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

ELIZABETH ANN SWIFT

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Initial interview date: December 16, 1992

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INTERVIEW

Elizabeth Ann Swift was born in 1940 in Washington, D.C. Graduating from Radcliffe she entered the State Department in 1962 and the Foreign Service in 1963. She served in Manila as a visa officer and in other training positions in the embassy, then returned to Washington to be on the Benelux desk. After training in Indonesian she served in Jakarta as a political officer, then took Asian Area training at Cornell. In Washington from 1972 to 1979 she had a variety of positions in cultural affairs, congressional relations, the Philippine desk, and was seconded to a congressman as an assistant. In 1979 she was sent to Tehran as a political officer only to be taken hostage within a few months. On her return from captivity and a year of study at Harvard she moved into the consular field of the Department of State mainly dealing with the problems of American citizens overseas. She them went to Athens in charge of the visa operation, followed by a assignment as consul general in Kingston, Jamaica. Returning to Washington she served in the Bureau

of Consular Affairs as a deputy assistant secretary of state. She is going to London as U.S. consul general as of 1993.

Ann Swift entered the State Department in 1962 and the Foreign Service in 1963, caught in the idealism of the Kennedy administration that inspired her generation. She was baptized in the visa trade early in her career as an officer interviewing large numbers of Filipinos at our embassy in Manila. Her comments on the role of young officer making major decisions that effect the lives of so many people are as valid today as they were in the early 1960s.

After a tour in Washington she studied Indonesian and went to Jakarta where she worked in the embassy's political and economic sections. Back to Washington she dealt with cultural exchanges of international visitors. From that pacific occupation she moved to selling warplanes to the Philippines as the political-military officer. She then was assigned to the Bureau for Congressional Relations dealing with East Asian matters. Following this she was seconded to Congress as an assistant to Congressman Dante Fascell for a year. She goes into the complex relationship between the State Department and Congress, and the failures of the Foreign Service to understand the need to better service Congress.

After eight years in the United States Swift returned to the field in 1979, being assigned as a political officer to the American embassy in Tehran shortly before its takeover. She describes in detail the events that led to the seizure of the embassy in November 1979. She spent 444 days as a hostage. On her release in 1981 she discusses her reception in the United States and how she determined to become a consular specialist. She has a series of positions in the Bureau of Consular Affairs dealing with the American citizens. This was followed by her assignment to Athens as chief of the visa section. She discusses the concern of a supervisor dealing with junior visa officers who let the authority of the position go to their heads. She also goes into the pattern of Greek emigration.

Greece was followed by an assignment to a very difficult post, Kingston, Jamaica. Swift was the consul general in charge of a large consular section where immigration pressures were immense, fraud pervasive, and with the need to stop narcotics traffickers from traveling to the United States on their nefarious business.

Returning to Washington Swift was assigned to the Bureau of Consular affairs first in an administrative capacity and then as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Citizen Services. She had to deal with the problems of Americans caught in the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Throughout the interview Swift discusses the problems of assignment in the Foreign Service for a woman, and the obstacles that needed to be overcome. At the time of the interview Swift was on detail to the Carnegie Endowment to do research on immigration matters. She is scheduled to be the U.S. consul general in London starting the summer of 1993.

This is an interview with Elizabeth Ann Swift, and this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Ann and I are old friends.

Q: Ann, I wonder if we could start off as we do these interviews with something about your background, when, where you were born, something about your upbringing, family, and education, so people will know who you are and where you come from.

SWIFT: Okay. Born in Washington, D.C., third generation Washingtonian. My grandparents were in the Navy, and my uncle was in the Navy. My father was International Red Cross, so I grew up in Washington. My father died when I was very young and I grew up to tales of traveling abroad. My parents had been all over the world and I decided, probably when I was in high school--I can remember our bookshelves were full of books on the world, and I read all the books on China and various places. I got very interested in East Asia and decided when I was in high school that I wanted to go into the Foreign Service. Why? I do not know. I just wanted to travel the world and thought that would be fun.

So I went to Maderia high school here, and went first to Stanford for a year, came back and went to Radcliffe for three years. Came out of Radcliffe, took the Foreign Service exam...

Q: When did you get out of Radcliffe?

SWIFT: '62. Took the Foreign Service exam while I was in Radcliffe which meant at that point that I was probably 19 when I took the exam, and 20 when I took the oral.

Q: You had to be 21 in order to be an officer.

SWIFT: Well, to be an officer...anyway, wherever I was, I was right at that edge...no, you're right, I was 20 when I took the exam, 20 when I took the oral and flunked the oral but then they changed the exam system so I took the exam almost immediately again, and then passed it. So when I came in I was 21.

Q: How was the oral at the time?

SWIFT: Oh, it was hysterical. I went in having been told it would be a personality test. They just wanted to see if you were a nice person, and if they would like you. Wrong. They asked me all sorts of horrible questions about what was the gross national debt, which I could not tell you today, and certainly couldn't tell them at that point. All sorts of esoteric and wonderful questions, none of which I knew, and I did a terrible, terrible job on that first exam. At that point you had your exam with three people for maybe two or three hours, and then at the end they sort of said, "Thank you very much," and you went out, and the chairman called me back in and he said, "Miss Swift, we're very sorry to tell

you that you haven't passed." And I knew it already so that didn't bother me. And he said, "But we really liked you." And I thought that was an odd comment, and "we'd really like to have you in the Foreign Service so why don't you marry a Foreign Service officer and you can become a part of the Foreign Service that way." I was so angry, because I'd been brought up by my mother, my father having died when I was very young, and I had been brought up in girls schools until I went off to Stanford and Radcliffe, had done very well at Radcliffe, and by that time Radcliffe was coed in everything but name with Harvard, and I'd always competed well with the guys. It never occurred to me that I was any different from any guy, and it never occurred to me that there would be something different about hiring a woman as to hiring a man.

I was so angry I walked out of the front door of the State Department and swore I would never ever come back, and almost went into the Peace Corps but the Peace Corps wanted to send me to Tanzania, and I wanted to go to Thailand. So I got a job at the State Department in the Message Analysis and Dissemination Office of the telegraph branch.

Q: In the message center?

SWIFT: In the telegraph center of the State Department, putting little indicators down the side of cables which at that point we did by hand.

Q: This is basically, these are the people who will be interested or need to know this, or something?

SWIFT: Yes, exactly. Nowadays it's all done by computer. In those days it was done by hand. You read the message and you had a format, and you figured out where the message should go. It was exactly the sort of job that I should never in the world have had because I am slightly dyslexic, have a tendency to reverse things, put all the wrong indicators on all the time. I think if I hadn't passed the exam the next time around I would have been fired. But it was a fun job. It was really an interesting job because you read every single scrap of paper, or at least a lot of it that came into the Department. I can remember up against the walls they had whole shelves of cubbyholed cables from every post in the world that were NODIS and EXDIS, and there were four or five of us that were young college graduates and our treat used to be, when we were allowed to take a break, and we could go over and sort of clean out, update, the NODIS and EXDIS traffic, and sat down and read cables from Ambassador Bruce and everybody. It was wonderful.

Q: NODIS meant, no distribution outside of a very select group and that sort of thing.

SWIFT: That's right.

Q: What prompted you, after having this studied insult, to be told to marry a Foreign Service officer? What made you think you would deal with this outfit again, the Foreign Service?

SWIFT: Oh, totally practical. I needed a job, I wanted a job in the foreign affairs field. I didn't want to go into the Peace Corps because they wouldn't offer me the right thing. I probably would have eventually. But I decided, oh well, what the heck, I'll take the exams again and by that time my mother had found me...she had worked in the State Department before, and she had found me this job. I was offered a job in USIA, and another one in the State Department, and I guess it was just bull-headed. I was very, very angry and I guess the anger, as usual with me, just went away. I figured I could handle it.

Q: Just to catch a little of the flavor. You came in when?

SWIFT: '62. No, I get confused because my birthday is in December so I was 22 when I came in. I came into the State Department in '62, I came into the Foreign Service in '63, in May or June of '63.

Q: Was there still sort of a spirit of get out there and do things, with the Kennedy administration?

SWIFT: Oh, yes. I was very much a Kennedy kid. That's why I wanted to do Peace Corps or something like that...very idealistic, all of us. And my class was one of the early classes where there were three women in it, and one black, which was sort of unheard of at the time. So we were the early...I mean there were a lot of women in the Foreign Service at that point. I mean a fair amount of women but they were just starting a diversity program.

Q: I'm trying to catch both the political and social things. Again, I'm appalled having been on the board of examiners somebody saying that to you.

SWIFT: It really didn't bother me. I was young, I was a hard charger, I was very idealistic, and I wanted to go out and serve my country and this seemed a very good way to do it. I guess I was mad at him. I was furious, but I really don't think at that point I thought much more deeply beyond that. It really didn't occur to me that if they let me into the Foreign Service finally that there would be any limitation on what I could do.

Q: Did you find any of that attitude when you came in? I'm talking about when you first came in.

SWIFT: Oh, sure, absolutely. It was always, being a woman in the Foreign Service, you were always told that unless a woman had been in the job before you, you were always told that a woman couldn't possibly do the job. That was standard. You were always being told you couldn't go various places, you couldn't do various things because you were a woman, and women just didn't do that sort of thing. I found usually that once I got into a job, that it would take two or three weeks or so, and then people would start treating me like I was a perfectly normal person, rather than something different.

Q: I'm a slightly older generation than you, and we all went through this process where women came in, you'd sort of have the feeling, oh gosh, I don't know. But at a certain

point, hell, it doesn't make any difference, its the person. But there was a great learning process going on. Back then to your training. When you first came in what was the attitude of your group of people who came in.

SWIFT: There really wasn't an attitude that I remember at all. I came in with a class of about 23, and as I said, three of us were women. We were all just coming in together. Those were in the days when you had the limit of 31 as the age that you could come in. It must have been 21 to 31. At any rate we were mostly young. There were one or two of us that were 30, and those of us who were right out of college thought that the guys up there that were 30 were golly, old and wise. But there was no feeling of anything unusual among ourselves. I don't think there were any preconceived ideas of how anybody would do anything.

Q: After you got your training, this would be early fall of '63?

SWIFT: I went to Manila in August of '63.

Q: What were you doing there?

SWIFT: Line visa officer. Actually we went out rotational so I was supposed to go out and do six months in the consular section, and then another six months in the admin section, six months in econ, six months in political. The way it worked out, naturally, because in those days it was no different from now, was they were understaffed and not getting replacements. So I spent almost a year on the visa line.

Q: As you know these interviews, although we want to catch a full career interview, there is a focus on the movement of people, visa and other things. Can you give how you were doing it, and your impressions of how the system was working at that time? I guess it was about our busiest visa post.

SWIFT: It was busy but it was nothing like the way it is today. We had what we thought of as large groups of Filipinos coming in for visas, but in terms of the way the interviews went, in terms of the sorts of things we looked for during interviews, it was exactly the same sort of thing that you would have found in either Kingston, which was my last post, or almost any place in the world. I just don't think that the sorts of applicants, and the sorts of questions you asked, I don't think it has changed over the years at all. What has changed is the volume. We were a very, very busy post at that point, but I think we had something like three or four line non-immigrant visa officers, and then another three or four immigrant visa officers. So it was huge in terms of the Service at that point, but not today. I don't think we ever had these lines that stretched out the front of the building. I mean we always dealt with what came in in a day. The waiting room was always busy, and there was always a lot of work, but it wasn't overwhelming.

Q: How did you feel about this when you first got hit with very obviously important decisions you were making on other peoples' lives?

SWIFT: Hated it. It wasn't so much the decision making that bothered me but the fact that the Filipinos regarded a consular officer as something slightly lower than God. Certainly we were better than the ambassador and anybody else in the embassy. I mean people would come in and be very humble and self-effacing to me, and I was a 22 year old right straight out of college. I had no illusions that I was anything particularly wonderful and great. And here these often very important people, within Filipino societies--senators, and all sorts of things--were sort of looking up to me, or least were coming to me to plea for a visa for their relatives. And often for a visa for themselves. Often we would have mayors from towns outside coming in to want visas for themselves, and being terrified of me as a junior officer, and I found that appalling. I really found the situation despicable in that sense. I didn't mind the work. The work was interesting and fun and there were patterns, you could see the little people from the villages coming in who plainly wanted to go join their relatives in the States, and were trying to go the NIV route. We used to laugh, you couldn't pay a bit of attention to any of the documentation because I don't think any Filipino that ever came in ever made more than $100 a year. Their income tax returns were all fake, their bank accounts were all fake. Everything was fake and you really had to go on what they looked like, and what they would tell you of themselves.

Q: Again, I think this has some pertinence to get a feel for how the system worked, the second tier of supervision that you were getting. We have old consular hands, did you find this a problem?

SWIFT: It was just exactly I would say like what it is today. I really don't see much difference. Of course this was four or five, six, seven years after Wristonization?

Q: Wristonization was around '55.

SWIFT: Yes, seven years. We had a lot of people that were GS officers, rather than consular, and then had moved over. We had some just wonderful old-time consular officers. In my mind at that point, by the time I came in, none of this made any difference anymore. Everybody was Foreign Service. So you really didn't pay any attention to what they had been before. All I knew was that my mid-level supervisors tended to be older. I mean like they were in their probably early fifties, most of them, and were very experienced. Some of them were wonderful, and we had one guy who came out who was just an absolute total horror. But most of them were delightful, wonderful people.

Q: Did they add a touch of firmness?

SWIFT: Oh yes, it was very strict.

Q: ...as opposed to the more liberal officers. We're talking about experienced visa hands.

SWIFT: I remember it as a very strict type of experience. You did not question...when the Foreign Service said to me that I was going to Manila, I sort of grumbled and said, "I

wanted to go to East Asia, and I didn't really think that the Philippines was East Asia," but it never once occurred to me to try and get out of it. And when I was told that I was going into...well, we all knew that we were going out on these rotational things, so we all assumed that we would get a crack at every section of the embassy, but it never occurred to us...or it certainly never occurred to me, to try to wangle my tour in any way, shape or form. I mean tours happened, and you did what you were supposed to do. And when I left Manila I knew I was coming back to Washington but I didn't have a clue what job I was going into, not the first idea. They didn't tell me until I got back to Washington that I was going to be on the Benelux desk, which is what I ended up doing. For what reason, who knows, I did not know a thing about the Benelux countries at that point. I was an East Asia person. And your bosses were your bosses. They were your teachers, and there was never a question of would you do the work, or wouldn't you do the work. You did the work. If the work didn't get done by 5:00 you did it until whatever time it got done. And you regarded it as, that's the way you did it.

Besides that, as a 22 year old, right straight out of college, my mother kept telling me who had been in government service for a long time, that I was making three times the amount she made as a much more senior person when she retired. Now mind, she had not retired, but got out of the government. She got out of the government in '51 or '52, or something like that, but she regarded my salary as something just out of this world, and I did too. I thought it was incredible.

Q: Did you find with the visa officers...I'm not sure, prejudice may be too strong a word, but biased. I mean, after all you have people who lie to you all the time, was there developed a feeling or a different group of officers, no Filipino is going to the United States is up to any good, or anything like that. Was this a problem?

SWIFT: Well, in those days, especially when I was in Manila, the Peace Corps was there and we were all very idealistic, and we all thought the world ought to be one great big wonderful place. Yes, we knew these people were lying, cheating and stealing to try and get into the States, but could you blame them? Sure, that's what they did, and it was our job to be nice and firm, and pleasant, and turn them down, and let the ones that we thought were okay go, and not let the other ones go. It was very difficult as a young visa officer to operate in Philippine society which we did all the time because you were constantly being hit up for visas, which is no different from what you get today. And you had to learn to handle that. The Philippines was fairly safe except for parts of the Mindanao area where the radical Muslims were, and parts of Cagayan Valley where the NPA Communists were operating. We traveled all over the country; meeting Filipinos, staying with Filipinos, staying with the Peace Corps. We were young and adventurous, we just paid no attention to any restrictions that were put on us. I don't think in those days anybody really told us we could not go. We knew where things were unsafe, or were not safe, but two or three of us had a sort of race on to see who could visit the most provinces. So we traveled all over, and we met an awful lot of Filipinos, and you liked them. It was fun being with the Filipinos, and learning to know them, and the aim of all of us was to learn to know the culture, good or bad. So you sort of separated people out,

and I had some very, very good Filipino friends who would never have thought of hitting me up for visas. And yet I knew the minute I stepped foot out into one of the provinces, and anybody found out I was vice consul, number one I would get the red carpet treatment, but secondly, I'd get hit for visas. But I don't recall any bitterness at the time.

