

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

**RONALD K. SOMERVILLE**

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## INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. Somerville.]

*Q: This is an interview of Ronald Somerville. We worked together for many years in consular affairs. Ron was the executive director of the Bureau of Consular Affairs and in many other positions in the United States government. He will fill us in on how he came to the State Department and what he did there. Ron, as a starting point, what brought you into the State Department and the United States government?*

SOMERVILLE: Let me say at the outset, Bill, a disclaimer. Everybody who seems to rise to a certain rank level wants to imply and leave the impression that this has been a planned progression. In my case it was not. It may be unbelievable at points but no matter how carefully you plan you don't know where it is going.

I came into government in the late '50s after the McCarthy mess, prior to the Kennedy election campaign. I was a management intern with the old Civil Service Commission.

*Q: Which is now . . . ?*

SOMERVILLE: Now it is OPM (Office of Personnel Management). It has a rather different role now than it did then. Back in those days in the wake of McCarthy, the Civil Service Commission included the International Organization Employee Loyalty Board. In that capacity they ruled on the loyalty of candidates that the US was proposing for appointment to any UN organization. They would work as US citizens in the UN. They had to be cleared by the board. That board reflected security responsibilities that were given in the wake of the McCarthy mess.

*Q: At what point of time are you talking about?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, there had been many firings as a result of McCarthy; for example, Robert Service in the State Department. There were many people who were thought to be

"pinkos" or fellow travelers and were removed and subsequently became employees again. There was a defection, which you may remember, from the National Security Agency in 1959. National Security was then known merely as a part of the Department of Defense. It was at Fort Meade and did all the code making, breaking, etc. Two gentlemen defected through Cuba to Russia and they were thought to have taken great secrets with them.

That triggered the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee – Jay Sourwein, chief clerk, a nasty fellow; Carl Mundt, senator from Montana, or somewhere, and a bunch of guys who had been strong supporters of McCarthy. They were deeply imbued with the thought that the State Department, in particular, was, had been and may still be run by "commies," pinkos, sympathizers, etc. Feelings were running high. They began clamoring for jurisdiction as to who could hold a hearing and bare all the stuff that was going on. I was called in by the director of personnel, with two colleagues...

*Q: As an intern?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, as an intern. I had no hooks, had been nowhere in the government and therefore in a sense could be presumed to be unbiased. I was taken to a room that was windowless and files were wheeled in on a cart. It was unbelievable.

These were the files of all the employees, many of whom were State Department employees, who had been accused or alleged to be communist sympathizers, etc. These were people who had been fired or suspended, many of whom were subsequently, after the heat was down, put back on the roles in non-sensitive jobs in other agencies. Many had gravitated back to the State Department if that had been their original place of employment. This was after the "Who lost China" stuff had all died down.

*Q: What year was this?*

SOMERVILLE: It was 1959, before the conventions of both parties in 1960 when a deal was made. The chairman of the commission at that time was a gentleman named Roger Jones. He was an Eisenhower Republican. He was trusted by the right wing. He had the utmost integrity. A nice guy, too. A deal was made that in order to keep this defection issue and the spin off issues (the Internal Security Subcommittee and the Un-American Activities Committee wanted to get into a great public display) from destroying the government, it was agreed that it would stay out of the campaigns if both parties would agree that immediately upon election, Roger Jones would move to the State Department, take custody of the files and clean up the mess.

*Q: In a balanced and non-political way.*

SOMERVILLE: That went without saying. The election campaigns proceeded. Where were all these people who were alleged to have been communists? The election was held in November and by December of 1960 Roger Jones was moved from the Civil Service

Commission chairmanship to what was then called deputy undersecretary of State for Administration. The position is now called the undersecretary of State. His role was to clean up the mess in State.

*Q: Find the spies and get rid of them?*

SOMERVILLE: The whole bit. In any event, upon his arrival he immediately drew up a reorganization that included a commitment we had not known about in the commission during the campaigns. That commitment included the transfer, in toto, of State Department's personnel security structure to the Civil Service Commission. It merged with the security structure of the Commission which included the whole government. In those days, all background investigations were done by them and we were separate. If you wanted to be an employee of an international organization, for instance, you had to be cleared by them. They also did security up-dates [renewals of former clearances]. An exception: some agencies like the FBI and State Department had their own. Well, it was presumed because of "all" these pinkos in State and those "Who lost China?" types, and all this background [involved], that the only way to clean up the mess in State was to transfer all personnel security to the commission and merge it with a legitimate operation. So, after Roger Jones had moved to the State Department, before a new president was even in office, we in the commission began to draw up tables of organization, tables with names, ranks for merging cross agencies, etc.

*Q: And all the people we were talking about in State were Civil Service or were they both Civil Service and Foreign Service?*

SOMERVILLE: Both.

Jones immediately set up a reorganization in which the Bureau of Consular Affairs, because it was internally security linked in those days, having deep security connections because of refugee movements and East-West connections, etc. It was set up as the supervising bureau over the Office of Personnel, the Office of Security, the Inspector General, and the Office of Budget. All the sensitive elements of the central structure of the State Department were placed under the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Roger Jones reached into the Civil Service Commission for one of his regional directors, Bernie Rosen, whom he brought over as director of personnel for the State Department.

*Q: All of personnel was under him?*

SOMERVILLE: You got it. He also neutralized the Director General so that the Foreign Service could not get their hands back on this personnel cluster. So you had Roger Jones, chairman of the commission, as deputy undersecretary of administration and Bernie Rosen as director of personnel. Then he brought in a brilliant guy from the Rand Corporation which did a lot of defense stuff and was clean. He became a principal deputy and planning architect.

Things began to roll down the road. I worked in inspections, then in the Civil Service Commission, and was involved in inspecting federal agency personnel systems.

*Q: Including now the State Department?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, not at the time I was in the field. Later on I did inspect part of State's allegations of Kenny O'Donald and a number of the Kennedy rat pack who were running rough shod over Merit Rose and hiring only Catholics. There was a great Catholic-Jewish brouhaha in government during the Kennedy administration. You may not recall that the Labor Department was seen to be all Jews and the average mafia had to take over. We had some of the same problems in the State Department and there was an investigation by the Civil Service Commission of these allegations that the Kennedy crew had corrupted the personnel system.

*Q: Was the entire State Department overseas assignments under the CSC?*

SOMERVILLE: Absolutely, how else could they get control? How could you reveal and discover and purge?

*Q: You are saying the one of the objectives was to purge?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. That was part of the arrangement made before the elections, including Roger Jones moving over to the State Department, whether the government was Democratic or Republican.

*Q: I don't see how it worked.*

SOMERVILLE: It worked marvelously. It defused this battle between the Un-American Activities Committee and the Internal Security Subcommittee that could have destroyed the executive branch.

*Q: Are you suggesting that was why it was done?*

SOMERVILLE: That was the deal that was made going into convention when it was apparent that Kennedy would be the winner. It was done in order to prevent this from getting into the campaigns the nominees agreed that would happen no matter who was elected. That was the solution and it worked. Maybe there were better ideas. I don't know.

Anyway, my immediate boss in the Civil Service Commission was transferred over to the State Department as another deputy to Bernie Rosen, the new director of personnel. In this capacity he had to do with Foreign Service hiring. Obviously the whole thing was being de-Wristonized [laterally commissioned Foreign Service officers from the Civil Service], or whatever, and converted into a non-Foreign Service kind of an organization. It had that flavor.

Shortly after I arrived he called me and said, “Hey, Ron. We are going to have some fun. Look at all the things that are going to be done.” By then I had become an inspector but still had the idea that merit should rule and politics or corruption shouldn’t influence. I was not cynical but very idealistic. I felt this way, based upon what I knew from the onset of the defection of the guys at NSA down through what was evolving under the Kennedy administration. I thought that it might be a lot of fun over there [in the State Department] and there might be a chance to do some things. So, I said, “Yes, I would.” I transferred and became the chief of non-Foreign Service officer employment.

*Q: Give us a date on that.*

SOMERVILLE: That would have been in 1962. The year before the assassination.

By that time a whole lot of things had gone wrong. There was a new secretary of state, Dean Rusk. The new deputy undersecretary for administration had been fairly well neutralized by a force so potent that he never realized it could exist. It was the Foreign Service. He had become rather neutralized. The reorganization placed [him in] CA (Bureau of Consular Affairs)...it was headed by the administrator of Consular Affairs. At the time it was the only statutory position in the entire Department of State. It was the only position that could call upon, or be called upon, by a committee of congress other than those having normal oversight. The judiciary committees [of the House and Senate] controlled immigration. It was unique. Because of its uniqueness in that way it was watched by [House] judiciary and judiciary in the Senate [which] included, of course, Internal Security.

The reorganization had begun to go awry. They spun off personnel first, the inspector general second, and security third to be individual entities reporting through an A (Administration) structure, not as a part of CA’s jurisdiction. They had appointed a gentleman who was very close to immigration interests organization as an administrator. He was a true, trusted political hack.

*Q: Sounds familiar.*

SOMERVILLE: Because of what was being attempted, the [Democratic] party felt they had to have a certain kind of individual. So rather than being a Rusk person he was a Kennedy person. However, he had certain weaknesses. Among those were a pension for painting the walls in his office over one weekend six times, different colors of pink and lavender. It conjures up a certain image. Well, that was conjured by Frances Knight and pumped out through her husband, Wayne Parish who was the Cleveland Plain Dealer representative in Washington. He owned US Airline Guide and Aviation Daily. He was a very influential journalist.

To digress for a moment, Frances’ background was a public relations speech writer type. When Richard Nixon first ran against Helen Gilhagen Douglas in California, she is alleged to have written speeches that conjured up Douglas as soft on Communism. This was published in a pink paper’s notice which is where the word pinkos comes from. So,

of course, Nixon won that election. During the later Eisenhower years, around 1957, when Marge Shipley retired from the Passport Office, Frances Knight replaced her and became a fixture because of her links that were very tight with J. Edgar Hoover, Bill Sullivan, his deputy, and a third man whose name escapes me, in the FBI.

*Q: We must take pause to let the reader know that Frances Knight died just last week.*

SOMERVILLE: By way of her background she was extremely right wing. She was known to be behind a prolific system of tracking US citizens travel abroad. She dealt through the cable system directly with consular sections in shadowing Americans' travel abroad. She provided to the FBI and received from the FBI comprehensive reporting on the movements of Americans abroad. She was very active in denying passports to people whose loyalty might be questioned. She was very active in all kinds of travel control programs that were launched from time to time. She was a very tough lady.

*Q: Today, anyone who is wanted by a United States magistrate is subject to alert through the State Department and perhaps to extradition back to the U.S. jurisdiction..*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, that has always been legal. That is entirely different from prohibiting the travel of an American citizen not indicted, a free citizen. If there is no court involved you have the constitutional right to travel. It was alleged that she was abridging that right by her denial patterns.

*Q: But, it held up. It was documented. There were the cards and "airgrams" (surface mail, versus telegrams) that went out from her office. Cables [telegrams] also were sent out.*

SOMERVILLE: It went on until Dean Rusk personally admonished her and ordered her to cease and desist.

*Q: To cease and desist all of these things that you have listed that were not legal?*

SOMERVILLE: That's right.

Let me give you a little bit more of the dynamics that were happening at the time I arrived. The new Administration obviously wanted to hit the deck running as fast as it could. They had a mess in the State Department but they delivered on their commitment to bring Roger Jones over, began some organizational changes. They brought in some very tight but political-hack type people from the Kennedy administration who were not much on governmental expertise perhaps but very keen politicians and very close with the family.

The security apparatus in the State Department had been successfully defeated with plans transferred to the Civil Service Commission. A gentleman from the CIA was hired as the head of security. You can see the pattern here. All of the controls were replaced in the State Department. I wouldn't say it was a purge but it was damn close to it. This was

arising from dynamics set in motion many years before with McCarthy, picked up again with the NSA people and arrangements and commitments made going into the election. Kennedy was not soft on communism. He was as harsh as Eisenhower ever was.

Despite these changes in personnel and structure, the [State Department's] Office of Security was successfully damaging the flow of appointments of ambassadors, under secretaries, who by the right wing were suspect of being at least soft on communism if not card-bearing. These were choked in the pipeline. Clearances didn't get finished. Clearances were not granted preventing appointments. There is provision in law, in Executive Order called "180 day clearance". In an emergency a cabinet officer has the right to bring a person on board in a sensitive position prior to the granting of a security clearance. So, the Rusk administration began to use this 180-day clearance procedure as its only means of filling the jobs.

*Q: It didn't mean there wasn't a security procedure that had been done or was going on.*

SOMERVILLE: It was an ongoing thing. No appointments were made without the initiation, to my personal knowledge, of at least the federal agency check. The House Un-American Activities Committee had an index; Internal Security had an index; Justice had an index etc.; and those were checked minimally. But the field work of background investigations and interviews, etc., were not completed.

The system became clogged and more or less in desperation the Administration went to a prolific use of the 180-day waiver. This, of course, inflamed the right-wing who were sure that this was nothing more than Kennedy bringing in a bunch of pinkos. And some of the names involved were very liberal.

There was a gentleman in the Office of Security who was so pained by this change that he became a public figure, an obstructionist, alleging that gross improprieties were taking place in security in the State Department. His name was Otto Otepka. For many years he had been the head of the investigating division. He had seen his empire almost transferred to the Civil Service Commission and the efforts of his field agents, which were being so thorough, that nothing moved, usurped by the 180-day procedure. He went public through The Richmond News Leader, an extremely right-wing publication at that time. He became a pariah. While this was going on, I as chief of Officer Employment discovered that I had two employees who were involved. One, as a flow point for Otepka's material.

*Q: What do you mean by "flow point"?*

SOMERVILLE: It was through her that Otepka's material was being fed to The Richmond Leader.

*Q: I presume this was more than just sensitive material.*

SOMERVILLE: I won't say that it was security sensitive but certainly privacy sensitive



and damaging stuff about some of the people who were being appointed. Information from security backgrounds, etc., material that could only come from security files. Very suggestive stuff. Anyway, I found that I had another employee who was actively involved in dealing with senior candidates in distributing J. Edgar Hoover's book. She had a crate of these damn things in her office and she was passing them out to all the candidates to warn them. Well, here I am, a young guy from the Civil Service Commission not knowing anybody in the State Department trying to run an operation and I had to deal with the folks.

