

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

**ROBERT J. RYAN, SR.**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*  
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## INTERVIEW

[Note: This transcript was not edited by Ambassador Ryan]

*Q: Today is November 7, 1991. This is an interview with Ambassador Robert J. Ryan, Sr. on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Bob, I wonder if you would give me a bit about your background--where you came from, where were you educated, etc.?*

RYAN: I was born in the little town of Hatfield, Massachusetts in 1914. I attended the public schools there; then the University of Massachusetts for two years; and then decided that my final efforts in education could best take place in Washington. I went to a commercial college to learn shorthand and typing and related subjects with a view to taking a civil service exam. I did; passed; got on a list; the State Department selected me.

In April, 1937 I came to work for the State Department as a communications clerk in what was then the Division of Communications and Records. At that time our communications with our embassies was done by what we called "one-time pad". I can remember sitting up there laboriously working with the pencil decoding messages coming in from the posts and getting them sent to the distributor.

*Q: The one-time pad comes up again and again in these interviews. But nobody has ever talked about somebody at the other end in Washington having to do exactly the same thing.*

RYAN: Yes, that was the way the system worked. It was at that time a novel system. I understood that the Department had employed a man by the name of David \_\_\_\_\_, who had been a cryptographer in the War Department, to start to take advantage of some of the cryptographic efforts that had come about through the First World War and thereafter.

From there I moved into the Visa Office as a file clerk. Shortly after I came to Washington I enrolled in Columbus School of Law and pursued my legal studies in getting an LD degree. Then I moved on to the Passport Office as a passport examiner and ultimately worked in what they called the frog section of the Passport Office and found that because the Passport Office had a number of old time employees who were not above the grade GS-6, that Mrs. Shipley would not approve my promotion to GS-7...

*Q: We are talking about Ruth Shipley who was one of the dragons of the Passport Office.*

RYAN: She was the dominate force in the Passport Office. She had these people who had been with her for a number of years and they were very competent people, but they weren't able to get beyond GS-6 and when I got my law degree I became eligible for a higher grade and post, but she wouldn't approve it. So my only recourse was to go to Peg Edwards, who was then Chief of Employee Relations in the Personnel Office. She, with the help of Assistant Secretary G. Howland Shaw, was able to pry me from the Passport Office into the Personnel Office where I went into the Classification Section.

*Q: When was this?*

RYAN: This was in probably 1939 or 1940. As a result of that I got into the classification activities at a time when the Department started to expand because of the war. We reached a point where because the grade structure in the civil service didn't permit going beyond GS-15 or P-8, that we actually created some of the new divisions with a division chief at P-8, a deputy chief at P-8 and two or three assistant chiefs at P-8. We needed the P-8 grade to represent the specific responsibility but also to attract the type of people that the Department wanted to fill those particular specialized jobs. But some of those were filled by people like Harry Labouisse, who eventually went on to be head of UNICEF and Ambassador to Greece. Tom Finletter was another one that was brought in.

But the point I am making is that the civil service structure at that time was antiquated and to accommodate things that was how we had to set up the job structure.

I remember very well because of my close association with the Passport Office that I felt that the Passport Office, which was then GS-14, ought to be at least GS-15 and the whole service ought to be elevated. But the Civil Service Commission was adamant in

approving anything because they felt there was no change in what the Passport Office was doing and thus no bases for an increase.

So without going into a lot of detail, with Mrs. Shipley I worked out a strategy that ultimately led to the reclassification of "the old line divisions of the Department of State to at least get the chiefs of those divisions a GS-15 and their deputy chiefs a GS-14."

Then I moved up to be Assistant Chief of the then Department of Personnel. One of the functions that I was involved in was a study group with Ed Gullion and some other people preparing some materials for the use of the Wriston Committee which ultimately led to the publication and implementation of the Wriston Report.

It also led to the amalgamation of the Division of Departmental Personnel and the Division of Foreign Service Personnel into an overall Office of Personnel. For a while I had been Assistant Chief for Foreign Service Personnel...this is where the McCarthy era comes in and perhaps I can come back to that...but in terms of progression in the Personnel Office, after serving as Assistant Chief for Foreign Service Personnel, because I had had Departmental and Foreign Service experience, when they created a Division of Personnel Operations, which involved handling the operations for both the Department and the Foreign Service, I was made the Chief of Personnel Operations which involved the recruitment, placement, efficiency reports and related activities for the Department and the Foreign Service.

*Q: Before we go back to the McCarthy period, I would like to go back to the war period just to get a feel of how recruitment worked and your impression of how the State Department was staffed. There must have been tremendous problems because the military services were getting their choice. Was State having problems?*

RYAN: Well, sure. State had problems, but I think, as I recall, every agency had them. The big difficulty was not only getting officers for some of the specialized positions that were created in the area of keeping track of trade, shipment of activities, resources, etc., but, as I recall, from a recruitment standpoint because of the war situation, the individuals that we went after we were able to get but that was one of the reasons that we had to work out this scheme of tri-level P-8s in some of the divisions in order to attract the kind of people the Department wanted. We, of course, were subject to civil service rules and you still had problems with people having to take exams and getting on lists, but because of the personnel demands the Civil Service Commission gradually had to reduce its control on some of this stuff and gave the actual action responsibilities for a good many of the posts to the individual Departments. So, we were doing our own recruitment under civil service rules and regulations, which, as I look back on them now, were antiquated even for that period of time.

But the State Department, as is the case today, was the smallest agency numerically in the whole Federal Establishment. I think our experience during the war indicated that particularly in the field of management and administration, the State Department was ill-

equipped to take on the responsibilities that ultimately came to it in the post-war period. But I think it had its origin during the war period. You just didn't have people who had management and organization experience in the sense that it was needed then and was going to be needed particularly after the war.

*Q: Bob, I wonder if you could give me a little feel for how at the time you viewed the Foreign Service within the State Department? I am talking about the war years.*

RYAN: It was like a separate agency in many respects. The Foreign Service had its own Division of Foreign Service Personnel and Division of Foreign Service Administration. They reported to the Assistant Secretary of State then G. Howland Shaw. Then you had Departmental Personnel which were all under Civil Service. You had certain positions in the Department that were filled by Foreign Service Officers, particularly at the Assistant Secretary level and sometimes the Deputy Assistant Secretary level.

One of the weaknesses in the Department was that there were too many of the posts filled by "Civil Service employees" who were there and couldn't be moved. So one thing the Wriston Committee did in amalgamating the Department and the Foreign Service...I think it opened up better administration and management in terms of opening up more jobs into which Foreign Service Officers could be placed to serve for 3-4 years as part of their Foreign Service careers. I think that was a plus from the Wriston Report. At the same time those Departmental people that passed the exam to go into the Foreign Service went out and got experience in the field. So I think it was a very healthy thing from that standpoint.

But when I first went into the State Department, as I recall, it was almost like two separate agencies. For example, in the Communications and Records Division and in the Visa Division, the chief of the Division was a Foreign Service Officer, but everybody else in the Visa Division was a civil servant. In the Passport Office you didn't even have that. All the officers in the Passport Office were civil service. That was true in several of the other areas of the Department, except the four, then, geographic bureaus.

That was one of the reasons that led to the Wriston Report and led to the recommendation that there should be a better integration of the Department and the Foreign Service.