Q: While you were in the Philippines you had some rotational jobs. What other things were you doing?

SWIFT: I spent a couple of months in the administrative section, and a couple of months in the econ section, and about five or six months in political.

Q: What were you doing in the political section?

SWIFT: The political section was not fun in the beginning. What happened to me was that I had been about eleven months on the visa line, and I really didn't mind it. I did want to go off to the other parts of the embassy, and as usual they were saying, "You can't go, you can't go because we're too busy." I had one of the fine old timers as our boss, but she left and in her place came an officer who I think was on his last assignment and was about to be selected out or something, and he was very bitter, and he just absolutely would not do any work, or take any responsibility for anything. And working under him was simply awful, and I had been used to working under really good guidance and a very free flow where we were expected to make a lot of decisions on our own. But when things were political or tricky, then we were expected to go to our bosses and say, "Hey, I have the niece of, or somebody who says they are the niece of the president of the Philippines, or the senator or something, but I've got to turn her down because she's standing out here telling me a tale that cannot be true. Could you smooth the way." And we were used to having our superiors help us out in cases that we knew were very tricky. And this guy didn't want to touch any of this stuff, so what he would do when you would come back to him, he would look at you coldly and say, "What's the matter? You can't make a decision." Well, I could make a decision. I knew what my decision was. My decision was that I was going to turn this person down flat. But I also knew that if I turned the person down flat we were going to be in the headlines of the paper the next day, and a much smoother way of turning the person down flat was going to have to be done. And I didn't think I could do it out there on the line. It would be much better if somebody would take them back and be gentle with them. And he wouldn't do this, and he was never around, and he never gave us any guidance. It was demoralizing when we got somebody like that. And at that point...the inspectors were coming in and I went to the Personnel section and said, "You get me out of there, because if you don't get me out of there the inspectors are going to hear about your lack of junior officer rotational program until they're sick of it." So I was moved two days before the inspectors came and I always regarded the inspectors as friends after that. Because I was getting to the point where it was going to be the end of my career pretty soon...we were in such a battle, this guy and I.

Q: You spent a little longer time in the political section...

SWIFT: You asked me how the political section was. Remember that I can't spell.

Q: You mentioned that you have a mild form of dyslexia.

SWIFT: That's self-diagnosed. Everybody has always told me all my life that I can't spell. I know I can't spell. I really can't spell, and I reverse numbers, and I read in peculiar ways. When I was coming up through school nobody knew about dyslexia, and I was given remedial spelling, and I just thought I couldn't spell. But what that means is that if you ask me to file things, it is not a good thing to ask me to do. And I'm very inaccurate, and I was in constant trouble as a young officer because we didn't have computers, and we didn't have spell checks. I used to say my typewriter misspelled things, and spelling was a big thing in those days in the Foreign Service. So I was constantly in trouble for my spelling. Anyhow, I got in the political section and the first thing I was put in charge of was the bio files, which was just awful, clipping newspapers, and trying to be neat and tidy and get everything in order.

Q: The Foreign Service equivalent of running an obituary files in a newspapers.

SWIFT: Exactly, and it was just plain awful. I am just no good at that sort of stuff, and I had an old line Foreign Service officer who was a lovely political officer, who was just an absolute love, but an absolute nit-picker of absolutely everything. And I couldn't write a sentence but that the sentence got rewritten, and certainly I couldn't spell anything, so that was worse. By that time I had gone through admin, which had been kind of fun, and I'd gone through econ which had been okay, and then I got into that political section and I really thought, "This is not good." But then they were having the Philippine base talks, so they needed an extra person on the pol-mil section, and that was fun. That was good fun, so that's where I ended up in the political section.

Q: You left the Philippines when and you went back to Washington?

SWIFT: Left the Philippines Christmas of '65, so '66 I went back to Washington and went on to the Benelux Desk.

Q: I would think the Netherlands...well, there are a couple major countries in NATO, but Luxembourg...

SWIFT: I got back there just at the time the French were pulling out of NATO. Oh, there were all kinds of hysterics going on, and Belgium was, of course, the colonial power in the Congo, and the Congo was falling apart. You had all these mercenary armies running around in the Congo. And Luxembourg was just there. Most of my time on the Benelux Desk, if I remember correctly, was spent taking care of visiting dignitaries. I learned how to get Presidential motorcades going, and all that sort of stuff; and working with the outlying issues. My boss did the core European issues, so I ended up doing the Belgians in the Congo, and the Dutch in Suriname, the around the edges things. We didn't have

Caribbean desks at that point. We had Benelux, Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles. It was all under our watch.

Q: What was your impression of how we viewed these things? Sort of getting in the way of our maintaining NATO?

SWIFT: Yes. It was just outlying areas of responsibility. It wasn't too long after that that Suriname got its own desk officer in the Latin America bureau. It was an uneasy situation because nobody in EUR really knew what to do with it, why those little countries were in EUR.

Q: Did you come away with any impressions about the role of junior desk officers?

SWIFT: Yes, it was very junior. Again, it was the same sort of thing. I was junior flunky. It was fun, I enjoyed it...I mean I kind of enjoyed it. Again, my inability to spell and my writing style got me into trouble after trouble. I had a boss who I was very fond of, but he ripped everything I ever wrote...

Q: Who was this?

SWIFT: Peter Moffat. ...everything I ever wrote to pieces. By that time I was totally convinced I couldn't write my name backwards. It was a lot of flunky work. It was okay, but it wasn't great.

Q: You did that from '66 until...

SWIFT: '66 to '68 at which point I had been trying to get back into Asian studies. Now, of course, there I was on the Benelux desk, and Bob Anderson who was our Country Director...I was there just at the time they moved from the old WE, Western European big unit. They split everything up and went to these country directorships. It was the trivialization of the Foreign Service was just beginning. And Bob Anderson who had been deputy in WE, which was a big group of countries, became country director for France and Benelux which was a big and important unit. Since I was in the European bureau, I could probably have gone off to France or any place else but all I wanted to do was get back to East Asia. I was looking at going into Japanese language training, and actually got myself into the Japanese language training program. And then discovered that the role of women in Japan was minimal and that trying to be an officer in Japan was going to be real tricky. So I decided I would pull myself back out of the Japanese language, which was probably a wrong decision but I guess I don't know very many Japanese experts that are women. There still don't seem to be really...anyway I went and learned Indonesian, and went off to Indonesia and again, this is a period when you had very little to do with your assignments. You could wangle your area of the world if you were lucky. You could run around and look and see if there was...what I did was I got myself into language training, and then they were going to take me from language training and put me into some spot in Indonesia. They could put me anywhere.

My first assignment was to go to Surabaya as econ and consular officer in a dual-hatted. Now mind you, I knew very little about economics, but had been a consular officer in the Philippines. I thought, "Good, okay." Off I go to Surabaya. But the Consul in Surabaya was a political officer, a Foreign Service officer who was in charge of the consulate. He wrote a letter back to Personnel which I plainly was not supposed to see, that said while he had nothing against women in general, nor women Foreign Service officers in particular---and then he went on for three pages why a woman could not possibly work in Surabaya. And Personnel, being craven, decided the way they would cure this slight problem was to send me up to Jakarta and put me first in the econ section, and then transfer me up to the political section, maybe.

My lower ranking personnel officer was a woman, and she was absolutely furious about this. She was just furious, and this was not going to take place. This was disgraceful, etc. And I sort of said to her, "Don't fuss too much. I'd much rather go to Jakarta than go to Surabaya." In the end I ended up going to Jakarta, and ended up in the political section in Jakarta.

Q: This was...

SWIFT: This was now '68. I got out there in '68.

Q: You started in the econ section?

SWIFT: ...started in the econ section, and then moved up to political, up only because the econ section was downstairs, and the political section was upstairs.

Q: Well you still speak in Foreign Service terms of what's up and what's down. What were you doing in the econ section?

SWIFT: Mostly whatever anybody else didn't want to do which meant that I was doing...those were in the days...did we have a commercial attaché? I don't think we had a commercial attaché. At any rate I did a lot of the reports for the Department of Commerce, the yearly economic summary.

Q: What was the situation like in Indonesia at the time you were there?

SWIFT: '68 was two and a half years after the coup where the communists were thrown out and Suharto came in. The country was still somewhat unsettled, some demonstrations and things. It was calming way down. It was a very exciting period because the coup and the counter actions...there was a younger generation of students that had supported the anti-communist movement, and they were all very dynamic and a great deal of fun. They were also about my generation or a little bit younger. So it was just great fun. It was a very exciting time to be there.

Q: Was there any impact from the Vietnamese war? This was right at the height of our involvement.

SWIFT: We got into the Vietnamese war while I was in the Philippines. You are right, we were at the height of our involvement during that period. We were pretty well isolated from it, which I regarded as a great deal of luck because I had not been able to have a dinner conversation in Washington because I was in Washington, of course, at the height of it too. And my mother was ardently anti-war, and did such things as sitting out on the front doorstep with all the neighbors doing anti-war banners to go down and march. I was working in European affairs, but watching Vietnam out of the side of my eye, and I would get this tirade from my mother about, "Look at the TV set. Look at these horrible pictures." Indonesia was really off the beaten path for Vietnam.

Q: Was there any feeling that you were getting, particularly from these younger students, that we shouldn't be there?

SWIFT: No. They had enough troubles of their own, and they were very strongly anti-communist, but uneasy about what we were doing in Vietnam. They didn't really support us in Vietnam, but it wasn't hostile at that point. The only hostility I can remember is from my colleagues in the Ford Foundation, and other places, when we went into Cambodia. I was there the night we went into Cambodia, and there was a great deal of...

Q: The spring of 1970. Then you moved up to the political section, one flight up?

SWIFT: Well, here we go again. Mary Vance Trent had been in the political section, and I think she ended up as Political Counselor, or at least she was deputy. At any rate, there had been a tradition that a woman could serve in the political section because Mary Vance had done it before me. Otherwise, they would not have let me go.

Q: This is one of these things if somebody slipped in and then once...

SWIFT: ...if you got a foothold you were okay. In the Philippines they had always had a tradition of having...they had had several women go through there, and in the Philippine society women play a major role so there was no real question but that a woman could work in the Philippines, and the question never really arose. When I went to Indonesia you've got a Muslim country and the question immediately arose with the consul in Surabaya, and then they said, its alright, we'll send her up to Jakarta and she can go up to the political section eventually because Mary Vance was up there and women have a big role in Indonesia, and she can handle women's affairs. My idea of women's affairs was not theirs. I thought I would handle something to do with regular political organizations, and if women had a part in it that was all good and fine.

At any rate, when I went up to the political section I was in charge of women's affairs...I ended up being in charge of communists, which, of course, had pretty well been knocked out by that point and the Chinese. I was assigned the students later. I also was assigned

the government party which was just starting to get going because it was viewed as unimportant and something that a woman could do. However, the government party became very, very important. So all of a sudden I ended up handling what was really the most important piece of this action. And when I left a friend, Harriet Isom, who was also a woman, came to take my place, and I had been told I could not do the Muslim parties. There was no way I could do the Muslim parties because the Muslims wouldn't talk to me. I was a woman, and they wouldn't talk to me. Well, that's nonsense, it's absolutely crazy. So when Harriet took my place, guess what happened? She was given the Muslim parties, and somebody else took GOLKAR, which was the government party very important at that point so it got whiffled off immediately, and Harriet ended up with the Muslims. The funniest thing I ever did see.

Q: This obviously is the fast shuffle that happens. But it's not unknown in the Foreign Service where a junior officer, or one whom people don't pay much attention to, will be given something considered of no importance. Often the officers at a lower level are given the position of being an opposition party, and when the opposition party comes in the younger officers are sitting on top of all the best contacts. There is this class structure within the Foreign Service. How did you find reporting on these various groups?

SWIFT: Oh, it was wonderful fun. It was like being at university or something because Indonesia has a long tradition, both in the United States and in Holland, of really good studies having been done on the country, sociological, anthropological and historical. I mean it has a tradition of academic study that I thought was normal because the Philippines had a pretty good body of literature that is built up around it. But having now been in a lot of other countries, I find it's not quite as usual as you would think. But, at any rate, it was like being in a university being up in the political section and reporting all this stuff. It was good fun.

Q: For a new officer coming in, how does one go out and act as a political officer? Say you're given these assignments, what did you do?

SWIFT: Read a lot of newspapers as everybody says. You just march out and there's usually some structure somewhere. With the communists obviously you couldn't meet people because there weren't any. With the Chinese, the Chinese community was just there, and with the government party I just went out and met people. You just march up and say hello, I am from the American embassy and I'd like to hear about what you all are doing. It was very open, very above board, and it's good fun. You have parties, have people over to your house and get to know them.

Q: Who was the ambassador during this time?

SWIFT: Marshall Green was there, and then Frank Galbraith.

Q: How did you find them as far as their...

SWIFT: Oh, super. They're both highly respected professional Foreign Service officers. Indonesia has been very, very lucky in its ambassadors.

Q: With the exception of maybe Howard Jones early on who was a special case.

SWIFT: Jones was a special case but again Jones was somebody who knew Indonesia. These were officers who really knew what they were talking about, who knew the area, they were real professionals all of them. You could quarrel with Jones' ideas, he was a very dramatic, very strong-minded individual. He was wrong with his approach to Sukarno, but he knew what he was doing with him.

Q: He had a policy, and he knew what he was doing. It's just controversial.

SWIFT: I should say one more thing again. They put the cone system in place while I was in Indonesia.

Q: I might add for the record, the cone system was a classification into various specialities and all of a sudden you were stamped as a political officer, a consular officer, administrative officer, economic officer.

SWIFT: Yes, and because I was in political I was stamped as a political officer. Now, the interesting thing at that point is that all of us were in Indonesia moving through all of these different jobs with no particular problem. Harriet, who later took my job, came to Indonesia from Africa, came in as head of the consular section, then went up to Medan which was one of the consulates, served up there a year or so, and then came down and took my place in the political section.

Q: She later became ambassador to Indonesia.

SWIFT: No, she later became ambassador to a couple of countries in Africa. She hasn't been back to Indonesia. Oh, Harriet may have been political counselor. And then Al LaPorta, and a couple of other friends...one, Dick LaRoche was a consul at that point and ended up as a consul in Indonesia at the time we got coned. So, of course, Dick got coned consular. I don't know what Harriet got coned because she was trading back and forth in jobs at that point. And Al LaPorta was consul general in Indonesia at that point too, and Al ended up somehow in political. But all of us, at that point, we regarded consular as part of our work. I used to take full advantage of the consular section whenever I could because they had...and I was always very, very jealous of Harriet and Dick because the two of them did much more traveling, had a bigger travel budget than we did up in the political section. So if I could at all, I used to hitch on to their trips out into the countryside to give a reason to my travels because one of the things I reported on was what was happening among the Chinese communities up in Borneo, and it was very difficult for a political officer from the embassy to just chug on out there. And Dick had all sorts of missionary families and things out there that he needed to go see, American missionary families, so the two of us got together on one wonderful trip and went all up

through that area by dugout canoe, and all sorts of things. Carrying the American flag going to visit our constituents out there. And I went along and learned a lot about how you take care of Americans that are out in the backwoods. Dick was going out and helping them with passport services, and reports of birth and all that sort of stuff, and basically making sure they were okay. I got to meet all the local dignitaries because at that point I think I ranked him, but when we traveled he was the consul, and I was just along on his coattails. At any rate, it was a very easy relationship, and I don't think either of us ever regarded anybody as superior or inferior. It just wasn't something you thought about at that point. Dick was a Foreign Service officer who happened to be doing consular work.

Q: Were there any major events that happened in Indonesia during that time you were there? Or was it a fairly calm spot.

SWIFT: It was pretty calm, pretty straight forward.

Q: Timor was not a major problem.

SWIFT: Timor didn't become a major problem until three or four years later.

Q: You came back in what? '71.

SWIFT: I came back in '71 and went to Cornell for a year in Southeast Asian Studies.

Q: Cornell is sort of the center of Indonesian studies. Did you find the academic world had a different view of Indonesia than, you might say, the Foreign Service? I do think there was a problem with Sukarno - Suharto at that time.