Well, it turns out that Otto Otepka was typing his material in Frances Knight's office. I told you this was unbelievable. He was producing his material in her office with her knowledge, using J. Edgar Hoover intelligence. I knew this because there were times I was in her office and she would telephone across and get input from over there. I was required to chastise and stop what they were doing. I couldn't stop the flow to the Richmond News Leader because that was done off premises, but I got rid of the publications, etc.

*Q: Who ordered you to stop it?*

SOMERVILLE: I do not recall but I think the relationship between me and my supervisor and his supervisor and the deputy under secretary for Administration was such that perhaps there wasn't a need for an order. I was an idealist young guy and had an idea how the government should work and these operations were not the right way. You don't destroy people's reputations with information you are privileged to have, and should treat it accordingly.

*Q: And the officials concerned felt, if not ideologically exactly as you did, in principle, that this was the wrong thing to do.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. My immediate superior was a Foreign Service officer, a very senior guy of impeccable credentials and not a captive of the sabotage that was being perpetrated on the new deputy under secretary for Administration. So I enjoyed working for him.

*Q: And you had been in State long enough to have a feeling for what was evolving.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. That was a little bit of the climate that existed. I had nothing to do with CA at this time. I was solely in the Office of Personnel as a recruiter seeking officers, and getting them through clearances, etc.

*Q: I'm sort of lost. Wasn't it part of CA?*

SOMERVILLE: By the time I arrived it was functioning autonomously again. Let me put it this way. The person who had been appointed by the new administration to the CA administrator's job, with all the subordinates under attack sufficiently by then, felt that it was wise to spin apart the pieces. That combined with the kinds of pressures that the

“system” was bringing to bear on Roger Jones because...

*Q: The Inspector General?*

SOMERVILLE: That was sacrosanct. It was a different idea than it was now. It was wholly and solely a Foreign Service entity. It solely looked at embassies and that sort of thing. Non-Foreign Service management did not diddle with the Inspector General. Well, that had been taken away and put under this guy from the Civil Service Commission. You can see the anger. I won't say it was right or wrong.

*Q: Was that legal? It was in the Foreign Service Act.*

SOMERVILLE: It was legal. Administratively you can move it wherever you want to. Remember you didn't have the Inspector General Act that you and I are used to for the last 20 years. Then it didn't exist.

And the responsibilities of the Inspector General inferentially were the totality of the non-Civil Service part of the personnel system as stated in law. So they made it an ineffectual job. It was a sit on the side, get out of the way, we are running the show.

*Q: It was perhaps more a job of looking into things that might need cops, if you will, rather than today's role of an inspector general on policy.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, in those days a major objective of having the Foreign Service inspection operation wasn't limited to the appropriate stewardship of money, property, etc. It was also to make sure that we didn't have ambassadors and staff who went native. There was a great concern of clientitis in those days. That the staff would become strong advocates for a point of view that they were no longer functioning in the broader U.S. national interest.

*Q: That still is a question.*

SOMERVILLE: And it always will be. This concerned Kissinger when he came in and he designed the GLOP program. He took people out of their geographical areas and made them move, because their loyalties became distorted, internally and externally.

*Q: Let me stop, Ron, for just a minute. There is something that I think the reader needs to know a little more about. What was your background before you became an intern. Where did you grow up and go to school?*

SOMERVILLE: I am from Pennsylvania and spent a couple of years in the Service. Always had an interest in government. In high school I came down for an inauguration of a president with a bunch of friends. Strange as it may seem there is a building catty-corner from the White House, across from the Old Executive Office building. We came down, pulled down the fire escape on the back, climbed on top of the building and were opposite the presidential reviewing stand watching the parade and waving at everybody.

*Q: You can't do that any more.*

SOMERVILLE: I graduated from Pennsylvania University in industrial psychology. I went through the management intern exam including interviews.

*Q: That's the way you came into the Civil Service?*

SOMERVILLE: That was the mechanism then from which I got my first assignment to the Civil Service Commission.

*Q: Okay, you are now plugged in.*

SOMERVILLE: That, of course, was totally concerned with personnel related activities for the government.

Here's is a little aside that is funny. When I joined the State Department you filled out a little piece of paper to go into the Stud Book (Biographical Register). I was required to state what I had been doing previously. I put down Civil Service Commission, listing no responsibilities. So, for 15 years I was seen to be a CIA plant in the State Department.

Along the way I was offered the job of personnel officer for what was then the A Bureau, the Administration Bureau, which was different than it is presently concocted. It had fiscal operations as well as other operations. It did not have security, the inspector general or personnel. By the time this happened, the CA superstructure had nearly been dismantled administratively, not legally. The administrator was more and more isolated from operations and greater autonomy had been given to the Visa Office, the Passport Office, and Services to Americans Abroad Office, which Frances Knight (as head of the Passport Office) was still trying to gobble up.

CA had become a holding company. It didn't have its own budget. There was a visa budget, a passport budget and no significant central control between those and the Department, OMB and congress. By intent, it was being dismantled. This was because of the fracas about the political appointee who had been placed in the administrator's position by the Kennedy administration.

In moving to the A Bureau personnel officer job I moved into one of responsibility again for servicing CA to the extent anybody supported them to a personnel sense because the CA assistant secretary's level had no involvement. It was very strange. So, I did the classification, assignments and all the personnel stuff.

*Q: You had the staff to go along with these responsibilities?*

SOMERVILLE: I inherited two people who came from CA. Bear in mind this was not really a control structure. Nobody wanted to sit on top of Frances Knight. Nobody wanted to get in her way because they would be shot. The Foreign Service was an overseas thing

by itself and the Visa Office didn't really deal anywhere else.

At this time I was also given residual responsibility for the care and feeding of Otto Otepka. By now his case had progressed through "grievances" [appeals] in the court and he was in a holding pattern. They placed him in a building by himself where Virginia Avenue now exists. There was a State Annex there. It was a building that was to be torn down and Virginia Ave was to be constructed. He called in reporters and showed them the rats and the mice and all hell was raised about the mistreatment of this poor super American patriot, etc. I had to give him desk space, meet with him once a week, make sure he got all the directives in the system and create the charade that somehow he wasn't an outcast. He was integrated into the organization, and given all the communications he needed to do his job, etc. In the mean time he is hold up in Frances Knight's office producing a book. Through some contortion and convolution in the security stuff, I became suspect of being one of his flow points to the Richmond News Leader.

*Q: Of course. You associated with him.*

SOMERVILLE: Without mentioning any names it became known to me that the space I was in, then State Annex 2, had previously been security space and had microphones and those were turned on. I will tell you, Bill, for about six months I had the most marvelous time. I worked late and engaged in fictitious conversations and fed more stuff. Oh, it was marvelous.

In the service role of the Bureau for Consular Affairs, I was called by the then deputy under secretary for Administration, a gentleman by the name of Bill Crockett, and told there was a lady in an office on the fifth floor, for whom we have to create an office organizationally and staff with two people. This will become a second special advisor to the secretary. There was a senior advisor to the secretary on refugee affairs. This was to be something like that, a senior advisor on consular affairs. Go see the lady and set it up.

So, I went to the office and Barbara Watson was sitting there. She introduced herself and didn't have the foggiest notion what the State Department was. She had been brought down from New York City to be appointed in this consultant role. I didn't know what was going on. I created, honestly, an office to support this senior advisor outside of CA. I got space, set up an office, got a couple of secretaries, etc. After this was all done I learned that this was a transitory position to the administrator for Security and Consular Affairs. Bare in mind this was just a shell and existed only in law and not at all administratively, authoritatively, budget-wise, or position-wise. She was sponsored by John Rooney, who had been the district attorney in Brooklyn, and a close friend of Barbara Watson's-

Barbara was there preparatory to being appointed the Administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, which at the time comprised only the Passport Office, the Visa Office and the Office of Citizen Services. The only security aspect that it had, had to do with the prevention of security risks from entering the U.S. via the visa processing system or curtailing of travel by Americans under indictment, on the passport side. These

were both under legislation. The first one under the Immigration and Nationality Act; the second, I think, was in the act that created the bureau.

*Q: Let's get a date on this.*

SOMERVILLE: In September of 1968, Barbara Watson was nominated, confirmed and appointed.

*Q: Her predecessor was?*

SOMERVILLE: A name I cannot remember. [Abba P. Schwartz 1962-66] The position was vacant at the time. It was a person who had been fired. Rusk called him and told him he was no longer an employee having been targeted by the right-wing on the Hill, and engaged in practices that became notorious. Although in ethnic and migration circles he was highly regarded. He was a lawyer with a long time association with legal immigration issues, particularly with regard to refugees.

The election took place in November and of course Richard Nixon won. In reviewing his appointments he decided very early in the game, in January, the month of his swearing in, that it was in his political and administrative interest to retain the very fresh, brand new administrator for Consular Affairs, Barbara Watson.

*Q: In skills. In terms of credentials and background.*

SOMERVILLE: She was qualified and more importantly she was politically important in that Nixon had to deal with John Rooney on the appropriations side, with Dr. Morgan Uppers on the international relations side, with Carl Mundt and the current conservatives who had found her sufficiently acceptable to confirm her. And lastly, if he opened the position up, he would have grave difficulty getting through the various factions and interests anytime soon to appoint a successor.

There was another element that was not seen and that was that Barbara Watson was the most senior black woman ever in the history of the State Department. First black assistant secretary, first female assistant secretary. She broke many, many of the old "rules". Politically acceptable to both parties. She could not be penetrated by Frances Knight. Here you have Nixon, for whom she had worked many years before, as a new president reflecting what he knew to be the case in terms of dealing with Frances Knight.

He left Barbara Watson in the position. Strengthened her by recreating the bureau, authorizing the creation of a staff and directed that the staff should manage a bureau entity and that all office directors within the bureau should report only through the administrator for the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. The visa director at the time was Ray Collum, a strong personality. Frances Knight, a very partisan political person would be managed by a black woman who had good political credentials, was astute, bright, imposing, and seemingly acceptable by the State Department's Foreign Service.

Shortly thereafter I was called and asked if I would please come aboard. In truth she didn't know where to turn. It was suggested by the then assistant secretary for administration, John Thomas, with whom, I had grave disagreements -- I cared not at all for some of his style -- that she consider me as personnel officer/deputy executive director. He noted that she had to have a Foreign Service person in as executive director because the organization was principally overseas, a Foreign Service organization. Because of our problems, he offered to give her my position, with me. So, I had the distinct honor of arriving with the position on my forehead, thus removing a thorn from his side and fulfilling an obligation that he had to make sure that the bureau was put back into a structural soundness.

*Q: And with someone who was qualified to do it and knew enough about the department and the machinations.*

SOMERVILLE: Probably more the latter than the former. This was the time when there was a gentleman by the name of Bill Crockett who was the deputy under secretary for administration, now called the under secretary for management. These fit together very nicely because Barbara came in from outside, a total non-fit for the State Department, being senior black and senior female. The Foreign Service didn't like either one of them, and arranged its affairs generally for them, except in very subordinate positions or in consular sections. Bill Crockett, who was very close to John Rooney, was a Foreign Service Staff officer whose wife never forgot the indignities that she suffered from the Foreign Service officers. Mr. Crockett was also very close to Wayne Hays.

During those years we went through a very stressful "Oh, dear, what should we be? Oh, dear, what should we be?" There were personnel studies after studies. Should we be Domestic Service? Should we be Foreign Service? Should we merge? How should we restructure ourselves to be effective? There was commission after commission. The Wriston Commission. The Hoover Commission. Anyway, it was decided with Wayne Hays' strongest support that we really should be one Service and that is the only way you are going to get rid of this rivalry between the Staff officers and the Foreign Service officers and the Civil Service officers.

*Q: Which was getting more extreme and more complex and confusing.*

SOMERVILLE: Wayne Hays was chairman of two powerful entities on the Hill. First, for the State Department, he was chairman of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on foreign operations in the State Department. Probably of greater interest to him, and the Congress, was that he was full chairman of the House Administration Committee. What does that mean? He assigns space, staff, dollars and parking permits to every congressman. Therefore, he had in those days ultimate power. There was no congressman in the Hill structure that had more power.

In any event, Wayne Hays, John Rooney and Leo Ryan hated Frances Knight and supported Barbara Watson. Nixon decided for all these reasons to keep her in place to put

together the bureau. I joined the bureau as personnel officer with the new executive director, Jerry Wetzork, a nice fellow. We began an operation which rapidly was perceived to be one of outcasts. Outcasts of the Passport Office because it was seen as a non-player, and outside the purview of any professional interest in the State Department. A non-player as far as the Visa function and its massive staff abroad, because those were technicians who handled those dirty smelling foreigners and didn't go to the parties or have the same titles. They rarely got the decent space abroad because they had to have big waiting rooms with lots of immigrants coming in.

*Q: And still a lot of staff officers.*

SOMERVILLE: It was a mixture, but mostly Staff officers despite the Rogers Act in 1924. But then because of the Hays program it became really bastardized.

*Q: You haven't told us about the Wayne Hays program.*

SOMERVILLE: Wayne Hays felt that the Department of State could only be effectively managed if we got rid of the rivalries. We would have one type of officer that he saw as a Foreign Service Reserve/Foreign Service officer. He saw the Reserve officer as a transitional mode to a single structure of Foreign Service officers.

*Q: From Staff, to Reserve, to officer?*

SOMERVILLE: From staff to reserve and eventually to officer; or on the Civil Service side, from Civil Service to Reserve to officer. He felt strongly that only with a single service could you get rid of this rivalry once and for all because the problems were readily apparent. We had no consular officers in significant senior positions in the Department. They could not aspire to be ambassadors. They rarely got to be principal officers even though a post's primary staffing function and responsibility was consular. A Foreign Service officer, typically going the political route, was perceived and in fact was the most favorite when it came to the more responsible positions, and therefore promotions. Rarely did a consular officer who was also a Foreign Service officer ever become what was then FSO-1, the senior most Foreign Service rank. The reason they didn't had less to do with their abilities and performance but more to do with the fact that they were not permitted to seek assignments that qualified them both for visibility and for a record of performance in the more senior jobs.

