was better that Nasser learn about it beforehand from us rather than have it leaked at some later date to the press.

Syria's separation from Egypt caused Nasser to turn inward. Knowing Nasser's disappointment and potential to cause problems for the United States, such as fears that Nasser was behind nationalist movements in Panama to nationalize the canal (these fears were never proven), caused the Kennedy administration to have the Department develop an action program in the spring of 1962 to raise the level of U.S.-Egyptian relations to one of “limited cooperation.” Sometimes it was called “cooperation without commitment.” During the last years of the Eisenhower administration, the United States had begun to provide Egypt with a limited PL480 program, mainly the sale of wheat and vegetable oil that was primarily paid for in local currency. This PL480 agreement was renewed on a yearly basis.

Since Egypt’s agricultural production was no longer sufficient to feed its population, Egypt had become a food importer. Not only were the Egyptians seeking to obtain an increase in the PL480 program, but to avoid uncertainty, they wanted it to be on a multiyear basis. The United States had signed a couple of years before a three year PL480 agreement with India, which Cairo pointed to as a precedent. As another sign of our interest in trying to find better relations with Nasser, President Kennedy appointed John Badeau, who had been the president of the American University of Cairo, as our next ambassador to Egypt. Also, several high level visits were organized where I was involved in preparing papers. One included sending Chester Bowles, who at the time was the special advisor to the President and I think had already been ambassador to India. Another was Professor Mason of Harvard. Mason had been asked to visit Egypt to come up with recommendations on what might be the best approach to improve the Egyptian economy. One of Mason’s recommendations that I recall was to urge that Nasser obtain a religious fatwah from Al-Azhar University which would support family planning. In fact, it was obtained. These high level visits were reciprocated by the visits of Egyptian officials, including the Egyptian finance minister, Abd al Moneim al Kaisouni, who was bearing Egypt’s formal request for a large multi-year PL480 program.

After a year on the UAR desk, I was shifted back to NE/ECON to make way for Curt Jones, who was coming in as number two. He was expected to replace Ralph Barrows. So, I worked with Enoch Duncan in the negotiations for a $390 million three year Title I PL480 program for Egypt. In addition, Egypt was also to receive additional assistance in the form of Title II PL480 grant aid and Title III grant aid for non-governmental organizations such as Catholic Relief and CARE. I do not remember the different categories of surplus agricultural commodities that were included other than that they were very large second only to our PL480 program in India. The negotiations actually took some time partly because of U.S. insistence that Egypt honor the usual marketing requirements. This refers to the fact that Title I PL480 was not intended to replace other traditional foreign suppliers of foodstuffs. There was also haggling over the amount of local currency, Egyptian pounds, that would be available for U.S. government expenditures in Egypt, and what amount, albeit small, would be set aside for converting U.S. owned Egyptian pounds for dollars. Once the negotiations were completed. there was some hesitation by the Kennedy administration. But finally, the President gave the green light for signing the PL480 agreement in early September 1962 with Finance Minister Kaisouni coming to Washington for the ceremony.

But the goodwill generated by this agreement was soon undermined by events in North Yemen. Barely two weeks after the signature of the PL480 agreement, the Imam of Yemen was overthrown, but he managed to escape to Saudi Arabia. Abdullah Sallal, the leader of the coup, declared North Yemen to be a republic. The Yemen Arab Republic was promptly recognized by Egypt. Fearing that the Saudis would seek to reinstate the Imam because they did not want to see a royalist regime overthrown in the peninsula, Nasser sent a large expeditionary force to Yemen to buttress the republicans and, in the process, laid the basis for a civil war between the Egyptian backed-republicans and the Saudi-backed royalists.

The positioning of a large Egyptian force, which at one point amounted to almost 40,000 troops, became a new issue in our relations with Nasser. I had made an estimate that the cost of this expeditionary force amounted to about a half million dollars a day, which was an expenditure which Egypt's economy could hardly afford. Coupled with criticisms in Congress against the multiyear PL480 agreement with Egypt and Saudi concerns over the large Egyptian force in North Yemen, it put our a policy of "limited cooperation" with Nasser under the microscope.

I remember having to speak before different groups in attempting to justify our PL480 program for Egypt. The argument was that by providing this assistance, it met a basic food requirement of the Egyptian people and offered them an alternative to complete dependence on the Soviet Bloc. Were we to deliberately cut off this aid, it would significantly reduce our ability to influence peace and stability in the Near East. It would also arouse widespread anti-American sentiment among Arab nations and it would intensify the threat against Israel. I also tried to explain why, despite Syria's separation from Egypt, Nasser remained the premier charismatic leader in the Arab world. Our efforts to arrive at an acceptable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian problem simply could not occur without the cooperation of Egypt.

In the expectation that recognition of the Sallal government in North Yemen would allow Egypt to begin withdrawing its troops, the United States recognized the Yemen Arab Republic in late December 1962. But despite this action, the Egyptian troops remained. By then, the Yemeni royalists, thanks to Saudi aid, had been able to maintain control over a good bit of territory in the northern part of North Yemen next to the Saudi frontier. Our recognition of the Yemen Arab Republic coincided with moves to establish a United Nations presence that was known as UNYOM with Doctor Ralph Bunche as the mediator. However, we increasingly found ourselves on the horns of a dilemma.

Our recognition of the Yemeni Republicans had infuriated the Saudis, who justifiably feared that Nasser would use North Yemen as a base to undermine the House of Saud. In the spring of 1963, after it was discovered that the Egyptians had made an air drop of arms in Saudi Arabia, we sent Ellsworth Bunker accompanied by Talcott Seelye to try and work out a mutual disengagement between the Saudi backed royalists and the Egyptian backed republicans. We also stationed a few planes at the airport in Jeddah and parked an aircraft carrier near Jeddah on the Red Sea as a warning to Nasser not to mess with the Kingdom. I found it increasingly difficult to justify our Egyptian PL480 program before public audiences.

Our warning to Nasser also came at a time when the Kennedy administration found itself under growing pressure from Israel and its supporters in Congress to do something to stop Egypt's missile production. Some of these critics claimed that the missiles could be "nuclear tipped." In the late '50s, the Egyptians had hired some second rate former German missile scientists for the purpose of developing a surface to surface capability. While the missiles were plagued with technical problems and, to my knowledge, never fired, they would be proudly displayed in the streets of Cairo during military parades. Egypt's move to show off its SSMs had come about the same time that word had leaked out that Israel was constructing a secret nuclear reactor at Dimona in the Negev desert with the help of the French. For several years, the Israelis had tried to cover up its construction by claiming it was a textile plant. The Israelis had also kept under wraps their joint missile development program with the French and initial arrangements to use South Africa's missile testing range.

President Kennedy had become aware very early in his presidency that the Israelis were building a secret nuclear reactor capable of producing weapons grade plutonium. Before Dimona became public, the President had on several occasions pressured the Israeli government to allow U.S. scientists to visit Dimona. Ben Gurion finally agreed in 1962 to allow a team of American scientists to have a brief peek of Dimona that lasted only a few hours. But the Israeli government had subsequently strongly resisted any further attempts by the administration to allow for periodic U.S. visits.

By the spring of 1963, President Kennedy had become increasingly concerned over the implications of the Israeli nuclear project for regional security in the Middle East and the destabilizing impact of Egypt's display of SSMs, as well as the need to respond to congressional criticisms over U.S. policy toward Egypt. The administration issued National Security Action Memorandum 231 which called for taking measures to improve access to Dimona and forestall Egypt's advanced weapons program. Under the authority of NSAM 231, the State Department was instructed to develop a plan which would involve Nasser and Israel's leadership that could respond to these concerns along with an approach that might appeal to Nasser and Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol (who had replaced Ben Gurion).

So, a small secret group was formed, chaired by NEA deputy assistant secretary Jim Grant, who would later become the head of UNICEF. The group also included Bob Komer of the National Security Council; Bill Polk of Policy Planning; Near East office director Bob Strong; Wreath Gathright from ACDA [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency]; and myself as the gofer, notetaker, and record keeper. I believe that my colleague, Bill Crawford, who was the Israeli desk officer, was involved on the periphery. There were a number of meetings in Grant's office. I would give the small group a codename of "CANE," which was an acronym for Control of Arms Near East. Since our meetings involved nuclear weapons policy and our interest in getting the Israelis to let our experts visit Dimona on a regular basis, I remember having to get a "Q" clearance. For security purposes and for secrecy, there was only one copy of every memorandum and only two copies of every telegram. I wonder if they can be found in the Department's archives?

During the meetings of the CANE group, it was decided that the President should ask

Jack McCloy to serve as a secret emissary. McCloy was a former under secretary of the Army and at the time was the chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank. Rather than try to approach Nasser or the Israelis with an arms control agreement, it was decided that the initial approach would be based on the idea of discussing the implications of a nuclear and missile arms race in the Middle East. The approach would be to seek a mutual arms restraint arrangement but on an informal, not a formal, basis. We would start with Nasser. The hope was that if the approach was promising, we would be in a position to tell Nasser that the U.S. was keeping its eye on Dimona.

Hermann Eilts, who at the time had the Near East desk at our embassy in London, was brought into the picture for the purpose of being on hand when Mr. McCloy visited Egypt and Israel. Before Mr. McCloy left for his trip to Cairo in the summer of 1963, I recall having dinner and overnighting at his home in Connecticut to give him a last minute briefing on what we hoped to accomplish.

McCloy's visit to Cairo was inconclusive. Nasser was very suspicious, wondering why Egypt and not Israel was the first stop. Nasser could not understand why, among the non-nuclear states, Egypt was being singled out since he had no intention of engaging in nuclear weapons. Hermann sent a long reporting cable following McCloy's private meeting with Nasser. I hope that he has some recollection of the McCloy visit. Perhaps he has done so in a similar oral interview.

Following the initial visit, there was discussion whether it was worth continuing the CANE approach. It was decided that McCloy should not visit Israel at this time. I felt that McCloy was not very enthusiastic about continuing with CANE. But, given the President's interest, it was decided that preparations be made for another McCloy visit, again beginning with Egypt. These preparations, however, were interrupted by President Kennedy's assassination in November of 1963. This caused the CANE approach to be set aside for several months. Later, when President Johnson was briefed on the background, he showed little interest in another McCloy mission. Johnson seemed to be less preoccupied with the danger of nuclear proliferation than his predecessor. Nevertheless, it was decided that preparations should be made for a second try, this time late in the summer of 1964.

Meanwhile, despite our many disagreements on political issues with Egypt, there were also common interests, especially in the cultural field. Shortly after I came to the UAR desk, I was involved with arrangements for the King Tut exhibit, which was opened by Mrs. Kennedy at the Smithsonian in October 1961. It was the first and only time I ever saw the First Lady. After the Smithsonian, the exhibit remained in the United States for a couple of years and traveled to a number of cities, where it was well received. In 1963, because of the rising waters of the High Dam, the Egyptians dismantled the Temple of Dendur. The temple was donated to the United States and shipped stone by stone to be reassembled at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where it remains today on display. Another reason for giving the Temple of Dendur was to support the UNESCO program to try to save other threatened monuments, and particularly Abu Simbel in the southern part of the Nile near the Sudanese border.

At the time, UNESCO was trying to raise funds on a worldwide basis and the focus was on Abu Simbel. Luke Battle, who was then Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs, worked very hard to obtain Congress' approval to allocate $36 million worth of U.S. owned Egyptian currency which had been generated by the Title I PL480 program. This was to help cover the local costs of removing Abu Simbel and placing it on higher grounds before the waters of Lake Nasser began to rise because the construction of the High Dam was going a pace. The U.S. contribution was key to saving the monument, particularly because it would encourage obtaining contributions from private sources and from other nations. Despite Luke's groundwork, saving Abu Simbel had lukewarm support at best in Congress. Members of the House Appropriations Committee were opposed basically because they were mad at Nasser. Arguments to the effect that unlike political regimes, monuments last forever did not seem to make much of an impression. The argument used by the critics was that since the Soviet Union was financing and helping to build the Aswan High Dam, let the Russians save the temple. With the House Committee turning down the request, it went to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee. I remember testifying with Luke before the Senate Subcommittee in June of 1964 in support of the request. At the end of the testimony, rather than take a vote, the senators asked why the President did not use his discretionary authority to allocate these U.S. owned Egyptian pounds. Shortly after the hearing, President Johnson did that. Abu Simbel was saved.

But that would be the last time that the President was able to use his discretionary authority to allocate U.S. owned foreign currency. This authority was taken away from him by the Congress in the 1964 appropriations bill.

By this time, I had been moved back to be the number two on the UAR desk, now headed by Curt Jones. Luke Battle had been nominated to replace John Badeau as ambassador to Egypt. It was believed that Battle's appointment would be seen favorably in Cairo because of his role in saving Abu Simbel and our common interest in cultural affairs. Also, there had been another Arab summit in Alexandria in September 1964 where Nasser had downplayed calls by the extremists to use military action to stop Israel's siphoning waters from the Sea of Galilee. It was decided that this was a good time for a second McCloy secret mission. I recall that Bill Boswell, who was our charge at the time (Luke had not yet arrived in Cairo), had a devil of a time chasing down Nasser, who was relaxing in Alexandria, and getting his approval for a second McCloy visit. This time, I accompanied Mr. McCloy to Cairo because Hermann was now our DCM in our embassy in Tripoli, Libya. McCloy had just finished being a member of the Warren Committee investigating the assassination of President Kennedy and had with him a printed copy of the report that he planned to give to Nasser.

The second McCloy-Nasser meeting was a failure. While the discussion was pleasant, Nasser let it be known to the press after the meeting that he had been visited by Mr. McCloy. This instantly raised questions by the press, what was Mr. McCloy doing in Cairo and why was he calling on Nasser? As I remember, we used the lame excuse that McCloy was visiting Egypt and, in his position as a prominent American, had paid a courtesy call on President Nasser. When I returned to Washington, Bob Komer was furious with me. He believed that somehow I had messed up. In any event, that was the end of CANE.

Two months later, there was another nail in the coffin in our relations with Nasser. This time, it was Egyptian planes overflying the Sudan to provide military support for the Lumumba regime in the former Belgian Congo. I recall being instructed to draft a stiff letter to Nasser to be presented by our ambassador. The letter infuriated Nasser. It resulted in organized demonstrations which ended with mobs burning down the USIS library in Cairo on Thanksgiving Day. I remember that because I didn't get my Thanksgiving turkey. Lost in the fire were records and books of the Union and Confederate officers who had been hired by the Khedive of Egypt after the U.S. Civil War. I will never forgive Nasser for stimulating the mob that burned those records.
The burning of the USIS library put an end to any chance of continuing our PL480 program. Moreover, by the time I left, an investigation was underway over the alleged misuse by Egyptian authorities of corn supplied under our grant Title II PL480 program. The Title II commodities had been furnished not only on a grant basis but for the purpose of using them for specific public works projects. It also put on ice my favorite suggestion of using some of our U.S. owned Egyptian currency to fund family planning clinics and instruction in the use of the intrauterine device [IUD]. The IUD was considered to be an effective means to control pregnancy and could easily be manufactured at a very low cost in countries like Egypt, which had a basic plastic industry. Egypt's population at the time was about 36 million, but it was increasing at the rate of a half million a year, which made the country even more dependent than ever on food imports. Unfortunately, there was opposition to this proposal among influential members of Congress which the E Bureau in the Department was not prepared to tackle. The excuse by the E Bureau was that the use of U.S. owned local currency for birth control programs could only be undertaken when the United States was prepared to be identified with fertility control programs.

Q: What was going on in Syria after the break off with Egypt?

DICKMAN: Following the bloodless army coup by the Syrian military in September of 1961, Mamoun Kuzbari, a prominent Syrian businessman, was named prime minister. We had a small PL480 program in Syria and had extended a loan for grain storage. The soviet Union was the major aid donor in Syria. So, the purpose of our small aid program was to try and minimize Syrian distrust of our motives. Ever since the attempted CIA coup against the leadership in 1957 (an attempt to reinstate Colonel Shishakli), the Syrians had remained very suspicious about our motives. Kuzbari remained as prime minister for less than a year and was replaced by a series of army coups until the Baath Party officers took control in the spring of 1963. Other than the Arab-Israel issue, the main regional political issue was the anticipated impact of the Euphrates dam in central Syria, which was being partially financed by a German loan. I recall meetings with my Turkish desk colleague, Bill Helseth, in examining what role if any the United States could play in settling the dispute between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq over the utilization of the Euphrates water. My recollection is that Turkey considered this a matter for Syria and

Iraq to settle. Turkey was where the Euphrates had its origin. Turkey had its own plans for the use of the waters of the Euphrates which called for the construction of a series of dams. So, Turkey had no interest in any riparian agreement and nothing was worked out between Syria and Iraq by the time the Euphrates dam was completed.

Q: During those four years you were in Washington, I'll bet that Margaret stayed busy as well.

DICKMAN: Yes, she did. Margaret was involved in several volunteer activities, one being a charter member of THIS [The Hospitality and Information Service]. By 1960, a number of former colonies had become independent, resulting in the arrival of many newly assigned diplomats to Washington. The purpose of THIS was to assist the families of newly arrived diplomats in finding housing and adjusting to life in the United States. During our second tour in Washington, THIS was still in existence. Margaret was also involved in helping one of the Southeast Boys and Girls Clubs in southeast Washington. The director of the club happened to be the first African-American who had played football at the University of Wyoming.

Another one of Margaret's activities occurred following the assassination of President Kennedy. Margaret and another Foreign Service wife, Louise Stookey, were asked to process and catalogue all of the packages that had been received from all parts of the world in memory of the President's assassination. In the process, the stamps on these packages were saved, soaked, and sold during the State Department's book fair of 1964. Since then, the sale of stamps has continued to be a feature of the Department's annual book fair.

Q: And what was your next assignment?

DICKMAN: My next assignment was Tunis. After four years in the Office of Near Eastern Affairs flipping back and forth between NE/ECON and the UAR desk, I looked forward to this posting. I was being assigned as the embassy's economic officer. On the other hand, I regretted leaving a messy situation to my successor on the UAR desk, who was Mike Sterner. In mid-January 1965 when it became public that the United States was not going to negotiate any new PL480 agreements, Nasser's angry response was to say, "Let them drink seawater."

We flew to Tunis in the first days of 1965. The officer I was replacing, Charles Taqey, had already left. We stopped in Rome on the way to see about registering our daughter, Christine, at St. Stephens, a private American high school, for the following academic year. The American school in Tunis only went through the 8th grade. But leaving Washington, DC in the middle of the 9th grade is difficult for any child and it was especially so for Christine. We thought she could finish her year by going to a French school in Tunis and using the University of Nebraska high school correspondence course. Well, Chrissy struggled for the next six months. The students at the lycee were less than accommodating or friendly. It was a mistake on our part. We should have tried to get her into St. Stephens as soon as we reached Tunis. Our son, Paul, did not have the same problem. He fit in easily, entering the American school in Tunis in the 7th grade. Two years later, he attended St. Stephens in Rome.

Although the furnace didn't work, we felt we were lucky to be able to move into a beach house at Gammarth, which is located some 20 minutes by car from the embassy in Tunis. But it would take several months before our household effects arrived - this time because of a stevedore strike in the United States. So, we had to camp out with whatever odds and ends the embassy could provide.

Francis Russell was the ambassador and Leo Cyr the DCM, who would soon be replaced by Jim O'Sullivan, who later was replaced by Ed Mulcahy. With me in the Economic Section was Edward Peck, later to be replaced by Harry Sizer. The Political Section was headed by Steve McClintic with Art Lowrie as his assistant. There was a large, well established AID mission with a number of ongoing projects. It was headed by Tracy LaVergne, who was later replaced by Stuart Baron. There was also a large Peace Corps contingent. The wife of its director was a sister of Ted Sorenson and hence got a lot of attention. In addition, the Ford Foundation operated the Family Planning Center.

The year before our arrival in Tunis, the few thousand highly mechanized foreign owned (mainly French) agricultural lands had been nationalized by the government for redistribution to the hundreds of thousands of landless peasants. Compensation was to be in non-convertible Tunisian dinars. It had resulted in the departure of a large number of French citizens who aside from the agricultural sector provided a number of useful services. General DeGaulle had reacted imperiously by stopping the purchase of all Tunisian wines, which at the time was the country's leading export. Because of warm weather, Tunisian red wine had a higher alcoholic content and it was used to blend with French Bordeaux, a practice known as "coupage" [French: cutting]. Except for Francophone cultural activities, the French government had pretty much ended its economic assistance to Tunisia by the time we arrived. As a result, the Tunisian economy had been severely affected and it was in basically very bad shape. The nationalization had even caused a problem for our AID program. A couple of landowners with U.S.-French dual nationality were threatening to apply Section 620E of the Foreign Assistance Act, which called for stopping economic assistance if there was uncompensated expropriation of assets owned by American citizens.

The Tunisian economy was further affected by the actions of Ahmad Ben Salah, the second most powerful Tunisian after President Habib Bourguiba. While Bourguiba was the chief of Tunisia's only political party, the Neo-Destour, Ben Salah, through his hard work and honesty and as a leading exponent of state planning, had gained a very influential position in the party. At the time, Ben Salah was the minister of planning and finance. I think he had previously been Minister of Agriculture and Economy. In 1962, Ben Salah had pushed through a three year (1962-1964) economic plan and had been influential in pushing for the repossession of foreign [owned] lands. Before we arrived, the Tunisian government had already begun a stabilization (i.e. austerity) program under the direction of the International Monetary Fund. Meanwhile, Ben Salah had embarked on a new four year plan to cover the years 1965-1968. Among other things, the four year plan called for establishing state-organized agricultural cooperatives in these repossessed [colonized] lands, as well as putting the retail sector, including the small shops, into cooperatives. This was not a very popular move.

One of my first tasks in Tunis was to help negotiate a new Title I PL480 agreement, which as I remember amounted to about $40 million. It included wheat, tobacco, and soybean oil. Soybean oil was mixed with Tunisian olive oil for domestic consumption. This allowed Tunisia to export olive oil, which had now become its main agricultural cash export. Having previously been involved with the PL480 program in Egypt, I was very familiar with the financial and reporting requirements of the program. It involved negotiations with the foreign office's secretary general, Ismail Khalil, and his successors, Muhammad Megdiche, and Habib Bin Yahya, all of whom I would later meet as Tunisian ambassadors. Bin Yahya would, in fact, become the Tunisian ambassador to the United States in the '80s.

