Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

JOHN J. HARTER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview dates: July 22, 1997

"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam
The First Version of Edward Fitzgerald
London, Harrap, 1940, p. 42

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INTERVIEW

Note: This is an edited transcript of an interview with John J. Harter. The following exchange took place at the beginning of the second interview on July 25, 1997:

HARTER: Since our last session I have recalled some points at which my answers to your questions were incomplete, inaccurate, or otherwise unsatisfactory. I assume I'll be able to make corrections and additions in the final version of the transcript.

KENNEDY: Oh, absolutely!

Numerous changes were made, and therefore this transcript does not precisely track the actual interview. (In addition to factual and typographical corrections, some repetitive material was deleted, the sequence was sometimes altered to improve continuity, and clarifying details were added.)

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Early Life in Canyon, Texas (1926-43)

Q: John and I are old friends and we've both been in the oral history business for many years. John, let's start at the beginning. Tell me about when and where you were born and then something about your family.

HARTER: I was born in Canyon, Texas on January 31, 1926, and I grew up in the "Dust Bowl" during the Great Depression. My father's father was one of the earliest settlers in Canyon, which is 17 miles south of Amarillo. He first arrived in 1896 with my grandmother and their two small kids. My grandfather expected to be the leading blacksmith at a major railroad junction, but as it turned out, the Santa Fe Railroad chose Amarillo instead of Canyon. My dad was just a baby and his older brother, my Uncle Charlie, was about two years old when they settled there. They lived in a "dug-out" their first year - until they could build a modest home.

The town was named Canyon because it is 11 miles west of Palo Duro Canyon, which is now a State Park. It's a magnificent gorge, second in size and splendor in the United States only to the Grand Canyon. In 1910 Canyon became the home of West Texas Teachers College, which grew in stature and prestige over the decades. It's now a large branch of Texas A & M University. Canyon was - and is - a small college town, and the college from the beginning was built around a strong Education Department. My mother came there to attend "W. T." to earn her credentials as a teacher. She met my dad, and they were married in 1923.

Q: Was your mother from Texas?

HARTER: Yes, she was born in Tulia, some thirty miles south of Canyon. She finished high school in Big Spring, still further south. My dad worked for the post office most of his adult life, first in Canyon and later in California. My mother taught school in Canyon and in California.

Q: Were you aware as you were growing up in the 1930s that you were in a depressed area?

HARTER: Only vaguely. I saw Canyon as a wonderful place to live. However, in retrospect it's clear that most of us really were rather poor. My parents bought skim milk for ten cents a gallon from the dairy a block away from our house. We raised our own vegetables every summer. My dad had some chickens, and, of course, in that part of the world, beef and wheat were cheap. We ate the simplest of foods - certainly adequate and balanced meals - but we were not well off by any modern standard.

Q: You went to school in Canyon?

HARTER: Yes, I attended Canyon Elementary School and Canyon High School. Our high school graduation class had 47 members. Several of our teachers, like my mother, originally came to Canyon to study there, and each year the local school recruited the best graduates from the WT School of Education. That's why the Canyon school system has been outstanding since the 1920s.

Q: Did you develop an early interest in international affairs?

HARTER: No, not at all. Canyon was the center of my universe. Actually, before I went to California in 1940 at the age of 14, I couldn't imagine living anywhere except in Canyon.

Q: Did you read a lot when you were young?

HARTER: No. But when I joined the Boy Scout Flaming Arrow Patrol, I persuaded our group that we should produce a newspaper. We were thirteen years old, and our patrol prepared and distributed *"The Flaming Arrow Scoutspaper*." That introduction to journalism awakened in me a lifelong interest in writing. During my senior year, I was editor and a columnist for our high school newspaper, *The Eagle's Tale* - and the principal editorial writer, proofreader, and messenger. We won several statewide competitions that year. But I didn't read much until later.

Q: What were your other interests in high school?

HARTER: My other major interest was music. I played saxophone in the high school band, and I also organized a dance band that provided music for local events. I had little interest in the academic side of school. Our history teacher, for example, left me with a sense that the past was dead, with no relevance to the present. Her approach to teaching history was to require us to memorize a few out-of-context names and dates.

University of California (1943-44)

Q: When did your family move to California?

HARTER: Gradually, between 1940 and 1943. In the summer of 1940, my mother attended the University of California at Berkeley to earn credits toward her Master's Degree, which she needed to raise her salary. My dad suffered from nephritis in the late 1930s as the aftermath of illness he incurred during his World War I military service. His health improved that summer in Berkeley, and he decided to move to California. He negotiated a transfer to a post office job in Lafayette, California, and my parents considered themselves Californians after that. However, they allowed me to go back to Canyon to finish high school, which I did in January, 1943.

Q: What did you do in California?

HARTER: I registered at the University of California in February, 1943. I thought I was going to be an engineer, but music continued to be a dominant interest. I really enjoyed playing saxophone in the University of California band and lead alto in Rudy Salvini's local dance band.

Q: But you were pointed toward being an engineer?

HARTER: I thought so. During the war, the faculty advisors at Berkeley encouraged young men to study engineering. That made little sense in my case, given my overall aptitudes and interests, but I had no idea as to how I wanted to spend the rest of my life.

Q: How did your studies go at Berkeley?

HARTER: I did reasonably well, but the only classes in which I consistently excelled were the mathematics classes. I finished differential calculus before I entered the Air Force.

Army Air Force (1944-45)

Q: When did you begin military service?

HARTER: I signed up for the Air Force Enlisted Reserve Corps Program soon after I enrolled at the University of California. As a member of the ERC, I remained at the University until soon after I was 18, and I reported for active duty in April, 1944. Oddly, I went to Amarillo Field for Basic Training, and I visited Canyon nearly every weekend while I was there.

Q: What was the Air Force pointing you toward?

HARTER: I would have been a navigator, according to the old Air Force battery of exams. They graded us on a so-called "stanine" scale, which ranked us from one at the bottom to nine at the top. I scored nine for navigator and less for pilot and bombardier.

Q: This was your math, I guess...

HARTER: That probably helped. But I caught pneumonia during Basic Training. We bivouacked in the rain, and I was hospitalized for three months. I ran a high temperature for several days, and by the time I left the hospital, D-Day - the Normandy invasion - had come and gone, and most of the fellows with whom I was inducted were in cadet school. The Air Force wasn't sure how many more pilots, navigators, and bombardiers it would need to defeat Germany and Japan. It reduced its intake of cadets and warehoused a few thousand of us in case we would be needed. A large number of 18-year-olds had entered the ERC program expecting to become cadets immediately after Basic Training. They called us "OLTs" for "on-the-line trainees."

Q: What did that mean?

HARTER: The original intent of the Air Force was that we'd be working "on the line" in the hangars to become familiar with airplanes. However, there were too many of us for that, and they deployed a few thousand of us "temporarily" wherever they could. I was assigned to the 530th Army Air Force Band at Amarillo Field as a musician, and I remained there until the end of 1944.

I have always loved music, from the time, as a small child, I listened to my mother play the piano. Making music with first-class professionals was exhilarating. Music can help individuals transcend themselves, in a sense, and recent studies seem to show that overall intelligence is enhanced for children and adults who study, practice, and listen frequently to music.

Q: Where did you go when you left Amarillo Field?

HARTER: The Air Force eventually decided that too many OLTs were at Amarillo Field, and in December, 1944 they transferred some of us to Merced Field in California, which happened to be about one hundred miles from my parents' home in Berkeley. Again, I was assigned full-time to the Air Force band at Merced Field, and I went home nearly every weekend while I was there. By the summer of 1945, the Air Force reclassified most of us. I went to Scott Field, Illinois for training in the arcane art of cryptography. However, soon after I arrived at Scott Field, the pneumonia that was apparently dormant for a year worsened and I was hospitalized again.

Q: This was in the pre-penicillin days?

HARTER: That's right, and I had viral pneumonia, which was different from bronchial pneumonia. It was a slow-to-heal pneumonia, and it left scar tissue in one of my lungs that is apparently related to a small respiratory problem that has slightly bothered me over the years.

Q: How long were you in uniform?

HARTER: Only eighteen months. The trainees with whom I entered cryptography school finished their training while I was in the hospital, and they were despatched to Japan. In the fall of 1945, Senator Johnson of Colorado deplored, in a speech on the Senate floor, that we OLTs had been misled and unfairly treated: We had been promised that we would go straight into cadet school immediately after Basic Training, but we were denied an opportunity to win our wings. It would therefore only be fair, the Senator asserted, for all OLTs to receive immediate discharges. There were about 1,800 of us. His legislation sailed through Congress just after Japan's surrender ended the war.

Q: And that entitled you to an early release from the Air Force.

HARTER: Yes. I received my discharge with only 18 points, one for each month of domestic service. Most OLTs had fewer points, having been in uniform less than a year. I received my discharge at the separation center at Scott Field, where most of the sergeants processing us had 40 or 50 points or more. They had Purple Hearts and other awards, and they justifiably grumbled that this was grossly unfair.

Q: In retrospect, what did you learn from your military life?

HARTER: I hated the hierarchy, regimentation, and make-work that are endemic to command-and-control military structures. Frankly, my experience and observations from the time I was inducted to the time I was discharged left me with a strong and enduring sense that military organizations are inherently stultifying.

University of Southern California (1945-53)

Q: So in late 1945, you were among the thousands of young men leaving the Service.

HARTER: Exactly. We flooded universities across the country! I decided to go to the University of Southern California [SC] in Los Angeles because it had strong schools of music and journalism, which were then my primary interests. SC offered a special two-month semester for returning veterans. I received my discharge on October 31 and I started to attend classes on November 5. I visited my parents briefly between those dates.

Q: What was your major?

HARTER: It changed several times. After taking introductory classes in music and journalism I became acutely aware that my general level of education was deficient. I was an English major for a while, until that awakened a profound interest in history. I received my Bachelor's Degree as a history major in 1948.

Actually, the classes I most enjoyed were the ones with a broad, sweeping approach: The history of music, for example, the history of journalism, the history of art, or the history of anything. I tended to lose interest when too much detail accumulated around narrow topics unless I could connect them with larger contexts.

Q: What was the University of Southern California like at that time? Obviously, the student body was loaded with veterans...

HARTER: Well, before World War II - and again today - it was and is a rich man's school. But the veterans diluted that elitism for a few years after the war. In the post-war period, there was a cleavage between two categories of students: The rich fraternity kids, most of whose parents had gone to SC, and the rest of us, who were mostly veterans seriously eager to get an education.

Q: Did you get any feel for international affairs before you received your degree?

HARTER: Somewhat, but more so after I entered graduate school. I stayed at SC until mid-1953, a total of eight years, fall, spring, and summer. As an undergraduate, I was especially interested in modern European history and American diplomatic history, but as a graduate student, I won a teaching assistant position for the required freshman course "Man and Civilization." For three years I taught ancient and medieval history. I was also an assistant to Professor Richard Van Alstyne, the author of a well-known textbook on American diplomatic history. As his assistant I met several future FSOs, including Morrie Draper, Ted Tremblay, Curt Moore, Ralph Richardson, Ray Gonzalez, and Bob Martens.

Q: What was the attitude at the university toward the new United Nations?
HARTER: Just after the War, some faculty members were almost intoxicated with the great promise of the United Nations. A co-author of our "Man and Civ" textbook, Alistair Taylor, was considered an expert on the UN, and he extolled its potential for bringing about a new world order. But gradually, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, a more somber Cold War attitude prevailed, accompanied by widespread disillusionment with the United Nations. Editorial writers for *The Los Angeles Times*, for example, reflected a growing fear that "world government" threatened to impair American "sovereignty." That slant was conspicuous in the School of International Relations.

Q: Such events as the Berlin Airlift and the Soviet move into Czechoslovakia lowered expectations regarding the United Nations.

HARTER: Unquestionably! Many forces were pushing the Truman Administration into a Cold War psychology, and there was inordinate academic support for that. The textbook for the basic class in international relations at SC was an early edition of Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, which updated a traditional balance of power perception of international relations. Morgenthau foreshadowed an emerging consensus that confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union under the circumstances prevailing after World War II was inevitable.

Interestingly, Morgenthau was later a prominent dove in the national debate over Vietnam. In his later incarnation he strongly disputed the official view that vital U.S. national security interests were at stake in Southeast Asia in the 1960s.

Q: Were there any Marxist professors at SC?

HARTER: Not in the School of International Relations or the History or Political Science Departments. Those faculties prided themselves on their *realpolitik* orientation. They sincerely felt they were not ideologically oriented, but, in fact, they really were. On the other hand, Herbert Marcuse of the Philosophy Department was a pronounced leftist. I remember him well! I audited his course on Kant and Hegel. He was a lousy lecturer, by the way: He had a thick Teutonic accent, and I found him turgid, inscrutable, and hard to understand. Curiously, he became a national hero to the 1960s radicals.

Q: What were your career aims in graduate school?

HARTER: Early on I wanted to teach history at a university, because I really enjoyed my classroom experience, and I was acquiring a real thirst for knowledge. To establish professorial credentials, I needed an advanced degree, which required a thesis. But I just couldn't find a suitable topic - one sufficiently interesting and worth the toil - until a roommate named Chuck McGinley aroused my interest in Henry Adams. Van Alstyne agreed that Adams' philosophy of history would be a suitable subject for a thesis. Chuck, by the way, later had a good career with USIA.

I did enormous research on that, contrasting the themes of his two great masterpieces, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams*. The former described the thirteenth century as the pinnacle of civilization, on the ground that European culture then reflected a unified system of scholarship, art, and philosophy that inspired leaders and the multitudes. Adams' paean to the glorious medieval cathedrals was enchanting. In contrast, he saw his own epoch - the nineteenth century - as an era of chaos, confusion, and excessive materialism. In the words of his brother, Brooks, he saw his contemporary age as one that witnessed "the degradation of the democratic dogma."

Q: So you thought Henry Adams was an inspiring historian?

HARTER: Yes, but! He was a multi-faceted, complex personality. He dealt with all of history - not just bits and pieces of it, in a big, fantastic, inter-related, philosophical way. And, of course, his prose was elegant and provocative. I also marveled at the insightful detail in his multi-volume history of the Jefferson and Madison Administrations. Nevertheless, as I delved into his vast and intricate output, I realized it would be incredibly ambitious to document a thesis wide and deep enough to do justice to his vision. The pieces and the whole just became too intimidating. I also came to feel alienated from his gloomy perspective, which was basically incompatible with my growing sense that history is the story of human progress.

Q: You were in graduate school for five years?

HARTER: Yes. I taught for three of those years. In comparison with today's staggering costs, my expenses at SC were modest. After I exhausted the resources available to me through the GI Bill and the California State GI Bill, I held three jobs: I was a teaching assistant, I worked in the library on weekends, and I was a cafeteria bus boy. In addition I took courses in History, Political Science, and International Relations. I also tried to organize a graduate seminar on the requirements and implications of democracy, based on the proposition that ***political*** democracy is tenuous unless associated with social, economic, and cultural decentralization. My effort won considerable support, but it didn't get off the ground. Still, it was a valuable learning experience.

Foreign Service Exam (1951-52)

Q: How did that background lead you to the Foreign Service?

HARTER: I met several graduate students who planned to take the Foreign Service exams, and I decided on the spur of the moment to join them. I passed the written exams in 1951, except for the Spanish language segment.

Q: This was the old three and a half day exam?

HARTER: That's right. But I scored only 44 on the Spanish language test. I took private lessons and passed the language make-up in 1952, shortly before the Eisenhower Administration froze all Foreign Service appointments. That freeze lasted until November, 1954. I came to Washington immediately after I received my Master of Library Science degree in June, 1953. I had fifty dollars in my pocket when I arrived in Washington and no bank account. I stayed with a former SC roommate until I could find a job and lodging. I searched for a library position, since there wasn't a clue as to when I would enter the Foreign Service.

Q: Did you take the oral exam in Washington?

HARTER: Yes. I rode with my parents as far as Texas when they drove to Canyon to visit friends, and they paid for my round-trip bus ticket between Canyon and Washington. The oral took place in the old Walker-Johnson Building on "G" Street. The chairman of the five-man panel was Tom de Courcy, a former Ambassador to Haiti, and two or three other ex-Ambassadors were on the panel. Three candidates took the oral exam that morning. One was Walker Diamanti, and I was the third one. When the first two came out with word they both made the grade I feared that I hadn't, because I had been told that fewer than half the candidates who pass the written exam get through the oral. I was somewhat surprised to learn I passed.

Q: Do you remember any of the questions the panel asked you?

HARTER: Not exactly, but I have a sense as to how it developed. The first questions were rather simple, like: Where did you come from? What did you think of your service with the Air Force and your years at the University of Southern California? Gradually it got heavier. There were a series of factual questions I couldn't answer, and I just said, "I don't know." A veteran Foreign Service Officer warned me that to bluff would be unwise. He also said the panels often asked questions about political and economic conditions in the candidates' home states, and specifically that candidates from California were often asked about California's Central Valley. I was therefore well prepared to field questions in those areas - and, sure enough, they did ask me about the Central Valley.

Q: When did you report for duty?

HARTER: On November 15, 1954. The freeze imposed on Foreign Service recruitment in January 1953 remained in effect for nearly two years. Much later I learned how traumatic that period was for the Department.

Q: Did you have any feel for what the Foreign Service was at that time?

HARTER: Not really. I knew several SC graduates who were working at the State Department, including Morrie Draper, Gene Davis, John Houck, John Karkashian, and Bill Templeton. However, they were quite young and I didn't really get a clear picture from them. I had no idea what I was getting into.

DC Public Library (1953-54)

Q: What did you do while awaiting a Foreign Service appointment?

HARTER: I went to Library School at SC, partly because I knew one could not count on a full career in the Foreign Service, and I thought a degree in Library Science might provide a fallback career. After that I went to Washington, and only two days after I arrived, I had a choice of three library positions: I could work in the Music Division at the Library of Congress, I could be a Reference Librarian at George Washington University, or I could take an unnamed position at the District of Columbia Public Library. I chose the Public Library, and I remained there for a year and a half. At first I rotated around the library system, working in cataloging, acquisitions, central reference, and several branches, until I was named Deputy Chief of the Library's Schools Division. We had a complex system for circulating books into all of the District's elementary and junior high school classrooms. After about four months, my supervisor was promoted to be Chief of the Library's Extension Division, and I succeeded him as Chief of the Schools Division. That gave me valuable administrative experience. I supervised a staff of about a dozen people.

Q: That was at the beginning of the civil rights movement.

HARTER: The leading civil rights laws were mostly enacted a decade later, but the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was in 1954. As Chief of the Schools Division, I visited all of the elementary and junior high schools in the District, and I observed the stark contrast between the well-kept white schools and the shabby black schools. Ted Hines, my boss - and he was a native Washingtonian - accurately predicted that the Supreme Court decision would produce great ferment in the coming years, because "integrating" those two completely different systems was bound to generate tensions.

And by the way, Ted and I watched the spell-binding McCarthy hearings when we lingered over lunch across the street from the Old Carnegie Library, where Massachusetts and New York Avenues intersect.

Foreign Service Institute (1954)

[Note: The Foreign Service Institute ("FSI") is the training facility for employees of the State Department and other government agencies involved in foreign affairs.]

Q: When did you finally enter the Foreign Service?

HARTER: In early November, 1954 I was asked to report to the State Department for an interview. I was told I could begin as a Foreign Service ***Reserve*** Officer right away, with the understanding that I would be designated a Foreign Service Officer in January 1955, or I could wait until January and enter as an FSO without going through the interim phase. I was told that "Reserve" officers were normally specialists of one kind or another, and that was a personnel category that didn't require Presidential nomination and Senate confirmation, as did the FSO designation. The distinction wasn't entirely clear to me, but I wanted to get started as soon as I could, so I opted to report on November 15, 1954. Three weeks later, on December 9, I was on a plane to South Africa. Many vacancies had occurred at posts around the world during the year and a half when no appointments were made, and the Department was filling them as expeditiously as possible.

Q: There really wasn't any training for new FSOs at that time.

HARTER: That's right! FSI exposed us to three or four orientation lectures. A man named Little, for example, gave us a stale lecture on communism - basically a vapid recitation of clichés, stereotypes, and Cold-War jargon.

South Africa (1954-57)

Q: I entered the Foreign Service in July, 1955, and mine was the first group of new officers for which FSI organized an introductory class for several years. During the months before that young officers were just thrown into their new jobs with no formal preparation. You went to South Africa for your first post?

HARTER: Yes, and that was an irony. At FSI I met Bob Flenner, who heard I was going to South Africa. He was preparing for his assignment to Belem, Brazil, and he wondered why I was selected to go to South Africa. There was no logical explanation - it was a random bureaucratic decision. Flenner had been a researcher in the Department's biographic unit - a section of INR [Note: The Bureau of Intelligence and Research ("INR") includes a complex of State Department offices that produce analyses of political and economic developments in other countries. The Bureau is also the Department's principal interface with the CIA.] that was shifted to the CIA in the late 1950s - and he was well acquainted with South African politics. Logically, with that background, ***and*** the fact that he had a wife and a four-year-old child, he should have been assigned to South Africa, where living conditions were family-friendly, and I should have gone to tropical Brazil.

Q: How did you travel to South Africa?

HARTER: I flew first class - with a berth. It was a 44-hour flight to Johannesburg, with refueling stops in the Azores and Ghana. When Tom Wailes, our Ambassador, learned I was arriving as a new Foreign Service Officer, he invited me to stay two days in Pretoria to attend Embassy staff meetings and to meet Embassy officers. That was a valuable introduction to my new job, although I was in an absolute daze, this being my first exposure to life and work in the Foreign Service. In fact, it was my first experience outside the United States.

I thought Wailes was an outstanding Ambassador. Before his tour in South Africa, as the Department's top administrative officer he refused to answer Senator McCarthy's questions regarding FSOs the Senator suspected of being Communists. McCarthy was after his scalp, and Wailes resigned from the Foreign Service. Eisenhower then appointed him Ambassador to South Africa.

Q: You proceeded to Port Elizabeth after that brief period in Pretoria?

HARTER: Yes. I caught a South African Airways flight to Port Elizabeth on Sunday. The Consul, H. Gordon Minnegerode, and his wife, Nancy, met me at the airport, and they drove me straight to the Elizabeth Hotel. Gordon deposited me there and said, “I'll see you tomorrow morning at the office." That evening I went for a walk along Humewood Beach, which was near the hotel, and the beach seemed absolutely abandoned and desolate. I thought, "My God, how did I end up here on the darkest edge of Africa?" I vividly remember that evening: I felt as lonely as I ever did in my life. I had no idea what I was in for.

Q: What was Port Elizabeth like?

HARTER: I couldn't have received a better first assignment. To me, Port Elizabeth was charming! In retrospect, It was like an English outpost in a bygone era - an extension of Victorian culture. English-speaking South Africans were dominant in Port Elizabeth, and Gordon and Nancy blended nicely into that old neocolonial society. Some two-thirds of Port Elizabeth's white population were English-speaking South Africans, and up to one-third were Afrikaners [Note: Afrikaners are South Africans descended mainly from Dutch settlers. The Afrikaans language is similar to Dutch. Urban Afrikaners generally resent being called "Boers," an Afrikaans word that is roughly equivalent to peasant.]. Both groups generally had a primitive and simplistic view of Africans. Even the better educated whites, for the most part, regarded them as slightly removed from savagery. For example, I befriended some of the professors at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, about eighty miles from Port Elizabeth. It was a first-rate university, but I was appalled that its otherwise enlightened professors doubted that Africans could have intellectual ability. It was a thoroughly oppressive society, but few whites felt its weight. Several of my more liberal South African friends - those who cringed at apartheid's cruelties and indignities - emigrated to the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Q: Was it difficult to find friends?

HARTER: Oh, no! To begin with, there was a so-called Consular Corps in Port Elizabeth that dated from the nineteenth century. Only the American Consulate employed career diplomats - the others were honorary consuls representing France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Members of the Consular Corps were routinely invited to the official functions in Port Elizabeth, and that provided an effective means of quickly meeting the city's leading citizens. I was young and single, and that opened additional social opportunities. I played saxophone and clarinet in a local dance band for the first few months after I arrived, and that introduced me to individuals rarely known to American consular personnel. I also had a brief acting career with an amateur theatrical group in Port Elizabeth, and that brought me into contact with an entirely different range of people.

Q: What was your main work in Port Elizabeth, and how did you learn to cope with your new duties?

HARTER: I had been told in Washington that I would learn all about consular functions in Port Elizabeth. However, when I arrived I encountered a huge backlog! My predecessor departed some three weeks before I arrived. Gordon had told the State Department he needed a seasoned officer familiar with consular functions to replace him. He issued no visas, he executed no notarials, and he hadn't even signed off on a towering stack of pending consular invoices that accumulated during those three weeks. My God! It was like the cartoon of a skier going down the slope while reading a book on how to ski. Anyway, I somehow managed to perform my official duties: I certified floods of consular invoices and I issued a few non-immigrant visas each week. Several American ships docked regularly in Port Elizabeth and their captains had to report to the Consulate, so I became acquainted with them and their local agents. A few invited me to join them for cocktails on their ships.

Q: You were, in effect, an overall assistant to the Consul?
HARTER: That was my original assignment. I was vice-consul from December, 1954 until May, 1955, when Gordon went on home leave. The Consulate General in Johannesburg had planned to send Chuck Higdon to Port Elizabeth as Acting Consul, but Chuck was suddenly and unexpectedly reassigned to Vientiane, and Ambassador Wailes decided to let me serve temporarily as Acting Consul. He apparently said, "Let's just keep an eye on him and see what happens." I was Acting Consul for six months, and shortly after Gordon returned from home leave, he replaced John Stone as Consul General in Cape Town. I was then Acting Consul for another six months - about a year altogether.

Q: Who was your supervisor while you were Acting Consul?

HARTER: It was an extraordinary situation for a Foreign Service Officer on his first assignment: I didn't have a supervisor. Throughout that period I frequently spoke by

telephone with someone or other from Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, or Washington, and someone visited me officially every two or three weeks. They gave me a pretty free hand. Years later I learned the downside of that: My accomplishments in Port Elizabeth were not well described or evaluated in my official personnel file.

Q: Did you have any unusual consular cases?

HARTER: At first everything seemed unusual to me. I was apprehensive whenever a new visa applicant came to the office, but I read the regulations, as time permitted, and it all worked out satisfactorily. I remember, for example, when Newt Rittenhouse died of a heart attack. He was the Managing Director for General Tire and Rubber and a friend of mine. I felt queasy when I identified his body in the casket before they sealed it to ship to the United States. I made the arrangements for that.

Q: Did many Americans live in your district?

HARTER: Yes, more than two hundred Americans lived in our district. Port Elizabeth was the Detroit and Akron of Africa: General Motors, Ford, Studebaker, Goodyear, Firestone, and General Tire and Rubber had factories in Port Elizabeth or nearby Uitenhage, and they all employed Americans. There was an active American Women's Club, and the Americans in Port Elizabeth comprised a close and socially active community. I became well acquainted with most of them. Of course, they required passport and citizenship services and notarials. I remember, for example, C. V. Hendon, the Goodyear Treasurer, who married a Scottish lady who had been a nurse for his first wife when she was dying of cancer. No one had told her she was eligible to become an American citizen even though she had never lived in the United States, and they were overjoyed when I informed them she could be naturalized while on home leave. She did so, and she was quite proud of her American citizenship after that.

Q: Did the consular district include Americans outside Port Elizabeth?

HARTER: Yes, a few. For example, I met a rather odd American in Kokstad, a rural village in the Transkei. Ted Tremblay, an old friend from SC, returned from South Africa shortly before I went there, and he arranged for me to meet his former boss, Marselis Parsons, who had been Consul General in Johannesburg. Parsons urged me to visit an American named Kelly who ran a small newspaper in Kokstad. Parsons said Kelly rarely saw Americans and welcomed any opportunity to interact with someone from the United States. Kokstad was in the middle of nowhere, about two hundred miles from Port Elizabeth, and I stopped there to see him on my way to Pretoria. He was an oddball with a touch of paranoia: He thought the South African police had targeted him as a spy. I often wondered what happened to him. By the way, I drove all over Southern Africa during the two years I was there: Through the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, along the coast from Durban to Cape Town, and even through Kruger Park and up to Lourenco Marques.

Q: Apartheid was the official government policy.

HARTER: Yes, and it was staunchly enforced by most South African whites. They totally excluded Africans from their schools and residential areas. A few African doctors and lawyers attempted to practice their professions, but they faced huge legal and other obstacles.

Q: When did apartheid begin?

HARTER: Apartheid was the proclaimed policy of Daniel Malan, who became Prime Minister after his Nationalist Party won the 1948 election. Malan's administration tried to renovate the country's entire legal and socio-economic structure - perhaps modern history's greatest failed experiment in social engineering.

Q: As we discussed earlier, the United States went through a rather difficult period after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, when demonstrations at Little Rock and New Orleans impeded the integration of previously segregated school systems. The Eisenhower Administration dragged its feet on civil rights, despite increasing pressures for change.

HARTER: South Africans across the political spectrum closely followed those developments in the United States.

Q: Did you do any political reporting?

HARTER: Oh, yes! Port Elizabeth was the headquarters of the African National Congress, which was Nelson Mandela's political base. However, no one at the Consulate in Port Elizabeth paid heed to the ANC before I arrived. The Embassy in Pretoria encouraged me to meet ANC leaders, and I did. The tradition had been for the Consul to send a biweekly letter to the South African Desk in Washington, with copies to the Embassy, and I kept my eyes open for meaningful events to describe and assess in those letters. For example, I'd meet one of the Africans and pump him for information and insights, and then relay and interpret what I'd been told. Over time I received several nice commendations for those reports.

Q: Did you become acquainted with any of the ANC leaders?

HARTER: Yes, especially Joe Matthews. He and a few other non-whites were sometimes my guests at the consular residence - before the Embassy first invited Africans to diplomatic functions. Joe was the son of Professor Z. K. Matthews, the principal at Fort Hare College for Africans in the Ciskei. I visited the campus there with the CIA Station Chief and the USIA Cultural Affairs Officer from Pretoria. Professor Matthews was a respected scholar and an efficient school administrator. His wife - Joe's mother - was absolutely charming. Joe was then an attorney in his 20s, and the police fingered him as a dangerous radical. I thought his perspective was balanced. I sometimes arranged for Joe to chat at the consular residence with U.S. visitors who expressed an interest in the ANC. He was an impressive young man, and I thought he might have a fine political future. In

fact, he subsequently, in post-apartheid South Africa, became a prominent member of the Inkatha Freedom Party, and Nelson Mandela appointed him to a Deputy Minister position in his cabinet.

Q: What future did the individuals you knew anticipate for South Africa?

HARTER: Speculation about the future was a persistent theme of conversations at dinner parties and cocktail parties - and I attended many. During that two-day stopover in Pretoria before I went to Port Elizabeth, for example, I attended a dinner party at which I met a university professor and friend of Malan's named Dr. Tomlinson. When Malan came to power, he asked Tomlinson to head a commission to determine steps needed to implement apartheid. Tomlinson's commission wrestled with that question for five years before eventually producing its multi-volume report in 1953.
Q: You spoke with him about that?

HARTER: Yes, in December, 1954. I asked him about his report - although frankly I knew virtually nothing about South Africa at that time. Contrary to Malan's 1948 rhetoric, Tomlinson's commission concluded that the Africans could never be removed from the urban areas. To slow down their inflow into the cities, Tomlinson believed, heavy investment in irrigation systems, transportation, schools, and hospitals in the rural areas would be required. The cost would be humongous!