*Q: I might throw in what was true at the time of the Rogers Act, and continued: consular work tended to be more technical, more repetitive...*

SOMERVILLE: It tended to be like that other non-starter in the Foreign Service: administration. There were many efforts over the years during my tenure to join together the two career specialties. They both stem from law and regulation and finite fixed things and merely required you to relate a body of written information to a situation to a solution, without any real analytical judgment. They didn't have to understand [substantively] foreign governments and peoples and culture.

*Q: It took care of the social superiority of the diplomatic officer.*

SOMERVILLE: How much Wayne Hays saw of this on his own and how much he was influenced by Bill Crockett, no one really knows. There was then an attempt to pass legislation to merge the two. The Foreign Service officers were very strongly against what was seen by them as diluting their ranks. They were instrumental in having other elements in congress stop the legislation. Wayne Hays vowed that with his hammer over the State Department he would show his colleagues that the employees, other than those blue noses, really wanted to do this. He encouraged the Department to administratively achieve the same objective. Hence we began what was called the Hays program. This was a program of convincing the employees, Staff and Civil Service officers, that it was in their best interest to volunteer for conversion to the Foreign Service Reserve Corps carrying with them their career status and eventually moving into the Foreign Service retirement system.

*Q: Was there a Reserve officer corps at the time?*

SOMERVILLE: The reserve appointment authority [in the Foreign Service Act] began to be used, and some would say bastardized extensively, by the new Kennedy administration. They saw themselves being hamstrung in every other direction they took to assume the reins of power in the State Department. They couldn't get their own people in easily and when they did, those people were not able to get control of the structure. They were titularly there but not really there. There was an intervening structure they had to create and they did it by the use of the FSR, the Foreign Service Reserve appointment authority which until then had been used only for doctors, deep, deep specialists, or clearly transitory appointments from Social Security Administration or Department of Defense, etc., some other appointing authority; it didn't stay.

*Q: And an appointment that could only last five years.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. That was non-renewable administratively. Legally, the appointment was limited to five years but there was no statutory language prohibiting subsequent FSR appointments. So there were people who served for a number of tours successively.

*Q: By and large, however, they were in positions that no one would ever raise a question about, like a medical officer.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. A highly specialized skill. They weren't a threat to anyone's career field or assignment opportunity. They were non-threatening.

The Hays program was a massive one. It was a very costly one for the US government. It was one of the stupidest things that was ever done. I had the dishonor or ignoble job to be responsible principally for the program. We had daily seminars and briefings and I had to call Bill Crockett's office every evening at 5:00 and tell them how many people



converted that day, from the Civil Service or the staff. That was then passed over to Wayne Hays to further convince him and keep his eye on the ball in getting the rest of his colleagues up there to agree to release the Hays Bill which would give us statutory basis for this.

*Q: The staff corps could see that it was advantageous to it, other than from the competition aspect. If they got the word correctly they would have realized they wouldn't vie successfully in most cases because of the officer promotion system which was highly competitive. But, the civil servant in State could see, perhaps, how he could grow with this conversion.*

SOMERVILLE: Not only could [the Civil Service officer] grow, but he was clearly told that this was what his management wanted him to do. For example, for family and personal reasons I did not feel free to try and join the Foreign Service. However, I felt greatly constrained to convert to the Foreign Service Reserve program because I was charged with making it work. So, I converted to the Foreign Service Reserve. I never had an intent of going abroad. I accepted the appointment under the ground rules that were then in place administratively, which was no obligation to serve abroad. It was to be as though I had continued in a Civil Service capacity except that my label would change, my pay system would change and my promotion system would change. I became an FSR-2.

*Q: You were competitive with FSRs or with FSOs?*

SOMERVILLE: Bill, it was mumble-jumble over the years. The criteria changed over the years. The composition of the boards changed. I was very fortunate and promoted from FSR-2 to FSR-1. I am sure there were Foreign Service officers who wondered "who the hell is this? A non-Foreign Service person taking up a slot." And, I am sure there was resentment. Naturally so.

*Q: Yes, because there were just "X" number of promotions and you got one in your class as an "R." How did that manifest itself?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, because of where I was in CA, I don't think I experienced much of anything from my colleagues whether they were Foreign Service or Civil Service. I was seen more as an executive director and was working for a powerful assistant secretary of Consular Affairs. We either intruded ourselves or were invited into the assignment process, promotion number allocation, not the panel process of deciding who won. We obtained the resources necessary to create the positions, staff them, furnish them. I didn't recognize any resentment to me.

*Q: I don't think there was either, because you did all these things that were necessary and good for the consular bureau. I think few knew of your promotion, or cared. It was a non-issue because you did absolutely everything; and even more: you taught us how to do it. Now, everyone would walk away smiling.*

SOMERVILLE: To digress. Up until the time we began to recreate, reconstitute and

reform the front office of CA there had been little opportunity for consular officers to get involved in anything that would expose them to how the Hill worked, how the Office of Management and Budget worked, how the Internal Acquisition and Allocation of Resources worked. They knew nothing of the processes.

*Q: They didn't want to know. It was only when they served in personnel or some place associated with you, like the computer in the Visa Office as I was, that one realized that there was power, in the good sense. And you supported them and translated some of these "technical" things. You protected me in the Visa Office from somebody who hated that sort of thing, and was scared of it.*

SOMERVILLE: This was an anathema to Julio Arias, who kind of epitomized the old staff consular officer.

*Q: And there was an employee out there to get through to him.*

SOMERVILLE: That was the man who was thrown out by Frances Knight and for political reasons we were asked to find a home for him. I didn't solve this problem, Diego Asencio did. Immediately after appointment as assistant secretary, he got a call from the Hill. Wayne Hays was sitting on the State Department authorization bill and had been doing this for a period of several weeks. There was a real risk that we would not be reauthorized. Pat Kennedy went to visit the gentleman with the then under secretary for management. I had warned them in advance what was going to happen. Pat Kennedy called Diego Asencio from the office on the Hill to say that his first payback opportunity was coming now and here is what it is. "You have a gentleman in the Passport Office who is isolated, ostracized, sitting in an office with no lights and no heat and you are going to have to do something for this person". So, you got him.

*Q: He was on board when I arrived as deputy director of VO (the Visa Office). I was told that part of my new job I was taking on was to keep this "special politically sponsored soul from the Passport Office" and Julio Arias, the head of the Visa Office, apart, from each others' throats.*

SOMERVILLE: Was Helen Mulholland still there?

*Q: No, she had left.*

SOMERVILLE: She sued Barbara Watson for sex discrimination for bringing that gentleman in and taking her responsibilities. This reached the point of depositions, after Barbara had been de-hired [and replaced by a Republican appointee: Leonard Walentynowicz]. She served twice you know. She came back with the promise that Carter would get rid of Frances Knight. That was the only caveat she insisted upon to come back to the office.

*Q: Now, the reader should know clearly that none of this is gossip. This is all personnel management of the highest order and all true. This is all factual, interpersonal*

*relationships.*

SOMERVILLE: The first time Barbara was de-hired she was made ambassador to Malaysia. The second time she was de-hired she returned to civilian life. The lady in the Visa Office whose job was usurped by the gentleman [from the Passport office] sued Barbara Watson for sex discrimination having given a female's duties and responsibilities to a male. I went over and wrote Barbara's deposition in her apartment on Queen Ann's Lane, she being a non-employee at the time but not at the time covered by the suit. The lady didn't succeed because the case had no merit. It was a very unfortunate case because she was a nice lady and had put a life time of effort into the job and felt she had been terribly treated.

*Q: And this is the bottom line of so many personnel, congressional, executive branch, intercessions in personnel actions. It's real and you just happen to have one of those jobs that stayed mostly to the center of that.*

SOMERVILLE: Okay. Let's take a little digression into the area of automation, work engineering, process design and that sort of thing.

*Q: Now, do that in terms of the point in which we have reached in our discussion: the establishment of the new bureau.*

SOMERVILLE: Okay, but in truth I have to go behind that a little bit.

*Q: Yes, you should.*

SOMERVILLE: I am essentially relating to you things in which I was personally involved, not things that evolved around me. I had to meet with Wayne Hays on numerous occasions carrying him ammunition to fire at Frances Knight. I had to meet with John Rooney in his office on the Hill carrying him ammunition to throw back and shoot at Frances Knight. I spent time with him creating scenarios that could be used to strengthen the consular function, whether it was dealing with the secretary, the under secretary for management, etc. These comments are only things in which I participated in.

*Q: I would argue that the first things that you faced in terms of our chronology here of setting up CA was Frances Knight. I think, excuse the expression, she has to be done away with in the sense that Barbara had a terrible time as the new leader, leading in comparison to other "principals" - heads of bureaus - in the State Department.*

SOMERVILLE: Before we go to the automation side let me talk about that. As Barbara Watson assumed her new duties she was immediately targeted by Frances Knight for demise. Frances worked her will on the Hill in an attempt to further disestablish the bureau and prevent it from being reconstituted, recreated, reorganized. She attempted to have it de-funded. She accused Barbara Watson of needing officers around her all the time. She alluded to the senior staff members around Barbara Watson as hand holders.

She alleged she only spoke words that were stuffed in her mouth by others. She alleged that the woman had to be scripted for everything that she did. She did this through her husband, Wayne Parish in the Cleveland Plain Dealer which had entree into a very strong Ohio Republican congressional delegation. There were some very strong folks through Karl Mundt. and basically through the ideological right wing.

*Q: This is a holdover from the McCarthy era.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. Frances built up a fierce reputation as a hard nose manager. She got the job done. She created statistical material every year about how much money she made for the Treasury and how little it cost. Of course, she didn't compare it against anything. What we found early in the game was that in reviewing the annual financial data as we began to put together a coordinated, consolidated, single CA presentation, I discovered negative obligations in a particular account in the Passport Office, which meant that somehow an account had more money in it at the end of the year than had been given at the beginning of the year.

*Q: They made a profit.*

SOMERVILLE: I wondered, what the hell is this? As it were, this came to the attention of the chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee that governed the State Department. The structural situation was such that the only way it could be addressed was externally. He sent a group in from the House survey and investigations group, which is a group available to the entire appropriations committee in the House from the FBI and from the GAO (General Accounting Office) and the Defense Department's contract audit agency. A gentleman by the name of Loft from the FBI and two other guys came over to investigate the books. What they found was there had been created in the Passport Office during Ms. Knight's tenure a "special handling fee." From the time passports were first created you had a dead period, and then a peak period in the spring when everybody is thinking about going abroad. It is difficult to staff for peaks and valleys. Work in the peak season accumulated. Backlogs are a natural, built-in fact of life. The real management issue was how should you define a backlog and how big should it be because it is always going to be there.

Well, a scheme had been thought up whereby a special handling fee, an extra charge, would be an elective made available to the applicant during the high season if they wanted the passport on time. What we found further was that Frances Knight had a great publicity activity every year of parading a vast public image that she had been starved of resources and therefore there were all these backlogs and people couldn't travel abroad missing their trains and planes. Of course, when that publicity was out, the attractiveness of her special handling fee became very high.

What happened is she had been able to create this picture that created so much cash in her communications, telephone and postage account that the inflow of money for special handling more than offset all the expenditures. Of course, the congressional group passed it over to the GAO and the GAO said it was illegal and it has to be terminated. You could

not take to a court of law malfeasance in the sense of a connection between the publicity, the imposing of a fee and the offset in the appropriations thereby giving her an unseen amount to use for other purposes. Nobody took the money away.

*Q: Didn't she have good financial people to tell her that such a fee was against the law?*

SOMERVILLE: She had competent staff but you had logic type compartments, the financial guys did financial stuff and management guys did management stuff, etc.

*Q: You weighed very carefully going into the director and saying, "this ain't legal."*

SOMERVILLE: Yes.

*Q: And you had to do it in this way since it couldn't be done by some memo. She had to be confronted. Because if she didn't know what she was doing was illegal, she knew it was self serving.*

SOMERVILLE: In my mind I don't believe the lady had a dumb bone in her body. She was very bright. She modernized the Passport Office, give the devil her due. She created a work environment in which the work got produced. She created a political environment by which she got the resources that she needed. She further created a political climate that preserved her empire and insulated her from meddling above. She viewed anybody who came from above, as meddling. She obviously felt her political strength was such that she could get away with the apparatus for tracking Americans travel abroad.

*Q: She had links with J. Edger Hoover.*

SOMERVILLE: I discovered in my first year in CA on looking at the physical facilities a dozen desks in the Passport Office that I couldn't figure out. These were to accommodate 12 FBI agents who were normally resident in her office for the file information she had. She had the largest colored photographic collection of US citizens that existed because she had a duplicate photo of every person who had ever applied for a passport. She had familiar link information that exceeded anything available elsewhere in the government. When the privacy act came into existence we got rid of them. No agency can go pawing in your file now. It has to be requested, purpose stated, authorized and recorded.

She saw herself as an integral part of a security apparatus. Don't disregard the title of the bureau - the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs.

Scott McLeod has a certain reputation in an ideological perspective. He was instrumental in the creation of the bureau with that functional perspective. What you had there was the classic art of the over reach. It never really materialized in any broad way except for what was conjured by Frances or in the visa process. You know the Department has certain links elsewhere on visa clearance issues. Except during that very brief period after the Kennedy election when for gaining control purposes it was seen desirable of putting together all the pieces that had ever been contemplated in the bureau in statute. The

bureau was created in statute during the Scott McLeod days long before I ever got there. This was what they had in mind at that time but they couldn't pull it off.

Scott McLeod was in the bureau at the time that Frances Knight was appointed. He was never confirmed as the administrator for Consular Affairs. He could not be confirmed. His name was finally withdrawn. He served in an acting capacity. There were a series of two or three appointments there that were very messy and very politicized and ideologically driven. The history of CA leading up to my association was far messier than after I arrived.