*Q: When the war ended all of a sudden the United States really had worldwide responsibility. A multitude of agencies had grown up dealing with this, but not under State.*

RYAN: You had, of course, several agencies that had been created to undertake international relations or foreign affairs functions that were setup because the State Department was not equipped to handle them. You had the Office of War Information, which was setup under Elmer Davis. The Voice of America became a big operation. You had the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which was doing war time functions relating to Latin America, under Nelson Rockefeller. Ultimately you had the

Foreign Liquidation Commission which was involved in liquidating a lot of US equipment and supplies from overseas. Then, of course, you had the Office of Strategic Service (OSS), the forerunner to the CIA.

When the war was over there was a push to decide what to do with these various offices. There was some sentiment that they all ought to be abolished. But it was clearly shown that they were functions that were going to have to be continued as a part of our foreign affairs undertaking. So the question was whether they be kept separate or what? Then it was decided that they are all concerned with foreign affairs and ought to go into the State Department.

I think that the real reason that the Congress agreed to that course of action was because former Senator Jimmy Byrnes was Secretary of State and they had confidence in him. So they felt the simplest thing to do was to take the whole kettle of wax and put it in the State Department and let the State Department handle the integration.

Related to that is that during the war there was very little in the way of what we came to know as loyalty, character, security investigations. And during the war these wartime agencies had to recruit "some individuals with questionable background"...some of whom had communist backgrounds and were actually members of the Communist Party. They apparently served a function during the war, but when the war was over and they were absorbed into the State Department, that is where the State Department started to run into problems with the charges of being a haven for communists. A great many of the people who had been labeled as such were people who were integrated into the Department as part of this post-war integration effort and undertaking. Because there never had been any thorough investigation of any of them there were all these allegations which were in the file but nobody had ever run them out.

We kept getting increasing press about the State Department being a haven for communists, etc. I remember at one point having a conversation with the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration Peurifoy and the Chief of Security, saying, "The only way we are ever going to clear this up is to investigate everybody in the Department and the Foreign Service." I had seen enough of these files to say that as long as these leads are not run down and finally evaluated you are going to be subjected to charges, and that is what really developed.

It wasn't until finally you had Eisenhower come in and Scott McLeod as Chief of Security, that the State Department really undertook this detailed investigation of everybody in the Department.

*Q: That was 1953.*

RYAN: Whenever it was...1952 or '53. That then started to settle things down.

But in that intervening period there were all these allegations...and you had Owen Lattimore and the Alger Hiss case. There was the unfortunate case of some of the Foreign Service people who had been in the Far East. There was a series of very able officers that had a very unfortunate experience as a result of that.

*Q: Didn't we have an apparatus for checking them out?*

RYAN: We had a Security Office and at one point the investigations was run by the Civil Service Commission, but the point was that the individuals that were in the Department were not investigated. For example, no one had ever run an investigation on me since I entered the Department in 1937. It was only investigations on new employees. So all of these old employees that had some allegations of one type or another leveled against them, the allegation stayed in the file. Nobody ran them out.

*Q: Where was the problem? Was it just money, inertia, not wanting to open this can of worms?*

RYAN: I think it was probably the belief that these people had been working with us for years and don't need to be investigated. I think this was an evolving problem and at the time no one really appreciated the full extent of the problems that were created for the Department because all the people had not been investigated.

So, as I say, it was under Scott McLeod, who was subject to a lot of criticism, that everybody was investigated and ultimately it all got settled down. Some people got fired because the allegations were proven and the great majority were not. The communist label of the Department sort of tapered into the twilight. But until that was done, that was not the case.

There is no denying the fact that in amalgamating the personnel from the wartime agencies, the State Department inherited some people of questionable background.

*Q: Well, also too, because of wartime circumstances we needed them, their expertise. With the passing of time priorities change.*

RYAN: Well these particular agencies needed them, but when you got them into the State Department in a different context, the State Department really didn't need them. And, of course, you were moving through the war period and then when you got into the post-war period and then right up to the McCarthy era as you ran into the Cold War, the existence of some of these people, even a few of them, in the Department really constituted something the Department could have done without but didn't know how to handle at the time.

*Q: You were doing what at this particular period?*

RYAN: During part of the time I was Assistant Chief of Departmental Personnel and then I moved over to be Assistant Chief of Foreign Service Personnel. But during the period of integration into the Department of State, I was in the division of then Department Personnel.

*Q: Were you looking at these files and seeing these things?*

RYAN: Yes, that was one of the reasons I made the statement that I did. I had seen enough of these files to know that there were allegations in them that were serious but that they were not substantiated in the file at all and that some detailed investigation was going to be made to prove or disprove the allegations in fairness to the people.

*Q: Around this time Robert Woodward was in Personnel and had clashes with the McCarthy Committee and all of this. What was your view of how our relations were with Congress? There were problems of leaks from Personnel files...it was sort of a rancid time there, at least it seemed so from the outside.*

RYAN: When I went into the Division of Foreign Service Personnel, Elbridge Durbrow was the Chief. He was replaced by Bob Woodward. If we want to move into the McCarthy period...

*Q: Why don't we.*

RYAN: I can tell you exactly how it came about because I was right in the focal point for it. I was Assistant Chief for Foreign Service Personnel and Bob Woodward was in the field. It was after President Eisenhower had been inaugurated and Joe McCarthy had taken over as Chairman of the Senate Operations Committee...

*Q: That would be 1953.*

RYAN: That would be the '53 period getting to the McCarthy period. I received a telephone call saying that Mrs. Baylog, who was Chief of the then Foreign Service Files Section, had been summoned to appear before the McCarthy Committee and what should she do? That was the first we knew about it.

Secretary Dulles had not yet come on board. As I recall, the then Legal Adviser was Acting Secretary. Carl Humelsine was still the Under Secretary for Administration and Management but was about to depart. I remember consulting with both of them about what was to happen. The only instructions we got was to tell them that they have to accede to this demand and tell the truth. That was the only instructions we had.

Then various employees in the office started to get calls to come up to the McCarthy Committee. Then there started to be newspaper reports about what the McCarthy Committee was doing vis-a-vis "its investigation of the Department and the Foreign Service and its files and deletions from the files, etc." These people went up and the



McCarthy Committee swore them to secrecy. They said they were secret hearings and they were not to talk about them. So they came back from the hearing shaken--everyone that went up. They were not any of the necessarily higher level people. They picked on the chief of the file section and someone who was an administration officer. They had someone who was in the efficiency report file because he had a name, Tomanak, and he was a Russian; Vladimir Tomolinov was one who was picked off, etc. They were all afraid to talk.

I was at home because my kids were ill and my wife was ill and I got a call from Roy Cohn saying that as I knew the McCarthy Committee was doing this and Senator McCarthy and the Committee hoped to complete its actions on this and wondered if I could come up for an hour or so. I knew, from what was happening, that they had been investigating me because they were in my neighborhood asking questions. They had been back in my hometown in Massachusetts. They had really run an investigation to try to find something on me. I said that I couldn't come up because I was at home with my wife and sick children and this was not a convenient time. Well, Cohn said that the Senator was very anxious to finish this off today or tomorrow and could I not get a neighbor to come in and sit with my wife and kids so that I could come up and testify before the Committee.

Well, I did that and went up and got involved with Cohn and Schine and Sourwine.

*Q: Cohn and Schine were infamous aides to Senator McCarthy.*

RYAN: Sourwine was an ex-FBI agent who was attached to the Senator Operations Committee in a staff capacity as were Roy Cohn and Schine.