SWIFT: There had been a fairly hardline group of FSOs in Indonesia during the coup, and there was a very strong dislike between the Cornell academics and the embassy in Indonesia in that '65 period. By the time I got out there, the group was turning over. It was very much an intellectual fight, right wing versus left wing. By the time I got out there those people were starting to leave, and the new group that came in was much more liberal. Bob Pringle came out, and Bob was a Ph.D. out of Cornell in Southeast Asian Studies. Mark Dion was there too, and Mark had been at Cornell doing a Ph.D. So basically the whole embassy got infiltrated by Cornell so there really wasn't the tension there. There was slight suspicion still, but there really wasn't the tension.

Q: As I recall the tension had been more or less that the Cornell group had plunked down for Sukarno. In our terms we'd call it a rather rigid left wing group. I don't know if that's a good characterization.

SWIFT: It's very hard to use those sorts of terms. They were anti the war in Vietnam. Anybody who studied Southeast Asia had a very hard time justifying anything that we were doing in Vietnam, which included me. Academically, the whole Vietnam war...I

mean when you study Southeast Asian history, it is just not something you do. The French fouled up, the French should have gotten themselves out peacefully a long time before, and for us to go in behind and make the same mistakes the French did was just outrageous. So from an academic, or a historical point of view on Asia, it was really hard for anybody who had been brought up in Asian studies to be anything other than in opposition to our Vietnam policy. And to be much more conscious that Southeast Asian political movements were national movements rather than true communist movements. The Cornell crowd tended to look at the communists in Indonesia as an indigenous group that weren't controlled from the outside. The State Department tended to look at the communists as being controlled by the outside. I don't think either group was totally correct. I do happen to think that the communist group did try to overthrow the group that controlled the army. And I think they failed, and in the backlash the more conservative officers of the army used the PICI's involvement to turn against them. Poor George Kahin of Cornell was always accused during that period of being a radical left winger, and George is not a radical left winger. George is an intensely intellectual student of political and historical movements in Southeast Asia, who didn't happen to agree with the State Department. Ben Anderson tends to be a little bit more theological in his views.

Q: How did you find the experience at Cornell?

SWIFT: It was wonderful.

Q: Then you went to...

SWIFT: Then I went to the Bureau of Cultural Affairs--CU. It was the last couple of years of the State Department running the Fulbright program. Again, I got taken by the scruff of the neck by Personnel. No decision making on my part. For the Cornell assignment there was a fair amount of decision making. I was asked if I would like to do it. They said we have selected you for university training, would you like it? Well, what was I to say? Of course I'd like it, I'd just love it. Then the honchos in Personnel said...they were trying to upgrade CU. I think they realized they were going to lose it to USIA if they really weren't careful, and they were trying to get some good officers in. The officer that I replaced was two grades above my then grade, so I was called by the Personnel system. I had all sorts of other ideas in mind about where I was going. I fully intended to go back to one of the desks in the East Asia Bureau. I was called by the Personnel system and simply told that this is a wonderful job, it's very career enhancing, and you're going. We're going to panel you. I really didn't have much say. I had already been promised a job by the East Asian Bureau, and Personnel system just simply put me into CU. This was a time when the system was starting to weaken around the edges, and several people had escaped from CU just before I got there. The Executive Director of CU, Dick Fox, told me straight out that he had had a very hard time getting good people in, and he had been fair-minded and let several of them go when they got offered really good jobs on the outside, and there was no way he was going to let me go. So I could just settle down and stop looking for other jobs because I was going to stay here. He wanted me to stay. So, until Dick Fox left I was stuck. But for all of the wrong reasons, or for all of the right reasons, it was a really good

job. It was fascinating, it taught me all about budgeting, it taught me about working with the Hill. It taught me about international visitor programs. It taught me all sorts of wonderful lessons for which I was never ever given any credit by the Foreign Service ever after they told me this was going to be wonderful for my career because it was going to give me such good management experience. It did give me absolutely outstanding management experience, and nobody since that day...I spent the next four or five years back in sort of line positions with everybody saying, "Oh, Ann ought to get more management training." And I kept saying, "Wait a minute, I just had a couple years of it."

Q: What were your impressions about the Fulbright program?

SWIFT: A superb program but the problem was at that point that the White House...remember this is now the tail end of the Nixon, Haldeman, and the gang.

Q: Nixon was at his height.

SWIFT: Nixon was at his height. We were still heavy in Vietnam. You had great tensions in the United States. There was a strong feeling on the part of the Republicans that anybody who was the least bit anti the policy in Vietnam, which was about two-thirds of the nation, was a left wing communist supporter of the Russians. There was also a very strong feeling at the White House that the Fulbright program should be used only for the benefit of their particular aims. They had a very hard time getting at it in the State Department. It was sort of buried away, and they couldn't reach it. So it was somewhat protected and we were allowed to make, I think, very good and not swayed by politics decisions on who should come. They were trying. I can remember Haldeman himself was involved in trying to structure the programs.

Q: Haldeman was one of the special assistants to the President, and later indicted in the Watergate affair.

SWIFT: A truly bad man. He at one point got one of our tour leaders fired because he discovered that she was taking...he or she, I can't remember who it was...but was taking this group of foreign leaders, these were young leaders, to see the Democrats and a few other organizations that were forbidden. It was really quite amazing the depth to which Haldeman's reach went. He was putting into USIS his people who were then supposed to be aimed at changing these horrible left wing programs that the State Department and USIS ran. It was really quite unique. It was an eye opener.

Q: You got this taste of the White House reach, the politicalization of the process.

Ms SWIFT: The attempted politicalization, they didn't really get at it. They went down in flames before they could do too much damage.

Q: How about your relations with Congress? Did Congress get involved with this at all?

SWIFT: With that program, yes, they got involved but it was at a higher level than me. I was doing the budgeting for the budget presentations, but I myself rarely went up on the Hill. We would send our leader grantees up on the Hill sometimes.

Q: You then moved over to Congressional Relations.

SWIFT: No, no. I moved from being a purveyor of wonderful idealistic trips around the United States, to selling war planes on the Philippine desk.

Q: You were the political-military person.

SWIFT: Political-Military officer on the Philippine desk.

Q: From '74 to '76.

SWIFT: That's right.

Q: What did that job consist of?

SWIFT: Selling planes to the Philippines. Exactly what it said. This was at a time Marcos was elected...that was one thing that did happen while I was in the Philippines, and I stayed in the Philippines a little bit longer to go through that election. Marcos was elected at the end of '65, and at the point that Marcos was elected we all figured that he would either be the best president the Philippines had ever had, or the worst. And when I got onto the desk I was fairly convinced that he was the worst, and the State Department was trying to think that he was one of the best. My job was to make sure that our relations with the Philippines on the military side went smoothly. This included base negotiations, sales of military equipment to the Philippines, and various types of training. The whole spectrum of anything that had to do with military relations. One of my chief things that I can remember doing was attempting to block sales of war planes to the Philippines. I was there at a time when Marcos, with our encouragement, was building his armed forces from a very small group of about 30,000 soldiers in the military, to what ended up 120,000 armed forces. It was absurd. It was stupid. It came right out of the Vietnamese war. It came right out of our paranoia about communism. We were selling them all the wrong kinds of equipment, and telling them to go bomb the hell out of their own villages to get at those nasty communists. It really was not a good period.

Q: This is at the time of our pull out from Vietnam, and the fall of Vietnam. Did you have the feeling that we were going to take our hard earned military technology and transfer it to the Philippines?

SWIFT: Well, we gave them a lot of it. It was just a mindset. It was a very military mindset during those years. You didn't see it in terms of mass movements. We were trying to keep the world safe for democracy in the Philippines and the way that they figured they were going to do it was, rather than supporting democratic institutions, that

they would simply support Marcos. One of the ways you supported Marcos was to give him everything he wanted as he built up the armed forces which he plainly saw as the way to maintain his power.

Q: What sort of reflections were you getting? Military sales and things like this?

SWIFT: Oh, I was right in the middle of everything, yes.

Q: ...a part of all the flow in. Were you getting a feeling we were going through this positive thing about Marcos, but getting reports in from the embassy, that gee, he really isn't that great.

SWIFT: No. Bill Sullivan was doing everything he could to...Bill Sullivan did not particularly like the Marcoses, but he was a very strong supporter of military assistance to the Marcoses, and he was a very effective supporter of military and any other kind of assistance. He was your typical gung-ho ambassador of that period, and one of our best. He went from there to Iran. Very strong willed. A lot of ambassadors go in and don't have complete control over their embassy, and over the various agencies that work for them. Bill Sullivan did his absolute damnest everywhere. He failed in Iran, but mainly Brzezinski was running around behind his back. But he was a very strong ambassador who used everything he could think of, including the cables. I used to have the Bill Sullivan cables...the funniest things you've ever seen. Just wonderful. When he'd get mad at us back in Washington he called Congress cowardly lions, and he called those of us on the desk that were working against him on a couple of things, including mattress mice. Get those mattress mice off my back, they're chewing my policy to pieces." He was, of course, right

Q: When you say you were trying to block some sales to Marcos, where did this come from, how did you work on this, and what was the feeling? Obviously this was part of our policy business and one just doesn't go off and try to stop sales.

SWIFT: I can't remember but one of the ways you do is you try to convince people that giving...we had two kinds of war planes at this time that we could sell. One was a F-5 which was a small jet fighter.

Q: The kind you could load a lot of stuff on it.

SWIFT: You really couldn't load a lot of stuff on the F-5. It really was not very good for much of anything. As someone told me, "it parked pretty." It was a very sleek pretty looking thing, and when you're going out to sell arms to all of these governments that don't need it...I mean, what the heck did the Philippines need jet planes for? We had Clark Air Force base there. Any threat that took air to air fighting planes was not going to be countered by the Philippine government. But we were selling them merrily. But the F-5s I had no objection to whatsoever because they were a fighter plane to fighter plane type of plane, and if you tried to use them to try to bomb...you could hang stuff on it, but if you

tried to use them to bomb villages in Mindanao, they just weren't very efficient at it. They didn't have the range, and they didn't have the ability to put stuff on the wings and drop it in any precise fashion. The planes we had, because we had surplus out of Vietnam, we had A-4s, I think, which is a Navy version of some kind of a plane, and it was a really good air to ground plane. You could hang everything on it. You could stand back and just destroy any little old village that you wanted. My feeling was very strongly that one of the reasons that we were losing the war in Vietnam was that we did a lot by air power, and air power does very little other than earn you the enmity of whoever you indiscriminately plonk with your air power. It seemed to me they had a rebellion going in Mindanao, but the way you got the Philippine government to deal with the rebellion in Mindanao was either going in there with enough troops on the ground and slugging it out, or compromise. But you didn't give them all this fancy sophisticated air equipment that you could go in and stand off and plonk villages with. It was just stupid.

But how do you do it? You redirect it. You point out what these things are going to be used for, and you try to redirect people into other directions, and you try to sell them lots of F-5s which are cheaper, and easier to support. I mean, there are all sorts of ways you can do it.

Q: I'd like to get a feel for how a desk officer who is opposed to forces outside that are trying to push this. Our military was trying to push this, weren't they?

SWIFT: Not particularly. Our military is pretty smart. They're divided, and there were divisions on how to do stuff. I didn't have much effect but every now and then you could push something in a different direction.

Q: How about the office director, I mean whoever is head of Philippine affairs?

SWIFT: They were dealing at the same time, and you'd talk to them and try to argue them around to your point of view.

Q: How did it work out while you were there, '74-'76 period?

SWIFT: It was plainly going absolutely the wrong direction. When you're young, each little victory seems like a major victory. When you get older, you stand back and you say you didn't have one bit of effect on it. Understand again, I'm coming right straight out of Harvard doing Asian Studies and Cornell doing Southeast Asian Studies. I had done a lot of work on indigenous rebellions and all that sort of stuff, and I just thought what we were doing in Vietnam was not only wrong-headed, but we're going about it in the wrong way. I mean, we weren't going to win. If we were going to do it the way we were doing it, we weren't going to win anyway. And by '74 it was quite obvious that we were going down in flames, and most of our attention at that period was on Vietnam. All of us in East Asian bureau were watching Vietnam. There was general rebellion in the ranks. That was the time that Win Lord left, and a lot of people were just rebelling. It was all very exciting and sort of interesting, and fun.

Q: Then you moved over to Congressional Relations.

SWIFT: Then I went up to Congressional Relations.

---recorder turned off

Q: I've got you from '76 to '77 you were in H which is known as the Congressional Relations office. Is that correct?

SWIFT: That was two years up there, it must be '76 and '78. I'm not quite sure how it works but I think I got...yes, I got invited at that point...Bob McCloskey who was roving ambassador, or whatever that title was, in other words special assistant to Kissinger. He had three titles at one point. He was head of Public Affairs, head of Congressional Relations, and he was Special Ambassador. He went to Greece after H. He was wonderful. He was press spokesman. A press spokesman has to be totally honest. If you're not totally honest, the press will eat you for breakfast, and McCloskey really had their respect as a press spokesman. They knew they could count on him to be honest. This was dealing with an administration with not very honest people in the State Department at that point.

Q: Kissinger was micro-managing...

SWIFT: Kissinger was up at the top, and he was not known for his veracity, and changed history a lot to suit his whims. Brilliant, irascible, fierce, terrible, everything you've ever heard of Kissinger, as far as I know, is absolutely true. But he gathered around him a group of very, very competent, very intelligent people, and Bob McCloskey was one of them. And McCloskey decided that we weren't doing very well in Congressional Relations. Well, we weren't of course. We were at loggerheads with the Congress over Vietnam.

Q: Watergate was just...

SWIFT: We were through Watergate by that time. Or maybe we weren't through Watergate, when was Watergate?

Q: Watergate was just over.

SWIFT: Yes, because I remember I was down on the Philippine desk when Watergate came up.

Q: ...the Ford administration, and you straddled into the Carter administration.

SWIFT: So McCloskey was expanding. This was the beginning of the expansion of H into what it is today, and he hired on four or five more legislative management officers,

and I was one of them. I went up to do East Asia because I was coming right out of the East Asia bureau, and because they had nobody else to do it. I was assigned human rights, which was at that point a totally unimportant subject.

Q: It was something that Henry Kissinger had on the radar.

SWIFT: Oh, absolutely not. I mean, Henry Kissinger could have cared absolutely less about it. So I had human rights and East Asia, and I was there during the switch-over to Carter and, of course, Pat Derian came in and human rights all of a sudden got on the board.

Q: Let's stick to the Kissinger-Ford time. You had East Asia and this non-issue, human rights, what did a Congressional Relations officer do on East Asian affairs?

SWIFT: It was great fun. Our job was to go up to the Hill to get to know mostly staffers. I knew some of the Congressmen as well, but basically we worked with the committees' staffs to explain to them what our policies were, and where we were going, and to bring their views, and their questions, and their problems, back to the State Department. We went back to our bureaus and tried to explain what problems they had with how the Hill viewed our policies and what changes the Hill wanted. The Hill would have told us, "No, you can't possibly do that, you've got to do this," and we'd come back and I'd tell the East Asian bureau this, and they would either say, "That's a good idea," or they would say, "Absolutely no way," and then we'd get into a big battle with the Hill. I did all of the briefing for our Assistant Secretaries and our DASs when they went up to the Hill. It was my job to make sure that they knew exactly what was going to hit them when they got up to these committee hearings, and that they were ready to answer whatever off-the-wall question came at them.

Q: After all, the Hill has about 500 members, Congress aside, plus obviously the staffs, how did you go about finding out...

SWIFT: Well, basically you're working with certain committees. When you start getting beyond the committee stage and on to the floor stage, then it becomes real tricky. But by that time you're usually working with an entire bill, and you've got the AID legislative people, and you've got the State Department legislative people, and you're all coming together. Up until that point you've been working your own little edges of these bills, and when the bill actually goes down to the floor, then everybody in Congressional Relations gets involved. And among all of you, you know a lot of them and we used to figure out which Congressman would be likely to be sitting on the fence, and then you'd go up and you'd talk to their people, or you would talk to them, and you'd try to get their support, try to change votes.

Q: What was your impression of Congress?