I faced an demand that we would open Detroit. It wasn't necessary but it was the cost of getting rid of Frances Knight and they would seriously consider opening two other agencies. Upon her retirement and the ascension of the first non-political type in many years, Lory Lawrence, from the Foreign Service, as head of the Passport Office, we had to carry through with the commitment to open Detroit, which was subsequently closed a few years later when the political heat was off. We created studies and forwarded them to congress about the need for two additional agencies but did not open them. And, with that we will end the career of Frances Knight. She retired and the State Department resumed management of the passport function probably for the first time in 25 years. Between Marge Shipley and Frances Knight, the Passport Office had been more or less untouchable for about a quarter of a century.

*Q: For obvious political reasons, but also political security reasons of a right-wing inheritance.*

SOMERVILLE: That, but I have to be fair to the incumbents, Bill. The State Department managed everything poorly, if it managed at all. It was almost anathema to the profession of most concern to the Foreign Service and, these were production operations. They demanded a totally different style, a different hand at the helm, a little more rigidity, and very service oriented. The State Department would not have given good stewardship anyway, I'm tempted to say. The good stewardship that followed didn't happen by accident. Lory Lawrence, in fact a career senior person, was carefully selected for that position.

*Q: And succeeded?*

SOMERVILLE: Lory succeeded tremendously. What he succeeded in doing was reorienting a Civil Service Passport Office shop, ruled by a tyrant totally outside the sphere of the State Department, and bringing them into the fold. Whether it was more efficient or not is not something to be argued. What he did was to reorient management and employees and brought them into CA firstly, so that CA for the first time in probably 30 or 40 years and maybe since the Rogers Act, began to function as a bureau sharing resources, staff, management philosophy, and becoming a global looking organization encompassing both US domestic as well as overseas functions. That was a big change.

*Q: This was supported, enthusiastically I presume, with all of the ramifications of*

*management and integration by Barbara Watson. Were you now the deputy director?*

SOMERVILLE: Oh, yes, long before.

*Q: When did you actually become executive director of the Bureau of Consular Affairs?*

SOMERVILLE: It was about 1971, somewhere in that neighborhood.

*Q: And Barbara came on when?*

SOMERVILLE: In 1968.

*Q: So you had at least three years of experimentation.*

SOMERVILLE: Apprenticeship. The change in the management of the Passport Office was not universally embraced. Political forces on the Hill, in particular, were very unhappy at the thought of a "careerist" going into the job. The Foreign Service wasn't universally enthusiastic about the idea of getting into that sort of thing. I think it was accepted primarily on the thesis that it was consular and was therefore not really relevant to other things being done in the State Department.

*Q: Or wouldn't use resources that were needed in other areas?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, and there were other concerns, too. The Passport Office hiring system was generally to hire people at the base, not as professionals, to train, promote and develop them and finally they became officers and some were damn good. There was no exam entry comparable to the Foreign Service. The State Department by and large was bifurcated with most serious positions being held by the Foreign Service, domestically and all positions abroad, except Foreign Service National positions. There was no Civil Service assignment abroad at all. There were very few interims, like FSRs, which included security and very specialized activities.

*Q: Not even to make them stronger and more experienced through training of a sort?*

SOMERVILLE: None. From the departmental personnel policy standpoint there were prohibitions. For example, a Foreign Service officer who didn't want to go around the world any more was prohibited from converting into the Civil Service. A Civil Service officer could apply for lateral entry but he wouldn't get it unless he was lucky enough to be a Wristonee or under a Hays program or some special program that was blessed. In the normal run of the mill to and fro year after year a civil servant could not cross the line into the Foreign Service nor could a Foreign Service officer cross the line back into the Civil Service.

*Q: We had a tremendous need of personnel at the end of World War II.*

SOMERVILLE: Right. And that was what brought the Wristonee program but not the

normal Civil Service program. There was one other, but it was very oriented to employees already in the State Department and I can't think of the name of it but it was patterned after the navy.

*Q: Bill Macomber's Mustang program, which I think still exists today.*

SOMERVILLE: That was more or less oriented towards staff corps.

*Q: We needed more people but we needed the right people who would be competitive for jobs and hopefully for professionalism. And it worked.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, there is very little continuity over the years in techniques for meeting overseas staffing requirements.

*Q: And this is your job.*

SOMERVILLE: You went from a Wriston program that was deemed successful and then deemed a failure. After it was deemed a failure, the Department bumped along for a few years and came up with the Hays program which initially was for Foreign Service staff, to recreate a strong Foreign Service staff, recognizing that the broadening of the Foreign Service officer corps to cover consular and administration was really so resisted that it couldn't work. And the Hays program failed because you were creating a two class society.

I have to tell you that Barbara Watson was dead set against the Hays program. She saw it as parallel to her experience in the black community. You had the water workers and then you had the carriers of water. The carriers of water analogous to blacks were the staff people. Even though this would have given her in the consular corps access to a lot more talent she needed, she did not support the staff conversion program, the Hays program, because it was a two class system.

*Q: And you were under instructions to implement it as a State Department executive director.*

SOMERVILLE: I was on both sides of the camp.

*Q: How did this play out?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, one paid lip service to Caesar and one does in the halls and behind the doors what one has to do.

*Q: Because you also were against a two class system?*

SOMERVILLE: We have to separate this by time a little bit, Bill. My primary role in flogging the system to get conversions was before coming to CA. It was in the A bureau and M, and that constellation that serviced CA, budget and fiscal, personnel and all that.



In that context I had a relationship with the Hays program. When I moved to CA, I was the CA person. My relationship with Wayne Hays and his staff became one primarily of gaining support for consular interest issues, whether it was budgetary or not. Now Wayne Hays was both House administration and foreign affairs committee. So, he was a king pin in congress and he was important for us. My relationship with him had a lot to do with containing and controlling Frances Knight. He became a primary power and influence when it came to doing that.

*Q: And that dominated all other issues in the beginning, I presume?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. So, the issue of staff corps and conversions, etc. in my relationship was a different one. I was more able to carry out I guess policy stands that Barbara would have wanted and that was: "Get us the talent, get them regular. Get me the junior officers. Don't tell me to hire all the spouses. Don't tell me to hire the kids. Don't tell me to hire the DOD overseas families. And, don't get me staff people. Give me FSOs solely." She did not seek to have Civil Service people excursions, nor did she seek a Mustang kind of thing. She supported the Mustang program primarily as an EEO thing, not as something functionally tied to the consular staffing requirements abroad.

She recognized what they had to be, to be the most effective in their jobs. They had to be respected in the mission, literate, capable of analyzing issues and drafting, because when she arrived she found as a result of the kinds of staffing patterns that had taken place prior to her arrival, a lot of consular officers, in fairness, were not competitive. They were adequate to stamp a visa or issue a passport, but they couldn't carry on an analytical conversation. They had no local contacts that would be useful to the mission in terms of information gathering or information spreading. They had no public diplomacy sense at all.

*Q: And maybe a chip on their shoulder to a degree where it made it worse.*

SOMERVILLE: They tended to isolate themselves. There is no question about that.

*Q: Well, there was a mass of people affected by this over several years, so it wasn't just like turning a clock on and off. No way.*

SOMERVILLE: That is correct and they were confronted year after year with the proposal that they merge with their brothers and sisters in the admin function, who likewise were seen as pencil counters and bean counters and floor washers, etc. The admin folks had a very low reputation. There was very little movement from admin or consular into any other endeavor in the State Department. There was very little movement to senior management positions except in those fields. There was very little cross over.

There is another aspect that has to go in the deck and that is that the situation was one in which both the admin folks and the consular folks maximized the use of their own jargon, their own tools, to create a mystic which gave them some prestige and protection from

inroads.

*Q: And got maybe better promotions in some ways. I remember Barbara Watson's insistence that in addition to equal or better promotion rates, there be other outside signs of the equality and importance in foreign affairs of consular work.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, that's another discussion. What we had was the entering of an era in which we created a parallel to what is now to be found unconstitutional in the private sector. That is, we approached the idea of quota systems as the only way we could crack the egg, which was, I think, the thinking in the private sector. By looking at the number of senior and mid level positions that were important to the Department and to begin to demand a proportion of those, a specific percentage.

To be successful we did all kinds of crazy things. We went over to Frances Wilson in the EB bureau, Economic and Commercial Bureau, and said, "Frances, you and we have to fight publicly over a number of these principal officerships and other things in order for either one of us to get a decent bottom line." So, we engaged in crossed memos and in great conflict in meetings before the authorities could make decisions, thereby carving out a specific piece of the pie for each of us.

*Q: Now, Ron, if you would like to stop this chronological pattern, keeping with personnel and personnel management issues, or do you want to stop and come back to it later in our interview?*

SOMERVILLE: Let me come forward in time. There are two things that I think might be worth putting on the record. One is some evolutionary kinds of things in management and the other is a little bit on automation, mechanization process and that sort of thing. They tend to get together later on.

When we arrived in CA, as previously mentioned, there was no bureau structure. There was nothing. There was an aftermath of an attempt to dissolve and recreate free standing entities for visa operations, passport operations and what they called federal security operations consisting of federal benefits and service abroad to Americans in trouble. There was no budget entity, no personnel entity, no management philosophy. There was nothing. However, what we found is that there was an interest in automation and modern technology that would assist in a vast workload and tremendous accelerations in the increasing amount of workload with the changes in the visa line in 1968, with the increase of travel by Americans abroad and need for passport services and special consular services abroad at the missions.

As a result when we arrived we found that in the Passport Office we had the most modern technology in the entire State Department. It was punch paper tape, flexawriters, and it connected to the only mainframe computer the State Department had, an IBM 360, that was acquired on the justification of passport name check operations. That was the first mainframe computer acquisition for the State Department.

*Q: Nothing to do with foreign affairs.*

SOMERVILLE: Nothing. Well, I have to tell you that I do consulting work now on information technology. Today, if you are a political officer assigned abroad and are sitting at your desk your tools are essentially as they were 25 years ago. You don't yet have a desktop. You can't consult with a colleague at the next post in creation of a document. There is no collaborative work possible. You can shoot documents physically around, but you can't collaborate in real time as you can domestically here. I work in a work group and we do all of our work at home on documents through the Internet.

*Q: Is that security, money or attitude problems as managed by the State Department?*

SOMERVILLE: All of the above. USIA has a semblance. They are essentially not concerned about security primarily. They are out there being seen and want to be seen.

Anyway, what we found was that we had a paper punch operation in passports where information was created on a piece of tape with holes in it, and was carried to a machine that produced things automatically. We had the beginning of that sort of thing in the visa operations for name checks where they were poking tapes overseas into a communication terminal that was carrying the message back to this single computer and getting a name check and sending back a response.

*Q: We even have that in the Consular Training Segment of the Foreign Service Institute as an example of what not to do.*

SOMERVILLE: I saw the flexawriter over there. So, although there wasn't a central management structure, there was a microcosm of work simplification, automation orientation, mechanization sensitivity both in the Visa Office and the Passport Office. But they were not tied together. There was no communication back and forth between the two. There was Frances Knight, and the Foreign Service side didn't concern itself with the other side. The Visa Office was significantly Foreign Service. There was no cross communication. When it was attempted it was stifled. People who showed disloyalty and dealt with the head office, CA, were headless soon if they were in the Passport Office and found to be dealing with the enemy. I had to save more than one senior officer who was found to be dealing with us in the bureau on bureau issues. They were simply PNGed

We put some [of the Passport Office] in Visa, some in CA and OCS; moved a couple of them outside the bureau entirely because they were very vulnerable to being besmirched by Frances.

Back to my point. There was an attitude toward mechanization. An attitude towards automation that didn't exist anywhere else in the State Department. That was very refreshing. We continued after the beginning of the reconstitution of the bureau with the separate entities for a period of several years until Frances retired. Upon her retirement we centralized mechanization from Visa and from Passport. And, you know some of the problems that caused. I think you might have been there at the time. There were civil

servants who had long been involved in things and developed proprietary attitudes that had to change.

*Q: Also, within the Department there had begun a power center in the Administration's new focus on general automation that had some definitional problems with the work in CA.*

SOMERVILLE: We had significant philosophical problems in the Department to automation as to whether it had to be done all centrally by the central automation shop or whether the functional areas such as CA could create and implement their own programs. That battle is still going on. It will never end. There is really no resolution. There is no one way for this reason, Bill: Applications development can best be done close to the application sight, and that is CA in and visa and passports operations. However, that has to fit into a larger scheme for economy, for integration into a larger entity. The larger entity's requirements have to be built into the applications development process. How do you best assure that that happens? Then you eventually get down to personalities and organizational relationships. There is nothing scientific about it at all. It is getting them to work together. Now you get into power relationships.

*Q: And money, too. These are costly.*

SOMERVILLE: These are very costly and CA typically, because of its unique relationship outside the loop of normal congressional links in the State Department, has links to the Senate and House judiciary committees. No other part of the State Departments links to those two committees. I will be very cynical and say no member serving on the Senate or House judiciary committee can go abroad without the hook on the State Department that gives them access to justification to travel abroad. This is very cynical, but I am going to tell you something. Over time it is important. And the same thing is true of staffers.

One of the things we did early in the game, Bill, and you recall this, was to create the Consular Conference, a kind of traveling road show, in which we would go around the world and take senior staff and technical people to talk about what is happening in headquarters and the field and get them talking together. We always took with us our OMB examiners and our staffers from the Senate and House judiciary committees, and eventually appropriations committees. Now, to do that, sometimes I had to pay the travel of the congressional travelers because their staff budgets would not support the travel. So, we paid their travel for them to come and bring us the message from the Hill. It worked wonders.

*Q: And this was fairly well understood by one and all overseas. They sometimes wondered, because maybe they weren't always told as honestly and as up forward, what the semi-devious reason was for the conference. But, the conferences were indeed were valid. It was a most valid program.*

SOMERVILLE: This was true. There was a tendency overseas to see the value of the

conference in terms of what they gained at that level. A better understanding of policy operations and the background of what they had seen happen is helpful and it is hard to measure that. They couldn't see at all the benefit that was gained by entertaining folks from outside the work sphere of the State Department. And, yet, to get the budgets we had to have, to get support on legislation, it was important for these people to understand that the folks out there needed their support. It seemed to work.