The South African Parliament debated Tomlinson's report at length, revealing mainly that a white South African government would never tax its supporters sufficiently to finance Tomlinson's prescription for slowing the inflow of Africans into the cities. The Parliament approved some one-twentieth of the minimum investment Tomlinson deemed necessary to accomplish that end. That being the case, the prevailing view at our Embassy was that violence was inevitable, probably within a few years.

Q: Did you find a different attitude among our officers in Cape Town and Pretoria, as compared with the picture you had in Port Elizabeth?

HARTER: Our officers in Cape Town and Pretoria didn't always agree with each other. John Stone, our Consul General in Cape Town, for example, had been there about five years when I arrived, and he had come to reflect the South African government point of view. His friends included cabinet ministers and other influential Afrikaners. Remember, Pretoria was the administrative capital of South Africa, but the South African Parliament met in Cape Town for several months each year, and the Cabinet and other key members of the government went to Cape Town while it was in session. John Stone was a dramatic example of "localitis," by the way, illustrating why even our best Foreign Service Officers should be transferred fairly frequently. Our political officers at the Embassy, on the other hand, felt John Stone's outlook was much too conservative. Their perceptions generally paralleled my own.

Q: How about the CIA?

HARTER: The Chief of Station was an extremely bright guy, and he agreed with John Stone. He had also been in South Africa for several years. He had no doubt the South African government would remain in firm control because of its well-trained and disciplined military establishment and constabulary. He pointed out that few Africans lived in the urban areas, and those who did were mostly in the isolated communities called "locations," just outside the metropolitan areas, where the supply of water, electricity, and transportation could easily and quickly be suspended, making them vulnerable military targets. The Chief of Station was convinced the South African Government could maintain the status quo indefinitely.

Q: Did you interact directly with him?

HARTER: Well, yes. Let me tell you a story. One Saturday night I received a telephone call at the Consular residence from a fellow named Daniel Porter [Note: This was not his real name. Other names indicated in this incident are also ***not*** their real names.], saying he urgently wanted to see me. I had never met him before that, but I said, sure. He immediately came to the residence, and he told me his life was in danger. He wanted to fight "communism" anywhere the U.S. government might want to send him. He told me about the leaders of a local communist cell, and I took detailed notes. He asked me to go with him to his house, right then and there, to see a fresh bullet hole in the front door. I did, and he showed it to me. I thought he was a nut, but the next day I sent a confidential letter to the Chief of Station, fully recapitulating what Porter told me. I said I didn't know what to make of it, but I thought the Embassy ought to know about it.

Q: Did the Chief of Station respond?
HARTER: To my amazement, within a couple of days, he telephoned to say, "I'm catching the next plane to Port Elizabeth, and I want to talk with you as soon as I get there." I said fine, I would meet him at the airport and provide lodging for him at the Consular residence. He was closeted for three days with the top local officials of the South African police: Colonel Hammond, Major Van der Merve, and Lieutenant Preslaw [Also not their real names.]. Colonel Hammond organized an extravagant dinner for us at the Marine Hotel the last night the Chief of Station was in Port Elizabeth. Before he left, he told me he would send me a letter on special stationery marked "Division M," labeled TOP SECRET, to say: "Dear Mr. Harter: Thank you for informing us of Mr. Porter. We appreciate his offer, but, by his own admission, he is well known to the communists. He would therefore be of no value to us." The Chief of Station said he would sign it with a phony name, and, on receiving the letter, I should invite Porter to my office. In his presence, I should open the safe, pull the letter out, and ask him to read it, while admonishing him not to tell anyone about it. After he read the letter I should return it to the safe and lock it in his presence. After Porter left, I should take the letter out and burn it. I followed that scenario, just as the Chief of Station prescribed. Porter left my office, literally in tears.

A couple of weeks later, Colonel Hammond locked himself in his bathroom and shot himself. I had known him and his wife slightly before that, and I sent Mrs. Hammond condolences. After that she invited me to her apartment for dinner about once a month with her three beautiful, young daughters. I became quite fond of the older one, Jennifer. Also, soon after Colonel Hammond's suicide, Major Van der Merve and Lieutenant Preslaw were promoted and transferred to Pretoria to senior positions in the police department. Their successors in Port Elizabeth went out of their way to befriend me.

That was the first time I became aware of the extensive and deep relationships between the CIA and the constabularies around the world.

Q: How did Ambassador Wailes analyze the political situation there? Did he assume apartheid couldn't go on forever?

HARTER: Well, I didn't speak a great deal about this with Ambassador Wailes or his successor, Hank Byroade. But, of course, I received and read the reports of the Embassy's Political Section, and I spoke often with our excellent political analysts in Pretoria: "Mac" Johnson - that was William McKinley Johnson, Jr., who headed the political section when I arrived - and Bill Wight, his successor, after Mac took over the South African Desk at the State Department. Tom Karis was the other political officer with an insightful grasp of South African politics, having been an INR specialist on South Africa before his assignment to Pretoria. Karis was a "Wristonee" who later returned to an academic career. Those three individuals provided continuing feedback on the political reports I sent from Port Elizabeth, and as I indicated, frequent visits to Port Elizabeth from officers at our Embassy and other South African posts kept me *au courant*. Their consensus was that apartheid could not be sustained indefinitely - that South Africa was a smouldering volcano that was bound to erupt sooner or later, probably within five years.

Q: I was in the Africa section of INR in the early 1960s, and the analysts there envisaged a night of long knives in South Africa. Did you think the white South Africans could be persuaded that peaceful evolution was possible?

HARTER: Most of them wouldn't countenance a relaxation of apartheid, but some liberal South Africans were perceptive. Moderates at the University of Stellenbosch, for example, pressed the government to be less oppressive. They favored more public services and educational opportunities for Africans, contending that Africans should occupy influential positions as they became better educated. I knew an Afrikaner named De Villiers, the editor of *Die Oosterlig*, the Afrikaans newspaper in Port Elizabeth. He seemed more realistic than most Afrikaners I knew. He later visited me in Washington. But nobody I knew in Port Elizabeth - among the Americans, the English-speaking South Africans, or the Afrikaners - could have imagined what actually happened in the 1990s.

Q: You were there when a few African states to the north became independent - with mixed results.

HARTER: Yes, and the white South Africans were quite apprehensive about the prospect of establishing diplomatic relations with the new African states. They were alarmed at the prospect of accommodating black Ambassadors from those countries in Pretoria.

Q: Did any American Navy ships visit Port Elizabeth while you were there?

HARTER: Yes, an American submarine docked in Port Elizabeth while Gordon Minnigerode was still there, and that was hailed as a major event. Nancy Minnigerode organized a few well-publicized social functions for the crew.

Q: Would you care to say anything else about Port Elizabeth?

HARTER: Well, I met my wife there. Mickie was a reporter for *The Port Elizabeth Eastern Province Herald*, the local English language daily newspaper. I met her shortly before I left. I knew many attractive young women in Port Elizabeth, but Mickie was spectacular.

Soon after we met, Hank Byroade visited Port Elizabeth, having recently replaced Ambassador Wailes. Byroade had been our Ambassador to Egypt, where he was apparently a good friend of Nasser, who was stunned when John Foster Dulles announced at a press conference that the United States would not finance the Aswan Dam. Byroade spoke openly in Port Elizabeth and elsewhere about Nasser's shock over this. Byroade maintained that if Dulles had informed him in advance of that announcement, he would have informed Nasser, who might have then reacted more calmly. Byroade said just after he read about the Dulles decision - in the same newspaper on the same day Nasser read about it - an irate Nasser called him to say: “Hank, you Goddamned bastard, you lied to me! I’ll never again trust an American.” Byroade said the day before that he had assured Nasser the United States would provide substantial financial support for the Aswan Dam. In any event, he was immediately transferred to South Africa. Tom Wailes went to Hungary, where, incidentally, he granted sanctuary to Cardinal Mindszenty when the Cardinal was threatened by the communist regime there.

My wife and I were married in Alexandria, Virginia on May 25, 1957, when Byroade happened to be in Washington. Mickie asked him to be Father of the Bride at our wedding, and he agreed. Byroade was the most charismatic Ambassador I knew during my Foreign Service career. He was a West Point graduate. He had an extraordinary military career before he shifted to the State Department. I believe he was our youngest Brigadier General.

Q: Yes, during World War II, I think.

HARTER: After the War, he ran the Berlin Airlift, and he came to the State Department when it inherited responsibility for German affairs from the Pentagon. He subsequently served as Assistant Secretary for the Department's Mideast Bureau. The copy of the

Truman Library interview with Byroade is one of the most interesting transcripts in your files.

Q: He made quite a name for himself!

HARTER: Right. I think he was more or less coasting when he came to South Africa.

Q: When did you leave Port Elizabeth?

HARTER: In February, 1957, about six weeks after John Tomlinson, the new Consul, arrived. The Department gave me the option of staying for another year as Vice Consul or transferring to a new but unspecified position at a different post. Having been in charge of the Consulate for about a year, I thought it was time to move on to something new. [Note: Tomlinson was "Wristonized" shortly before he was assigned to Port Elizabeth. He was later U.S. Consul General in Casablanca, and after that he was Consul General in Leopoldville when the Congo was suddenly and unexpectedly proclaimed a sovereign nation in 1960.]

FSI: Training in Administrative Operations (1957)

Q: What did you do after you left South Africa?

HARTER: In late 1956, a two-man inspection team headed by Brewster Morris [later Chief of the Political Sections in London and in Bonn and Ambassador to Chad], accompanied by Ed Wilson as administrative inspector, visited Port Elizabeth. The inspectors encouraged me to pursue an interest in administration, and following their lead I requested assignment to an FSI administrative training course. That request was granted - and that ten-week class was the most miserable experience I endured in my Foreign Service career.

Q: What was the problem?

HARTER: A fellow named Bill Beauchamp was supposed to be in charge of the class, but he was struck with hepatitis after the first week. His assistant, Mary England, substituted for him, and she made an awful mess of it! She mostly scheduled administrative personnel to give us lectures, although many of the Department's administrative officers were lousy speakers in those days. To make matters worse, Mary more often than not fouled up the schedule: Two speakers sometimes appeared at the same time on the same day, and on other days no expert showed up. When that happened, Mary gave the lecture herself - for three or four hours at a stretch. She had no relevant Foreign Service experience to draw on, and her presentations always lacked coherence.

Mickie and I were married in the middle of that class, despite Mary England's vigorous objection. Mary said I should have arranged for our wedding to take place before or after the class, and she would not listen when I tried to explain why neither option was

feasible. I had proposed to Mickie before I left Port Elizabeth, and we wanted to have our wedding in the United States before proceeding to my next assignment. Mary virtually accused me of insubordination! I was astounded to learn years later that her extremely critical "efficiency report" covering my participation in that class could have such negative career implications. Fortunately, Mickie and I had a beautiful and enduring partnership despite that rocky beginning!

Chile (1957-59)

Q: What was your next assignment?

HARTER: I went to Chile as General Services Officer, meaning I was responsible for the commissary, the motor pool, buildings and grounds maintenance, the custodial staff, and all other administrative operations except for personnel and budget and fiscal matters. The Embassy wanted me to arrive immediately after the FSI course because my predecessor had already left and Reed Robinson, the Administrative Officer, planned to leave Chile as soon as he could. My assignment to Chile was confirmed before I left Port Elizabeth, and en route to the United States I lunched with Brewster Morris in London. Brewster told me he knew Robinson and considered him one of the best administrative officers in the Foreign Service. He said Robinson requested an early transfer from Chile, because he had repeatedly clashed with Bill Belton, the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission, the Ambassador's alter ego]. Robinson left a few days after I arrived, and I was Acting Administrative Officer ***and*** General Services Officer for several months - and that was just after Mickie and I were married.

Q: What problems did you encounter as Acting Administrative Officer?

HARTER: The toughest part of the job was the renovation of the DCM residence the U.S. government purchased shortly before I arrived. Ultimately it was a splendid place to live in, but when I arrived it was a dilapidated shell that needed extensive carpentry, plumbing repairs, electrical work, painting, and landscaping. Belton and his wife, Judy, were sticklers: They wanted everything precise and perfect, right away! It wasn't easy to meet their meticulous requirements efficiently and within the tight budget parameters set by the State Department. The Department also acquired a beautiful site for a new residence for the Ambassador shortly before I arrived, and I worked with FBO [Foreign Buildings Operations, the office that oversees the acquisition and maintenance of State Department properties outside the United States. The title of the office was later changed.] on architectural plans for the building that was to be erected. Belton and the Ambassador disliked the original FBO design, and I was the uncomfortable intermediary between them and FBO in reformulating it.

By the way, Claude Bowers' book about Chile was published in 1958, while I was in Santiago: Bowers had been the U.S. Ambassador to Chile for 13 years, and he wrote nostalgically about the charming old mansion that was his residence there. Belton, the

Ambassador, and FBO disagreed: They thought that structure was an anachronistic monster.

Q: Did you wrestle with those problems throughout your tour in Chile?

HARTER: Only through my first year. The new Administrative Officer, Norvelle Sannebeck, absorbed those responsibilities when he arrived a few months after Reid Robinson left. When Norvelle settled in, he, too, found it difficult to work with Belton. In mid-1958, Cecil Lyon, the Ambassador, knowing I was uncomfortable in the administrative position, asked if I would like to transfer to the Economic Section. I immediately replied in the affirmative. As a consequence, during my second year I filled a catch-all job that required reports on Chile's transportation, communications, and utilities industries. I inherited a backlog of standing Washington requests for detailed analyses of the Chilean railway system, the highway network, the merchant marine, air transportation, and electric power generation and distribution facilities. I prepared detailed analytical reports in each of those areas in addition to countless spot reports.

Q: I guess that was fairly routine.

HARTER: Actually, I enjoyed that job. Transportation poses unusual challenges for Chile because of its geography: It's one long ribbon of a country alongside the Pacific, and the interactions between infrastructure and the overall economy are complex and vital. I received considerable help from Patricio Huneus, the Minister of Transportation, who asked his staff to translate some of my unclassified reports into Spanish to distribute among his colleagues and advisors. Incidentally, the Department of Commerce strongly commended those reports, which were more comprehensive and analytical than the superficial responses it characteristically receives to its requests. I don't know how this works today, but I believe governments, international agencies, independent researchers, and various periodicals publish more of this kind of information today than they did in the 1950s.

Q: What was the political-economic situation in Chile in the late 1950s?

HARTER: Carlos Ibanez, then in his 80s, was President when I arrived. He was a career military man who had been Chile's President many years earlier. The head of our Political Section was Don Zook, who had been a senior aide to Loy Henderson when Henderson was State's top management officer. Don was an astute analyst, and he recognized that economic issues were central to Chile's political problems, especially since chronic - and sometimes galloping - inflation had distorted national politics in Chile for several generations.

Incidentally, I have read your country collection of excerpts from your interviews with officers who served in Chile, and I think they generally underplayed the acute impact of inflation. Also, the Claude Bowers book touched only lightly on inflation, and I thought that was a flawed perspective. Chile was in a God-awful hopeless mess in every

conceivable way in the late 1950s. Geographically, the middle third of the country has a temperate climate and fertile soil. Anything can grow there. Chile has rich deposits of copper, nitrates, iron, coal, and several other minerals. But the principal obstacle to economic stability and growth was the chronic inflation. The country had undeveloped potential for tourism and manufacturing; and its population included many well-educated, skilled, and sophisticated individuals; but it was not performing well!

Q: What were the practical effects of chronic inflation?

HARTER: When a currency's value shrinks daily, nobody has confidence in it. You get rid of any money that comes into your hands before its purchasing power sinks further: You don't put your money in Chile's banks! You deposit any foreign currency you have in ***American*** banks and you quickly dispose of any Chilean currency that may come into your hands. You convert it into real estate or inventory or you stock up your basement like a warehouse, with anything that looked like a bargain, knowing that whatever you buy will cost more in local currency within a week. Those circumstances produce political instability, especially in a country like Chile, which, in those days, had some ten political parties, from the extreme right to the extreme left.

Q: Chile is a shining example of a formerly stagnant economy that's been turned around. Did anyone see Chile's untapped potential in the 1950s?

HARTER: Oh, unquestionably! An American economist in Chile named Joe Grunwald often spoke and wrote about that. This wasn't the Joe Greenwald who was later our Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs - it was the Joe Grunwald who headed the Institute of Economics at the University of Chile in the 1950s and was later the first president of the Institute of the Americas at the University of California in San Diego, now headed by Paul Boeker. I knew a couple of excellent American economists who worked with Grunwald, and their studies emphasized Chile's economic potential.

Q: Was there a serious effort to get inflation under control?

HARTER: Not really. Have you interviewed Jean Wilkowski? She was the Embassy's financial reporting officer, and she well understood the Chilean economy. The general sense was that Chile's inflation simply could not be tamed. Several generations of Chileans had lived with it, and it was deep in the bones of the society. The underlying problem was that Chile had developed an excessively generous welfare system, and entrenched interests, including the U.S. corporations doing business in Chile, resisted paying their share of taxes to pay for it. The short-term, politically acceptable solution was to close the revenue gap by printing more money - a classic recipe for exacerbating inflation! Furthermore, more than a little corruption was both cause and effect of the inflation.

Q: How about the multi-national corporations?

HARTER: Anaconda and Kennecott operated large copper mining complexes in Chile, and they were quite influential. ITT ran the telephone system, and ITT also had other interests in Chile. W. R. Grace and Company ran a shipping line and the Panagra airline, as well as extensive rice and sugar plantations. ITT, Grace, and others owned big chunks of Chile and Peru. Of course, Salvador Allende and his colleagues fulminated against all this as Yankee imperialism.

Q: Did you know the executives of those companies?

HARTER: I knew some of them. A fellow named Rawlings, for example, was the local CEO for ITT, and Mickie and I exchanged dinner parties with him and his wife. Rawlings was quite knowledgeable about Chile. When I left he asked me to call on his counterpart in Brazil on my way home, and I did.

Q: Did the American executives exhibit a neo-colonialist attitude toward the Chileans?

HARTER: No. They interacted well within Chilean society. They weren't overbearing. Most of them had been in Chile for many years. The Panagra representative was a Chilean named Carlos Bronson. However, Chile's society was rigidly divided into three strata: The elite, a struggling middle class, and the poor, who believed the nasty propaganda put out by *El Siglo*, the Communist newspaper, including its attacks on American businessmen. I don't think that reflected the majority view in Chile.

Q: Was there a conservative counterpart to El Siglo?

HARTER: That was *El Mercurio*, Santiago's leading newspaper. Its publisher was Agustin Edwards, a very conservative, pro-American editor. He was a descendant of the early Anglo-Chilenos, whose British ancestors settled there early in the 19th century. Claude Bowers accurately portrayed them in his book.

Q: Was the Political Section concerned about Allende in the late 1950s?

HARTER: Yes, and the large CIA contingent within the Political Section was sharply focused on Allende, who stridently complained that Chile's dominant conservatives were completely opposed to the interests of the impoverished masses. That's why the Communist Party supported him. The political instability that resulted from inflation clearly worked in Allende's favor. Personally, I have always wondered if Allende would have attracted ***less*** attention within Chile if the United States had not tried so hard to discredit and undermine him even before he won a large popular following. Anyway, it seemed to me that the extensive influence of the CIA on Chile's Catholic Church, labor union policies, and the press, for example, left unseemly fingerprints on their anti-Allende propaganda.

Q: How was Cecil Lyon as Ambassador?

HARTER: Somehow I never formed a clear picture of him. Actually, I knew his wife better than I knew him. Elsie Lyon was charming. She was quite friendly with my wife, then a newcomer to the Foreign Service. Elsie Lyon was the daughter of Joe Grew, probably the best known career diplomat of an earlier generation.

In contrast, everyone in the Embassy knew Lyon's successor, Walter Howe. He was a political appointee, but he was an exceptionally capable Ambassador. He replaced Lyon a year after I arrived - just as I moved to the Economic Section. Howe had an incredible background. As a young man, he was a visiting professor of Latin American history at the University of Mexico. His Ph.D. dissertation dealt with colonial Colombia. He had been a prominent Republican in the state of Connecticut, where he served as Speaker of the Lower House of the State Assembly. He headed the national Republican Finance Committee when Eisenhower ran for President. Early in 1953 he was named Director of the AID Mission in Colombia, a position he held for a year and a half before he came to Chile. He was fluent in Spanish, and he just absorbed information and insights through his pores. He was very well connected.

Q: Did Bill Belton continue as Howe's DCM?

HARTER: No. Bill Krieg replaced him about the time Howe replaced Lyon - and Krieg was an excellent DCM.

Bureau of International Organization Affairs (1959-60)

Q: By the time you left Chile, you had held consular, administrative, and economic positions. Had you decided to develop any geographic or functional specialty?

HARTER: No, I wanted to avoid specialization. After two years in Chile, I received travel orders reassigning me to Kathmandu, Nepal as the first Administrative Officer at our new Embassy there. Almost simultaneously we received a letter from Mickie's family informing us that her mother was dying of uterine cancer and desperately wanted to see Mickie and her only grandson, Tian, who was born in Chile. We immediately arranged for them to leave for a visit in South Africa.

Q: How long were they in South Africa?

HARTER: For nearly three months. When I arrived in Washington, I learned the assignment to Kathmandu had been broken - after Mickie received an immunization shot for the plague, which was then endemic in Nepal. She had a horrible adverse reaction, by the way, and she thought it grossly unfair that I didn't receive a plague shot.

Q: So did you go to Nepal?

HARTER: No, I was assigned to the State Department in Washington - to OES [The Office of International Economic and Social Affairs in the Bureau of International

Organization Affairs] in IO. I never learned why the assignment was changed. Few FSOs had been assigned to OES, which was mainly staffed by Civil Service personnel. Several officers there had been members of U.S. delegations to the conferences that established the United Nations and its specialized agencies, such as the FAO, WHO, and UNESCO [The Food and Agricultural Organization, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization]. John Tomlinson, the Consul who replaced Gordon Minnigerode in Port Elizabeth shortly before I left, had been in that office before he was "Wristonized."

Q: What are the responsibilities of IO?

HARTER: IO oversees U.S. relations with the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The Assistant Secretary for IO approves official U.S. instructions to our delegations to those organizations.

Q: How did you fit into that?

HARTER: OES, an office that no longer exists [Note: The State Department now has a Bureau of Oceanic, Environmental, and Scientific Affairs known by its acronym, OES.], was responsible for coordinating U.S. interests in the specialized UN agencies concerned with economic and social activities. My responsibilities evolved during the three years I was there. Initially, I backstopped the U.S. Delegation to UNHCR [The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, based in Geneva]. In addition, I assisted Herb Weiner, the Desk Officer for the ILO [The International Labor Organization, which was created after World War I and recognized as a special agency of the UN system after World War II]. I later worked with Kathleen Bell on the IAEA [The International Atomic Energy Agency] and UN technical assistance programs.

Kathleen was outstanding! She was the only child of Dan Bell, Henry Morgenthau's enormously influential deputy at the Treasury Department in the 1930s. When she first came to the State Department toward the end of World War II, Kathleen worked with Leo Pazvolsky, who headed the group that helped Cordell Hull develop plans for the post-war world. She attended the San Francisco Conference. When I was in OES, Kathleen was a special assistant to Walter Kotschnig, the office director and Deputy U.S. Representative to ECOSOC [The UN Economic and Social Council.]. Kathleen coordinated the huge flow of position papers and briefing memoranda related to ECOSOC meetings.

Q: What, exactly, was ECOSOC?

HARTER: The UN Conference in San Francisco expected ECOSOC to parallel the Security Council. It was supposed to ensure that activities of the specialized agencies were coordinated and mutually supportive. However, the outbreak of the Cold War provoked an anti-UN backlash, and that infected an array of special interests that constrained ECOSOC influence.

Q: You arrived in IO toward the end of the Eisenhower Administration. What was your impression as to how the United Nations and its specialized agencies fitted into our foreign policy?

HARTER: The reality I encountered in IO was certainly different from the picture of the United Nations I framed at the University of Southern California. Strengthening the UN was certainly not a priority in the State Department in the late 1950s. Perhaps OES was the only office in the Department that saw the potential of the UN for constructive international economic and social operations. To me, Walter Kotschnig, Kathleen Bell, and Otis Mulliken, the Deputy Director of the Office, represented the idealism that inspired the creation of the UN, and they struggled valiantly to ensure its effectiveness, but that was an uphill battle.

Q: How did you find your assignment there as a Foreign Service island in a Civil Service ocean?

HARTER: I enjoyed it! At first I was just trying to stay afloat - trying to figure out what my job was and how all these pieces fit into each other. Nobody paid much attention to what I was doing at the beginning. I was told that as the key person in OES concerned with the UNHCR I had great responsibility and authority, but I soon learned that I was really expected to echo the positions of ORM. [Note: The Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs, then in the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, was staffed with some fifteen senior officers who had long specialized in refugee affairs and outranked me.] I also worked with a knowledgeable fellow in OIA [Note: The Office of International Administration, the unit in IO that oversaw the budget and Congressional presentation for all elements of the UN system.] who worked on refugee issues for many years, and I, in effect, packaged whatever ORM and OIA proposed and sent it up the line for approval. In due course, however, I started to develop somewhat independent notions regarding those functions: I came to feel the refugee old-timers saw all refugees through a Cold War ideological prism, and I felt they basically reflected intelligence community priorities more than purely humanitarian considerations.

Q: Did you continue to work on refugee matters throughout your IO assignment?

HARTER: No, coincidence or not, my official responsibilities increased halfway through that assignment - after I received a totally unexpected letter from Bill Blue, Chairman of the AFSA [The American Foreign Service Association, established in 1924 as an independent professional body in the same year the Rogers Act created the modern diplomatic service.] Board of Directors, informing me I had just been elected to the AFSA Board.

AFSA, Wristonization, and Loy Henderson (1960-61)

Q: What was AFSA like at that time?

HARTER: I knew virtually nothing about AFSA before I received that letter. I joined the Association just after I entered the Foreign Service, before I went to South Africa, because I was told all new FSOs should do so.

AFSA didn't pretend to be a democratic organization in those days. Since its inception, it had been an instrument of the Department's most influential senior FSOs. Members chose an electoral college that named the Board: That is, every year AFSA circulated a list of FSOs stationed in Washington, and members voted for the 18 individuals they would like to serve on the electoral college, which comprised the 18 who received the most votes. Those were invariably Ambassadors, Assistant Secretaries, and other senior officers whose names were well known to AFSA members. I happened to know five of the electoral college members chosen in 1960; and that was the year they chose one officer at each level to serve on the new Board, responding to complaints that AFSA was dominated by senior FSOs.

Our new Board was extraordinary: Our President was Livingston Merchant, a Career Minister and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Department's third ranking officer - and he, surprisingly, attended most of our meetings as a quiet observer. The other Board members were Bill Boswell, FSO-1 and Director of the Office of Security; Bill Blue, FSO-2 and Deputy Director of the Office of Western European Affairs, who chaired the Board meetings; Martin Herz, FSO-3; Sam Gammon, FSO-4; Joan Clark, FSO-5; and I was the FSO-6. That was the year the Department added FSO-7 and FSO-8 levels. Bill Greene was the FSO-7 - he resigned soon after that - and Melissa Froelsch, later Melissa Wells, was the FSO-8. At that time Melissa was very shy, but by the time she became an Ambassador, her personality conspicuously blossomed.

Q: What issues did AFSA face in the early 1960s?
HARTER: That might take some time, because that gets us into the period of Loy Henderson and "Wristonization."

Q: Well, we're at the end of this tape. Let's pick up on this next time.

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As we concluded our last session we were discussing your tenure on the AFSA Board, beginning in 1960.

HARTER: For me, that was a transforming experience. It colored my attitudes toward the Foreign Service from then on. It was a year of intensive debates within the Foreign Service about Wristonization, arguments that are not well known today because they were not well documented. Neither the media nor the academic community really grasped what was going on, and nobody has seriously studied this striking bit of history since then. Few FSOs today have any idea as to how Wristonization came about, how it affected the profession of diplomacy, and how it cast a long shadow over the evolution of the Foreign Service. A few atypical case histories and anecdotes highlighting hardship and

inefficiency have occasionally been cited, but they mostly distort the intent and consequences of Wristonization. My own view is that Wristonization - and later attempts to undo it - had a more comprehensive and negative impact on the Department of State than McCarthyism.

Q: Why was the Department Wristonized?

HARTER: Wristonization was inextricably related to the continuing trauma the Department of State suffered as a consequence of World War II. As the war progressed, many FSOs died or retired, and the Department didn't recruit new officers to replace them. Positions in Washington that had been held by FSOs before the war were therefore filled, as they became vacant, by Civil Service personnel who had never lived or worked overseas. Many FSOs in the service after the war had spent their entire careers overseas. My first boss, H. Gordon Minnigerode, had been in the Foreign Service for 25 years when I met him, and he had never had a Washington assignment.

Q: Do you feel this adversely affected the conduct of foreign affairs?

HARTER: Absolutely! It helps to explain why the Department underwent an awkward institutional transition from its limited role in the 1930s to its vastly expanded global responsibilities after the war, and this was not irrelevant to serious errors of analysis by post-World War II policy makers. The Department's Civil Service personnel during and after the war lacked a global perspective, and many FSOs who staffed our Embassies had fuzzy notions of how the Department of State was organized and how it worked. The two groups increasingly lacked common perspectives and judgments - and a common culture. The domestic side often had a jaded view of things foreign, and the overseas establishment failed to report and analyze milestone events they considered self-evident.

This was the context in which the National Security Act of 1947 was enacted, creating the CIA and the National Security Council and consolidating and amplifying the U.S. military voice in foreign affairs, which greatly reduced the potential of the Department of State for influencing the President's views on foreign affairs. Increasingly, from that point on, the President relied more on the "National Security Advisor" who headed the NSC staff than on the Secretary of State - and personnel assigned to the NSC disproportionately represented the Defense Department and the CIA. Beginning in 1950, Senator McCarthy's vicious, unfounded, and relentless assault on Truman's Department of State as a presumed haven for communists and communist sympathizers and the extraordinary coverage devoted to McCarthy's charges by the media exacerbated the problem. Remember also that during the 1952 Presidential campaign John Foster Dulles blasted the Department of State, no doubt influenced by McCarthy's charges, and all of these events contributed to widespread distrust of the Department by Congress and the public.

That was the background of the freeze John Foster Dulles imposed on all Foreign Service appointments in 1953, which we mentioned earlier. At the same time, he ordered other

drastic personnel actions that devastated the Department, including a "RIF" - a reduction-in-force, a peculiar and complex bureaucratic process for shrinking the government.

The way a RIF worked was: A senior officer whose job was abolished would "bump" - or replace - an officer at a lower level, who in turn would "bump" an officer at the next lower level, and so on. It was a very destabilizing chain reaction that assigned responsibilities to many individuals ill-equipped to perform them.

Meanwhile, Dulles appointed a commission headed by Henry M. Wriston, President of Brown University, to consider whether Civil Service personnel policies were compatible with an entirely different Foreign Service system. This question - and whether the Civil Service and Foreign Service systems should be "integrated" - was continuously debated between 1946 and 1952, but no consensus or conclusion was reached. Meanwhile, the State Department was developing an expatriate Foreign Service and a rigid and narrowly focused Civil Service bureaucracy in Washington. The Wriston Commission recommended that Foreign Service Officers should staff most substantive positions in the Department, excluding clerical, technical, and custodial jobs, and that senior Civil Service personnel in the Department should be "integrated" into the Foreign Service. The Commission also specified that this drastic change should take place all at once, with no gradual phasing in.