I should mention that in my work as economic officer, I had the complete confidence of Ambassador Russell, who was very generous in his evaluations of my performance. During the three and a half year tour in Tunis, I was responsible for administering the Title I program, which represented in monetary terms about half of our annual economic aid to Tunisia. This involved certifying the arrival and condition of different shipments, ascertaining that Tunisia was meeting its usual marketing requirements, making sure that Tunisian dinars generated by the sale of these commodities had been deposited in the bank, and assuring that a portion of local currency was available for the embassy's local expenditure with a small amount earmarked for conversion into U.S. dollars. This meant constantly badgering the Cereals Office (Office de Cereales), the Vegetable Oil Office (Office de l'Huile), and the tobacco monopoly, which were often tardy in making the required local currency deposits.

The AID mission was responsible for overseeing the Title II PL480 grant program, which provided flour and was used as payment-in-kind to unemployed Tunisians who were busy planting hundreds of thousands of eucalyptus trees. AID also supervised the Title III PL480 grant program for foodstuffs provided by Catholic Relief, CARE, and other non-governmental organizations. The PL480 program was an excellent form of economic assistance, especially for a country like Tunisia. I think it did a great deal to tide the country over a very difficult period in its economy.

In addition to PL480, I did a lot of economic and financial reporting, including the semi-annual economic reports, Tunisia's budget, its balance of payments, and its gross national product. I left the commercial work, such as our participation in the Tunisian trade fair, largely to Ed Peck and Harry Sizer. I worked very closely with the AID mission, especially Glenn Lehman and Patrick Demongeot, who were both excellent economists. Because Title I generated so much local currency, we were in a strong position to virtually dictate to the Tunisians just how this local currency would be allocated and used within Tunisia. One of our tasks was to convince the Planning Ministry that Ben Salah's four year plan (1965-1968) and its push for agricultural cooperatives was unrealistic and that its projections of economic growth were wildly optimistic. Much of the first three year plan had been financed by medium-term French supplier credits used by France to boost exports. Normally, these credits required repayment within three to seven years. Many of these supplier credits had now become due. This had added to Tunisia's economic woes because of its very limited foreign exchange reserves, much of which were being used to pay off the principal and interest on these supplier credits.

At the time, we made little headway in encouraging Ben Salah to modify his push for agricultural cooperatives under his four year plan. However, after many meetings with the director of the plan, Sadok Bahroun, we finally forced the Tunisian government to adopt an annual economic plan. It reviewed the performance of the economy during the previous year, the investment goals to be achieved in the current year, which included the use of the Title I generated Tunisian dinars, and budget projections for the succeeding year. As part of this exercise, we also encouraged the Tunisians to reduce capital investment financed by foreign supplier credits and to try to renegotiate these supplier credits. One result of this effort was to make Tunisian economic planning more realistic and to encourage the government to look for other sources of foreign exchange, especially by building up a thriving tourist industry, which had begun to attract many European visitors to Tunisia's beautiful beaches, especially Germans and British.

One project that made effective use of U.S.-owned Tunisian dinars generated by Title I PL480 that I am especially proud of was the Smithsonian Mediterranean Sorting Center northeast of Tunis. With the increased pollution in the Mediterranean, Smithsonian scientists wanted to classify as many marine species as possible before they all died out. So, an agreement was worked out whereby $60,000 worth of U.S.-owned Tunisian dinars were initially allocated for this purpose to cover the Center's local administrative costs and to hire a few local employees.

I should point out that Washington's generally favorable reception of our aid program was facilitated by President Bourguiba's foreign policy. For example, along with his general pro-western approach, he was one of the few Third World leaders who supported our stand in Vietnam. Also, shortly after we arrived in Tunis, Bourguiba embarked on a lengthy visit to several Arab countries, during which he tried but failed to get Nasser to withdraw troops from North Yemen. Bourguiba lectured different Arab leaders that a direct military confrontation with Israel over its diversion of Jordan waters should be avoided and that there should be a pacific solution with no victim. After having visited a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, Bourguiba inferred that Arab states shared a responsibility for their plight. As you can imagine, Bourguiba was heavily criticized for these views by other Arab leaders, as well as by many Tunisians but who did so in a private manner. But on the other hand, the Johnson administration viewed Bourguiba's statements as those of a true statesman. This resulted in several high level visits. I recall particularly the visits of Averell Harriman and Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

However, the strong feelings of the man in the street over the Arab-Israeli question really came out on the day of Israel's surprise attack against Egypt on June 6, 1967. The attack had come after Nasser had asked the United Nations to withdraw its military presence in the Sinai at Sharm el Sheikh. We learned about Israel's action on the car radio while coming to work. I recall telling Margaret, who had come to town, to head back home directly. Once the radio carried Nasser's reckless accusation that planes from the United States' Sixth Fleet had been involved with Israel in destroying Egypt's air force, mobs converged on the British and American embassies. The British embassy, which was downtown in the center of town, was burned to the ground. We rolled down all the shutters, which were beginning to be pelted with stones, and barricaded the front entrance to the chancery. However, we could not protect the cars that were parked in the courtyard in front of the embassy, which were all trashed. As the crowd assembled and began using a ramrod in trying to open the entrance, I spotted an individual who had climbed a tree and had entered the second floor balcony. At that point, we began defending ourselves using tear gas within the embassy as well as lobbing tear gas from the roof, where most of the embassy personnel had taken refuge. The Marines had been wisely instructed by administrative officer Zack Geneas not to fire any weapons. Fortunately, the tear gas seemed to do the trick. For some reason in all the excitement, I was not bothered by the tear gas. After about a half hour, the crowd began to disperse. By then, Tunisian authorities attempted to remove the crowd to a spot a few blocks away. We felt particularly fortunate that the crowd had not discovered the gasoline pump located behind a high wall in the back of the courtyard. That could have made the situation much more dangerous had the mob discovered it. Ambassador Russell at the time happened to be in Washington, DC to be on hand for a meeting between Tunisian foreign minister, Bourguiba, Jr., and Secretary Rusk. Upon hearing of the mob actions, Ambassador Russell hurried back to Tunis.

Q: Last time, you were describing the mob action outside and inside the embassy of Tunis. You remained on in Tunis for some time, I take it?

DICKMAN: Yes, I did. It so happens that at the time of the demonstrations, we were scheduled to depart for home leave and had made arrangements to fly to Rome to attend our daughter's graduation from St. Stephens, a private school in Rome, and to pick up Paul, who by now was also attending the school. We were then to go to Naples for a leisurely boat trip home. However, our plans for the boat trip went awry. As we were boarding the plane for Rome, I was paged by Ambassador Russell's secretary, Louise Farnus, instructing me to stay in Tunis, but she couldn't tell me why. Since the baggage had all been loaded, I said I could not delay the Tunis Air flight, so we flew to Rome. At the airport in Rome, I was paged again, this time by the DCM and told to report to the embassy, which I did, where I was told that the Secretary and Ambassador Russell had instructed me to return to Tunis. Embassy Rome had canceled the boat reservation, so the family and I flew back to Tunis the next day. What had caused the flap was the visit to the embassy by Deputy Prime Minister Bahi Ladgham and Planning and Finance Minister Ben Salah the day after the demonstration. It was intended as a gesture of apology and a promise to help pay for the damages.

During the tour of the embassy, which was guided by political officer Steve McClintic, Ladgham took exception to a remark made by McClintic which was misinterpreted as Tunisia showing cowardice toward Nasser for not stopping the demonstration. This remark apparently settled in Ladgham's craw who sent a message to Tunisia's foreign minister, Bourguiba, Jr., who was meeting with Secretary Rusk in Washington. Ladgham asked that McClintic be removed. While this whole episode was very unfair to Steve and his family, the Department ordered them to pack their bags immediately for an assignment in Paris. During the next three weeks, I became the notetaker for meetings between Ambassador Russell and President Bourguiba and other officials.

Despite the angry public reaction to Israel's surprise attack and pressure coming from Egypt and neighboring Algeria, Tunisia did not break diplomatic relations with the United States. Once the dust had settled, we flew home for a shortened home leave to visit our parents in Wyoming.

In a way, Tunisia was our reward post since it was the only non-hardship post in my career. There were so many places to visit in Tunisia, such as the ancient Roman village of Douga, the Colosseum at El Djem located in the center of the country, which is nearly as large as the one in Rome, the ruins of Sbeitla near the Kasserine pass, and of course the magnificent collection of Roman mosaics at the Bardo Museum. We were within a couple of miles of Carthage and an easy drive to the Phoenician ruins at Kerkuan on the Cap Bon Peninsula, it made one realize how the area had once been one of Rome's granary. On almost every sunny afternoon, if we weren't visiting another place in Tunisia, we would go for long walks with Iraq's former Minister of Education, Fahd Jamali. Fahd was a graduate of Columbia and a disciple of John Dewey. Following the 1958 military coup in Baghdad, he was jailed for several years until he was allowed to leave and go into exile in Tunisia where he taught at the University. He was a grand old man of Arab politics and a true Arab patriot. He died about a year ago.

As in our other posts, Margaret's abilities as an organizer were called upon again. This was still the day when the role of the wife in support of her husband and the image she projected of the United States were still evaluated. Margaret received the highest marks and unquestionably helped my career. Mrs. Russell, the ambassador's wife, was a strong believer in volunteer activities and in "two for the price of one." She was the honorary president of a very active American Women's Club of Tunisia that met regularly and had a number of different activities. These included reading for the blind and bringing the first Braille typewriter into Tunisia, working with Peace Corps volunteers at the orthopedic hospital, weekly visits to an orphanage, Tunisian study groups, and a pilot project on mental retardation. Margaret held several positions in the organization, including being its president for at least a year.

Q: Where did you go after Tunisia?

DICKMAN: After three and a half years in Tunis, I received orders to attend the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania for an academic year beginning in September of 1968. Christine, who was now a freshman at Colorado Women's College in Denver, welcomed the assignment but not Paul. He had enjoyed the taste of "la dolce vita" and he knew Rome like the back of his hand. Over his strong objection, we insisted that he could not continue at St. Stephens and that he had to attend the Mercersburg Academy, a private high school about an hour's drive from Carlisle, where he would graduate three years later.

The academic year at the Army War College was an especially rewarding one for me. I met and listened to a number of fine speakers such as Mr. Kissinger and took advantage of the research facilities that were provided. We were placed in one of the barracks that had been converted into small apartments, but it took a long time to settle in because our lift van was lost. It was finally discovered after several months to be in Baltimore. So, we slept on Army cots during this period, which I think lasted some four months, using whatever the War College could scrape up for us in the way of cots, tables, chairs, kitchen utensils, etc.

Except for this inconvenience, I very much enjoyed the stay at Carlisle. My research paper examining whether the Palestinian guerrillas were becoming an effective fighting force was chosen for inclusion in the College's "Commentary." My paper was intended to bring to light PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who at the time was still relatively unknown. The conclusion of my paper was that the guerrillas were not effective in unconventional warfare but were effective in terms of their political leadership.

Before leaving Carlisle, I was astonished to learn that I had been promoted to class two only four years after reaching class three. I had expected to be assigned as the deputy office director for North Africa or in some position in INR until Dick Murphy, who was then in Personnel, called to say that Hermann Eilts wanted me in Jeddah. Hermann had been our ambassador in Saudi Arabia for nearly four years. He had reorganized the embassy structure so that there was a joint economic-political section which he wanted me to lead. I was not especially enthusiastic about a tour in Saudi Arabia, hoping at the very least that I would have a couple of months at the Foreign Service Institute to brush up on my Arabic. However, I left the decision to the needs of the Service. Hermann wanted me to come as soon as possible in order to have a short overlap with Mel Sonne, who I was replacing.

Q: Was Saudi Arabia your next assignment?

DICKMAN : Yes. In mid-July 1969, I flew to Jeddah with Margaret coming a month and a half later after Christine and Paul had entered their respective schools. I never dreamed that I would thereafter be tied to the Arabian Peninsula for the rest of my Foreign Service career. Initially, I was assigned as first secretary and later as economic counselor. Bill Stoltzfus was the DCM. In this joint economic-political section, David Newton and Joe Twinam were the political officers. John Craig and later Roger Merrick were the junior commercial officers. Bill Rugh was the PAO and David Ransom was the consular officer. I might mention that all of these except Merrick later became ambassadors. Ray Close and Graham Fuller supported the political half of the section.

Although many embassy families had their homes within the embassy compound, which featured a small desert golf course, we lived off compound in a large house several blocks away. It was to be our first government furnished quarters. We were connected to the embassy switchboard by an ancient hand crank telephone, which often did not work. Also, one of the problems in walking to the compound was that we had to avoid a pack of wild dogs that fed on garbage scraps. You were never quite sure whether this pack was going to attack you.

Since access to high level Saudi personalities was basically restricted to the ambassador, this meant that Hermann did a good deal of the embassy political reporting. Fortunately, the economic-commercial side of the joint section was not subject to such strictures. Saudi businessmen were easily accessible for commercial reporting and I also had good contacts with the Saudi monetary agency, which was headed by Anwar Ali, who was a Pakistani, and also with his principal assistant, Dr. Omar Chapra. Shortly after arriving in Jeddah, I recall our section being busy with promoting U.S. agricultural exports which was organized around a food fair Among other things, it featured smoked turkey which tasted just like ham. Once the fair ended, Margaret used what was left to demonstrate U.S. dishes at Queen Iffat's Dar al Hanan's Women's High School in Jeddah. Queen Iffat was the wife of King Faisal. Among the items that had not sold at the food fair were packages of chicken livers, which Margaret showed how they could be made into excellent pates.

What was different about the assignment in Jeddah was that the capital of Saudi Arabia was Riyadh. Since foreign missions at the time were not allowed to be stationed in the capital, I would fly periodically to Riyadh to call on various officials such as the planning director, Hisham Nazir; the deputy finance minister, Muhammad Aba al Khail; the deputy commerce director, Omar Fakiah; PETROMIN governor, Abd al Hadi Tahir; occasionally petroleum minister Zaki Yamani; plus others whose names I no longer remember. My biggest problem in going to Riyadh was where I would spend the night. Riyadh was very, very crowded. Moreover, I was never sure whether I had the desired appointment. I had to depend exclusively on taxis. This was especially a problem when I had to squire around a VIP who would arrive at the airport in Riyadh and expected to be met with an Embassy car and driver. I recall, for example, the visit of Henry Kearns, the chairman of the Export-Import Bank. The other problem was that invariably, hotel rooms were almost always full. Each time I visited Riyadh, I had to hope that there would be an extra bunk at the U.S. military training mission, which occupied the upper floors of a building in downtown Riyadh. Since the phone system didn't work in the Kingdom, the only way the embassy could communicate with the military mission in Riyadh in making preparations for my visit was by shortwave radio, which was often blocked by static. Fortunately, after I left, the embassy finally rented a house in Riyadh, provided a car, and assigned to my successor a local employee who also served as interpreter.

With the ambassador doing much of the political reporting, it meant that our combined ECON/POL section focused mainly on economic subjects, some of which had not been written about in the past. For example, I did a report on Saudi Arabia's balance of payments and another on its national accounts, which estimated the Kingdom's gross domestic product. I also did one on its national budget. These initial reports laid the basis for key economic indicators which became part of our semi-annual Economic Trends Report, which either I prepared or helped to prepare. The June 1967 war had had a noticeable adverse economic impact on the Kingdom. With the Suez Canal remaining closed, the cost of imported commodities had risen substantially. In addition, the Saudis had almost been forced to become major aid donors, providing $150 million in grant aid each year to Egypt and Jordan, with the former intended to offset revenue losses caused by the closure of the Suez Canal. Although Egyptian forces had withdrawn from North Yemen as a quid pro quo for Saudi aid, the Kingdom's outlays for defense and internal security had continued to grow as it sought to build up a modest deterrent force. The Saudis wanted the latest equipment. However, since most of it was very sophisticated, it required a lot of support companies like Raytheon to manage programs like the Hawk ground to air missile.

By the time I arrived, the pressures on the Saudi budget caused by rising defense expenditures, foreign aid, and a helter skelter of different development projects had forced the government to apply stringent fiscal restraints. In order to deal with the problem, the Saudi Central Planning Organization, headed by Hisham Nazir, had completed the Kingdom's first comprehensive plan with the assistance of the Stanford Research Institute. Meanwhile, the Saudi attempts to reestablish a monarchical regime in North Yemen were going nowhere. Although Nasser had withdrawn Egyptian forces from North Yemen in return for Saudi aid, the Yemeni Republicans had managed to maintain control over much of the country by turning increasingly to the Soviet Union for military equipment and to Communist China for economic assistance.

Early in 1970, King Faisal finally decided to stop supporting the royalists and to establish diplomatic relations with the Yemen Arab Republic. King Faisal had finally realized that the Yemeni Royalists had become a very expensive lost cause and that the civil war was only giving Moscow new opportunities to meddle in the Peninsula. The Saudi recognition of the North Yemeni regime gave me a couple of opportunities to fly down to Sanaa to meet with the then head of the Yemen National Bank. Saudi Air had established a fairly regular flight schedule with Sanaa. Although North Yemen had broken diplomatic relations with the United States during the June 1967 war, we established an interests section following Saudi Arabia's recognition of the North Yemen regime under the protection of the Italian embassy.

Q: What was the most interesting aspect of your assignment in Jeddah?

DICKMAN: I think what turned out to be the most interesting aspect of my assignment in Jeddah was to watch and report on the series of events that began in 1970 causing an increase in OPEC's bargaining power. It was a period when Saudi Arabia was becoming the world's major oil producing and exporting country. At the same time, Saudi Arabia was pursuing its goal to gradually take ownership of the ARAMCO concession. The term that the Saudis used was "participation," participating in the concession.

In the summer of 1970, Libya's Muammar Qadhafi had forced Armand Hammer's Occidental Petroleum Company to cut back on its production by about 35%. Armand had failed to get other oil companies like Exxon to loan him some oil so that he could meet his contractual arrangements which were entirely with European nations. Libya was Occidental Petroleum's only source of crude. Unable to gain help from other oil companies, Hammer caved to Qadhafi's demand for higher postings and a change in the tax rate from 50/50 to 55/45. Other OPEC countries, including Saudi Arabia, soon demanded the same treatment. This was followed by Syria closing the Iraq Petroleum Company pipelines in its dispute with Iraq over transit fees. To strengthen its negotiating position, a Syrian bulldozer "accidentally" cut ARAMCO's Tapline which carried oil from Dhahran to the Port of Sidon in Lebanon. The sudden shortage of oil was further exacerbated by Kuwait's decision to cut its oil production from four to three million barrels a day. Not only did Kuwait's cut back affect world supply but the civil war in Nigeria had broken out, which had sharply reduced exports from that country, and there were delays in completing the Alaska Pipeline because of environmental concerns. At the time I arrived in Jeddah, ARAMCO employees were complaining that there was a world oil glut. But by the fall of 1970, the situation had suddenly changed to a world oil shortage.

This was reflected in OPEC's meeting in December 1970 in Caracas, where the member countries sought to take advantage of the situation. They issued a 30 day ultimatum to the oil companies to make new price concessions and to accept the 55/45 split of profits. Otherwise, the OPEC nations threatened to cut off their supply. Since the value of oil was denominated in dollars, the OPEC nations also wanted price adjustments to overcome the 10% devaluation of the dollar that had occurred earlier in the year.

Fearful that they could be caught in a ratcheting situation, the major oil companies decided that they would no longer deal with OPEC nations individually but as a common front. So, they agreed on what they called a "safety net" arrangement whereby if one company's access to crude was denied by an oil exporter, companies not similarly disadvantaged would transfer some of their crude to the affected company. Since the "safety net" arrangement raised anti-trust problems in the United States, the companies turned to Jack McCloy who was instrumental in getting the Department of Justice to issue a business revue letter exempting the oil companies from anti-trust prosecution. In order to coordinate negotiations with OPEC countries, a policy group of senior oil company executives was formed in London.

The news of the London group provoked angry reactions among OPEC nations. Wishing to avoid a confrontation, Under Secretary of State John Irwin was sent as special emissary to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait to moderate their demands. The first stop was Iran. Under Secretary Irwin was accompanied by Fuels and Energy director Jim Akins. Irwin's message was to stress the importance to the United States and the free world that there not be a halt or a cut in oil production which otherwise would seriously affect our relations. The Shah had objected strongly to having negotiations where OPEC would be dealing with a common front of oil companies. The Shah claimed that the OPEC threat had been misunderstood The dispute was with the oil companies, not the oil importing nations. Oil would always be available to oil importing nations even if OPEC's negotiations with the oil companies broke down. The Shah insisted that the United States deal separately with moderate Persian Gulf producing nations which were willing to enter into five year oil supply agreements even if radicals like Libya or Venezuela got a better deal in separate negotiations.

I had been sent to Riyadh to meet and brief the Irwin party as it came in from Tehran. I expected that they would hear the same message from Saudi oil minister Yamani, which they did. It was clear that Yamani knew what Irwin had heard from the Shah. After the meeting, I remember the discussion that followed, whether to acquiesce to the Shah's position or what to do. If the offer of a five year oil supply arrangement was turned down, the oil companies might find themselves with a less favorable arrangement. That was our concern. The general feeling was to accept the assurances of the Shah and the Saudis and later the Kuwaitis that they would avoid price ratcheting. This is what Secretary Irwin recommended to Secretary Rogers and the oil companies. But in doing so, it broke up the London group's united front. In February 1971, the oil companies met in Tehran, where the companies agreed to a new profit split as well as a uniform increase of about 35 cents a barrel, the elimination of discounts, and adjusting posted prices periodically to deal with the inflation of the U.S. dollar. The Tehran meeting represented a symbolic transfer of power from the oil companies to the OPEC countries in the Persian Gulf basin.