I at that point was the highest ranking officer they were interviewing and that got into the question of the communists in the State Department, Owen Latimore and Alger Hiss and the others. Of course, I was privy to some of the information in those files so I had a pretty worrisome period with these guys as they queried me about these things because I didn't feel I had the responsibility to tell them.

In any event, when I came back from this hearing, which took place...first of all Cohn and Schine and Sourwine talked to me a couple of hours. Then I was summoned in to talk to the whole Committee and was again told that this was a secret hearing and I was not to divulge it to anybody, etc. Before we started the hearing I said, "Well, Senator, I would like to ask that I have permission to review the transcript before it is officially released or anything." They had an aside conversation because that was the first time they had been asked that. They agreed that it was okay as long as I didn't make any substantive changes.

I went through the hearing and the basic problem had been that because of these various allegations that existed in various files we had decided that one way to control it better was to take the files of those people and keep them in my office so that I had a file cabinet of personnel files of people who were under investigation. The simple idea was that

before we go moving them half way around the world and having to bring them back, we ought to take into account the status of their investigations.

Well, Mrs. Baylog apparently resented the fact that she didn't have access to all of those files. Then there was a disgruntled security investigator who had been put into the personnel files section to review some of the personnel files to gather information for use to the security people. He was disgruntled. It developed later on that they were the two that went up and talked to McCarthy about the fact that we were maintaining separate files and that we were deleting portions of the files to cover up, etc. Then the security investigator was teed off at the security section and so he was making out that they didn't know what they were doing.

McCarthy and his people saw this as an area that they could use to his, McCarthy's, advantage and that is what they did. The State Department personnel file investigation was the first one McCarthy did. I was the last person that he interviewed. I came back to the Department and went to the Legal Adviser and to Carl Humelsine and indicated that I felt that I knew what they were after. That, secondly, as an employee of the State Department that I had a responsibility to tell my employers what went on but that I had been sworn to secrecy and was not about to tell them anything until the Legal Adviser gave me a paper saying that I had an obligation to convey this information to the Department and that I would not be subject to any action by the Congress because I did that and if I did the Department would back me. I have that paper in my files at home today.

However, I felt that uncertain because of McCarthy's power. I then told them what they interrogated me about and that I was of the opinion that probably not too much more was going to come out of the State Department's files investigation...which turned out to be the case as they moved to the Voice of America and then to the Department of the Army.

But the State Department was the original target and despite all of the affectations of secrecy, there were leaks anytime anyone went up before the McCarthy Committee. They ultimately had TV hearings where they had Mrs. Baylog and the security investigator and some other people up testifying before them, but they never called me. I was convinced they didn't call me because what we were doing made too much sense and they didn't want that thrown out over the television and also I think they figured they milked that for about as much as they could and it was to their advantage to turn to some knew outfit that would represent new faces and new problems...which they did with the Voice of America and the Department of the Army.

*Q: What were some of the repercussions as you saw it in the next few years with this McCarthy business?*

RYAN: It was terrific on morale in the State Department. The general belief among the public that the State Department had a lot of communists; that we had people who were working with the communists and the conspiracy to the detriment of the United States. So

there is no denying the serious affect it had on the reputation of the State Department and that it had on the morale of the people in the Department. And, of course, during that period you had the consist by play between McCarthy and Secretary of State Dean Acheson which...they used to call him the Red Dean and things like that. The whole public posture of the State Department was one of suspicion and if you worked for the State Department and the Foreign Service in those days, you were viewed with a certain amount of suspicion by the public.

*Q: When John Foster Dulles became Secretary of State he had a meeting right at the beginning which left sort of a chill. He talked about Cohn for the State Department to give positive loyalty to the new administration. Positive loyalty sounded like "You had better tell us what we want to hear, not how you see things." Did you get this feeling too?*

RYAN: Yes, that was a difficult period when Dulles came in. Of course, they brought Scott McLeod in to be the Security Chief and then they brought in George Wilson, who had been on the staff of Senator Nolan of California, to be Director of Personnel. The fact that they brought in their own people to head up personnel and security, by and in itself, had this adverse affect on morale and we just had to live through that particular period. It was a very trying period because they came in with great suspicions of everybody in the Department. It was only after they were there for a year or 18 months and we were able to prove to them that we were loyal and were working with them and that they were being taken for a ride by some of these disgruntled employees who were feeding them all of this information, that they began to give some credence to what we were telling them and to accept us as members of the organization.

I would say that those of us who were in the organization at the time served a useful purpose of keeping things from going from bad to worse because we did get the confidence of these people and they were ultimately willing to accept our advise and evaluation of events. You saw that happening and ultimately you even saw some falling out between some of these disgruntled employees and Wilson and McLeod because they didn't think they were supporting the posture that they had originally advanced about all the rotten stuff that was in the Department and the Foreign Service.

*Q: The ultimate affect...was there a massive weeding out?*

RYAN: No, actually relatively few. What they did was to hire about 20 additional investigators and put them in the Security Office. They undertook the investigation of the people on board and came up with reports. In certain instances they found enough to justify calling someone in and suggesting that he resign. In a few places it involved filing charges, but most of the people before you got to the filing of charges went out the resignation route. I can't give you a figure, but compared to the total number of employees of the Department and the Foreign Service, it was relatively small.

*Q: What about homosexuality? Was this much of a problem?*

RYAN: Yes, that was another one I happened to be in on the beginning of. When I was in Departmental Personnel, we had an individual who had been arrested and then the Security Office ran an investigation on him and found that he was an active homosexual. I remember Arch Gean, who was then the Chief of Departmental Personnel, telling me about going up with Jack Peurifoy, who was the Assistant Secretary for Administration, to see General Marshall and going over the file with him. When they finished their discussion, as it was reported to me, General Marshall said, "Fire the bastard." And that was where the policy was inaugurated of terminating people with homosexual backgrounds.

And it also brings to mind two other things...the McCarthy Wheeling, West Virginia speech saying there were 157 card carrying communists in the State Department. It is my personal belief that that had its origin in Assistant Secretary Peurifoy agreeing to let the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee review the security files because he believed that by letting them review the files they would be satisfied that our people were not all rogues, etc. and that the State Department was okay.

I can recall some of us saying to him that he was going to rue this day because by letting those guys in, all they are going to do is get all the unfavorable stuff and we are going to be dealing with this for some time to come. Well, the then Chairman of the Subcommittee of the State Department Appropriations was Congressman Jack Taber and Jack thought he had an agreement with Taber that would protect us from that happening.

Anyway, that group came up with 157 cases and it has been my supposition, I have never seen it proven anyway, that that report which went to the House Appropriations Committee from its staff ultimately found its way into McCarthy's hands giving him the figure that he used in the Wheeling, West Virginia speech. I don't know if anyone has ever told you that or not.

*Q: No.*

RYAN: It is ancient history now, but it is interesting.

On the issue of the homosexuals, of course, one of the unfortunate incidents that occurred following that is that each year at the time the State Department went up for its hearing before the Appropriations Committee, one of the questions from Congressman Rooney, who was Chairman of the State Department Committee, always was "How many homosexuals has the Department fired this year?" That was a usual question, so it was a matter of public knowledge each year of how many people left the State Department because of allegations of homosexual activities. But the Security Office, actually had one guy, John Finletter, who spend his full time following up allegations of homosexuality among the employees of the Department.