There was a symbioses involved in the process. We had created what later became known as the Consular Package, and we will talk about that in specific terms, which included a raft of statistical analytical information which depicted workloads, processes, staffing and other resource related items post by post, mission by mission, worldwide. The use of that accumulated information, analysis based thereon and global statistical summaries depended upon credibility. To a great extent we gained credibility for that product by having the users, the consumers were really not us although they helped us do the analytical work, but the marketing use of the tool was even more important. That demanded credibility. By taking the OMB staffers, having committee staffers from appropriations, foreign relations and judiciary committees out, to hear us talk about how vital it was that it be accurate and not be fluff, that the numbers be sound, vetted and staffed throughout the embassy and the posts so that everybody was on the same sheet of paper. They became more and more impressed. These were credible documents, credible requirements and they needed to have appropriations support.

*Q: And none of the consular sections, like many government agencies, needed money for weapons, etc., but in fact needed resources to serve people. People, constituents, getting passports, getting visas for relatives to come to the U.S. All real-life, vote related, appropriated resources.*

SOMERVILLE: That's right. It brought them up against the only portion of a 25,000 person institution that costs \$5 billion a year that directly touches them and their constituents. By advertising the fee collections and the amount we put into the Treasury, it became less painful for them to appropriate the money because they could show their colleagues an offset which was an income to the Treasury.

We exercised good stewardship in increasing those fee levels which had not been done before. When we arrived, we found the fee income was far less than costs. Working with OMB directly we developed a system to analyze services in terms of costs, increase fee schedules close to cost recovery, which again supported OMB and the appropriating committees in having to come to give us more money. It convinced them that we had costed and covered all the fees and all the costs we could.

*Q: In language and style that they understood.*

SOMERVILLE: Bill, we even gave them clearance on the schemes before we issued them, partially for ego reasons and partially for involvement reasons.

*Q: And, you knew it was going to be a great success.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, we knew that when we changed fees we were going to have great public outcry. We doubled the IV, immigrant visa, fees two and a half times and we were accused of subverting CSCE (Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe) by Larry Eagleburger because we had done something that prohibited the free crossing of international borders and he held us up for one year.

*Q: It was constitutionally required. Those immigrants had the right to this visa, why should they pay for it. I said this to Barbara Watson one day.*

SOMERVILLE: You did?

Increasing that fee, by and large, did more for us on the Hill and OMB than any other fee change we made, because these were immigrants. Other fees, that affected American citizens, caused a little different attitude. Anyway, Larry Eagleburger was assistant secretary for EUR and he prevented us for one whole year from implementation of alleged allegations that this subverted CSCE. Now, who is right? I can't say. That was a damn important treaty in those days and we were the advocates of it.

In any event, the system that we had developed for placing fees more closely in alignment with actual costs was such that OMB asked us to teach INS how to do it, because INS was collecting very little money [for the services it gave].. We tried our best, sending our guys over to talk to them, but they got no where. INS for another 15 years charged token fees and saw no value in cooperating with OMB and the congress in collecting fees and forewent the opportunities that we seized on in building goodwill and convincing the congress of good stewardship and giving them something that they could use for their colleagues to get them to stop bitching about giving the State Department an extra \$20 million for automation for consular operations. They are paying it back.

*Q: Could you bring us up to date as to whether the INS fee is anywhere near costs today?*

SOMERVILLE: INS, after being beaten over the head year after year after year, finally did institute a new fee program maybe a decade ago now, about the time I retired. They did it, however, by bum-set.

*Q: What?*

SOMERVILLE: They sat on their bums and used manpower utilization data derived for budgetary and other purposes and did a little sampling and used it to support a theory on costs that in turn produced a fee schedule. It looked fine from the outside because it was an increase. However, anyone who has watched the results over the decade has seen them get into deep, deep, deep political, legal - and in one case criminal - trouble, because once having collected the fees they misutilized them. This was in contrast to the State Department where the fees collected all went to Treasury as miscellaneous receipts and recorded as income for the US government which we could show as an off set. They achieved statutory authority to retain certain fees and they had such a weak internal

management control system that they couldn't control where the money was going. And we went into legalization, you remember that one. Funds that were collected for legalization were supposed to be used only for that purpose. But they ended up buying vehicles with them. I don't believe it was ever proven to be stealing of funds. Rather it was a mis-accounting, misuse and abuse. I believe someone went to jail because of it.

*Q: Did we ever change our system of turning over all the fee funds to the Treasury?*

SOMERVILLE: During my time in CA, Bill, I was encouraged by some to do two things. One was to centralize global consular resources in an earmarked appropriations context, in CA, which CA would then dole out to the posts or geographic bureaus in terms of operations dollars, salary dollars, FTE positions, staff, etc. The other was to come up with a scheme that would permit us to have direct access to fees collected. Instead of them going to the Treasury, the fee receipts would be retained by the State Department.

I resisted that, however, for about 15 years. The reason I did was that I felt the success of consular operations abroad required integration with the mission. The minute you make a reservation of resources, you are outside the loop. You are no longer important. You are no longer considered. If you have overloads as we had highly seasonal workloads, you can't call upon the mission for shot infusions of resources. You can't detail staff across from other sections. You begin to see the loss of even junior officer assignments. The plain fact of life is you cannot operate a post from Washington. You cannot do it. The post administration has got to be local. So, I resisted the idea of centralization and earmarking into CA.

We came out of S&E [salary and expenses], which is the generic appropriation for the State Department. We competed within the mission then for a proper allocation and we used all kinds of things to do that. Leadership support from the Hill or OMB or support internally or getting prominent folks up topside. We had Barbara Watson, a prominent black female, who could only be bruised so much because she had unique qualities.

The accounting for fees as a trust in the State Department, versus going to Treasury, I resisted also. I felt that in fact if we did that, we would be taken out of the appropriation and wouldn't be appropriating but living on fees. Fees, certainly for visas and passports, are variable over time. You may say, "Yes, but they have gone up traditionally," and they have. But travel patterns change with world economic conditions, currency exchange rates due to terrorism, etc. There are all kinds of things that caused changes in the rates of travel, and there was income derived from passports and visas. We had constant costs. We had base costs. If we went into a fee based support system and we went into the overloads, we would have no place to go.

*Q: And you would have to prove that the price spent was the following....*

SOMERVILLE: We could only change income by price. So, we continued to depend upon on specific appropriation for the State Department as a budget base. About five years ago they needed money to implement a machine readable visa world wide which

would take a significant automation investment. There was no real hope of getting an appropriations increase to support it at the time.

*Q: Did they need that by legislation?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, they needed the money. In order to get the money they came up with a proposal which essentially assured congress that the monies flowing into miscellaneous receipts would continue unabated, unaffected by the change that was going to be proposed. Therefore, Treasury could project this as a source of income to the government. They convinced congress that it was appropriate because of the increased cost for the machinery of the visa to charge the visa applicant an additional amount for that machine readable visa, which gave the visa applicant, the future user, certain benefits. These included being able to get through custom checks and border checks routinely and more quickly. It gave us all kinds of benefits, but it gave them benefits too.

*Q: Was security the principal benefit, the driving force?*

SOMERVILLE: There was a package of beneficiaries. The system was a beneficiary in the sense that the labor required to produce the machine readable visa was not to exceed the labor required to produce a routine visa. The security enhancements were a plus, in terms of internal vulnerabilities, fraud perpetrated by officers or Foreign Service nationals, which has always been there although not talked about much. It is a serious concern in a number of parts of the world. We have found at times the whole visa section to be culpable. External control in terms of the inviolability of the visa once put into the foreign passport. Border control points could more readily determine when there had been manipulation, changed visas, substituted pictures, etc. The fields that were automated were more assuredly read by automatic readers at the ports of entry in terms of getting clearance as a person came through. There were many beneficiaries. I think the driving point was security.

*Q: And don't forget the word that goes with it, terrorism.*

SOMERVILLE: Terrorism, yes. Well, this was ongoing. We had a little problem with the sheik in an African country being issued a visa....

In this same time frame, because of those external drivers, you began to get money appropriated with the FBI for the creation of the first automatic fingerprint system. This was contemplated in the machine readable visa because it was anticipated that eventually the machine readable visa would be tied into an automatic data base that the FBI had just begun to develop. Now, it took about seven or eight years for the FBI to finish its work. It is now in operation.

We are now running fingerprints from the missions into the automated data base. We are designing systems now that will electronically transmit the fingerprint as a part of the lookup system. That is being done in Mexico as a pilot test.



*Q: You have come now in your interview to the point of present-day knowledge and sophistication that we have reached, is that right?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, yes. Technology has emerged that will make that possible in a cost-effective manner. You have been able to do it for years and has been done in Los Alamos and Sandy and places like that where they read the iris of the eyeball, the fingerprint, and do all kinds of interesting things. Today, because the cost of technology is down, money it is no longer an issue. We also had the problem Mexico followers are well aware of: the millions and millions and millions of border crossing cards. You can't eyeball a document. You can electronically process a document and get a fingerprint check immediately, but you can't do much beyond that. The traffic queues now will line up for hours and hours. Now, with NAFTA ( North American Free Trade Agreement) you have trucks and vehicle traffic like you have never had before, and you have to be able to get them through.

*Q: And you can't issue pre-clearances like you do for airplanes.*

SOMERVILLE: Right. We convinced congress that while not reducing the fee income projected by Treasury for consular operations, we could fairly establish a new fee for the machine readable passport even though by treaty we agree with foreign countries to waive non-immigrant fees bilaterally. We have done this with practically every country in the world. We could implement a machine readable document without violating those treaties, without reducing the flow of money to the Treasury, because it was a fee that had not been charged before, and that the sums we could charge that legitimately related to cost would in turn support the cost of the automation going into it.

We would not collect money for American salaries and permanent costs and buildings. We would collect money associated with automation of the process. That was the camel's nose under the tent. Congress agreed. Machine readable visa fees are collected, deposited to Treasury, credited to a trust account in the State Department and available for general support, with some specific earmarking for visa automation. So, we have now access to fees very specifically, very pointedly, under very controlled conditions, using accounting systems that account for their stewardship and operating under an annual stewardship report to congress, which is how we keep the system honest.

*Q: And not questioned on the Hill anymore?*

SOMERVILLE: As a matter of fact it has worked so well that a new fee was established for domestic passport operations for expedited services. If you now go to a passport agency and apply for a passport you are going to pay, I think, \$45. If you want to pay an extra \$25 or \$35 you can have a guarantee that you will get your passport in 24 hours.

*Q: That was attacked on television the other night.*

SOMERVILLE: I'm sure it will be.

*Q: Yes. Why should I have to pay for a service like that, that I am already paying for?*

SOMERVILLE: You have opened a can of worms. Let me digress. In the first part of our interview I mentioned a special handling fee that Frances Knight had instituted which gave her access to money. There are elements of the reconstitution of the special handling fee in the fee that is now charged for special services. Back in time I had an analysis done, including review by the GAO and by the survey and investigation group of the House appropriations committee, of the relationship between increased cost and rapid service. We found the difference to be less than 50 cents. We documented the fact that the operating procedures of the Passport Office were such that uniformly, whether or not a person had paid an extra fee when backlogs occurred, the first procedure upon opening the mail was to see the departure date of the traveler and if the departure date was within ten days it was automatically slipped to the front of the line. The State Department continued that practice because it makes sense. So, I have great difficulty seeing the basis for a \$35 fee for special handling, although I have not seen any numbers. In any event, that fee was established and it is now a source of income and the funds are available.

The first two years' income was substantially dedicated to the Passport Office automation to come up with a new passport. The funds otherwise flow into a capital improvement fund for information and technology support in the department across the board, as do the machine readable visa fees. So, now there are two fees, the funds of which are retained by the State Department. They are re-authorized every year. They are appropriated from the trust fund not Treasury receipts. So, the same congressional oversight is there. It is just that they are not drawn from generic Treasury funds. Now, it gave the department an infusion of cash which it otherwise would not be able to get.

*Q: And it is a service-oriented fee, which we understand.*

SOMERVILLE: There is nothing wrong with this as long as the stewardship in accounting and utilization is vigilant, not like INS. I think as long as the judiciary committees are involved in the oversight, and the authorizing and appropriations committees continue to demand their reports, it won't be distorted.

*Q: Does the oversight take care of intervention? Let's face it, it is often somebody doing a favor for a constituent, or the consul general taking care of that call from the president, via the ambassador. That type of intervention often settles all emergency cases, or most of them. But, now that you have a fee that you can tell the person, "Well, if you pay \$35 more that will take care of the intervention...." Or doesn't that exist?*

SOMERVILLE: I think probably the existence of the passport expedite fee is of value to congressional service staffers because the applicant is shown right at the time of application that there is a way you can be sure. "Here it is, pay your money." As long as Passport delivers on that, it is better for congress because they get fewer calls.

There is another aspect of fees perhaps worth documenting that is going on now and that is in the passport context. Because telephone workloads are terribly consuming, because

they are a constant source of irritation to the public, there is no way without going to free 800 numbers that you can stack the calls properly. Social Security attempted to do that with free lines and ended up spending several hundred million dollars a year and had a devil of a time getting away from it. In the passport context, a contractor was engaged to develop a system of an automated telephone tree response pattern responding to the most frequently asked questions. In addition, a contractor was engaged to handle the telephone calls that were in person queries. A differential fee was established. The in-person queries now, if you call the line, you will pay \$1.05 a minute, for talking to someone about where is my passport, etc. You will pay 35 cents a minute to call into the telephone tree and play with the computer by pushing such-and-such a number.

Both of those systems have generated a lot of controversy. The response at the State Department has been, "Okay, if this is unacceptable, congress, give us 500 positions and \$50 million and we will recreate what we had before; that is, staff to handle the telephones. Those people are now issuing passports. If you want us to do that, that is fine with us, but you have to give us the money first." And, of course, congress is not in the mood to give away money. So, despite a lot of complaints and a number of the public feeling they are being ripped off, the system is in place and the proceeds are maintained. Now, the proceeds generally only pay for the cost of that service. It is a service, however, that was paid out of an appropriated base up until the system was designed and implemented, so it released funds for other things. It also does another thing. It keeps disruptions from coming into passport agencies.