SWIFT: I liked Congress. One of the problems you find is that Congress thinks that State Department people are arrogant. And we are. We're an arrogant bunch. We have every reason to be arrogant. We come out of really good schools, we come through a very rigorous selection process. We're given a great deal of training in foreign affairs. It's our job to know what's going on in the world outside the United States which most people in the United States just don't care about, except big issues. Generally speaking the first time a Foreign Service officer ever sees a Congressman is when he's coming around on one of these overseas tours. On tours, Congressmen will do some serious business, and they're going to do a lot of shopping. And what the Foreign Service officer, generally speaking, focuses in on because he's usually staffing up a control room for the Congressman, or taking the Congressman out on shopping tours, is that these guys are a bunch of dilettantes. They know absolutely nothing about foreign affairs, and they're totally unimpressive. Well, it just ain't true. The top foreign affairs folks that go out on these trips are always good...I can't say always, but usually good, and usually very informed. But also on the Congressional trips you often get a lot of people who've never stepped out of the country, who do not pay much attention to foreign affairs, and who really are just along for the ride. And having come out of Cultural Affairs (CU), that's what the whole program is about. You take people from abroad, and you bring them to the United States, and you show them what its about, and you hope they learn something. And on these Congressionals, that are often called boondoggles, I don't really think they're boondoggles, I'm all for them.

Q: Well, you get them out there.

SWIFT: You get them out there, and you let them see what some of the problems are in the field. Congressmen often cultivate an uneducated image. Congressmen like to be thought of as people of the people. You don't become a Congressman without having brains in your head. I would say that there are very, very few stupid Foreign Service officers, and there are also very few stupid Congressmen. They may not be smart in the ways that we used to people being smart being smart, but they're smart. And Foreign Service officers tend to drip condescension when they work with Congressmen. Often they may not do it quite to the Congressman's face, but its a problem. And its the same when you're working with them up on the Hill. Your typical desk officer sees Congress as an impediment to the business that he's doing. The idea is how do you keep those idiots up on the Hill from prying into whatever you're trying to do. I never really had that feeling about Congress. I was much more broad-minded. I guess I hadn't done too much work with staff dels. So when I got up on the Hill I was much more open-minded. They are very, very bright people, and there are some not so bright people up there. There are some people who really know what they're talking about, and there are some people that are kibitzing. I really enjoyed working with them. And I enjoyed coming back to the Department, and taking my colleagues in the Department and shaking them, and saying, "Look, these guys have a point. Stop fussing about the fact that they're criticizing your program. Look at what they're saying, and see what you can do about it. See how you can either explain to them that what you're doing is not so horrible. Or maybe take a look at their ideas and see if their ideas don't have some credibility." It was a fun job.

By the way, the higher you get up in the State Department, generally speaking, the better peoples' understanding of the function of Congress becomes, because they're forced to work with Congress. Your worst attitudes towards Congress are down at the lower levels.

Q: I've always found as a consular officer, particularly supervising consular officer, that the strength of our system as far as protection of Americans, issuing visas, and this type of thing, is those damn Congressional letters, and Congressional inquiries. Without those we would tend to be rather mindless bureaucrats. With those you've really got to think it through, and justify, and change. They're annoying, but it makes the system work, which many other countries don't have.

SWIFT: That's absolutely right. It's a control over the top of us. And, as you say, it makes the system work. And for consular affairs particularly. We get an awful lot of support from Congress. Congress has treated consular very, very well indeed.

Q: Ann, we'll come back to the consular relationship later on. How did you find the staffs of committees? I'm not sure if it was by this time or not, but these are always considered almost an entity of the government apparatus that exists almost by itself. This may have grown later on, or not. But how did you find the staff committee people?

SWIFT: Pretty good, pretty good generally. My next year was going up there and working for Fascell, and being up there was a real eye opener. Because when you're in the government, you know exactly what's going on. You may not be able to influence it, but you know exactly what's going on. You read all the secret material, you know where the policies are headed. And if you don't, and you want to know, you can always sneak around and find out, because there are no secrets in the State Department. Our leaders, our elders and betters, attempt to have secrets all the time but ordinarily if you want to find out what Mr. Kissinger is really doing, it is possible to do with a little bit of ingenuity. Its not possible on the Hill, and especially for a young staffer who perhaps is very good in his field, but has never really dealt with the U.S. government, hasn't worked inside the government. When he calls down to the State Department to get an answer, what he gets is somebody who is extremely bureaucratic on the other end. First of all, he won't be able to get through to anybody. It will take him weeks to find somebody who'll actually talk to him. And then he'll often get a very bureaucratic answer. Now this doesn't happen so much with the committee staffs, they work up their own relationships with various people in the State Department. So they know where to go when they need information. But even they get frustrated. But the personal staffs of the Congressman just have a terrible time with it. You run the risk of looking like an ignoramus if you don't have inside information. So often they will look not as educated as they really are, because they simply haven't had access to the stuff. But basically speaking, I found them very bright, very ambitious. They're just chargers. To be a staffer on the Hill you have to be young, ambitious, and energetic.

Q: This is a breeding ground for Congressmen.

SWIFT: That's right, and it's a tough one. It's a really dog eat dog...they're not dog eat dog really, they're nice people and they get along well generally speaking--the various staffs--because they have to. The whole idea of Congress is compromise. It's not killing one another. But generally speaking, their level of education and of intelligence is usually very high. They may be gadflies...the problem is to make a name up there, like making it in the State Department, you've got to get an issue. And once you get an issue, then you've got to just pound it to death to get anything done. And usually its the State Department they're pounding on, which makes it uncomfortable.

Q: Speaking of an issue, all of a sudden you found yourself in this non area of responsibility, human rights. The Carter administration comes in and this is practically the major policy of the Department of State. Did that change what you were doing?

SWIFT: At this point, I have a hard time remembering back to how much of a change there was. But obviously it was a major one. I think it was Ron Palmer who was in charge of the human rights at that point. I think he was the head of it, and Ron had really gotten it moving. So it's unfair to say that we weren't doing much because Ron had really very quietly, and very sort of behind the scenes...I think he actually started up some human rights reports. I think we had the legislation at that point, but I think he was really starting to move in things. He was making an incredible amount of movement on the human rights side in an administration which just wasn't about to pay any attention to human rights. I can remember that my role in working on the Hill on the human rights stuff really didn't get going until Pat Derian came in and then the fur flew in all directions. It was great fun.

Q: What were you doing then when she came in, and human rights was put on the front burner? How did your job change?

SWIFT: The Christopher committee got going which vetted all the assistance going at that point.

Q: Warren Christopher.

SWIFT: They vetted all the assistance to Latin America, and Pat used to sit on that committee, and I would go too as H's representative often. It was just very exciting. You had a tool that you could use, and the Carter administration was more willing to use than Kissinger ever was to try to get some sort of human rights observance. And it was fun working with Pat in the very early stages because she had absolutely no conception of how the bureaucracy worked, and was the least bureaucratic looking, seeming, acting, person that you could possibly imagine.

Q: She came out of the civil rights movement as a white liberal lady from Mississippi.

SWIFT: Yes, and just a charger, an absolute charger, and just wasn't going to take any guff from all of these high ranking State Department bureaucrats. It used to be just fur flying in all directions. It was good fun.

Q: Did you get involved in these fur fights?

SWIFT: Oh, around the edges, yes. Mostly sitting back and trying to advise Pat on how perhaps she could get the same thing done by going in a slightly different direction, or what bear traps she was about to run into.

Q: I was on a country team in Seoul, Korea, and of course we were saying this is all very nice but gee you can't apply it here, we've got the North Koreans 30 miles away. I mean we had some real justification, but there were still major problems but I'm sure every country was reporting in, just great, you should do it but not here.

SWIFT: It was very, very, very difficult. I was torn between two very strong assistant secretaries. Dick Holbrooke came in to East Asia, and Dick came in as a great human rights advocate, and all this sort of stuff, and suddenly he gets into the hard realities of foreign policy. There were often times where what he wanted to do on the Hill, and what Pat wanted to do on the Hill, were totally at odds. And I was standing there right in the middle, and it was extremely uncomfortable.

Q: Holbrooke was dealing with realities?

SWIFT: We had all sorts of legislation up on the Hill. And Pat would be pushing the human rights legislation, and Dick would be trying to hold it back a little to keep it from messing up too badly our relations with Korea, or with the Philippines, or whatever.

Q: Although it wasn't your area...one of the sticking points always on this thing was with Israel. I mean Israel was not treating its Arab population very well to say the least, yet at the same time the Jewish lobby, and the Friends of Israel lobby were strong supporters of Carter, and every good politician really had to pay attention to this. Did you see these battles raging on this particular issue? I mean what we should report, and how we should report Israel's actions?

SWIFT: No, because I think at that point...I'm trying to remember. Israel has been such a difficult problem for so long that obviously it was around, and obviously it was a problem. When did they bulldoze the Shatila camps?

Q: That was about 1980.

SWIFT: It was '81 because I was back here when they did it. We'd had that war in '73, but the concentration on human rights in Israel, I think, was not very great at that point. I have a hard time separating it out because it became a major issue. I don't think it was that because what we were focused on more during the period that I was there was Korea, the

Philippines, Timor, and Iran, and a lot of the Latin American countries--Nicaragua at that point, El Salvador to a lesser extent, but Nicaragua was the burning issue.

Q: We were up against...I mean we're running this communist thing.

SWIFT: Generally speaking what happened with human rights, and I think where Jimmy Carter just went crashing down in flames, was that the human rights drive runs absolutely counter to what was then our support for very dictatorial regimes in order to counter communism. And what those of us who were gung ho for human rights kept saying all the way through the Kissinger period, and the whole idea of human rights and everything came out of Vietnam. I mean, it was around before, but it came very much out of Vietnam and then applied around the world. What we were saying was, "You cannot build firm democracies without an underlying respect for human rights." It's the same sort of thing that we just had thing over at Carnegie recently on Haiti, and what they were saying was, "You cannot build a decent community, or a decent life, in Haiti unless you can get respect for human rights. And until you can get respect for human rights, how can you have democracy?" And that's what Pat and the human rights people were saying very, very loudly in the beginning of the Carter administration.

And at the same time you had...I mean the best example which I know best unfortunately, is Iran where we saw our interest in Iran as keeping open the border listening stations which were monitoring missile shootings.

Q: Very important to watch the Caspian Sea.

SWIFT: We said we couldn't survive without it, and it was a period where our overhead satellite surveillance was getting better and better, but it had not gotten to the point that it could entirely take over. There was a great debate going on as to exactly how necessary those listening stations were. And as it turned out when the listening stations vanished, it did not hurt us I don't think very much at all. But there's a great tendency in the U.S. government once you got something, to defend it to the end. I mean we haven't needed Clark Air Force Base for a thousand years but it took Mt. Pinatubo to get us out of there.

Q: That was a volcano that erupted about two years ago that ended our interest in the area because it was a struggle to put it back.

SWIFT: Yes, but those bases have been silly for a long time. Yet we defend our entire policy toward a very repressive regime in the Philippines on the basis that we needed to stay in the bases. The same thing with Iran. We were keeping up a relationship with a very repressive regime because we were scared to lose both the commercial interests in Iran and the listening stations. And Brzezinski was very, very pro Shah, and conned Jimmy Carter into being pro Shah.

Q: It was almost indecent.

SWIFT: It was the failing of Jimmy Carter. I mean he brought our captivity upon himself by his actions towards the Shah, which were in direct contradiction to everything he was saying and doing on the human rights front. So you had that tension right across the board on a whole series of things.

Q: Because of our feeling about...

SWIFT: Yes. The more I think about it, my statement that we weren't doing much in that first beginning on human rights under the Republicans is not right. We were doing a lot on human rights in that early period because the Congress was pushing a lot of human rights legislation, and Ron Palmer as head of HA was running a very, very savvy game. His new position, and what he wanted to do both, ran toward pushing human rights in U.S. foreign policy. But he had to do it very, very carefully because he had Henry Kissinger sitting up above him. I'm trying to make a dividing line but we were fighting a lot of bad stuff in Argentina...remember this is the time Tupamaros and everything in Uruguay, and we were doing a lot of work--Ron was--on all that sort of problems. I can remember fighting with Shlaudeman...

Q: Harry Shlaudeman.

SWIFT: Yes, who was Assistant Secretary for Latin America at that point.

Q: But it was a period where every time we turned around, we were tripping over the human rights thing. I can remember my reluctance at the time, there wasn't any policy position, saying, "What the hell are we messing around with this for," and very reluctantly came to realize if the United States didn't do it, nobody else would. And it has proved, with exceptions, with problems and all, to be a major element in the law. We're talking human rights now which we weren't before.

SWIFT: If you remember back to that period, those of us who were working with it were thought of as some kind of nuts. Carter gave us a certain amount of legitimacy. And certainly human rights among Democrats on the Hill was extremely legitimate. And remember that I was working in Congressional Relations. I was working for a Republican administration, but in our contacts on the Hill, both committees, Senate and Foreign Relations Committee, were run by the Democrats. So you had relations both with the Republican side...our job was to keep relations open with both sides because often a lot of the issues that you worked on you needed Democratic support to get them through. So we worked both sides of the Hill, and very closely. And, of course, since I was human rights person, I worked very, very closely with the Democrats on a lot of stuff. It was extremely frustrating while Kissinger was around, and then as Carter came swirling in it was...

Q: Did you find that a problem? Because in foreign affairs no matter who is in...right now since 1950 I think both houses of Congress have been democratic, or almost. So a whole generation, a couple of generations, have been used to dealing with basically

Democratic leadership in the government. Was it a problem? Were the Republicans in the State Department? They must be pretty used to it, it's a fact of life.

SWIFT: No, it just worked. It was tricky because it was a tricky period. The whole Vietnam experience, Nixon's downfall, and the end of the Vietnam war, had just taken all credibility away from the Republican administration. There were an awful lot of us in State that just wanted them gone. So it was tricky to work for both sides. It was not easy.

Q: Then you changed over. You took one of these Pearson assignments. Is that right? From '78 to '79, and worked for Congressman Dante Fascell. What is a Pearson assignment?

SWIFT: Congressman Pearson set up a program where State Department officers are sent out into real life in the United States to see how the U.S. functions. There was a big problem back in the late '50s, early '60s, where Foreign Service officers were regarded as having spent too much of their career abroad, and not enough back in the States, and that Foreign Service officers were felt to be totally out of touch with what was going on in the United States. Which I think was true at that time. Now it's the other way around. We rarely get out to the field. Fifty percent of Foreign Service officers now back in the States.

Q: And they want it that way.

SWIFT: In our time you just never wanted to come back.

Q: You just hated to come back.

Mrs. SWIFT: No, I was a very unusual type of person because my career, until I got into consular, was spent basically in Washington with some postings out. And from '71 onward I was back in the States until '79. Not because I didn't want to get out, but because as I was a woman, it was one heck of a lot easier for me to get really good jobs in Washington where I knew everybody, than to get myself assigned out to a really good job in an embassy abroad. I kept getting offered better and better jobs in Washington, and was not being offered comparable jobs abroad. So I took the Washington road. It was fun, I loved it. But a lot of people didn't like it.

At any rate, the idea of the Pearson was to get Foreign Service out into the business community. I have a friend who worked for the governor of Idaho for two or three years, all over the country, and up on the Hill. So I went up on the Hill with Fascell.

Q: What was Fascell's speciality, and what were you doing working for him?

SWIFT: Fascell is from Florida. He was number two on the House International Relations Committee, and he ran the Oversight Committee for the State Department on the international relations side of things. I worked on his personal staff as opposed to working on the committee staff. The committee feels, and I think they're right, that they can't have

Foreign Service officers working on their staff, or they shouldn't directly. But I worked in Fascell's office. Fascell has had, or had, a whole string of Foreign Service officers (one a year) up there in basically intern positions. That's basically what you were. You were a one-year staffer, and you fell into whatever happened to be around. You did some work with his constituents, you did some work with the committees...you worked very closely with his committees obviously. But you were primarily assigned to his office. You had to carve your own niche and see what was going on, and what issues he wanted you to get into. It was fun.

Q: How did you find, because this comes up later on, Consular Affairs-Congressman relationship. Coming from Florida there must have been...

SWIFT: Well, Fascell was a real defender, and his people were, of the consular service. And one of the reasons CA got more and more funding during this period was because of Fascell driving it. He was very, very interested in consular affairs. He was very interested in the role of consular officers abroad, in taking care of American citizens. He felt that we were undervalued, and under cared for, and he set out to change that. I think watching the work we did for his constituents probably. He knew that protection of Americans abroad was a very important part of what the State Department did, and he thought we ought to do it better.

Q: Being on the other end, did you see a problem as far as how the State Department viewed the Congress?