We reported on how these developments were having a favorable impact on the Saudi economy. Because the United States no longer any shut in capacity and had ended oil import quotas, the ARAMCO oil companies were rapidly increasing production. By 1972, Saudi Arabia had become the world's leading oil exporter, which had resulted in rapidly rising foreign exchange earnings for the Kingdom. In doing economic reporting, I had become pretty well acquainted with oil minister Zaki Yamani. On at least a couple of occasions, he had invited me and Margaret to his home. One of these dinners was when Armand Hammer was present. I believe it was in the latter part of 1971. Sheikh Zaki was always helpful in answering my questions whether the Kingdom would allow the continued rapid rise in oil production since the income from oil was beginning to exceed the economy's absorptive capacity. Yamani implied that there was a limit beyond which Saudi oil production should not rise, although he had to be careful in what he said since he was not a member of the royal family.
By this time, Nick Thatcher had replaced Hermann Eilts as ambassador. Hermann had gone to the Army War College in Carlisle as deputy commandant. Much of Ambassador Thatcher's time was devoted to dealing with Saudi requests for sophisticated military weaponry as well as advanced training, but he had also become increasingly preoccupied in how to deal with the Ministry of Petroleum's push for share participation in ARAMCO. It raised the question of the extent to which the U.S. government should become directly involved with the operations of American oil companies in the Kingdom. For several years, Yamani had called for Saudi shared participation in the U.S. oil company consortium but Washington had avoided reacting to the idea.

In February 1972, matters had come to a head when the ARAMCO partners had turned down a Saudi request for an initial 25% of ARAMCO's shares. The American companies had also been hesitant to make the needed investments that the Saudis wanted to capture associated gas that was being flared. The Saudis wanted to convert it into valuable petroleum by-products. Instead, the ARAMCO partners had offered a 50% share in new discoveries. Reacting to this refusal, the Saudis had announced that they would call for an extraordinary OPEC meeting to take place in March. Along with David Newton, I remember attending a meeting on the subject between Ambassador Thatcher and King

Faisal which included Oil Minister Yamani. The ambassador had received instructions to point out to the King that participation was not part of the 1971 Tehran Agreement with the oil companies. Its implementation without negotiation would violate existing contractual agreements. As I recall, the ambassador made about 10 points. Faisal's performance was impressive. He responded to each of the points in the order they had been presented. He hoped the companies would not oblige him to forcibly put participation into effect. He said participation would ensure a long-term supply relationship between the Kingdom and the American oil companies. Normally during visits by American officials, Faisal was wont to digress to talk about the dangers of the protocols of Zion, but this time, with Saudi national interests involved, there was none of this.
I believe this meeting was important from an historical point of view. On the eve of the special OPEC conference, oil minister Yamani announced that the ARAMCO partners had accepted the principle of participation. The partners had finally realized that with growing world oil demand, what mattered most was not who owned the oil concessions but who had access to the world's largest pool of recoverable reserves. So, what had been an adversarial approach was now changing to one of common interests.

The appearance that we were giving in to Arab oil producing nations generated suspicions among certain elements in the United States. The suspicion was that State Department Arabists were undermining U.S. support for Israel. In an article by Joseph Kraft which appeared in the November 7, 1971 issue of "The New York Times Magazine," a copy of which I have, it implied that as Arabists, almost by definition they were pro-Arab at the expense of Israel and their influence had to be countered by the White House. The article quoted out of context statements from Department Arabists as well as some who were not even Middle East specialists. If such reasoning were accepted to its logical conclusion, it would discourage Foreign Service officers from taking Arabic language training since they would be perceived as untrustworthy. I recall that retired Ambassador Pete Hart wrote an excellent letter rebutting this outrageous article. The attack reminded me of charges in the early 1950s against the old China hands. Nevertheless, the suspicion has remained even to this day. The Arabists myth was the subject of an article by John Soleki that appeared in the 1990 issue of "The Middle East Journal." Soleki's article indicated that there was little if any proof that the Arabists had ever influenced U.S. policy vis a vis Israel. Recently, there has been a book entitled "The Arabists" by Robert Kaplan which supports the Kraft thesis. What I found surprising in Kaplan's book is that he never mentions the Soleki article, not even in a footnote or in his extensive list of references.

Q: When did you leave for your second tour in the Department?

DICKMAN: In December 1971, I learned from Rodger Davies, who was now deputy assistant secretary in NEA, that I would be replacing Dick Murphy as Arabian Peninsula country director. Rodger had come to Manama to represent the United States at Bahrain's independence day celebration. I had joined Rodger in Bahrain and then traveled with him and Lee Dinsmore, who was our Consul General in Dhahran, for a swing through the lower Gulf. It included stops in Qatar, the fledgling United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

We flew on the old DC-4 that the U.S. military training mission used to go back and forth between Jeddah, Riyadh, and Dhahran which was known as the “Desert Run.” On occasion, I would hitch a ride when traveling to Riyadh.

Rodger’s visit came just as British military forces were completing their final withdrawal from the Gulf. These newly independent, small, and very vulnerable Gulf states were most anxious that U.S. diplomatic recognition would soon be followed with the opening of an American embassy in each country.

The most fascinating part of this visit was Oman. In 1970, the British had forced the removal of the retrograde Sultan Said and replaced him with his son, Qaboos, who had attended Sandhurst. The Saudis had withheld recognition of Qaboos because of their dispute over the ownership of the Buraimi Oasis. However, by the time we had arrived in Oman, Qaboos had just returned from a visit to Saudi Arabia, where he had been addressed as His Majesty. The Saudis had belatedly become concerned over the insurgency in Oman’s western province of Dhofar, which was being supported by South Yemen’s Marxist regime. The Saudis had decided to abandon their longtime support of rebels in Oman’s eastern interior because of their boundary dispute with Qaboos’ father. After landing in Muscat, we boarded an Omani military aircraft which took us to Salalah, the capital of Dhofar province, where we met with Sultan Qaboos. At the time, the primitive runway at Salalah was periodically under mortar attack from the nearby mountain positions held by the insurgents. Although Oman had become a sizeable oil producer (an important oil field had been discovered by Shell), Oman was still very much a medieval kingdom. There were only three miles of paved road in the entire country, which joined Muscat to the port of Matrah. At night, the gates of Muscat were closed with the inhabitants only allowed to use lanterns as they moved about.

As for the rest of my tour in Jeddah, other than being involved with details for the visit of Vice President Spiro Agnew, who came in the summer of 1971, the one major headache that I had during my tour was being the embassy’s point man to deal with problems of the Jeddah electric power and desalination plant. Prior to my arrival, an agreement had been signed with the Saudi government whereby the Department of Interior’s Office of Saline Waters was responsible for the design, engineering, and supervision of the plant’s construction as well as making recommendations on the construction bids. Westinghouse had made a strong pitch for the job but it had gone to a Dutch company because it was the lowest bidder. By the time I came, construction was well underway, but there were a number of technical problems. Ambassador Eilts did not want to be involved in the incriminations among the various parties. The Dutch company had cut corners such as not properly coating the many pipes which prevented the plant from operating properly. At one point on Christmas Eve of 1971, lightning struck the plant putting three of its four banks out of commission. The Jeddah electric company officials refused to provide the needed electric charge to jumpstart the plant in order that it could operate again. The company officials were afraid that if they did so, it could ricochet and short circuit the city’s other power generating plants. Eventually, the desalination plant was put back into operation after arranging to jerryrig a large power line connecting the generator in Raytheon’s compound a half mile away to the desalination plant in order to give the needed jump start.

By the time I left Jeddah, the Saudis wanted to use the Department of Interior's adjudication mechanism as the means to obtain funds from the Dutch company. In other words, they wanted enough funds to make the plant operable. This was strongly resisted by James Watt, who was then Assistant Secretary of Interior. Although we were both from Wyoming, I felt Watt was more interested in protecting the Department of Interior from getting a black eye than trying to work out the problem equitably – at least equitably for the Saudis, who were footing the bill. If I remember correctly, the Dutch company went bankrupt, which forced the Saudis to pay about $8 million for the services of a German company to make the plant operable.

Q: How did Margaret find life in Jeddah?

DICKMAN: She was flexible and a good soldier. As you know, womencan't drive in Saudi Arabia. This was always a problem. Also, it was an inconvenience when I had to travel to Riyadh at least once, sometimes twice, a month since we did not live on the compound. But I must say, the biggest time consuming inconvenience was shopping. There was no embassy store at the compound. Our house was located about a mile from the nearest grocery store. This meant that every time Margaret had to go to buy food, I had to drive her there. It also meant being sure you had included all the needed items on your grocery list to cut down on the number of trips. The embassy motor pool tried to help by periodically assigning a van to take wives to do their shopping. But this meant stopping at different places for different needs all of which required a good bit of time. Fortunately, this inconvenience did not bother my very resourceful wife. Aside from demonstrating American foods, Margaret's many activities included coaching the daughters of Deputy Foreign Minister Ibrahim Mas'ud, who were seeking to improve their English comprehension. They would only call when I was not in the house. Since the second floor of our large house was unoccupied (Our kids were in school in the States), it also became a spit and glue center for embassy wives to relieve some of their frustration over their lack of freedom of movement.

Q: You said you had already received your assignment to Washington, DC.

DICKMAN: Yes, we had. We left at the beginning of March of 1972 and returned directly to Washington for my assignment as Arabian Peninsula country director. Dick Murphy had left a couple of months before with Joe Twinam ably filling in during the interim. The directorate also included Quincey Lumsden and David Ransom. All three of these officers later became ambassadors. A few months later, after Joe Twinam left for his next assignment, he was replaced by Brooks Wramplemeier. Joe Sisco was the NEA assistant secretary and Rodger Davies was the NEA deputy assistant secretary, to whom I reported.

My assignment in the Department coincided with the end of what had been a major policy review of what role the United States should play in the Persian Gulf in light of Britain's Labour government's decision to end its security role in the region. Our policy had been to try and create a Federation of Arab Emirates, which would include Bahrain, Qatar, and the seven emirates in the lower Gulf. However, both Bahrain and Qatar opted for independence, leaving a fragile confederation of seven small emirates that had been formed in the last days of 1971 by Britain's chief negotiator at the time, Sir William Luce. The outlook for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had not been helped by the Shah's forces seizing the islands of Abu Musa and the Tumbs belonging to the emirates of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaima respectively. This had resulted in an attempted palace coup in Sharjah and had delayed Ras el-Khaima's decision to join the UAE confederation. With the emergence of these small, vulnerable new states, we did not want a repetition of what had occurred in 1967 when Luce had negotiated the withdrawal of British forces from the former Aden protectorate. It had been anticipated that the pro-Nasser Front for the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY) would take control following the departure of British forces. However, following a fierce political battle, the Marxist National Liberation Front led by Abd al Fatah Ismail managed to take control and create what came to be known as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), otherwise known as South Yemen to differentiate it from North Yemen.

Shortly thereafter, the PDRY became the base for supporting the insurgency in Oman's Dhofar Province. It also began to promote a political movement known as the People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG). In 1969, PDRY forces had also made a couple of forays into southern Saudi Arabia. This became one of the reasons why the Saudis finally decided to drop the Yemeni royalists and to recognize the Yemen Arab Republic. In many respects, what had happened to the former Aden protectorate was a reflection of the Cold War. The PDRY had become a Soviet base with Russian warships regularly visiting the port of Aden with Russian submarines reportedly operating off of South Yemen's island of Socotra.

At the time of the Persian Gulf policy review, the United States was still very much involved in Vietnam. It was decided that the United States would not try to replace Britain in the Gulf, but it would maintain its small Middle East naval presence in the Gulf which was known as MIDEASTFOR. The force consisted of a command ship berthed in Bahrain and two destroyers that were peeled off from other fleets and assigned to Gulf duty for six month periods. It was also decided that Bill Stoltzfus, our ambassador in Kuwait, should also be accredited as the U.S. ambassador to Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman, and to establish a very modest diplomatic presence in each of these countries. So, John Gatch in Bahrain, Phil Griffin and Nate Howell in the United Arab Emirates, and Pat Quinlan and his wife in Oman single handedly established a diplomatic presence as Charges. Because of a lack of funds, no one initially was assigned to open an embassy in Doha, Qatar. I soon found myself trying to assuage the newly arrived Qatari ambassador, who could not believe that the State Department could be so penurious, believing instead that we had some dark motive.

An outgrowth of the policy review was the application of the so-called Nixon Doctrine. To reduce deployment of U.S. military forces abroad, the United States would now depend on certain countries to assure stability in strategic regions. In the case of the Persian Gulf, it was to be the Shah of Iran. Early in May 1972 on the way back from a trip to Moscow, President Nixon and NSC Director Kissinger had stopped in Tehran to visit with the Shah, where they promised him that he could buy any item in the U.S. military arsenal except nuclear weaponry. The decision had been made without consulting the State Department nor had any thought been given to concerns of Arabian Peninsula countries as to why the Shah was building up such a large military force. Since these countries were not a threat to Iran, they asked who the Shah thought was the enemy. The Soviet Union? The Iranians couldn't defend themselves against the Soviet Union? The question was ignored by the administration. At the time, I did not yet realize the extent to which Secretary Rogers was being bypassed by Kissinger.

The Shah welcomed the prospect of being seen as a protector of the Gulf and the tempo of our military sales to Iran rose rapidly. I knew we were very beholden to the Shah because Iran was an oil supplier to Israel and had allowed us to place electronic monitoring stations along Iran's border with the Soviet Union. However, I thought it was a mistake to be so solicitous of the Shah, who was viewed by Arabian Peninsula countries as a bit of a megalomaniac and barely as an observant Muslim. He had never made the Haj during the highest holy month.

Aside from seeking of funds to open proper embassies in the small Gulf states, one of my initial efforts was to encourage the Saudis to place some of their growing dollar earnings into U.S. securities. This interest was shared by then Treasury Deputy Secretary Bill Simon and Treasury Under Secretary Jack Bennett. This interest was also shared by large money center banks. I can recall during my last six months in Jeddah seeing representatives from the large money center banks lining up at the Saudi Monetary Agency, which was the Saudi central bank, with each trying to outshine the other in offering services for Saudi deposits. Unlike Kuwait, which had deposited its surplus oil income in foreign financial institutions and equities for its Future Generation Fund, the Saudis did not have a similar fund and they were looking at various alternatives. By the fall of 1972, the Kingdom was meeting half of the world's annual incremental oil demand. Saudi oil production had risen rapidly in three years from 2.9 to over 7 million barrels a day. Coupled with the higher price of oil, it meant that the income received was growing beyond the Kingdom's absorptive capacity, at least in the short-run.

While the Saudis (and the Kuwaitis as well) wanted a safe place to place their excess funds, they also wanted complete confidentiality as to the amounts invested. One of the first important visitors from Saudi Arabia after I became ARP [Arabian Peninsula] Country Director was Saudi Monetary Agency governor Anwar Ali. In the fall of 1972, we also had separate visits of Oil Minister Zaki Yamani and Deputy Oil Minister Saud al Faisal. Saud was a son of King Faisal and later became (and still is) foreign minister. They proposed a special relationship with the United States whereby we would be assured of access to Saudi oil in return for allowing Saudi investments in the U.S. oil industry. While American officials were not keen on the idea, it is my recollection that Treasury Under Secretary Bennett was sent to Saudi Arabia about this time to work out arrangements where the Saudis could invest their surplus income in a variety of U.S. Treasury notes, bonds, or other U.S. government securities. Since large sums were involved, the deposits would be "ex-market." In other words, they would be kept outside of the normal market for these securities and would be kept strictly confidential.

Meanwhile, shortly after becoming ARP director, the Department received hints that North Yemen might be ready to reestablish diplomatic relations by welcoming the visit of Secretary Rogers. As mentioned earlier, following the Saudi recognition of North Yemen in 1970, we had established an interests section in Sanaa with Italy as the protective power. The Yemeni approach interested Secretary Rogers since the Yemen Arab Republic would be the first of the Arab countries that had broken diplomatic relations at the time of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war to seek their re-establishment. The North Yemenis had become increasingly concerned over attempts by South Yemen to subvert the government in Sanaa. They also hoped that renewed relations with the U.S. would bring back an AID program that had stopped when relations were broken in 1967. The Yemen government was informed that the Secretary would visit Sanaa as part of a series of stops around the globe and would expect that diplomatic relations would resume at the time of the Secretary's visit.

Since the airstrip in Sanaa was not capable of handling a jet aircraft, the Secretary's plane would have to land in Yemen's port city of Hodeida and from there travel on a C-130 over the mountains to Yemen's capital, whose altitude happens to be the same as Laramie's, 7,200 feet. Landing at Hodeida was tricky because the Egyptian-built runway had buckled in certain places. Hodeida was also the site of a number of aging Russian MIGs that Moscow had sold North Yemen on credit but which were now junk. David Ransom and I accompanied Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco to catch up with Secretary Rogers' party in Jakarta, Indonesia. From there, we flew to Hodeida, landing safely in the afternoon, but it would become a very adventurous trip.

Two C-130s that were based in Turkey were waiting for the Secretary. But after an hour of failing to buddy start either one of the C-130s, it looked like the visit would have to be aborted. However, Secretary Rogers spotted the old U.S. military training mission DC-4, which had flown from Saudi Arabia to Sanaa earlier in the day to bring a Marine security detail for the Secretary's visit. The DC-4 had landed in Hodeida on its way back. The Secretary rushed over to the DC-4's pilot to ask if the aircraft could take the party to Sanaa before dark. Told that they could provided the passenger list was cut back to 15 and the baggage tied down while in flight, Sisco, Ransom, and I scrambled aboard with the Secretary and a few members of his staff and security personnel. I might mention that the Secretary's plane flew off to Bahrain to spend the night and returned to pick him up the following day. On the old DC-4, there was a Yemeni observer who gave directions to the DC-4's pilot to turn right and then left as we weaved our way through the 11,000 foot mountain peaks as well as a rainstorm before reaching the airport in Sanaa, which by then was dark. The airstrip was visible only because cars had been lined up to shine on the strip with their lights. Upon leaving the aircraft, the Secretary couldn't walk right down since there was no airport ramp. He had to climb down backward on a makeshift ladder, where he was greeted by Bob Stein, who was in charge of our interests section.

The next day, Secretary Rogers made a tour of Sanaa in an open jeep, which gave fits to the Secretary's small detail of security personnel. But this was followed by formal resumption of diplomatic relations. The interests section became our embassy and Bob Stein was made Charge. I recall overhearing a conversation between the Secretary and Joe Sisco over who should be named as Ambassador. They both agreed it should be Bill Crawford, who became our first resident ambassador to Yemen and the first in our Arabist class to named as an Ambassador. Later in the day, the Secretary and our party departed Sanaa on a functioning C-130 to fly to Hodeida where the Secretary's 707 was waiting. The visit to Yemen was one that Secretary Rogers would never forget.

I peeled off from the Secretary's party when it left Bahrain in order to visit Qatar, where I assured the ruler that we would soon open an embassy, as well as the United Arab Emirates and Oman, where our embassy personnel were operating on a shoestring. It was an occasion to view the very limited and primitive buildings that might be halfway suitable for an embassy and also gave me ammunition to plead to NEA's executive director for more funds. Secretary Roger's stops in Yemen, Bahrain, and Kuwait, along with a growing awareness of our energy dependency on countries in the Persian Gulf, generated hearings before Congressman Lee Hamilton of Indiana in July of 1972. These hearings were really under the guidance of his principal staff aide, Mike Van Dusen. The Arabian Peninsula Directorate had to prepare a lengthy briefing book for Assistant Secretary Sisco, who was the lead witness. I testified briefly, along with Jack Miklos, who was the country director for Iran, as well as Talcott Seelye, who was country director for Iraq. Secretary Sisco gave an overview of the strategic importance of the countries within the Gulf area.

While preparing for the hearings involved a great deal of work for the ARP Directorate, it was useful in forcing us to focus on policy objectives in the Gulf. It gave me an opportunity to point out in talks in public meetings and within the Department that we could not separate our Gulf policy from the Arab-Israeli conflict. We could not compartmentalize these two issues. Within the Department, I also made the point that in terms of vital U.S. interests, the key nation in the Middle East was Saudi Arabia and not Iran. Iran did not have the oil reserves of Saudi Arabia and the Shah had lost all sense of reality. I believed that the Shah's days were limited. This point of view was not shared within the administration.

For the next four years, hearings would be held at least once a year before the Hamilton or other congressional committees on our Persian Gulf policy, which reflected the considerable interests in Congress over this region. Both the Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian country directorates were called upon to prepare statements and detailed briefing books for the Department's lead witnesses for each of these hearings. Normally, my role was to serve as a backup in the hearings in order to respond to certain specific questions.

Soon after the 1972 hearings before Congressman Hamilton, we had the visit of Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan. The Prince had been invited to Washington by Defense Secretary Melvin Laird. The Prince also met with President Nixon. While much of the visit dealt with the U.S. response to various Saudi requests for additional training and military equipment, Prince Sultan took the occasion to point out that the Saudis were urging President Sadat of Egypt to reduce his dependency on the Soviet Union. Later, the

Prince implied that Saudi Arabia had been behind President Sadat's dramatic move to expel all Soviet technicians in July. I recall accompanying Assistant Secretary Sisco and calling on the Prince at his hotel. During the meeting, Prince Sultan said that the Saudis had encouraged Sadat to distance himself from Moscow in the belief that it would permit Washington to start taking again a more active role to get the Middle East diplomatic process moving again. Prince Sultan hoped that diplomatic relations between the United States and Egypt, broken off at the time of the 1967 Arab-Israel conflict, would be resumed. During the meeting, Sisco urged the Saudis to persuade Sadat to enter into proximity talks, i.e. opening a private diplomatic channel between Washington and Cairo. National Security Council director Kissinger must not have been at the Prince Sultan's meeting with the President, since he mentions in his memoirs that he did not know of the Prince's meeting with Sisco until later.