*Q: I have to presume that a lot of what you have done, and had to do, was in reaction to something that happened in the real world.*

SOMERVILLE: There is no question about that.

*Q: Would you say that most of those things that you have singled out, particularly reacting with the computer, reacting with modernization of an automated system of some sort, was more to advance planning on your part, or events that just took place?*

SOMERVILLE: Both. It is difficult to get funds on theories. You need to be able to develop a describable need that can be used to justify the acquisition of anything that costs money. So, there has to be something happening out there, not just a theory of something happening, in my experience, before OMB and congress will respond. There are 20 other demands for that money.

We are going to need to address the internal management philosophies of the State Department in relation to funding and staffing because the battles that we fought were more severe internally than they were externally.

*Q: I sense that management issues you faced were quite different than your successors face and they have a different base from which they now work. No one, I would argue, "internally" cared much about a consular package. If, I'm right, all those things came from you and the few others that thought that way.*

SOMERVILLE: As I said when I arrived there was no base for anything. There was very little knowledge base by resources and what was being consumed. They were all buried in the budgets of geographic bureaus and posts and various places. The competition internally, within the State Department, was such that we had a very difficult time pressing our needs successfully. Consular issues are generally not of great importance to a cabinet officer, unless they get him in trouble. Unless there is an American in a Mexican jail being tortured. Unless there is a constituent has a visa applicant who can't get a visa or a refugee who got kicked out or a passport that didn't get issued, they didn't give a darn. As a result the consular activity was doing less well than necessary to support the functions.

In looking at the internal situation it became quite apparent that no matter what we did, dealing solely internally wouldn't make a great deal of difference. Even if we were able to generate increased appropriations flow, the commissions that were paid on that increased flow were very severe. Very little ended up at the trickle down level where the rubber meets the road. Even if it was appropriated as an increase in good faith, and was distributed by the Department to the geographic bureaus and down to the missions, the mission demands were such that distortions occurred there. In casting about for a product that has credibility, provides an analytical tool to ourselves, because frankly we didn't have the foggiest idea of whether Mexico had too many or too few resources, we had no knowledge of what procedural flow was in place in Mexico City versus Paris. There was little procedural control, little constancy, little sharing across line, except as an assigned officer went from post to post and they could be very capricious because what they remembered was often not the same kind of case. So, you had disruptions caused by assignment change which were aided and abetted by the lack of a firm procedural milieu.

There was an officer who had no concept of how to engineer workload, analyze workload, project workload, lead workload, develop proper work habits among staff, etc. As we cast about we began to think about a scheme that would permit us to go globally.

*Q: Who is we in this case?*

SOMERVILLE: Probably yours truly and a particular analyst at OMB. We got together and talked about how can we systematically portray what is going on in a way that will influence all the people who have a vote in the process. And that begins at the embassy or post and runs up through the assistant secretaries and cabinet level, the comptroller, OMB and congress. We began thinking about a packaging that would reflect something about each post. The best account item we had was the fee schedule. It didn't represent necessarily clean cleavages in the work but what it was was an accepted enumeration of tasks that were supported by allocations of fees. Whether or not those allocations were correct, which they weren't when we came on board, was less relevant than that they had credibility externally. They had been alluded to as being accurate. They supported the thesis to give them money because their money is coming into the Treasury, etc.

So, we started basically with items contained in the Foreign Service consular fee list. We

began to try to associate work effort with those tasks. What is consumed to produce it. This tied in with our refinement of the consular fee schedule because that became the basis of the consular package. We had to be more accurate or we couldn't use it for analytical purposes. We thought we couldn't do this from Washington and came up with a scheme that involves the consular officer, who knows conditions, what it takes to produce a visa, and it is different in every post. Even if we make it procedurally parallel, the conditions, economically, societal, political, environmental, work, staff, etc. that what it takes to produce a particular item will vary greatly even within country.

So, what we set about to do was to come up with a scheme that would permit us to depict the primary consumers of resources, beginning with the fee schedule, and after a year moving beyond that to things that were more clearly accountable and meant something. There were a number of items in the fee schedule that meant nothing in terms of manpower. We evolved from something that began looking from the first enumeration of task, the fee schedule, to an enumeration of tasks representing a product. It might be a jail visit, correspondence, visas issued or denied, etc. We associated these with work hours. We came up with a structural package.

I mentioned earlier that we were involved in managerial devolution before it became popular because we involved the consular officer at his desk in a process of a re-orientation of how to look at work, at workload, at staff, programming of the day's activities, the rhythm of staffing requirements, etc.

We began to use the consular officer as a local manager, not just as a guy banging out visas. We required that he involve his admin counselor and his DCM in the process of validating what he anticipated, what he had done and what he foresees for the future. This gave us a way around a real hard nut in the Foreign Service. That is, the average tour abroad is three years or less. The first year is spent settling in, the second year is spent working and the third year is spent looking for the next assignment, when interest begins to wane.

There was very inadequate bridging from manager to manager, stylistically, policy wise, their understanding of the tools of the trade. There was very little continuity at post. By using the kind of a system that we came up with for looking at work and assessing work and projecting work based on past experience and current events, we were beginning to create a bridge so that the transition from manager to manager became less traumatic and workload proceeded less encumbered by idiotic change and more encumbered by consistency.

I think this was better understood, even by the local work force who participated in many cases in the workload analysis. I think the approach facilitated re-engineering efforts which you now call re-engineering and that is dissecting tasks into components and trying to figure out where they work and in what sequence.

*Q: It tells the manager quite a bit.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, it gave them a way to look at the job that I think perhaps was not as much in his mind before. As we developed this package of methodology reviewing the tasks, the tools it took to produce the tasks, we began to show high top support for the process. We began to communicate the credibility that must be included within top management at State. The competition for resources in the State Department had been such that the consular activity was always a pain in the neck to top management. And, top management could never be confident that the investments that they were making made a difference. Top management in many cases had a view of the consular manager of being an idiot who didn't really know what he wanted. He didn't understand it.

And, in many cases they were right. These were not managers, these were technical guys who were damn good at adjudicating a visa, at taking care of problems with local authorities, but couldn't manage worth a dime because they had never been taught. Never been given the tools or orientated to how to look at work, not as a curse but something that was there that you engineer and worked with.

*Q: How did Barbara use this device?*

SOMERVILLE: The first use of the device was internally because through the creation and initial implementation of the device we involved the department, the geographic bureaus and posts as well as the comptroller and Personnel Office in a process of inspection and examination and a production of data that reflected, for better or for worse, what was going on. It helped the Comptroller to provide us the resources we needed, but his problem was satisfying many customers. It gained us a better understanding, beginning with the counselor for administration at the embassy level in the mission. We required the DCM to sign off on the package so we made sure at least he knew the words and had some accountability. So, the benefits initially were obtained within the State Department, not externally.

Now, when it came to packaging the State Department's annual budget and getting it through the review processes at OMB, we had by the time it reached OMB coopted them into the process of the design of the tool, the initial operation of the tool, the analytical techniques applied to the tool and good exposure to our stewardship to making sure that the alleged credibility was reasonable.

*Q: Was there any other element in the department that was using anything comparable?*

SOMERVILLE: No. It was pretty primitive. For 20 years the consular package was the only systematic compilation in which you could look backward and forward. The only one in which there was routinely required the participation at the operating level at the post in workload analysis, anticipation and forecasting, etc. It wasn't universally embraced, Bill. Many people in the field fought like hell.

Then we got into semi-annual and quarterly updates. We were lucky because the Visa Office had always had statistical reporting of a certain kind, so we just snuck in and wrote on what was already there and accepted in the visa context. Over the years we

began to flesh it out a little more and a little more. We had battles with the Visa Office because we were corrupting their reporting. They had to have this reporting in a certain way and at a certain time and it couldn't be adjusted because it would violate the law or abrogate the intent of the law. It was a sacred sort of thing. But, this served the purpose of letting us go beyond an annual compilation to a validation technique. It never hurts to let the client know out there that it isn't the next guy who arrives a year later that is going to have to account for it, he is going to account for something every four months.

To digress a moment, you have to understand the cycling of the process a little bit. A workload analysis budget forecast is inherently old by the time you are saying it is the truth. When you begin the process you are at least eight months from the conclusion of a fiscal year that you are going to say was fact. You are going to report that three things were done in that year. Well, hell, the year is only one-fourth over when you are beginning to say that. Then you are going to say that this year we are going to do something with a certain volume of work that is so far down the road but by the time you are sending it to congress it is old. Not only is it old, but the real facts of the prior year's activities become known and if they are in variance with what you are sending forward, the starting point of everything you have calculated is wrong.

We got into a periodic updating of the process in order that when we went to OMB, before it resulted in a president's budget in January, we had valid information. We would go in and say, "Okay, you got the forecast and here we stand in the validating update in between." Sometimes it would be denied, but usually it confirmed. If it didn't confirm we threw it in the waste basket.

Now, this got us through the State Department process because they were no longer competing against fluff. They were looking at things that were alleged to be rather firm, rather precise, they were measurable. There were predictable consequences if you ignored them. More importantly, the guys outside, the guys that we had recruited from the congress and those from OMB, were saying, "What does the package say? Tell us what the analysis shows." So we created the external force that caused the State Department to say, "We support it," because we coupled the external support with not too heavily veiled threats from external realities to earmark appropriations if the State Department didn't come up with a scheme to probably depict the consular requirement.

And, of course, if there was anything the Department didn't want, it was an earmarking of the appropriations, and properly so. They needed the flexibility to use money where they needed it. But, without those kind of potential threats in mind, we wouldn't have gotten the kind of support that we did.

*Q: Ron, as you talk through the consular package, one element that you have not included - maybe because it isn't as numbers-oriented as visas and passports - is protection of Americans and general services to Americans, such as federal benefits. All of these are very sensitive and very costly. How did that fare?*

SOMERVILLE: We leaned more on verbal analysis in protection and welfare and

services to Americans. That is, descriptions of conditions in local jails, the amount of narcotic activity that was going on, and local conditions that made a difference. If a protection and welfare case in one environment took 50 times as long as somewhere else we could handle that in a text because we had both a text and numbers. In the special consular stuff generally we did not publish it externally, a raft of statistical data. That was better addressed in a narrative context.

*Q: We produced "Warnings to Americans."*

SOMERVILLE: We had that. But, the end product was an overlay globally, a summary geographic bureau by geographic bureau, a summary country by country, and under that was a serious document on each post. The entire compendium was perhaps two or three inches. Now you could live with the summary of maybe two dozen pages or you had a compendium in a full book. We made sure that the full book got to the Hill, to the staffers and to OMB, even though officially they got summaries. In the detail sheet for each post you will not find a lot of narrative typically talking about things that justify themselves statistically, visas and passports generally. Your text is more devoted to the softer things that can't be quite as quantified.

*Q: Such as hostage taking, the shooting down of airplanes with Americans on them, things that made the paper and are pretty explicit in terms of services.*

SOMERVILLE: Exactly. We would publish the number of guys in jail, increases in arrest rates, etc. During this time, remember, other things are happening to reduce the significant impact of certain kinds of activity. We negotiated bilateral treaties with most of the countries of the world now in which we exchange prisoners. We agreed that a Russian who is convicted in New York will be sent back to Russia to serve his time and they agree that Americans convicted in Moscow will come back here to serve their time.

*Q: Even a Frenchman.*

SOMERVILLE: Even a Frenchman. And so we have reduced some of those workloads by other arrangements.

Now the package became useful for all sorts of things. When an ambassador went to post he got this stuff as part of his orientation. When a principal officer went out he came around and got the stuff. It was useful in briefing people on the Hill who were going abroad.

*Q: Where is it today?*

SOMERVILLE: I think it plays the same role in that it is part of an environment in which a consular manager is taught from the beginning that he has a responsibility to analyze his processes, not merely arrive and do work. He has to project, attempt to re-engineer, learn how to play within the bureaucratic enterprise. When we arrived consular officers didn't know how to articulate what it was they needed. And, when they could articulate it



they didn't know where to do it. The concept of building friends for future need, the symbioses of a bureaucratic enterprise was there, but it was: 'I will trade you a visa for something else'.

*Q: That still happens.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, I can't really say. The idea that an entire work style, however, that involves visiting the counselor for administration, and finding out where you can help him, and visiting other members of the mission. There is a time to pay back and you enlist the support. So, the package is still a part of [managing a consular operation]. It encourages an attitude, way to approach work, way to approach [colleagues]. It inculcates a better feeling; if I articulate it properly they are going to respond. Now, we all know in resource allocation there is favoritism. You go from post to post and one is working real hard and one is losing, apparently. I think the consular managers have a stronger feeling that there is less of that. So I think it kind of infuses the entire consular operations.

*Q: It didn't go away, it got stronger and was actually mimicked. The two people who led it, you and Barbara Watson, as the first ones at it, have been substantiated. Management continues the same forever there after. Or put another way, does the leader of Consular Affairs now take the exact same positive attitude?*

SOMERVILLE: The only diminution was, I believe, a particular political appointee whose fate in a bureau was very bad, who left under a black cloud, whose interests had nothing at all to do with...

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*Q: Today is September 28, 1999. We are in the middle of talking about some of the successors to Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Barbara Watson, in terms of whether they were supportive or not, and to what degree. of the Consular Package.*

SOMERVILLE: I was talking about one particular assistant secretary who was not destructive but just totally uninvolved. The result of being uninvolved is that you conduct yourself at hearings and various activities in which you know nothing about the process, allude to nothing authoritative, thereby diminish the support that had been built for a process.

*Q: And, even worse, talked at length about the poor service CA was providing American citizens, under certain conditions.*

SOMERVILLE: I have heard about that. But, the immediate successor to Barbara Watson, Lenny Walentynowicz, a lawyer from Buffalo, had never had a significant managerial job before joining the bureau. He was significantly driven ideologically on immigration matters. He came on board and showed himself an able student of the managerial processes that we had instituted and soon learned that their external credibility meant that they would be useful to him in terms of maintaining a resource base

and a carefully crafted reputation of adequate performance, thereby letting him pursue things that were of more interest to himself.