*Q: Moving on to the Wriston Program. You were doing what?*

RYAN: I was Assistant Chief of Departmental Personnel and as they got to this question of how should we integrate or should we integrate the Department and the Foreign Service, I was put on the task force to develop background information which the Wriston Committee would want to consider as it reviewed this whole question. I never had the privilege of sitting in on any of the Committee's meetings or hearings, so my exposure was initially doing this staff work for them as part of this committee with Ed Gullion, Art Jones and perhaps one or two other people.

Then, of course, the Wriston Committee Report came out and the decision was made to Wristonize the Department and the Foreign Service--to amalgamate. That was when they set into motion examinations for the civil service people who wanted to go into the Foreign Service and resulted in the appointment of, I forget how many civil service people, to the Foreign Service. That in turn freed up various jobs that were frozen by civil service appointees, opening them up to ultimate assignment to Foreign Service Officers. As I said earlier, that is one of the positive elements of the Wriston Report.

*Q: Did you ever feel that the Foreign Service, as it was in those days, was fighting a rearguard battle? How were they taking it?*

RYAN: They didn't take to it very well, because they felt that being amalgamated into the Foreign Service for people who had never served abroad, which was (a) most of the time correct, (b) had not been subjected to a rigorous entry examination in the sense that they had, and (c) quite properly they thought that jobs they might ultimately aspire to would be filled to some extent by the Wristonees. So their concerns, I felt at the time, were logical and understandable. That is why I thought the offset was the opening up of jobs in the Department. But as is true today, if you are in the Foreign Service you don't love to have an assignment in Washington, so the fact that you open up jobs in Washington for Foreign Service Officers was not as attractive as opening up jobs in the Foreign Service for Departmental people who became Foreign Service Officers.

*Q: In my interviews Loy Henderson stands above everybody else as being the one person who seemed to be able to bring some order out of chaos in personnel problems, etc. He seemed to take a real interest in how the system operated. What was your impression of him?*

RYAN: He, of course, was Mr. Foreign Service. He was regarded, I think, in my day as the most respected and senior member of the Service. He coupled a heavy substantive background with a fairly good management and organization sense. He had a way of dealing with people that brought about confidence and respect so that he had a pretty good public relations posture. He had a very good standing with the Foreign Service, with the Department, because he knew them well having worked both inside the Department and the Foreign Service. He was an able and articulate individual who was able to articulate the problems and the desires of the Foreign Service. He was the ideal front guy.

Under Loy Henderson, I think the morale of the Department and the Foreign Service was elevated as was the whole public impression of the Department and the Foreign Service. I had the privilege of working in the administrative area when he was the Under Secretary and have the highest regard for him. I think that some of the weaknesses that came about in the Department and the Foreign Service in later years may partially be attributed to the fact that the individual in the post of Under Secretary for Administration and Management was, more often than not, not a person from the Foreign Service so he had no way of having an intimate knowledge of what was involved. I think if you ran a check you would find that probably seven out of ten of the Under Secretaries of State for Administration and Management were political appointees.

*Q: And not staying very long.*

RYAN: And not staying very long and not able to particularly articulate the needs of the Service when up with the Congress. Loy, when he went up before the Congress...they couldn't bamboozle him and they couldn't ask him stupid questions that he couldn't answer. I think that was one of the bright periods of the Foreign Service.

*Q: The Wriston program came in and began to have its effect, did you join the Foreign Service?*

RYAN: I went in through the Wriston program because I became interested in the Foreign Service when I was Deputy Chief of Foreign Service Personnel and welcomed the opportunity to go into the Foreign Service. I filed my application and was called before, as I recall, three examiners--I forget the nature of the questions they asked me--but in any event I was successful. I went into the Foreign Service in 1955.

*Q: Your first job was...?*

RYAN: I moved from the Chief of Personnel Operations to Executive Director of NEA in 1955, just about the time I was being appointed to the Foreign Service as an FSO-2. I was Executive Director of NEA until the fall of 1958 when I went to the National War College.

In terms of the NEA days, when I went into NEA it was Near East, South Asian and African Affairs. One of the tasks that I had was to serve on another task force with Ambassador Joe Palmer, Leo Cyr and one or two other people, looking at whether the State Department should have a separate bureau of African Affairs. At that time there was just an African Section or Division headed by Leo Cyr. Much of Africa still had colonial ties and some of it was handled by EUR. We reported that there should be a separate African Bureau and prepared the necessary papers for the approval of the Secretary, the Bureau of the Budget, and then the Congress. We got the money to set up the new Bureau of African Affairs which today, I guess, services more countries than any other Bureau in the Department. I think there are 52 independent African countries today.

*Q: You were representing the Near East. What was the attitude bureaucratically of giving up power, etc?*

RYAN: The general impression at that point was that the time had come as new countries were coming on the world scene in Africa. Indications were that it was going to continue. We felt that the problem of the Middle East, itself, was a big one and when you had Southeast Asia with India, Pakistan, Cyprus and Iran, that was more than enough for one bureau to handle. So there wasn't any great opposition to creating this separate bureau of African affairs.

*Q: There were obviously a number of things at that time in the Near East--the Suez War, the rise of Nasser, etc.--but what as Executive Director were some of your concerns?*

RYAN: Basically the responsibility of an executive director is in the management and administration and organization field. My principal points of contact within the Department were with the Budget Office on matters of budget, finance, personnel, etc. So we were the link to the Foreign Service posts in this area. We were their backstoppers. Each of the Foreign Service posts, as you know, had an administration section. That section in turn reported back to and worked with the Office of the Executive Director of NEA.

It was our responsibility, for example, to prepare and justify the budget for the domestic Bureau of NEA and for all the posts in that area. And to work with FBO on building and maintenance and construction programs. We worked with the Personnel Office on the assignment of people to all the posts--jobs at all levels. We were the backstoppers for the people in the field, so that as substantive problems like the Middle East War emerged, or difficulties in Iran or between India and Pakistan emerged, they always had administrative implications, including at one point the evacuation of people from Egypt, etc. So from an administrative, financial and management standpoint, the Office of the Executive Director was the focal point for handling that aspect of these various substantive problems that occurred in the Middle East.

*Q: How did you find dealing with getting the money? John Rooney, the Congressman from Brooklyn, was in charge of the State Department's appropriations and was always a very difficult character. Did the Near East have an adequate slice of the money?*

RYAN: The Near East as it is today was in the headlines. George Allen was Assistant Secretary and Bill Rountree. We didn't have that much difficulty with John Rooney and the committee, because the Assistant Secretary would go up and in an off-the-record conversation tell him about what was developing, etc. and finally Rooney would say the conversation had to go on-the-record so something would be there to justify the budget.

When I was there what happened was that he would say, "Mr. Secretary, I know we have kept you longer than we should and I think the balance of this your executive director can handle so if you want to be excused we will let Mr. Ryan handle it," and that was it.

I never had any difficulty dealing with Rooney--not only when I was in NEA but when I was in Paris. He could be difficult because he had the feeling that a lot of people in the State Department looked down upon him and didn't think that he was up to determining what the State Department ought to be doing and getting money out of the Congress.