Q: Was there opposition?

HARTER: Loy Henderson was the most outspoken opponent of Wriston's prescription when it was first announced. Remarkably, when Dulles accepted the Commission's recommendations, he asked Henderson to implement them as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration [Note: The title of the position was changed to "Under Secretary for Management" during the Nixon Administration, ostensibly to raise its status and influence. Nevertheless, most of the individuals who occupied the position lacked the background and clout to overrule bureaucratic and other pressures counter to the enlightened management of the Department of State.]. Once installed, Henderson quickly and honestly became convinced there was no rational alternative to Wristonization. That was the burning issue facing the Foreign Service when I joined the AFSA Board.

I proposed early on that the entire AFSA Board should meet with Henderson to discuss Wristonization, and the Board agreed. Henderson welcomed our initiative, and we met with him several times [Note: I saw Ambassador Henderson many times after that - from the 1970s until he was virtually on his death bed, and I tape-recorded many hours of interview/discussions with him. *The Foreign Service Journal* published edited excerpts in its November, 1980 issue. The tapes have been donated to the ADST Foreign Affairs Oral History Project.].

Henderson explained to the Board why he veered one hundred eighty degrees from strong opposition to Wristonization to ardent advocacy, as he became aware of managerial

rigidities implicit in administering two incompatible personnel systems with dissimilar assignment, promotion, leave, and retirement policies within the same Department. He said he found Civil Service Office Directors invariably preferred to oversee Civil Service personnel, whereas Foreign Service Directors favored Foreign Service subordinates - and he insisted this was a predictable consequence of the different cultures represented by the two systems.

Under Henderson's management, "Wristonization" moved ahead with a vengeance in the late 1950s, and naturally enough, many problems arose. I recall two much discussed examples. The first involved a Civil Service analyst in INR who was previously a Professor of History. After being integrated at the FSO-2 level he was assigned as DCM in a small Embassy. Lacking familiarity with Foreign Service mores - and never having lived or worked overseas - he didn't adjust well to Foreign Service life, and his family suffered severe "culture shock." The other case concerned a woman who had efficiently processed consular invoices before she was "integrated" at the FSO-3 level, but she stumbled when required to supervise the Consular Section in a large Embassy.

Such situations created great frustration, and Henderson personally decided each case as compassionately as he could to ensure that a minimum number of officers were forced into premature retirement. He thought the Department could digest integration after at least four to six years. After that he expected most Wristonees clearly unsuited to Foreign Service life would have voluntarily retired.

Q: Was the AFSA Board sympathetic to the Civil Service people who suddenly had to perform strange duties in completely new milieus, as they moved into lives they had never anticipated?

HARTER: Yes, it certainly was! We came to understand their frustration. At first the Board was hostile to them, reflecting a general malaise within the Foreign Service, but Henderson was thoroughly persuasive.

Incidentally, throughout those discussions, Henderson emphasized that Foreign Service Officers should take every possible opportunity to speak candidly with their Congressmen and Senators. He actively encouraged FSOs to visit their Congressional representatives while on home leave, and the check-out sheet for officers in Washington on transfer or consultation included an item to provide for that. The Department supplied written and oral briefings for officers with appointments on Capitol Hill to ensure they were familiar with current personnel policies, building operations, and budget matters, as well as any special interests of individual Congressmen and Senators. Because of that, when Loy Henderson headed our management team, we had stronger support on Capitol Hill than at any time since. That changed abruptly when AFSA led a revolution against the whole Loy Henderson philosophy of the Foreign Service, beginning in the late 1960s. AFSA officers later came to believe ***they*** should serve as the principal interface between the Foreign Service as a whole and the Congress. That was an egregious mistake!

Q: What happened to Loy Henderson - and Wristonization - when Kennedy came to the White House?

HARTER: The Board thought the most disruptive aspects of Wristonization had been settled by 1961. Henderson informed the Kennedy transition team he was prepared to remain in his position for a reasonable period. The AFSA Board wanted him to continue monitoring Wristonization, but influential people badmouthed Henderson and everything he stood for. Some old-line FSOs were downright bitter over the large-scale incursion of Civil Service personnel into the Foreign Service, sometimes at senior levels, and their complaints prevailed. In short, the Kennedy team spurned Henderson's offer to stay on, even for a limited period.

Q: Who succeeded Henderson?

HARTER: Unfortunately, the Kennedy team designated Roger Jones to succeed him. Jones had been Chairman of Eisenhower's Civil Service Commission, and he and Henderson fought many battles over specific cases in the Wristonization process. Jones was virtually given a mandate to explore how the eggs could be unscrambled - that is, how Wristonization could be reversed. He quickly concluded that he couldn't immediately "dewristonize" the Department and he appointed a committee to study the matter. This was the Herter Committee, chaired by Christian Herter, who had been Secretary of State for the two preceding years. The principal conceptualizer for the Herter Committee was Don K. Price, then Dean of Harvard's Littauer Center [Note: Harvard's Littauer Center later became the John F. Kennedy School of Government.].

Q: What position did the Herter Committee take?

HARTER: It favored caution and moderation, but it essentially opposed dewristonization. Perhaps we should pick that up when we discuss my training assignment at Harvard. However, Jones resigned after one year, before the Herter Committee completed its report. There was a hiatus before William Orrick replaced him. Orrick had no relevant background: He had been a San Francisco lawyer and a politically active Democrat in California. Robert Kennedy brought him into the Justice Department as an Assistant Attorney General in 1961, and, impressed by his managerial skills, championed him as a successor to Jones. Orrick remained at State for only one year. He resigned soon after President Kennedy's assassination. During the year Orrick held the job, Bill Crockett, as Assistant Secretary for Administration, made most managerial decisions, and he was promoted to succeed Orrick. Crockett was primarily an administrative officer who lacked a broad Foreign Service perspective. His own disciples said he was largely preoccupied with placating Congressman John Rooney, who had a stranglehold on the State Department budget.

Q: Rooney was Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee...

HARTER: Right, and Rooney's focus was sharp but narrow. During the Kennedy years, the Department, managerially speaking, was not in good shape.

Q: Do you think these personnel matters affected U.S. foreign policy?

HARTER: Certainly! It's extremely unfortunate that Dean Rusk, who had many admirable qualities, showed no interest in management or personnel operations, which were a shambles throughout his tenure. That's a major reason career diplomats were inhibited from expressing their honest judgments on controversial foreign affairs matters in the 1960s - they had good reason to fear that to criticize the policies they considered misguided might jeopardize their careers. As a consequence, policy-makers were not sufficiently informed to make sound decisions. It was not coincidental that the CIA continued to gain influence, continuing the trend that began to get out of control in the 1950s, when the Dulles Brothers - John Foster and Allen - headed the State Department and the CIA.

Bureau of International Organization Affairs (1961-62)

Q: Meanwhile, what were you doing in IO?

HARTER: Immediately after I joined the AFSA Board, Walter Kotschnig, our Office Director, realigned my responsibilities, saying he wanted to work more closely with me. I suspected that was not a coincidence. For a while, Walter assigned me to keep track of ECLA and ECE [The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the UN Economic Commission for Europe]. I was somewhat familiar with ECLA and Raul Prebisch, ECLA's Secretary General, in Santiago, the site of its headquarters. Walter later asked me to substitute temporarily for John Ordway, the FSO-1 responsible for UN technical assistance programs, after he was named Director of Personnel Operations.

About that time Walter was named rapporteur for an "Ad Hoc Group of 8," a UN committee that was created to assess UN technical assistance. The committee recommended the merger of the UN Special Fund and EPTA [The UN Expanded Program of Technical Assistance] to form the UN Development Program. EPTA, which dated from Truman's "Point Four" program, was one of the earliest post-World War II initiatives for bolstering Third World development [Note: The fourth point of President Truman's inaugural address in January, 1953 pledged to increase economic aid to developing countries.]. I helped Kathleen Bell write and clear the relevant position papers and background studies. The United Nations accepted the Group's recommendation, much enhancing its contribution to Third World economic development. Walter also wanted to exploit that opportunity to build up a central role for UNDP Resident Representatives as coordinators of technical assistance activities of the UN Specialized Agencies at the country level. He conceived this as the core of a career diplomatic service for the United Nations. All that was quite exciting, and I loved it!

Q: Was there support for - and opposition to - the merger?

HARTER: Some members of Congress were apprehensive that technical assistance funds allocated to the United Nations were not efficiently utilized and others thought all UN activities were insufficiently anti-Communist.

The Eisenhower Administration chose Fran Wilcox to head IO with a view toward convincing Congress that the UN system would be held on a tighter leash than it had been under Truman. Wilcox had been Chief of Staff for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the main congressional unit pressing for reforms of the United Nations when Senator Fulbright headed the Committee. Wilcox fully concurred with Walter's stance.

Q: Where did the opposition come from?

HARTER: David Owen, who headed EPTA, strongly opposed the merger. EPTA was weighed down by its own bureaucracy, and its constituents in the Specialized Agencies were apprehensive that their influence would be reduced if EPTA should be submerged as an element of UNDP. Owen preferred to preserve the system as it had existed since the late 1940s, ostensibly favoring administrative flexibility to "coordination." Owen, by the way, was the father of the David Owen who worked with Cyrus Vance in trying to forge a satisfactory resolution of the Bosnia mess a few years ago. It was Paul Hoffman, the first UNDP Administrator, who really put the new organization together.

Q: So you were there when the UNDP first came into existence.

HARTER: Yes, and that certainly raised the content of my job. Even before that our office routinely passed to ICA [Note: U.S. Agency for International Development, the unit of the U.S. Government responsible for administering U.S. economic assistance aimed at fostering Third World development, was known as the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) during the latter years of the Eisenhower Administration. (Before that, with slightly different structures and functions, it was known as the Mutual Security Agency, under Truman, and the Foreign Operations Administration, during Eisenhower's first term. The Kennedy Administration reorganized and renamed the agency, which is still known as USAID.)] information from the United Nations about pending requests for technical assistance, and that enabled our experts to evaluate them before the projects were approved multilaterally. The proposed projects were larger and better structured after UNDP was created. I also worked closely with a fellow named Julian Arnold of ICA to provide opportunities for UN Resident Representatives to consult with ICA experts familiar with relevant developments in their countries of responsibility. We had abundant feedback that this coordination between ICA and UNDP was fruitful, but the Kennedy Administration discontinued it in 1961.

Q: You were in IO when the Kennedy Administration took over?

HARTER: Yes, and IO was wild in 1961! The whole pace quickened. Fran Wilcox, as Assistant Secretary for IO, oversaw a relatively backwater Bureau; but Harlan Cleveland,

as Wilcox's hard-driving successor, was determined to make IO a center of action. He brought in a few gung-ho assistants, including Richard Gardner as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs, and Mike Moynihan, Pat Moynihan's younger brother, as a public affairs advisor and speech writer. Gardner was only 28 years old, but he was already a Professor of International Trade and Law at Columbia University, and he had written a classic called ***Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy***.

Q: Didn't Gardner serve in later Administrations?

HARTER: Yes, he was Carter's ambassador to Italy and Clinton's ambassador to Spain. He was brilliant and articulate, but also impulsive and controversial. Even when his ideas had obvious merit, his manner sometimes provoked controversy. Basically, the attitude in IO during the Kennedy years was, "We're going to convert the United Nations into a positive global force that Congress will support, and we're not going to let bureaucratic nonsense hold us back."

Q: Did this affect OES?

HARTER: Yes. Cleveland and Gardner unfairly saw Walter Kotschnig as an obstacle to their objectives, and they relieved him of his responsibilities as Office Director. They ostensibly promoted him to be a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary, with continuing ECOSOC responsibilities, and they imported Nat McKitterick to replace him as Director of OES. Nat, in turn, was soon replaced by Bill Stibravy.

And by the way, all this coincided with Dag Hammarskjold's efforts to restructure and rejuvenate the United Nations. I often wondered if Hammarskjold's efforts would have succeeded if he had not died tragically in an airplane crash in the Congo just as his reform plans were taking shape.

Q: What was the feeling in the Department toward Adlai Stevenson as Kennedy's Ambassador to the United Nations?

HARTER: Cleveland and Gardner were his proteges, and they were enthusiastic about him. Kathleen Bell worked closely with Stevenson on several occasions, and she, too, admired him. But some people in the Department saw him as a visionary who was not hard-headed enough.

Q: Did changes associated with the New Frontier affect your work in IO?

HARTER: Definitely! I interacted directly with Gardner much more than I did with his predecessor, Horace Henderson. But the new emphasis on strengthening the UN was not cohesive, and there was a lot of wasted motion. One of my most interesting assignments, for example, began in March 1961, when I was designated as the IO liaison officer to Sarge Shriver and the new Peace Corps - even before the Peace Corps was formally promulgated. Shriver's original intent was to assign some of his volunteers to UN

technical assistance activities, and his staff assumed they had a Presidential mandate to ensure that result.

Q: How did that work out?

HARTER: It was a can of worms! UN employees are supposed to be ***international*** civil servants beholden to no sovereign state, and that clashed with Shriver's concept that he was personally responsible for all Peace Corps volunteers. I attended several brainstorming sessions in Shriver's office, where he daily assembled his key lieutenants, including the young Bill Moyers. Shriver eventually gave up on the UN and diverted his attention to creating a so-called International Volunteer Service that generated considerable hoopla. I have no idea what became of it.

Q: Did you receive other unusual assignments?

HARTER: Well, in January, 1962, Nat McKitterick informed me one Saturday morning in the State Department cafeteria that Cleveland and Gardner had accepted a long-standing proposal of Raul Prebisch that a major UN conference should be convoked to consider new ways and means of channeling international support for Third World economic development. McKitterick said they wanted me to coordinate U.S. preparations for it.

Q: What was that all about?

HARTER: Throughout the 1950s Prebisch, as ECLA's Executive Secretary, pressed the thesis that the world's most affluent countries owed the poor countries the resources they needed to raise living standards for their people. The Eisenhower Administration opposed such a UN conference tooth and nail. My bosses in IO, Walter Kotschnig, Otis Mulliken, and Kathleen Bell - not to mention virtually everyone in the Department's economic bureau - recognized the long-term hazards such a conference would pose.

Q: What, specifically, was their objection?

HARTER: They knew such an event would intensify pressures on the United States to finance unrealistic initiatives ostensibly designed to promote Third World economies, measures that Congress was bound to oppose. The New Frontiersmen, discounting that concern, thought we could win brownie points by agreeing to Prebisch's long-standing proposal, and the conference was set for the summer of 1964. When McKitterick told me about it, I thought, "Oh, my God! That will be a mess!" To be centrally involved didn't seem attractive.

Q: Why not? That would seem to be a good opportunity for a young Foreign Service Officer.

HARTER: I knew that many influential people opposed the whole concept of the conference. I knew from my assignment in Santiago that Prebisch was charismatic and determined, with a dedicated Third World following. I knew one of his central obsessions was that the very existence of GATT [The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] thwarted the economic interests of developing countries. I knew his economic philosophy was anathema to most American economists, because it would depend on economically inefficient mechanisms to accelerate the flow of real resources to the developing world. I also knew the United States would not accept his proposals nor were we likely to contrive alternative constructive positions for the conference.

Nevertheless, it was a done deal, and the international bureaucracy churned out exhaustive studies for discussion at the conference, and the United States and other countries expended enormous manpower in analyzing them. Predictably, our preparations were not imaginative, and when the conference finally convened, the U.S. Delegation was astounded to find itself engulfed by a tidal wave of adverse global opinion.

Q: What was the outcome?

HARTER: In the end, Prebisch used that 1964 assembly as a giant lever to force the international community to recognize the conference as a permanent ongoing institution. That was the beginning of UNCTAD [The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development], which subsequently met as a plenary every four years. Between its quadrennial meetings, the "conference" was backstopped by a secretariat in Geneva that also supported specialized committees that coped with specific issues. When McKitterick offered me the chance to coordinate U.S. preparations for the conference I said I wanted to think about it - and then, by a remarkable coincidence, I had an opportunity to undertake graduate economic studies at Harvard. The more I thought about it, the more attractive Harvard looked.

Harvard University (1962-63)

Q: Had you applied for university training?

HARTER: No, but I applied for Russian language and area training several times before that, because I had a vague sense that our politically-oriented experts on the Soviet Union misunderstood and overestimated the overplanned Soviet economy. I relished the prospect of an assignment to the Economic Section of our Moscow Embassy. My name was just below the cut-off line several times, but in 1961 I was selected for Russian language training, to begin in the fall of 1962. I read everything I could find about the Russian economy - until Personnel informed me in January that the Russian program for that year was canceled. They said the Foreign Service was oversupplied with Russian language officers. Instead, they said, I could earn a master's degree in economics.

Q: I thought those assignments were determined a year or so in advance.

HARTER: They usually are, and Personnel had lined up five FSOs for advanced economic training at Harvard for that academic year, but Harvard rejected one of them because his academic qualifications didn't meet Harvard's admissions criteria. For that reason Personnel wanted to recruit a substitute quickly. I said I would talk to my wife about it. We had a second child by then - Dorothea was born in Washington in March, 1961 - and I knew it wouldn't be easy for Mickie to corral our two small kids in an unfamiliar neighborhood while I was attending classes. But she agreed, and I accepted. I told McKitterick I had to decline the offer to work with the U.S. Delegation to the 1964 conference.

Q: So you were at Harvard from the fall of 1962 until June, 1963?

HARTER: Yes. I left Washington after attending a four-week refresher economics course at FSI for FSOs assigned to university training. At Harvard I selected classes on three broad subjects: First, I wanted to learn as much as I could about the Russian economy. Harvard's Abe Bergsen was the leading U.S. expert on the Russian economy, and I became well acquainted with him. My second area of interest at Harvard, following from my work in IO, was Third World economic development, and third, I wanted to acquire a solid foundation in international trade theory.

Q: That sounds like a heavy load.

HARTER: It was! I took four courses for credit and six for audit each of the two semesters I was there, meaning I was literally attending classes from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a. m. to noon on Saturday. I was in the library almost non-stop in the evenings.

Q: What attitude did you find among the Harvard faculty toward the government?

HARTER: Overall they had a fairly realistic sense of how government works, especially with respect to history, organization, and management. Several of the economics professors had held senior government positions. Incidentally, the five FSOs assigned to advanced economic training at Harvard that year included Mike Ely and Charles Carlisle, both of whom went on to distinguished careers. In addition, there was one FSO at MIT and one at Fletcher, and the seven of us in Cambridge were a simpatico group. We decided to invite one faculty member to lunch with us each Tuesday, and as a consequence we became acquainted with Harvard's best economists. A usual disadvantage in attending a large university is that it’s a factory in which students rarely interact personally with individual professors. Our weekly lunches gave us rich informal associations that our instructors cherished as much as we did.

I remember, in particular, our luncheon discussion with Don K. Price, who had recently been named Vice Chairman of the Herter Committee, which the Kennedy Administration established to help it cope with Foreign Service personnel issues after Wristonization. Price picked our brains on the Foreign Service system for effecting promotions,

assignments, and selection-out. After that lunch I volunteered to summarize some of my own ideas in a memorandum, and the Herter report reflected some of those comments.

Q: Such as?

HARTER: Such as criticism of traditional Foreign Service performance evaluation procedures. Unfortunately that report had little impact and it has rarely been cited.

In addition to those weekly meetings, Professor Stanley Hoffman included the seven of us plus a few Pentagon and CIA officials attending Harvard in monthly round-table discussions. Hoffman moderated lively and sophisticated foreign policy debates that were often more enlightening than our classes.

Q: You were at Harvard during the Cuban missile crisis in October, 1962?

HARTER: That's right. And on October 20, the critical day of the confrontation, prominent notices sprouted all over the campus announcing that Professor Merle Fainsod would preside over a town meeting on the crisis. A huge crowd filled Harvard's biggest auditorium for a three-hour session, and Fainsod's pitch was dramatic. He was unquestionably aware of what was going on in Washington. By the way, I audited Fainsod's course on the Soviet Government, having read his classic textbook, *How Russia Is Ruled*.

Q: You received a Master's degree in economics for your work at Harvard. Did you write a thesis?

HARTER: No, but I prepared a one-hundred-page-plus paper on the Soviet economy for one of my seminars. It analyzed developments in the years preceding, during, and following the First Five Year Plan, which covered the years 1928 to 1933. The Plan was designed to modernize Soviet industry. My research underscored the role of an economist named Preobrezhenski, who conceived the Plan ***before*** 1928, assuming a massive increase in Russian wheat exports would be needed to finance large-scale imports of capital goods. Tragically, world wheat prices plummeted after 1930, meaning that ***four times the large volume of wheat exports projected in the Plan*** would be required to comply with the Plan's industrialization targets. My research demonstrated how rigid adherence to long-term economic projections can lead to severe social dislocations and personal suffering. In this case, agricultural collectivization, the liquidation of the kulaks, and the other draconian policies of the Soviet Union in the 1930s followed as inappropriate solutions.

Q: What was your conclusion?

HARTER: I concluded that the political ideology of "communism" was less important than economic constraints, bungling bureaucrats, and Stalin's personal paranoia as the dominant forces at work in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. That period happened to

follow Stalin's bureaucratic struggle with Trotsky, a time when Stalin increasingly judged any challenge to his policies as a threat to his authority, if not a treasonable act.

Q: You enjoyed your year at Harvard?

HARTER: Oh, yes! It was a rewarding sabbatical. Aside from what I absorbed academically, that experience confirmed to me the value of occasionally living and thinking in a completely new milieu. But it was a strenuous year for my wife and our two small kids. I saw little of them that year. Incidentally, Mickie was naturalized while we were at Cambridge - on April 1, 1963. And I was promoted to FSO-4 before I left Harvard. I had reached the FSO-5 level, by the way, soon after I was elected to the AFSA Board, so I received two promotions two years apart. I didn't realize it would be a long, hard road before I would receive another promotion.

Thailand (1963-65)

Q: What did you do after your year at Harvard?

HARTER: Starting in January, 1963, the FSOs in Cambridge wondered what our next assignments would be. My previous overseas posts had been in South Africa and Chile, and I didn't want to be boxed in as an expert in African or Latin American affairs. I thought a tour in East Asia might be rewarding, and luckily, Chris Pappas, the personnel officer responsible for mid-level economic assignments to that area, had been a neighbor in Arlington when I was assigned to IO. We rode the same bus to work. I called Chris from Harvard, and he said an economic slot in Bangkok classed one step above my level would open in the summer. If I was interested, he would check it out. I was, and it worked.

Q: You served in Bangkok from when to when?

HARTER: From July, 1963 to July, 1965 - just two years.

Q: What was your position?

HARTER: I was the Embassy's financial reporting officer, meaning I kept track of the Thai planning agency, the Central Bank, and the Ministry of Finance. This provided an excellent vantage point for observing the practical implications of the economic development theory I studied at Harvard.

Q: How would you describe the political situation in Thailand while you were there?
HARTER: The Prime Minister when I arrived was Sarit Thanarat, a striking individual. As you know, Thailand was virtually the only country in Southeast Asia that escaped colonial status in the late nineteenth century, when the British grabbed Burma to the west, and the French seized Vietnam to the east. The clever diplomacy of two remarkable Thai kings - Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, the exotic personalities featured in *Anna and the*

King of Siam - staved off both the British and the French, and Thailand thus avoided the imperial overhang that handicapped many Third World countries in the twentieth century.

The monarchy provided an element of stability in the Thai political system. Bhumibol Adulyadej, a descendant of those nineteenth-century kings, was much respected, and he reputedly exercised a constructive behind-the-scenes influence. The photogenic Queen Sirikit was often described as Asia's most beautiful woman.

Several coups d'etat occurred, beginning in the 1930s, but they mainly involved opposing factions of the military elite rather than fundamentally different groups with opposing political philosophies. Thai governments, before and after I was there, were largely controlled by Thai generals who were not immune to corrupt influences. The two Deputy Prime Ministers under Sarit were Praphat, who ran the Ministries of Defense and Interior - which oversaw local governments and the constabulary - and Prince Wan, who played a largely ceremonial role. General Thanom Kittikachorn succeeded Sarit when he died in the fall of 1963, and under his cautiously benign patronage, Thailand underwent some preliminary movement toward parliamentary democracy before I left. Nevertheless, the generals relinquished their traditional authority grudgingly and slowly.

Q: How about the economic side?

HARTER: The principal economic advisor to Sarit and Thanom was Dr. Phuey Ungphakorn, Governor of the Central Bank. Dr. Phuey earned his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics, and his wife was English. His proteges dominated the economic ministries and agencies. They were intelligent, honest, and genuinely dedicated to the Thai national interest. They laid the foundation in the 1960s for the economic stability and impressive growth that generally characterized the Thai economy in the 1970s and 1980s.

Q: Were you personally acquainted with Dr. Phuey?

HARTER: Yes, I was fortunate to know him and several of his lieutenants fairly well. Dr. Phuey was the personification of integrity - and a very pragmatic politician. The odd fact was that Sarit, as Prime Minister, depended on Dr. Phuey to track the economy at the same time he countenanced corrupt elements in the military and police structures. For Dr. Phuey, the critical issue was to maintain stable purchasing power for the Thai baht, which was just about as solid as the Swiss franc.

Q: That was in marked contrast to the situation you found in Chile.

HARTER: Yes, and I saw ample evidence that when inflation is minimal, economic decisions can be more rational. Unfortunately, Thailand later strayed from Dr. Phuey's conservative and anti-corruption precepts, and by the 1990s a continuing economic boom led to overexpansion in some sectors and speculation in real estate and the stock market. Nevertheless, the country's long-term outlook continues to be bright.

Q: Were you involved in commercial work?

HARTER: Not directly. The U.S. Commerce Department operated a Trade Center in Bangkok, managed by a commercial attache and two assistant commercial attaches. When I arrived the commercial attache was John O'Neill, who was succeeded by Harold Voorhees. Both were well acquainted with American and Thai businessmen, and through my association with them and participation in the monthly meetings of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, I indirectly absorbed some sense of what was going on in the commercial world. The business community was overwhelmingly optimistic about the Thai economy.

Q: What did you think of AID operations in Thailand?

HARTER: My view was mixed. Overall, the Thai Civil Service benefitted greatly from an AID project aimed at building up a School of Economics at Thamassat University. That began as Dr. Phuey's pet project some ten years before I arrived. The Public Administration Service, a private group under contract with AID, played a very positive role there. AID also stimulated constructive investment in education, health, agriculture, and highway construction that yielded abundant long-term benefits to the Thai people.

Q: What was your impression of the Thai Civil Service?

HARTER: I was favorably impressed with the Thai civil servants I knew. They were relatively senior officials at the central bank, the Ministry of Finance, and the planning agency. Many of them had received graduate degrees from Columbia, Harvard, or the London School of Economics.

Q: But you considered some AID operations less successful?

HARTER: Yes, I felt the so-called public safety program was too eager to boost the position of ostensibly anti-communist elements in the police agencies, the military, and local governments, especially in the Northeast. I think the use of AID cover for CIA operations distorted economic development priorities, while sometimes bolstering unsavory elements in the government.

Q: Did you know what the CIA was doing in Thailand?
HARTER: Just what the CIA does is always murky because of their zeal to protect their "sources and methods," comprehensively defined, which ensures that CIA activities and research are insufficiently accountable. The CIA was certainly influential in Thailand. I assume we shouldn't go into detail here, but I think it would be appropriate for me to mention prevalent impressions among my friends at the Embassy. The Chief of Station was well known among the Thai elite. He had been in Bangkok for several years when I arrived. He was a strong personality and a beer-drinking buddy of several Thai generals. I first met him about a year after I arrived in Bangkok. He apparently spoke Thai, and he

seemed to be close to Praphat. He knew more about Thai history, the Thai government, and gossip about top Thai officials than anyone else at the Embassy.

Q: Do you mean Thailand was a country of particular interest to the CIA?

HARTER: It certainly was! The OSS [Office of Strategic Services, the World War II predecessor of the CIA] developed an extensive operation in Thailand toward the end of World War II, and "Wild Bill" Donovan, the super-sleuth who created the OSS, took a personal interest in it. Remember, Donovan was our Ambassador to Thailand in 1953-54, just after the Korean War was over, and he apparently played a major role in developing the CIA network throughout Southeast Asia that was centrally involved in the buildup to the War in Vietnam.

Q: Did you work directly with any of the CIA officers?

HARTER: One could hardly avoid them! Jim Lilly, for example, had an office next to mine in the Economic Section. He was quite different from the very public Jim Lilly we occasionally see on the Jim Lehrer news program these days: He seemed reserved and taciturn, but very sharp. We were told he was an expert on China, but we never knew exactly what he was doing.

Q: Who was our Ambassador to Thailand?

HARTER: Al Puhan was Charge when I arrived. I knew him in IO. Ambassador Graham Martin arrived some three months later.

Q: What was Martin's mode of operation in Thailand?

HARTER: In a word, it was Byzantine! The best description I can give you would be to recapitulate an in-house briefing I attended at USIA in 1975, shortly after the collapse of the South Vietnamese government. Alan Carter of USIA tried to explain what, in his view, went wrong in the final days. The meeting was packed, and Carter's presentation was taped. Carter emphasized, as a principal factor underlying the chaos that prevailed in Saigon in April, 1975, Martin's refusal to authorize in advance the kind of emergency evacuation plan that is normally required at U.S. Embassies. Carter said his entire experience in Saigon, from the time Martin arrived until the end, was surreal - and that was Carter's word. He said our Embassy in Saigon was the only one he ever heard of where the Ambassador never attended his own staff meetings and the DCM always presided. That was precisely how Martin ran the Embassy in Bangkok a decade earlier. Carter said Martin was almost inaccessible, except for a few senior officers who spent many hours with him. Martin was at the Embassy from early morning until late at night, but he rarely interacted with most of the Embassy officers.

Q: Did you ever deal directly with him?

HARTER: Yes, on a few occasions. Soon after he arrived I was the Duty Officer, and he asked me to bring the Embassy cables to his residence. I vividly recall that Sunday morning when he engaged me in a lengthy duel of words over the Foreign Service personnel system. I had promised my wife I wouldn't be gone long, but I was wrong.

Q: What was his attitude toward the Foreign Service?

HARTER: The fireworks started when I said I admired Loy Henderson. Martin thought Henderson's whole approach to the Foreign Service was dead wrong. I had heard, when I was on the AFSA Board, that Martin would be an effective Under Secretary for Administration, but if he had held that position he would have irreparably destroyed the Foreign Service. He favored large-scale annual recruitment of junior officers and vigorous selection-out at each level to eliminate ***most*** FSOs after their first two or three assignments.

Martin had no sense of a junior officer's life. He entered the Foreign Service in Paris at a very senior level, when Douglas Dillon, as Ambassador to France, recruited him as his chief administrative officer. When Dillon became Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, he named Martin as his Chief of Staff. Even after Dillon left State in 1961 to become Treasury Secretary, he promoted Martin's career. Unfortunately, Martin's views were adopted by the so-called "Young Turks" who seized control of AFSA in the late 1960s [Note: See also *Toward a Modern Diplomacy*, a report to the American Foreign Service Association by Graham Martin, 1968.].

Q: How did the Embassy's Political Section feel about Martin?