SWIFT: Oh, yes. The State Department doesn't know Congress. They don't know who the chairmen of these committees are. I mean its the rare officer that can tell you who the chairman of the various committees up there are. So I used to play Congressional staffer. When I called back to State, if I really wanted to get something done, I would call a friend. But if I had time, I would just call in blind. I would say, "I'm Ann Swift in Congressman Fascell's office, and I need this." I mean it was absolutely appalling. First of all they wouldn't know who Congressman Fascell was. All they'd know is some silly Congressman wants such and such. And then getting an answer out of the bureaucracy was worth your life. It was just unbelievable. Often I would end up calling friends because that was the only way to get anything done. But it gave me a real taste for why it is that Congress regards the State Department as so difficult to work with. Because we were not helpful.

Q: How about consular affairs? Were they better?

SWIFT: No. Gene Krizek was up there doing consular affairs, and I worked very closely with Gene, especially because of the human rights sort of stuff. So I knew Gene, and I knew that I could get an answer anytime I wanted if I called Gene. I wasn't going to do that. So on the normal routine sort of stuff, visa affairs, no problem. If you got into something tricky...and when I was on Fascell's staff we had just a crazy situation where an American businessman, naturally from Florida, had gone down and gotten himself

involved with the Somoza government in Nicaragua and I don't know, things had gone awry. It ended up with Somoza's troops chasing this guy into the embassy, and the embassy making the Marines throw him back out to the Somozan troops. It was not a good scene. At any rate, in the end it all came out all right. The embassy negotiated him out of the country, and it was okay.

But I was trying to find out on what basis they had thrown the guy out of the embassy. What was the legal basis for doing it, and how they should have done it, or not done it, because the constituent was back in Florida screaming his head off. So I was trying to get answers. I mean, I didn't want to know who was right or wrong, I just wanted to know what the regulations were. Well, I couldn't get them. It was like they were secret, or something.

Q: Go around and look at the manual.

SWIFT: Yes, but I got a lot of bureaucratic answers, rather than getting a thoughtful response.

Q: Its disturbing, and unfortunately I think it continues, the protectiveness, and the settling back on bureaucracy rather than giving real answers.

SWIFT: Well, on the American services side, I think we've gotten a lot better. And even in that case, the people did the right thing. In the end the consular officers got into it, got it settled, and rescued the guy. But the reaction of the embassy had not been good, and the ambassador had not been good in the beginning. And had been against our own policies. They had done the wrong things even given our own policies which were why they didn't want me to get it. Right? There was a perfectly good reason for the Department being kind of recalcitrant on giving me answers. But I think nowadays that relations between EMR and the Hill are really very good. I mean what will often happen with this American Services stuff, is that the crisis will occur before you can get into it. So fur has flown, and everybody is angry at everybody, and then EMR has to step in.

Q: EMR is?

SWIFT: The Emergency Center of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which works to protect Americans abroad. But I think relations between EMR and the Hill tend to be pretty good.

Q: In 1979 you got a real plum assignment. Would you describe how this came about?

SWIFT: By mistake basically. I was up on the Hill and I needed an assignment. This time I really did need an assignment abroad. I had been three tours back in the States, and one up on the Hill. I'd been '71 to '79 and I really wanted out. Also my entire career had been in East Asia, except for that one period on the Benelux desk. So I really wanted a job outside of the East Asian Bureau, which was a mistake because I could have gotten pretty

good jobs in East Asia. But trying to go to another bureau was real difficult. I mean difficult for two reasons: one, because I was an unknown quantity for them; and two, I was a woman. So this was the period in my life where I really hit up against being a woman. Being a junior officer woman is no big problem, but as you come up through the ranks and get to the point that you are now qualified for higher ranking jobs, then it got tricky. I was working in the mainline bureaus, rather than AF. AF was just a wonderful place for women because they took women and did all sorts of wonderful things with them. But the EUR bureau, and the NEA bureau were not as good. My own bureau, EA, would have been quite easy to deal with. Trying to get out and go someplace else was real hard, and I wanted to go as Consul General to Palermo. I thought that would be good fun, just because it happened to be coming up and it was ready to go. And I was told in no uncertain terms that no-way were they going to put a woman down there. Now, I did not realize that a woman had been down there about ten years before. But naturally when a woman gets out of the job, then of course a woman can't do it anymore because you're dealing with all these terrible male-chauvinist Sicilians and they won't have anything to do with a woman. It was nonsensical.

What would have been a much better argument was that the job was one grade above my present grade, and I spoke no Italian.

Q: Also because the Italian hands tend to be Italian. They've been back again and again.

SWIFT: Oh, yes. But my competition wasn't coming from anybody who was an Italian hand actually. It was coming from all sorts of other people. There would have been a perfectly good reason. There were all sorts of reasons for me not to get that job. I saw them perfectly well. But one of the main reasons given me was that I was a woman, and they didn't want no woman down there. And I also looked at a Pol/Mil job in Korea. Phil Habib roared with laughter. He said, "Ann, you're just not going to be allowed in any of those ginseng parties."

Q: You didn't miss a thing.

SWIFT: I could have gone to Korea. I would have pushed, and they would have given in. But I really was trying to get out of East Asia. So the jobs that I was being offered were just not really wonderful. And along came one of my good friends in Personnel, and said, "Oh, how would you like to go as Deputy in the Political Section in Tehran?" And at the point, at the point they came along I was getting a little desperate. One of the problems was it was off cycle. It was January and they hadn't assigned me up until the end of January.

Q: Normally the summer period is the assignment cycle.

SWIFT: So I was off cycle anyway, so it was a little bit difficult. Fascell was glad to have me up there as long as I wanted to be up on the Hill. I really did not want to use Fascell...I mean, obviously I had a great deal of potential influence that I could have used to get an

assignment, but I didn't want to use it--which is just my stupid pride. So I had not been telling Fascell and his guys how much trouble I was having. It was a certain amount of loyalty to the Department. So when this thing with Tehran came up I thought it was kind of fun. The Shah had been kicked out, the place was in chaos, but it looked like it was going in an interesting and reasonable direction.

Q: There's nothing a Foreign Service officer likes better than chaos.

SWIFT: Well, that's true, and it was a good job in a big world area. And I thought it would be a real winner. So I said, "Sure, I'll do it." This is Personnel coming to me, and saying, "Would you like to go?" At which point, I said "Sure, okay, I'll do it." At which point the entire system, the old boy network, leaped on me and said, "No way. Put a woman in the number two slot in the Political Section in Iran at such a time? Nonsense. It will not happen." So I said, "Now wait a minute guys. You came to me wanting me to go to Iran. This is not some place that it's real easy to get people to go to. You all came to me. Now, if you want to say to me that a woman cannot do the job because you've got a whole bunch of Muslim fanatics that I won't be able to communicate with, fine. The fanatics were not that fanatical at that moment. If you think that there's a good concrete reason that a woman can't do the job, tell me. I am no radical and I'll let this go." Well, no, they didn't want to do that, and Vic Tomseth who was there as Political Counselor, looked at it very seriously, and called me and said, "No, Ann, I don't think it's a problem. I think you can do it." Bill Sullivan, who was still out there at the time, I ran into in the corridor and he just laughed at me. He said, "Ann, it's not that you can't do the job, it's why would you ever want to come?" So I was getting different readings.

The DAS for the area was a woman, and she took up my cause and pushed it through the NEA bureau.

Q: With friends like that...

SWIFT: Yes. So I got assigned. I started off into language training and right about that time the Political Counselor position in Kuala Lumpur came open, and Bob Fritz was looking for somebody to go. It was just the right rank, right everything. And Bob said, "Why don't you go?" Well, I was too proud. I should have backed out of Iranian language training at that point and stop causing the system such trouble, and gone to KL, but I didn't. It was one of the stupidest decisions I ever made.

The next thing that happened was that the system got this wonderful idea, Henry Precht got this wonderful idea, and they found another officer. They were trying to build up the section and they found another officer, but he was one grade above me. And they were going to put him in the Political Section. You know, if they're going to put him in the Political Section...he was also a grade above the Political Counselor. He was going to have to swallow his pride, and work under the Political Counselor, Vic Tomseth, but it was going to be too much for him to swallow his pride and work under me too. And therefore, rather than me being deputy in the Political Section, I was going to be like

number three, but it was a wonderful job anyway. And that was when I lost my temper, and said...this was Henry called me in and tried to talk...

Q: Henry Precht was the desk officer.

SWIFT: Was the country director, and Henry tried to talk me into it, and I just got madder and madder. He was telling me what a wonderful job, and wonderful opportunity it was, and I got madder and madder. He called me at night, and by the next morning I was so angry you just would not believe it. At that point, I called Ben Read who was the head of management, whom I knew, and I had not talked to before. And I said, "Ben, I'm really sorry to bother you, this is absurd, but...and I put the whole thing in front of him. And I said, "Look, this is Tehran. I am not nuts, there's no particular reason for me to go to Tehran. I'm happy to back out of it, but I will not go as number three in the Political Section. I will not have this done to me. So all I'm asking you, is that either send me to the job to which I was assigned, or pull me out---but protect me." You know how the system is, you pull out of the job...if I would have pulled out they would have just creamed me. And Ben called me back later that day or the next day, and said, "Oh don't worry about it, Ann. It's all fixed." And off I went as number two.

Q: As number two.

SWIFT: ...as number two. So I got out there and I was only there two months before the embassy got taken.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived?

SWIFT: Reasonably chaotic. The embassy was quite small. It had been overrun on the 14th of February in '79. I got there in August. On the way to Tehran I went to London and stayed over with friends, and went out to the plane Monday morning. I boarded the plane which was going through Frankfurt, and was sitting beside a lady who turned out to be Iranian, who said, "What do you mean you're going to the embassy? The embassy had just been taken again." And I opened up the paper and there was the story that the embassy indeed had been taken again on the 15th of August.

What actually had happened was that the embassy had called a different set of Islamic revolutionaries in. The embassy had an out of control group that was providing security, and they had asked the government to come get this out of control group out. But at any rate I could have gotten off at Frankfurt...but no, I went on in. I mean it was crazy. We arrived at night, Vic Tomseth picked me up, drove me back in, ignoring all lights, nobody paid any attention to traffic lights. It wasn't totally lawless, but it was close to. Not lawless the way Somalia was, but it was pretty crazy. And I was there two months and just getting established. It was fun. It was turning out that Vic was right. There were certain things I couldn't do, but there were four of us in the political section.

Q: I realize we're talking about a rather short run time there. You arrived in August, but how would one go about in a situation like that? Were there people who wanted to talk and get out?

SWIFT: No, you were free to travel almost anywhere in the country. People went out every weekend to various parts of the country. John Limbert and Mike Metrinko, who at that point were fairly young officers, both spoke fluent Farsi, and both were developing very good contacts with the Muslim leadership. In terms of my contact, I was handling the Foreign Ministry which was easy because they were all very westernized, and I was starting to get out more and more into the community. This was before the days you had to wear scarfs.

Q: How were you observing events? I mean, what precipitated the takeover? From your point of view, how did you observe the events that led over to the takeover?

SWIFT: Basically you had all these factions going back and forth. It's almost impossible, and I still don't think that we understand how Iran works. Iran does not work like a western country. Even in East Asian countries you can make sense out of their politics. You have to change your head when you look at Iran. There are lots of political parties and factions, they mean absolutely nothing. It's the inner workings of shifting groups of alliances back and forth. It's all very informal. And at the time we were there there was this shadowy revolutionary council which later became a real thing. I remember having a terrible fight with Henry Precht who said the revolutionary council didn't exist. But the revolutionary council, which was basically Khomeini's way of controlling the country, was made up of some military leaders, a lot of the Ayatollahs, and some of the leadership of the government, but depending on who he trusted from moment to moment, he would move them out and it shifted.

I think that the revolutionary council was extremely nervous that the United States government was going to try to come back in, and put its own people in power. I think they were absolutely right that was exactly what we were trying to do. There were supposed to be elections, and there were elections I think finally in December, or something like that. And Khomeini's people were just bound and determined that the moderates would not get back in. The whole issue of having the Shah in the United States was an extremely emotional one for the Iranians. I don't think I really realized at the time exactly how emotional it was, but what it basically meant...they looked upon it as just one more sign that the United States government was really fully intent on restoring the Shah, or at least restoring a right wing government to Iran. They were not about to believe that we were going to let the Shah in just for medical treatment. They saw much deeper...

Q: The issue was that the Shah...where was he? In Egypt at the time, or Morocco?

SWIFT: No, I think by that time he had gone to Panama, or he was in Latin America, and he turned out to have cancer and he needed an operation which obviously could have been done in many places. But Henry Kissinger got to Carter, and to a certain extent I had

to agree with Kissinger. Kissinger's argument was that this guy was one of our major friends who had worked very, very closely with us for a thousand years, and the United States could not slap him in the face this way. That here he was very, very sick, he needed medical assistance, we had it, and on humanitarian grounds the only thing to do was let him in. Kissinger was a funny one to be talking about humanitarian grounds. And Kissinger, of course, was very tied in to the upper levels of the State Department, and the White House, and to Brzezinski. I think Brzezinski felt very much like Kissinger did. And Bruce, and various other people at the embassy, warned...Bruce Laingen who was the charge, warned the Department in no uncertain terms that they could set off real problems by letting the Shah in. And they knew.

Q: You were in the Political Section. How were you reading this?

SWIFT: There would be trouble, there was no question. But nobody quite thought there would be that much trouble. We had no conception of what Brzezinski was doing. I don't think anybody still does. But Brzezinski met with Prime Minister Bazargan and Foreign Minister Yazdi in Algeria. And I think even more than letting the Shah in...the Shah was symbolic of what the Khomeini people thought was going on. The meeting between Brzezinski and Yazdi, and Bazargan, really made the Iranians think that the United States Government was coming back, and was going to work with these moderates to overthrow the Islamic revolution. Which indeed is what we apparently were trying to do. Quite clearly the whole intent of U.S. policy at that point, which was not being run from the embassy but from the White House, was to block the Islamic leadership from control of the country. That was the idea. The problem is that it seems perfectly normal nowadays to say that we were opposing Khomeini because we now know the excesses that government went to. However, in 1979, the legitimate revolutionary government was the Islamic government, and what we were trying to do was move it more to the moderate side. And what we did, we ticked off Khomeini and the more radical Islamics. And I think the meeting in Algeria did it, even more than letting in the Shah. The Iranians used the Shah to whip up things. Letting the Shah in meant to them that we were moving towards support of the Shah, which we may have been.

Coming from a human rights background, I did not like the Shah. But I did feel the United States had supported him for ever and ever, and that we shouldn't run scared.

Q: I was in Naples at the time, and as it led up to it I didn't see what else we could do.

SWIFT: It was very simple what we could have done. It was very, very simple but we were unwilling to do it, which was what I think really set them off. We could have said to the Shah, "Okay, look, we're perfectly willing to let you in here for medical assistance. However, understand that there are certain conditions and you will have to abide by them. No political actions in the States. You will have to renounce any intentions you have of ever returning to Iran. If you want to come in as a private citizen, and not the Shah of Iran, welcome, but you have to make it absolutely clear that you're giving up your pretensions to interfere in Iranian affairs." He never would have done it and he never

would have come in. I think that it would have been possible to take that stand. We recognized the revolution, we recognized the new regime, why not say to the Shah, "If you want to come and use our facilities, welcome, but you've got to stop being political."

Q: In talking to Bruce Laingen in a series of interviews which are continuing now, and he was saying that really things were looking up.

SWIFT: Oh, hell. This is where I go bonkers.

Q: Well, he says he was wrong.

SWIFT: Yes, and I was sitting down there saying they're not looking up. You're looking at the person who was fighting with Bruce, and with the Econ Counselor. The Econ Counselor was saying things are better, we can bring American business back in, things are getting better, things are wonderful. Isn't it dandy. I was watching increasing attacks on...and you didn't know where they were coming from, you didn't have a clue where they were coming from...but increasing numbers of attacks on power stations in Tehran, more and more unrest among the Arab community down in the south. Things were just wildly unstable. I had no feel for where they were coming from. All I knew was the Bazargan government, which was the one we were supporting and trying to build, was not very powerful. These were the indications we were getting at the time we got taken, and this was the big fight I had with Henry Precht. I said to Henry, "Look, Bazargan and Yazdi are not the people that run this government. Don't look to them as the people who run the government. There is this thing called the Revolutionary Council, and the Revolutionary Council runs the government. Yazdi and Bazargan are part of this shadowy Revolutionary Council, and that is where the power is. It comes out of Khomeini; it is not Bazargan and Yazdi. If you think that Yazdi and Bazargan are the real forces of power in this government, you're wrong." And I was told I was stupid, I knew nothing of what I was talking about, I knew nothing about Iran, I had had no experience in Iran, and shut up small child, and forget it. I still get angry. This was two weeks before we got taken. Henry came out through on a trip. I was not speaking to him when he left. Quite literally I walked out of his office.