But I found that if you dealt with him in a down to earth manner, he could be your ally. And in this instance, Jack Peurifoy, for example, during the period that he was the Assistant Secretary, had a very close tie with Rooney. As did Dave Crockett. One of the things those guys did was to travel with Rooney when he went overseas...and how they ever put up with it I will never know, but they did, day in and day out.

Rooney needed something each year that would get him a headline to show that he was controlling the State Department and the Foreign Service and that we were scared to death of him. So we put things in the budget with the idea that he would find them and could rant and rave and get a headline or two and that was it.

I can remember one period I went up there and he had me justifying one line after another and I felt we were going to get clobbered. However, we came out of that hearing with everything we wanted.

But he could be difficult with certain perks of the Foreign Service, but he liked the idea. That was his principal *raison d'etre*. As Chairman of the State Department Appropriations Committee he traveled every year to various posts...and he visited me in Paris on several occasions. He didn't look into too much. When we get to discussing Paris I will tell a few things about it. But the principal thing with some of those people was that you had to handle them properly when they arrived in Paris at the airport. And that you serviced them properly in terms of whatever they wanted to do in the town and in some instances that you arrange night clubs, and related activities if that is what they wanted to do. On certain occasions you found some of them who were serious and would dig in on the programs, but most of the time when they were in Paris their final appraisal of how effective the Paris Embassy was revolved around how well our conference section in the American Embassy took care of them.

*Q: Can we move then to Paris?*

RYAN: Sure.

*Q: You went to the War College from 1958-59. Then you went to Paris where you served from 1959-64 as Counselor for Administration. How did you get this job?*

RYAN: It went through the personnel process. Glen Wolfe was then Counselor for Administration and was being moved. In the personnel process my name was one that was discussed. One day I got a call from the Personnel Office, when I was down at the War College, saying that Ambassador Houghton was in town and they would like to have



me talk to him because I was one of the people being considered for the Counselor for Administration job in Paris. So I met with Ambassador Houghton and a few days later I got the word that I was to go to Paris as Counselor for Administration. And not only Counselor for Administration, but as Executive Officer of the US Mission to NATO and the US Mission to the OECD and UNESCO. That was designed to give some focal point in Paris for administrative activities. Each of those other organizations had an administrator officer who worked with and under me. As Executive Officer I was able to sit in on all their staff meetings. I was learning things in those staff meetings and passing them information on what was going on in the Ambassador's staff meetings. This helped to bring about a better integrated American community in Paris.

*Q: I am sure because these separate missions were separate.*

RYAN: Yes, and the American Ambassador didn't want to trample on them and didn't want to be involved with them at all. But nevertheless there were common problems and they were mostly in the management and administrative field, so it was logical to have one guy in the person of the Counselor for Administration and Executive Officer to do these functions. When I went to Paris it was the largest embassy in the world...there was the great buildup that occurred after the war. One of the things that I knew I was going to get involved in was the cutting back of the size of the Embassy in terms of (a) personnel, (b) such things as automobiles, buildings, etc.

We had some success in doing that. I remember when I got to Paris you had three other chiefs of mission and they had deputy chiefs of missions--I think there was something like 14 or 15 people with private cars and chauffeurs. That wasn't at all necessary, so we set about, with the help of the inspectors, deciding that only the ambassadors and the deputy chiefs of mission needed individual cars with chauffeurs and that the other officers would be serviced by a pool. We set it up and it worked out fine. It had been a great waste of money because we found for the most part, these officers were just using these cars to go to social events and in a couple of instances the wives were using them for shopping, etc.

We were also able to cut down a couple of buildings. We were able to reconstruct 4 av. Gabriel in such a way that we actually joined it to 2 av. Gabriel, the main Embassy building.

This was the time we were moving into the computer age, and we had been selected to be the regional finance center for Europe so we were involved in setting up a computer center in Paris that could become the regional finance center for Europe and also Africa. At the same time the Department was dealing in antiquated communication procedures and it was decided that in Paris we would go into a computerized operation so we went about the development of the necessary plans that involved putting the new computer operation in a different section of the Embassy because we had to keep communications going while the new thing was being constructed. Ultimately the new computerized

communications center was inaugurated during the period of Ambassador Jim Gavin. It was the state of the art operation at that particular time.

We also were involved with the Ambassador's Residence. There was a building at 41 Faubourg St. Honore which is between the home of the President of France and the British Embassy. It had been used by the Germans during the war as a club. We took it over for offices and was used by USIA and a few of the regional functions in Paris when I first got there. But we were developing plans to use that structure as the Residence of the US Ambassador and to do that we had to work closely with John Rooney, who was Chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for the State Department, and with Congressman Wayne Hayes, who was Chairman of the European segment of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

That whole operation took a period of two or three years to develop. It involved working on arrangements to sell the existing Residence of the Ambassador on Ave Gabriel, and developing plans for remodeling 41 Faubourg. With the proceeds from the sale of the original Ambassador's Residence, we were able to get a good portion of the money that was going to be needed to remodel 41 Faubourg. Then there were some additional contributions made and some other financial arrangements worked out so that ultimately 41 Faubourg was remodeled and is now the Ambassador's Residence.

But it did not, at the time, require any separately appropriated funds. At one point Rooney was against it. Ambassador Houghton and I talked to him when he came to Paris and finally got him to go along with it so long as we did not have to go before his committee and ask for additional money. We were prepared to do that because Ambassador Houghton had worked out through a couple of sources ways of getting some additional funds that could be transferred from one pot to the other to do this, and then through some public subscription they got money with which to buy the furniture for 41 Faubourg.

During the time I was in Paris, these various activities took place reflecting the changing scene in Paris as it relates to the American presence there and the work of the American Embassy.

*Q: From your point of view in dealing with them, could you compare/contrast the three Ambassadors in Paris during your tour? There was Amory Houghton (1957-61); James Gavin (1961-62); and Charles Bohlen (1962-68).*

RYAN: Each Ambassador is different. Ambassador Houghton had been President of Corning Glass and had a very long affiliation with the Republican Party. He was a heavy contributor. He was a very able man; an easy man to work with. He had some handicaps: (1) He had a throat problem causing him to speak with difficulty; (2) He was not able to speak very much in French so that anything that he did with the French had to be done through an interpreter. He delegated a lot of his substantive work to his Deputy Chief of Mission.

I think it reflects the wise policy of the Department of giving a very able career guy to a political appointee as the deputy. If the political guy uses good judgment he will let that career man run the embassy and deal with a lot of the substantive issues. Cecil Lyon was the Deputy Chief of Mission and a very able man--fluent in French. So Ambassador Houghton and he had a very close working relationship.

Ambassador Houghton also worked on the principal of delegation of authority. He let the various ministers and counselors run their shops. We reported to him and had to give him written reports from time to time and had regular staff meetings. But he pretty much let us run our show. If we needed him we went to him and he would willingly help us. But he and Mrs. Houghton were a joy to work with. In fact, I still maintain contact with Mrs. Houghton.

He, Ambassador Houghton, had the advantage of the political party affiliation with, not only the President, but with others, so that from the standpoint of the Paris Embassy he was one of those people who, if he wanted to, could not only call the Secretary of State, with whom he was on excellent terms, but he could call the President--and everybody knew that.