HARTER: Well, the Political Section was a remarkably strong team headed by Ted Tremblay and his deputy, Al Seligman. The others when I arrived were Wever Gim, Tom Barnes, and Al Francis, and together they produced a steady stream of balanced and perceptive analytical reports. I think they regarded Martin as an enigma. They had a sense that he was brilliant but I think they regarded him as Machiavellian. He always seemed to be spinning complex webs.

Q: Can you recall an example?
HARTER: Yes, here's one: Al Francis once prepared a comprehensive report of some 30 to 40 pages on corruption in Thailand. Ted considered it excellent and sent it to Ambassador Martin for final approval. Martin blocked it, saying he didn't want anything like that to leave the Embassy.

Martin's rationale was that a State Department report on corruption in Thailand was bound to leak and undermine his efforts to secure more U.S. resources for Thailand. Actually, he was probably right about that! Anyway, Al's report did not leave the Embassy until after Sarit Thannarat died in the fall of 1963, when the world press exploded with accounts of corruption in Thailand. At that point, the Embassy dusted off Al's report and sent it to Washington, where it was well received.

Q: Martin's reaction was not unusual. Many governments in developing countries are corrupt, and some are awfully corrupt.

HARTER: Probably less so today than then.

Q: But when you highlight it, some Senator will become aware of it and use it in a way that may not be helpful to programs advocated by the Embassy.

HARTER: Well, this reminds me of a point Loy Henderson emphasized in my interviews with him: I asked him what he considered the most important attribute of a good Foreign Service Officer, and without hesitation, he said he prized ***integrity*** above all other qualities. He said absolute honesty is essential for the Foreign Service, and a Foreign Service Officer who shades the truth is not doing his proper job. I think that's right. We should convey to Washington the reality we observe, without bending or distorting the facts. The State Department must be scrupulously honest in dealing with Congress. Throughout the Cold War too many people blindly accepted and parroted stereotypes put forward by influential individuals in the Congress and the media.
Q: I agree! But how do you convey the truth? FSOs who served in the Middle East found that reports critical of Israel often leaked to Congress. FSOs who reported the facts in China in the mid-1940s were crucified.

HARTER: Nevertheless, withholding the truth contributes to inaccurate Washington perspectives and misjudgments. Sadly, there is often a disconnect between our Embassies and the Department. Senior officials in Washington are bombarded with secret reports from the intelligence community, Congressional opinions, and newspaper editorials that tend to be less prescient than insights of well-placed professional diplomats.

Anyway, from the time he arrived in the fall of 1963, Martin was determined to ensure continuing if not increased congressional appropriations for military, CIA, and AID programs in Thailand. He was convinced, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that a major war was going to be waged in Vietnam, and he saw Thailand's northeastern provinces as a launching pad for the bombing missions he anticipated. He repeatedly echoed Douglas MacArthur's prophecy that sooner or later Armageddon must come in the form of an epic showdown between "communism" and "freedom" in Southeast Asia.

Q: Was the idea prevalent that the Chinese communists were about to take over Thailand?

HARTER: No, that was ***not*** a common view in the Embassy or among Thais I knew. It ***was*** a commanding myth among influential people in Washington. Graham Martin thought the threat was real, and a few expensive studies and reports by the Rand Corporation sustained that presumption. They were heavily influenced by the CIA, which gave too much weight to views of local police officials in the Northeast and the South. They were true believers in the anti-communist cause, and our public safety advisors

closely associated with them shared their views. I found the same phenomenon in South Africa and in Chile, where the local police, especially in rural areas, also identified their political opposition as "communists" or "communist inspired."

I recall a discussion between Ted Tremblay and Thayer White of the Economic Section, as my family rode to Bangkok from the airport after they met us on our arrival. Ted and Thayer spoke of a meeting that morning, at which they both questioned and discounted the position of JUSMAG [Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group] officers who were alarmed at ostensibly new evidence that Thailand was threatened by invasion from communist forces from the north. Ted and Thayer considered the external threat less serious than the potential for ***domestic*** unrest. They thought internal political stability was critical for Thailand, and the thrust of U.S. policy should therefore be to sustain a sound and growing economy. That was basically the view of individuals I knew who worked at AID, the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance, and the planning agency, who weren't excessively concerned about the so-called "communist threat." To them, it was much more important to reduce the disparity in incomes between rich and poor Thais.

Al Puhan, who was charge when I arrived, shared that outlook. Incidentally, Puhan and Martin seemed incapable of communicating with each other. Puhan left soon after Martin arrived. I sat next to Puhan at a lunch in Florida in 1993 for Foreign Service retirees, by the way, and he was still overflowing with bitter memories of Martin.

Q: Were attempts made at that time to foster something like what later became known as ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations]?

HARTER: ASEAN dated from the late 1960s, after I left Bangkok, but the Thai authorities were exploring possibilities for fostering closer economic cooperation with neighboring countries, especially the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, while I was there. In the mid-1960s there was much more emphasis on SEATO [The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, modeled more or less after NATO], which was staunchly championed by the Dulles brothers and Graham Martin. The Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thanat Khoman, was also a strong advocate of SEATO. Of course, ASEAN is still going strong, but SEATO died a natural death after North Vietnam took over the South.

Q: Did you deal with other matters?

HARTER: I was especially interested in southern Thailand. I took a fact-finding trip down to Songhkla and Haadyai, just north of the Malaysian border. My wife and our kids were with me there for several days. I prepared an in-depth report on the economy of southern Thailand, an area that had been largely neglected by the Thai Government and the U.S. The economic potential of southern Thailand was seriously underestimated in those days. Northern Malaysia, just south of the Thai border, had good roads, productive rubber plantations, and prosperous tin mines; but southern Thailand, north of that border,

was undeveloped, with ragged and overgrown vegetation even though the area had very similar climate, soil, and other resources.

My report suggested that a major highway connecting Bangkok with the Malaysian highway south of the border would spur economic advance in southern Thailand. I think such a highway was eventually built, but in the mid-1960s AID gave priority to road construction in northeastern Thailand, impelled by strategic considerations. Those roads, in the long run, helped to open up relatively underdeveloped areas and integrate them into the national economy, but I argued Thailand as a whole would have gained larger returns from a comparable investment in southern Thailand.

Q: When did you finish your assignment to Bangkok?

HARTER: In July, 1965. My last night there was a nightmare! Tonia, our younger daughter, was in ill health, and our older two kids were recovering from strep throat. Tonia was born in Bangkok, and she was a one-year-old baby. We considered postponing our departure, but the Medical Unit pronounced our kids well enough to travel. I went to the Embassy after dinner that last night to clean out my desk, and that was when Konrad Bekker, the deputy chief of the Economic Section, confronted me with my efficiency report. And there were serious problems with it.

Q: What kind of problems?

HARTER: Konrad's report was basically positive, but it used a superseded format.

In 1965 State Personnel split the annual efficiency report into two parts, one that was supposed to grade "performance" and the other that ostensibly described "potential." The former was shown to and discussed with the rated officer, but the latter was not - it was supposed to be secret, and that inevitably led to widespread abuse. The personnel authorities were besieged with outcries regarding that format, and it was never used again. Konrad didn't like it, and he insisted on using the traditional form that preceded it. I told Konrad I shared his concern regarding the new format and I appreciated his favorable comments, but I told him I would be disadvantaged if my EER did not contain the categories of information called for in the new form. He asked me to set forth my objections in writing so that he could forward my concerns in my own words with his draft EER to Bob Fluker, who was out of town. I hastily drafted the memorandum he requested and left it with him about midnight. I later learned that Fluker incorporated my objections as the main component of his reviewing officer's statement. I left the Embassy after midnight, and the next day we left Bangkok on home leave with three sick children. We were exhausted, tense, and dispirited when we arrived at my parents' home near Berkeley, California, and our visit there was marred by the most painful disagreement I ever had with my dad.

Q: What was the conflict?

HARTER: Well, somehow the burgeoning mess in Vietnam quickly became an inescapable topic of conversation. My dad was a World War I veteran whose patriotism had been honed by active participation in the American Legion in the 1920s and 1930s. He was appalled at the much publicized, trenchant, and sometimes obscene protests against "Lyndon Johnson's War" at the University of California in Berkeley. He was shocked when I suggested that although their remonstrances were intemperate and simplistic, their basic complaints had merit. It got worse when my dad told me the President of the United States based his decisions on knowledge I had no access to, and I replied that I had a better understanding of what was happening in Southeast Asia than the President did because I had just returned from two years in the area, and I knew some of the information that was fed to the President was distorted. I had never before suffered such a complete inability to exchange views with my dad, and for the next ten years we both avoided any such exchanges. After 1975 he relented and granted me some slack. He died in 1978.

FSI: Bulgarian Language Training (1965-66)

Q: Where did you go after home leave?

HARTER: Well, as I said, I had for several years requested assignment to Russian language training, and early in 1965 "Chips" Chester called me from Personnel in Washington to ask if I would like to go to Sofia as a one-man Economic Section, preceded by nine months of Bulgarian language and area training. I said that would definitely interest me, and he made it happen. When I left Bangkok in July, I had orders to report to FSI for Bulgarian language and area training in August.

Q: How was the language training you received?

HARTER: It was heavy going, but effective. We were a congenial three-man class - myself and one officer each from USIA and the CIA. We endured six-hour drill sessions five days a week in a small windowless room in Arlington. We all suffered claustrophobia. I studied at least two or three hours every evening to keep up. It was a difficult living situation for Mickie and my three kids.

*Q: You were assigned to language **and** area training. What was the area training?*

HARTER: FSOs studying Eastern European languages at FSI were supposed to meet occasionally with Gus Tuckerman, a scholarly individual who had been an INR analyst. Gus loosely monitored an informal reading program customized for each of us. He probed gently in one-on-one sessions to identify our individual backgrounds and interests, and he recommended books and articles that we subsequently discussed with him. I read everything I could find about Bulgarian history.

I was surprised to learn that Bulgaria was often at the crossroads of western civilization. Philip of Macedonia and Alexander the Great came from that area, and Cyril and

Methodius introduced the Cyrillic alphabet in Bulgaria. The crusades ravaged the Balkan Peninsula. We were also required to produce a paper. Gus approved the topic I chose - "*A Dialogue on the War in Vietnam*" - but he was conspicuously distressed after he read my analysis, which essentially refuted the U.S. rationale for the war. He said he personally found my position provocative, but he cautioned me not to share it with others.

Q: Did you go to Bulgaria?

HARTER: No. In June 1966, after nine months at FSI - just as I qualified as a Bulgarian language expert with an S-2+, R-3 rating - the State Department Medical Division ordered my assignment to Sofia canceled. They said X-rays revealed scar tissue in one of Tonia's lungs as a consequence of the pneumonia she contracted as an infant in Bangkok. Ironically, the Medical Division ***approved*** our assignment to Sofia in September 1965, ***before*** I began Bulgarian language training, and Tonia's health improved in the interim. She's in her 30s now and quite healthy, by the way. She and her husband have two beautiful daughters.

Q: Where did you go?

HARTER: Few positions were available on short notice. After a few dead-end inquiries, I asked Anne Oumano of the IO Executive Director's Office whether she anticipated a need for an economic officer in New York or Geneva. She said there might be a suitable slot for me in Geneva. She made some phone calls and set up a couple of interviews for me, and in no time the assignment was approved. We left Washington on the same day we had planned to leave for Bulgaria.

Geneva: GATT and UNCTAD (1966-70)

Q: You were in Geneva from 1966 until...

HARTER: From July 1966 until May 1970, nearly four years. It was supposed to be a five-year assignment - three years, home leave, and two more years - but let's come back to why that changed later.

Q: What did you do in Geneva?

HARTER: I worked mainly on GATT affairs. For the first two years, I also spent some time on UNCTAD. The Kennedy Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations was nearing its final crunch when I arrived. A strong negotiating team represented the United States in those negotiations, comprising some 30 to 40 experts and support staff headed by Ambassador Mike Blumenthal. I was ***not*** a member of that team. Instead, I was one of the permanent U.S. representatives to GATT responsible for all U.S. interests in GATT except for the Kennedy Round. We were responsible for accession negotiations for new GATT members, regional trade agreements, trade-related balance of payments issues, and administrative matters, for example. Henry Brodie was the official U.S. representative to

GATT, Herb Propps was the alternate representative, and I was an assistant or substitute for either or both of them. Henry and Herb were both FSO-1s, and Herb, having been steeped in GATT affairs for many years, frankly felt their roles should have been reversed. I replaced Doris Whitnack, who, for many years, had been a trade policy official in both State and STR [The Office of the Special Trade Representative (redesignated as the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative [USTR] in 1979)]. Doris couldn't stand Herb Propps, and that's why the position suddenly opened: She begged Washington to get her out of there as soon as possible. She was downright miserable! I arrived three months before she left, and the overlap was too long, but it afforded more than ample time for Doris to share with me her considerable knowledge of GATT and her dislike for Herb.

Q: Did you have suitable experience to fill that position?

HARTER: Not really. GATT delegates constituted a special fellowship. They were social intimates and they spoke a common language understood by few outsiders. Although dedicated to their separate national interests, they shared a faith in the power of international trade to shape a better world. The cognoscenti didn't quickly and easily absorb new initiates. But my economic duties in Chile, Thailand, and IO, reenforced by my economic studies at Harvard, gave me a good foundation, and I was well briefed before I left Washington by Jules Katz and several senior members of his staff, including Bob Brungart and Bill Culbert. Jules was appointed Director of the Office of International Trade Policy shortly before that. I had known him slightly when I was in IO. He had been an economic officer in the Office of Eastern European Affairs for some 15 years. I met him through Art Wortzel, who was then the public affairs officer in the Office of European Affairs. Art and I had lunch one day, and he brought Jules along. Jules then seemed to me quite shy, and I was amazed at the transformation in his personality after he became State's key trade policy executive. He was in command, very articulate, and somewhat aggressive - totally different from the individual I met in the early 1960s. Phil Trezise, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, shrewdly chose him to head the trade policy office because he saw Jules' potential and also because complex issues relating to the Eastern European countries were coming before GATT. Subsequent history confirmed it was an exceptionally good choice. Apparently it was Jules' personal approval - and a strong IO endorsement - that sealed my assignment to Geneva despite my lack of prior trade policy experience.

Q: Were you disadvantaged as a newcomer to GATT?

HARTER: Yes, I was! For the first few months, I felt severely underqualified. It took time to gain admission into the world of GATT lore. Doris was very helpful during our overlap, but Henry Brodie and Herb Propps were always busy and disinclined to inculcate a newcomer into that world.

Q: Did the Blumenthal team help you?

HARTER: Yes, some of them tutored me. So did the GATT Secretariat, especially Margaret Potter and Jan Tumlir, who patiently coached me on GATT precedents and mores during my early months there. Also, just by attending negotiating sessions and interacting with other delegations I gradually became familiar with the GATT world. Eventually I was a true believer in GATTology, convinced that continually expanding world trade is the indispensable element of a dynamic world economy.

Q: What were the duties of Henry Brodie and Herb Propps, and how did you assist them?

HARTER: Henry represented the United States at meetings of the GATT Council, the oversight body that authorized actions pursuant to recommendations of subordinate GATT Committees. Herb, as Henry's alternate, usually represented the United States in Henry's absence and at the more technical and legalistic meetings. I was on the U.S. Delegation to virtually all GATT meetings, except for those concerned with the Kennedy Round, and I usually wrote the first draft of delegation reports. At first, Herb heavily edited my drafts, but he gradually came to approve them with little or no change.

Q: What were some of the specific issues Brodie and Propps dealt with?

HARTER: Countless issues were on the GATT agenda, so it's hard to choose. Henry spent many hours on Poland's accession to GATT, for example, after Poland requested accession as a full Contracting Party in the late 1960s, having attended GATT meetings as an observer for several years before that. Jules Katz personally managed that accession, which was quite tangled, technically and politically. I attended those meetings with Henry, and I usually wrote the reporting cables.

One item that Herb fielded was the so-called Tripartite Agreement, through which Yugoslavia, India, and Egypt tried to forge a special intra-LDC scheme through which signatory developing countries would reciprocally extend trade preferences to all parties to the agreement. The idea was to exempt intra-LDC trade from GATT rules, and Herb fought it tooth and nail. Again, I attended the meetings and I wrote most of the reporting cables. This issue ultimately evolved into an UNCTAD program that was identified as "Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries," which was eventually supported by a special division of the UNCTAD Secretariat.

Q: Was Japan active in GATT in those days?

HARTER: Japan acceded to GATT by 1955, when its economy was beginning to recover from wartime devastation. Japan was never prominent in GATT, but it became somewhat more visible while I was in Geneva.
Q: Were the communist countries members of GATT?

HARTER: The Soviet Union wasn't, but some communist countries were. Cuba, an original Contracting Party to GATT, was represented at major GATT meetings over the years. We would have expelled Cuba if that had been possible, but other governments

wouldn't support that. Whenever the Cubans attended a GATT meeting, they delivered bitter anti-U.S. tirades that sorely embarrassed and distracted Henry Brodie and Herb Propps. Czechoslovakia was also a Contracting Party from the beginning, but its representative was pretty tame. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was an energetic player in GATT affairs - but not as a communist country. The Yugoslav representative, a voluble man named Papic, was one of the most prominent Third World voices in GATT, along with the Indian and Brazilian spokesmen.

Q: What was the origin of GATT?

HARTER: That went back to the post-World War II period, when the international community created several new specialized agencies to be associated with the United Nations, including the FAO, WHO, UNESCO, and others. The older specialized agencies - the ITU, the UPU [The International Telecommunications Union and the Universal Postal Union dated from the late nineteenth century.], and the ILO - were also recognized as specialized agencies of the UN system.

The economic institutions were a special case. From the beginning, the U.S. Treasury insisted they must in no way be subordinate to the UN The Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 basically envisaged the need for new international organizations to oversee the implementation of global rules aimed at preventing a recurrence of the "Beggar-Thy-Neighbor" policies that disrupted the world economy in the 1930s. The International Monetary Fund was supposed to ensure that national monetary policies and exchange rates were compatible with international order; and the International Trade Organization was to provide a framework through which governments could negotiate reductions in trade barriers. The Bretton Woods Conference assumed the IMF and the ITO would cooperate to grease the wheels of international finance and trade.

The so-called "Havana Charter" was subsequently negotiated as a basis for the ITO, but the Truman Administration did not submit it to the U.S. Senate for ratification, knowing there weren't enough affirmative votes to approve it. Some Senators thought the very concept of the ITO was inconsistent with U.S. sovereignty, erroneously assuming the ITO itself would be empowered to reduce U.S. tariffs. Some Senators also opposed the ITO, which would have included all UN members, because they did not want the communist countries to be parties to a non-discriminatory trading system. These developments unfortunately coincided with the beginning of the Cold War, when U.S. foreign policy coalesced around the concept of "containing" communism. In the eyes of some, that implied a virtual embargo on trade with the Soviet Union.

A common view at that time was that excluding the Soviet Union from economic interaction with "free market" economies would hasten its economic collapse. Expecting that the ITO would eventually come into being, the United States and the Europeans construed GATT as a temporary agency that would implement the more urgent trade-policy provisions of the Havana Charter. GATT was therefore the center of several increasingly ambitious rounds of tariff cuts, beginning in 1947. In its early years, GATT

basically comprised the European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and several Latin American countries, but by the time I left Geneva in 1970 nearly one hundred countries were members. As you know, GATT recently morphed into the World Trade Organization, which resembles the original ITO concept.

Meanwhile, in addition to the IMF and the ITO, the Bretton Woods conferees agreed that a third international organization was needed - an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which came to be known as the "World Bank" - to finance and spur the reconstruction of the war-damaged countries of Europe. After 1947, the Marshall Plan basically took care of that, and by the late 1940s the Bank's agenda effectively shifted to development and its mandate was broadened to embrace special emphasis on stimulating the growth of Third World economies.

Q: Did you have primary responsibility for particular areas of the GATT portfolio?

HARTER: Yes, after Doris left, I was the U.S. Representative to all GATT administrative and budget meetings. That's how I became personally acquainted with Sir Eric Wyndham White, the Director General of GATT. He had a major hand in setting up and directing GATT between 1947 and 1967, and he closely monitored its executive and budgetary functions. I had heard at Harvard that he was a cardinal figure in the economic rehabilitation of the European economy and the continuing rise in living standards in the world economy following World War II. Nevertheless, neither Henry Brodie nor Herb Propps paid the slightest heed to the GATT budget. Whenever anyone in Washington tried to discuss it with either of them, the call would be bounced to me.

GATT was a unique target for U.S. budget-cutters because, technically speaking, it was not an "international organization." Our fiction was that GATT was merely an "executive agreement" and a negotiating forum, and its supporting Secretariat was not sanctioned by U.S. Senate ratification. The legal presumption was that U.S. contributions to support its budget weren't part of U.S. contributions to the United Nations and other international organizations. That may sound like a nit-pick, but the practical result was that U.S. funds allocated to GATT, although relatively small, were a conspicuous "administrative" item in the State Department budget. They invariably caught the eye of Washington budgeteers. Accordingly I always received stiff instructions requiring us to cut every penny we could from the GATT budget. Actually, that may have been a good thing: It kept the GATT Secretariat slender, sleek, and efficient.

Also, as time passed, I was increasingly designated to represent the United States at meetings concerned with the trade of developing countries, especially those that focused on trade restrictions that developing countries claimed were necessary to rectify their balance of payments. GATT essentially required countries that maintained such import restrictions to defend them annually in formal on-the-record meetings.

The State Department tended to see those balance of payments sessions as pro forma and inconsequential because Article XV of the General Agreement bestowed on the IMF

authority to sanction a government's imposition of import restrictions to safeguard its balance of payments. However, those meetings provided underutilized opportunities: I usually received excellent and detailed instructions that highlighted the adverse economic effects of bad economic policies, and the erring governments usually sent senior trade-policy officials to defend those policies. We could have made good use, in bilateral and other multilateral fora, of the official GATT reports that fully recapitulated the points we made in those meetings and the superficial rebuttals. With this in mind, Roderick Abbott of the U.K. and I floated a joint U.S./U.K. initiative to upgrade those balance of payments meetings, but our proposal wasn't well received either in Washington or London.

Q: Didn't the developing countries complain that GATT was a "rich man's club" that gave insufficient priority to their trade interests?

HARTER: Yes, they did, vehemently and incessantly. It was a mantra! In response, the GATT charter was amended after the first UNCTAD conference in 1964. Governments negotiated and adopted a "Part Four" of the General Agreement - new Articles 36, 37, and 38 - that specified that obstacles to exports of developing countries should receive special consideration under the aegis of a new Committee on Trade and Development, which met at least twice a year to oversee implementation of the new articles. I was sometimes the U.S. Representative to that committee and its sub-groups. Actually, we gave low priority to those meetings, because the total volume of U.S. trade affected was not substantial. After all, U.S. policy toward GATT was largely dictated by our immediate ***trade*** interests.

Q: When did the Kennedy Round end?

HARTER: Technically, at midnight on June 30, 1967, the deadline imposed by the legislation that authorized U.S. participation in the negotiations. Actually, the final exchange of concessions occurred during the frenzied hours after midnight, as Joe Greenwald, Mike Blumenthal, and a few senior members of the U.S. team sparred with their European counterparts to cobble together the final Kennedy Round package. They "stopped the clock" at midnight to make it legal.

A friend of mine who took notes at those final exchanges after midnight told me the ultimate Kennedy Round concessions rested more on the negotiators' subjective sense of probable political support at the time of ratification than on the bulky statistical and technical studies that had been laboriously prepared by the bureaucracy to bolster their positions. He also said Wyndham White magnificently steered the negotiators around pitfalls and dead-ends during those final hours.

Q: You knew Wyndham White personally?

HARTER: Yes. He was charismatic in mediating critical policy debates, and he was down-to-earth in informal settings. I vividly recall a dinner party my wife and I attended at the home of Louis Halle [Note: Louis Halle was a member of the State Department

policy planning body after World War II and a professor of economics in Geneva in the 1960s. (Halle is also well-known for his classic book about birding in the Washington area.)], at which Wyndham White's wife berated him as a "failure" because he never amassed a fortune. That helps to explain why, after the Kennedy Round, he accepted an executive position with a corporate organization that went bust soon thereafter. After that - and after his ensuing divorce - his life was sad.

Q: Were there other reasons?

HARTER: I heard conflicting stories about that. Some say he would have continued at GATT if his salary had been increased, even though he was disheartened when we did not press for continuing trade liberalization immediately after the Kennedy Round. We didn't try to persuade him to remain. We thought a Swiss diplomat named Paul Jolles would replace him, but Jolles declined. At the last minute the Swiss Foreign Office proposed Olivier Long as Wyndham White's successor, and, lacking an alternative, we accepted him without knowing anything about him.

Actually, Long had a distinguished background: He was a former Ambassador, a professor of economics, and a senior officer in the Swiss militia. His principal claim to fame before 1967 was that he secretly oversaw the negotiation of General de Gaulle's settlement with the Algerians. However, his subdued manner contrasted sharply with Wyndham White's extroverted, take-command style.

Q: Did the Mission's GATT-related duties change after the Kennedy Round?

HARTER: Yes, but not precisely as the Mission anticipated. Technically the Kennedy Round was completed by mid-1967, but Henry Brodie, Herb Propps, and I were still picking up the pieces into 1968. Henry and Herb assumed that after the Kennedy Round, they would be unambiguously responsible for the full range of GATT affairs. Joe Greenwald had promised Henry that his duties and his staff would expand after the Blumenthal team departed, but only John Bushnell came in at that time.

Q: Why the change?
HARTER: Well, from 1947 to 1967, Wyndham White resolutely pressed the international community, and especially the United States, to move from one round of trade negotiations to the next. He characteristically invoked the famous bicycle metaphor, which held that trade liberalization could continue only as a relentlessly forward-moving process. Otherwise, he maintained, protectionism would pull it down. The rationale was that as trade barriers are reduced - and as efficient overseas producers penetrate domestic markets - the increased competition will force inefficient producers to become more efficient or to go out of business. Inefficient producers will always lobby the government to protect them from the increased competition, the argument goes. When a major round - or preparation for the next round - is under way, the government can respond that all trade policy complaints are receiving priority in the context of the negotiations or the preparations for negotiations. At other times, it's hard for the government to provide

politically acceptable answers. For twenty years Wyndham White invoked this rationale to persuade U.S. trade-policy officials to move from one round to the next, each more ambitious than the last. Following two decades of precedents, it was widely expected that a new round would follow the conclusion of the Kennedy Round, but Olivier Long at the helm did not try to force the next round as Wyndham White had done before him.

Q: What direction did U.S. trade policy take after the Kennedy Round?

HARTER: There was some debate in Geneva and elsewhere about that, but our senior trade policy officials at the State Department basically stayed aloof from that debate. They were preoccupied with the ramifications of GSP, preparations for UNCTAD-II, and the enlargement of the European Community, especially the question of U.K. entry into the Common Market. The Mission was well aware of those distractions, but it did not press Washington to direct GATT toward any particular course.

Q: Do you mean the U.S. position in GATT was passive?

HARTER: Well, the U.S. position wasn't really well-defined. As I understand it, Lyndon Johnson, perceiving no clear initiatives on overall trade policy from his principal advisors, asked Bill Roth, who succeeded Herter as the head of STR, to prepare a report on the world trading system. Roth apparently wanted to indicate possible future directions to the incoming Nixon Administration, and he depended heavily on a young man named Harald Malmgren to help him develop that report. Hal had been one of McNamara's "Whiz Kids" at the Pentagon, and he came to STR to work on agricultural trade matters. In 1968 and 1969 he represented the United States at a series of GATT meetings seeking to project a GATT agenda for the 1970s. Frankly, Henry Brodie and Herb Propps didn't relate well to Hal: They saw him as an unguided missile without an official mandate. As a consequence I was usually designated to serve as the Mission's representative at those meetings. Hal was brilliant and easy to work with, and he exhibited a definite sense of where he thought we should go.

During my last two years in Geneva I basically served as Hal's man on the spot. Of course, that put me in a delicate position, because Henry and Herb - rather than Hal - were officially the principal U.S. representatives to GATT, and they wrote my efficiency reports, as rating and reviewing officers, even though they really had no basis for observing or evaluating the work I did with Hal.

Q: Were other governments represented at those meetings by the local Missions in Geneva?

HARTER: Most were, but the leading participants were senior officials from capitals. Hal usually arrived at those meetings late, and he left early, and I often sat uncomfortably in his place at the beginning and at the end of those meetings. Each meeting would stall for time pending his arrival because the U.S. position was always critical, and no one but Hal knew what it was. He usually left as soon as the key conclusions were nailed down in

principle, sometimes before they were formally enunciated. I prepared the reporting cables, which spelled out the recommendations Hal left with me orally. Hal virtually never briefed Henry or Herb about those meetings, but one of them would sign off on the cables after I showed his clearance in substance.

Q: What were the principal GATT topics discussed in those meetings?

HARTER: Hal saw those sessions as a preliminary exploration of issues to be negotiated in a future round, although no formal policy determination had been made that there would be such a round. The most important questions related to so-called non-tariff barriers, or measures that governments presumably imposed for purposes unrelated to foreign trade, although they sometimes gave their own producers competitive advantages in their own markets vis-a-vis foreign suppliers, thus distorting international competition. The trade-distorting effects of those measures were increasingly evident after tariffs were slashed in successive GATT rounds.

We began by compiling a comprehensive inventory: We asked countries to submit lists of measures ***other*** countries maintained that impeded their own exports. After the Secretariat consolidated those submissions into one large, unwieldy list, we broke the measures down into categories, such as government procurement policies, customs formalities, technical standards, and quarantine, health, and sanitary measures. Herb Propps, as an old GATT expert, grumbled every inch of the way that GATT negotiations would never reduce or eliminate non-tariff barriers to trade, but subsequent history proved him wrong. A separate series of meetings pinpointed the economic costs of agricultural subsidies, which Hal expected the next GATT round to deal with. Unfortunately, those measures remained sacrosanct until the Uruguay Round, which took place from 1986 to 1994.

Q: Where did Malmgren get his official guidance?

HARTER: He apparently had a loose oral mandate from Bill Roth. In addition, Hal kept his eyes and ears open for fresh thinking on trade policy, wherever he could find it. For example, he consulted closely with the Trade Policy Research Center, a small think-tank in London that identified non-tariff barriers as an appropriate focus for the next GATT round.

Q: What was the process through which the United States ultimately launched a new round of trade negotiations?

HARTER: It may be worth recapitulating that saga in some detail because it's an important bit of history that's not well known, even among trade-policy scholars. Here's my understanding: The report Bill Roth submitted to Lyndon Johnson late in 1968 urged the incoming Administration to sponsor a new round, and the Nixon transition team gave weight to that report. Prior to his election Nixon was apparently of two minds regarding trade: His instinct was to favor a liberal trade policy, but his 1968 campaign hinted that Nixon would protect textiles producers from foreign competition, because Nixon thought

Kennedy's pledge of support for the U.S. textiles industry was crucial to Kennedy's narrow victory in 1960.

Nixon early on named Murray Chotiner, his long-time chief political advisor, as General Counsel at STR, giving him a vantage point for observing GATT. I was Chotiner's control officer when he came to Geneva for meetings of the Cotton Textiles Committee in 1969, and I found him perceptive and congenial. Presumably reflecting Chotiner's recommendation, in May, 1970 Nixon designated a Presidential Commission headed by Albert Williams, the IBM CEO, to take a close look at international trade and investment policies.