Q: Here is a problem of the new boy or the new girl on the block coming in often with a different point of view which can be more objective.

SWIFT: The people who had been stationed at the embassy through the earlier period thought things were getting better. To somebody like me coming out in August, this was the craziest, most lawless, situation I'd ever been in. There were mounting demonstrations against the embassy. I mean, you had demonstrations all the time, huge demonstrations. This place was crazy, and extremely, extremely dangerous. And for the older officers to try to minimize what was going on was insane, and that's what they were doing. And they were doing it on orders from Washington.

Q: Was it orders from Washington, or...

SWIFT: It was on orders from Washington.

Q: ...sometimes you try to put the best face on things, and all things will work out if we just...

SWIFT: You know how it works. It's not really on orders from Washington. It was just that Washington, Brzezinski, and the State Department all wanted things to get better with Iran. So did Bruce. And therefore anybody who thought that things weren't getting better, was an alarmist and crazy. I'm always an alarmist and crazy, so there you go. I did not expect what happened to happen, but I just knew that we were in a terribly dangerous situation. I did expect what happened to happen a couple of days beforehand, because I was told it was going to. It was a whole mindset of "we've got to make relations better with this government, therefore it will be better. And if we can keep saying that's its better, and if we can keep saying that things are calming down..."

There are two things driving this. One was that the White House was desperate to start up economic relations with the country again, and to work back into those damn sites up there on the border.

Q: The listening sites, electronic monitoring.

SWIFT: And secondly, the upper leadership of the embassy, and everybody in the embassy who was married wanted their wives back in. There were no families there, and you couldn't get the wives back in unless you could say that things were safe. And they were desperately trying to get the wives back in. I mean, this was running policy. It's just nutty. Can you imagine what would have happened if we'd had the wives in at the time that the embassy went down?

After the Shah got let in, it became quite clear that bad things were going to happen. And my friends at the Foreign Ministry told me that something awful was going to happen to the embassy. I took off that weekend thinking the embassy was going to be taken over that weekend. And what's always astounded me, was that it was absolutely clear to all of us that there was no way...and it was clear to me, that there was no way Bazargan and Yazdi could guarantee the safety of the embassy. No way. The only person who could guarantee the safety was Khomeini, and to a lesser extent Rafsanjani.

Q: Here you were Deputy Chief of the Political Section...

SWIFT: ...actually on and off again, acting.

Q: How about dealing with Khomeini and reporting on...

SWIFT: One of our big problems was that Khomeini, and the whole bunch of Ayatollahs, were anti-American. There were some that were easier to deal with and we were talking

to the easier ones. Bruce was dealing with Yazdi. My officers in the Political Section were dealing closely with Beheshti and his people and some of the other ones. So we had our antenna into these places, but Iran is a place of massive plots, and you could never tell from moment to moment who was plotting what where.

At any rate, it was sort of clear in those last few days that something terrible was going to happen. However, remember that all of us were of a mindset. Certainly I was at that point, that if the embassy was taken, and we were basically defenseless...these mobs would come by and any time they wanted to get us they could. But it had been taken once before, and we'd been released. And that was what we assumed was going to happen. At least that is what I assumed was going to happen. It would be one of these relatively dangerous takeovers, but then the embassy would be turned back. I mean, who had ever held an embassy hostage before? Never.

Q: The world wouldn't stand for it.

SWIFT: No, that they might take the embassy, and then we'd all get evicted, or something like that. That was the kind of assumption that I think most of us were working under. Certainly I was.

Q: Would you like to describe what happened?

SWIFT: No.

Q: Okay.

SWIFT: No, because it is all over the place and in eight billion books and I see no point in...

Q: Okay. Were you getting any information while you were being held...this is what? 444 days. Any intimation towards the end that something would come out. How did you feel about getting out? Did you feel completely...

SWIFT: Oh, I didn't think we were going to get out. I couldn't believe in the beginning that they didn't...the fact that the U.S. government didn't break relations with the Iranian government within the first couple of days of us being held, is just mind boggling to me still. I assumed that some sort of Cambodian type rescue like the Mayaguez would be run rather quickly, and was nothing but astounded that it wasn't run. Assumed we'd all be killed if they ran it but assumed that the government would have to. And assumed that our lives were really hanging in the balance every day.

Q: Were you getting any intimation towards the end...we're talking about after Reagan was elected President in November of 1980, that you might get released?

SWIFT: There were all these rumors of release, and not release that kept occurring. There was a period before the rescue attempt that they'd nearly worked out an agreement, and then the thing fell through. So we would hear these things about we might get released, and we might not. And along about November or so, or October there was one spate that it sounded like they might start releasing us again, and then that fell through. And then as we worked down toward the elections...I can remember one of the guys coming in...we didn't have a clue what was going on. One of the guys came in and said, "Do you know who's running in the elections?" And I think at that point we didn't know it was Reagan. He said Reagan was going to win, and we just roared with laughter. The last we'd heard Carter was in fine shape, and there was no way Ronald Reagan could win.

Q: Ronald Reagan was considered sort of a joke.

SWIFT: I can't remember when it was, but in one of these discussions one of these Iranian guys came in and said, "You all better hope you get out before Ronald Reagan comes in because he will take military measures, and all of us will die." And I think that was quite possible too. They just figured that when Reagan came in that they believed his rhetoric, that indeed he would take action. So, I have never been one for this great theory of Casey going off and cutting deals. I assume that Casey was talking to the Iranians but...

Q: Just to put in context in the last political campaign there was the idea that somehow the Reagan people said, "keep the hostages in place," which was terribly damaging to Carter, and probably was the main reason he lost, although there were other reasons, and then, "We can cut a deal, or something like that after I'm elected."

SWIFT: I've never believed that that was true, never. I have always thought it was perfectly creditable to think that Casey and some of the Republicans had contacts with the Iranians, especially when it looked like Reagan was going to win, that they would be talking to the Iranians and saying various things to them like, "If you don't let these people go, you're going to be in big bad shape." Because you know the Iranians timed our release to the precise moment that Reagan made his acceptance speech--which I thought was amazing.

Q: When you came out of there...a couple of questions: one, how did you feel? I mean you'd had plenty of time to brood about the State Department. What did you feel about the State Department, the Foreign Service?

SWIFT: I'd worked in East Asia, I'd been through the pull out of Saigon. I was on the task force for Mayaguez.

Q: Mayaguez being a ship that was taken over by a Cambodians and we attacked at a great loss of life on our side.

SWIFT: The loss of life was when a helicopter went down in Thailand and part of the rescue mission collapsed. I had assumed all the way along that everybody back in the

States was desperate and worried about us. I never felt abandoned. There was no way the State Department was going to abandon us. I had too many friends, and I've never quite understood how people could feel that they were abandoned. There was no question in my mind that the President had the right to make a decision that might cost me my life. That the President might take a decision to try to rescue us that might well get us killed. Or that he might take some sort of decision that would get the Iranians so mad that they would execute us, or something like that. But it never occurred to me that people weren't very worried about us. When I signed up for the Foreign Service, I signed up for whatever happened. I cannot say that I was particularly delighted with the thought that I might get shot or killed, and if you'd asked me did I want them to come to our rescue physically, I would have told you no, because I thought a good many of us would get killed. But I would never have said it's not the right of the President of the United States to make that decision. And I know he would make it realizing that indeed he might get a lot of us killed, but that is one of those awful decisions you have to make as a President. A lot of my colleagues didn't feel that way.

Q: How about when you came back? When you got back to Washington how was it?

SWIFT: It was crazy. The psychiatrists that met us in Wiesbaden...you know, all of us had varying degrees of guilt, and upset about various things. I mean, heck, I sort of felt that I lost the embassy. Bruce feels that he lost the embassy. Everybody feels they lost the embassy. And from the time that we got taken we had absolutely no ability to control our destinies. None. There was a tale around that I had refused to go out with the women because I didn't want to abandon the rest of the people at the embassy. Well, nonsense. Nobody ever asked me. I had absolutely zip control over anything that I did. So I certainly didn't feel myself a hero in any way, shape or form, just the opposite. And to come back to this outpouring of joy, and triumph, where we had been sort of glorified, was real hard to deal with. And what the psychiatrists in Wiesbaden told us is just don't go out there and try to tell everybody how you're no hero, they're not going to believe you, they're not going to deal with it. Just leave it be. It was an interesting experience because you learn to know how movie stars must feel, and a lot of very public people. There was one person out there that was me, and there was another person that was this hostage, and the two of them had very little to do with one another, and I just let it be.

Q: When you came back obviously you'd been through this and the Department I assume was trying to, "what do you want?"

SWIFT: Yes, they were wonderful.

Q: For one thing the State Department had learned, there was a time early on where if you were a hostage...I mean these are single hostages, nobody mentioned it, but they were treated like pariahs, nobody wanted to get close to them, or something like that. We've gone through a lot of soul searching on this whole hostage thing.

SWIFT: I give Sheldon Krys the most incredible high marks. Sheldon at that point was the head of NEA/EX. He was the executive director for the NEA Bureau. He pulled the damnest stunts for us. I mean, he was wonderful. When we came back in, USIA told its people...Kate was furious because Kate wanted to go abroad, Kate Koob, who was with me, and was told none of the USIS people will be assigned abroad. "You're back here for a year and we're going to watch you, to see that you're not crazy." They didn't say it in those terms, but they said nobody is going out. For the State Department they had obviously, and as I say, I put a lot of this to Sheldon because I think a lot of it was his planning, although everybody was involved. I don't think there was anybody in the State Department that wasn't just turning themselves inside out for us. I can remember Harry Barnes, who was Director General, came out on that trip to Wiesbaden and he had a list all made up of these worldwide choice assignments for all of us. Where did we want to go? What did we think would be fun? Anyplace that we wanted to go that was open, was ours. Generally speaking, at grade, or a little bit higher. I mean, really plum jobs. I was offered something in New Zealand, something in Jakarta, I was offered all of these wonderful, wonderful jobs. I was in no shape, mentally, or anything, to go off abroad again. I simply told them, "Look, you put me in that same situation again, I'm going to tell the Marines to fire. You do not want me any place in an embassy where I might be faced with a mob again, because my reactions are going to be extremely irrational. I tell you right now."

So when Harvard offered me the opportunity to come up there for a year, I leaped at it, and the Department worked it out, and it was wonderful.

Q: What were you doing at Harvard?

SWIFT: I was at the Center for International Affairs as one of their fellows for the year.

Q: What were you working on?

SWIFT: Whatever struck my fancy. I had thought about going to the Kennedy School, and then picked the International Center because it just seemed a more free-flowing program, and a little bit more fun. I was trying to get into management, and learn a lot about management techniques, computer stuff, and then a lot of international relations. I did a paper on the role of the U.S. ambassador. It was fun. It was just a nice, nice year, it was very interesting.

Q: Were you getting any reflections on how the academic world viewed our Iranian policy?

SWIFT: I tried to stay as far away from Iranian policy as far as I could. I had had it. I really didn't want to have anything to do with Iran. I really still to this day like Iranians. Iranians are fun people, they're very bright, they're just a little crazy, but very, very bright. You cannot meet an Iranian and not be involved in politics immediately. Their psyche is tied to the various permeations of Iranian politics. They are all on one side or another, and

they're all scheming. They're all deeply involved and fascinated by their country, and by how their country is governed. You can't go to a party with Iranians but that you're immediately sucked into various things Iranian. Everybody that I would have dealt with after I got back would have assumed back here that I would be pro-Shah, which I absolutely wasn't, or pro-Bazargan, which I wasn't, nor Yazdi, because I thought they were a bunch of idiots. And very, very anti-Islamic revolution, which I also wasn't. I just thought, stay away away from it.

Q: Then you came back from there, and its really a drastic change of course. You still had a certain amount of the aura of having come out, and you were recovering from this thing. So how come you ended up taking the direction you did?

SWIFT: I'd always liked consular. This is why as a senior officer I'm now absolutely determined that somehow you need to give all incoming junior officers a taste of consular, and if we can go back to the system where we gave them a taste of the other cones as well, it would be a really good idea. I like consular. I hated my last consular boss in Manila, and it caused real problems. But my feeling always was that while I wanted to be a political officer, I would be quite happy doing consular work because I liked it. So consular was always my second choice. I just decided that I'd had enough of this banging my head against the policy bricks. I was very discouraged. I'd gone through all of this business with human rights which I really believed in.

Q: You had arms sales to the Philippines.

SWIFT: Oh, arms sales to the Philippines, the Vietnam war, you name it, we'd had it. I had gone through this business of being really a committed human rights person, and had watched Carter come in saying that he was going to be all for human rights, and watched him back way off. And because when I'm committed, I'm real committed, and I can't help it. I just thought, for your own sanity it would be better to take yourself out of political stuff, especially under Ronald Reagan.

Q: Oh, yes. I forgot about Ron.

SWIFT: Yes. Remember Ronald Reagan that I came back to? I left with a fairly liberal Democratic government, and I come back with Ronald Reagan. I mean, it was just absolutely unbelievable. So I think that no matter who had been there, because I really thought that Carter had...Carter certainly with Iran had betrayed everything he ever said about human rights. But interestingly enough, I pushed Bruce into a thing with human rights that really backlashed on the embassy badly because I made Bruce go do a demarche. The Iranian government took...I can't remember whether it took, or was going to take...a 92-year-old former general, who was in a wheelchair, up to the top of one of these buildings and executed him. It was just scandalously awful. This was just as we were trying to work our way back in to dealing directly with Khomeini. Bruce was trying to get an appointment with Khomeini, and I said, "This is appalling, we cannot stand by and let this go unnoticed." And I made Bruce go off and make a protest, and it drove the

country bonkers. I've never really felt guilty about that, but I do realize that it was a stupid move.

At any rate, after Iran I thought seriously about getting out of the Foreign Service, but again, with the new Foreign Service system I figured I had six years to go before I got kicked out. I figured there was no way of making it into the senior Foreign Service, I will let them kick me out, and I'll be gone, wonderful. I was thinking of getting out and doing a total career change. And also you come back out of an experience like that really wanting to make a difference with people. The whole political nonsense of trying to shape foreign policy...I really think that there is a foreign policy that the U.S. government follows...its gotten better in the last years, but its not one that I was really joyous with. We go a very center line policy. It doesn't matter whether you've got a liberal president in, or a conservative one, we come right down that center line, and I'm not a center line person.

So I figured it was better to get out of foreign policy, and on the other side of it I think all of us coming out of Iran...when you go through an experience like that you really comes to terms with what life means, and your mortality and everything else...you have a real desire to do something, and do something for people. Not do something in big huge world policy terms which had always been the...

Q: Oh, yes sure.

SWIFT: I was your typical Foreign Service officer, driven, charging, and it makes you stand back and look at what is real in the world. I wanted to help people. I wanted to do something that was meaningful for people. Where can you do something for people? And where you can do something for people is in consular. So my first choice when I came out, I knew I wanted to redirect myself. My first choice was to go into consular, my second choice was to do something in admin. I wasn't real keen on admin but if I couldn't get into consular I was going to do admin.

So, I made the mistake of going in and talking to Diego.

Q: This is Diego Asencio who at that time was in charge of Consular Affairs.

SWIFT: Who himself had been a hostage in Bogota.

Q: For someone like Diego an odd type of assignment in charge of Consular Affairs.

SWIFT: Well, Diego sat me down and said, "What a wonderful idea it was that I was going to come into Consular, because as a political officer I could do just fine in Consular, and I could get all these wonderful Consul General assignments out there which were basically political, and I could further my career, and wasn't it going to be wonderful." I had been trying to explain to Diego how I was attempting to change my lifestyle, and Diego wasn't hearing it. I didn't want to come into Consular because I

wanted to...as a career move, I wanted to come into Consular because it seemed to me consular officers work with people, and that I could do something in consular that was close to going out and working in VISTA or something.

Q: VISTA being a public service type volunteer group for the United States.

SWIFT: So that was when I first came back. I had one conversation with Diego, and I knew I was going up to Harvard. I was looking for a six month assignment that would get me started in consular or something. But I got invited to go up and work in MMO for six months. So I went up to MMO. Okay, now I was looking at admin.