Aside from the hearings, one event that I remember vividly is the murder of Ambassador Cleo Noel and Deputy Chief of Mission Kurt Moore in Khartoum on March 2, 1973 by Black September operatives. The Dickman and the Noel families had become very close having both served in the Sudan. Our children were buddies. We were also close friends of the Moores. Curt had been in the FSI Arabic language class following our own. I was alerted by the Operations Center that Cleo and Curt had been captured along with the Belgian Charge during an evening reception on March 1 at the Saudi embassy in Khartoum at a reception that was in honor of Curt, who was leaving. I immediately went to the Operations Center to try to be of some help. One thing I did do was to establish a log of every incoming and outgoing communication, telephone call, or statements by U.S. government officials.

During the next 24 hours, attempts were made to negotiate with the captors who wanted the release of Palestinian (Black September) prisoners being held in Jordan. However, King Hussein refused to negotiate. As negotiations were underway in other channels, President Nixon made a statement at noon on March 2, or about seven or eight o'clock in the evening Khartoum time. The President said that the United States would never give into blackmail. A couple of hours later, the log would show our receiving the first reports that Cleo and Curt had been murdered. Personally, I have no doubt that Nixon's tough statement, which was unnecessary in my view, undermined any possibility of negotiating their release. A few days later, we went to Andrews Air Force Base to meet the caskets. As one of the pallbearers, I joined the cortege to the Arlington Cemetery where Cleo and Curt are buried. The Secretary and Mrs. Rogers were present at Andrews as well as at the funeral service in the Presbyterian church, and at the burial ceremony in Arlington. This was in sharp contrast to a year and a half later when Secretary Kissinger did not bother to attend the arrival of the casket of Ambassador Rodger Davies at Andrews Air Force Base, who had been murdered by a mob attacking our embassy in Cyprus.

I should mention that during the time I was ARP country director, I was heavily involved in issues relating to arms sales to the peninsula countries, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. I worked closely with my Pentagon counterpart in the Office of International Security Affairs, which was headed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Jim Noyes. In 1972, there had been periodic border episodes between Kuwaiti and Iraqi forces with the latter building a road along the border. In March of 1973, Iraqi forces occupied a Kuwaiti border post and laid claims to the two mudflats of Waraba and Bubiyan, which command the approaches to Um Qasr, Iraq's only port on the Persian Gulf. The Kuwaiti's reaction was to declare a state of emergency and a request that we send a military survey team.

The team made a number of recommendations calling for air defense capability, tanks, and a quickly available air cover. A couple of months later, in response to Kuwait's request, we arranged to demonstrate some used Navy F-4 Crusaders that were being replaced and were immediately available. The Kuwaitis were also approached by the French, who were seeking to sell their much more sophisticated Mirage. After months of hesitation and despite Ambassador Bill Stoltzfus' effort to get the Kuwaitis to make up their minds, they finally decided to buy 38 Mirages from France. However, I should point out that we did sell the Kuwaitis the Hawk surface to air missile.

Although our moves to offer to sell arms to Kuwait generated some opposition among Israel's supporters in Congress, it was mild in comparison to the adverse reaction in the summer of 1973 when the Department agreed in principle to sell F-4 fighter aircraft to Saudi Arabia. The F-4 was a supersonic aircraft. Up to this time, we had supplied the Saudis with sub-sonic Northrup F-5s. By the spring of 1973, we had already concluded four military sales agreements to modernize and train the Saudi national guard, which serves as an internal security force, to build shore installations for the Saudi coastal navy, which included training, and to supply a variety of trucks and other vehicles to improve military mobility. I remember preparing a memorandum for Roy Atherton, who had replaced Rodger Davies. Rodger had been named to be our next ambassador to Cyprus. Roy was now the principal deputy NEA assistant secretary that I reported to. I do not recall exactly what arguments I used in the memorandum, but it was enough to convince Roy that we should respond positively to the Saudi request for the F-4 Phantoms. Roy in turn persuaded Sisco. I think one of the winning arguments was that in light of our growing dependency on Saudi oil, we could not turn down what the Saudis considered to be the litmus test of our commitment to their security. If we turned them down, the Saudi leadership would conclude that it had no recourse but to buy Mirages from the French.

Once the decision to make the F-4 available to the Saudis had leaked out, objections were heard in the Congress and hearings were held in July 1973 before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The criticisms directed at the Department came mainly from Congressmen Rosenthal and Gilman. They had no problem responding positively to supplying arms to the Shah or for that matter Israel, but they had a number of reservations when it involved sales to the Saudis. In the hearings, they asked what guarantees we had that the planes would not be diverted to another Arab country and thereby undermine Israel's military edge over its neighbors. They ignored the fact that only a small number of aircraft were involved. They also ignored that it would take a couple of years before these aircraft could be delivered and that under U.S. foreign military sales legislation, the recipient was obliged to not transfer equipment to a third party without prior U.S. approval. Besides, there was no mention that the Israelis had received the Phantom F-4s several years before and were expected to receive the top of the line F-16 in the next three years.

Every time we had this kind of hearing, it would generate a host of letters from members of Congress relaying questions from their constituents which asked about the future of our defense commitments to Saudi Arabia. Behind these objections were fears that our growing dependence on Saudi oil would impact directly on U.S. support for Israel. This required the time consuming preparation of replies, many of which Congressional Relations (or H) objected to, particularly if the reply sounded too much like boiler plate. It was one of the Directorate's most onerous tasks. We were seeking to spell out how the arms sales supported U.S. interests in the region, but H wanted the letters to be as pleasing as possible to the member of Congress' constituent.

In the meantime, I had several occasions to speak to public groups that the growth in world demand for oil was more rapid than expected and that it could not continue at its present rate. I should say that I was encouraged to speak to the public groups and I welcomed the opportunity. Saudi oil production at the time was expected to reach nine million barrels a day, about three times what it had been in 1969. Based on consumption trends that existed at the time, if they continued, it would require Saudi production to reach at least 24 million barrels a day by 1980. Before leaving Saudi Arabia, I had reported that the Ministry of Petroleum considered the 24 million barrel a day production to be an unrealistic projection. Any increases would have to depend in the future on the extent to which ARAMCO invested in projects that captured and processed associated gas that was being flared. By 1973, ARAMCO was flaring six trillion cubic feet a year or roughly 1/3 the annual U.S. consumption of natural gas. The Nixon administration and NEA Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco did not take Saudi production curbs seriously. I believe they listened to Max Fisher, the Detroit industrialist who was an influential advisor in the Nixon administration. The argument was that if the Saudis did not want to increase their oil production, the United States could continue to look to Iran as a major source of oil. However, Iran did not have the oil reserves that Saudi Arabia had.

By 1973, Iran had reached its maximum production limit of six million barrels a day. Since the Saudis did not need extra income at the time, my argument was that there was little incentive for the Kingdom to allow ARAMCO to continue increasing production. I also believed that unless world demand leveled off, there was bound to be another price increase regardless simply because there was a growing oil shortage throughout the world. The Department's fuel and energy chief, Jim Akins, reflected this reality in his famous article in the April 1973 issue of "Foreign Affairs," which was entitled, "The Wolf is at the Door." Knowing that the article did not fit the administration's mindset, Akins had not bothered to clear the article within the Department.

Meanwhile, the doubtful outlook for increased oil availability to meet world demand began to be viewed in political terms by the Saudis. In April of 1973, we began to receive warnings from King Faisal that the Kingdom would no longer allow a continued increase in Saudi oil production, particularly if the no war, no peace situation in the Middle East remained. With the death of Nasser in November of 1970, Saudi-Egyptian relations had improved significantly. Sadat made several visits to Saudi Arabia. At the time, Faisal was reflecting President Sadat's frustration as well as his own that Sadat's expulsion of Soviet technicians from Egypt the previous July had not resulted in any new diplomatic initiatives by the United States. King Faisal's warning initially had been conveyed by ARAMCO oil company executives in calls on Joe Sisco (where I was a notetaker). Subsequently, the warnings became public with statements by Oil Minister Yamani. Later when Faisal learned that his warnings were seen by senior administration officials as a bluff, he repeated the warnings in public to "Newsweek" and the "Washington Post." We soon learned from our embassy in Jeddah that Faisal had decided to hold any further increase in oil production to 10 percent, which would mean a ceiling of about 9.9 million barrels a day, and that he had informed visiting President Sadat of that decision.

By September, the Department was getting worried. It was decided to send Jim Akins to be our next Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Aside from being an Arabist, Akins was well known for his energy expertise. It was also decided that arrangements be made for a visit to Saudi Arabia by Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush. A high level visit was intended to indicate the importance that the United States attached to its relationship with the Kingdom. The Arabian Peninsula Directorate was instructed to come up with a list of incentives that would encourage increased Saudi oil production. The principal one that we came up with was to offer a significant expansion in reimbursable technical assistance - in other words, technical assistance that the Saudis would pay for. For years, the Saudis had funded the U.S. Geological Survey in its search for groundwater resources. Also, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had done the design work and supervised the construction of TV transmitters in the Kingdom. There was also the example, albeit not a very good one, of the Jeddah desalination plant. Well, the outbreak of the Ramadan or Yom Kippur War on October 6, 1973 canceled any plans for Under Secretary Rush's visit, just as it stopped any consideration of F-4 Phantoms sales to Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. For the next six weeks, I and my colleagues lived in the Operations Center spelling each other in 12 hour shifts. Remembering my experience with Cleo and Curt Moore's murder, I started a log on the first day listing every major communication or event, which proved useful when we prepared a situation report for the Secretary every six hours and later every 12 hours.

Two days after the war's outbreak, there was a long prearranged meeting that took place in Vienna between the oil companies and Persian Gulf exporting nations, which were seeking to get a near doubling in oil prices to offset world inflation. The companies had responded that they could only offer forty cents a barrel and the talks broke off. By the time the talks broke off, oil prices had shot up, particularly in the spot market. So, the Gulf producers met in Kuwait on October 16 and, for the first time, unilaterally determined the price of crude, which rose from about three dollars a barrel to five dollars and 12 cents. It represented an increase of 76%. Fearful that their access to the oil resources of the Peninsula might be denied, the ARAMCO majors turned to Jack McCloy once again. Using McCloy as an intermediary, they prepared a memorandum for President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger. The memorandum emphasized that any increased military aid to Israel would have a very negative effect in our relations with moderate Arab oil producing nations and could affect U.S. access to their oil. Haig, who had replaced Kissinger as NSC director, reportedly sat on the memo for several days. Whether or not this is true, I do not think it would have made any difference.

On the same day of the unilateral increase in oil prices by the Persian Gulf producers, a delegation of four Arab foreign ministers headed by Saudi Arabia's Omar Saqqaf arrived in Washington. They met the next day with Secretary Kissinger, where I was the notetaker, and then went to meet President Nixon. They appealed for the U.S. to establish a cease-fire and a stop to the massive U.S. arms shipments to Israel that were underway. The war had been going on for 11 days. Their oft repeated goal was to seek Israel's return to its 1967 borders in accordance with UN Resolution 242. Although the delegation seemed heartened by Kissinger's promise to make a major Middle East diplomatic effort once the conflict ended and do so on the basis of UN Resolution 242, Kissinger said the United States could not stop the arms airlift unless the Soviets did the same.

Prior to the visit of the Arab delegation, President Nixon had decided to respond to domestic pressures and submit a request to Congress for $2.2 billion in grant military aid to Israel. I knew of the decision because Mike Sterner, after polling the opinions of NEA country directors, had drafted a memorandum to the Secretary setting forth the likely reaction among different Arab countries. I had told Mike that I believed the Saudis would apply an oil embargo, that they would stop the overflight of U.S. military aircraft across Saudi airspace, and would push Bahrain to close its facilities for MIDEASTFOR. I felt the request was a bad move and an unnecessary one. We were already emptying our NATO stocks to provide all the material that Israel could possibly handle. The request should be delayed until a cease-fire had taken place. I knew of the decision, but could not reveal it to the delegation. Kissinger said nothing about it in his meeting with the delegation and, to my knowledge, neither did President Nixon.

When the request was submitted to Congress in the morning of October 19, the Saudis had announced on the previous day that production would be cut 10% if the United States continued to supply arms to Israel. Remember, the war was now 12 days old before they were talking about cutting back. Once they heard the President's October 19 request to Congress, the Saudis announced an oil embargo against the United States and a cut in oil production of 25%. The request to Congress was interpreted by the Saudis as a public diplomatic rebuff similar to the one given by the Eisenhower administration to Egypt in July 1956 when we withdrew our pledge to help finance the Aswan High dam. The oil embargo applied as well to the United States' offshore purchases of petroleum products. These were made mainly by the U.S. Navy from refineries in Bahrain which processed Saudi crude. This forced the Navy to rely on dwindling American stocks which were already stressed because we were supplying South Vietnam's energy needs. Kissinger claims on page 873 of the second volume of his memoirs that he can find no record of anyone warning him of the Arab reaction.

The embargo and production cutback proved to be a deadly combination. At the time, I recall pointing out in our situation reports for the Secretary that the U.S. was consuming almost 17.5 million barrels a day of which over six million barrels a day were imported (Saudi Arabia accounting for about 2 million) with an additional 375,000 barrels a day purchased offshore by the Navy mainly from Bahrain's refineries. The application of the Saudi embargo and production cut back put the ARAMCO partner companies between a rock and a hard place. They were in the anomalous position of having to carry out the instructions of a foreign government against their own government. If they failed to do as they were instructed, the ARAMCO companies risked losing their Saudi oil concession and to be replaced by the French, Japanese, or other outsiders. But they could also be penalized or taken to court in the United States for not meeting contractual supply commitments. So, they had every interest in seeing an end to the embargo.

With gas lines forming in the United States along with the rapid rise in the price of oil, it caused a major political problem for the Nixon administration. In my view, it was the compelling reason that goaded Secretary Kissinger to undertake a major effort to bring about a cease fire and to begin a process of disengagement in what came to be known as shuttle diplomacy. In doing so, Kissinger sought to use our diplomatic intervention with Israel to end the fighting as a bargaining counter to get the Saudis and other Arab oil exporters to end the embargo.

The domestic impact of the oil embargo generated an angry anti-Arab and anti-oil company reaction in the United States, particularly among Israel's supporters in Congress. They accused the oil companies of forcing a choice between Israel and Arab oil. They sought to pass legislation to embargo shipments of grains and foodstuffs to Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations that were involved in the oil embargo and production cutbacks. The ARP directorate was kept busy responding to letters from members of Congress and their constituents seeking punitive action. In response to those seeking to stop grain and food shipments to the Saudis, we pointed out that the Saudis could easily find substitute suppliers. If necessary, they could use access to their oil by the food exporting nations as an incentive. Besides, it would be difficult to police such a ban since there was nothing to stop foodstuffs sold to third countries from being re-exported to Arab countries. We also pointed out that the proposed legislation would make it much more difficult in pursuing our efforts at disengagement. In late November 1973, there was another set of congressional hearings before the Hamilton Committee with NEA Deputy Secretary Rodger Davies as the lead witness. In an effort to offset punitive legislation while the oil embargo lasted, Rodger pointed out how countermeasures could be unproductive in light of the ongoing diplomatic effort underway by the Secretary. My brief testimony stressed the economic importance of the Arabian Peninsula countries as sources of aid to poor countries, as rapidly expanding markets for U.S. goods and services, and as sources of investment in the United States. I also pointed to the discussions that had started with the International Monetary Fund's Group of 20 with the oil exporting nations in an effort to provide easy credit to Third World countries suffering from the rapid rise of oil prices.

Early in December, I had prepared briefing papers for the anticipated visit of Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Fahd, who had been invited to come to Washington by Secretary Kissinger. The Prince had accepted but had decided to drop out at the last minute. Instead, we had the visit of Saudi Oil Minister Yamani and his Algerian counterpart, Abd al Salaam, both of whom had been visiting several European oil importing countries and I think were on their way to Japan. I remember meeting Yamani and his colleague at the Department's entrance and escorting them to the Secretary's office. The call received heavy play in the evening TV news with the naïve expectation that the oil embargo would soon be lifted. As notetaker, my recollection of the meeting was rather more confrontational than the way it is portrayed in Kissinger's memoirs. Yamani insisted that the embargo could not be lifted and production curbs progressively removed unless a timetable for Israel's withdrawal from territories had been instituted. That included the territories that had been occupied in the recent conflict. The Secretary's reply was that if the Kingdom wanted the United States to intervene to achieve this timetable, then it first had to lift the embargo as well as the production cuts; otherwise, it could not expect the United States to pursue these diplomatic initiatives. Following the meeting with Kissinger, Yamani called on Deputy Defense Secretary Bill Clements at the Pentagon and quietly agreed to allow the Navy to resume its offshore purchases of petroleum with the understanding that the arrangement would be kept secret.

The announcement of the embargo and the cutback in oil production caused the world oil market to react frantically. The spot market rose above $20 a barrel. The embargo and production cutbacks had also precipitated a split in the western alliance with the United States blamed by the Europeans and Japan for its inept actions, actions which had brought about the embargo and cut back two weeks after the conflict had broken out. In scrambling to ensure that they had sufficient oil supplies, I was disturbed that our Western European allies and Japan had ordered oil companies that supplied their needs to prohibit the diversion of any crude or refined product to the United States. This was clearly an example where these countries were looking after their own narrow self-interests and were not playing the role of allies. This was not lost on the Shah of Iran. Taking advantage of the run up in spot prices, the Shah pushed for another substantial increase in posted prices. Meeting in Tehran on December 23 (my birthday), the six Gulf exporting nations as well as Venezuela announced a new price for marker crude of $11.65 a barrel, representing an increase of 126%. In a little over two months, the price of oil had quadrupled.

When we got wind of what the Shah was up to, Iranian ambassador to Washington, Ardeshir Zahedi was called to meet with Rodger Davies in the Department. At the meeting which I attended, Rodger expressed Washington's concern over the move to raise prices again pointing to the terrible impact it would have on the economies of the free world. The ambassador could not have been more arrogant. He argued that the oil companies were making an exorbitant profit and he repeated the Shah's arguments that the price of oil had been under priced far too long. This meeting was followed by an instruction which I drafted from the Secretary for our embassies in Teheran and Caracas to make a demarche pointing to the severe impact the price hike would have on the economies of Third World nations in particular. Well, the Shah took a strong exception to the demarche. He responded by pointing out that the new price was well below spot prices. If the oil consuming countries were so worried about the inflationary impact, they could reduce their very heavy taxes on petroleum products. The Shah hoped Western nations would not react by raising the prices of what they exported to OPEC nations, thereby leaving the door open to further price increases if world inflation did not abate.

In light of the Shah's sharp retort, Secretary Kissinger refused to have a follow-up.

Basically, he didn't want to continue tangling with the Shah over the price of oil. Instead, he became attracted by moves of the French and the Japanese who were signing a series of long-term oil-for-commodity barter deals with the Saudis and other Arab oil exporters. The Secretary wondered if the United States should not do the same. I prepared a memo arguing against such a move. Aside from the economic disadvantages of barter, to engage in such a practice would reinforce the perception that every country was looking out for itself in a period of oil shortage. I think I also mentioned that it would require a government to government agreement, which would mean excluding private oil companies altogether. I remember the Secretary returning the memo with the notation "I do not agree. HAK."

Meanwhile, the rise of oil prices gave an excuse for Senator Church of Idaho to hold hearings in January 1974 on multinational oil companies. It was part of a series of hearings that lasted at least a year to uncover in the Senator's words "betrayal that led the United States into dependence on Arab sheikhdoms for so much oil." As part of the hearings, former Under Secretary of State John Irwin, who now was the U.S. ambassador to France, had been called in to testify on his mission three years earlier to Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The January 1971 mission had come in reaction to a 30 day ultimatum to the oil companies which had been issued by OPEC members at their Caracas meeting for higher posted prices and for a 55:45 split in profits. Otherwise, the companies faced losing their access to oil. I was asked to help Ambassador Irwin prepare his testimony and to accompany him to the hearing. Senator Church asked Ambassador Irwin why he had not insisted on the oil companies maintaining a unified front in negotiating with OPEC rather than agreeing to their negotiating separately with the three Persian Gulf oil exporters. He referred to the Justice Department's issuance of a waiver to permit the oil companies to band together as one group for this purpose. The Senator also wanted to know why Mr. Irwin, in seeking to avert price ratcheting by the oil exporters, had not sought assurances to discourage participation, which was a buzz word for the gradual takeover of oil concessions by producer governments. The February 1971 Tehran agreement had been used by oil exporting nations as a springboard to establish or strengthen their national oil companies. The senator considered that the gradual takeover of oil company concessions by the exporting countries was ratcheting but done in a different manner. However, the consequences were what the companies had feared would happen if they negotiated separately with OPEC members. The senator also took issue with Mr. Irwin's statement that in retrospect, the 1971 Teheran Agreement had brought a degree of stability to world oil prices for the next two and one half years until the dramatic increase caused by the outbreak of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli conflict.

I thought the hearing was very biased and unfair. Despite the second devaluation of the dollar, there had been no significant changes in oil prices in the period after the Tehran meeting. As for the oil companies, there was no assurance that they would have been able to get better terms had they maintained a unified stand. As oil exporting nations became increasingly knowledgeable about the oil industry, I felt that the gradual taking over of their foreign oil concessions was inevitable.

By the end of January 1974 between one of the shuttles to the Middle East, Secretary

Kissinger had dropped the idea of engaging in oil barter agreements. He had picked up on a proposal by Walter Levy, the noted petroleum consultant. Levy had called for a combined European-U.S.-Japanese energy policy which would be coordinated by an international energy council. So, the Secretary called on industrialized nations to meet in Washington on February 11, which came to be known as the Washington Energy Conference. By now, the Arabian Peninsula directorate had been taken out of the loop with Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs Tom Enders preparing the briefing papers. The announced purpose of the meeting was to try and promote a coordinated response to the energy shortage.

Since the oil embargo against the United States and the production cutbacks were still in effect, the attendees of the Washington conference suspected that Kissinger had convoked the meeting to create a counter to OPEC, a suspicion which I shared. The most outspoken were the French, who opposed forming any oil consuming group of nations. They wanted European nations under France's leadership to have government-to-government contacts with oil exporting nations. They had picked up on an earlier idea floated by Yamani for a consumer-producer dialogue. Both Enders and the Secretary were strongly opposed to this idea. With Paris remaining intransigent, the meeting ended with the creation of a coordination committee, which the French initially refused to join. Its purpose was to monitor how oil companies allocated the oil supply shortfall caused by the production cutbacks. This committee later evolved into becoming the International Energy Agency with its headquarters in Paris, an agency or an organization which continues to exist to this day.