Q: Was the Williams Commission useful?

HARTER: Yes, indeed! It illustrated how a Presidential Commission can resolve a critical policy debate when its mandate is well-defined and its members understand and agree on the role they can play. It was an excellent group, and its staff, headed by Isaiah Frank, was superb. Its report in July, 1971 energized the Department of State and STR to press a broad GATT round of trade negotiations.

The OECD [Note: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is an international agency based in Paris through which the major industrial countries seek to coordinate their positions regarding international economic issues, looking toward expanded world trade and investment and the economic development of developing countries.] responded by launching its own study headed by Jean Rey, a former President of the Commission of the European Community, and its analysis essentially echoed and endorsed the Williams proposition that a new round of trade negotiations should be initiated as soon as possible. A GATT preparatory committee adopted that position in 1973.

Q: That was the beginning of the new round?

HARTER: Yes. A GATT Ministerial meeting in Japan in the fall of 1973 formally inaugurated the "Tokyo Round," although serious negotiations could not begin until the U.S. Congress enacted legislation that authorized the Administration to negotiate reductions in trade barriers. That finally occurred in January, 1975.

The Tokyo Round ultimately concluded with some tariff reductions and international "codes of conduct" that set limits to the use of specific categories of non-tariff barriers that distort trade, building on the NTB inventory that we compiled in Geneva in the late 1960s. Those codes were endorsed by the U.S. Congress in 1979 and were thus incorporated into U.S. law. They also became law in the European Community, Japan, and other OECD countries. Developing country members of GATT did not sign them at that time, but they later accepted agreements that elaborated them at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations, which were conducted as "a single undertaking" [Note: This edited transcript incorporates factual information suggested by Bill Culbert, a

principal participant in the meetings indicated, regarding these and other relevant developments that were not explicitly discussed in the 1997 interviews and are not otherwise well known.].

Q: Did you have other responsibilities in Geneva?

HARTER: Yes, the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Center absorbed a great deal of my time. It was a unique institution, much praised by developing countries, although it received scant notice in Washington.

Q: What was the International Trade Center?

HARTER: Well, shortly before I arrived in Geneva, Wyndham White established the ITC as a small unit within the GATT Secretariat to advise developing countries on technical ways and means they could employ to expand their exports. At first its functions were not clearly specified - it was frankly a gimmick to preempt the ambiguous but firm declaration of Raul Prebisch at the 1964 Trade and Development Conference that he would establish an international mechanism to help developing countries expand their exports. Wyndham White took preemptive action because he thought such a body based in UNCTAD was likely to encourage export subsidies, which are wholly contrary to the GATT system.

Q: How did the ITC work?

HARTER: Initially it only supplied limited advice to developing countries on GATT-consistent policies and practices that might enhance their export performance. It was just getting organized when I arrived. Three gifted and inspired individuals were already there, each carving out a niche for himself: Herb Jacobson, the energetic and imaginative American Director; Victor Santiapilai of Sri Lanka, a skilled diplomat with prior export promotion experience, the Deputy Director; and Hatt Arnold, a prolific English writer who turned out an incredible volume of correspondence, studies, and manuals on export promotion.

Q: But it evolved into a larger and more vital organization?

HARTER: Yes, the ITC grew into a very proficient institution with a broad mandate. Paul Pauly of the U.S. Department of Commerce, a leading authority on export promotion, attended annual meetings of an expert advisory committee that gently guided the ITC. He helped persuade the Departments of State and Commerce that the ITC was a positive force in the world. I was the U.S. representative to specialized meetings on administrative and technical matters affecting the ITC.

Q: What happened to the ITC?

HARTER: Prebisch was eventually persuaded there was no scope for a separate export promotion agency in UNCTAD, and he encouraged the developing countries to press for the transfer of the ITC from GATT to UNCTAD. We opposed that, but we agreed to set up a negotiating group to work out arrangements for GATT and UNCTAD to oversee the ITC jointly. I was the U.S. member of that group. Those negotiations were prolonged and tortured, and my instructions from Washington kept me on a very tight leash. We eventually hammered out a strange framework that called for the ITC to be largely autonomous, with GATT and UNCTAD equally sharing oversight and costs. The ITC expanded over the years, and when I returned to Geneva in the early 1980s I learned that the ITC employed more than one hundred individuals who fully occupied a four-floor building. By then it was globally influential. It backstopped numerous UNDP-financed and other technical assistance projects.

Q: Did you have responsibilities outside of GATT?

HARTER: Yes, during my first two years in Geneva, I assisted Henry Brodie in his capacity as the U.S. Representative to the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, which met once or twice a year to review the work of UNCTAD Committee meetings between sessions of the Conference. During those two years we were principally absorbed with preparations for UNCTAD-II, which took place in New Delhi in 1968. John Bushnell joined our staff in January, 1969 as a full-time UNCTAD liaison officer, taking over my UNCTAD-related functions. Frankly, I was relieved to escape those UNCTAD responsibilities.

Q: Why don't we stop here and pick up the discussion next time?

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[Begin September 3, 1997 session]

Q: John, you mainly followed North-South questions in Geneva?

HARTER: Yes. Victor Wolfe, your former partner, told me in 1984 he wanted to interview me on North-South issues as soon as your program was firmly established. He somehow knew that most of my Foreign Service assignments involved interrelationships between international trade and Third World development. Unfortunately, as you know, Vic died in a tragic automobile accident before we could schedule that interview.

Q: What do we mean we speak of "North-South issues?"

HARTER: That phrase may be anachronistic today. In the 1960s and 1970s it seemed an apt blanket term to cover economic tensions that characterized discussions in UNCTAD and several other international organizations. The term "North" in that context was taken to include the more industrialized countries associated with the OECD, mainly the United States, Europe, and Japan, and the term "South" referred to developing countries that generally lacked advanced industrialization, infrastructure, and capital investment.

These matters should be seen as the aftermath of the sweeping decolonization that transformed international affairs after World War II, as the old British, French, Dutch, and Belgian empires were liquidated in the 1950s and 1960s. Formerly dependent colonies, protectorates, and territories suddenly became sovereign nations, even though their economic resources, Civil Service, and political underpinnings were too weak to cope with the rising expectations of their people. Some of these governments could scarcely deal effectively with their own domestic problems, let alone their economic relations with other countries. As colonies, they had been closely tied to their European sponsors, politically, economically, and administratively. Unfortunately, the developed countries really didn't focus on the economic problems of developing countries before the first UNCTAD Conference in 1964, mainly because they were fixated on and distracted by the Cold War.

Q: What were the major UNCTAD issues you worked on?

HARTER: The overriding UNCTAD issue in the late 1960s was the Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP, as we called it.

Q: Just what was the GSP?

HARTER: It was a controversial approach to trade policy that was supposed to compensate developing countries for their presumed economic disadvantages, in a sense comparable to affirmative action in the United States. It was a drastic breach of the most-favored-nation principle that had been the cornerstone of U.S. trade policy since the early 1920s. MFN essentially required us to levy "non-discriminatory" tariffs on imports from all countries with which we have trade agreements, and this principle was the core of the GATT system. In practice this meant any contracting party to GATT - that is, any member country - should import products from all other contracting parties at the lowest "bound" tariff rates that resulted from all preceding GATT negotiations. In the 1960s Raul Prebisch argued that this principle was unfair to developing countries on the ground that, for historic reasons, they lacked the economic infrastructure to compete fairly in international trade with producers in the developed countries.

Q: What did he mean?

HARTER: Prebisch maintained that exports of developing countries should receive ***preferential*** treatment in the markets of industrialized countries to offset economic disadvantages associated with their "underdevelopment". The industrialized countries, in other words, should impose ***lower*** tariff rates on manufactured products they imported from developing countries than on comparable products from other industrialized countries. Prebisch wanted ***all*** industrial countries to apply a ***general*** system of preferences to their manufactured imports from ***all*** developing countries. His theory was that those preferences would expand markets for such goods in developed countries and thus encourage their greater production in developing countries.

Q: Why did the United States accept the GSP concept despite its traditional adherence to MFN?

HARTER: After the Kennedy Round, it appeared that domestic resistance in all of the industrial countries would make it difficult to negotiate further tariff reductions, at least until domestic structural adjustments took place in response to the lower tariffs. Some trade policy officials, believing momentum in reducing obstacles to trade must be maintained, searched for alternatives to traditional tariff-cutting negotiations. In addition to focusing attention on NTBs, they envisaged an alliance with those who wished to support Third World development by reducing barriers to developing country exports, and this led them to consider GSP. The turning point came when Australia requested a GATT waiver to permit it to grant its own special preferences to its imports from developing countries. Only the United States opposed the Australians, and that sent shock waves through our trade policy professionals in Washington and Geneva. They were already concerned that France, Belgium, and other members of the European Community granted special preferences to their former colonies in Africa under the Yaounde Convention, while the British did the same for Commonwealth members pursuant to the 1931 Statute of Westminister. We contended that all of those special preferences effectively discriminated against U.S. exporters. Meanwhile political pressures on the U.S. government to extend comparable preferences to the Latin American countries were increasing. Joe Greenwald, in particular, feared that the proliferation of many different preferential systems could cause the whole GATT system of non-discrimination to unravel.

Q: How did the United States approach the problem?

HARTER: Greenwald and Bill Culbert, his principal lieutenant on GSP, attended several meetings in London, New York, Geneva, and Washington as members of an OECD "Wise Men's" group to negotiate the modalities. Once they hammered out a GSP scheme acceptable to that group, they sold it to other industrial countries in the OECD. Parallel negotiations within the U.S. Government were no easier, but Greenwald and Culbert eventually persuaded the relevant agencies that President Johnson should announce in his speech at Punta del Este in the fall of 1967 that the United States would support the GSP concept at UNCTAD-II in 1968. Greenwald and Culbert correctly anticipated GSP would dominate that conference.

The initial proposition was that all developed countries should extend preferences to all developing countries for a common list of products, on the presumption that a unified global approach would overcome domestic pressures in all developed countries. However, the theory insufficiently recognized the political strength in the developed world of such labor-intensive industries as textiles, footwear, and chemicals. Small plants in New England and the southern U.S. would face bankruptcy if they had to compete with cheaper imports from developing countries, and their communities would be devastated if those plants should be liquidated. There was therefore irresistible political opposition in

North America, Europe, and Japan to a common list unless it was very short. Frankly, the original concept was never seriously considered by OECD governments. They knew their parliamentary bodies, sensitive to the vulnerable industries that would be affected, would veto a wide-open preference scheme. They therefore concentrated on developing politically acceptable schemes [Note: Paul Jolles, a prominent Swiss diplomat, famously proposed at UNCTAD-II that the developed countries should pursue "parallel but convergent" approaches to GSP - a mathematical impossibility!]. Nevertheless, once the GSP idea was absorbed in the international agenda, it developed a momentum of its own. Throughout the process we in Geneva were often asked by other delegations and the GATT and UNCTAD Secretariats to explain widely quoted public statements of our lords and masters and the intentions behind them. This was a central and emotional issue for many delegations, and we spent many hours, days, and weeks, trying to rationalize the latest developments, even though we were always on the periphery of the actual negotiations and we were rarely apprized of relevant details.

Q: Are you saying the GSP, as ultimately implemented, did not conform with the original idea?

HARTER: That's correct. Each country developed its own GSP scheme. The U.S. Congress, for one, put its own stamp on preferences: The legislation that authorized us to participate in a GSP scheme explicitly excluded textiles, footwear, and ceramics, and other so-called "sensitive" products. Those were, of course, precisely the products for which the developing countries wanted preferences, because they were the products in which they had a strong comparative advantage. They were also the products of small, inefficient factories in some U.S. communities heavily dependent on their production, communities effectively represented in Congress.

Q: Were there other shortcomings of the GSP scheme?

HARTER: Well, the GSP did not cover agriculture, which happened to be the sector in which developing countries overall had a very large comparative advantage. Moreover, as ultimately implemented, the preferences were ***unilateral*** concessions that could be withdrawn unilaterally, as contrasted with multilateral concessions that were effectively sanctioned by international law. And since they were subject to ceilings and safeguards, they did not serve as strong incentives for new investors in developing countries to embark on new ventures, thus denying a major tenet of the original rationale set forth by Raul Prebisch.

Q: Was the U.S. Mission in Geneva represented on the U.S. Delegation to UNCTAD-II?

HARTER: Yes, Henry Brodie was Greenwald's principal deputy on that delegation for dealing with commodities. Bill Culbert was on the GSP firing line.

Q: What was the G-77?

HARTER: The so-called "Group of 77" comprised delegations from the 77 developing countries represented in UNCTAD in 1964, where they functioned as a super caucus/lobbying group that tried to hammer out consensus positions that all developing countries could subscribe to. After UNCTAD-I the developing countries held their own mini-conferences to caucus as a group under the G-77 label before major UNCTAD and other UN meetings in New York and elsewhere. They still call themselves the Group of 77, although more than 150 developing countries are now associated with it. The developing country rhetoric that was forged at UNCTAD-I has echoed over and over since that time.

Q: Was the G-77 a monolithic group? Weren't there differences among them?

HARTER: Certainly, there were disparities in size, level of development, and economic interests, but in the 1960s, the developing countries were incorrectly perceived in UNCTAD as a more or less homogeneous group. By the late 1970s four distinct groups of developing countries could be discerned, each defined by different economic circumstances: The so-called Newly Industrialized Countries - the "NICs" - included countries like Brazil and Singapore that were developing competitive domestic manufacturing industries; a second group comprised countries that relied heavily on commodity exports, such as Malaysia and Nigeria; a third group included the oil exporting countries, which were generally very quiet at UNCTAD meetings; and the fourth group constituted the least developed countries, or the poorer countries of Africa plus Haiti, Laos, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Afghanistan. Countries in the fourth group, of course, urgently needed grant aid, but they were largely ignored by the industrialized countries. The G-77 claimed to be an umbrella covering all four groups - and hence their demands swept over a wide spectrum. By the 1990s the OECD decided that such countries as the Bahamas, Brunei, Kuwait, and Singapore should no longer by identified as "developing countries."

Q: Who were the G-77 leaders?

HARTER: Different individuals were prominent at different meetings, depending on the interests of countries and individuals. From the beginning, India and Brazil often provided the most visible G-77 spokesmen. Both countries had highly professional diplomatic services, and they usually sent their most articulate diplomats to UN meetings.
Q: What was the U.S. attitude toward the G-77?

HARTER: We were the hard-liners! Most Americans who attended UNCTAD meetings were hostile toward UNCTAD. They correctly lamented that UNCTAD was institutionally biased against the United States. By reflex they opposed most G-77 initiatives, which, of course, were generally not economically sound or politically realistic. The Europeans often hid behind our skirts, grateful that we effectively rationalized why Group B couldn't do more.

Q: Were there other "groups?"

HARTER: The Group of 77 comprised Group A, the Asian and African delegations, and Group C, the Latin American delegations. Those two groups effectively merged at UNCTAD-I. Group B was the counter group that represented the industrialized countries. The communist countries of Eastern Europe participating in UNCTAD functioned as Group D, but they played a minor role in UNCTAD, individually and collectively. Yugoslavia and Romania considered themselves members of the Group of 77.

Q: What about the Soviets?

HARTER: They were the most prominent member of Group D, but they were not active participants in UNCTAD. There was a separate UNCTAD committee ostensibly charged with fostering trade between the communist countries and the developing countries, and a small unit within the Secretariat compiled statistics and published occasional studies related to that trade. In addition, the Secretariat facilitated occasional government-to-government negotiations, as by supplying translators and meeting rooms. Large Soviet delegations sometimes came to Geneva for those meetings. Developing country delegations complained to us that those negotiations were difficult and yielded little benefit to them. Incidentally, that experience illuminated the advantages of dealing with trade multilaterally.

Q: I assume each industrial nation was especially generous toward countries with which it had historic ties. Did UNCTAD provide a forum for working out fairness and largesse across the board?

HARTER: Well, the former colonial countries weren't really as generous toward their former dependent territories as they claimed. In many cases, the net flow of resources continued to be from the newly independent areas to the European countries, even after decolonization. The Scandinavian countries and the Canadians - and sometimes the Australians and New Zealanders - were usually ahead of France, England, and the United States in providing real resources to developing countries in UNCTAD. Whatever the circumstances, the U.S. role in UNCTAD was always conspicuous because our economy was so dominant.

Q: Was there any overall formula for measuring the desirable level of aid?

HARTER: UNCTAD promoted the concept that each Group B country should extend assistance to developing countries amounting to one percent of its GNP. We objected to those targets, pointing out that the total amount of our aid far exceeded that of other countries, even though the total of our government-to-government financial assistance to developing countries represented only a fraction of one percent of our GNP. We also stressed that the absorptive capacity of recipient countries - their ability to utilize external assistance effectively - should always be weighed. The ***quality*** of aid, we stressed, was more crucial than its quantity.

Q: You're saying the monetary value of the aid we provide developing countries is not necessarily an indication of its impact on economic development?

HARTER: Correct. The ***military*** assistance we provided developing countries over the years exceeded the ***economic*** assistance we earmarked for education, health, agriculture, and transportation to raise living standards. The "aid" we granted clearly affected decisions of recipient governments directing the deployment of their own scarce resources. Beyond that, there has often been subterfuge in that much of the economic activity described as "foreign aid" was really designed to promote donor country exports. Also, we should keep in mind that a large share of total U.S. aid during the Cold War, whether military or economic, was ***politically*** inspired. Take our very large programs in Israel and Egypt, for example.

Q: Did you have other responsibilities in Geneva?

HARTER: Well, I was designated the Mission's liaison officer for CERN [Note: CERN, located on the outskirts of Geneva, is the world's largest research center for the study of subatomic particles. It is sponsored by an association of 14 European countries sometimes known as the European Organization for Nuclear Research. (The name "CERN" is an acronym based on an earlier French name of the association.)], but that merely entailed occasional transmissions of scientific communications between technical agencies in the United States and CERN.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

HARTER: Roger Tubby was our Ambassador the first three years I was there. He had been Harry Truman's Press Secretary. He was a warm person who knew everyone who counted in Geneva and Washington, and he had a good sense of what the Mission could accomplish. Incidentally, he asked me to serve as control officer for Senator Fulbright when the Senator participated in the 1967 *Pacem en Terris* conference in Geneva. I had met the Senator earlier and my wife and I welcomed the opportunity to escort him and Mrs. Fulbright during their visit.
Tubby's DCM was Charlie Mace, an executive officer whose talents and interests effectively complemented those of Ambassador Tubby. Charlie was the twin brother of Howard Mace, by the way. They looked very much alike, but they were very different kinds of persons. I knew Charlie as a friendly, outgoing person, whereas my later encounters with his brother revealed the stern manner for which Howard was famous. Perhaps we can discuss Howard Mace later. Tubby left Geneva in 1969, after some six years.

Q: Who replaced Tubby?

HARTER: That was Idar Rimstad. I recently read the transcript of your interview with him, in which Rimstad said there was no real substantive job for a U.S. Ambassador in Geneva. He said the Geneva operation was really a management job, and since there was

nothing for him to do he let the Mission's administrative staff take care of it. That showed how little he understood what was going on in Geneva. Rimstad said in your interview he never wrote a speech he gave, but he gave a lot of speeches. That was true. Unfortunately, when he read the speeches, it was obvious he didn't have the foggiest notion of their substance. Before he came to Geneva, he held the top management job at the State Department once filled by Loy Henderson.

Q: What was Rimstad's approach to that job in the Department?

HARTER: Basically, Rimstad radically altered the personnel practices of Loy Henderson, who steadfastly refused to practice large-scale selection-out. In 1968 Rimstad, as Under Secretary, approved a major change in the precepts that governed promotions, and after that he forced many first-rate Foreign Service Officers into premature retirement. Nothing like that had ever been seen in the history of the Foreign Service. Whereas Henderson valued seniority, Rimstad lowered the priority accorded experience, at the behest of the Young Turks who seized control of AFSA in 1968.

Q: Who were the Young Turks?

HARTER: They were a group of young Foreign Service Officers, including Lannon Walker, Bill Harrop, Charlie Bray, Frank Weise, and Dan Newberry. They groused that their State Department careers were progressing too slowly ***because***, in their view, the upper reaches of the Foreign Service promotion ladder were clogged by too much "deadwood." That was the term they used to refer to "the grey heads and the bald heads," as they called them, many of whom were Wristonees.

Q: What policies did the Young Turks advocate?

HARTER: Their simplistic panacea for reforming the Department's personnel system was to purge the Department's senior ranks by accelerating selection-out, thus opening opportunities for their own rapid promotion. They did not understand the trauma already inflicted on the Foreign Service during the preceding years by McCarthyism and Wristonization. They came on the scene just as the Department was beginning to recover from those ordeals. Anyway, while Rimstad was the Department's top management officer, the career of any officer who had not been promoted during the preceding ***two*** years was at risk.

Q: There was a general push in society at that time, not just in the Foreign Service, to make way for promising young people.

HARTER: That's true. Kennedy's election as a youthful President portended a general rise of a younger generation to prominence. Unluckily, the change in the Foreign Service was abrupt, disruptive, and cruel to many individuals. Heavy selection-out of mid-level officers during the four years between 1968 and 1972 was unprecedented. Officers affected had no retirement benefits, and there was widespread fear of joining their exodus from the Foreign Service. By and large the establishment press ignored - or even

disbelieved - what was happening, but a few reporters picked up bits and pieces of the story. Clark Mollenhoff, a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist, for example, was among those who dwelt on the suicide of Charles Thomas at that time.

I first learned of all that in Geneva in 1968, when I received an unexpected telephone call from Dick Adams, who had been in the Political Section of our Embassy in Pretoria when I was in South Africa. Dick asked me to join him for lunch. I inquired as to his next assignment, and he said he was a victim of the new selection-out policy. He was in Geneva in search of a job. I was surprised because Dick had a reputation in Pretoria as a capable officer. Until then I was totally unaware of the new time-in-class policy. Dick asked when I received my last promotion, and I said that was in 1964. Without knowing more, he said immediately, “You’re in trouble!” He said the Department's new precepts for governing promotion had been drastically altered to favor the rapid advance of recently promoted officers over those who had been in class more than three years.

Q: Any final comment on your assignment to Geneva?

HARTER: Well, my most jarring experience in Geneva was an encounter with John Fishburn, the Mission's liaison officer to the ILO. One day, after I told him I admired Senator Fulbright, he asked me to stop by his office. For half an hour he grilled me on my attitudes toward communism, Vietnam, and the Cold War, while taking copious notes. Finally, he stood up and exploded in vehemence! In a nutshell he said no one with my views should be allowed to represent the United States overseas. Two days later Henry Brodie called me into his office and closed his door, which was usually open. In a stern tone he admonished me for having made indiscreet comments within the Mission. He didn't refer to Fishburn. Henry said I could not doubt that he agreed with me about the "folly and the horror" of the war in Vietnam. However, he advised me ***not*** to share my opinion on those matters with colleagues who held contrary views.

Bureau of Inter-American Affairs (1970-72)

Q: Okay. Let's move on. You left Geneva in 1970?

HARTER: Yes. I reported to ARA [The Department of State Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, responsible for overseeing U.S. relations with Latin America.] on May 1, 1970. During the preceding year, I heard several dark stories about top-flight middle-grade officers who were forced to retire only because they were not promoted within specified periods of time [Note: The jargon was "excessive time-in-class." The acronym TIC was occasionally used as a verb, as when an officer was "TICed," meaning he had to retire forthwith.] - incidents that corroborated the warnings of Dick Adams. As my assignment to Geneva began - my third year at the FSO-4 level - I was learning new skills as a trade negotiator. I received excellent efficiency reports throughout my career, except for the one that covered my participation in an FSI administrative operations class in 1957, but my performance record didn't appear superior to those of a few specialized colleagues or those who held highly visible positions.

Q: Was that relevant to your next assignment?

HARTER: Yes. While on home leave in 1969 I called on Joan Clark, who was then Deputy Executive Director for ARA. I knew her when we served together on the AFSA Board. I asked her bluntly whether there might be a position for me in ARA that might boost my prospects for a promotion in 1970. She was non-committal, but when I returned to Geneva I was told ARA urgently needed a GATT expert to fill a new position and was pressing Henry Brodie to release me.

Q: Why did ARA need a GATT expert?

HARTER: ARA was gearing up to implement new initiatives outlined by President Nixon in a much publicized speech in the fall of 1969 in which he pledged to strengthen U.S. "partnership" with the American republics. Virtually all of our post-World War II Presidents made similar bows to Latin America soon after entering the White House. Nixon's speech foreshadowed recommendations of the Nelson Rockefeller mission that visited several Latin American countries.

Q: What did the Rockefeller Commission advocate?

HARTER: It basically urged the Nixon Administration to raise the priority of the Latin American component of U.S. foreign policy. Its report heavily emphasized the communist threat to Latin America. It also urged the negotiation of some form of trade preferences for Latin America. This initiative - and Joan Clark's recommendation - led to my designation to fill the new ARA position that was established to oversee preparations for the trade policy negotiations anticipated in the Rockefeller report.

Q: How did that affect ARA?

HARTER: An OAS [Organization of American States, which succeeded the Pan American Union after World War II] meeting in Caracas established an intergovernmental group as a forum within which the United States would "consult and negotiate" with representatives of Latin America, looking to inter-governmental measures that might boost Latin American exports to the United States. ARA saw this as a mandate to develop trade preferences for Latin America, whereas Joe Greenwald and the Department's Economic Bureau interpreted it as a nod toward implementing the GSP system developed at UNCTAD-II.

Q: How long were you in ARA, and what was your role in those negotiations?

HARTER: I held that position for nearly three years. My initial job was to help shape U.S. positions for the new OAS "Special Committee for Consultation and Negotiation" - the "SCCN". We tried to devise GATT-compatible initiatives that would promote the expansion of exports from Latin America. I chaired inter-agency meetings aimed at

identifying such measures. My immediate boss was Dwight Ambach, a classic, driven Type A personality, who, unfortunately, was not really in tune with GATTology. My basic recommendation, recalling the GATT inventory of non-tariff barriers that we developed in Geneva, was that we should multilaterally analyze all obstacles to the export of products identified by the countries that produced them. Dwight saw this as a tedious process - "getting down into the weeds" - but the U.S. government and OAS members agreed to the approach I recommended.

The official U.S. representative to the SCCN was Doug Henderson, our Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the OAS. He actually had little interest in the details of trade policy, and he only attended the meetings at which clearly political issues dominated the agenda. I was usually the U.S. spokesman and negotiator at the technical meetings.

Q: Did anything come of all that?

HARTER: Well, the OAS Secretariat published a massive, small-print compendium that summarized our deliberations in English and Spanish editions, organized on a product-by-product basis. I was told it was a standard reference book in government and academic libraries throughout the Hemisphere for many years. It was a potentially valuable resource, but I have no idea as to how extensively it was actually consulted.

Q: Did U.S. policy-makers make use of that analysis?

HARTER: We missed some interesting opportunities, principally because we were spinning wheels in misguided pursuits. I argued that the State Department should encourage our Embassies to discuss our findings with host governments, with a view toward identifying potentially useful projects on a product-by-product basis. Unfortunately, that never happened. Dwight Ambach was fixated on the idea of trying to include products of particular interest to the Latin Americans in the U.S. GSP scheme. Those were, of course, the items that were most discussed in the SCCN meetings, and desk officers throughout ARA vigorously pressed us in that direction. Those were mostly the "sensitive" products that competed with inefficient small-scale producers in the United States, such as textiles and footwear. As we previously discussed, those were mostly the same products that had been considered and rejected when the U.S. GSP scheme was developed, and some of them were explicitly excluded by law from receiving preferential treatment. Nevertheless, we became enmeshed in a complex and fruitless inter-agency squabble over them in meetings that were sometimes quite emotional. The more we tried to rewrite the U.S. scheme, the more we alienated trade policy experts in State's Economic Bureau, USTR, Treasury, Commerce, and other agencies responsible for U.S. trade policy.

Q: Was Dwight Ambach's position favored outside of Latin America and the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs?

HARTER: Yes. Some influential members of Congress and a few U.S. businessmen sincerely thought special U.S. preferences for Latin America would enlarge the U.S. share of hemispheric trade.

Q: How did you and Dwight relate to one another?

HARTER: Frankly, I didn't find it easy to discuss trade policy with Dwight, especially the GATT-oriented aspects of trade policy that I considered central. Dwight mostly ignored our early inter-agency deliberations and the product-by-product review that engrossed us in 1970, but his attention became all-encompassing after the review was completed. He then sought to add products of special interest to Latin America to the U.S. GSP scheme. I was only peripherally involved in that.

Q: What did you concentrate on after that?

HARTER: After the SCCN completed its review, I staked out a claim of jurisdiction in a couple of areas. I mainly concentrated on export promotion, taking into account my experience with the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Center in Geneva. I chaired an inter-agency committee that considered suitable measures aimed at fostering Latin American exports. Unfortunately, our deliberations were distracted by a number of inappropriate proposals of Amicus Most, who represented AID. His suggestions generally envisaged export subsidies in one form or another - the kinds of measures prohibited by GATT. He claimed to represent the White House, but our inter-agency group doubted that he had significant political support. Amicus Most apparently complained to Dwight Ambach that our group resisted his proposals. In the end, we may have exercised modest but constructive influence on export promotion activities in Latin America.

Q: Did you think we should have done more in that area?

HARTER: Yes. I thought the United States could provide technical assistance to help developing countries design export promotion programs comparable to the limited advice and assistance our Embassies offer American businessmen. I also thought we should have implemented an ambitious proposal put forward by Herb Jacobson of the ITC. Herb wanted to use the information developed by the SCCN as a basis for a comprehensive export promotion program for all Latin American countries. Unfortunately, his proposal never got off the ground, in part because a misbegotten and short-lived competitive institution based in Colombia claimed responsibility for multilateral export promotion support for the countries of Latin America.

Q: Did those negotiations produce other results?
HARTER: Yes, we contributed, at least marginally, to a better understanding in Latin America of U.S. quarantine, sanitary, and health laws and regulations that affected U.S. imports of a few agricultural products. Some countries saw these measures as purely protectionist devices aimed at keeping their food products out of our market. Experts from our Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration attended SCCN

meetings to explain in detail just how those measures are intended to ensure that U.S. food imports meet our legitimate health standards.

We sometimes found in GATT that some countries do use quarantine, sanitary, and health laws and regulations - and labeling requirements - to block the entry of competitive products into their markets. For example, we accused Japan of that from time to time. Anyway, after the SCCN reviews were completed, AID published a brochure that recapitulated our findings, and it was translated into Spanish and Portuguese. It was widely distributed throughout Latin America, and I was told it stimulated some modest reforms - or at least simplification and clarification - of U.S. laws and regulations after I left ARA. We also provided modest technical assistance to countries that requested help in meeting our requirements.

Q: Did Mexico have a prominent voice in those SCCN meetings?

HARTER: No. Mexico was always represented, but its delegates were not particularly active. The Brazilians, the Argentines, and the Chileans were much more visible. Surprisingly, so were the Central Americans.

Q: How did you find your relationships with the Economic Bureau in dealing with those issues?

HARTER: Excellent! I worked closely with several outstanding economic officers, especially Ed Cronk, Jack Leary, Bill Barreda, and John Ferriter.
Q: Did the Assistant Secretary for Latin America oversee those negotiations?