Then General Gavin came. He had been a hero in Paris because he had headed up one of the airborne divisions that flew into France on D-Day. He was received in Paris as a hero. I remember Cecil Lyon and I went to Le Havre to meet him. He and his wife and children came over on, I guess the SS United States at that time, and we went up to Le Havre to meet him. He was mobbed at the docks by the media. Then we came down to Paris on the train and when we got into the station in Paris there was a mob again with television and radio. He had to give an interview. He had been taking French lessons and was quite sensitive that his French was not very good, but he had a speech which he gave in French and then he responded to questions.

General Gavin brought a bit of a military bearing to the Embassy and a military type of organization and operation. But quite frankly, I didn't find him that much different to deal with in my work than I did Ambassador Houghton. I would say about Ambassador Gavin that he was a visionary. He was a man of the future. You could understand how he headed the Arthur D. Little Company because he had that sort of a mind. But I can remember talking with him about things...looking into space, computers, etc....and his whole demeanor would almost take on a different atmosphere as he started to think. You could see his mind jumping ahead. He really was a man of the future and was a joy to deal with.

He, too, recognized his strengths and weaknesses and used the staff. Cecil had a good relationship with him as did the rest of us. We had no problems. There was no backbiting either under Houghton or Gavin. We all worked together as a team.

As a military hero he was well regarded by the French. As a strong supporter of President Kennedy, he had an in at the White House. So, here again, you had an Ambassador who

had the ear of the White House and to the extent that we needed things in Washington, if we got the Ambassador involved in them, we generally could get it.

From a money standpoint that was a period when we didn't have all that much trouble getting the appropriations out of the Congress. Sure they might cut us a few \$100,000 here and a few \$100,000 there, but we had already built that into the budget so we didn't hurt at all. We ran into the problem, and I guess they still do today, that you would come to the end of the fiscal year and scurry to find a way to spend the money.

Ambassador Bohlen was a career diplomat. A real, knowledgeable, savvy guy, who was recognized by the French; who had earlier served in the Embassy in Paris; whose French was flawless; who had served in Moscow (had been one of the original Russian hands in the Department) and knew about communism. He brought, again, very special characteristics to the post of US Ambassador which were: (a) very well received by the French and (b) he knew how to run the Embassy.

I think the principal problem of having an Ambassador like Bohlen is in the political and economic sections because the DCM and the Ambassador were so strong in those fields and tended to take away some of the functions of the Minister for Political Affairs and the Minister for Economic Affairs. But, aside from that, you were dealing with first rate professionals and when you went in with problems you got decisions made and you went on with your business. It worked out very, very well.

For me, it was a pleasure to work under each of the Ambassadors. I think each in his way accomplished an important mission in terms of US-French relations.

*Q: You were there during a very photogenic period when President Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline came. There is the story that the President said, "I was the person who escorted Jacqueline to..."*

RYAN: Yes, I was there when he said that.

*Q: How did that trip go?*

RYAN: Again, as the Counselor for Administration and with the conference section, which is under me, we had an important role to play in planning the visit. We were in on it from the first word with the White House and the State Department with advance people coming over to set up security arrangements, communication arrangements, and to deal with the French on the total program.

When President and Mrs. Kennedy came...the visit was an important one, of course, and was viewed by the French in that way. Mrs. Kennedy, because she spoke French flawlessly, I guess, and because on State occasions it is the wife who sits on the right hand of the Chief of State, she was a big hit with de Gaulle. The President, and I think rightly, played on that and let it run its course.

That visit went off very smoothly. There were a lot of details involved in planning and executing the visit. One little humorous story that I tell...Tish Baldrige was the secretary to Mrs. Kennedy. Tish had earlier been the social secretary to Ambassador Luce in Rome, and is now one of the country's foremost experts on etiquette. Well, the Kennedys had a valet and a maid for Mrs. Kennedy. We had made arrangements that the last group coming out of the place where they were staying, the guest house, would be the maid and the valet. We had made arrangements to get them to the airport by a separate route so that they would be there when the Kennedys arrived. Well, unbeknownst to me, Tish Baldrige decided that they should be part of the entourage that was going out to the airport. In doing that, because no one had planned on that, they got separated.

Fortunately we had enough sense to put one of our French speaking employees from the conference section in the car with them. He was able to steer the driver along the route that we had arranged, but they got to the airport after the departure ceremony and after the Kennedys had gotten into the plane, doors had been closed and they were preparing to leave. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a car come up and try to get through the security. Fortunately the French speaking employee with them was able to talk to the people and get them to agree to at least let them get through the barrier to the next one.

Seeing this, through the Secret Service walkie-talkies we passed word to the plane and to the French that this was part of the Presidential entourage. Here you had this car with two Negroes in it with the Kennedys' effects, etc. and the security police were not about to let these people through to get on the Kennedy plane. Anyway we got them through. The door to the plane was opened and up the steps went the maid, valet and baggage. They were going on to Vienna and if they hadn't had the baggage they would have been in trouble. We would have had to arrange to ship that over in another way. Well, that was one of the little stories that developed.

Another one that comes to mind involves President Eisenhower. We had worked with the French for one of his visits. One of the first things that came up was that the White House wanted to bring the bubbletop (car with a plastic top so he could stand up and be seen but still be protected) to use for the President. We discussed it with the Chief of Protocol and the other people on the French side and they all agreed. So over comes the bubbletop. We are at the airport and waiting for President Eisenhower's plane to arrive and get word that it is in the vicinity. The Chief of Protocol comes to me ashen and says, "Bob, the President just told me that President Eisenhower and he have to ride in his car." I said, "But we have been through this and you people agreed." He said, "Well, the President tells me and we just have to do it." I said, "Well, I can't make that decision." So I went and talked to Jerry Bean who was then the top Secret Service man. He said, "Hell, no. We haven't had any chance to check that car out or know what is in it. No way." I said, "Jerry, it is the President of France's car and I don't think they have any bombs in it."

I talked to the Secretary of State who was there and to the Ambassador and they felt they couldn't over rule the Secret Service. Finally, the Secretary of State said, "Go talk to Jim Hagerty, who was the President's press secretary." And here the plane is about to land.

I explained it to him and he said, "Well, you have a problem haven't you Bob?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Let's go talk to Jerry." He said, "Jerry, Bob has just told me about this problem that we got with the French. I have to tell you honestly if it were put to the boss he would say we will use President de Gaulle's car." With that Jerry let out a couple of profanities and said, "But, if we get into any trouble, you guys and the Ambassador and the Secretary of State are all in this with me. If anything happens I am not going to take this rap alone."

So, here is the Chief of Protocol biting his nails. Finally I went over to him...this whole thing probably didn't take longer than five minutes, but it seemed like an eternity...and I said that it was okay to use the President's car. So then we had to get someone to remove the bubbletop from the lead situation and get it away from everything.

So the two Presidents get in de Gaulle's car and de Gaulle had a handle that they could use and President Eisenhower got a tremendous reception in Paris.

That was the time that Khrushchev came to Paris and you had the Gary Powers U-2 incident. But back to the car business...President Eisenhower was going some place in Paris and the Ambassador called me with a chuckle and said, "Bob, you are going to be interested to hear this. The President is wondering if you could make arrangements with the French to let him borrow de Gaulle's car for a couple of hours this afternoon while he goes on this particular visit." I said, "Well, I think that can be arranged, but give me ten minutes." So I call the Chief of Protocol and tell him what is wanted and he thought it would be all right but he would have to talk to the President. About five minutes later he calls me back and says that it is okay.

By the time I got on to the phone to the Ambassador to tell him that it was okay he said, "I know it. The car is out front."