On March 18, 1974, King Faisal finally agreed to end the embargo against the U.S., but not the production cutbacks. The latter were not cut back until after Secretary Kissinger had negotiated the disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria in early June. With the removal of the embargo, Secretary Kissinger wanted to find means to strengthen U.S.-Saudi relations, at least something symbolic. We received an instruction from the Secretary while he was shuttling in the Middle East to formulate plans to establish two joint commissions at the cabinet level, one for economic affairs and the other for military affairs. Cabinet level officers would meet periodically to discuss issues and this arrangement would reflect Saudi Arabia's special relationship with the United States. I was less than enthused with the idea, finding it overly bureaucratic. However, Hal Saunders, who was now an NEA deputy assistant secretary, stepped in to spell out what he believed the Secretary wanted.

For the next two months, we were busy preparing a host of memoranda covering different agendas for a meeting of what was to be a U.S.-Saudi joint economic commission. To give substance to the economic commission, we resurrected the idea that had been proposed for the aborted visit by Deputy Secretary Kenneth Rush of offering reimbursable technical assistance for such projects as customs classification, vocational training, establishing national parks, locust control, solar energy, wheat growing in arid areas, and so forth. There were about 15 or 20 projects. I don't remember them all. They would be financed by interest payments received from some of the Saudi government's holdings of U.S. Treasury notes and bonds. Initially, I approached AID and the Treasury

Department about how this could be administered. AID was very bureaucratic and raised a lot of questions. But Bill Simon, who had now become the Secretary of Treasury after heading the Federal Energy Agency after about a year, was enthusiastic. He assigned Treasury Assistant Secretary Jerry Parsky to administer the program. It would be unique as the only US technical assistance program organized and administered solely by the Department of Treasury and not by AID.

I remember being very involved in the preparation for the joint commissions, which were to be announced during the visit in June 1974 of Deputy Crown Prince Fahd, who stood in line for succession but who for all practical purposes had become the Kingdom's prime minister. He had been invited by the President and the Secretary to come to Washington for the signing ceremony on June 8th of a joint statement which established the two bilateral joint commissions. To give emphasis to the visit, Prince Fahd was put up at Blair House. The day after the signature, there was a large front page picture of Secretary Kissinger and Prince Fahd at the signing ceremony, but it did not include Treasury Secretary Simon. Having spent virtually the entire night making my poor secretary type and retype last minute changes in the documents to be signed, I had overlooked the fact that the Department had forgotten to invite Treasury Secretary Simon to the ceremony. It probably was my worst protocol boo-boo.

Once having launched the joint commissions for Saudi Arabia, Secretary Kissinger decided to organize similar joint commissions for other important countries lest they think only Saudi Arabia was favored. Joint commissions were established with Israel, Egypt, Iran, India, and a few others. But after initially becoming a fad, it soon became evident that the joint commission idea had its limitations. Busy U.S. cabinet officials simply did not have the time to devote to these commissions and they soon ended up getting in the way of normal diplomatic intercourse. Except for the U.S.-Saudi Joint Economic Commission, whose acronym was JECOR, all the others petered out after a couple of years. As for the U.S.-Saudi military joint commission, I believe it met only once in Riyadh in November 1974 (and I attended that meeting). The U.S. delegation was headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert Ellsworth. At the meeting, the Saudi representatives used the occasion to tell us that they were no longer interested in the F-4s. They wanted to know if the United States would be willing to supply the Kingdom with the F-15, the newest and most sophisticated U.S. military aircraft.

The move to establish JECOR did not, however, reduce the debate in the United States over what should be done in the event in the event the U.S. was faced with another oil embargo. The attention that Saudi Arabia was receiving caused TIME magazine to name King Faisal as its Man of the Year for 1975. Various articles appeared in the media suggesting that the next time, the U.S. would seize Saudi oil fields. Speculative articles appearing in the "Washington Post" suggested that Iran or Israel could act as our surrogates in seizing the oil fields. How the U.S. might react was given further credence in a December 1974 "Business Week" interview with Secretary Kissinger, who had been asked if the United States would consider taking any military action to gain access to oil. His response was that it would be a very dangerous course. He was not saying that there was no circumstance where we might use force, but it was one thing to use it in the case of a dispute over price and another when there was actual strangulation of the industrial world. The interview raised a furor in Saudi Arabia and generated severe criticism from Ambassador Akins. Articles appeared in the Arab press that any attempt to seize oil fields by force was a fantasy. The prolific oil fields of the Arabian Peninsula could easily be put to the torch because of the high gas drive and it would take years to put them under control, which in fact happened in Kuwait in 1991 by retreating Iraqi forces. Kuwait certainly served as a good example.

Secretary Kissinger's press interviews on matters related to Saudi Arabia reminds me of an amusing incident that occurred some time after the embargo and production cutback had ended. The ARAMCO partners had scheduled a meeting of their board in Panama City, Florida. Since Saudi Arabia was now a major shareholder in the ARAMCO concession, Oil Minister Yamani had come to the U.S. in a private capacity as a member of the board to attend the meeting. During a press interview, the Secretary was asked what Yamani was doing in Panama City? Not familiar with the cities in Florida, he understood the question to mean Panama. The Secretary had to answer that he did not know and immediately called Roy Atherton who in turn called me. I explained it was a board meeting in Panama City, Florida. The Secretary was furious that he had not been informed that Yamani was in the U.S. It was my mistake but I fear that Roy got the worse of it. However, the fit of temper was soon forgotten with the Secretary inviting Yamani to an elegant lunch in the Department.

Q: Wasn't King Faisal assassinated shortly after being named Man of the Year?

DICKMAN: Yes. It is an event that I remember very well. As I was leaving the house in the morning of March 25, 1975, I heard over the radio that King Faisal had been assassinated. By the time I reached the Department in less than 10 minutes, Roy Atherton was paging me to come immediately to the Secretary's office, with instructions to prepare a series of condolence messages and to have by 10:00 am an analysis for the Secretary on who was likely to succeed, the prospects for internal political stability in Saudi Arabia, any signs of organized political opposition, the future of the House of Saud, and how the tragedy might impact on U.S. access to Saudi oil. It soon became evident that I could not meet this timetable. While I struggled preparing condolence messages, which are always hard to write, and refused to take a flood of outside calls, I began to prepare the requested briefing memorandum. Although we still had only fragmentary reports on Faisal's assassination, I anticipated that the succession would be smooth. I expected that the royal family would close ranks and name Crown Prince Khalid as King and Fahd as Crown Prince, which is what occurred.

Thanks to help from INR, the briefing memorandum was finally completed in mid-afternoon. By this time, the issue was whether to only have Ambassador Akins represent the United States at the burial ceremonies that were to take place within the next 12 hours or to send a high level official but who could not possibly reach Riyadh before the burial. Late that afternoon, it was decided to have Ambassador Akins represent the United States in the cortege but to send Vice President Rockefeller to Riyadh as the United States' gesture of condolence. Roy Atherton and I boarded Air Force Two with the Vice

President along with a gaggle of members of the media which included the newshen, Connie Chung. The aircraft reached Riyadh in the morning of March 27. The memorandum for the Secretary became the basis for briefing the Vice President. While I briefed the Vice President on the House of Saud, Roy Atherton briefed him on the latest status of the Sinai disengagement. After reaching Riyadh and paying his respects to the House of Saud, who were lined up to receive visitors, the Vice President plunged into meetings with Egypt's President Sadat and Crown Prince Fahd. By the late afternoon, we were back on the plane returning to Washington. Roy and I spent the time preparing long memoranda of conversation of the Vice President's meeting with Sadat and Crown Prince Fahd. When I finally reached home in the early morning of March 28th, I had not had any sleep for 60 hours.

Faisal's assassin was a young nephew who would be beheaded after a short trial. At the Saudi government's request, the FBI conducted an investigation of the nephew, who had spent several years at the University of Colorado. The Saudis were concerned about the possibility of someone else being behind the assassination. From the investigation, it appeared that the young man had acted alone. The investigation revealed that he had spent most of his time cutting classes at the University while enjoying the young ladies. In the end, the motive for the assassination never became clear other than perhaps it was because the nephew's brother had been killed in a demonstration against television stations about a decade earlier in the city of Hayl.

Meanwhile, events in the Peninsula had resulted in a new series of hearings that began in the fall of 1974 and continued throughout the following year before Congressman Hamilton and Senator Church. The focus of the former, the Hamilton Committee, was mainly on the constructive use of petrodollars and on arms sales to the small countries in the lower Gulf. The interest of the latter, Senator Church, was whether our dependency on imported oil affected our relationship with Israel. With a growing awareness that the Saudis, Kuwaitis, and the Emirates were beginning to accumulate large dollar deposits because of increasing oil revenues, there were concerns in Congress that the Arabs could "buy out" the United States. While Kuwaiti and Saudi financial institutions were investing in properties and several businesses in the U.S., their investments were minuscule compared to Japanese, British, or Canadian investments. There were a lot of silly articles in the media in letters to the Congress which were passed on to the Department. One I remember concerned the Kuwaiti Investment Company's purchase of Kiaweah Island, which is located off the coast of South Carolina, for the purpose of building a tourist resort. We received letters claiming that the island was to be used to implant missiles aimed at the United States. All of this nonsense required repeated explanations to letters from members of Congress or the media that wealthy Arabian Peninsula countries were very conservative investors with much of their deposits in the form of U.S. government securities. This would then cause certain supporters of Israel such as Congressman Rosenthal of New York to demand that the Treasury Department reveal Saudi holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds and notes. Despite considerable pressure, as far as I know, the Treasury Department was always able to resist these demands.

On the other hand, awareness of the growing importance of the small sheikhdoms in the

Peninsula did help to reduce one of my administrative headaches. Chase Bank chairman David Rockefeller had visited the small Gulf states of Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman in the summer of 1974 for the purpose of attracting deposits for his bank. Upon his return, he had asked Secretary Kissinger, who was a good friend, why these small posts were being so neglected. Suddenly, some resources became available, which made it possible to appoint Joe Twinam as our first ambassador to Bahrain, Bob Paganelli as our first ambassador to Qatar, Mike Sterner as our first ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, and Bill Wolle as our first ambassador to Oman. As we extended our diplomatic presence in the lower Gulf, we maintained close consultations with the British Foreign Office. During my stay as the ARP director, I helped prepare briefing papers for the annual meetings we had at the Assistant secretary level with our British counterparts. The meetings, unfortunately, always seemed to be in Washington, giving no one in the directorate a chance for a trip to London.

Another favorable development that occurred during my time as ARP director was when the Shah agreed to a request from Sultan Qaboos of Oman late in 1974 to place a 1500 member Iranian battalion in the rear areas of Dhofar province. This allowed the Sultan to concentrate his British-officered troops on the front lines who were fighting the insurgency supported by South Yemen. The Iranian battalion was accompanied by a Company of Jordanian engineers, which I suspect was financed by the CIA to dig wells, build roads, and do similar hearts and minds activities for the inhabitants of Dhofar province. As a result, Qaboos' forces were finally able to crush the insurgency in less than a year's time.

In January 1975, Sultan Qaboos came to Washington at the invitation of the Secretary. Qaboos was shy, not very talkative, and I think a bit overwhelmed by the attention he was receiving. At the banquet in Qaboos' honor, Secretary Kissinger soon ran out of subjects to talk about. The following morning, Kissinger asked for new talking points for his upcoming meeting with the Sultan. Well, this fell on the NEA front office since I was accompanying Qaboos to lay a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington. Fortunately, by the time Qaboos had his meeting with Secretary Kissinger, Deputy Defense Secretary Bill Clements had joined us. Mr. Clements was very aware of Oman's strategic position. The northern tip of the Musandam Peninsula, which commands the entry into the Persian Gulf, is Omani territory. Another strategic area is Masirah Island, where the British Broadcasting Company operated a powerful radio transmitter and manned a nearby airfield. During the meeting, the Sultan hinted that Oman might be willing to make certain facilities available, having in mind access to Masirah. At the time, the Pentagon could not make up its mind whether to pursue the offer. It was not until December of 1979 that the offer was taken up when the Carter administration reacted to the security implications of the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and created the U.S. Central Command headquartered in McDill Air Force base in Florida.

Attention to arms sales picked up again after Congress became aware that the Saudis were no longer interested in the Phantom F-4s but now wanted to buy the F-15s. Articles appeared citing the size of the foreign military sales program to Saudi Arabia, which amounted to many billions of dollars but which were portrayed as being used only for the purchase of huge amounts of arms that could overrun Israel. While it was true that these were very large programs in dollar terms, over three quarters of the total was for training, warehousing, and facilities construction with the latter under the supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In 1975, Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts introduced legislation to impose a moratorium on foreign military sales to Arabian Peninsula countries. While the legislation did not pass, the result of the Saudi approach for the F-15s caused Congress to pass the Arms Control Act of 1975. This act required the Executive to submit 30 days in advance any proposed arms sale to another country whose value exceeded $25 million. Later, it was reduced to $7 million. If a majority in both the House and the Senate were opposed, the sale would not proceed. While no country was identified, it was pretty clear that it was directed at the Arabian Peninsula states since Congress had no problem in agreeing to give F-15s and 16s to Israel or AWACs to the Shah of Iran.

An example of just how ill disposed certain members of Congress could be when it came to military subjects involving the Arab world was Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey. Senator Case was a member of the Church committee. In the spring of 1972, we had started negotiations with Bahrain to renew our navy's stationing agreement. This allowed for MIDEASTFOR's mother ship to berth at Manama's port. It also allowed for a house in town for the admiral, access to buildings for the seamen's recreational facilities, the use of the airport for the admiral's plane, and a military dependents school. We were paying Bahrain $600,000 a year but the Bahrainis wanted more and, after a lot of bargaining, settled on $4 million a year. My counterpart in dealing with the negotiations in the Defense Department was Captain Gary Sick, who handled most of the administrative details. Gary later moved to the National Security Council's Near East Desk and later would write a very good book on Iran entitled "All Fall Down."

During Senate hearings on the American bases abroad, the stationing agreement with Bahrain had gotten mixed in with the agreement between the United States and Portugal for the use of Portugese military facilities. Senator Case insisted that the Portugese and the Bahraini facilities agreements were treaties, not executive agreements and therefore, they required the Senate's advice and consent. The Senator caused an uproar by pushing for a resolution that would ban funds for recent executive agreements. While the Nixon administration was finally able to remove the Bahrain stationing agreement from the Case resolution, the lengthy debate that it had engendered on the Senate floor drew the attention of the Arab world to Bahrain, which was being accused by Arab radicals of providing a base for the United States. Sensitive to being out of step with the rest of the Arab world, Bahrain's parliament voted to end the U.S. Navy's presence. In the summer of 1976, I remember telling Bill Crowe, who was scheduled to take command of MIDEASTFOR and had just been promoted to rear admiral, that it looked like the agreement with Bahrain was dead. Crowe, who later became Chief of Naval Operations and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was sensitive to Bahraini concerns. To remove the stigma of Bahrain providing the Navy with a base, the admiral terminated the stationing agreement and replaced the Navy's presence with a "command afloat." In other words, the mother ship, instead of being berthed, would just be floating in the Persian Gulf. This formula worked. Except for the ship spending more time at sea and less time tied up at the quay in Manama, little changed in practice.

Meanwhile, my having dealt with Arab boycott issues during my first tour in the Department caught up with me during my second tour. With the growing U.S.-Saudi cooperation and the fact that Peninsula countries were becoming important purchasers of our goods and services, Senator Church's committee shifted its attention to the Arab boycott and called for hearings. The American Jewish Congress had reported that three European money center banks (Warburg, Rothschilds, and Lazard Freres) had been excluded from underwriting syndicates in the Arab world because they were Jewish and were on the Arab boycott list. Related to this were complaints from the Anti-Defamaton League that American Jews were being excluded from employment in the reimbursable technical assistance programs that JECOR was managing in Saudi Arabia. Up to now, the boycott had been more of a nuisance than a hindrance since there was a wide difference in how each Arab state enforced the secondary boycott. In some like Tunisia and Morocco, it was practically not at all.

I knew the hearings were likely to occur after being asked by one of the Senator's aides if the Department had a list of American companies on the black list. I told the aide that the Department did not maintain a list, lest it be misunderstood that we condoned the boycott. However, I innocently said that I had a copy of a publication issued in 1970 by the chamber of commerce in Jeddah which I had picked up during my assignment in Saudi Arabia. It listed the names of firms and individuals on the black list, but I could not confirm if the list was accurate. This immediately sparked the interest of the aide, who asked to borrow the publication.

The hearings were held at the end of February of 1975, attended by Senator Church, Senator Case of New Jersey, Adlai Stevenson, Jr. of Illinois, and Senator Clark of Iowa. It was clear that Senator Church had presidential ambitions since the hearings were televised and were receiving considerable publicity. By making public copies of the 1970 Saudi chamber of commerce boycott publication, the hearing was intended to be seen as uncovering for the first time the extent of the Arab and Saudi black list. Of course, that was nonsense. The committee also sought to determine if U.S. government agencies operating in Saudi Arabia under the Joint Commission Reimbursable Technical Assistance Program had acquiesced in enforcing the boycott.

The hearings began with the testimony of Army Corps of Engineer colonels who were responsible for doing the design and engineering of construction projects paid for by the Saudi government. The colonels explained that the Saudi government, not the Corps, approved the private companies that the Corps considered were capable of meeting contract requirements. As was well known, Saudi visa regulations barred the entry of workers of the Jewish faith. To the colonels' knowledge, no American firm seeking a contract in the Kingdom had been denied because it was black listed. NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Hal Saunders was the lead off witness for the Department. Hal reiterated the U.S. policy of our opposition to the Arab boycott, but he also pointed out that the boycott was politically, not economically, motivated. This meant that progress in gaining its removal could only be achieved if there was progress in the Middle East in the political context. My testimony was mainly explaining where the committee had gotten the Saudi black list. I pointed out that the boycott had been applied to firms not because of their religious persuasion but because they were believed to have engaged in acts supporting the Israeli economy. I also pointed out that Arab nations did not black list a firm simply because it traded with Israel. I also recall denying that the Department had ever indicated a do-it-yourself way of getting off the boycott list. Someone had written an article to that effect.

As the Congress continued its debate over the U.S.-Saudi relationship, the Secretary's December 1974 interview with "Business Week" continued to reverberate among Arab oil exporting nations. The Secretary's remarks hinting U.S. military action to seize oil fields if we were being strangled had been picked up and played upon by a number of commentators and writers in the United States. The concerns that these comments generated were repeatedly reported to the Department by Ambassador Akins, who would continue to point out how impractical it would be to try and seize oil fields. The implication was that the Secretary was not doing enough to discourage these provocative articles. Akins' reports increasingly got under the Secretary's skin. This was not new since the Secretary had previously had run ins with Ambassador Akins, who insisted on being present at all of the Secretary's meetings with Saudi officials.

In June of 1975, Ambassador Akins returned to Washington for home leave. When he phoned me to check in to the Department, I alerted him to an article in "The Washington Post" that had appeared that morning written by Joseph Kraft. The article said that Akins was to be replaced by Bill Porter, then our ambassador to Canada, with Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs Tom Enders to be our next ambassador to Canada. I told Akins I knew nothing about this news and would deny it if asked. At the morning NEA staff meeting, I brought the article to Roy Atherton's attention. I said I would deny it if asked. Roy told me not to say anything in response to the article until he had checked it out with the Secretary. By the time the staff meeting had ended, Akins, flushed and angry, was in my office. Shortly thereafter, my secretary received a call for the ambassador to meet with Deputy Secretary Robinson, who would confirm that what was in the article was correct. It was an example of the devious way the Secretary operated.

The action appeared to have been taken on the spur of the moment because no request for an *agrement* for Ambassador Porter had been sent to Saudi Arabia or to my knowledge to Canada for Assistant Secretary Enders. The Saudi leadership was confused and concerned since Akins was well respected in the Kingdom. The Secretary sent a reassuring message to Crown Prince Fahd on the importance of our relationship. It pointed out that Ambassador Porter had been Under secretary for Political Affairs and was one of our most senior Foreign Service officers. Akins returned to Saudi Arabia for a short period of time to pack up and bid his farewells while I began to prepare briefing papers for Ambassador Porter's testimony before the Senate as our next ambassador to the Kingdom. Shortly thereafter, Akins retired from the Foreign Service.

During the last year and a half I was Arabian Peninsula director, Joe Sisco had become

Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Roy Atherton had become Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia, and Sid Sober became the NEA deputy assistant secretary I reported to. With 1976 being a presidential election year, the Secretary realized that very little would be accomplished in the Middle East. So, he turned much of his attention to Sub Saharan Africa. During this year, the ARP directorate continued to be involved in preparing testimony on various arms sales. By then, we had established a small U.S. military liaison mission in Kuwait, whose acronym was USLOK (U.S. Liaison Office, Kuwait). One sale that generated a lot of opposition that I remember was responding to Kuwait's request for Sidewinder air to air missiles to be attached to A-4 aircraft, which the Kuwaitis had purchased to supplement their fleet of Mirages. In the end, after testimony by Sid Sober, the sale for a limited number was finally approved by the Congress.

As for the military sales program for Saudi Arabia, legitimate questions arose over the very high commissions that American suppliers of military equipment were paying to Saudi middle men such as Adnan Khashogi. I was concerned over reports that since the death of King Faisal, various members of the Saudi royal family were pushing hard to have a share in these lucrative commissions. By now, Saudi Arabia had made a formal request for the F-15s, whose long range was needed to protect the Kingdom's lengthy coastlines along the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Should the sale of F-15s be approved, plus a number of supporting facilities, there would be many opportunities for operators like Khashogi who we believed was passing a good bit of his high agent fees to certain favored members of the Royal family. This prompted Congress to pass the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1976 making it a criminal offense for any American company caught offering bribes to gain contracts. In light of this legislation and given the general opposition of Congress to more arms sales to Saudi Arabia, the Saudis were advised to put off their F-15 request until after the 1976 presidential elections.