HARTER: No. Our Assistant Secretary was Charlie Myers, a political appointee and formerly a senior Sears executive. I first met him just before I left the Bureau, when he invited me to his office to express his appreciation for what I had done in the SCCN negotiations. Before that I had no evidence he was aware of what I was doing. He depended on Dan Szabo, his Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, to monitor our work. Dan was competent and conscientious, but he lacked any relevant background for coping with Latin American economic affairs or trade policy. He was also a political appointee, having previously been a special assistant to Senator Javits and, before that, a Vietnam desk officer at the Department of Commerce. He, in turn, relied exclusively on Dwight for guidance. Also, John Krizay, our office director, showed little or no interest in trade policy.

Q: You were in ARA from 1970 until?

HARTER: Until the end of 1972. The inter-agency meetings and the SCCN negotiations took place in 1970-71.

Q: In retrospect, how would you assess those negotiations?

HARTER: History won't devote more than a footnote to those sessions, although they could have been more useful if we had approached them more realistically. The general sense in the OAS was that we had been there and done that before - and that we would forever repeat the same pattern in the future, loudly proclaiming our particular wish to boost intra-hemispheric trade, while taking very small steps toward that end. Old-timers in ARA said our SCCN performance was not comparable to the hustle and bustle that accompanied the Alliance for Progress in the early 1960s. We've re-invented that wheel several times since then.

*Q: You were trying to deal with trade policy **regionally**, although negotiations on a **global** level had a larger impact?*

HARTER: Exactly! This has been a recurrent theme in U.S.-Latin American relations. The inescapable fact is that the United States is the largest market for most Latin American countries, whereas total U.S. exports to all of Latin America comprise a small percentage of U.S. exports. This translates into sharply contrasting perspectives that are difficult to reconcile and confront politically.

Q: Did you have any further assignments in ARA after those OAS meetings?

HARTER: Yes, ARA sent me to attend UNCTAD-III in Santiago, Chile in the spring of 1972. The question of enhancing Latin American exports was on the agenda, and I had substantial background in export promotion. However, that topic was almost totally ignored at the conference.

Q: What was your position in the delegation?

HARTER: I was an advisor to Jack Leary, the U.S. Representative on the UNCTAD trade policy committee. Jack was the director of the State Department office responsible for U.S. trade policy. I had worked closely with him and others in his office throughout the two preceding years. At the UNCTAD meeting I helped him lobby Latin American delegations. I had a minor voice, but I was at Jack's elbow on the rare occasions when he wanted assistance.

Q: What was your impression of Chile at that point?

HARTER: Chile was in horrible shape! It was fascinating to see Chile during Salvador Allende's tenure, as contrasted with Chile in the late 1950s. As we discussed earlier, Chile had been a victim of severe inflation since the late 1800s. Allende compounded the country's economic problems, especially by increasing expenditures, even as tax receipts stalled. He clearly hoped that hosting a major UNCTAD conference would raise Chile's image and bring in much needed foreign exchange. His government constructed a special building for the conference in a very short time.

Q: Were you able to ascertain the Embassy's views regarding Allende?

HARTER: Not really. Anyone involved in an UNCTAD conference tends to be fully absorbed for the duration. I had met our Ambassador, Nat Davis, in the mid-1960s, and he invited me to a reception at his residence. I briefly chatted with him there. I was pleased to see our beautiful new residence, having been involved in its early planning. Nat later wrote a book about his experience as our Ambassador during the last two years of the Allende regime, but it was hardly definitive. Clearly, the hopeless economic mess in Chile set the stage for Pinochet's coup d'etat and the repressive government that ultimately tamed inflation. By crushing all political opposition, Pinochet was able to adopt the conservative economic policies advocated by University of Chicago economists, including free exchange rates, balanced budgets, liberal trade policies, and liquidation of inefficient state enterprises. The downside was real suffering by the poor, but by the time Pinochet left office a few years later, Chile had contrived a thriving economy. Some economists argue lessons from Chile's ordeal could be broadly applicable, but that's not a widely accepted view.

Grievance I (1971-72)

Q: Where did you go when you left ARA?

HARTER: Before we get into that, let's discuss my 1971 grievance. My first year in ARA was my eighth year at the FSO-4 level, and because of the promotion precepts adopted by Idar Rimstad at the behest of the Young Turks, I was facing the limit of my time-in-class. I was promoted from the old FSO-5 level to FSO-4 while I was at Harvard on the basis of my work in IO. My grades at Harvard were excellent but I didn't receive a standard Foreign Service efficiency report that year. Then, after two years in Bangkok, I was assigned to Bulgarian Language Training, and I received no efficiency report for that year. Therefore, my "performance" wasn't really "evaluated" during two of my first four years at the FSO-4 level - and we have discussed the circumstances of my last performance evaluation in Bangkok. During my first two years in Geneva I was learning the arcane rites of professional trade negotiators, and during my last two years there my nominal supervisors had little knowledge or interest in the important work I was doing with Hal Malmgren. On learning I was not on the annual FSO promotion list in January, 1971, I asked to see my complete personnel record, and at the top of the file I found a memorandum that Dwight Ambach had submitted in lieu of the required evaluation of my performance in the SCCN negotiations. I had not previously seen it.

Q: Why didn't he prepare the normal evaluation?

HARTER: He was evasive when I asked him about that. He wrote a good one at the end of my ARA tour, but only a short memorandum in 1970. Under the circumstances I have described, there was a fatal gap in my record. Dwight's 1970 memo commended my SCCN performance, but it didn't describe our actual achievements in those proceedings. Given the inadequate documentation of my career during the preceding seven years, the lack of the legally required performance evaluation in 1970 was a grievous deficiency. I

discussed this with several experts on Foreign Service personnel policies and learned that I was eligible for a hearing under the Department's authorized grievance procedures.

Q: So what did you do?

HARTER: On February 8, 1971 I sent a letter to Howard Mace, the Director of Personnel, pointing out that Dwight's memorandum in lieu of a required efficiency report breached the Department's personnel regulations and that my recent performance was not otherwise properly documented. I therefore requested a hearing pursuant to grievance procedures authorized in the Foreign Affairs Manual. Individuals familiar with relevant precedents advised me not to provide too many details in that letter. They said the Department's lawyers would by reflex discount or refute any specific information in my complaint without seriously examining it.

Q: Did you get a hearing?

HARTER: Yes, some eleven months later, in December, 1971. The regulations required a prompt hearing, but the regulations were ignored. Within a few weeks Howard Mace told me he had authorized special arrangements to ensure that I would not be selected out in 1971. He didn't understand why I didn't regard that assurance as an adequate response. When Bob Brewster replaced Howard in August, he immediately ordered the hearing that finally took place at the end of the year. Actually, your interview with Brewster briefly discussed this, without mentioning my name, and your interview with Ambassador John McDonald also discussed it briefly. I assume your interview with Michele Truitt also referred to it [The Truitt transcript had not been transcribed at the time this transcript was edited.]. There were precedents of a sort for my hearing, but mine was the first that more or less complied with the provisions set out in the Foreign Affairs Manual. The hearing committee met for five consecutive days, during which H. Rowan Gaither, III, on behalf of the Department, strenuously contested the claims put forward by my two excellent lawyers, Murray Belman and Dick Frank.

The committee's report, issued a few days after the hearing, recommended that I should be promoted to the FSO-3 level. My attorneys probably spent more time representing me ***after*** the hearing than they did in preparing for it, because the Department was initially disinclined to implement the committee's recommendations. In the end, Belman and Frank persuaded the Department's lawyers they had the authority - and were legally obligated - to promote me following my hearing.

Q: Did AFSA take a position on this?

HARTER: Surprisingly, AFSA was in turmoil over my quest for a hearing throughout 1971. Early in the year AFSA instituted a first-rate Grievance Committee chaired by Norman Barth to consider the entire question of grievances in the context of accelerated selection-out. Barth's Committee steadfastly supported me, but the AFSA Board virtually ignored its recommendations. Bill Harrop, the AFSA President, asked Tex Harris to take

an independent look at my grievance. Tex, then a junior FSO assigned to the Legal Advisor's office, called me into his office one day and asked me to describe my grievance. That was an awkward exchange! Tex didn't hear a word I said.

Q: How do you know?

HARTER: Well, his body language and glazed-over eyes during our discussion - and the irrelevance of his few questions and comments - were evidence enough! More important, I assume his report to Bill Harrop and the Board was the principal reason they did not support the recommendations of Norman Barth and his Committee. From that point on, the AFSA Board was ambiguous at best regarding my grievance. In the spring of 1972, Tex wrote an editorial that was published in the *Foreign Service Journal* vigorously opposing my promotion. I was amazed at that because Tex knew nothing about me or my career. Defying his negative stance, the Department promoted me to the FSO-3 level in 1972.

Q: So you won...

HARTER: Well, yes, but one's reputation is inevitably stained by an ordeal like that. The hearing was an adversarial proceeding, and the Department's attorneys were downright hostile. They saw themselves as prosecutors, determined to prove my claims lacked merit. When they couldn't disprove the unassailable facts presented by my lawyers, they pronounced them irrelevant. This whole experience did ***not*** enhance my reputation within the Foreign Service.

To make matters worse, Charlie Bray, the Department's press spokesman - one of the original Young Turks - "confidentially" briefed a reporter for *The Washington Post*, which ran a front-page article that referred to me by name in an inaccurate and defamatory manner on January 26, 1972. The article said the Department's official spokesman "volunteered criticism" of me and another Foreign Service Officer for "certainly inappropriate and unprecedented" actions. That item was widely read and discussed in State Department corridors.

Q: Were there other adverse press accounts?

HARTER: Yes, throughout 1971 and 1972 several distorted press accounts associated my name with Alison Palmer, John Hemenway, and other so-called "whistle-blowers." Some articles were ostensibly favorable, but they didn't improve my reputation with the Department's personnel authorities.

Q: Weren't you involved in AFSA politics?

HARTER: Yes, beginning in 1971. Aside from AFSA's position on my own grievance, I was appalled when AFSA, in tandem with the Department's top management officer, engineered a revolution against Loy Henderson's concept of the Foreign Service by

mounting heavy selection-out of mid-level FSOs. I also opposed the conversion of AFSA into a company union despite strong opposition from members who wanted it to remain a purely professional association, as it had been since 1924. Several hundred AFSA members resigned in protest - and I decided to run as an opposition candidate in the AFSA election of 1971.

Q: How did you do in that election?

HARTER: Not so well. Opposition candidates had ***no*** opportunity to inform AFSA members of their views on controversial issues. More generally, I came to understand the immense advantage of incumbents in political contests.

Q: What did you do when you returned from the UNCTAD meeting in Santiago?

HARTER: My tour in ARA was supposed to end in 1972, but my replacement occupied my office while I was away. I remained in limbo in ARA until the end of the year, attached to the Executive Director's Office. Lacking specific responsibilities, I registered for several short FSI classes during the last four months of the year - courses in Communism, Intelligence and Foreign Affairs, Political-Military Affairs, Theories of International Relations, Public Speaking, and several regional courses, for example.

Q: What did you think of those courses?

HARTER: They were provocative and mind-stretching. They illustrated the kinds of training interludes that should be routinely required for all Foreign Service Officers. Unfortunately, training is a scarce component of most Foreign Service careers, and it's undervalued in determining professional advancement.

U.S. Information Agency (1973-80)

Q: When did you leave ARA?
HARTER: At the end of 1972. I was increasingly uneasy, after returning from Santiago, having no prescribed duties or opportunities to participate in the Bureau's functions. Then, late in the year, I received an unexpected telephone call from Bob Beecham of USIA, inviting me to join him for lunch. Bob was our Press Attache in Bangkok in the mid-1960s, and he often asked me to brief American journalists on the Thai economy. In 1972 he was Deputy Director of the USIA Press and Publications Service. He told me he wanted to improve the Wireless File coverage of international economic issues, but he couldn't find suitable talent within USIA. He asked if I knew a Foreign Service Officer with good writing skills and a strong economic background who might like to serve a tour as a reporter for USIA. I said I would think about it. I talked with State Personnel, and they encouraged me to volunteer for a two-year loan assignment to USIA. They said they didn't foresee a better assignment for me in the immediate future.

Q: So you told Beecham you would like to take the position yourself?

HARTER: Yes, I concluded it might be an interesting assignment for me. I told Beecham I was interested in the position he described, and he asked me to join him and a friend to discuss the matter. I met Beecham and a fellow named Jerry Donahue for drinks one evening at the old Roger Smith Hotel. Donahue had been chief of the European Branch of the Wireless File. I was subsequently interviewed by Ed De Vol, the so-called Managing Editor of the Wireless File, and his deputy, Howard Oiseth - and they approved. The formalities were taken care of expeditiously. I reported to the small Economic Section of the USIA Wireless File in January 1973. The staff included Gene Brake as chief, supported by Dick Wilson, John Holway, Sam Burks, and John Uhler.

Q: You went to USIA for two years?

HARTER: Well, that two-year assignment ultimately stretched, year-by-year, into eight years, from January 1973 through 1980.

Q: What was the nature of that job?

HARTER: Are you familiar with the Wireless File?

Q: Yes, but perhaps you should describe it for the record.

HARTER: Going back to the years just after World War II, before USIA was splintered off from the State Department in 1953, the U.S. government operated a ticker-tape service comparable to those managed by the Associated Press, UPI, and Reuters. USIA sent the Wireless File, five days a week, to every U.S. Embassy around the world. There was a Spanish language version for Latin America, a French language version for francophone Africa and other French-language-speaking countries, a special version for the Mideast, etc. The service was larger and perhaps more prestigious in its earlier years, but it was still a valuable though underutilized tool. Many Embassies took it off the wire in the pre-dawn hours, retyped selected items, added local news, and distributed several hundred copies in an attractive bulletin format to local government officials, journalists, businessmen, prominent members of the American community, and others, who found it on their desks when they arrived at their offices in the morning.

Q: Was that the universal practice at our Embassies?

HARTER: Unfortunately, it wasn't. The Embassies I knew in Chile and Thailand - and especially our Mission in Geneva - made very good use of their "Daily Bulletins," which were much respected and often cited. Having seen it at those posts I welcomed the opportunity to have a hand in its production. However, some of our less imaginative USIA teams merely circulated the file as it arrived within the Embassy, sending it first to the Ambassador. In that unwieldy format it was almost unreadable. A few Embassies considered the file useless, on the ground that it was difficult to place specific File articles in the local media. That attitude, of course, totally misconstrued the real value of the

Wireless File. Unfortunately, senior executives at USIA generally failed to appreciate and exploit its potential.

Q: How was the Wireless File staff organized?

HARTER: It was structured as a series of geographic and functional sections: Separate geographic units compiled different files for Europe, the Far East, the Mideast, Latin America, and Africa. Each unit fielded its own reporters. The staff included a political section, with Alex Sullivan at the White House, Marie Koenig at the State Department, and Blythe Finke at the United Nations. Alex as a member of the White House press corps usually accompanied the President on his overseas trips, and Marie performed the same role for overseas trips of the Secretary of State. The Economic Section attempted to cover the main international economic news coming out of Washington each day.

Q: How did the managers decide on the news to put on the daily File?

HARTER: The heads of the individual units, known as "Editors," met every morning at 9:15, after reviewing the AP, UPI, and Reuters "day books," which listed scheduled Washington events, such as Congressional hearings, White House and State Department briefings, press conferences, etc., and they collectively decided by 9:30 on the events that warranted priority. Gene Brake would immediately get the word and dole out assignments to his staff by 9:35. I would learn at that time, for example, that I would cover a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee scheduled to begin at 10:00 o'clock.

Q: What kind of hearing, for example?

HARTER: Sometimes the U.S. Trade Representative would report on the status of the Tokyo Round negotiations, or the Secretary of the Treasury would justify U.S. contributions to the World Bank. I would obtain a copy of the opening statement and prepare excerpts for the file. More important, I would take notes on the questions and answers that followed the main presentation and recapitulate the principal points in a story. After the hearing, I usually went off to lunch some place and literally prepared a first draft while eating lunch. I then rushed back to the office to revise and type the article, which had to be on Gene's desk by four o’clock, so that he could release it to the file by 4:30. Translators would be standing by to prepare the Spanish and French language versions.

Q: How many articles did you produce in an average week?

HARTER: I usually wrote at least one topical news item each day. In addition I wrote analytical and interview pieces. I soon discovered that the interview articles were especially prized. When I interviewed David Rockefeller, Howard Baker, Frank Church, or Jacob Javits, for example, the interview was prominently placed on the File and was often the lead item in the daily bulletins circulated by Embassies, thus capturing a global audience. During the eight years I was there I conducted interviews with more than one

hundred well-known individuals. Most of them were taped by the Voice of America, which used excerpts for its broadcasts, and several took place at the USIA motion-picture studio for dissemination in video format. I was surprised to learn, by the way, that USIA had a modern, well-equipped facility for that purpose. I tried to promote the simultaneous release of the print, broadcast, and video versions, but that kind of coordination never worked. The different USIA operations were sovereign fiefdoms that rarely if ever synchronized the releases of their products.

Q: Did your responsibilities at USIA emphasize particular areas?

HARTER: I mainly wrote about international trade, especially insofar as expanded trade facilitates Third World economic development. I also followed other international economic issues related to North-South dialogue. I knew from my experience in Geneva that a new round of trade negotiations in GATT would begin during the second Nixon Administration, and I expected the traditional establishment press to give it little heed. Congressional hearings looking toward those negotiations began in 1973, and not surprisingly the Washington press corps mostly misconstrued the fundamental issues discussed in those hearings.

Q: In what way?

HARTER: For example, the media were preoccupied with the Jackson-Vanek amendment, aimed at precluding the extension of MFN status to the Soviet Union. The Jackson-Vanek amendment was a Cold War measure, totally at odds with trade liberalization: Its aim was to ***restrict*** rather than ***expand*** trade. The hearings in the House of Representatives extended through 1973 and in the Senate through 1974. I was often the only person at the press table during those hearings. Foreign Service friends later told me my articles constituted their principal source of information regarding developments associated with U.S. trade policy throughout the 1970s.

Q: Did you cover events outside of Washington?

HARTER: Yes. USIA sent me to report on UN meetings in New York and Geneva and a conference in Seattle, for example. They also sent me to UNCTAD-IV in Nairobi in 1976, UNCTAD-V in Manila in 1979, and the Fifth "Non-Aligned Summit" meeting of developing country representatives in Sri Lanka in August 1976.

Q: Was there any particular reason to cover UNCTAD-IV?

HARTER: Yes, that was the conference at which Henry Kissinger, as Secretary of State, delivered a keynote address. He apparently discovered the Third World in the wake of the energy crisis of 1973-74. His address at the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations in the fall of 1975 generated favorable press reaction and a broad presumption that the Ford Administration would direct greater attention to developing countries than the Nixon Administration had. Emboldened by that response - and Kissinger's eagerness

to capitalize on a new constituency - the whole U.S. government labored mightily to produce a number of presumably positive initiatives that Kissinger could announce at UNCTAD-IV. That was mostly cosmetic, with few practical consequences, but the Kissinger speech at Nairobi was well-publicized in developing countries, thus arousing a widespread impression that the United States was beginning to recognize the central importance of Third World economic development.

Q: Who headed the U.S. Delegation after Kissinger left Nairobi?

HARTER: Paul Boeker was the de facto head of our delegation after Kissinger's day in the limelight, and Paul performed superbly! He was the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Economic Bureau, having earlier headed the office concerned with international finance and development. I interviewed him several times, and I attended his staff meetings in Nairobi, which provided good material for several articles I wrote at the conference. Later, in 1995, Paul and I cooperated in organizing an economic conference on Latin America at the State Department.

Q: Was anything accomplished at UNCTAD-IV?

HARTER: The crowning achievement was the so-called "Integrated Program of Commodities," which was supposed to augment foreign exchange earnings of developing countries that depended heavily on commodity exports. The objective was to foster international commodity agreements for a few "core" commodities - such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, and tea - that can be stored in warehouses and hence are considered suitable for buffer stocks that can be bought and sold to even out global export price fluctuations. Ideally, the agreements would protect producers from catastrophic price declines without imposing unacceptable financial obligations on consuming countries.

A series of international commodity agreements were, in fact, negotiated for some commodities over the ensuing years. The concept of commodity agreements wasn't new, but the international focus on them was.

The centerpiece of the IPC was the so-called "Common Fund," through which the international community was supposed to underwrite financial support for commodity development. Market research and other export promotion assistance was expected to encourage increased exports of such commodities as bananas, tropical timber, and vegetable oils, which weren't deemed suitable for commodity agreements. Unfortunately, the Common Fund never lived up to its promise. I wouldn’t exaggerate the significance of the IPC, but it may have had short-term propagandistic significance.

Q: How about UNCTAD-V?

HARTER: The atmosphere at UNCTAD-V was better than it was at most UNCTAD meetings. Chuck Meissner, who headed our delegation to that conference, was a skilled negotiator, and he achieved unusual empathy with developing country delegations, many

of whom left Manila with a warm and fuzzy feeling. Chuck emphasized, by the way - both then and later in the early 1980s when I returned to Geneva for a second tour there - the particular needs of the poorest developing countries.

Q: What happened at Sri Lanka?

HARTER: That was the Fifth Non-Aligned Summit meeting, which occurred shortly after UNCTAD-IV. I frankly thought it was odd that USIA sent me to that conference despite Gene Brake's protest that coverage of that meeting was not the best possible use of my time and USIA travel funds.

Q: Why did they send you?

HARTER: I never knew. However, earlier "non-aligned summits" produced virulently negative publicity for the United States, especially in the Third World press. Someone in the State Department apparently thought I could put a useful spin on the proceedings, and I tried. However, I was somewhat constrained because I was strongly cautioned to keep a low profile in Sri Lanka and ***not*** to seek interviews with delegates. I was usually the only Caucasian at the briefings held by developing country delegations for the media. I was astonished at the ferocity of the shrill rhetoric vented at those briefings, mostly denouncing the United States, Israel, and South Africa, linked together as "imperialist oppressors, Zionists, and racists. determined to control world affairs." Of course, no opposing view was expressed at those sessions. The few U.S. journalists who were there were mostly turned off by the thunder and lightning of Moammar Gaddafi and others of his ilk who endlessly spewed the stereotypical diatribes so often heard in UNCTAD.

Q: Your assignment to USIA was outside the Foreign Service mainstream. How did you find that?

HARTER: It was quite exciting for the first four years, but I was ready for a change after that. It was supposed to be a two-year stint, but as the second year ended, my counselor in Personnel urged me to extend the assignment for another year. The same cycle was repeated a year later, and again and again. By the fifth year, I began to fear that a further extension would jeopardize my Foreign Service career, especially given my setback in 1971-72, but, despite my misgivings, the assignment stretched into eight years.

Any Foreign Service Officer concerned with economic issues could benefit from the experience I had at USIA - the opportunity to attend White House and State Department press briefings and Congressional Hearings, for example, and numerous economic conferences. All that gave me a bird's eye view of how Washington works - a vantage point one doesn't normally attain from State Department assignments.

Q: What did you learn about how Washington works?

HARTER: I would like to write a book about that. It seems to me Washington is driven by stereotypes, cliches, fads, and momentum that may or may not signal deeper currents of history. Participants throughout the system - the President, Congressional leaders, think-tankers, lobbyists, and especially reporters and columnists - are all locked into niches that afford them little wiggle-room. Most of them are bound to constituents and fans who expect conditioned reflexes to the day's hot issues, which the media cover with one-dimensional intensity, almost monolithically. Anyone who reaches beyond mainstream perceptions risks loss of credibility. In this context, those who operate behind closed doors, hiding under Top Secret cover - mainly members of the intelligence and military communities - exercise disproportionate influence by "leaking" their favorite secrets, usually at senior levels, often through intermediaries. When the media select and amplify distinct noises from the static, they exercise a powerful stimulus and constraint on government action.

The small band of reporters who cover the military, intelligence, and foreign affairs communities tend to view rumblings outside their accustomed environment as eccentric or jarring unless pronounced by well-established public figures. They rely heavily on written handouts, senior officials, members of Congress, lobbyists, and designated spokespersons, especially those who produce resonant sound bites. Themes that best penetrate their collective consciousness each day become the headlines in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, which, in turn, usually determine that day's Washington agenda, including the buzz at the water cooler, lunches, receptions, and network transmissions.

Q: How were you, as a State officer on loan, received within USIA?

HARTER: Initially my new colleagues weren't happy that I was assigned to help them produce the Wireless File. They disbelieved that a Foreign Service Officer could measure up to their professional standards as working journalists. But within a few months I settled into a comfortable berth. I received excellent efficiency reports from Gene Brake as my supervising officer and from his successive bosses as the reviewing officers - Howard Oiseth, Dan Endsley, Bob Cohoes, and Dick Carl.

Q: Did the change in administration in 1977 affect your work at USIA?

HARTER: Well, yes. In 1977 the Carter Administration changed the name of the "United States Information Agency" to the "International Communication Agency." John Reinhardt came in as Director and Charlie Bray as his deputy. Charlie Bray, in particular, had virtually no relevant background, and he tried to effect a number of cosmetic changes without touching anything basic. Some of us were under the impression that Bray favored a de-emphasis on our USIA economic output. Soon after he arrived, analytical articles were discouraged and we were mainly expected to prepare excerpts from government handouts for the Wireless File.

Grievance II (1980)

Q: You were a Wireless File reporter for eight years - until the beginning of the Reagan Administration in 1981. What did you do after that?

HARTER: By 1980, I was again in danger of selection-out for "failure" to be promoted within the eight-year limit after reaching the FSO-3 level, and I called on the grievance staff to complain that I hadn't had a fair chance to compete for promotion since I received my last promotion in 1972. I pointed out that I received glowing efficiency reports during each of those eight years at USIA - from my supervisors ***and*** from the senior Foreign Service Inspectors the Department sent to USIA each year - but my tour as a journalist at USIA just didn't strike Selection Boards as qualification for promotion to senior Foreign Service rank.

Q: How did the grievance staff react?

HARTER: Well, I had several discussions with Ed Murphy of the grievance staff. The grievance procedures concocted by Tex Harris and Jim Michel in 1972 required an "informal" approach to the Department's personnel authorities - and their response - before a formal appeal could be taken to the Grievance Board. My discussions with Ed soon led to extensive exchanges of memoranda and other documents. Fortunately, Ed grasped the circumstances, but he wasn't authorized to alter my status during that "informal" stage. As soon as I legally could, I filed a formal complaint with the Grievance Board. Ed and I then joined in an arbitration procedure refereed by a representative of the Grievance Board in the Board's hearing room. We soon agreed on terms and conditions.

Q: How did that play out?

HARTER: Once arbitration was authorized, Ed said, “Okay, what do you want?” I said I wanted a promotion. He said, “We can’t give you that, but perhaps we can extend your time-in-class to give you a fair opportunity to compete for promotion." We eventually signed a settlement agreement extending my-time-in class until the end of September, 1983. Ed subsequently told me he discussed the matter with Ron Palmer, the Director of Personnel, and he felt the three-year extension was the limit to which he could agree.

Ed then asked what kind of position I would like, and I said I considered myself eminently qualified to fill the UNCTAD liaison position in Geneva that would be open in the summer of 1981. He said he couldn't guarantee that I would receive that assignment, but he would discuss it with the appropriate officials. As it turned out, that wasn't a done deal, but Dick Scissors in Personnel, taking into account Ed's informal representation on my behalf and his own familiarity with my accomplishments before that, endorsed my candidacy for the position, and the assignment was ultimately approved. Early in 1981, I left USIA and began a full-time, three-month refresher course in French at FSI, having gained a smattering of the language when I was in Geneva in the late 1960s. After some brush-up in French, I was off for Geneva.

Q: The grievance procedure worked properly on that occasion.

HARTER: Yes, thanks to Ed Murphy. In retrospect I realize I had a chip on my shoulder when I first approached him because of the ordeal I endured in 1971-72. I was especially concerned since Ed's immediate supervisor was H. Rowan Gaither, III, who was quite hostile when he represented the Department's personnel authorities at my 1971 hearing. Ed later told me Gaither, recognizing a potential conflict of interest, was not at all involved in my 1981 appeal.

Geneva: UNCTAD (1981-83)

Q: You were in Geneva until?

HARTER: From July 1981 until September 1983.

Q: Had anything changed since you were in Geneva in the late 1960s?

HARTER: The most conspicuous change was a dramatic hike in the Swiss franc/U.S. dollar exchange rate - from four to one in the late 1960s to about two to one by the early 1980s. There had been virtually no inflation in Switzerland, and U.S. dollars therefore stretched about half as far in the Swiss market as they did earlier. We received a slight cost-of-living allowance, but not enough to compensate for the huge difference in the exchange rate. Otherwise, I saw relatively little change in Geneva or in Switzerland.

Q: How about UNCTAD?

HARTER: It was almost the same as before.

Q: It was still the United States against the G-77?

HARTER: Yes, but again, as in my earlier assignments to Chile, IO, and Geneva, it was almost as though I held two different positions in sequence. The first year was challenging and rewarding, but the second year was not a happy experience, largely because of several personnel changes. Gerald Helman was our Ambassador in Geneva when I arrived. That was his first and only tour as an Ambassador, but he was a first-rate career diplomat. Having been the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in IO just before he came to Geneva, he was thoroughly familiar with the United Nations. He had little interest in administrative detail, so he chose Don Eller as his DCM. Don had been the IO Executive Director, and his entire background was in administration. Gerry Helman and Don Eller had a wholesome and mutually supportive relationship that nourished a comfortable milieu for the Mission.

Q: How did you find Helman as an Ambassador?

HARTER: I was impressed with his comprehensive grasp of the Mission's entire output, complex and technical as it was. He read every cable into and out of that Mission. He was in his office by 7:00 o'clock every morning and he usually left about 7:30 in the evening unless he had an evening engagement, in which case he sometimes returned to his office after the event. Early every morning he began telephoning Mission Officers to clarify something or other. I was usually there early in the morning, and I received a number of those calls. Some people thought he was too preoccupied with detail, but I personally welcomed his interest. Also during that first year, our UNCTAD duties were imaginatively backstopped from Washington. The Deputy Assistant Secretary in IO with overall responsibility for UN economic and social matters was Marion Creekmore, who has been the senior international affairs advisor at the Jimmy Carter Center in Atlanta since he retired from the Foreign Service. Marion had a sophisticated perspective on UNCTAD, as did Gordon Brown, his officer-in-charge of the unit that backstopped our UNCTAD programs.

Q: I've interviewed Gordon Brown.

HARTER: Marion and Gordon approved my assignment to Geneva, by the way, and they briefed me thoroughly before I left Washington.

Q: Who were the principal State Department officers directly responsible for UNCTAD affairs?

HARTER: During that first year it was Chuck Meissner, representing the Economic Bureau, and Vickie Huddleston in IO. Chuck headed U.S. delegations to the principal UNCTAD meetings that first year. I met him at UNCTAD-V in Manila in 1979. He was fully attuned to the technical and political intricacies of North-South economic relations, and he was a skilled negotiator. Tragically, Chuck died at an early age in the plane that crashed in the Balkan Peninsula with Ron Brown in 1995. Vickie Huddleston was, in effect, the UNCTAD desk officer in Washington.

Q: I know her husband, Bob Huddleston.