He became actively involved internally in advancing the interest of an analytical approach to work analysis and resource planning. He carried that through OMB. He comported himself well and learned the material he needed to learn for hearings and under his direction the process was strengthened. It continued to provide the department and congress and the public with all the benefits that had been envisaged at its creation. He had the political sensitivity to understand the value of continuing to involve congress and OMB in the process in context elaboration of the process and reenforcement of the process. He was very supportive.

Following Walentynowicz we had the return of Barbara Watson for a period, and she continued her solid support, advancing the interests of the consular corps as an integrated professional organization.

Upon her departure, Diego Asencio came on board as the first senior FSO, as far as I can recall, to head the Bureau of Consular Affairs. He actively, energetically, visibly supported any process that could advance the Department's interest in supporting Consular Affairs.

*Q: Including being certain that consular officers had arrived in full competition for promotion and equality with all Foreign Service officers.*

SOMERVILLE: True, and there is an interesting evolution there Bill. With Barbara Watson you had a background that experienced discrimination from birth. So, you had very strong drives to equalize and the boot strap to bring a mistreated, in her eyes, abused and unappreciated group, to full equality. Now, she was also active in promoting the EEO agenda, probably more ethnically and racially than sexually, but she was there and very much involved in the processes in the Department and externally that had advanced the cause of EEO.

She had been followed in her first "appearance" by the fellow from Buffalo who was ethnically Polish, who had a number of the stereo typical views that might be expected. He had a feeling that quota kinds of approaches to handling disadvantaged groups was wrong, but he recognized that they were there and he fought hard internally for the rights of the consular officer.

*Q: The famous third generation, if you will.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. He had an analogist perspective but it was ethnically based. After Barbara's second "appearance" Diego Asencio was the most senior Hispanic in the Department. He had some elements of perspective that were influenced by that. He felt that the time had arrived that consular officers should be able to hold their heads as high as anyone. That they should secure a full measure of assignments to the attractive positions, should aspire to become ambassadors, etc. Now, these are not significantly

different than Barbara Watson's, but he was serving in a different time frame. He could look upon a group that was more qualified. It had been enriched over a period of time. It had gained respect. I guess consular officers picked up the baton and carried it proudly.

Diego, probably stylistically and personality-wise, had the strongest assets of any of the assistant secretaries I served with. He could captivate an audience bent on his destruction. He knew how to disarm them, how to massage their egos and was canny enough to discern ahead of time what they needed and wanted, and led them to believe that they would receive a reasonable measure of what they needed.

He continued the same battles internally, however, he had a modicum of success in some ways significantly greater than Barbara Watson's or Lenny Walentynowicz's in that he was of the cloth. He was successful as a Foreign Service officer and had been an ambassador. He was highly regarded as a political officer even though, he, as Barbara Watson, became a super consular officer. He never addressed himself to the substance of consular work, to become an expert in it like a lawyer would be, and as Barbara Watson did.

*Q: And as Walentynowicz did.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, she had a more scholarly approach. Lenny, I think, had a more ideologically driven perspective. Diego's great mission was to preside over the reintegration of the Passport Office into the State Department and into the consular management totality. He presided over Lory Lawrence's assignment, succeeding Frances Knight. He had a style in reorganizing the bureau at that time that led to very heavy employee involvement all the way down to the desk, to the clerk. There were working groups and endless discussions. This was a very brilliant bureaucratic tactic and encouraged cross talk. It opened up cross assignment potential. It raised horizons. Within six months the bureau was thinking and being perceived as a bureau, as an entity.

He was able to create an environment that better met the aspirations of particularly the non-involved passport folks, but also across the bureau. He created certain centralized amalgams that facilitated the creation as a whole. He centralized automation kinds of activities, and planning activities, and anti-fraud activities, and policy activities, and public affairs activities. He brought people from the constituent pieces into those centralized entities which gave them a stake in a larger bureau view. Now, some of those perhaps later were devolved back down to a lower level, nevertheless they continued to maintain a central tie and a cordial relationship. So, Diego presided over a new era in the bureau and a new era congressionally.

*Q: He had friends in congress.*

SOMERVILLE: He and the chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee were very close personal friends.

*Q: He also had something else in his credentials which you failed to re-mention.*

SOMERVILLE: What was that?

*Q: He had been a prisoner of a terrorist group.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, he had two unique qualifications. His first assignment was as a consular officer in the Yucatan peninsula and he had visited jails himself. Subsequently, as ambassador to Bogota, Colombia, he had been a captive.

*Q: And managed it brilliantly.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, and he wrote a book about it. It was on the plane returning after his release that he was told he was going to be assigned as assistant secretary for Consular Affairs. And, to his credit he didn't run the other way. He carried on a liaison with the Mexican government in terms of consular issues, the likes of which had never been seen before or since. We created a cross border working group tantamount to being a commission and created new border crossing documents. He was able to accept some of the things the Mexicans felt essential to accept for political or other reasons. He knew them and respected them and they felt better. He had probably the strongest innate leadership skills of any assistant secretary, in fact, almost anyone I worked with my entire career.

I have to add that he was not universally loved. This is not a god figure. But, from the standpoint of being a leader and involving people in the processes that will affect them, his philosophy and approach were carried out very effectively.

*Q: As we near the end of our discussion you have given us sort of a rundown of our leaders, which is vital. You have given all the 129 million reasons why we needed better leadership and how each of these had in their own way contributed. You don't have many left to contribute to. I can't remember who the present one is.*

SOMERVILLE: The present head of CA is Mary Ryan.

*Q: Why don't you just give us a quick summary of who were your leaders through your retirement.*

SOMERVILLE: Okay. Joan Clark succeeded Diego Asencio.

*Q: She was another career officer.*

SOMERVILLE: She was a career officer from the administration area. She had been ambassador to Malta, a deputy director general, an executive director in the EUR Bureau, had a career stretching back to the Berlin Airlift her initial assignment having been, I think, a cargo checker standing on the runways in Berlin. She was staff corps. She suffered life-long discomfort from a therm condition caused by serving on the runway in Berlin. She could never become warm enough. Like a permanent case of chill blains.

*Q: This can be hurtful.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. Anyway she had a very long and illustrious career and was very highly regarded in the Foreign Service. She had also been an assignment officer too for the administrative people.

*Q: How does she fit into Consular Affairs?*

SOMERVILLE: Well, there was a vacancy [Asencio had been named ambassador to Brazil]. For whatever reason Joan was available from her previous assignment. The Department had a problem every time the job became unencumbered and that was that there continued to be a faction outside the government that felt that that should be politically encumbered. The White House has traditionally wanted to seize the job for political appointees for policy and partisan political reasons.

There are always considerations out there, that need to be satisfied by numbers and the CA function, with all the fine things we say about how we have elevated its stature, still doesn't count consistently for a whole lot as far as the main line interests of the foreign policy establishment. The political interests are primarily to keep the public happy. That results in every time the job is to be vacant there is a great deal of consternation in the State Department in a careful crafting of the lists of potential incumbents and selection of the candidate.

*Q: And making sure that the candidate has all of the qualities needed for that position.*

SOMERVILLE: Absolutely. When Diego was coming out there was obviously diverse interest in filling the job. Joan was female, a highly respected professional, so she was immune from certain kinds of limiters, shall we say.

*Q: She did have knowledge of Consular Affairs.*

SOMERVILLE: She had been an ambassador and an admin person at the highest levels. She knew the resources system, and that is a principal concern. She knew the personnel assignment system, which is a principal concern in running the consular operation. She had some familiarity with automation having been in personnel when they automated a lot of personnel processes. She had been supportive of the consular requirements when she was in geographic bureaus. So, there were lots of reasons why she was more than a suitable candidate.

*Q: Did she come forward into history with any particular qualities?*

SOMERVILLE: Joan was probably more of a hands on manager than most all of her predecessors. Her style of management got down to the desk level. Some probably felt that she micro-managed, but I am not prepared to say that one way or another. Her management style was to wander into the nooks and crannies of the processes and make

sure that things were ship shape.

*Q: So she was management oriented in the sense of "ship shape".*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, I think so. I think that is fair. I don't think she enjoyed the same day-in-day-out deep involvement in policy issues. It was just not her style. She was an admin person used to making things happen. Diego was much more reflective and loved to deal at length, ad nauseam, in argumentative discussion of policy pluses and minuses, and ins and outs. Barbara was more legally oriented. She was a lawyer. Lenny was more ideologically driven. You really had a contrast here.

*Q: Now the lady that you won't mention, I will because it is part of published history: Elizabeth Tamposi, political appointee from New Hampshire. She had some sincere limitations, one of the most serious from the bureau's standpoint was that she was on duty at the time of the destruction of PanAm 103, over Scotland. The Department was held inordinately responsible, especially Consular Affairs, for its lack of sympathetic understanding of the tragedy of the act of terrorism. She also was on board when, unfortunately, the passport documentation of Bill Clinton, a president-to-be, and his mother were put through a series of blunders. It was sad for the Department.*

SOMERVILLE: What can be added to that, I believe, is that the then secretary of state, career officer, Larry Eagleburger, summarily fired her, rightly or wrongly. The activity that resulted under her stewardship during a presidential campaign became embarrassing to everyone for whatever reason. She retired back to New Hampshire. She came in as a political appointee as was the administration's right to do. I don't believe she felt comfortable in the role.

She returned to private life and was followed by her former deputy, Mary Ryan. Mary Ryan was Ms. Tamposi's deputy and Ms. Tamposi felt uncomfortable with her. Mary is of the highest career and well known to be a very outstanding and upstanding officer. Her presence was dismissed by Ms. Tamposi and upon Ms. Tamposi's release she came back to CA, this time as assistant secretary. She has been greatly loved. She has spent a lot of time working with the line level officers and loves to use the consular conferences as an opportunity to meet and deal with and be seen and known by her clients.

*Q: And now back to the consular package, which is still used.*

SOMERVILLE: The consular package is probably used more now than perhaps it was in some of the in-between years. There was some weakening of its utility during a couple of administrations but I think it has been put back into a very prominent position. The need has not changed. It has been made easier by virtue of the further application of automated tools.

*Q: And, no in-house problems with it?*

SOMERVILLE: I'm sure there are always problems with it. There will always be one

basic problem, Bill, and I guess it is worth mentioning. We began with the fee schedule and moved over the years to measure certain elements of work that were captured by the fee schedule, to eliminate some that were over identified. There is a constant war as to whether we are measuring the right things. So, you have a contest of do you change the measured elements and lose the analytical, historical and political value of being able to look forward and backward with long eye sight for improving the precision of measuring where your time is going, or do you maintain the elements that people are used to seeing and are useful for looking backward and forwards and use your verbal textual material to carry messages that are not adequately borne out by the numbers.

I held fast to standard units. Subsequently they were reduced in number but the consistent units have been maintained.. So, while a purest will look and say this doesn't adequately cover certain of your manpower considerations that should be measured because they are important, they have continued to choose, and correctly I think, to address that in textual ways rather than change the counted units.

*Q: But all statisticians have to compromise these things.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, here you make it a little more dicey in that there are the political issues which are not just statistical. A statistician will probably make more changes in what he is counting, as the Census Bureau, in order to more accurately depict what is going on. But, when your credibility depends on consistency, if you begin to change things you unnecessarily come under suspicion.

*Q: That you are changing something or just changing degrees of information?*

SOMERVILLE: What you begin to lose is credibility, that you have created. And this is a judgment call. My only point is that they are sticking with the approach that we used and that was changes in accounted activities through natural movement. As you need to get more meaning through other things that are happening, do it descriptively.

*Q: Who was your immediate successor?*

SOMERVILLE: Currently, Frank Moss, a Civil Service officer and senior executive person is executive director. He was preceded by a Foreign Service officer, who in turn was preceded by my successor, a fellow who had been an executive director elsewhere in the Department.

*Q: Then there wasn't much continuity after your departure.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, the person who followed me had been an executive director. The person who followed that person was in the Visa Office and involved in the consular package over the years. He wasn't there very long, but it was planned that he would be sort of a bridge. Frank Moss has been in the job for a little more than a year.

*Q: But you institutionalized it to such a degree little would be affected negatively.*

SOMERVILLE: It is a different era. I probably could not function adequately in the present milieu, it is so changed. I am technologically obsolete.

*Q: You certainly came into technology and into computers and today's world in different directions at different times. What you have said to me, as an experienced consular and Foreign Service officer, is very important because you do need the new generation behind you well trained, and intellectually able to accept historical realities... Would you summarize this?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes. Let me track it a little bit. When I arrived in CA automation consisted of punch paper tape machines, flexawriters, EAM cards and connections to one IBM 360 in the basement of the State Department. Shortly down the road it was realized that we needed to get out of typewriters and old addressographs abroad and participated in a working group on "selection" that resulted in the selection of WANG Corporation. It was the only domestic producers of automation equipment that could provide us a worldwide network of service. If it didn't exist they were willing to commit themselves contractually to buying locally service at posts to maintain equipment. This was a serious issue because this stuff is going to be shoved in 250 places around the world and it had to be kept up, maintained.

We went into a procurement that resulted in a master contract that remained in place for over a decade. It began with word-processing. That was automation. You didn't automate office practices and procedures, you automated typewriting. So, WANG word processing was procured and sold around the world. In that context we began to use the WANG equipment to automate visa processes abroad. We began to use parallel equipment in the Passport Office to further automate. We remained with the WANG contract and WANG developed many computers. These were small main frames that could be established abroad and maintained abroad and to which you could connect networks. This was heaven!

We embarked on a program of redesigning visa and other processes at post that would key into a mini computer installed in the post. The mini computer then interchanging with the communications system for name checks with the main frame computer back here. We did not export the name check. That advanced to the point that it nearly collapsed. We ended up with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of mini computers around the world, complex data basis, partially decentralized, interfacing with the communications system that often didn't work right - still doesn't - back to sophisticated centralized software and main frame computers in Washington which eventually became linked with customs and INS, so your name checks now cross over agency lines to other data bases. We don't suck your data bases in but link the data bases so the name in one will show up in another check.