An illustration of some of the little things that can happen at the spur of the moment that one just has to handle. Fortunately in both of these instances it worked out correctly. Had it not, somebody's head might have fallen.

*Q: You then left Paris and became Ambassador to Niger. How did that job come about?*

RYAN: Well, it came about, I think, because at the time Bill Crockett was Under Secretary of State and there were moves to try to provide a way for people who were not in the political and economic cone to have ambassadorships. This included USIA and other avenues as well. I was one of the people who was in the administrative area that was put on a list to be considered for ambassador. Ultimately it was Niamey. Originally it was to be Sierra Leone. But because I had some French, another Foreign Service Officer

who didn't have French and had a lot of political influence got the Sierra Leone assignment and they gave me Niamey. It worked all right. I didn't mind it at all. It was a very rewarding and interesting assignment. I was the second ambassador and we were still developing the Embassy.

When I went there the Ambassador Residence was a small house that had been occupied by one of the officials of the city of Niamey and consisted of two bedroom and a long entrance way that we made into a dining room and a living room. The Department had built on an area as a separate kitchen. But it was most inadequate for an Ambassador's Residence.

One of the jobs I had was to work with FBO in developing plans to build a new Embassy Residence and Chancery. That took up a considerable amount of time. Among other things because you started to run into money problems in the FBO account. Secondly, because the Department found that it had to give a job to an architect who was from Wayne Hayes' district. He ran the FBO as his own little private fiefdom. This guy came out and asked to visit the French Residence, which we let him do and then it developed that what he did was design a scaled down version of the French Residence. We had a whale of a time making changes in plans. Ultimately we had to accept what we thought were not the best plans at all because if we went much further we felt we would irritate the architect and that would irritate Hayes and that would create problems for the Department. So we went along with it.

The government of Niger donated, I forget how many acres in a desirable part of town on which to construct the Ambassador's Residence and the Chancery. Joe Palmer came out for a visit and we laid the cornerstone for the Embassy and the Chancery and then the construction took place. My successor, Ambassador Adams, was the first Ambassador to move into it. It is a very comfortable residence as is the Chancery and I think it has worked out reasonably well. But some of us thought the design of the building should have been different.

Another important element was building a bridge. The nation of Niger had no bridge across the Niger River. Earlier there had been discussions between Ambassador Mercer Cook and others about constructing the bridge. So the idea and plans with AID for loaning the government of Niger the money with which to construct the bridge were in place before I went out there. But then when I arrived, again because of money problems and AID having difficulties questions started being raised about whether the bridge should be put up or not.

I remember some of the AID people coming out and making a study indicating that the roads that would be connected carried very little traffic, certainly not enough to justify a bridge. Well, I had to go to Washington a couple of times. We finally got it settled and we proceeded with the signing of the bridge agreement. Then there was trouble finding a contractor to come out and build the bridge. Ultimately the bridge was finished. Not in

my time, during Ambassador Ross McClelland's time. However, I had the privilege of going back and participating in the dedication ceremony.

On the subject that it was the first bridge across the Niger River, it was interesting to note that they had a big party at the Palace that night and we were returning back to Ambassador McClelland's residence about midnight and had to pass the bridge. It was mobbed with people just walking back and forth. It was the first time they had a chance to do anything like that. The bridge made a difference to Niger because it opened up the area across the river. As I have gone back a couple of times I notice that the area has developed. There is a college there now as well as some government building. It also provides a better link to what was Upper Volta because the only way you could get across the river if you wanted to get to Upper Volta when I was there was via a ferry boat.

*Q: What were the American interests in Niger?*

RYAN: They were the same as they were in a lot of the developing countries: (a) having an American presence, (b) the desire of the developing countries to get away from the heavy French influence and in the instance of Niger the heavy British influence. The fact that the United States felt that its best interests were in establishing embassies to help these countries establish themselves in ways that would be favorable to us and obviously you had at that time the Cold War and the communist confrontation. The desire was to be in every country in a way that would minimize the possibilities of a new influential communist presence. But I think these countries wanted our presence. They wanted our aid and our expertise.

During the time I was there we enjoyed very, very friendly relations with Niger. We had a Peace Corps program of about 140 people. We had a very active AID program in a variety of fields. We had USIA and, of course, we had the normal political, economic and consular functions. I know at the time those embassies were created we discussed whether we needed just an embassy with an ambassador accredited to two or three other countries. I was one at the time who thought that that was the way we should go. We earlier talked about Loy Henderson. Well, he was one who felt that we ought to go ahead with an embassy in every one of the countries. Looking at it now I think it was a wise decision. We would have weakened our position in Africa if we hadn't done it.

Niger went through a couple of periods of drought where we had to send out some special sorghum. They went through a period when a communist backed group of Nigerians tried to overthrow Diiori. Actually they tried to assassination him at a prayer meeting. They missed him but killed some other people. The result of that assassination attempt meant that for months and months he didn't go out of the Palace. He feared for his life.

*Q: How did you deal with him? Was he your main point of contact?*

RYAN: I dealt with him, with the Foreign Minister and the other appropriate ministers for specific problems. If there was something in the health field I would deal with the



Minister of Health. For example, the World Health Organization and AID were to inaugurate their smallpox, measles vaccination campaign in Africa designed to eradicate both diseases over a period of years. Niger was one of the first countries to do it. The government went along with organizing the arrangements, providing certain personnel and logistical support for the vaccination teams. Diori felt these things were important and readily agreed to support such efforts. He liked very much having the Peace Corps and gave it very strong support. He felt they were an example for the Nigerian youth. Here are young people with an education who want to work in the government. They come from comfortable families but are willing to come out and help others.

The Peace Corps supported the efforts of AID and the government of Niger to improve agriculture. We hit upon the idea that emanated with our land grant colleges of setting up six young farmers' agricultural centers around the country that would be centers for training the young people on better farming methods. Ultimately it was hoped they would serve as research centers, etc. The idea was that the government of Niger provided the land. AID provided the money to put up the buildings that were needed; money to buy the equipment and financed an American director. The government of Niger financed a counterpart for the American director with the idea that after three years they would take over the school and the American director would leave. We used Peace Corps volunteers to help train. Then we recruited the students from the villages. The parents of the students had to agree to give each student a plot of land when he was graduated that he could use for his own. The government of Niger agreed to loan the students money to buy oxen, a plough, cart and some other implements.

That really worked. These youngsters went back to their villages and quickly showed that these new methods paid. They were able to hire themselves out to other farmers, which was the multiplier effect we were looking for.

*Q: Did you find yourself up against the French? Did they look upon you as competitors?*

RYAN: Well, it was mixed. I had good relations with the French Ambassador. I never tried to do anything behind his back. We did irritate them on occasion with what we were doing, although in some respects I think they liked the idea of the United States financing things that needed to be done.

One example that stands in my mind, the Peace Corps volunteers learned the local, tribal languages. Some of them were pretty fluent. From that a couple of them started developing some language training books which never existed before. They started having classes. The French didn't like that. I remember the French Ambassador objected to that. He felt they should be taught French and not given an opportunity to fall back on their own language. We didn't agree and went on with that. He got quite irritated that we were moving in that direction.

The French had a program called *Volontaire d'Progres* [phonetic] which was patterned after the Peace Corps.

When our Peace Corps volunteers started arriving speaking the local tribal languages, in a couple of years the French arrived doing the same thing.