HARTER: Vickie was wonderful! She was patient, bright, endlessly energetic, and she always sent us timely and realistic instructions. Unfortunately, all that changed during my second year in Geneva. Less experienced and less perceptive individuals replaced all of the key players. Geoffrey Swaebe succeeded Gerry Helman. He was conscientious, but his background was utterly irrelevant to our responsibilities in Geneva. He had no previous association with the State Department or foreign affairs or the United Nations. He was in his 70s, but he seemed older. He had been a salesman for Florsheim shoes and a senior executive for the May Company. He received his Ambassadorial appointment solely because he supported Reagan's gubernatorial campaigns and 1980 presidential campaign as a fundraiser. Swaebe chose Marten Van Heuven as his DCM to replace Don Eller. I knew Marten when I was in IO and he was in the Legal Advisor's Office. He was originally Dutch, and he spoke several languages fluently.

Q: There were other personnel changes?

HARTER: Yes. Chuck Meissner's position in the Economic Bureau was abolished, and its UNCTAD-related functions were absorbed by Gordon Streeb, who replaced Marion Creekmore in IO. Gordon took a very hard line in UNCTAD. About the same time Vickie Huddleston and Gordon Brown were succeeded by individuals who shared Gordon's aggressive approach to UNCTAD.

Q: That was just as the Reagan Administration came in.

HARTER: That's right. And in 1981 Paul Volcker at the Fed pushed interest rates up sharply. That brought inflation in the United States under control, but it also accentuated a global recession, which significantly dampened U.S. imports from developing countries, contributing to a severe downturn in their economies. And they blamed the United States for that! Chuck Meissner understood those interrelationships, but most Americans who attended UNCTAD meetings in the early 1980s did not appreciate the implications for our UNCTAD agenda.

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[Begin September 8, 1997 session]

Q: Just what did your job involve?

HARTER: It was a non-stop operation from January through December, from early morning until evening, almost every day, including many weekends. Other Mission officers enjoyed occasional free days, uncluttered weekends, and all American and Swiss holidays. I didn't, because UNCTAD scheduled back-to-back meetings throughout the year, except for August, when most Europeans take their vacations. The ongoing program centered on UNCTAD committees - shipping, commodities, financial flows, trade in manufactured goods, transfer of technology, economic cooperation among developing countries, insurance, and a few others. Each committee functioned independently of the others, and there was little coordination among them, either within the Secretariat or within governments. The UNCTAD Trade and Development Board met once or twice a year, ostensibly to review, coordinate, and approve the programs of the committees, but in practice its overall guidance was minimal.

Q: What happened when those committees met?

HARTER: In each committee the G-77 sought to devise some means of accelerating the flow of real resources from industrial countries to developing countries. Take the commodity agreements for coffee, cocoa, tin, and rubber, for example: Group B was generally willing to accept them when they were structured to stabilize prices around world trends, but the G-77 wanted to peg commodity prices at artificially high levels that would effectively require importers to subsidize commodity exports. One problem with

that was that high commodity prices encouraged consumer shifts to substitutes. In practice, it was hard to find a compromise formula acceptable to both sides, and the meetings often ended in impasse.

Q: Who represented Washington at those UNCTAD meetings?

HARTER: During that first year, Chuck Meissner and Vickie Huddleston headed our delegations to the Trade and Development Board. Gordon Streeb inherited that chore the second year. A different inter-agency group came out for each committee meeting.

Q: How long did those meetings last?

HARTER: Each committee was normally scheduled to meet for two weeks, but invariably, around midnight of the second Friday, the Committee would decide - as we expected - to "stop the clock" and meet again on Saturday. More often than not, the proceedings spilled over into Sunday. After our delegations left Geneva, I usually wrote the reporting cables and our Mission transmitted them to Washington Monday morning.

Q: What has been the long-term impact of UNCTAD?

HARTER: That's a good question! UNCTAD history has not been positive overall, but one should see this in historical context. Prebisch envisaged UNCTAD as filling a vacuum left when the International Trade Organization failed in 1947. GATT was the phoenix that rose from those ashes, but GATT was only a partial substitute for the ITO, which would have had a more universal membership and a more ambitious agenda. The new WTO is more than GATT, but not quite what the ITO would have been. UNCTAD has dealt with bits and pieces of the world economy, but UNCTAD discussions lack balance. Like an adversary legal system, they tend to argue in terms of black versus white, with a view to identifying the "guilty" party, rather than seeking compromise in shades of gray.

Remember, before World War I, several European empires dominated their colonies in Asia and Africa, and by the 1960s those formerly dependent territories were politically sovereign, even though they lacked the institutions, traditions, and resources of modern states. This posed enormous challenges to the international community, but its responses were distorted by the Cold War. Neither Group B nor the G-77 took into account the causes and consequences of decolonization during the Cold War.

Q: Wasn't the United Nations established to solve those problems?

HARTER: That's debatable! Its overriding mandate was to maintain the peace, a mission that was derailed by the Cold War. The Second Committee of the General Assembly more or less reviews international economic developments, but it isn't a viable forum for analyzing interconnections between trade policies, foreign exchange rate fluctuations, and foreign aid flows, for example. Delegates to the San Francisco Conference intended for

ECOSOC to oversee and coordinate the programs and activities of international agencies concerned with economic and social developments, but ECOSOC hasn't proved to be a potent instrument. In fact, it has no authority over trade, money, and aid. The World Bank finances major development projects, the IMF more or less monitors exchange rates and balance of payments shortfalls of individual governments, and GATT/WTO facilitates international trade negotiations. Those agencies are beyond the reach of the ECOSOC and other organs of the UN.

Q: Did Prebisch think UNCTAD could fill that vacuum?

HARTER: More or less. Prebisch and the G-77 attempted to secure a very broad mandate for UNCTAD from the beginning. During the months following its initial conference in 1964, a major bureaucratic battle ensued in the U.S. Department of State between the Economic Bureau headed by Phil Trezise, and IO, represented by Dick Gardner, regarding the precise role UNCTAD would play. As I understand it, Gardner thought UNCTAD should be a decision-making body, while Trezise insisted that it could only make ***recommendations*** - which the United States and Group B could block in the other organs of the UN system. In the end, Trezise prevailed. UNCTAD's power has been limited, and UNCTAD debates have been polarized and shrill. The stereotypical image in the minds of many was that the G-77 was a tribe of whiners making unreasonable demands, while the U.S. obsession with containing communism limited our strategies for coping with the Third World. UNCTAD fora have therefore been the scene of endless wars of words in which neither side really heard the other. Nevertheless, UNCTAD may have helped, over time, to raise public awareness on both sides that global economic development is a complex and necessary phenomenon that warrants much more attention from governments than it received during the Cold War.

Grievance III (1983-89)

Q: When did you leave Geneva?

HARTER: On September 7, 1983 I received a cabled personal note from Joan Clark, then the Director General of the Foreign Service, informing me that my name was not on the 1983 promotion list and hence September 30 would be my last day on the State Department payroll. I was stunned because, just two months before that, Joan Clark herself and several other senior personnel officers assured me, while I was on home leave, that if I wasn’t promoted I could anticipate a limited extension of time to arrange an orderly move to Washington and an opportunity to settle my affairs. Those officers included Art Tienken, Director of Personnel Operations, and Steve Bloch, Director of Performance Evaluation. If Gerry Helman had still been our Ambassador in Geneva I have no doubt he would have insisted that my request for a short extension should be honored. However, our politically appointed Ambassador told me he would not "intervene" in a personnel decision of the Department. I frantically packed our household effects and left Geneva as quickly as possible. Our youngest son, Lal, had just started the

fall semester at Geneva's International school, and we immediately pulled him out and returned to Washington.

Q: What did you do when you arrived in Washington?

HARTER: On the day I reported to the Department, September 22, I sent a letter to Andrew Steigman, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Personnel, asking the grievance staff under his direct supervision to review the circumstances related to my untimely transfer from Geneva. I pointed out the provision for "interim relief" in Section 1106(8) of the new Foreign Service Act of 1980, which was designed to ensure that a Foreign Service Officer who filed a grievance related to the termination of his career would have a reasonable opportunity to prepare for a hearing on the grievance before he was dropped from the payroll. I described the grievance in general terms, knowing from my experience in 1971 that thorough research and legal consultation were critical to success. I took it for granted that interim relief would be automatic, but I was wrong!

Q: How did your grievance play out?

HARTER: Well, the grievance procedures adopted in 1971 assume that informal review of a complaint by the personnel authorities requires at least a few weeks. But on September 28, less than a week after I sent my letter to Ambassador Steigman, I received a curt reply, dismissing my complaint out of hand on the ground that it was "frivolous and capricious." Steigman's improper and premature judgment was deemed a sufficient basis for denying the interim relief mandated by law. His stance was totally untenable: He couldn't have had the foggiest notion as to what the actual circumstances were. It was an absolute miscarriage of justice for Steigman and the grievance staff to make a definitive negative judgment at that stage.
Incidentally, I recently read the transcript of your interview with Chuck Schmitz, who told you that in setting up the Department's grievance procedures in the 1970s, he deliberately intended to discourage officers from seeking recourse to the Grievance Board. He should have said he clarified and extended the architecture Tex Harris and Jim Michel designed in 1971 to supplant the much fairer grievance procedures previously authorized and spelled out in the Foreign Affairs Manual. Obviously the ***Board*** should determine whether a grievance has merit, ***not*** the personnel authorities, whose errors were the basis for the complaint! And the Board, in turn, should be absolutely neutral until it examines the formal presentations of the parties. Furthermore, the grievance staff represents the personnel authorities before the Board when it later opposes the grievant in a formal setting. Clearly the same grievance staff should ***not*** serve as Father Confessor to the grievant when he first explains his grievance, even before he has had recourse to legal counsel. Unfortunately, under the Harris/Michel/Schmitz procedures, the grievance staff tends to adopt the traditional prosecutorial presumption that a grievant is guilty until proved innocent, and in their preparations for hearings, the grievance staff - subtly or otherwise - often prejudices witnesses against grievants.

Q: What did you do when you received Steigman's letter?

HARTER: Well, the procedures provided that once the personnel authorities have pronounced their judgment - but not before that - the grievant can file a formal appeal with the Grievance Board. That's what I did, and the Board agreed in writing ***the next day***, on September 29, that it would accept jurisdiction over the matter. At the same time, the Board wrongfully denied interim relief. That was a severe blow! I had taken it for granted that I would have a reasonable opportunity to seek legal assistance in preparing my presentation to the Board before being removed from the payroll. I knew it would be much more difficult to establish grounds for ***reinstatement*** than it would be to show mere ***errors*** in a personnel action.

Q: Did you ask AFSA for support?

HARTER: Yes, as soon as I arrived in Washington - before sending my September 22 letter to Ambassador Steigman - I made an appointment to speak with Susan Holik, the AFSA in-house attorney. When I arrived at her office, Dennis Hays, the AFSA President, and Thea de Rouville, the AFSA Vice President, were with her. I was flabbergasted! Dennis and Susan hardly said a word, but Thea was conspicuously hostile. As a former Foreign Service secretary, Thea had a limited grasp of Foreign Service culture, but she nevertheless dominated AFSA for several years. Steigman's response would unquestionably have been more responsive if AFSA had weighed in on my behalf. As you may know, Thea was proud that she was known as "The Dragon Lady." She once showed me the gold-plated dragon-shaped broach she wore. I didn't expect AFSA to take a position on the merits of my grievance; I thought AFSA should always suspend its judgment regarding a specific grievance until it could examine the relevant facts, preferably after observing the full presentation by the parties to the Board. Meanwhile, AFSA should certainly defend the absolute right of any FSO to present his complaint and the evidence to support it to the Grievance Board.

Q: Do you know why Thea was hostile?

HARTER: I think the AFSA leadership was infected by a lingering negative bias because of my political opposition to AFSA in the 1970s. They vaguely knew of my two prior grievances, but they were totally unaware of their substance. In addition, Thea knew I vigorously opposed the Foreign Service Act of 1980. I was among the few FSOs who sent letters to the relevant House and Senate Committees protesting that the legislation would seriously wound the Foreign Service. That legislation would not have been enacted without staunch AFSA support, and Thea coordinated AFSA's lobbying effort. Incidentally, I discussed that bill with Loy Henderson, who also opposed it. In addition I was told that "an AFSA representative" discussed my grievance with the personnel authorities, and that must have been Thea. I'm sure that discussion, whatever it entailed, adversely affected Thea's judgment.

Q: Why did AFSA lobby in favor of the Foreign Service Act of 1980?

HARTER: That's a good question! I don't know the answer. Ben Read, the Under Secretary of State for Management during the Carter Administration, told me AFSA's strenuous lobbying was a major factor underlying the Department's position. AFSA contended, incomprehensibly, that the Foreign Service Act of 1946 should be "modernized." Ben Read also told me some individuals in the Carter White House wanted to bring the Foreign Service under the Civil Service, which was then being restructured. Perhaps it is also relevant that some of us who opposed the unfair grievance procedures that went into effect in 1971 prevailed upon Senator Birch Bayh to introduce a bill that would require the Department to adopt more effective personnel policies. The Bayh Bill was co-sponsored by Senators Fulbright, Church, Humphrey, Cooper, and others, and it overwhelmingly passed the Senate in four successive years, but Wayne Hays killed it in the House of Representatives each of those four years. Some of us were under the impression the AFSA Young Turks egged Hays on. The idea may have persisted in Congress that legislation was needed to ensure that Foreign Service Officers had access to fair grievance procedures. The provisions in the 1980 legislation, however, bore little resemblance to the constructive elements in the original Bayh bill! The 1980 legislation was just a tragic comedy of errors.

Q: What happened when the Grievance Board upheld the Department in denying you interim relief?

HARTER: I immediately appealed to the District Court to grant me a Temporary Restraining Order to block my separation from the Foreign Service pending a formal court hearing on the denial of interim relief. Unfortunately, my appeal went to Norma Holloway Johnson, who has a quirky reputation as a judge. She denied the TRO, effectively sealing my retirement from the Foreign Service on September 30, 1983. At the same time she scheduled a hearing on injunctive relief, which, if granted would have retroactively reinstated me until the Grievance Board could assess the merits of my grievance.

Q: Did you have legal representation?

HARTER: No. I filed the relevant documents on my own and I delivered the oral arguments in court, following limited informal coaching from Alan Raywid. Alan was a prominent Washington attorney who had successfully represented several individuals in Foreign Service personnel matters.

Q: Why didn't you hire Raywid to represent you?

HARTER: In retrospect, perhaps I should have. However, that would have cost upward of $5,000 for the interim relief matter alone, and I knew I would need whatever resources I could command to pay for good legal assistance in presenting my complaint in a formal hearing before the Grievance Board. Professional representation on interim relief in the District Court might have enabled me to prevail at that point, and that would have dramatically colored subsequent proceedings. Unfortunately, Norma Holloway Johnson

held the case for three long months until, just before Christmas, she definitively upheld the Grievance Board's denial of interim relief. I later learned that judges in the DC Circuit are, as a matter of course, overwhelmingly and routinely biased in favor of the government: They tolerate boiler-plate claims by government lawyers, along the lines that "to award the plaintiff in this case will open the floodgates to all kinds of malcontents." They also characteristically frown on plaintiffs who represent themselves without professional counsel.

Q: What did you do when Johnson denied your appeal?

HARTER: I petitioned the Court of Appeals to reverse her decision - and again I prepared the documents and argued the case myself. My most vivid memory of that ordeal was the cold and contemptuous scowl of Robert Bork, a member of the three-judge panel that heard the case. That was terribly distracting! Bork obviously didn't hear a word I said. Anyway, the Court of Appeals upheld Johnson, and its reasoning was pathetically thin. Eventually I went to the Supreme Court, again on my own, as Alan Raywid continued to coach me behind the scenes. My appeal to the Supreme Court was also rejected out of hand.

Q: Meanwhile, what was happening with the Grievance Board?

HARTER: A year lapsed before the Board scheduled a formal hearing on the grievance, which finally took place in September, 1984. Alan represented me at that hearing, and in preparing for it, we made some astonishing discoveries. We found the Department lost my 1983 efficiency report and never found it. Just before the Selection Board reached its final decisions regarding officers that would be promoted, the Department discovered that it was missing and urgently ordered our Mission in Geneva to cable a copy to Washington. That "copy," in a cable format, was not readily comparable with normal evaluations. To make matters worse, it was garbled, and it arrived in Washington at the last minute, just before the Selection Board identified the officers at my level who would be promoted. If I had known and incorporated those details at the time I wrote my letter to Steigman, he could not have pronounced my grievance "frivolous and capricious."

Q: Were there other problems?

HARTER: Yes. Steve Bloch, who headed the Department's performance evaluation unit, "confidentially" discussed my record with the full Board, and a few days later, he privately briefed its chairman to "clarify" questions regarding my promotability. There was no record of those ***ex parte*** discussions, but Bloch later confirmed that they occurred. He did ***not*** divulge what was said. Of course, that was highly improper if not illegal.

Q: How did the Department respond when you pointed out these infractions?

HARTER: The Department was represented by Michele Truitt, and mine was apparently the first grievance she prosecuted. She didn't dispute the facts or challenge our evidence.

She either ignored everything we said or claimed it was all irrelevant. My recourse to the judiciary on interim relief probably added to the pressure on her to ensure that the Board would dismiss my grievance. In any event, anyone who objectively reviewed the record could not doubt that Alan Raywid's presentation to the Board was far more compelling than hers.

Q: What did the Board conclude?

HARTER: The Board myopically construed the cabled evaluation of my 1983 evaluation as pivotal, totally avoiding the more central elements of my grievance. That evaluation, on the whole, was favorable, but it contained a specific comment in the section concerned with management potential to the effect that I could have made better use of the junior officer available to me on a part-time basis. It was obviously ludicrous to select that minuscule point as a central element of my grievance, but that was indeed the Board's principal focus. Actually, that "junior officer" was a CIA officer who had no background or interest in UNCTAD, economic issues, the United Nations, or Third World economic development. He and his supervisors regarded his work with me as a purely nominal device to provide "cover." The Board concluded that the comment should be deleted from the evaluation, while stating unequivocally that it had no bearing on my promotability.

The Board also corroborated some of the errors I alleged and ignored others. Again, the Board took many months to produce its essentially negative decision and report.

Q: Was that the end of it?

HARTER: Oh, no! I again appealed to the District Court, this time represented by Fran Chetwynd of Alan Raywid's firm, because Alan was tied up with a major Supreme Court case involving *Newsweek* magazine. This time we went before Gerhardt Gesell, who, without holding a hearing - and after about a year - remanded the matter back to the Grievance Board. Gesell's decision held that the Board erred in having failed to indicate ***why*** no relief was warranted, given its finding that the errors I alleged occurred. He ordered the Board to hold further proceedings, specifying that the Board should review my total file in that context.

Q: Did the Board hold another hearing?

HARTER: Yes, but it ignored the context. The three individuals who represented the Grievance Board on remand - they were not the same persons who presided over the original hearing - construed the judge's order narrowly. The most active member was Stanley Siegel, a USAID retiree who was downright antagonistic.

Q: Did Michele Truitt again represent the Department?

HARTER: No. Incredibly, Steve Bloch represented the Department, even after we urged him to recuse himself on the ground that ***his*** personal and direct intervention in the Selection Board's review irrevocably tainted its conclusion regarding my promotability.

Q: Did you present new evidence to the Board on remand?

HARTER: Yes. The question posed by Gesell was how my total experience and qualifications measured up against the comparable background of my peers. We therefore sought and obtained under discovery objective information regarding officers at my level who were promoted in 1983.

Q: What kind of information?

HARTER: We zeroed in on the promotion precepts, which mandated tangible factors that should be central to promotability, including knowledge of foreign languages, management experience, advanced education, writing and speaking skills, and training assignments, for example. In practice, it's widely believed within the Foreign Service that Selection Boards rarely heed these factors. In any event, the Department provided us with that information for each officer at my level who was promoted in 1983, despite Steve Bloch's strong objection. Our analysis showed, for each specific criterion, that I scored above the median of the 1983 promotees.

Q: How did the Grievance Board respond?

HARTER: They totally ignored our evidence, without comment. They created a spurious device they called a "Reconstituted Selection Board" - a special panel of three senior officers who met solely for the purpose of comparing my personnel file with the files of officers at my rank who were promoted in 1983. The RSB was instructed to determine whether I would have been promoted had the inappropriate sentence been excluded from my 1983 evaluation. ***The RSB did not see the comparative information we compiled!*** The RSB bore no resemblance to the original Selection Board, structurally or procedurally. Its deliberations in no way resembled the complex process followed by the original Board, which reviewed and ranked the files of ***hundreds*** of officers at my level. We were not even apprized that the RSB was constituted until ***after*** it rendered its negative verdict. And, can you believe it, they chose Charlie Bray to chair the RSB. He must have known that I complained publicly on various occasions over the preceding twenty years about his destructive impact on the Foreign Service. More important, he could not have forgotten that my attorney vigorously objected after he leaked prejudicial information about me in 1971 to a reporter for *The Washington Post*. Bray was one of the original Young Turks who subverted the Loy Henderson concept of the Foreign Service, principally by calling for accelerated selection-out in the late 1960s. Given that background, he should have recused himself from serving on the RSB. Not surprisingly, the RSB he headed concluded, ***without explanation***, that I should not be promoted retroactively, and the Grievance Board accepted its judgment.

Q: What did you do then?

HARTER: We went back to Gesell, who then scheduled a hearing that took place in 1987. A year later - ***five years*** after I filed the grievance - he issued an order that upheld the Grievance Board in denying my retroactive promotion. Alan Raywid represented me in the Court of Appeals and ultimately at the Supreme Court, all to no avail. Aside from my personal chagrin, I regretted that my grievance was a devastating precedent for the Foreign Service. I knew I was bucking a system that ***normally*** forced ***most*** FSOs to retire after twenty years, contrary to Loy Henderson's vision of a professional diplomatic service that prizes skilled, dedicated, and mature officers. Henderson refused to terminate a Foreign Service career unless there was a sound basis for considering his performance below professional standards. It was little solace to me that ***most*** of my peers who entered the Foreign Service in the mid-1950s, as I did, were selected out in the late 1960s or early 1970s. I never understood why more of them didn't fight the inequity and inefficiency of the system, and I considered it absolutely irresponsible that AFSA did not do so.

Q: The Department was taking a hard line.

HARTER: Yes, the personnel authorities wrongly persisted in the view that the Foreign Service Act of 1980 ***required*** heavy selection-out at the FS-1 level [The FSO-3 level before the 1980 legislation went into effect.], following the lead of the AFSA Young Turks and their followers. The Department squelched potential precedents that might inhibit large-scale selection-out. I was struggling against an avalanche. No one would say it for attribution, but the underlying attitude was: "What's your problem? You had a ***30-year career*** when few FSOs survived more than 20 years. You'll have a good annuity for the rest of your life and your wife will receive a reasonable stipend thereafter should you predecease her." As I saw it, I was forced to retire at the age of 57, when my value to the Foreign Service was still growing. I had acquired and demonstrated with distinction technical and professional skills in several areas of competence important to the Foreign Service. I had an exceptionally wide network of friends and colleagues at all levels throughout the Service. Individuals in other professions at my age were just approaching the peaks of their careers.

Q: Your encounters with the Department's grievance procedures were bizarre!

HARTER: Yes, and I have kept complete documentation, on the presumption that some day someone might wish to study those records, which illustrate how Foreign Service personnel policies were implemented during the Cold War.

Q: Your experience and your observations reveal important insights into the personnel situation at the Department of State. Briefly, John, what have you done since you retired?

HARTER: Just before I left Geneva, I spoke with Alistair MacIntire, the Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD, about the possibility of succeeding Dan Caulfield as Chief of the UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Division, which was supposed to

mobilize and coordinate economic assistance for the world's poorest countries, such as Haiti, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Laos, and several former colonies in sub-Sahara Africa. I thought that Division had potential for spotlighting the causes, consequences, and potential cures of failed states. Clearly, the distress of the world's poorest people urgently required scrutiny and action, but that Division did not receive priority in UNCTAD. Dan was an American and a friend of mine. He had been there for several years, but in 1983 he was in poor health, and he expected to retire soon on medical disability. He died a few months later. Alistair said if the U.S. Government formally nominated me I could probably expect to succeed him. Unfortunately, Ambassador Swaebe chose not to support me, so that didn't work.

I later spoke with MacIntyre about mounting an UNCTAD/UNDP project aimed at increasing the contribution of the private sector to Third World economic development. I corresponded for several months with the UNCTAD and UNDP secretariats about the possibility of organizing such an activity, and they finally agreed to finance a joint so-called private sector project. However, it was not at all what I proposed! A Third World national was appointed to manage it - in the position I wanted to fill myself - but he had no relevant background. His program fell far short of my concept. It may be that after MacIntyre left, the Secretariat perversely wanted to show the ***limits*** of private enterprise rather than its ***potential*** for accelerating Third World development.

Q: Did you pursue other options?

HARTER: Yes, of course! On September 30, 1983 - my last day on the State Department payroll - Joan Clark authorized a contract for me with a head-hunting group headed by Art Wortzel, a former State Department Director of Personnel. I was the last FSO assigned to that program.

Q: What was that program, and how did it work?

HARTER: It was supposed to help Foreign Service retirees launch second careers. Wortzel's deputy, a fellow named Kit Sherrill, coached me on the best ways of searching for a private-sector job and on how to develop first-class resumes. He told me frankly that few of their Foreign Service clients moved into good positions after retiring, especially at that time, when the American economy was just recovering from a recession. I assume the Department liquidated the program because its success was minimal. Kit told me Foreign Service retirees who held the title of Ambassador were sometimes competitive in the job market, but most highly qualified retirees in their 50s just couldn't find decent jobs. More than a few suffered psychiatric, marital, or cardiac difficulties as a consequence. I had assumed my background constituted a good platform from which to launch a new career: I had a Master's Degree in Economics from Harvard, a Master's Degree in Library Science from SC, a rich and varied Foreign Service background, considerable experience as a writer/editor, and excellent references, but that did not help me find a good position outside the Foreign Service.

Oral History (1975-)

Q: You have devoted substantial energy to oral history.

HARTER: Yes. That began in the mid-1970s, when I took a correspondence course at the Northern Virginia Community College aimed at helping middle-aged individuals launch second careers. The outcome of that course - predicated on my deep interest in history, my multi-colored Foreign Service life, and the one-hundred-plus interviews I conducted for USIA - was that I should be an oral historian. I discussed this with David Trask, the Department's Historian, and he urged me to join the Oral History Association and to interview a few retired FSOs. He thought a carefully planned and executed oral history program associated with his office could contribute invaluable supplements to the documentary record of diplomatic history. Specifically, he thought the FRUS [*The Foreign Relations of the United States*, the many-volumed documentary record of American diplomacy published by the Department of State since the late nineteenth century, usually some twenty to thirty years after the documents were originated] series could benefit, especially during a period in which existing records of covert operations were ambiguous. In this connection, he anticipated Bill Safire's much-quoted observation that history never has enough first-hand testimony.

Q: You have conducted a number of oral history interviews since then.

HARTER: Yes, a great many. *The Foreign Service Journal* published excerpts from my interviews with Trask (July 1980), Loy Henderson (November 1980), Kathleen Bell (June 1984), John Ford (June 1985), and others. In 1980, while I was still at USIA, I signed a contract with the Treasury Department to interview Bill Heffelfinger at length. Heffelfinger went to work for the Treasury during World War I as a teen-age messenger, and he rose to a top position responsible for most of the Treasury's financial transactions after World War II. Soon after I concluded some thirty hours of taped interviews with him, he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The Treasury Historical Association retained the cassettes and transcripts.

I later recorded some forty hours of discussions with Elizabeth Scully Sanders, the widow of FSO William Sanders, whose early career at the old Pan American Union was capped in his later years with an appointment as Deputy Secretary General of the OAS. Between those assignments, he was a prominent State Department expert on Latin America. I have given those cassettes, transcripts, and related documents to the OAS library.
I also taped several hours of fascinating discussions regarding global changes with Hugh Lynn Cayce, Edgar Cayce's son and the long-time President of the Association for Research and Enlightenment at Virginia Beach, and Gladys Davis Turner, the elder Cayce's secretary. Those tapes were deposited with the ARE Research Center. In the mid-1980s I documented the life and career of Howard Head, the inventor of the Head Ski and the Prince tennis racket. My interviews with Howard and many of his colleagues extended over some three years, until I began a nine-month stint as Oral Historian for the National Gallery of Art in January, 1989.

Q: Didn't you propose an oral history program for the State Department?

HARTER: Yes, for some months I fully expected to organize and manage a multi-pronged oral history project for the Office of the Historian. I discussed that idea at length with Bill Slany, Trask's successor, immediately before and after my last month on the State Department payroll. Slany at first seemed to share Trask's enthusiasm for the idea, and I submitted a written proposal, which I discussed with Joan Clark, Art Tienken, the Director of Personnel Operations, and others. I was under the impression they all favored my temporary assignment to Slany's office to get the program off the ground. To my consternation, all that crashed when Steigman decreed that my Foreign Service career must be terminated on September 30, 1983.

Q: What were the specific elements of your proposal?

HARTER: The basic thrust was to fill in gaps and clarify ambiguities in the documentary record of post-World War II U.S. diplomatic history, to be managed in concert with the Presidential Libraries. When it became evident that wouldn't work, I submitted a similar but more limited proposal to the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs at FSI, soon after it was established. The Center responded in 1985 that my proposal was too ambitious, and I quickly drafted a more narrowly targeted plan to clarify and expand the formal record of U.S.-China relations between 1949 and 1972. It's a shame that didn't fly because several individuals with valuable insights into that strange and controversial history have died since that time. Although these more ambitious initiatives didn't materialize, I have, over the years, completed many good interviews with colleagues, friends, and relatives.

AFSA Conference Program (1989-96)

Q: Didn't you work at AFSA headquarters for a while?

HARTER: Yes, in 1989 I ran for election as a retired representative on the AFSA Board, and to the consternation of the AFSA establishment I won. I had been a candidate for AFSA Board positions on several occasions before that, and I had lodged formal complaints with the Labor Department regarding AFSA's defective election procedures.

Q: What was wrong with AFSA elections?

HARTER: The basic problem was that candidates were never able to inform AFSA members of their platforms, and the electorate therefore had no means of grasping the choices before them. That's why the AFSA leadership has rarely been challenged electorally, and that's also why the opposition that did materialize tended to be bitter and controversial.

Q: Do you mean AFSA is in some ways unique?

HARTER: Yes, AFSA is an unusual organization. Few of its members are in any particular location, and there is little interaction between and among members in different locations. A large number are in Washington, of course, but more are scattered among our overseas Embassies and Consulates. More than a third are retirees spread across the United States and overseas. An imaginative elections process could be devised to inform members of their election choices - through *The Foreign Service Journal*, for example, or through widely-distributed video-taped presentations. Sadly, we have never seen anything like that!

Anyway, by a fluke I joined the Board at the end of the Cold War, a period that presented exceptional challenges and opportunities for the Foreign Service. With that in mind, I resigned my position at the National Gallery of Art in September, 1989 so that I could work full-time for AFSA. It's tragic that we did not respond more imaginatively to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Q: How did the Board respond to the end of the Cold War?

HARTER: At first it looked promising. Sabine Sisk, our energetic and talented Executive Director, arranged a retreat for the Board immediately after the election to assess the opportunities before us. To me, that was an electric experience! Sabine hired a live-wire facilitator named Harry Wilkinson, who was a genius at stimulating productive brainstorming. He was, by the way, no relation to Ted Wilkinson, our president. Harry divided us into two task forces, one to consider the AFSA mission and the other to identify possible means of informing the public of that mission. The first group, unfortunately, became bogged down in semantical nonsense and produced a banal collection of cliches.