Q: This was after you came out of Harvard.

SWIFT: This was before I went to Harvard. I had from January to September basically. I worked in MMO, and working in MMO was something else too. I suddenly realized how totally irrational the administration of the State Department is. And this was in a day that MMO had a certain amount of power. Sharon Wilkinson was doing the consular beat, and her head was going under because there was so much going on in consular at that point. So I ended up doing a variety of things but one of them was helping Sharon on the consular side, and by helping Sharon on the consular side I got to know Ron Somerville of the CA Executive Bureau. So when I went up to Harvard, I was able to give Ron a call and say, "Ron, look, I really am serious about doing consular. Can you help me find a job?" I knew it had to be in the State Department because I knew I couldn't go out as consul immediately. I wanted to come in and work in consular stuff, and the job as Carmen's deputy was open--Carmen DiPlacido, in Citizen Consular Services. Ron said, "Come on down. We'll give you that if its okay with Carmen." And Carmen, big-hearted fool that he was, took me on not at all knowing what he was getting. The assumption was, as you said, for all that I think the State Department acted just wonderfully towards us when we came back as hostages. I mean they really treated us like real people, and they really treated us like people who weren't nutty. And basically we weren't nutty. We were a little shook up, but we weren't nutty. And, of course, Carmen didn't have a clue what he was getting, not the first idea. All he knew was he was getting a former hostage as his deputy, and not a consular officer to boot.

So I went in and started working for Carmen. We really got along very well and it was fun work. And then the deputy of the emergency center to Jim Ward, the director was unfilled.

Q: He was what?

SWIFT: Jim Ward was head of the emergency center in OCS, Overseas Citizen Services, and his deputy slot was open. It was the same job that I was holding in Carmen's office up in the emergency center. And Jim was getting paneled to go someplace so it was clear to everybody that there was going to be no deputy, and no head of the Emergency Center. So

I was asked to go up there and sort of understudy with Jim, and run the thing while they went and found a head for the Emergency Center. I ended up doing that for almost a year.

Q: This was 1982?

SWIFT: Yes, 1982.

Q: How did the Emergency Center operate? And what were you doing?

SWIFT: It's very similar to what it was doing today except that when Dave Hobbs came in he reoriented it to a regional basis away from what they had at that point which was a Welfare, Whereabouts Division, Arrest Division, and a Death Division. David came in and I disagreed with him when he first did it, but I think he was absolutely right. He split EMR up on a regional basis so that everybody handled everything, and you didn't have one poor person doing deaths all the time.

Q: I've read about it. Somebody did nothing but tell people their relatives had died.

SWIFT: Kerry Homes. It gets a little heavy after a while. The plus on it is that you get people who are really good at doing it. It cuts back on the mistakes that you could make in dealing with something this tricky. But on the other side of it...I mean poor Kerry.

Q: What was the genesis of this center?

SWIFT: Jim Ward started the emergency center. There always was a division in CA that handled problems concerning Americans abroad, but I think when they split the passport office up they decided that they would form an actual unit that was set up to deal specifically with emergencies, and cut off the slower type work, or the less time sensitive work, and put it in another office and make one unit which was specifically an emergency unit that would specialize in handling the fast rising emergencies that you get abroad, and Jim set it up. The idea was to make it a very flexible outfit, give it good equipment, and give it all sorts of authorities so that it was able to respond to Americans in crisis. Authorities like the trust funds so that you can ship money, repatriation loans so you can bring people back when they're in dire trouble.

Q: What was your impression, you were there a year?

SWIFT: A superb outfit. Really, really good. A lot of very dedicated people who really knew what they were doing, who would work incredible hours if there was a real emergency going on. It was an exciting fun job. I was offered it on a permanent basis. I ran it for nine months or something like that, and then Diego offered it to me on a permanent basis. I turned it down and went back and ran Carmen's office while he went off to the War College. For two reasons: one, I was still a political officer, and the head of the Emergency Center position is the premier CA position at that level in Washington, and there were an awful lot of people who felt I was carpetbagging. And since I was

really very, very serious...by that time I was very serious because I really liked it. I suddenly found that this was what I wanted to do. I mean this was fun. I enjoy doing consular work. I enjoyed, and was intellectually stimulated by doing political work but I love consular work. It's just fun. And I realized that I'd made the right decision, that I really liked what I was doing, that this was going to be a real career choice, and I didn't want to tick off everybody in consular by taking what they thought was the best job. As a matter of fact, I had already accepted it, I said, sure I would do it. I went to Ron and said, "Ron, I can't do it. You're going to need somebody to run Carmen's shop while he's away, let me run Carmen's shop. It's a perfect thing, I need to know that work. I only had a taste of it to start off, it's a fun job, I'd love to do it, and choose somebody else for the Emergency Center job."

Q: What was the job?

SWIFT: Carmen's job? Or the CCS job? That is a whole variety of things. At that point one of the biggest parts of that job was the determination on loss of citizenship, determining whether an American who was living abroad had taken an action to lose his American citizenship, or not. It involved a lot of legal work, it involved some court cases and things of that sort. We did some child custody work at that point, trying to find children that had been taken abroad. We did a lot of adoption work trying to work out the legal framework for Americans going abroad to adopt so that they didn't get tied up in foreign legal systems, and have tragic experiences.

Q: The taking away of citizenship has become...at least my impression, I've been away from it, but even during the '70s I almost had the feeling when I came into the Foreign Service I learned all these exquisite laws about when anything happened, you had long charts, and all of that kind of died. I had the feeling you can't lose your citizenship.

SWIFT: The problem was that you had a couple of Supreme Court cases starting in the late '60s...Afroyim and then Terrassis in the early '80s where the Supreme Court basically said unless an American citizen wants to give up their citizenship, there is very little way that the U.S. Government can take away his citizenship. It's very, very difficult to prove against a U.S. citizen saying that they really don't want U.S. citizenship. It's very hard to prove that they have lost their citizenship even though the Congress had passed a law that said here are the acts that will show that somebody intends to lose their citizenship. The problem was, and I came to this absolutely dead cold, and had no idea what was going on, that it was all good and fine that the Supreme Court was making these decisions, but there was an entire raft of people in CA who had worked under the old system for a thousand years, and felt that the Supreme Court was wrong.

Q: I know exactly what you mean, and its always more fun to enforce something...

SWIFT: It's a lot easier to enforce.

Q: ...and it gives you a feeling of power. I mean there are all sorts of things.

----Today is January 22nd, 1993 and we'll continue this interview with Ann Swift.

Q: Ann, we're moving now to getting back overseas. We had just finished your time when you were dealing with American citizenship affairs, and now you're going overseas in 1984. Can you tell us something about what assignment you had, and what you were going to be doing?

SWIFT: It was real interesting because I had just, of course, switched into consular. I was talking yesterday to a friend of mine about the cone system. I was still at that point a politically coned officer.

Q: Could you explain what a cone is? This is one of our obscure terms.

SWIFT: Okay. In 1971 or '70 the Foreign Service went to a system where each officer was given a functional responsibility, either political, economic, consular or admin. This was done in particular to try and alleviate what seemed at that point as the inequalities between jobs in the Service. Consular and administrative officers were looked down on by econ and political officers and the idea was to develop very strong professionalism in the consular and admin ranks, and build up their status. As a political officer in the '70s, I thought the cone system was a craziest thing I ever saw. And it was very rigidly held to. If you were a political officer it was very hard to become anything else. If you were a consular officer, it was very hard to become a political officer, and I always thought that was wrong, and still do. Over the years, however, I have changed my mind on the whole system, and really think that it did a very good job of giving consular officers a real feeling of self respect and strength within the Service, and gaining respect for them from the rest of the Service.

At any rate, at the point that I was going to Athens, I was coming back into consular work. I was a political officer. All of my political officer friends thought that, number one, I was crazy to be going into consular, and number two, it would be absolutely easy for me to get into consular. I'm here to tell you it was not easy to get into consular because the consular officers didn't want political officers coming into their cone.

Q: Particularly you were high ranked at this point.

SWIFT: Yes, I was high ranked. At that point I was an FSO-1, just below the senior Foreign Service, and a fairly new one. I was coming in at a high rank, and consular was not happy with this so when I tried to go abroad it then became very difficult, as usual, to get an assignment because this time I was a political officer trying to go out as a consular officer. Everybody would have been quite happy for me to go out doing American citizen services some place, but I didn't want to go out doing American citizen services. I felt I knew American citizen services, after two years working in it, and I wanted to go out doing visa work. They really didn't want to let me go out doing visa work because they felt I didn't have the knowledge of visa work which to a certain extent was true because I

hadn't done it for about 15 years. On the other hand, when I got out to the field and started talking to various consular officers, I discovered that many consular officers would go for 10 or 15 years without ever touching a visa, and then would suddenly become a visa officer. But it was so clear with me in my situation that people were very, very hesitant. So, as I was looking for jobs I was getting a great deal of static, and the job I went to in Athens was deputy in the consular section which made me Deputy Consul General, and head of the visa section. It was a job that was at the grade that I was at, and it was under a very experienced Consul General who was very, very good on visa work.

Q: Who was that?

SWIFT: Dick Williams. So they really couldn't stop me, although in the end I had to go to Joan Clark. I finally just gave up and went to Joan Clark and said, "Joan,...

Q: She was the Director General of the Foreign Service then?

SWIFT: No, she was Assistant Secretary of Consular Affairs, and I went to her and said, "Look, I'm trying to get a job. I'm having a terrible hard time getting one. I need your support." And her first reaction, which was a common reaction for anybody in her position, was, "You can't have a job that is out of grade, Ann. It's just too difficult at this point." And I said, "Joan, the job I'm going for is not out of grade, it's at grade, and I think I'm qualified for it, and I think I can do it." And at that point I got the job. It was unfortunately working the system the way the system works.

Q: I know the job well that you went to because I was Consul General in Athens about ten years before, and I was not a visa expert, and luckily I had a very good visa expert who was the number two. One or the other probably should be.

SWIFT: Dick Williams was really, really good at it and he taught me a great deal. He taught me a lot about history. He's a lawyer himself, but basically what he did was to teach me to trust the FAMs...

Q: FAM being the...

SWIFT: The Foreign Affairs Manual, the instructional material that we have for the procedures for issuing visas. I went into Dick's office one day not having looked something up in the FAM first. He reached over behind him, pulled the FAM out, and started looking through it. And I thought, "I could have done that." The next time I went into him I already had all the FAM citations and as he whirled around to look at the FAM, I said, "You're going to look up such and such, and this is what you're going to find, but I'm still confused." And then I felt much better. He taught me to do that, and it was a real help.

I went out as head of the visa section--it was a small to medium sized visa section. I took the ConGen Rosslyn visa course before I went out. A lot of things had changed in visa

law since I had done visas in the '60s, and that course at the Foreign Service Institute runs is absolutely superb. I found when I got out to post that actually my knowledge of visa law was much more current, and much more correct, than some of my colleagues in the section, and certainly the FSNs who had not kept their knowledge up to date. So I found it was very lucky I had taken the course because I came in and everybody was looking at me, here's somebody who obviously doesn't know a thing about consular work. My authority was constantly challenged in my first few months by everybody. They just took me on because they were sure that I didn't know what I was talking about. And having taken the FSI course, I was very easily able to quickly show them that they were wrong when they challenged me which was extremely helpful in gaining the respect of everybody.

Q: This project that we're working on now, although we've been doing career interview, it is focused on the movement of people, i.e., the visa function. Trying to get a feel for the people who were dealing in visas, these are mid-ranking, low-ranking government officials who are making life and death decisions. What was your impression on how the visa function...it changes, but there is a sort of bureaucratic inertia within the system. I mean somebody learns the visa law back in their day, and even though it may change, there's a certain amount of obstinacy in changing with the law. Did you find this?

SWIFT: I think I probably found that more on the American citizen services side where the changes in the law, it was so evident that the Supreme Court had made decisions which the bureaucracy was refusing to carry out with any enthusiasm at all. On the visa side, by the time I got there, the differences in visa law from the early '60s to the early '80s were more changes in categories and details, and in numbers of people we were letting in rather than in attitudes toward how you do visa interviews, and that sort of thing. There was very little change that I could see from my days in Manila, to my days in Athens. The approach toward people who were coming in to get visas was very much the same.

Q: Could you describe a bit about what was the visa situation in Athens? We're talking between '84 and '86.

SWIFT: Athens was a very easy post for visa in terms of visa issuance. The Greeks generally speaking qualified for visas. We had a pretty low refusal rate. I think we ran between 8 to 12 percent refusals which is not very high. I think our refusal rate on Greeks was something like 6 to 8 percent, but then when you threw in the foreigners, which we turned down at a much higher rate--Indians, Iranians--then our rate went up a bit. So your basic assumption when you were dealing with a Greek was that the Greek was qualified to go to the United States. It made it a much more positive type of visa function than in the Philippines or in Jamaica where your attitude toward a lot of the people is that they probably are not going to qualify. It was a very pleasant place to work. When you're basically helping people to move back and forth between the United States and Greece, it's a much more positive and much more pleasant way to work than having an attitude that you're going to keep people out.

Q: How did you find the visa officers there?

SWIFT: I didn't have that many visa officers, let's start saying that. My deputy was an experienced visa officer, she had been in the business a long time. Besides that, then we had young, usually first tour officers, that were rotating through on the visa line, and they didn't have a clue what they were doing. Just like me, they'd gone through the ConGen Rosslyn course, and they were sort of making up their interviewing style as they went along. They were good. I had one junior officer that was a bit of a problem.

Q: Without getting into the person, how was he a bit of a problem?

SWIFT: One of the major problems with being a visa officer is, and this is something that we were working in the last couple of years on, is trying to make sure that your visa officers understand that their job is to issue visas. That their job is not to turn everybody down. That their job is to issue visas as pleasantly as possible, and if you're going to turn somebody down, you're going to do that as pleasantly as possible even though the person is lying to you. And you also have to make sure that the visa officer does not abuse his authority. He has absolute complete authority over issuance of visas. And for some of the young officers, this is very hard to deal with. They are highly educated. They consider themselves the cream of the crop because they've passed the Foreign Service, and everything they've been told right up to the time they get on the visa line, is that they're simply superb and wonderful. Then they get on the visa line where their authority is absolute and its hard for that power not to go to their head. So you have to really watch it. And this officer that I'm thinking of, the power went to his head. He was nice, but peculiar on the visa line. He wasn't abrasive or anything, but you could see that he was really interested in the power. With most junior officers the problem is that they will become very law enforcement minded because this is the one part of issuing visas that they can really get their teeth into. Saying yes to people over and over again is very nice, but it doesn't give you the feeling that you have enforced the regulations. But if you can find people cheating on you, then it really gives you something to do. You have to keep a balance in all of this. It's hard to do. It's a hard job for young officers coming in to do because they all feel that their intellectual talents are not fully being used, which makes them mad. They feel its a drudge job which is difficult and makes them dead tired at the end of the day, so they don't really love it. Basically speaking, it's not a joyous job to handle.

Q: How about the Greek staff?

SWIFT: The Greek staff had basically exactly the same problems as the junior officers multiplied. Greeks love authority, and Greeks love to be bossy, and they'll boss their officers around if they can possibly get away with it. They also like to use their authority in dealing with the public, with American, Greek, and foreign. So you had to run the Greek staff with the same firmness that you ran the American staff, because if you weren't careful you would go out on the line and find your Greek staff being totally impolite to

the customers as well. We had one very bright guy who we moved up while I was there into a position of authority, and he really liked his authority. And he also had a temper and used to lose his temper on the line, and I told him, "Look, it is totally unacceptable as far as I'm concerned to lose your temper on the line. If you start getting so mad with somebody..." and the Greeks themselves were very, very confrontational on the line. If you tried to turn them down, or if you tried to tell them that they needed another piece of paper, they would argue with you, and they would fight with you, and the tempers would go up and the voices would go up, and there would be a big screaming match because that is the way they handle things in their society. But this was the American embassy, and this was not what you did at the American embassy. So I told this one guy in particular, I said, "Now look, if you start losing your temper, you can lose your temper anywhere you want except on the line. You walk away from the line,"...we had great huge plate glass windows behind us..."if you want to go back and break one of those plate glass windows, fine with me. If you want to go back and kick the door, or kick one of the safes, fine with me, just do it out of sight. But you will not lose your temper on the line." So every now and then I would see him stalk off the line, back into a corner someplace, mumbling to himself, and then walk back. We turned it into a joke.