The French Embassy was the dominant embassy. The Ambassador was the Dean. He had the closest relationship with the President.

One of the things I found was that there was too much dispersion among the various embassies. When I got there you didn't know what the Germans were doing, or the Israelis were doing and they didn't really understand what we were doing. In some instances the Nigerians were playing us off against each other. Then, as I later got into the UN, you had four or five UN agencies in Niger, each of whom operated separately. There needed to be some coordinating mechanism. to bring all these things together. We never succeeded in doing it in other than an informal way, but I think it represented some of the duplication of effort that can take place in the third world if you don't have an appropriate coordinating mechanism handling all these various Peace Corps and AID type of undertakings.

*Q: You left Niger in 1968 and served for about a year in the Office of Management.*

RYAN: I was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Organization and Management.

*Q: You served under a controversial figure, Idar Rimestad.*

RYAN: Well, he was controversial but not to me. One, because I had some responsibility for bringing him into the Foreign Service. I was on the panel that went to Germany when HICOG was being dissolved and we were going to be setting up a US Embassy, etc. The HICOG people were going to be given an opportunity to be integrated into the Foreign Service. I was one of a three-member panel that went to Germany and interviewed the HICOG people for Foreign Service appointments. Rimestad at that time was in the Personnel Office, had done a very good job, was very well regarded. I remember he was one of those people that we interviewed and passed him and selected him. Then he filled various administrative jobs in the Foreign Service.

One that I thought probably did him the most good was Moscow. He served as administrative officer in Moscow where he was working closely with Chip Bohlen. I think Chip's affiliation with the Department and the Foreign Service was such that as Rimestad had opportunities to advance in future years, Chip was one of his supporters. He obviously must have done a top job in Moscow for Chip, Tommy Thompson, and people like that to have given him their support and backing.

He was made Under Secretary for Administration and Management. He also had a fairly close relationship with John Rooney. That didn't hurt him. I had learned that I was one, among others, who was being considered, but I didn't do anything to try to get it. I think I was out in Niamey at the time.

Anyway, Idar was in the Department, or perhaps Paris, and was the one selected. When I came back I came back as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Organization and Management. That involved undertaking a variety of manpower studies in the Department. But more importantly I was involved in what was called the SIS (Substantive Information Systems) in trying to develop ways for the Department to start to computerize some of its records.

*Q: Was the Department dragged kicking into the computer age, or were they ready to do it?*

RYAN: There was a little bit of both. The Department was behind, but I think it recognized that it was something that had to take place and so with some reluctance they went along with the plans to computerize various activities. But if you think the Department might have been dragged in by the feet, you should have seen what the UN was like when I got up there in terms of computerizing the UN. I am getting ahead of myself, but some of my experiences in the Department served me in good stead when I got to the UN in terms of programs that I thought the UN needed and were very far behind in. A lot of agencies were slow to recognize what was going to happen with the computer. It was a new and magic tool. Most people didn't know about it and were uncertain and suspicious. So a lot of people just shied away from it. But it was an instrument whose time had come and the Department just had to move into it.

And it was as a result of my being in that job and the fact that when I was in Niger I had indicated that if it could be worked out I would welcome an assignment to the United Nations, because I had seen in Niamey the need for some better coordination and direction of these "technical assistance" efforts. I felt a lot of it best ought to come out of the UN with all the countries contributing. Even some of the things we were doing bilaterally, perhaps could be done best by the UN. There was need for a better focal point for handling all of this stuff in the UN. So I indicated I would welcome an assignment to the UN.

The UN had decided they needed to undertake a management study because the US had been one of the governments pushing for it they wanted an American to head it up. They didn't want an American who had been in the UN but one that had some experience in the multilateral area and in the management area. My name was one of several submitted and after a series of interviews, I was selected and went up in July, 1969 as Director of the Administrative Management Service in the United Nations. I served there until 1977.

As Director of the Administrative Management Service we were responsible for and did do a survey of every facet of the UN, at New York and overseas. As a result of that I got a very good insight into the workings and management of the UN which stands me in good stead to this very day.

We don't have to go into it, but I ran into a few problems here and there with the Soviet Union where we found some of their operatives who were not doing very much UN work.

*Q: It has been known that the Soviet contribution to the UN in this period and up to recently has been heavily loaded with KGB agents. What do you do when somebody is spying who is supposed to be holding down a responsible job?*

RYAN: We knew it and there wasn't much that you could do about it.

For example, when I went in as Director of the Administrative Management Service...you had geographic distribution in the UN. We couldn't do this without the support of the Soviets. I had to take two Soviets on my staff. They didn't know as much about management as a five year old. One of them was one of my senior deputies. I had to laboriously organize the work so that this man was chief of a team, but that I had people working as a part of his team who were able to do the work and get him to go along with their recommendations and proposals and create the facade that he was this team's leader. But by doing that I had the support of the Soviets and that was an important element.

I had an African on my staff who didn't know much about management, but we had to have an African. But interestingly enough, that African was very smart, very astute. Today he is Assistant Secretary General for Personnel at the United Nations. He was good, he learned on the job. I had a staff of 15 with about 10 different nationalities doing management studies. It was a fascinating experience because everywhere we went we found ways of amalgamating undertakings, of eliminating things, etc. Any time you are proposing that you run into fights.

In a couple of instances we were recommending that whole units be abolished--they were headed up by a Soviet and obvious what they were. We knew it. Every part of the Secretariat had it. But the UN is an open book anyway. There wasn't much that they could learn from the UN. The idea was that they were performing functions, I guess, outside that took them away from the job.

*Q: Yes, that was it.*

RYAN: To show you the importance they attached to this I recall the Soviet Ambassador coming to see me on a couple of occasions about putting a Soviet in the contract section. I said, "Sure, Mr. Ambassador, if you send me somebody who is qualified." I remember once saying, "Don't send me somebody who you have written up as qualified and when he gets here we find he is not." He didn't like it, but he took it. Ultimately they came up with a woman who was well qualified. She was a very able employee.

The UN is an entirely different category and calls for different disciplines and ways of doing things, involving as it does dealing with so many different nationalities at the same time.

*Q: To do a management study there must be an American approach, a French approach, an Oriental approach, etc. How did you deal with the differences?*

RYAN: I think there was general recognition at that time that the US was ahead in the whole management field. We basically planned an American approach and taught the other people to operate within that approach. We had four Americans on the staff--a couple had been with management firms like McKinsey, etc. We had two who had been in the Bureau of the Budget. They brought to the staff some real management expertise that was quickly recognized. They were really what helped me to get the whole operation going and develop the methodology and then train the people and handle the whole management survey.

We were also fortunate at the time that we had a Britisher by the name of Andrew Stark, who was the Under Secretary General for Administration and Management. He understood administration management and we had his full support, so we were able to work that way. Because the pressures were starting to mount about cutting back and overlapping and duplication of effort, which was true in many respects because the UN is jerrybuilt, there was general recognition that it was time and lets do this study. The US is on our backs and lets get them off and set up the staff.

For the three years that I was the Director, I think we earned our keep. We showed several places where staff was reduced and where savings were made. There were a variety of things that we accomplished. Some we didn't because of the political problems that existed.

The poor Secretary General today with 166 nations in effect has 166 bosses. In my day it was about 126.

*Q: Well Bob, I think that will do it. Thank you very much.*

*End of interview*