Meanwhile, the hearings before the Church committee on the Arab boycott had generated moves in Congress to include legislation suggested by the American Jewish Congress for the 1930 Export Administration Act, which was due for renewal in September of 1976. The hearings had also put pressure on the Commerce Department to release reports filed by American companies which had received boycott questionnaires. When the reports were released, the media misinterpreted them as evidence that the companies were complying with the boycott when it was just the opposite. The picture was further muddled by a Justice Department suit in 1976 against Bechtel, charging that the corporation was refusing to do business with Arab subcontractors because they were on the boycott list. At some point after the hearings, I remember talking to Senator Stevenson of Illinois, who was not planning to run again for the Senate and who seemed more reasonable than his colleagues. I told him I could not see how the proposed legislation would help deal with the Arab boycott. It was not going to make the Arabs change boycott rules. It would only harden their position. By drawing attention to the boycott, the hearings had given the Arab boycott bureaucrats in Damascus a field day and made them feel more important than they really were. It was undercutting our efforts to gain greater flexibility in the application of the boycott rules. The publicity generated by the hearings and had made it more difficult for individual Arab nations to make exceptions to the boycott rules for commodities or services from companies that were included on the blacklist. In short, the anti-boycott provisions could drastically affect U.S. trade in this rapidly growing market.

In August of 1976, my days as Arabian Peninsula country director were finally coming to a close. I had received my promotion to class 1 a year earlier and my name had been submitted to the White House to be the next ambassador to the United Arab Emirates replacing Mike Sterner. I appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 7th. The hearing on the nomination of Graham Martin to be the next ambassador to Micronesia preceded mine. The Martin appointment was very controversial. He was grilled mercilessly by the committee over his performance as our ambassador to Vietnam. I wondered if my nomination would receive the same scrutiny. Fortunately, it did not. Much of the questioning was friendly, coming largely from Senator Percy of Illinois. In response to the question on the possible arms race in the Gulf region, I believe I reiterated what we had told the Hamilton committee. In adhering to our arms policy for the lower Gulf states, I contemplated no significant arms sales to the United Arab Emirates. In mid-September, I received news that the Senate had approved my nomination. It came as I was concluding a speaking tour on U.S.-Middle East policy in Arizona and New Mexico. It caused me to change my return travel to stop in Laramie to see my mother for a couple of days. She had been living alone in Laramie since the death of my father in 1969.

My duties as ARP director finally ended on September 30 when my swearing in took place with Deputy Secretary Robinson officiating. After four and a half very active years as country director, I was due for a change, a change which I thought would never come. During this period, the responsibilities of the directorate had gone from two to seven embassies with seven resident ambassadors but never staffed with more than four officers. Aside from the officers already mentioned, Chuck Cecil, Steve Buck, Paul Molineaux, and Mac DeFord had two year stints in the directorate during this four and a half year period. Joe Twinam, who had been our ambassador in Bahrain, became the Arabian Peninsula director upon my departure.

During our second tour in Washington, we lived in our house in Foxhall village. While proximity to the Department had some advantages, it also had disadvantages. Since I was the one living closest to the Department, it was not uncommon for me to be the first to be called to the Department when there was a problem. Rarely was there a Saturday or Sunday that I did not have to come to the office. Our daughter, Christine, came to live with us after she had received her BA at Colorado Women’s College in May 1972. She continued her studies, receiving a master of arts degree at American University in 1974, which was followed by employment for a year at the State Department’s Passport Office and then in the CIA’s Biographical Section. Christine continued to live in the house while we were overseas. Eventually, at the time of retirement, we gifted her the house.

During our second tour in Washington, Margaret again displayed her resourcefulness by becoming, along with Betty Atherton, a nearly full-time volunteer with the Advisory and Learning Exchange in Washington, DC. The Exchange was headed by Olive Covington and its purpose was to prepare teaching materials in the District of Columbia for all grades. This included organizing seminars and workshops for teachers in the use of these materials.

Q: You were ready for a change of pace. Did you get one?

DICKMAN: Yes, I did. After a couple of days in London, Margaret and I arrived in Abu Dhabi on October 19 to be met by Sam Peale, who was the chargé. It was quite a change. The phone wasn't ringing all the time. I could write my own telegrams that I didn't have to clear with anyone. It was a very pleasant change. Sam would remain as the DCM for several months until his assignment to Nepal. He was replaced by Brooks Wrampelmeier.

The embassy was small with a staff, including locals, of about 25 employees. It was located on the top floor of a circular building. The economic officer was Dan Dolan and the Public Affairs officer was George Naifeh. A separate branch office had been established in Dubai, staffed by a single officer, Charles Currier. There was no Marine security detachment. Our move had been an easy one in the sense that we had furnished quarters in Abu Dhabi. As I said, we had left Christine to stay in our house in Washington.

Upon my arrival, I soon learned that Sheikh Zayid, the President of the United Arab Emirates, was very relaxed about ambassadors presenting their credentials. So, I started making calls on UAE officials whom I had already known, having squired several of them around when they visited Washington during my days as ARP country director. Among these was Mana Said al Utayba, the oil minister for the emirate of Abu Dhabi, and his very able deputy, Abdulla Ismail, an Iraqi exile. When Utayba visited Washington, I had arranged for him to make courtesy calls on Treasury Secretary Shultz, Deputy Treasury Secretary Simon, Roy Atherton, and others in the Department. While the Abu Dhabi emirate was a minor league oil exporter, producing about 1.6 million barrels a day, and Utayba did not have the political importance of his Saudi counterpart, Zaki Yamani, he was flattered by the attention he received. A month before I presented my credentials, my presence in the emirate had become known as a result of a lengthy three part interview by Edmond Gharib, which appeared in the Arabic and English papers. Actually, the interview had taken place just before I left Washington. Among the questions asked was the meaning of Secretary Kissinger's threat that the United States would use force if its oil supply was strangled. The question reflected on the continued sensitivity of the Secretary's statement to "Business Week" made almost two years before. I pointed out that the Secretary was responding to a hypothetical question which I felt had been misconstrued in the Arab media.

At the time of our arrival in the United Arab Emirates, pressures were growing among OPEC members for a 10% increase in oil prices when they next met in Doha, Qatar in December 1976. After six months, it would be followed by an additional 5% increase. The outgoing Ford and incoming Carter administrations were strongly opposed to any increase and called for OPEC to delay its meeting. The world's economy was finally beginning to recover from the effect of the quadrupling of oil prices during the last three months of 1973. I had conveyed these feelings to Utayba, which were repeated a few days later during a dinner for visiting Senator Abourezk of South Dakota which was hosted by Sheikh Zayid and attended by Utayba. The ruler had recently returned from Pakistan, where he had hunted bustards with his falcons. Reflecting his informality, Zayid tore off meat from roasted bustards with his huge hands and handed it to Margaret and me. The taste of bustard vaguely resembled turkey. I should have added that Mrs. Abourezk was with the Senator during this visit and attended the dinner.

During the dinner, Senator Abourezk made the point that an increase in oil prices coming just before a new American president took office could be used by elements in Washington who were opposed to improved U.S.-Arab ties. Sheikh Zayid seemed interested and implied that the Emirates would follow the lead of Saudi Arabia rather than the OPEC price hawks. Since the Saudis were hesitant to go beyond a 5% increase, I enhanced my credibility as an oil reporter by predicting the UAE would do the same. At the December OPEC meeting in Doha, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates held to a 5% increase while the other OPEC members raised their prices by 10%. Because this two price system was the first break in the OPEC front since October 1973, my report on what Utayba told me of what had occurred at the meeting in Doha received a good bit of attention in Washington. Both Saudi Arabia and the Emirates were singled out and praised by outgoing President Ford for their advocating restraint on oil prices.

When we arrived in Abu Dhabi, construction was well underway for the ambassador's residence, which was situated on a plot of land that had been gifted to us by the ruler, Sheikh Zayid. The construction was being done by a Cypriot company. The Department's Foreign Building Operations had nothing to do with it. My predecessor, Mike Sterner, had obtained a $400,000 loan from the Bank of Commerce and Industry for the construction of the residence and its furnishings. By using the gifted piece of land as collateral, the funds normally set aside for renting an ambassador's house in Abu Dhabi was sufficient to pay off the loan over a period of years. It took nearly six months before the residence was fully completed. It was encircled by a high wall with a guard post at the entrance, manned by local police. Since the loan did not cover landscaping, Margaret and I planted all the trees, bushes, and grass. This required removing the sand in bags and replacing it with dirt. It turned out to be a lovely residence which fit well into the desert landscape. There was a small swimming pool which we shared with everyone in the embassy. About a year after its completion, we had the visit of FBO officials. They had some end-of-year funds and asked if they could pay off the BCCI loan. The bank had no problem. I think Mike Sterner deserves credit for his innovative way of getting the building constructed, which otherwise would have taken years if FBO had been involved.

Among my first activities as chief of mission was to invite members of the fairly sizeable American business community along with the principal of the American school to meet with me on a monthly basis. The American community in the Emirates was made up mainly of oil company personnel or bankers. The meetings were either at the residence in Abu Dhabi or at the house of our very energetic and sole representative in Dubai, Charlie Carrier. The purpose of the Dubai office was mainly for commercial promotion and reporting on political developments in the smaller of the seven emirates. Some years later, the Dubai office would become a consulate general. I believed that having good rapport with the American community was just as important as having good relations with the host country. I should add that Margaret helped in this regard by inviting wives in the American community and the embassy for tea or lunch at the residence.

In my monthly meetings with members of the American community, I would summarize what I considered to be the recent key political and economic developments in the Gulf region and I would listen to their concerns. Aside from making sure that we had an effective warden system, the two most prominent issues that came up at every meeting was the legislation intended to curb the Arab boycott and changes in U.S. tax law which was affecting the earnings of American citizens living and working abroad. Passage of the anti-boycott provisions in the Export Administration Act had not occurred in 1976 before Congress had recessed. However, Senator Abe Ribicoff of Connecticut had sponsored an amendment to the 1976 Tax Reform Act which applied tax penalties against U.S. companies found to be cooperating with the boycott. In 1977, legislation to renew the Export Administration Act was reintroduced with its anti-boycott provisions and was signed by President Carter. The two acts, the first administered by the Treasury Department and the second by the Commerce Department, resulted in a blizzard of complex instructions and guidelines which I tried, though not always successfully, to explain to the American businessmen. They could not understand why Congress was imposing such a counterproductive commercial policy. Eventually, we did receive some flexibility in 1978. Until then, American firms could not provide negative certificates of origin that the goods had not originated or been shipped via Israel. Under the modified rules of the Export Administration Act, it became permissible for a U.S. firm to issue a positive certificate for goods that they were exporting to an Arab country that applied boycott rules. This certificate would say that the goods are of purely indigenous origins.

As if boycott regulations were not enough, the U.S. tax laws had been changed, affecting private American citizens working abroad. It involved two issues. One was the amount of income that Americans could exclude from taxes and the other was a requirement to include benefits such as housing and education as taxable income. Until the passage of the 1976 Tax Reform Act, Americans living abroad for at least 18 months were exempted from having to pay U.S. income tax on foreign earned income. But this rule had been changed by the 1976 Tax Reform Act. Now American citizens working abroad were only allowed to deduct $20,000 a year in foreign earned income for the first three years of residence abroad and $25,000 a year thereafter, and their housing and education allowances were considered taxable income. These rules hit Americans living in the Emirates especially hard. The cost of housing, education, and transportation was very high. It caused a number of American families to leave, only to be replaced by Europeans, whose earnings abroad were generally tax free. We cited examples of American workers whose cost of housing alone was greater than their deduction on foreign earned income.

As a result of public pressure and extensive reporting by our embassies in the Persian Gulf, the Congress finally voted to postpone the effective date of the changes of the 1976 Tax Act for several years. Finally, in 1981, President Reagan signed new rules which eliminated the tax liability for about 90% of Americans working abroad beginning with an exclusion of $75,000 a year in foreign earned income as well as housing costs above a base amount and softening the required physical presence in the foreign country from 12 to 11 months.

Although much of Embassy Abu Dhabi's reporting and diplomatic interventions dealt with economic subjects, we did not neglect political reporting. Except for Sheikh Zayid, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, who I would see quite often, I would regularly pay calls on the rulers of the other small emirates, namely Sheikh Rashid of Dubai, Sheikh Sultan of Sharjah, Sheikh Saqr of Ras al Khaima, Sheikh Rashid of Ajman, Sheikh Ahmad of Umm al Qawain, and Sheikh Hamad of Fujairah. Since the call on each Emir generated photos and publicity in the press, I had to make sure they were all called upon at about the same time. Except for Sheikh Sultan of Sharjah, whom I had squired around when he visited Washington in my stint as ARP director and who had a degree in agriculture from the University of Cairo, none of the other rulers had more than a primary level of education.

My assignment to the Emirates was also facilitated by the fact that the UAE leadership sought to distance itself as much as possible from the unresolved Palestinian question. Unfortunately, the UAE was not always successful. One occasion was when a Lufthansa plane was hijacked by Palestinian guerrillas and landed in Dubai. There was a standoff that lasted for nearly 48 hours as the UAE sought to gain the release of the passengers while camouflaging the arrival of a German swat team. However, before the German team could mount its operation, the plane took off and landed in Aden, where the copilot was murdered, and then proceeded to Somalia. In Mogadiscio, the swat team finally caught up, killing the hijackers and freeing the hostages. Another was the tragic death of Saif Gubash, who was the minister of state for foreign affairs whose wife was Russian. Saif had come to the airport to greet visiting PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat only to find himself in the crossfire of a Palestinian gunman who tried to kill Arafat.

During my meetings with the rulers, the Palestinian question was almost never raised. The focus instead was on narrow parochial issues, which made for interesting discussion. Each ruler had very ambitious ideas for the development of his particular emirate and each competed against the other in seeking financial resources. But except for Dubai, where CONOCO operated a major offshore field, none of the other small emirates at the time were oil producers. They were almost entirely dependent on the aid they received from Abu Dhabi, the largest of the seven emirates. On every call, I would emphasize the importance that we placed on maintaining the political unity of the Emirates. Given the UAE's difficult birth in December 1971 and its delicate infancy, I would emphasize to the rulers the importance that the United States attached to the emirs working together in order to achieve political cohesion. Each year, I prepared my evaluation of the prospects for the continued unity of this loose-knit federation, which really amounted to a confederation.

During my stay in the Emirates, Sheikh Zayid was elected for his second five-year term by the UAE national assembly, as was Sheikh Rashid of Dubai as vice president. Sheikh

Zayid, I think, is now either in his fifth or sixth five-year term. Although Sheikh Rashid of Dubai often acted independently of Abu Dhabi and petty rivalries existed among the other small emirates, I felt the confederation would hold as long as Zayid maintained his generous aid to the poor emirates. Over time, I felt that native inhabitants would begin to identify themselves as Emirians rather than being Sharjahns or Dubaians, Abu Dhabians, etc. I pointed to the promising developments, such as steps taken by Sheikh Zayid to establish the Emirates' first university in Al Ain, and his efforts to convert the UAE Monetary Agency into a central bank. The UAE dirham, which was pegged to the dollar, was the Emirate's common currency.
Among other factors that helped bind the Emirates together and which immediately struck visitors was the extent of the construction activity that could be seen even in the poor emirates. Much of it was for infrastructure, especially modern four-lane highways which joined all seven emirates, as well as airports, seaports, electric power and desalination plants, manpower training facilities, and the latest in modern telecommunications. Of all the major projects, the largest and most ambitious was Jebel Ali in the emirate of Dubai. It involved excavating a cubic mile of earth for an extensive port complex. Included in the complex was the largest dry dock in the world, a state-of-the-art aluminum smelting plant using associated gas from Dubai's offshore field, and huge warehouses used to store goods in transit.

When Dubai was poor, it had lived as an entrepot, smuggling gold to India and manufactured goods to Iran. It now continued to live by its wits, but with many more resources. All of this activity had brought in a large number of foreign workers, primarily from Pakistan and India, who outnumbered the indigenous population by a ratio of six to one. One effect of this large expatriate population was a greater tolerance for non-Muslim religious worship as well as the availability of alcoholic beverages. There were no restrictions against women drivers.

During my stay, the UAE began to be discovered by different official visitors, beginning with Admiral Crowe, who was commander of MIDEASTFOR at the time. We had several visits by MIDEASTFOR vessels and they would call on different ports in the Emirates. One that I remember well was the Emirate of Fujairah, which is the eastern part of the Emirates and which did not yet have a suitable port. It required going back and forth on a dhow. But the crews liked the stop, which was different from the ordinary. Some parts of Fujairah are very beautiful, especially as one drives north along the coast to the mountains of the Musandam Peninsula, which is Omani territory.

We also had the visit of former president Ford, Brent Scowcroft, and former Under Secretary of State George Ball. We even had the visit of the Queen of England aboard her yacht, the Britannia. By now, the Emirates had also become a stop for a number of cultural presentations sponsored by USIA and organized by our public affairs officer. A number of these events were held at the residence, which was always followed by a reception with Margaret doing most of the cooking.

We enjoyed our posting in the Emirates since it allowed us to do a good bit of traveling by car, not only in the Emirates but in neighboring Oman. One frequent stop was to go to

Al Ayn which was located next to the Buraimi Oasis, an oasis which had been contested between the Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. During the time of British protection, the British forces held Saudi Arabia's demands over Buraimi at bay. But with independence, Sheikh Zayid decided not to make an issue of it with King Faisal. Al-Ayn became the location of the University of the Emirates. It also became the main entry point into Oman. Travel by car to the interior of Oman had become possible thanks mainly to UAE economic aid, which had financed the construction of several highways and opened up this interesting and fascinating country. We visited Oman on two occasions. Once was during the Christmas holidays of 1977 when Christine and Paul came to visit us. Their visit was also an occasion for us to fly to Das Island, which is the collection point for producing liquified natural gas in much of the Persian Gulf. At the time, Das Island represented the state of the art in collecting associated gas from a number of offshore fields in the Gulf and liquefying it for shipment to Japan aboard huge, bulbous shaped tankers.

Thanks to my good contacts with Oil Minister Utayba and his assistant, Abdullah Ismail, I was able to do a good bit of oil reporting and anticipate what OPEC members might do when they met every six months. At the next OPEC meeting in Stockholm in July 1977, the two pricing system that had occurred as a result of the meeting in Doha would last six months and would end at that point. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates agreed to raise their price by 5% on condition that the other OPEC members forgo their scheduled 5% hike. Although this move restored OPEC unity, Saudi Arabia and the Emirates continued to exercise restraint when OPEC next met in Caracas in December 1977. By then, we were faced with another issue which concerned a push by several OPEC members to abandon the dollar as the currency of payment for oil exports. Some suggested that the cost be denominated in German marks or Japanese yen.

With the quadrupling of oil prices, the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve had simply expanded the nation's money supply to cover the higher cost of imported oil as well as many other imports, all of which resulted in an ever growing U.S. balance of payments deficit. But this right of seigniorage, which the U.S. enjoyed over all other countries, could not last forever without weakening the dollar particularly in relation to strong currencies like the mark and the yen. At one point, Oil Minister Utayba talked about an "OPEC dollar which would base the cost of oil on a basket of currencies that included the dollar, the yen, the mark, and perhaps the British pound. It was an idea that I tried to discourage the minister from pursuing.

Late in the summer of 1978, we had the visit of Treasury Secretary Mike Blumenthal, who had supported this easy money policy. The purpose of Blumenthal's visit was to discourage moves away from the dollar while urging continued price restraint at the next OPEC meeting which was to take place in Abu Dhabi in December of 1978. Until then there had been an 18 month freeze on oil prices. But when OPEC met in December 1978 in Abu Dhabi, I expected that the freeze could not continue because of the deteriorating situation in Iran which was beginning to affect Iranian oil exports. Despite our entreaties, the Saudis and the Emirates went along with the price rise of at least 10% in order to maintain OPEC unity.

By the spring of 1979, two factors were complicating the oil picture. The first was the unhappiness in most of the Arab world over the Camp David Accords and the anger engendered when Egypt and Israel signed their peace treaty in March 1979. The treaty caused the Emirates and virtually all other Arab nations except Oman to break diplomatic relations with Egypt. During the first six months of 1979, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia cut back on oil production. The cutback amounted to about one million barrels a day for Saudi Arabia and 300,000 barrels a day for the Abu Dhabi emirate. To avoid criticism from the United States, the reason given by Utayba for cutting back on allowables was because recent reservoir studies had indicated the danger of over pumping. The second factor was the impact of events in Iran with the departure of the Shah in mid-January 1979 and the return on February 1 of Ayatollah Khomeini. Iranian oil production had plummeted from five to one million barrels per day. Because of the sizeable Iranian community, especially in Dubai, the Emirates had become very concerned over what was occurring in Iran as well as the Ayatollah's attacks directed against traditional monarchies. For the first time, the UAE government became concerned about my security by assigning me bodyguards each time I left the chancery or the residence.

Before leaving the Emirates in August 1979, I recall having several meetings with UAE foreign minister Ahmad Suwaidi, who would ask how the U.S. viewed developments that were unfolding in Iran. By this time, at our urging, both the Emirates and Saudi Arabia had reversed the oil policy earlier in the year of cutting back production and had started to increase their oil output to help offset the sharp reduction in Iranian oil exports.

During my last year in the Emirates, the question of arms sales came up. Abu Dhabi had an air force composed of a dozen or so Mirages that the French had peddled to the Emirates. With no native pilots available, the planes were flown by Pakistani air force officers who were delighted to fly state-of-the-art aircraft that their country could not afford to buy. The planes would be proudly displayed doing acrobatic flying on national holidays. Not to be outdone, Dubai had purchased six military jets from the British. On several occasions, I discouraged various informal approaches by members of Sheikh Zayid's family about buying arms and I had been critical with the ruler of Dubai for buying the aircraft from Britain. I asked Rashid what he was going to do with these aircraft. He really couldn't answer the question. Since Abu Dhabi had them, I could only assume that Rashid felt he had to have some, too. I pointed out that if Abu Dhabi and Dubai started buying a lot of military equipment, the other emirates would feel obliged to do the same thing. So, who was the enemy? The Emirates' security lay not in buying sophisticated arms, which would require a lot of foreigners to operate, but in having good relations with the Saudis and continuing economic assistance to Oman in light of its success in quelling the Dhofar insurgency.