I was assigned to the highly motivated outreach group chaired by Chuck Schmitz, which happened to include a few outstanding officers: Dave Schneider, Dave Jones, Purnell Delly, and Ross Quan. Our mandate was to consider means of projecting a favorable image of the Foreign Service and mobilizing a public constituency to support it. Our starting point was a decision by the preceding Board that anticipated an AFSA-sponsored conference in the fall of 1989. Our forerunners didn't specify any particular kind of conference - their fuzzy objective was merely to encourage AFSA members to attend the annual AFSA general meeting by linking it to a conference. I argued that wasn't practical - we shouldn't organize a conference in conjunction with the general meeting - but I agreed it was a great idea for AFSA to sponsor a conference. The group bought my fundamental suggestion that the conference should seek to initiate a sustained government-business dialogue on international economic issues. Chuck was disinclined to break the link with the general meeting at that time, but he said, “Let’s decide later how this will work out, but let’s agree now that AFSA will sponsor a conference to promote government-business dialogue, and John Harter and I will organize it.” Chuck enthusiastically presented that conclusion to our plenary, and the Board endorsed it at its first meeting after the retreat. I was occupied full time for the next few weeks in

organizing the conference. Luckily, we recruited Larry Eagleburger as our keynote speaker.

Q: What was his position?

HARTER: Eagleburger was Deputy Secretary, and his involvement contributed significantly to our success! It helped to galvanize the Board. Eagleburger's speech at our conference became a classic and much-quoted mandate for the Foreign Service to raise the priority of assistance to the overseas American business community. Actually, I prepared a first draft, which Chuck edited, and then Tom Robinson and Alan Larson of the Department's Economic Bureau completely rewrote it. A wordsmith in Eagleburger's office burnished it, and the final version was a superb piece that concluded with a so-called "Businessman's Bill of Rights," basically asserting that American businessmen have the right to be heard at U.S. Embassies and in the Department. If and when they didn't receive appropriate attention, Eagleburger said, they should appeal to him personally. The speech received little publicity in the United States, but USIA gave it maximum coverage overseas. Eagleburger later asked the Department's Inspector General to use his speech as an informal checklist for Foreign Service Inspectors reviewing commercial programs at our Embassies, and that greatly amplified its resonance.

Q: Was the conference linked to the annual AFSA meeting?

HARTER: No. About one month before the conference, the Board agreed to delink the two events, and the conference stood on its own. It was a triumph! We featured top-flight speakers, including Frank Carlucci, Fred Bergsten, and Joan Spero, the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs in the new Bush Administration. The AFSA Board and the Economic Bureau were startled at the extent and depth of our impact. Sabine's enthusiasm and efficiency were important keys to our accomplishment. Sabine, by the way, was an absolutely marvelous Executive Director! AFSA was in the red when she took over, but she ran a tight ship, and she quickly turned its deficits into surpluses.

Q: Didn't you manage other AFSA conferences after that?
HARTER: Yes, emboldened by that success, the Board authorized me to organize and manage some fifteen conferences between 1989 and 1995 - contingent on my raising the money to pay for them.

Each of those conferences centered on a specific international economic issue, such as strategic export controls, export promotion, targeting R&D for competitive advantage, oil and foreign affairs, APEC, American pharmaceuticals in the global village, and trade in services, for example. Each was targeted at an identifiable constituency, bringing together corporate leaders in that sector with mid-level FSOs who were familiar with their interests. Prominent corporations and private sector organizations cosponsored the conferences, and each attracted a sophisticated audience.

We produced and distributed several thousand copies of attractive, succinct, and authoritative reports for each conference, and the feedback convinced us they reached appreciative readers. To the delight of the Board - and Sabine - all of the conferences, except for the first one, paid for themselves. We charged a registration fee for corporate attendees, while waiving the fee for AFSA members. Corporations and foundations defrayed all costs. Over the six years I managed the conference program we raised more than one million dollars for AFSA, which paid for all direct conference-related expenses plus liberal outlays to AFSA headquarters for overhead.

Q: A great many conferences take place in Washington. Didn't yours merely replicate what was already being done?

HARTER: No, ours were unique. Washington hosts many conferences - as do many other cities. Those conferences wouldn't occur - and attendees wouldn't pay the usual four-digit registration fees - if they didn't serve useful purposes. They generally showcase the special preoccupations and biases of their sponsors. Ours featured mid-level Foreign Service Officers who are rarely if ever invited to participate in other fora. In other words, our conferences uniquely displayed the knowledge and skills of career diplomats and promoted interaction and mutual understanding of the interests, priorities, and expectations of the international business community and the Foreign Service.

Q: Did the AFSA conferences have a broad or overall purpose beyond that?

HARTER: We had two overarching goals. We wanted leading corporations to see that at least some Foreign Service Officers appreciate their contribution to the world economy; and we wanted to foment a cultural revolution within the Foreign Service whereby U.S. ***economic*** relations with the rest of the world would be deemed central to our whole foreign policy process. Actually, by the mid-1990s we were succeeding on both counts - and we were developing momentum. When we initiated the program in 1989 few U.S. corporations knew anything about AFSA, but by 1995 a solid, appreciative, and expanding core of corporate sponsors comprised dependable constituents. We also received good press.

Q: Did the Department of State support the program?

HARTER: Enthusiastically! The Economic Bureau, economic officers in the geographic bureaus, and INR strongly backed us, and we enlisted articulate FSOs as speakers. Ambassador Paul Cleveland, Coordinator for Business Affairs, and Ken Roberts, INR Director of External Research, were our staunchest champions. They both arranged for the Department to allocate significant funds to the program, which helped attract private sector contributions. Ambassador Cleveland, a career FSO who had been concerned with commercial affairs through much of his career, highly valued our achievements. Unfortunately, his replacement was a political appointee who showed little grasp of - or interest in - what we were doing.

Q: What happened to the program?

HARTER: Perhaps I overreached. In 1993, building on our continuing success, I proposed an ambitious four-day conference to explore new dimensions in foreign policy and interactions between globalization, Third World development, the environment, the evolving UN system, and the increasingly visible non-governmental organizations. The wealthy Herbert Quandt Foundation of Germany, which dispensed large Volkswagen sums for worthy causes, encouraged us to explore that concept. However, Tex Harris, who became AFSA President that year, was at best indifferent to the whole conference program, and Susan Reardon, who succeeded Sabine Sisk as our Executive Director, was less than lukewarm about it. After Sabine resigned in October, 1992 it was an uphill climb.

Tex urged us to organize "politically-oriented" conferences on human rights and democratization and to explore the prospect of mounting conferences in cities other than Washington, DC. I agreed that such conferences could be useful, but I tried to tell him it would be difficult to persuade the corporations that financed our economically-oriented events in Washington to pay for the programs he favored. Tex and Susan hired another retiree to manage conferences on Vietnam and Africa, and the program quickly withered away.

Q: Did you organize other conferences after you left AFSA?

HARTER: Yes, in partnership with Paul Boeker, President of the Institute of the Americas, I conceptualized and managed a conference on Western Hemisphere trade, and, in cooperation with a Washington think-tank known as Resources for the Future, I organized another conference on climate change. Both of those conferences took place at the State Department, and in some respects they were superior to our AFSA conferences. After that, I tried to put together conferences on peace in the Middle East, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, sustainable development, telecommunications, the international financial institutions, and the world trading system and the least developed countries, for example. There was substantial interest in each of those, and undoubtedly they all would have been well received, but it proved difficult to secure a solid financial basis for any conference program featuring FSOs without a permanent and well-motivated institutional base.

Q: Aside from the economically oriented conferences, how did AFSA respond to the end of the Cold War?

HARTER: Minimally. My hopes were briefly aroused in early 1992 when Sabine Sisk persuaded Hume Horan [Note: Hume Horan succeeded Ted Wilkinson as AFSA President in 1991.] that AFSA should produce a "White Paper" as a blueprint for updating the U.S. diplomatic establishment and that AFSA should enlist me to produce it. That was certainly the optimal strategic moment - before the Presidential and Congressional races dominated media attention later in the year. Hume called me into his

office to offer me a contract to draft such a document, but my enthusiasm collapsed when he handed me a four-page memorandum outlining his concept of the exercise. Hume's memorandum identified a few focal points for the paper that seemed to me parochial and tangential to meaningful reform and the names of a few senior officers and other well-placed individuals whose views he wished to incorporate in the white paper. His approach was totally incompatible with my own vision of post-Cold War diplomacy, and I reluctantly declined the offer.

Q: What happened after that?

HARTER: Well, in rebuffing Hume's overture I conspicuously lost his confidence. He and Sabine hired John Owens, a retired FSO with good writing skills, to undertake the task. Owens diligently tried to fill Hume's narrowly-focused prescription. He steadfastly persisted through several drafts until Hume was satisfied. AFSA then invited a few of Hume's friends and some Congressional aides to a meeting at AFSA headquarters to critique the Horan/Owens "White Paper" - and those who attended tore it to shreds. Hume Horan and John Owens were sorely disappointed, but that was the end of it.

AFSA in the 1990s

Q: Tex Harris won the 1993 AFSA election?

HARTER: Yes. It was a three-way race for the presidency. I entered the contest because I thought AFSA was uniquely positioned to provoke public dialogue on the need to reorient and strengthen U.S. diplomacy to meet the needs of the post-Cold War world and I doubted that either Tex or the other candidate would move in that direction. My experience with Tex in the early 1970s convinced me he was committed to the perspectives of the Young Turks, which I considered inimical to the real interests of career diplomats. I garnered a respectable vote, but Tex won the election.

Q: How would you evaluate his term as AFSA president?

HARTER: Let me illustrate with an example: Soon after his election as AFSA president, Tex told a reporter for *The Washington Post* that Congressional overseas "junkets" detract from the time and energy FSOs should devote to their "proper" duties. The *Post* accurately quoted him in a front-page article, and that certainly did not raise the image of the Foreign Service in Congress.

Tex's stance was diametrically opposed to Loy Henderson's view that few Foreign Service functions are as crucial as ***whatever*** we can do to enlighten our elected representatives regarding the Foreign Service and the world outside the United States. Henderson once told me he found that Senators and Congressmen, who rarely see us in our natural habitat, appreciate and remember diplomats who treat them as intelligent public servants searching for a viable context for their legislative duties. Most of them are under relentless pressure from protectionist, jingoist, and assorted special interests, he said, and

all Foreign Service Officers should seize any opportunities they encounter to broaden the perspectives of Congressional representatives.

Q: Didn't Tex Harris fortify the right of FSOs to dissent from official foreign policy positions?

HARTER: That was his claim, but his concept of "dissent" was constricted. He considered nuances at the edge of foreign policy suitable for debate, but not its central tenets. The Young Turks and their disciples stood up for champions of human rights in despotic regimes, but who wouldn't? American diplomats should routinely denounce authoritarian governments, censorship, the abrogation of civil liberties, and corruption. The dissent channel grew out of frustration within the Foreign Service over the Vietnam War, when the State Department falsely claimed that only a handful of junior officers questioned the war's rationale. The many serious critics of the war within the system suffered the burden of Sysiphus: Their arguments always fell back on them unexamined. The so-called "dissent channel" did not translate into leverage for successful challenges to the basic assumptions or processes through which our foreign policy is determined, which are often beyond the purview of the Department of State.

AFSA in the 1970s and 1980s was blind to the institutional deficiencies of our foreign affairs community. The timid initiatives that preoccupied the Young Turks were mostly misguided, myopic, and counterproductive.

Q: How, in your view, should our foreign affairs process be reformed?

HARTER: I see this as two separable but related questions that should be robustly examined: First, what is the optimal role of the Secretary of State as the President's principal advisor on foreign affairs? A sound answer to that question requires clarification of the responsibilities pertaining to U.S. foreign policy as exercised by the Department of State, the National Security Council and its staff, the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, and other executive departments. And second, ***does the State Department personnel system reward individual diplomats commensurately with their personal contributions to our diplomatic mission****?*

The Foreign Service Journal asked me to summarize my views on those two questions when I was the AFSA Conference Affairs Officer, and I responded in a pair of articles published in September, 1992 and January, 1993. Those are public issues that should be publicly addressed. **I hope the Congressional foreign affairs committees will some day invite qualified experts to testify on those matters in open hearings.**

National Security and Foreign Policy

Q: When did you conclude that our foreign affairs process should be reformed?

HARTER: As a university student, before I observed up close how our foreign affairs community really functions, I was repeatedly told the Secretary of State was the President's principal advisor for defining and enforcing the foreign policy of the United States. It followed that his department was there to facilitate his performance of his relevant responsibilities.

I was stunned to discover early in my Foreign Service career that the CIA often had much greater resources and behind-the-scenes influence than our nominal diplomats with respect to U.S. relations with South Africa, Chile, and the United Nations. My concern soared when I joined the AFSA Board in 1960 and especially during my Bangkok tour. In 1967 I drafted a paper analyzing the need to restructure our foreign affairs community, which I shared with a few colleagues. I thought then and I still think the ability of the United States to effect a rational foreign policy was crippled by the National Security Act of 1947 (NSA).

Q: Why? What did the NSA do?

HARTER: It had four tangible consequences: It strengthened the Pentagon by bringing the military services under the domain of one senior cabinet officer; it established the National Security Council within the White House to oversee the management of our "national security;" it created the CIA; and it greatly increased the influence of the military and intelligence communities over U.S. foreign policy. The result has been the **militarization** of U.S. foreign policy, as reflected in direct and indirect U.S. pressures on virtually all governments around the world to appropriate increasing shares of their own resources to military "preparedness." This has boosted U.S. arms exports, but it has not strengthened the outlook for peace!

More subtly, the NSA enshrouded Executive Branch decisions affecting U.S. relations with other countries in a cloak of secrecy. Specifically, as a consequence of the "national security" structure, our Presidents have repeatedly been ill-advised on key foreign policy issues, as, for example, with respect to covert actions in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in the early 1960s, Central America in the 1980s, and, above all, the war in Vietnam. Congress, the media, and the academic community have been steadfastly reticent to determine how and why otherwise intelligent Presidents accepted and later defended the bad advice they received that produced those and other tragedies despite contemporary critiques of State Department experts.

The world has changed profoundly since Congress enacted the NSA in the shadow of World War II, when the public perception of foreign affairs blurred military and diplomatic functions. Contemporary press accounts described it as the "unification" bill, perhaps reflecting undue concern with the presumed need to curb the contentious and wasteful inter-service rivalries that confounded World War II military commanders. Those problems seemed to become acute as Truman tried to downsize military budgets after the war. James Forrestal was the President's point man in the valiant effort to amalgamate the army, navy, air force, and marine corps into one administrative structure

under a senior cabinet officer. As the first Secretary of Defense, Forrestal was driven to distraction. He was a nervous wreck when he resigned after a year and a half on that job, and he committed suicide soon after that.

Q: Didn't it make sense to bring our military services under one roof? Didn't that make it easier to coordinate their programs and activities?

HARTER: Despite its advance billing, the NSA hardly "unified" the services. There is little evidence that it improved their coordination. Since the late 1940s, the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff - the most visible products of the NSA - have commanded a huge share of the U.S. GNP, probably more than the individual services could have wrested from Congress as separate entities. The direct costs of those massive misallocations have been enormous, while the indirect costs, or the lost investments in our national infrastructure that would have been feasible if less money had been squandered on superfluous and dangerous military hardware, have been incalculable.

Q: What do you mean by "massive misallocations?"

HARTER: Our defense budgets have been utterly irrational, especially when measured against our actual military needs. Frank Carlucci once told me that when he was Secretary of Defense, he proposed to Secretary of State George Shultz that State should project the military requirements it considered vital to backstop its concept of an optimal foreign policy, leaving it to the Pentagon to propose detailed military responses. Carlucci said his proposal fell on deaf ears, and the Pentagon budget has continued to lack any tangible and legitimate **foreign policy** basis.

Instead, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marines separately press their presumed military needs, based on their own assumptions, and in the end **Congress** determines the Pentagon budget, relying heavily on the claims of lobbyists representing defense industries, their satellites, and well-endowed think tanks. Members of the Congressional armed services and appropriations committees vote to maximize the flow of Defense money and jobs to their own constituencies. We bemoan those interrelationships as corruption when we discern them in developing countries!

Once determined, the huge Pentagon budget amplifies the military voice in foreign policy debates and weights the political equations that determine many Congressional actions. That's the heart of the "military-industrial complex" President Eisenhower warned us about as he left the White House, and it's a vicious cycle that threatens our democracy.

Q: Do you think we should be less concerned with our defense?

HARTER: We should more carefully assess the military component of our foreign policy as compared with economic and other factors. We should also bear in mind that,

throughout our military history, our most influential strategists have often persuaded us the best defense is **offense**.

Russell Weigley wrote a book in 1973 entitled The American Way of War, which laid out in detail how American generals have **normally** chosen a grinding strategy of attrition to destroy enemy forces. For example, Weigley described the campaigns of Ulysses S. Grant against Robert E. Lee in 1864-65, those of John J. Pershing against the German army in 1918, and U.S. Air Force strikes aimed at pulverizing several cities of Germany and Japan in 1944-45. Our textbooks and our folklore portray those strategies of brutalization and annihilation as heroic.

Q: What was the rationale for creating the National Security Council?

HARTER: A popular theory, as we emerged from World War II, was that we should **integrate** foreign and defense policy. The NSC was intended to accomplish that, just as Cold War apprehensions were rising and as President Truman approached a close election in which he was the underdog.

The NSC initially comprised only four individuals: The President, the Vice-President, and the Secretaries of State and Defense. The Secretary of the Treasury was expected to attend meetings at which international financial issues were dominant, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of the CIA were occasional advisors. Truman and Eisenhower attended NSC meetings, but formal NSC sessions have been rare since 1960, even as the influence of the NSC staff became more pronounced. The President's "National Security Advisor," who supervised the NSC staff, has usually represented the President at NSC meetings since then. The growing role of the NSC Advisor and the very existence of a bureaucratic buffer between the Secretary of State and the President has seriously compromised the central position of the Secretary of State as the President's leading voice on foreign policy.

Our ambassadors were less admired by Congress and the media than the generals and admirals who defeated Germany and Japan in those days, and one can understand how the young Clark Clifford and others persuaded Truman to favor a scheme that was supposed to ensure better coordination of military and diplomatic information available to the White House. Unfortunately, it didn't work that way.

The undue emphasis on the military side of foreign policy received a huge impetus in 1947, when Senator Vandenberg warned Truman he would have to "scare the hell out of the American people" if he wanted Congress to accept his proposal for the United States to supplant the United Kingdom as it withdrew its economic and military support from Greece and Turkey.

Q: The NSA also created the CIA.

HARTER: Yes. And unfortunately the Truman Administration and Congress pondered the content of the annex to the NSA that brought the CIA into being in haste and in secrecy. That part of the NSA didn't become known to the public for many years. The non-accountable, super-secret, self-governing bureaucracy that grew from that beginning soon commanded more money, personnel, and clandestine influence than the Department of State. Ostensibly, the origin of the CIA was a reaction to the apparent failure of the U.S. Government to anticipate the attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, which was deemed proof that information available to the government regarding developments outside the United States - and our ability to analyze it - were gravely deficient.

Proposed Reforms

Q: So what would you propose?

HARTER: Eventually, there should be a sober reassessment and public debate of the National Security Act of 1947, with a view to strengthening the economic and other non-military components of foreign policy, while reducing the impact of the military and intelligence communities.

Q: Do you think that is likely?
HARTER: Yes, in due course - although a sea change in public opinion must precede any such drastic restructuring. Congress and our media would not at present countenance a U.S. foreign policy that does not rest solidly on a military bedrock, clandestine operations, and the whole Cold War legacy of secrecy. Meanwhile, we should reposition a revitalized Department of State at the center of our foreign affairs community.

Q: Specifically, what would you recommend?

HARTER: First of all, we should replace the so-called policy planning staff in the Department of State with a nominally more modest but actually more constructive unit that might be called the Secretary's foreign affairs advisory staff. The change in name would concede to reality. The State Department has never had an office capable of "planning" foreign policy in the sense of anticipating future events, which are inherently unknowable, and then projecting possible responses. In practice, the so-called policy planning staff has traditionally been preoccupied with speech-writing, crisis management, and other immediate tasks, functions that should be discharged by the Secretary's personal staff, acting in concert with the Assistant Secretaries who directly oversee U.S. relations with other countries on a daily basis. The precise role, duties, and procedures of the advisory staff should be determined by the Secretary, interacting with the advisory staff itself, but it should be precluded from executive functions pertaining to immediate crises or ongoing events.

Tentatively, I suggest the advisory staff might have three basic functions: First, it should forge tightly integrated, coherent, and mostly unclassified analyses of foreign policy issues and related advisory opinions in response to specific requests from the Secretary

and other senior officers of the Department. Second, it should review post-mortem analyses of past foreign policy successes and failures prepared by other offices. And third, it should draft an unclassified "Annual Report of the Secretary of State." Over time, by enunciating general philosophical **principles**, through such outlets as these, the advisory staff would set parameters within which foreign policy decision-makers operate.

*Q: How would the Secretary ensure effective **implementation** of policy?*

HARTER: The **Deputy** Secretary, **assisted by a strengthened Executive Secretariat**, should monitor **all** government agencies concerned with foreign policy to ensure that important decisions and public statements by their senior officials are in line with policy directions approved by the administration. This oversight function should be exercised in close cooperation with the Department's desk officers, who should alert the Executive Secretariat to any apparent discrepancy between established policy and specific acts or statements by U.S. government officials, wherever they may be. The traditional watchdog function exercised by the Executive Secretariat with respect to the performance of State Department employees should be extended to the activities of the military and intelligence communities and other government agencies. When the Executive Secretariat perceives a possible conflict, it should refer the issue to the Secretary's foreign affairs advisory staff, which should quickly render its opinion as to whether or not policy should be amended. This would fall under the first of the three categories of its functions I mentioned.

Q: Do you seriously expect your proposal to be accepted?

HARTER: Clearly, our foreign policy **process** warrants national debate. It's unfortunate that debate did not occur in 1953 after Stalin died or in the early 1990s when the Soviet Union fell apart. I hope my proposal might stimulate discussion of whether our Cold War foreign affairs machinery requires adjustment to meet our needs in the 21st century.

Narrowly defined, the question is whether the Department of State can be administered in accordance with sound and well-established management precepts. I have been astonished to learn that influential former diplomats are convinced that Congress will never favor a strong Department of State. The broader issue pertains to just how the United States should relate to the world beyond our borders in the 21st century.

In any event, real reform of our foreign affairs community cannot occur until the United States elects a President who absolutely depends on and trusts his Secretary of State to guide his foreign policy. That's likely to happen when the American people realize that the existing institutions we have relied on since 1947 to cope with foreign affairs do not correspond to our national needs in a rapidly changing world.

The Highest Priority: Personnel Reform

Q: How would you reward diplomats in accordance with their contributions to U.S. foreign policy?

HARTER: For starters, we should help the public understand that our government **normally** relies on **diplomats,** more than covert operators or warriors, to develop and analyze political and economic information about the world outside the United States. It's often said that diplomacy represents our first line of defense, but the media, Congress, OMB [Note: The President's Office of Management and Budget, which coordinates the Administration's budget proposals to Congress. Throughout the Cold War, OMB tended to accept ambitious projections of the military and intelligence communities with little scrutiny, while relentlessly nitpicking State Department budget proposals. (Ben Read emphasized this in a discussion with me.).], and the academic community erroneously credit the intelligence community as the government's principal source of that information. Within that context, as Loy Henderson emphasized, **diplomacy** should be recognized as a **profession** comparable to medicine, law, or engineering. As Henderson saw it, good professionals mature with experience. Foreign Service careers should advance in step with their documented achievements, especially if and when our government adopts their specific contributions to foreign policy.

Q: How is this relevant to overall reform of the U.S. foreign affairs community?

HARTER: Foreign Service personnel reform should be the vital center of overall reform of our foreign affairs community! Unfortunately, the personnel policies and practices of the State Department since the late 1960s have been bureaucratic, arbitrary, and capricious, with a disciplinary element that has forced many promising diplomats into premature retirement at mid-career, as less qualified - and sometimes more obsequious - individuals have occasionally been advanced to senior responsibilities. In-house critics of the war in Vietnam, for example, generally did not prosper, whereas the annual promotion lists disproportionately rewarded hawks. It's not surprising that the opinions of career diplomats tend to vary within a narrow spectrum.

Q: Have we been recruiting the wrong kinds of people?

HARTER: No. Unquestionably, our recruits have been outstanding young men and women! Ill-informed individuals have occasionally suggested that our annual intake of would-be diplomats has been poorly screened, and bowing to that ill-founded complaint, we have from time to time modified our recruitment criteria, mostly in cosmetic and marginal ways. Between 1,000 and 10,000 candidates take the qualifying exams each year; some one hundred usually pass the written exams; and about half of those are inducted into the Foreign Service after passing the oral exams. Unfortunately, we do not treat them well after they enter on duty.

Q: How do you consider Foreign Service personnel operations defective?

HARTER: Sadly, there is little correlation between the performance and potential of Foreign Service Officers and their promotions, assignments, and retirement. The subjective and fallible judgment of individual supervisors - and pure dumb luck - advance or prematurely terminate too many Foreign Service careers. Our accepted lore is replete with tales of diplomats boosted by influential mentors or maimed as a consequence of "personality conflicts."

Modern psychologists understand how individuals with contrasting psychological characteristics, as reflected in such well-established tests as the Myers-Briggs profiles, don't always communicate effectively with each other, even when their levels of intelligence are comparable. Foreign Service personnel operations make no allowance for such factors.

Especially since the late 1960s, when the Young Turks skewed personnel practices to favor inexperienced but promising stars, the Department of State too often rewarded blandness while punishing honesty, integrity, and innovation. The milieu in which diplomats serve has not, in recent decades, sufficiently valued critical and sound judgment.

Q: Don't you believe we should weed out less promising officers?

HARTER: That's a subjective question, because the least promising officers can't be objectively designated early in their careers. Those forced to retire after one or two tours usually suffer poor dumb luck, just as those quickly advanced to senior rank are sometimes blessed with good fortune. The large-scale, automatic termination of the careers of dedicated and highly skilled diplomats with twenty years of service, as favored by the Young Turks, is incompatible with a strong diplomatic service. When threatened with possible early separation, many if not most officers will not risk challenging their supervisors' biases or the myths that dominate public thinking regarding foreign policy.

Some "late bloomers" get off to a slow start, just as those who began their careers with dramatic successes sometimes burn out early. **No** personnel system can infallibly distinguish at an early stage between career diplomats who might perform brilliantly after twenty years and those whose abilities will founder. However, there could be no less reliable system for evaluating, promoting, assigning, and firing diplomats than the crude and subjective performance evaluations at the heart of Foreign Service personnel operations in effect since the late 1960s.

Q: But if too many officers ascend the promotion ladder, we cannot retain a pyramid profile for the Foreign Service.

HARTER: Loy Henderson thought the pyramid concept was not a suitable model for the Foreign Service. It may legitimately apply to military command-and-control structures, where a few generals at the top determine strategy, an intermediate number of officers define tactics, and many armed soldiers at the bottom of the pyramid fight battles. The

State Department, on the other hand, should assign a larger proportion of **experienced** officers to senior positions that require critical judgments, a significant number of seasoned mid-level officers to administer foreign policy operations, and fewer foot soldiers at lower levels.

When we recruit excessive numbers of junior officers, we assign them to boring tasks like clipping newspaper articles for biographic files. The Graham Martin/Young Turk formula has been to create promotion opportunities for mid-level officers by forcing seasoned experts into premature retirement, thus sacrificing the skills they acquired after many years of dedicated service. This is not rational, efficient, or equitable.

Q: How could and should Foreign Service personnel operations be changed?

HARTER: The entire Foreign Service needs a fresh look. Several Senators, including J. William Fulbright, Birch Bayh, and others, took an active interest in Foreign Service personnel matters in the early 1970s, but Congress has not, since that time, devoted serious attention to these issues. Above all, more objective criteria should be used to measure the performance and potential of Foreign Service Officers. A comprehensive and objective analysis of complaints submitted to the Foreign Service Grievance Board would expose endemic errors in existing evaluation practices that should lead the Department to correct widespread flaws in our personnel procedures. In 1965, I submitted a detailed proposal to Bill Crockett, when he was our chief administrative guru, outlining a computerized and decentralized approach to performance evaluation that would help to correct the traditional bureaucratic inflation of performance evaluations. Several computer experts told me my proposal could work even then, when computer technology was relatively primitive, but it was never seriously evaluated. New technologies open practical modalities for effecting such a scheme.

Private sector experts on the efficient management of human resources should be consulted regarding these matters. A blue-ribbon commission modeled after the Herter Committee or the Williams Commission would probably be the best means of developing realistic proposals for dealing with this range of issues. Such a body should **not** include representatives of the military and intelligence communities.

USAID Declassification (1998-)

[Note: This section was added after the interviews took place in 1997.]

Q: What have you been doing more recently?

HARTER: In October, 1998 I accepted a position with USAID as a part-time declassifier of old government documents. Almost simultaneously the Department of State offered me a similar job, but the USAID offer was more attractive, being more flexible, less hierarchical, and more in line with my interest in Third World economic development. It pays well and it's extremely interesting.

Q: How does declassification work?

HARTER: At the behest of Senator Moynihan, President Clinton's Executive Order 12958, promulgated in 1995, was intended to force the automatic declassification of most classified government documents of permanent historical value that are more than 25 years old, except for those that should be exempted for specified reasons. Pursuant to the Executive Order, all government agencies have been reviewing reports, cables, memoranda, and analyses from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. However, the military and intelligence communities do not always respect the intent of the Executive Order. Nevertheless, serious researchers could find abundant evidence in the material that is being declassified to show how the U.S. foreign policy process was distorted throughout the Cold War because of our preoccupation with the containment of communism and our failure to address the priorities of global economic development. Unfortunately, this material is not adequately indexed, and it would require a Herculean effort to identify the documents that would be most revealing.

I've also been working on a collective biography of my high school graduation class - the group I grew up with in the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. Tom Brokaw's best-sellers have demonstrated that we were a remarkable cohort, but he focused unduly on military heroism in World War II. The story of my classmates centers on some extraordinary individuals and illuminates key motifs of twentieth century history.

Q: Would you care to offer any final comment?

HARTER: Well, yes. I recently read an obituary of Victor Frankl, who wrote Man's Search for Meaning many years ago. Frankl was in his 90s when he died. His book emphasized the vital importance of personal attitudes and goals in determining individual self-worth. He survived a World War II concentration camp, where he observed the behavior of a wide range of persons in dire straits. Those who discerned a purpose to their lives, he concluded, endured the ordeal much better than those who didn't.

Your oral history program should be seen in that context. It helps retired FSOs to see their public service in perspective. They can see afresh that their contributions were worthwhile, despite the disappointments and frustrations that impeded their paths.

Collectively, we have left a great legacy. The world is a better place than we found it. It's more stable, more prosperous, and overall with a better appreciation for law and order and social justice, notwithstanding that perhaps we could have done better if the American people better understood what we were trying to do and the obstacles we faced. It's useful to recall - and record - our part in that history.

Q: Oh, I think so, too! Well, why don't we stop at this point, John?

End of interview