This resulted in further automation in consular operations but also resulted in an absolute disaster around the world of hundreds of mini computers demanding hundreds of sophisticated staffers, technicians who can maintain them. We embarked on an enormous



recruitment program for technicians to assign abroad because for security reasons we couldn't use Foreign Service nationals. When we did they penetrated security. Remember there was one computer room in Eastern Europe where the national who was running it was a KGB type and they found a hard wire coming out of the next room that went out of the building!

In any event we reached the point of saturation of the mini computer technology. We were quite advanced in our use of it in consular operations. We were the only process at post that was automated. The only other use that was made of the equipment was for word processing for administrative support.

Realizing that we were stuck with a produce that was becoming obsolete, we triggered action to get into a different equipment approach. The State Department was probably \$160 or \$180 million committed to WANG. In those days you couldn't expect congress to give you replacement money to that tune. You had to find a way to move alone evolutionary. And, yet, WANG was becoming a bankrupt company and began not to produce its own stuff. It was labeling IBM equipment. It was funny. We were getting equipment from IBM that had to be re-labeled WANG because we could only buy from WANG and we depended on their software and their ability to support the hardware became nil. Here we are a global organization with a failing technology.

After my retirement I became associated with the centralized information technology arm of the Department. In that context I was involved in a procurement operation which led to under the label ONA a logical approach to modernization a few years ago. Pat Kennedy was in A and was very helpful. In fact, it was his organization then. We came up with a way that we could get budgetary support for the replacement of all the WANG stuff globally. That program completes this year. All embassies and all posts will have had replacement PCs, we are talking about personal computer technology, which is networking in a sophisticated way, not word processing stuff. So, it was a total embassy approach now which is fully networked, working out of PCs, not enhanced word processing and mini computers.

*Q: And secure.*

SOMERVILLE: One of the big problems of the Department's approach to automation with the WANG material was that it was not secure. The cables in the State Department even now must be prepared only on machines that do not emanate any electronic signals that can be intercepted, translated and converted to text so that you are not violating security requirements.

NSA created what it calls "tempest" technology, whereas a machine that might cost you \$4,000 if it were tempest, which means shielded, etc., might cost you \$15,000. So you can see it never caught on.

It was happening even in the bureaus. A funny aside. We were on WANG technology and in the press of business in the Visa Office you send many, many cables. It was

prohibited that they be produced on WANG machines because they were not tempest cleared. You could only use a manual typewriter. We had in the bureau a WANG mini computer network system. What they began to do was prepare the cables on the word processors, snap them out and put the security classification on by typewriter and then furnish them to the cable room. So, the security was typed on the thing after it had been produced out of the data base.

Not knowing this, I volunteered to be the first guinea pig to be inspected by the inspection corps in their first effort in looking at how automation was being used and was it being safely and properly used. They came into the bureau and I didn't know at the time that there was software that even though you erased something in a computer, all you do is move the address of the information, you don't remove the information. They came in and bled out information that had been erased and found that all the cables being produced in the Visa Office, classified stuff, were being prepared on the word processors and handled as I described.

They took my tape drives. In those days these things were a very expensive thing on the computer. They confiscated physically, about \$70,000 worth of tape drives. They said, "Somerville, you are going to pay for this. Now you are a good guy and this is a dry run and we understand this, but we are not going to return your tape drives." This meant we had to find money to replace the damn things.

*Q: I can remember well in the field when the consular officer had only a Foreign Service national who would type things on a typewriter. She did it without a classification on it. You then took the cable and typed on the classification.*

SOMERVILLE: We had the envy of the Department. Also you may recall we had a private communications network, the TWX, which carried the name check material from post to Washington and back to post. We could use that TWX line for "back channel" communications, although it wasn't terribly legal. Nobody in the embassy had any similar alternative to it, only we had that sort of thing, so it was used by others. Our concern was that its use became so rampant that record information was not being retained because the officers were using them for advisory and it was gone as soon as it was received.

It got even more dicey. Pat Kennedy was the chief administrative guy supporting George Schultz as his executive secretary back when fax machines were very novel. He had the only three in the Department of State and they were for use on the secretary's personal plane. He called one day and said, "Ron, these things are too damn heavy. My guys are bitching and moaning because they are having to carry them on and off airplanes. Let's make a deal. I don't have any money, you have money. I have three fax machines. I need three new ones which are faster and lightweight so they can be lugged around. Let's make deal. You cut a requisition and buy the new ones and I will give you mine for the new ones. I will carry the paper because I couldn't get authorization, if you agree to that."

I said, "Fine. You need the paper I will give you the numbers." As a result CA had the

first three fax machines outside the secretary's office. We put one in visa, one in "systems" and one in my office so we could do fax communication. What I found was that this was useful in dealing with the posts because it didn't have the same problems as the TWX system. But, overseas, the only people who had them were the USIS offices. So, we had to make an arrangement with USIS that when we wanted to fax to our consular guys it would come out in the USIS library.

*Q: Well, that is really secure.*

SOMERVILLE: In this case it was a marriage that brought them even closer together. A consular officer and an administrative officer learned how to cooperate mutually.

*Q: Ron, I have the distinct impression that you have very well summarized things. But, let's run over those things in your experience that you either want to bring up, perhaps pointedly, or remind us of some of your higher or lower points of your career, whatever. Let this be your over-all career summary.*

SOMERVILLE: Great. A couple of things I will say about the years that I spent in CA. It is pretty apparent that sustained support for the consular function, consular operations, etc., won't come about by chance. If CA - I say CA because I think in many respects CA has to be responsible for its own destiny - is not able to maintain cooperative, mutually productive relationships with each of the two judiciary committees, with the authorizing and appropriating committee staffs, involve them in the operations to the extent that is possible in terms of information flow, in terms of participation, even in terms of direct communication by individuals prominent on both sides; likewise with the Office of Management and Budget, the principal examiners, competition for attention, resources, bread and butter things like promotions, key assignments, cross training - the whole ball of wax - competition is so severe in the State Department that State can easily revert to what it was 15 or 20 years ago.

It is always an issue. It is not to be cursed. It is not to be regretted. It is to be acknowledged and dealt with. The State Department hires on balance very, very bright people. I spent time as an inspector looking at many agencies when I was with the Civil Service Commission and I can say, based on my own experience, that the type of individual typically hired in the State Department is far more verbal, more analytically inclined than almost any other agency in government. With that brain trust you have very bright people who will gather to themselves the tools they need to be successful.

Success is defined in a much narrower ground than in departmentally. It is defined in very personal terms. The organization will be structured because it is controlled and operated by those same practitioners. It will be structured and operated to enhance the possibilities of success. If you are not on the same train you get forgotten and that is not good or bad, it is just the nature of the beast.

And, so CA people in the future are going to have to do the same kind of hill climbing, clamoring, doing things necessary to make themselves be perceived as important.

Important in terms of starting with bread and butter issues, in terms of getting attention for their resource requirements that don't disadvantage other parts of the Department. In the past the Department was perceived as a place of zero sum in that if consular squawked and got more stats somebody lost. A political report didn't get issued. An ambassador didn't have a secretary. I think in the present environment that feeling is not extant because there has been a general raising of all ships over the last 15 years and because CA does have some independent access to resources there is not the same animosity and jealousy. It takes work to keep that. It takes a lot of nurture.

*Q: The only thing you haven't mentioned in detail is the "substance" of consular work: that is, service to American citizens when abroad; passport issuance, protection when arrested and jail. These demands on consular officers will never stop, unless somehow our nation stops. The second substantive issue is service to aliens needing to enter the United States. State will always adjudicate visas since nobody else will take the responsibility unless congress says that another federal unit must?.*

SOMERVILLE: Congress has every couple of years brought up the possibility of re-engineering the executive branch for immigrant and citizenship documentation purposes. There is right this month in congress a discussion with the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] about reorganization of INS that would split it into two agencies within Justice or would create two clear pieces under a commissioner. Doris Misner [present commissioner] favors the single commissioner and two clear pieces, while Congress is talking about two agencies. Within the last three years a commission recommended that a part of the INS be split off and given to the State Department because the State Department now had better stewardship, now was better run, now could more assuredly provide the service that congress wanted. That is a change. A hell of a change from 20 years ago.

A commission, eight years ago, chaired by Diego Asencio, former assistant secretary, recommended that the passport function be taken away from State and given to INS. So the pot bubbles. There are alternative organizational arrangements that can be made. The visa function in Canada is carried out independent of its foreign policy establishment and works very efficiency according to everything I have heard.

The passport documentation function in various countries isn't done by the foreign ministries in most cases, but by the interior ministry. It doesn't need to be in the State Department. If State ever lost it, it would lose an awful lot. It would lose one of the few processes to take it into contact with John Q. Public. There is virtually nothing else State does that directly touches a citizen in the US.

*Q: We call CA the American Bureau.*

SOMERVILLE: And that is what it is. If you lose touch with the folks there is no support for anything else you want to do.

*Q: Have we converted some in the State Department to understand better what the*

*consular function is and how we are important to State?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes and no. I think an officer's perspective changes markedly depending on where he is organizationally. The consular section has traditionally provided the Foreign Service officer corps, as a sheltered immersion opportunity for new officers to learn the culture of the Foreign Service, to learn the vagaries of living abroad with a family, of assimilating in another culture, of using a different language to communicate, of learning how to live with bosses. There is a cultururation process and orientation process that is probably parallel only in the military in terms of change of one's life patterns when you take a job.

The consular section provides an opportunity for officers to learn a whole lot in their first two tours that is very useful. I have said for years that the consular operation permitted the Department to support a high ranking, political, economic structure by providing a base for orientation. With moves in the last decade to use more dependents for the fodder-type jobs and to use to some extent retirees as Foreign Service Reserve officers, we have reduced the use of junior officers thereby depriving them, I think, of a bonafide, honest-to-god useful orientation period in their career.

There are few other opportunities in the State Department that a Foreign Service officer will get, an opportunity to manage, to plan a budget, to analyze and change a workload, to supervise people directly. So, by cutting off this universal opportunist -- which was known, however, as the universal curse to some, we have, I think, to some extent brought injury to the ability of the Foreign Service in the future.

*Q: How about to serve the American public?*

SOMERVILLE: That is the number one role of the chief representative abroad, of the American diplomat. And, I have had American ambassadors remind me of that, who are political appointees. "What are you here for primarily?", and this was not as chief of the consular section, it was his chief of the political section, "To protect American citizens in all forms."

*Q: I think we have exposed Ambassadors to this more in the last 20 years or so.*

SOMERVILLE: Absolutely. World events have caused that too. But, you still have a good amount of feeling that that is a diversion from "true work". The holy grail continues to be reporting.

*Q: Which always will be, and maybe must be?*

SOMERVILLE: I'm not at all sure. With the advent of the Internet and taking an examination right today of how information is flowing in the system, political reports are no longer the holy grail that they once were. When you get to the point I think we can foresee within five years, where the State Department will be using web based technology for political reporting, using the Internet as a transport mechanism from the

post to Washington, you will measure, as you do in a web page, how much use is made of the information that is being reported. Two hits in two years? Is it worth compiling? You don't now know anything about readership when you create a document overseas or send information. All you do is throw it into the damn pond.

*Q: Do you mean that after this wonderful consular management package that we have, even the political section can't measure some of those things now?*

SOMERVILLE: They can't. When they send something in it is gone. You stipulate an address on a TAG [Locator index of subject and location] but you don't know where it goes. You don't know if anybody ever sees it. You don't know if it is ever used. You just know that you sent it. The only way they know now is if somebody comes back saying it was a good report.

*Q: They have none of that approved now?*

SOMERVILLE: No. Zip! It is coming, but it is not there now.

*Q: Your point is that it is necessary to survive.*

SOMERVILLE: Well, the information in a number of the more advanced governments is now disseminated from web pages. This is true in Scandinavia and certain other European countries. It is becoming true in Asia. We are beginning to play with it in public diplomacy, but we are not there yet. As things are web-paged with periodical information, as with the Washington Post, you have parallel things happening around the world. These things are all in electronic form. Your reporting job will be going from web page to web page. But, you don't need to be sitting in Rome to do that because when you call up the foreign affairs ministry in Rome on their web page, where are you sitting? You can do it from Washington. I predict that the trend of the last 50 years of centralized decision-making ain't going to reverse. We talked devolution. It is not going to happen. I think the trend is going to reverse that.

*Q: The only thing you have left out of that is personal contacts, the human relationships and all those horrible things and wonderful things that make foreign affairs, international affairs and human affairs, affairs. If you translate everyone into a machine of some sort or a place or a disk, whatever. It is not even going to work for visa operations.*

SOMERVILLE: How are battlefields controlled? How was Kuwait controlled? Where was it controlled from? It was controlled from the war room in the Pentagon and the White House. Where was the Kosovo stuff controlled from? It wasn't controlled from the Avian airbase in Italy, it was controlled remotely.

*Q: Yes and no. But, maybe with that we should kiss the value of the consular function goodbye. And you have reminded us very well, Ron, of what it has done for others in the State Department, and our own service to all Consular Affairs. I am not saying goodbye at*

*this point because I want you to give us our last words, be they pages, but the important thing is you have seen it. You have walked through it and I walked through it with you, gratefully, as many others have too and seen the change.*

SOMERVILLE: It was an era of change.

*Q: And a lot of fun.*

SOMERVILLE: Yes.

*Q: What are your final words to us?*

SOMERVILLE: Right now? Traffic is mounting on the Beltway.

*Q: Those are words of the reality of Washington in retirement.*

SOMERVILLE: I think probably now is about as exciting a time as ever to be in the consular operation. The elements of excitement should be as strong or stronger now as they have ever been.

*Q: Now that speaks of your devolution.*

SOMERVILLE: It was a fun time for many years.

*Q: Do you feel that?*

SOMERVILLE: Yes, I do. Very much so. I think the security of job definition and job constraints is now going to be a thing of the past. Officers are going to have to deal with less defined parameters. That is wonderful although for many of the older officers it may not be very tolerable.

*Q: Thank you, Ron.*

*End of interview*