However, sometime in the early summer of 1979, I was asked to meet with Sheikh Khalifa, Sheikh Zaid's eldest son, who was then the commander in chief of all Abu Dhabi's military forces. This time, the request was formal. I do not recall what equipment Sheikh Khalifa asked about, but I did reiterate the same arguments that I had made earlier. I reported the meeting leaving it to my successors to decide how to respond.

Personally, I thought we should say "No" and maintain our current policy.

We left the Emirates at the end of August 1979 knowing that the next posting would be Kuwait. After a short leave in Wyoming, I had my nomination hearings before Senator Frank Church on September 26. The hearings were attended unexpectedly by former Wyoming senator Gail McGee, who had been my diplomatic history professor at the University of Wyoming and who at the time was our ambassador to the Organization of American States. Senator McGee testified supporting my nomination. He knew that I had previously appeared before Senator Church in testy testimony on the Irwin mission and especially on the Arab boycott. Senator Church's demeanor was visibly glum. He asked a few perfunctory questions but he didn't block the nomination, which was approved by the Senate 10 days later.

After two weeks of consultation, including a visit sponsored by the CIA for ambassadors to Camp Swampee near Norfolk, Virginia, we flew directly to Kuwait, arriving on October 20, to be met by the charge, Peter Sutherland. The public affairs officer was Ray Peppers. Jim Clunan headed the Political Section, Ralph Bressler the Economic Section, and Mark Sanna was the security officer. Four days after arriving in Kuwait, I presented my credentials to the Emir, Sheikh Jabir al Sabah. This was in contrast to the Emirates, where it took a couple of months before Sheikh Zayid received my credentials.

Kuwait was a bigger post than Abu Dhabi with about 80 American employees and over 100 local employees, several of whom were very skilled professionals. Included in this total was a 17 man U.S. military liaison team headed by a colonel as well as teams from the U.S. Highway Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Civil Service Commission, all of which provided technical assistance funded by the Kuwaitis. There was also a Marine guard detachment. The chancery, the administrative building, and the residence were located within a compound roughly the size of a couple of city blocks. It was surrounded by a high wall. Its only entrance was along a side street that was protected by a steel gate. Next to the embassy compound was a 10-story Hilton hotel.

On November 4, 1979, or two weeks after my arrival in Kuwait, I received a phone call from the Operations Center asking if I could contact our embassy in Tehran, which apparently had been taken over for a second time by demonstrating students. Since Kuwait was the closest geographically to Tehran and easily connected by phone, the Department thought the embassy might be able to find out what was occurring. Our attempts to reach Embassy Teheran failed. All I could report was that our agricultural attache in Iran had apparently made it to the Canadian embassy.

Working closely with the embassy security officer, Mark Sanna, the events in Tehran caused me to review our own security arrangements. It so happened that one of the secretaries in the Political Section of our Embassy in Tehran was visiting Kuwait for a few days of R&R. Hearing news of the seizure, she came to help my secretary, Gladys Chun in the front office. Noticing the steel safe filing cabinet in my outer office, she wondered if Embassy Tehran's Political Section, which had two similar file safes, had been able to destroy their contents when the embassy was seized by the demonstrators.

After reviewing the contents of the file safe in the front office, it got me to thinking whether we would have the time to destroy the classified files if we were overrun in Kuwait. Since I was the new boy in the embassy, I initially ordered that all classified files prior to my arrival be destroyed or shipped back to Washington by the courier. This included the contents of the cabinets located behind the safe door protecting the communications room. It took 10 days for the Marines working day and night using the shredding machine to pulverize the classified material. The staff was also instructed to turn in their in and out boxes each night for storage in the code room, which was the most heavily fortified room in the chancery. Logs would be kept of incoming and outgoing messages which could be shredded immediately in the event the embassy was overrun.

While the shredding was underway, we were making arrangements with Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Abdul Rahman al Atiqi, for the visit of U.S. Treasury Secretary William Miller, who had replaced Blumenthal. Secretary Miller was accompanied by Treasury Assistant Secretary Fred Bergsten, Joe Twinam (who had recently been promoted to be a NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary), and Congressman Jim Leech from Iowa. The party was scheduled to arrive on November 27 after stops in the Emirates and Saudi Arabia and was going to leave the following day. The purpose of the visit was to urge oil price moderation and to point to measures underway to maintain the strength of the dollar, which had recently appreciated in relation to other currencies. But the visit promised to be difficult. Finance Minister Atiqi had a very prickly personality and I was not sure if he would be at the airport to meet Secretary Miller. Atiqi was angry over the announcement that the Treasury Department had frozen Iran's assets in the United States, which amounted to over $10 billion, until the embassy hostages in Teheran were freed. He asked what assurances Secretary Miller could give that the same thing would not happen to Kuwait's investment in the United States. A great deal of the 10% in oil earnings that were set aside for Kuwait's Future Generation Fund was invested in a variety of stocks, bonds, and real estate holdings in the United States. Secretary Miller sought to assuage Kuwaiti concerns which seemed to be very exaggerated.

On November 20, as I was returning to the Embassy following a meeting with Atiqi, I heard over the car radio that the grand Mosque in Mecca had been seized by a group of Islamic militants. I considered this to be a very serious development, made only worse by Ayatollah Khomeini's propaganda attacks against the House of Saud for being an unworthy protector of Islam's holiest shrine. Two days later, just as we had finished Thanksgiving dinner for the Embassy staff at the residence, I was called aside for a visit by the head of Kuwait's Criminal Investigation Department (CID). He alerted me that members of Kuwait's Shia community had been overheard at their Hussainiyas (Shia mosques) who were planning anti-U.S. demonstrations in the next 10 days which could result in an attack against the embassy compound. The warning greatly concerned the Department. While we were awaiting the visit of Treasury Secretary Miller's party, we received instructions from the Department to encourage embassy dependents to evacuate. At that point, I made plans to establish an alternate command post located outside of the compound in the event the embassy compound was overrun. It was located in an Embassy apartment about four blocks from the compound but close enough for communication by walkie-talkies.

Q; Did you have to put these security measures into effect?

DICKMAN: Indeed we did. The night before the arrival of Secretary Miller, we received a second security alert from the Kuwaiti CID which was a bomb threat. This caused us to empty the compound except for the marine guards. Nothing happened, however. The visitors came on schedule and Atiqi showed up at the airport. The visit, including the call on the Emir, Sheikh Jabir, went well. Secretary Miller was able to soothe Atiqi's ruffled feathers by explaining that the freezing of Iran's dollar assets was a unique preemptive action in the face of American diplomatic personnel being held hostage and that Kuwait's assets in the U.S. were absolutely secure. When the party left Kuwait, the wife and children of the Economic Officer boarded the Secretary's plane as our first evacuees.

Our third security alert occurred in the morning of November 30. It was not unexpected because it was Friday, the day of Ashura, which is the holiest day of the year for Shia Muslims. What concerned me was that the CID reported that the police had arrested persons near the Embassy filling water bottles with gasoline. Margaret had gone to the airport to see the departure of some Embassy dependents. The Embassy compound was empty except for myself, a communicator, and the Marine security detail. Following Friday prayers, a very large and noisy crowd assembled outside the Embassy compound made up largely of Kuwaiti Shia and Iranians working in Kuwait. I managed to get word to Margaret and others to congregate at the alternate command post. After several tries, I also managed to contact the Foreign Ministry duty officer. After about one hour, we heard the rumbling of tanks which had finally been brought in to quell the demonstrators who fled leaving thousands of sandals on the pavement outside the compound. Since similar demonstrations had occurred against our Embassies in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Department made the evacuation of Embassy dependents mandatory. In spite of the angry reaction of many wives to this order, Margaret set the example leading the remaining US government dependents to the airport. She was not allowed to return until the all clear was given six months later on June 20.Margaret spent this time in Wyoming staying alternately with my mother in Laramie or her father in Cheyenne.

The evacuation of embassy dependents posed a problem when responding to questions from the sizeable American community in Kuwait. The question was, should they do the same thing. It was especially a problem for the large number of American women married to Kuwaiti men who had studied in the U.S. Most of them had children who were registered as American citizens at the embassy. I discouraged the idea that these women should evacuate Kuwait. I thought the Department was overdoing it. But it did move me to institute monthly meetings at the residence with the American community as I had done in the Emirates. The warden system was revised with block captains holding lists of phone numbers of Americans in their districts. These monthly meetings gave me an opportunity to review political developments in the region, talk about U.S. taxes on foreign earned income, and to listen to their security concerns. I always invited the embassy's consular, political, and economic sections to participate in the meetings to make them better known to the American community.

My efforts at outreach were greatly assisted by Margaret's organizing abilities in the kitchen, be it for dinners, for visiting VIPs, lunches for Kuwaiti bankers, or national days. When national days were celebrated, they were always held at the residence, not at a hotel where catering for a single reception would wipe out a year's representation allowance. Margaret would work with a cook preparing food ahead of time for as many as 700 guests. As a result, there was always representation money available for other officers. It was through this effort that we came to know a number of Wyoming girls who had married Kuwaitis. Through them, we came to know other American women married to Kuwaitis who, along with their husbands, had never been to the residence.

In the four years we were in Kuwait, the embassy security would remain a constant concern. Personally, I felt secure. When I left the compound, the Kuwait CID provided a bodyguard and a tail car. But I wanted to make sure there would be no major security breaches as had occurred at our embassy in Tehran. Copies of Embassy documents that had not been destroyed in Tehran would appear periodically in the English Kuwait Times, which could easily be identified as being genuine. During my time in Kuwait, all unneeded classified material was shredded every evening. Only logs of key messages were kept. As I already mentioned, Embassy officers were required to store their in and out boxes in the code room when they left the chancery. While this was a pain, especially for the Political and Economic Sections, the one advantage was that no one received any security violations. I also instituted weekly drills. The number of bell rings alerted the staff whether it was a fire drill, an unauthorized entry into the compound, or a hostage situation. In addition, I insisted that any trucks that entered the compound had to have one of our local employees enter the cab and stay with the driver. Except for the embassy security officer, the staff thought I was overdoing it. But they carried on in good grace.

My four year tour in Kuwait also coincided with the Sabah's family's growing concern for its own political legitimacy and its fears of external threats over which it had no control. The leadership's sense of insecurity was reflected in Kuwait's often ambiguous foreign policy. Kuwait was very rich, very vulnerable to military attack, and its resources were coveted by others. It was situated between three larger, more powerful neighbors, which regularly made conflicting demands on Kuwait's leadership. Kuwait's population was ethnically and religiously divided and although the majority of native Kuwaitis were Sunni Muslims, there was a large Shia minority whose co-religionists were in Iran. Foreigners composed of Palestinians and "guest workers" from third world countries provided the menial as well as the sophisticated labor that the country required, and who accounted for 60% of Kuwait's inhabitants. The leadership had traditionally sought to compensate for the country's weakness by avoiding entangling alliances, by trying to play one strong neighbor against the other, and by avoiding public stances that would antagonize any of its near neighbors.

However, by the end of 1979, Kuwait's leadership was faced with an unpredictable Iran which was holding American hostages, which was encouraging young Kuwaitis to return to conservative Islamic ideals, and which was trying to subvert the Gulf monarchies. Kuwait's sense of insecurity was also affected by the difficulties the Saudis were having in dislodging the Islamic militants who had seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca as well as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December of 1979, which had resulted in moves by the United States to improve its military posture in the Gulf. In addition to this was the unresolved boundary issue with Iraq and the strained relations with the United States over Camp David and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. The Kuwaiti government was opposed to US economic sanctions against Iran as long as the hostage crisis remained unresolved. Although it condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it also criticized the United States for trying to bring superpower rivalry into the Persian Gulf and to force Kuwait to take sides. As long as there was no resolution to the Palestinian issue, Kuwait's leadership saw the country's large Palestinian diaspora, accounting for about 22% of the country's inhabitants, as representing the largest potential internal threat. While the leadership refused to grant citizenship to its large Palestinian population, it was very conscious of its presence and did not want to be out of step with other Arab nations on the Palestinian question.

The Kuwaitis were apprehensive that the political turbulence in the area could upset their apple cart. They sought to deal with these shocks by trying as much as possible to burnish their non-alignment image by trying to portray themselves as more Arab than the Arabs. The Kuwaiti press was never really friendly to the United States and it became more strident than ever during my time in Kuwait.. Much of the emphasis was on the Palestinian question. The press saw the United States as uncritically supporting Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. One criticism that came up repeatedly was Washington's refusal to have any contact with the PLO. The Kuwaitis would always refer to the private meeting that our ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young, had had with a PLO representative in August of 1979, a meeting that the Israelis had bugged and then leaked to the press. This had caused such a row among Israel's supporters in Congress that it forced Ambassador Young to submit his resignation to President Carter. I recall that Ambassador Young along with Maynard Jackson made a private visit to Kuwait in March of 1980 at the invitation of Kuwait's UN ambassador. I had a reception for Ambassador Young and some members of his delegation overnighted at the residence.

The Kuwaiti press was also critical of the U.S. decision to boycott the Olympics in Moscow. It objected to President Carter's statement in January 1980 that the United States would use force if necessary to protect the western world's vital interests in the Persian Gulf. It complained that moves by the United States to gain access to military facilities in Oman were injecting the Cold War into the Gulf. When the U.S. would veto a resolution in the Security Council that was critical of Israel, the Kuwaiti press would headline my being called in to receive a protest from the foreign office's Under Secretary Rashid al Rashid.

This constant drumbeat of the press made it difficult for me and other embassy officers to explain how the Camp David Accords could serve as a basis for further peace negotiations and how we saw the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in geopolitical terms. Moreover, this negative attitude toward the United States was reflected in other ways. Although I had had a lot of contact with Sheikh Salim al Sabah when he was Kuwait's ambassador to the United States and I was the ARP director, by the time I got to Kuwait, Sheikh Salim had become the defense minister. Every request that I submitted to him for a port visit by one of our Middle East Force destroyers was refused. This had not occurred during the time of my predecessor, Frank Maestrone. Another example was when Kuwait Air was in the market for new aircraft and had decided to choose the Boeing 767. But the decision was reversed at the political level in favor of Airbus. Another example was when TWA sought to establish regular service to Kuwait as one of its stops on the way to India. The application was turned down because TWA also had flights that stopped in Israel.

On reflection, I'm not sure that I handled the press very well. I did go to the various newspaper establishments and talked to the editors and occasionally I was interviewed in English and in Arabic, but again, I don't think I handled it very well. Kuwait's sense of insecurity heightened even more in September of 1980 with Iraq's sudden invasion of Iran. It so happened that the invasion occurred while I was away for a short leave to receive a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Wyoming. I had left the embassy in the very capable hands of Brooks Wrampelmeier. Brooks had replaced Peter Sutherland, who had been appointed as ambassador to Bahrain. Ray Peppers was about to leave to be replaced by David Good as our public affairs officer as was Ralph Bressler, who was replaced by Jim Larroco as the head of the Economic Section, with Dale Dean as the commercial officer. Upon my return, I reviewed again to see if there was anything more we should do to improve the embassy's security. The one thing that bothered me was that we were still keeping copies of evaluation reports because they were unclassified. Perhaps I was being paranoid, but I asked that they be kept in the Administration's office for only one year. My recollection is that during the seizure of the embassy in Teheran, they had found these evaluation reports. Of course, you can glean a lot of information from them.

Iraq's invasion of Iran caused Kuwait's foreign minister, Sabah Ahmad al Sabah to revive a proposal to create a regional economic association among the traditional Arab Gulf countries. The idea had been set aside earlier when Iraq insisted on being a member. But now with Iraq preoccupied with its war with Iran, the Kuwaitis saw an opportunity to push for a political as well as an economic grouping of the six traditional ruling regimes in the Arabian Peninsula. It came to be known as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) when these rulers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Oman met in Abu Dhabi in May 1981. The headquarters were established in Riyadh and Abdullah Bishara, who had been Kuwait's ambassador to the UN, was named as the GCC's first secretary general.

The GCC fit well with U.S. policy of promoting regionalism in the Gulf. We were careful, however, in how we gave our support, lest we give it the kiss of death. In private discussions, it gave us a favorable political subject to talk about. But as Kuwait energetically promoted Gulf cooperation, it also found itself having to side with Iraq in its war with Iran, particularly as the war increasingly became stalemated. Kuwait, along with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, became major financial backers of Iraq's war with Iran. Kuwait's contribution alone amounted to some $13 billion. Kuwaiti ports also became the main transfer points for military supplies for Iraq. These were loaded on huge convoys that would leave in the dead of night destined for Iraq. The Kuwaitis hoped that their financial and logistic help to Iraq would allow for a friendly resolution of the boundary issues with that country. In 1983, Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Abdallah visited Baghdad for this purpose only to be given the back of the hand by Saddam Hussain. The Kuwaitis were also disappointed at a later date when Saddam resumed Iraq's claims to the mudflats of Waraba and Bubyian and seek a new boundary "correction" with Kuwait.

The visit of Treasury Secretary Miller in the early days of my assignment to Kuwait gave me an opportunity to initiate and maintain good contacts with the Minister of Petroleum, Ali Khalifa al-Sabah, and the Director of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Abd al Latif al Hamid. Both were very well educated and spoke perfect English. Ali Khalifa was a member of the ruling Sabah family. He had been instrumental in requiring that the oil companies operating in Kuwait make investments to capture all the associated gas for conversion into valuable petrochemicals. This was an example that the Saudis would follow a few years later. Under Abd al Latif al Hamid, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development had become second only to the World Bank in the number of low interest loans made to developing countries. Initially, the loans had been extended to poor Arab countries, but by 1979, that restriction had been removed. The Kuwait government supported this institution for very good political reasons since they generated interest and support in the Third World for Kuwait's continued existence, particularly when Kuwait was faced with periodic threats from Iraq. Sometime late in 1980, Abd al Latif replaced Atiqi as finance minister, which allowed for a much more pleasant exchange of views.

By the time I reached Kuwait, the spot prices of oil had gone through the roof. The fall of the Shah and the decline of Iran's oil production from over 5 million barrels a day to only one million had resulted in a new world oil shortage and new gas lines in the United States. It had caused the oil companies to bid one against the other for supplies, causing the price of crude to rise in the spot market to over $30 a barrel. The high spot prices made it extremely difficult to try and jawbone the Kuwaitis to show price moderation. However, perhaps because of our diplomatic intervention, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Emirates tried to preempt the price hawks (mainly the Libyans, Nigerians, Iranians, Indonesians, and Venezuelans). Just prior to the December 1979 OPEC meeting in Caracas, the three oil exporting nations raised their prices by about 30% to approximately $24 a barrel for marker crude. But the move failed. The embassy hostage crisis and the failed attempt by American special forces to free the hostages was causing so much uncertainty that the other OPEC members could sell at higher prices. So, this OPEC meeting ended in a new form of discord.

By June of 1980 when OPEC met in Algiers, the Kuwaitis refused to go along with the Saudis to hold the price of marker crude to about $32 a barrel. Because of the frantic bidding by the major oil companies, the Kuwaitis were receiving over $40 a barrel for their oil. In the fall of 1980, when it looked like market conditions were beginning to ease a little bit, Iraq's sudden invasion of Iran in September of that year created a new uncertainty. At the time of Iraq's invasion, Iraq was producing about 3.5 million barrels a day and Iran about 2.5 million barrels a day. I recall reporting Ali Khalifa's concerns since this was the first time one OPEC nation was invading and waging war against another OPEC nation. Coupled with the division within OPEC over whether to accept Saudi leadership over oil prices, it had had made negotiations within the organization very tense. In spite of Iraq and Iran's attempts to destroy each other's oil production capabilities, 1980 would prove to be the peak for oil prices. The anticipated supply shortfall did not materialize. By then, oil production from the North Sea was rising, the Nigerian civil war had ended, production from Alaska's north slope had begun, and the conservation measures that had taken place under the Carter administration were beginning to have an impact. I should also mention that in their frantic buying, the oil companies had stockpiled a good bit of oil.

As panic buying declined, prices leveled off in 1981. I did a good deal of reporting on Ali Khalifa's efforts in OPEC councils to maintain high oil prices. One of the oil minister's moves was to try to bring Norway and Mexico into OPEC. However, both these countries preferred to be price followers rather than bear the onus of being price leaders. By 1982, prices had begun to decline. This caused OPEC to have an emergency meeting in the fall of that year to apportion production quotas among its members. But assigning production quotas only caused some members like Libya to cheat by selling their oil at a discount in order to gain market share. In the spring of 1983 at a meeting in London, a new production quota system was worked out which placed Saudi Arabia as the central price defender by becoming the swing producer. In other words, if demand for OPEC oil fell below the 17.5 million barrels a day, which was the overall quota for OPEC, the Saudis were left with the responsibility of reducing their production. Because I had regular access to Ali Khalifa and would occasionally see Yamani and Utayba when they visited Kuwait, I was able to continue providing some insight on developments within the OPEC councils.

Q: Earlier you had talked about Kuwait's insecurity because of outside forces it couldn't control. How about its internal security by now?

DICKMAN: Well, with the Iraq-Iran war becoming a stalemate, there was growing fear that the internal security situation in the country had deteriorated. Responding to an earlier pledge that there would be new elections for the national assembly in four years, the Kuwaiti leadership made preparations in 1980 for elections that were to take place in 1981. I should mention that the national assembly had been dissolved in 1976 over the lack of cooperation between the executive and the legislature and had not been reinstated. Another reason for the closure was that the outspoken statements by some members of the Kuwaiti parliament had become an embarrassment, particularly with Kuwait's relations with Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

While a referendum on whether women should gain the right to vote captured the headlines in the reporting of the elections, in fact, it was only a peripheral issue. What worried the leadership was that the Iranian revolution had given the Kuwaiti Shia minority and, to a lesser extent, Arab nationalists a way to express their grievances in a more public manner. The demonstration against the embassy in 1979 was but one example. It had been followed by fiery declarations in the Hussainiyas as well as several bombings. One incident involved the firing of an anti-tank bazooka at the Iranian Embassy by pro-Iraqi Dawa operatives. By gerrymandering the electoral precincts of the 50-man assembly, the government was able to reduce the large Shia and nationalist representation while at the same time increasing the government's traditional elements. As a result, the Shia won only four seats compared to the 10 that they had held in the previous assembly. The right to vote, by the way, is limited to Kuwaiti males who have to be at least 21 years of age, who were born in Kuwait, and who can prove that they have a link to ancestors who lived in Kuwait in 1920. By the way, the vote for women's suffrage was defeated.

In reporting on the elections, we drew on the helpful resources of the political science department at the University of Kuwait. Occasionally, one of the professors would sneak me the draft of a research paper that was under preparation. One that I remember was as a poll of high school males in the Peninsula on how they identified themselves. The study indicated they first identified themselves as Muslims, then their immediate family, followed by their extended family, the location where they lived, and finally the country and the ruling family where they lived. I thought this contrasted with how the average American high school student in the U.S. would probably identify himself, first as an American, then the State where he lived, followed by his immediate family, whether he was a Democrat, Republican or an independent, and lastly his religious persuasion. Some of the papers were quite critical of the Sabah regime. As one professor put it, the issue of legitimacy was vital for the ruling Sabah family. With no political parties in the assembly, the older generation remained dominant in power and wealth. This made the young generation frustrated by its inability or its lack of drive to change the existing order. They were looking for something else. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why there was a noticeable increase in attendance by the young generation at the Friday mosques.

Impressions of political attitudes were also gained by attending the diwaniyas, which are social gathering centers located in homes and attended by adult males. The diwaniya is an institution which is unique in the Arabian Peninsula and is especially well developed in Kuwait. It is a place where issues are discussed informally and where the host, normally the eldest male in the family, often serves as a kind of arbiter. Each year, on the occasion of Id al Fitr (breaking of the Ramadan fast) and Id al Adha (the big feast), I was expected to make courtesy calls on the diwaniyas of at least a dozen or more leading families of Kuwait and to drink at least one cup of coffee and one cup of tea at each stop. Strong kidneys were needed.

During my tour in Kuwait, I maintained my monthly meetings with the American community. While some joked that members of the community came only for the beer, I felt it proved to be a useful form of communication on several occasions. One was explaining why the Kuwait government and the public were so upset over the extradition of Ziad Abu Ain, a young Palestinian from Jordan who was arrested by the FBI in Chicago after he had legally immigrated into the United States. The arrest came at the request of the Israeli government, which sought his extradition. He was accused of having planted a bomb in Tiberias in 1979 which had killed two Israelis and wounded others. This had resulted in a lengthy legal battle with Abu Ain protesting his arrest on the basis of questionable evidence as well as affidavits that he was 100 miles away from Tiberias when the explosion occurred. His lawyer argued that he was being charged with a political, not a criminal, offense and therefore was not extraditable. Abu Ain went on a hunger strike, protesting his innocence. However, the judge ruled that there was probable cause and refused to grant a writ of habeas corpus. The case went to the Supreme Court, but the Court refused to take the case on appeal. So, Abu Ain was extradited to Israel in 1981, where he was tried and jailed. The case was a highly emotional one and was viewed as another example of American discrimination against Arabs. It generated anti-U.S. demonstrations in Kuwait's large Palestinian community as well as expressions of regret by the Kuwait government.

Another occasion where communication with the community was important was a child custody flap that broke out in June 1981 resulting in our Consul, Robin Bishop being declared persona non grata and in which I was implicated. It concerned a custody battle over two American-born children. The, mother, Kristine Olman had married a Saudi student, Mustafa al Ukaily, when they were both geology students in the United States. They had two U.S.-born children. They had come to live in Saudi Arabia, where the husband taught at Dhahran's Petroleum and Minerals University. Kristine had become an abused and battered wife but could find no way to leave Saudi Arabia with her two children without having a Saudi exit visa which required her husband's permission and access to her passport. The husband kept her passport. The opportunity to escape came when her husband was invited to speak at the University of Kuwait. She and her children entered Kuwait on her husband's Saudi passport. But she carried valid U.S. passports for her two children. As an American citizen who could prove her nationality and was not engaged in any illegal activity, our consular section issued her a replacement passport. Although the embassy assisted Ms. Olman and her children to go through the exit formalities at the airport, it was the kind of assistance often rendered to American citizens. The foreign ministry's consular section was told what we had done. The next day, the irate husband came to the embassy accusing our consul of having spirited his wife and children out of Kuwait.

Nothing was heard of the incident until three weeks later when I was called in to the Foreign Ministry and read a bill of particulars that the embassy had violated Kuwaiti law by issuing passports to the mother and the two children and spiriting them out of Kuwait. I explained that no passports had been issued to the children and that the embassy had not violated any laws in issuing Mrs. Olman a U.S. passport, which was her right as an American citizen. I had barely left the Ministry when I heard over the car radio that I had been called in to receive a protest that the embassy had been engaged in kidnaping Dr. al Ukaily's two children, a charge which I had denied. The matter soon became a cause célèbre when the deputy speaker of the national assembly, Ahmed Sadoun, demanded that the government declare me, Consul Robin Bishop, and other embassy personnel as persona non grata. The deputy speaker also characterized the statement from the State Department defending the action of the embassy as "tactless and rude." After three or four days of verbal sparring, we received a note from the foreign minister declaring our consul, Robin Bishop, persona non grata, and giving her 72 hours to leave Kuwait.

The Department chose not to retaliate in kind by expelling the Kuwaiti consul in Washington, although I felt it would have been justified in doing so. Three months later, as I was leaving Laramie after a short, three week leave, I picked up the copy of the September 13, 1981 issue of "The Denver Post," a copy which I still have, with a front page story of two children who had been kidnaped in Aurora, Colorado, with the police issuing a warrant for the arrest of Mustafa al Ukaily. Apparently, he had hired a private detective to track down his wife and two children, who had gone into hiding, and had managed to spirit the children out of the United States. Later, the mother returned to Saudi Arabia to try and seek custody of the children, but her request was denied by Saudi courts.

I should mention that my support of the embassy's consular section did not win me any friends among the Kuwaitis. With the departure of Robin, the Consular Section became very shorthanded so that Kuwaitis now had to stand in long lines in order to get a U.S. visa. I dismissed the many complaints that I received, saying we did not have an extra supply of consuls for their beck and call. I also backed up our consular officers for refusing to issue visas to maids who were accompanying their Kuwaiti employers when they traveled to the United States on vacation. Most maids were from the Philippines or South Asia and were often poorly treated by their employer. Our experience had been that many of these maids would leave their Kuwaiti employer once they entered the United States and they would join the ranks of the many illegal immigrants in the country. Many Kuwaitis who were unhappy about this would revert to intermediacy in seeking to jump the visa line and to gain exceptions to bring their maids. They would do this by appealing to Margaret, but it didn't work.

By the spring of 1982, Kuwait's investment in the United States had again become a sensitive issue. Kuwait was accumulating substantial foreign exchange reserves with the high price of oil. Kuwait's first real estate investment was in Kiaweah Island in 1974 for a resort facility when I was ARP director. It was the kind of news story that elements unfriendly to the Arabs would point to. In May of 1981, someone gave columnist Dan Dorfman a list of U.S. equities totaling more than $7 billion that Citibank managed for the Kuwait government's account. It amounted to a mutual fund with the Kuwait government owning shares in some 150 U.S. securities which included shares in all of the Dow stocks. The article quoted Congressman Rosenthal, raising questions whether there was a genuine danger of Kuwait gaining control of or influencing leading American companies. The publicity caused the Kuwaitis to withdraw all their funds from the bank and place them in other financial institutions that could assure confidentiality.

As Kuwait continued to accumulate cash reserves, it decided to use some of them for downstream investments in Europe and the United States, especially in energy related activities. In Europe, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) purchased a refinery in Amsterdam which had belonged to the Gulf Oil Company and they also acquired a large number of former Gulf gas stations in Europe. In the United States, the Kuwait Petroleum Company formed a joint venture with AZO industries, which was an agribusiness company whose major shareholder happened to be Saudi businessman Adnan Khashogi for the purpose of exploring oil, gas, and minerals in the United States. But what really attracted attention was KPC's announcement of its intention to purchase California-based Santa Fe International for $2.5 billion or twice the company's share value on the stock exchange. By purchasing Santa Fe, it would give the KPC the technical ability to drill anywhere in the world. It so happened that Santa Fe was doing some drilling in the North Sea. The news generated a storm of criticism in Congress led by Congressman Rosenthal. The proposed purchase was reviewed by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, an interagency group which was established in 1975 to examine problems posed by foreign purchases of American companies. This was the first time in the six years of its establishment that this interagency group had met, which indicated just how political the sale had become. To facilitate the purchase, the Kuwait Petroleum Company agreed in the spring of 1982 to dispose of Santa Fe's subsidiary, the Braun Construction Company, which at one time had provided engineering services at Rocky Flats in Colorado. Santa Fe had also added former President Ford to its board of directors. In March of 1982, the former president visited Kuwait for a board meeting where he spoke in support of the Kuwait Petroleum Company's investment. I wondered but never asked the former president if he owned shares in Santa Fe at least before its purchase by the KPC. As one Kuwaiti wag at the time of the visit, "We can't vote for a President, but we can buy one."

The Santa Fe purchase created a political storm in Kuwait as well. The national assembly criticized oil minister Ali Khalifa for paying too much and for making Kuwait vulnerable to pressures from the U.S. Congress. The controversy got even worse in March 1983 when Interior Secretary James Watt, responding to domestic political pressure, reversed a decision that he had announced two months earlier that would have allowed the Kuwait Petroleum Company to drill in federally owned lands in western states. Exasperated by these political moves to appease elements in the U.S. opposed to Arab investments, the Kuwait government filed a suit in a Delaware court against the Interior Department over this whole issue. In July of 1984, the court overturned the action of Secretary Watt. However, because of this, the Kuwait Petroleum Company has never undertaken any drilling in federally owned lands in the United States.

Q: What was your worst moment in Kuwait?

DICKMAN: I think probably it was Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon on June 6, 1982. This was going on as recriminations over the Santa Fe issue were occurring. The Kuwait government to its credit had spent a lot of political and economic capital in trying to mediate an end to the civil war in Lebanon and to allow the Lebanese government to reestablish its control over the entire country. During the year before the invasion in my meetings with officials in the foreign ministry, I tried to describe how the efforts of our special envoy, Philip Habib, were maintaining a cease-fire along the Israeli-Lebanese border. However, any credibility we might have had disappeared when Israeli troops went beyond their announced plan to advance only 25 miles into southern Lebanon with the announced purpose of wiping out PLO positions along the border. Once Israeli forces went beyond the 25 miles and reached Beirut and began to bomb the city, the Kuwaitis were convinced that Secretary of State Haig had given the green light to Israeli defense minister Ariel Sharon. I denied this assertion, saying that I believed we had been duped by the Israelis. Toward the end of June, I recall receiving a very tough instruction which had been sent to peninsula posts from Secretary Haig, which in effect said, “Tell the Kuwaitis that the jig is up for the PLO in Lebanon and you Kuwaitis get that message across to the PLO leadership.” I did not act on the instruction in the belief that its nasty, overbearing tone would infuriate the Kuwaitis. I believe it was the only time in my career when I deliberately disobeyed an instruction. I just simply didn’t carry it out. Fortunately, a few days later, President Reagan, at the urging of his wife, replaced Secretary Haig with George Shultz in the last days of June of 1982.

As the bombardment of Beirut continued, which was shown on Kuwait television constantly, and the negotiations conducted by Phil Habib on the terms for the PLO’s withdrawal dragged on, the Kuwaiti leadership became increasingly anxious over how this could affect the country’s internal security. We reported that the government had staged several anti-American rallies in sports arenas to let off steam and to reflect Kuwait’s public distancing from the United States. But the leadership’s greatest fear was that PLO guerrillas that were being removed from Lebanon might end up in Kuwait. To prevent that possibility, the government had instituted strict new entry visa regulations and had ordered a cutback on the gruesome TV footage on Lebanon in order to avoid stirring up more pro-PLO emotions. My confidential report on Kuwaiti internal security concerns was soon leaked by someone in Washington to Evans and Novak to the discomfiture of the Kuwaiti government. To my knowledge, none of the PLO guerrillas who had been in Lebanon ended up in Kuwait.

Once the PLO guerrillas were finally removed from Lebanon, followed by the issuance on September 1, 1982 of President Reagan’s Middle East Peace Plan, I tried to get Phil Habib to make a trip to Kuwait to meet with Kuwaiti officials and have him provide a first-hand account of what he had accomplished. However, his schedule was very full and the possibility of a visit was overtaken by the assassination of Lebanon’s president elect, Bashir Gemayel, in mid-September, and the massacre of thousands of unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by the Christian Phalange with the support and complicity of the surrounding Israeli forces.

In the spring of 1983, Secretary Shultz tried his hand at shuttle diplomacy with the objective of getting both Israel and Syria to withdraw their troops from Lebanon. The Secretary did most of his shuttling between Jerusalem and Beirut. The Secretary had not accepted the wise advice of our ambassador to Syria, Bob Paganelli, to keep Syria fully informed or keep it within the negotiating loop. So, when the Secretary finally engineered an Israeli-Lebanese agreement on May 17, 1983, it provided that Israel’s withdrawal was conditional on Syrian withdrawal. This in effect gave Israel a veto power. When the agreement was presented to Assad, he found it unacceptable and it resulted in the Secretary’s shuttle effort being a complete failure. In the course of the shuttle, Secretary Shultz apparently became irritated by what he considered to be Paganelli’s unhelpful attitude. This would cause the Department to send me a cable asking if I would be available for Damascus. My answer was a bit evasive. In any event, there was no follow-up by the Department and Bob remained in Damascus for a period of time.

During the last year of my tour in Kuwait, the country's economy was trying to recover from a bout of unparalleled greed and economic irresponsibility by buying and selling stocks using postdated checks. It amounted to an unofficial futures market using deferred payments. The market had developed a couple of years earlier and was located on the ground floor of a large car parking garage in downtown Kuwait. It was known as the Suq al Manakh. At one time, many years before, it had been the spot where camels were bought and sold. The shares of the companies, most of which had very few assets, were bid up and up by using checks which were supposed to be honored sometime in the future, generally three to six months later. As the price of the shares rose, some shareholders would borrow from banks in order to honor the checks when they were due. Other checks would exchange hands with some having as many as 12 different endorsements. The whole approach was unbelievable. We did a lot of financial reporting on what was occurring.

I remember asking Finance Minister Abd al Latif al Hamid why the government was not stepping in to stop this speculation. To my surprise, Abd al Latif seemed relaxed about it all. Perhaps it was because there was a rumor that even the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Sheikh Saad Abdallah, was among the speculators. As I recall, Abd al Latif's attitude was "Well, if they lose money, they will get burned." I also recall taking an incredulous Deputy Treasury Assistant Secretary, Charles Chotta, to the suq to see for himself how the shares were being bought and sold. Local brokers would move from one stall to the next buying or selling shares using checks whose dates when due kept being extended more and more and who themselves were caught in the speculative mania. In September 1982, there had been so much speculation that the government was finally forced to step in and stop the practice of forward check writing. The Ministry of Finance called on all checkholders (and shareholders) to declare their position. But the action came too late. The Suq al Manakh crashed in October 1982. Nearly 29,000 postdated checks, held by over 7,000 individuals, had been registered for the equivalent of $93 billion and were now being held at the clearinghouse. One individual, Jassim al Mutawa, who was an employee in the Passport Office, had 5,000 checks for some $12 billion that he could not cover. Initially, the Kuwaiti leadership sought to establish some financial order by establishing an arbitration committee and by setting aside $5 billion in government bonds to pay off the small investors. But this did not alleviate the impact of the crash, which caused a sharp decline in retail activity. It would take several years before the internal retail market had recovered.

Since a large number of Kuwaitis, including prominent members of the ruling Sabah family, were involved in the Suq al Manakh, we were careful to classify our reporting cables as "Secret Exdis" in order to reduce their distribution only to discover that they became the basis for an article by Edward J. Epstein. The article, entitled "Embassy Cables," appeared in the May 1983 issue of "The Atlantic Monthly" and contained a number of verbatim quotes. The article also quoted a cable from the Department asking for the embassy's assessment to a series of questions and our response. I protested this leak and asked the Department to undertake an investigation. A few days later, I was called in to the Foreign Ministry to meet with an exercised under secretary, Rashid al-Rashid. He asked if the contents of the article were what the embassy had reported. I did not admit its veracity one way or the other except to say that, as he knew, I had been outspoken in raising my concern about the use of postdated checks with a number of bankers and Kuwaiti cabinet officials, including the Minister of Finance. As for the source of the leak, the Department was never able to identify who had provided copies of the cables.

My last official act in Kuwait was to seek the *agrement* from the Kuwaiti government for my replacement, Brandon Grove. After submitting his vita, I was called in by Under Secretary Rashid al Rashid and told that Grove was unacceptable. His last post had been as consul general in Jerusalem. This would make him a target of criticism by many Kuwaitis and by the large expatriate Palestinian community. I pointed out that the United States had had a consulate general in Jerusalem for more than 100 years. Grove's presence there did not mean that the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Our position was that its future should be the subject of negotiation. I didn't get an answer from Rashid. So, during my farewell calls on the ruler as well as the oil minister and the foreign minister, I appealed for their reconsideration, pointing out that it would probably result in a long delay before another nominee would be proposed. But it was clear that the decision not to accept Brandon Grove had been made by the ruler, Sheikh Jabir. By the time I returned to Washington, I read in the paper that Kuwait's refusal of Brandon Grove had been leaked. I later was told that Under Secretary Eagleburger had taken this unprecedented action thereby enshrining Grove's name in international law textbook as an example of a nation not being required to accept a diplomatic agent.

Q: What happened after Kuwait?

DICKMAN: Well, it took a year before my replacement, Anthony Quainton, was named as our next ambassador to Kuwait. During this period, Phil Griffin, who had replaced Brooks Wrampelmeier as deputy chief of mission in the fall of 1982, was the charge. We left Kuwait in mid-August for my next assignment as diplomat in residence at Marquette University. On the day of our departure, I remember our PAO, David Good, asking me what I considered to be my accomplishments during my four years in Kuwait. I said I could think of none. I had not even been able to get the Kuwaitis to accept my replacement. It had been a contentious four years and I had to admit that I had enjoyed my posting as ambassador to the United Arab Emirates a great deal more than I had in Kuwait, where I felt much more confined.

My arrival at Marquette was delayed several weeks because my medical at the Department knew that I needed a prostectomy. This caused me to miss the beginning of the fall semester. But once I got to Marquette at the end of September, I began a round of lectures before different audiences. On December 12, 1983, I heard over the radio that the American embassy had been bombed, as had the French embassy, as well as the Ministry of Information, the airport control tower, and the Kuwait Petroleum Company refinery. A truck carrying butane gas cylinders had rammed through the steel gate at the entrance of our compound and it had exploded, destroying half of the administrative building situated about 30-40 yards from the chancery. Miraculously, no Americans were killed but at least six local employees perished. For six months before this event, I had asked the foreign ministry to have guards posted to block the south entry of the side street that led to the steel gate which was the entry to the compound. After I left, I learned that the request had been turned down because by making the side street into a dead end street, it would complicate traffic. I felt guilty for not having been there.

During the spring semester of 1984 at Marquette, I taught a large class on government and politics in the Middle East. While at Marquette, I was approached by the Department to have my name placed on a list of three to be sent to the White House for the chief of mission position in Algiers. I asked not to be included. At the time, my mother's health was poor, as was Margaret's father's health. Margaret's father had been widowed since 1977. When I was in Kuwait, I had had to come back on emergency leave for a week when my mother, who was living alone, broke her hip. I did not think Margaret and I should have another overseas assignment. Although my mother passed away sooner than I had expected, I decided to leave the service after Marquette.

I officially retired at the end of the pay period in August 1984. On the day I retired, there was a little ceremony in the office of my old colleague and friend, Roy Atherton, who by now had become Director General of the Foreign Service after having been ambassador to Egypt.

Rather than stay in the Washington area, Margaret and I returned to live in my parents' home in Laramie, where I grew up as a child. Since then, I have been a adjunct professor in the University's political science department, teaching a different class at least once a year on such subjects as the politics of the Middle East, international law and organizations, international political economy, the geopolitics of energy, and American public policy.

Q: You and Margaret have also been very active on community affairs. With such a rich career on the conduct of relations with the Middle East, would there be any particular lessons that we ought to have learned by now that you'd like to point out?

DICKMAN: I think one lesson is that U.S. attempts to compartmentalize the Palestinian issue and keep it separate from protecting our interests in the Persian Gulf is a mistake. They are interrelated. In the end result, the Palestinian question remains the greatest threat to our interests in the Gulf. This was again made apparent just yesterday with the attack by our planes on Iraqi radar facilities. The reaction by Saddam was that this was an attack by Israel and the United States.

Another thing I think we missed is Iran. It's true that we could not have established relations or tried to establish a dialogue with Iran as long as Ayatollah Khomeini was alive. But once he passed away in 1990, we needlessly estranged ourselves from Iran. Approaches were made by Rafsanjani when he was president which were turned down, particularly in a joint venture with CONOCO to drill in the Gulf. Instead, the offer was taken up by the French oil company TOTAL. Also, we did not react favorably to the election of Muhammad Khatami in May of 1997 although his election (He's a moderate) certainly gave us an opportunity to try to establish a dialogue, which we have not done. I also think that the containment policy of Iraq and Iran does not work. The best way to deal with Iraq would be to try to reestablish some sort of a dialogue with Iran, at least try to establish better relations with Iran. Iran could serve as a counterweight to Iraq. I think it's the best way to deal with Saddam is by improving our relations with Iran.

Q: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

End of interview