Q: This, of course, is one of the things of trying to adapt what we would like to have as the American image. I think probably we work at it harder than a lot of organizations do to try to present a benevolent, but firm image of the United States despite other cultures.

SWIFT: Yes, and it's very difficult to do because in Athens the pressures rarely got horrendous unless we got short staffed and that sort of thing, but generally speaking the visa lines were quite manageable. When you put officers under a great deal of pressure, that's when they start reacting in a very bureaucratic or difficult way. Pressures weren't that high but at the same time it's very, very hard to maintain your cool all the time. And all you have to do is lose it once or twice, and if there's some American sitting around that sees you do it, and he's got a friend back in the States who happens to be a Senator, you're in major troubles.

Q: Although you did not have a high refusal rate, did you have much of a problem with representation from Congress on behalf of people?

SWIFT: Oh, sure. We spent a great deal of our time answering Congressional letters, and inquiries, because anybody you turned down unfailingly, especially on the immigrant visa side, would go to their Congressman. That was the immediate path to try to straighten out whatever problem there was, was to go to their Congressman. You often weren't turning down the person, you were often trying to clarify a point of what their finances were, what their birth documentation was, something like that. And the minute you said, "No, you have to go back and get X, Y & Z, you immediately got a Congressional, or a call from the Congressman. We spent a lot of time answering that sort of stuff.

Q: How did you find this? You answered it, but did it serve a purpose? Or was it just a duty to do?

SWIFT: Oh, no. I think it serves a real purpose. It's a terrible nuisance, but it serves the purpose of educating the people back in the States to what the law is. Usually the Congressional staffs are very nice. Every now and then they'll scream at you, but generally speaking they're very nice. I found dealing with the staffs on the telephones not a problem. I thought that was usually easier, and you could usually work problems out. For somebody to try and call into the office straight, when you've got a fairly high visa load, you can't have every relative back in the States calling in. Therefore you tend to either put them on to telephone answering machines, or something like that. You don't spend a great deal of time with the people themselves, and its almost better for them to call the staffs, and the staffs to come to you because you do pay attention to them. It does make you very conscious of being very careful in your decisions, because if you know over the top of your head is going to be a Congressman, you're careful.

What I never have liked, is the letter writing stuff. You don't get that many telephone calls because when you're that far away it's expensive to call, and the Congressman's office doesn't like calling because it's expensive for them, and the constituents themselves don't like calling because its expensive. So what you tend to get is a lot of mail. And in the days of computers you know perfectly well that the Congressman's office has just whipped off a standard thing to you. Often its just a little buck slip that says, "What's going on in this case?" And then you have all the paper that the constituent sent them. I found that very, very frustrating because the State Department, unlike most other government agencies, is not permitted to go back with a buck slip that says, "The answer to your question is checked below," the way the IRS does. We have to write a formal reply back that is signed by either the visa officer, or the Consul General, or the head of the visa section, and it has to be done up on letterhead. It takes an inordinate amount of time, and its stupid. It's really stupid. What you want to do is get back to the Congressman a good clear answer, and a good clear answer is often something which is right straight out of the law. You can write a very short paragraph to say what the particular problem is in a case, and then the rest of it is basically quoting the laws. Most of these cases fall into very standard patterns. And its just infuriating to have to do all of this paper work. Really stupid. At every post I've been at I've tried to simplify it as far as we could within the boundaries we were permitted. But I have yet to get anybody to agree that we can just send a buck slip back. I tried to do that in my last job and was told absolutely not. The Congressman's office demands a fully written letter, even when they're sending you a buck slip.

Q: What was your impression of Greek immigration in this period of the '80s, to the United States? The kind of people who were going, where they were going?

SWIFT: Greek immigration, I think, was fairly slow to the United States. Of course, the whole thing is governed pretty much by what family you have over there, and who can petition for who. The legal limit on immigration from any one country is about 20,000, and at the time I was there we were only issuing about 2,000 visas from Greece which I felt was very, very low. There were a lot of Greeks that would have liked to go and work

in the States but had no relatives that they could claim to go with, so they went illegally which was too bad but they did. They usually came back. What the Greeks liked to do, this was a period in the '80s of fairly...and still is I think in Greece, Greece was fairly prosperous, even out in the countryside people were not in bad shape, and the Greeks basically like Greece. Especially in the summertime, the country is just wonderful. So basically what the young Greeks liked to do was go over to the States and work for a year, a couple of years, and come back. What they'd really like to do is go over to the States part of the year and then come back and work in Greece the rest of the year. Our regulations just don't allow that so this was always a bit of a problem. Our refusal rate was generally higher for young Greek people between about 18 and 27. That was our highest refusal rate probably because we knew that these youngsters were going over to work in their uncle's or their cousin's restaurant or construction company, or whatever it was. Greeks are very prosperous, they're very industrious. They certainly weren't going on welfare, you knew that, but you also knew that they had this entire network of families that the minute they got there, they just vanished.

Q: Did you have any problems with the Greek seamen, for example?

SWIFT: Oh, heavens yes. Although not, I think, as much as one used to have in the earlier periods. Again, I think, because Greece was reasonably prosperous. Greeks seamen did jump ship, and you knew that because a lot of the immigrants coming back in to pick up their immigrant visas had originally gotten to the States by jumping ship. Our real problem with seamen though was foreign seamen. If a Greek registry ship came in, and their entire crew list was Greek seamen which was very unusual because most of the Greek ships the officers would be Greek, and the crewmen would be Indians, Pakistanis, Somalis, or whatever, and that was the category that we had major problems with. Those were the guys that we were never sure if the person was indeed a seamen. You usually did give them crew visas because they usually wouldn't jump ship. But often these ships would put hands on board that were basically just working their fare until they could get within sight of the States, and then disappear. Particularly the Indians in Athens had very strong organizations that were moving Indians to the States by using the cruise lines, and it was infuriating, it was very hard to catch. It was very hard to get INS to do anything about it. And there was a lot of fraud. They would change passports, fake identification. We tried our best to stop it, but it was very difficult. They'd invent whole cruise companies. They were usually after the kind of visa that would be to go join a ship. So you'd get these guys coming in and saying, "I just want to fly to New York to join my ship." And you'd check it out and you would find that the shipping company didn't exist, and the ship didn't exist. But they had all the documentation, and it was just perfect.

Q: While we've got you in Greece, and as an ex-political officer, what was the political situation there?

SWIFT: Papandreou was there so it was a liberal left government. The November 17 terrorist movement was active.

Q: They killed a number of Americans.

SWIFT: They'd killed several Americans and a lot of Greek officials. They were active. The Arab-Palestinian groups were also active. They were usually not targeting Americans, they were targeting other Arabs. But other than that the political scene was pretty stable. About three or four years after I left, Greece had a peaceful turnover to the conservatives. We had good relations with Greeks from all parts of the spectrum, and there wasn't any real unrest. This was a big modern country, and it was chugging along.

Q: Who was the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission, and what sort of interest did they show in consular affairs?

SWIFT: Monty Stearns was our Ambassador, and I am totally blanking on our deputy. At any rate Stearns was our Ambassador. Stearns had had long experience with Greece, and it was an interesting sort of situation. We had Stearns and then Ambassador Bob Keeley. Keeley had actually helped to save Papandreou's life back in the early '70s, and it was very interesting to watch both of these guys work. Both of them were very liberal.

Q: The coup was on April 22th, 1967.

SWIFT: They got him out of jail, got him out of the country. With both of these ambassadors being very friendly toward Papandreou, they thought that Papandreou would be more friendly toward us, which is a total fallacy. And it was very interesting to watch both of them deal with this. Stearns wasn't particularly popular at the Embassy because there was a very strong feeling that he was sitting on reporting that was critical of Papandreou. And I think that was probably true, and I think it was probably being done for very good reasons. Namely, that you had a very conservative American government with Ronald Reagan in power. And you had Papandreou who was a leftist, and Stearns wanted to continue an even relationship with Greece, and wanted Reagan not to over react against this leftist. So I think that was a great deal of what was going on there.

Q: This is a very important factor. Reporting is maybe objective, but you have to realize it goes back to Washington and gets magnified, blown up, and all of a sudden its counterproductive. Its like reporting on corruption in some places. Yes, its there, but so what?

SWIFT: Of course, what it does, especially the younger people in an embassy, it does terrible things to morale. So that was a problem. We then got Keeley in who supposedly was going to loosen embassy reporting. I'm not sure he did. And, of course, what happened to Keeley was that he came in thinking that he would have this wonderfully cooperative relationship with Papandreou, and Papandreou had no intention of having a wonderfully cooperative relationship.

Q: Papandreou had made his name although he had been an American citizen, served in the American Navy and he had made his name by being anti-American. That's where his strength came from, so friendship be damned.

SWIFT: That's right. So Keeley found himself in a funny position.

Q: Was there any attention paid to the consular section?

SWIFT: Very little. I mean both of them had the typical ambassadorial view, as long as there isn't a problem, keep it away from me, which is fine to a certain extent. Except that you would wish that they would come down and visit, and march through, and at least know where the thing was. Our DCM, I think, literally didn't know how to get into the consular section. He had never been there.

Q: Henry Tasca was my ambassador, and the one time he came down was after a bomb went off outside, blew the windows, and killed the two people who tried to set the bomb off. But that brought him down to walk through the consular section. That's what it took to get him down there.

SWIFT: The thing about Monty Stearns was, he was at once very aloof, and very ambassadorial, but also very attentive to his people. He had a wonderful memory, he knew everybody by name. He would always greet you when you were walking down the corridor when you ran into him, and he knew the people in the consular section from his previous periods. So people felt he was approachable, even though he was olympian. Stearns was seen as olympian sitting up there making his decisions in the atmosphere, but he gave the embassy the feeling that he cared for them.

Keeley who was supposed to come in and be very much more of an involved type of an ambassador, really wasn't that good at dealing with the embassy itself. He tried, but he wasn't that good at it. He somehow didn't have that reach-out touch. It was interesting to see because he didn't have the same touch that Monty Stearns had had.

Q: How did you feel? You were this sort of retread carpetbagger, or whatever you want to call it, into visa. How did you feel about it. In a way it was a good place to learn, but wasn't what you'd call a challenging post.

SWIFT: It was fine for me. It was a challenging post because it was very challenging on the American services side. And whenever Dick Williams wasn't there I, of course, had that bag so it was a very good place to learn. Also, during the period that I was there, was just after when the Marine barracks had been blown up in Beirut, and we were under heavy terrorist threat. As a matter of fact one of our consular officers got sent home because he was directly threatened.

Q: What was he threatened about?

SWIFT: He was a junior officer, and was rotating through the sections. He'd been working upstairs in the political section and came down to work in the consular section. The Iranians sort of apparently identified him, because of the pattern of his work, as maybe being CIA or something like that. We couldn't tell whether they were mad at him because he had turned down some Iranian visas, or whether it was actually one of these Iranian terrorist groups, which were targeting our embassy. At that period they were targeting embassies throughout the area in order to bomb them again. At one point we had what we figured were revolutionary guards come in and check out the consular section.

Q: The Iranian revolutionary government.

SWIFT: It was a period of high tension. It was one where we were fighting to get better protection for the consular section, and demanding stronger security measures at the front gates and that sort of thing because what the Iranians were doing, we understood from our intelligence, was working with suicide attacks--strapping explosives onto their bodies, and walking in and blowing themselves up. That was the idea. It was a period of a lot of tension for all of us. I found it reasonably amusing having been a political officer, and having done political work before, and knowing exactly what political work was made up of, to find there was a very distinct, as I had known there would be, we-you attitude from the upper floors of the embassy to those of us who worked down in the consular section. A slight condescension, one would say. The political section did look down on us, made it quite clear, although a lot of the people in the political section were close friends. There was no problem, but there were individuals up there who really thought it was nice that the consular section is down there. The econ section was much more relaxed. It wasn't bad.

Q: You were beginning to get at least the feel for the culture. What sort of protection and welfare problems were there?

SWIFT: You name it, we had it. You had a huge American community that lived in Greece. One of our normal problems was that Americans in order to get cars into the country...I've forgotten exactly how it worked, but they could only bring one car in a period of time, and the Greeks were trying to use American passports to control the entry and exit of cars, and sale of cars.

Q: They'd lose their passports.

SWIFT: So they lost their passports all the time, with every possible excuse. "I put my passport through the washing machine." It was just endless. We, of course, also had a huge tourist community, all of whom liked to ride motor scooters, and were forever killing themselves. We had a smaller group of American hippies that would come and go out to the back islands and would not understand that the Greeks had an extremely tight anti-narcotics laws, and that smoking marijuana would get you into jail for several years, and they would get caught and thrown into jail.

Q: Where were they going to jail? Was it centralized, or were they in various jails.

SWIFT: They were put in various jails. I think if they ended up getting a jail sentence they would be put back into one of the big jails. They would usually be caught out on the islands and would be tried out on the islands. So you'd have to go out to the islands. It was a terrible thing to go out to the islands. Just dreadful.

Q: That's how I got to see Crete, Corfu. There are a good number of islands down there.

SWIFT: The more isolated, the better. It was good fun.

Q: As long as you didn't get trapped there.

SWIFT: Yes, get trapped there and couldn't get back. Just dreadful.

Q: How did you find the Greek authorities as far as trying to do the usual consular thing, and saying let our poor guy or girl go, and get them out of the country?

SWIFT: We found them extremely cooperative. There was only one problem that we ever had with them. Basically speaking, the Greeks were very, very smart. They knew that tourism was a major factor in their economy, and therefore they wanted to make tourism as safe, and as pleasant as possible for Americans. So in everything from their health services, Greek hospitals were not up to U.S. standards although they weren't horrendous, but they had very good rescue capability. They had helicopters that they would fly out to the islands. They had evacuation techniques, because they did have a lot of serious injuries with their...

Q: They did not have it when I was there, so this is a development.

SWIFT: They would fly helicopters and pick people up and bring them back to the big emergency hospital. They had a big trauma center. So they had that very well organized. They had tourist police type thing, very well organized. They would always notify us the minute anybody got into trouble. If it was just a bunch of kids being stupid, we could usually talk them out of it, with a fine or something. We had one case where some teenagers...they were university kids, they were probably about 20...hauled down a Greek flag. Actually they were meaning to make off with it. This was one night, and they wanted a souvenir, and they got caught at it, and this is a very serious offense in Greece, and that really caused us a great deal of trouble. We finally got them off, but it was touch and go. And then we had some very serious problems with some Christian sects trying to proselytize.

Q: Item one in the Greek constitution is "thou shalt not proselytize. Orthodoxy is the state religion."

SWIFT: And its very interesting in a country as modern as Greece how you suddenly find when you get into religious things that the modernity vanishes. Its very startling for Americans to deal with, so when we had a couple of young American Evangelists hurled into jail, and they looked like they were facing sort of a 20 year jail sentence, this became a major issue between Greece and the United States. It was very touchy. But generally speaking in anything that involved police work, the Greeks were extremely helpful.

Q: One last thing on this. You had the Papandreou government in which he based his whole political thing on being both not a leftist, but also sticking it to the United States in a lot of things. Did that translate itself into anti-Americanism, or was that on the political level, and the people didn't respond?

SWIFT: It was really on the political level. There was very, very little anti-Americanism that I felt certainly while we were there. Even with the bases. We were having base negotiations, and that sort of stuff, and every now and then you'd get a demonstration against the embassy, or against something. We had one big demonstration against the embassy, but I think it was on the anniversary of the kids getting killed down at the university.

Q: November 17, 1973.

SWIFT: Yes, from whence your terrorist movement started, and we had a couple of demonstrations over that. But basically, you didn't feel a strong anti-American feeling at all during the period I was there. It just was not a factor.

Q: Well, then having gone through this solid introduction to running this, you went to the big time.

SWIFT: I went to big time. I went to big time because I lucked out. I think I got promoted on the basis of my emergency center work, for which I had gotten all sorts of commendations, which was nice. And the fact that I had then done well running the visa section in Athens. I got a good report out of that which meant to the people who looked at my file, that not only had I done well in something that was more familiar to me, but I had also made the transfer over into consular stuff. So I got promoted to OC, Senior Foreign Service, which meant that there were two of us at that level in Athens at a time that there was a great push on to drop the level of all of the Consul Generals around the world, and particularly in Europe. So Athens was a target for reducing the level of the Consul General back to O-1, to the top grade below Senior Foreign Service. So there was Dick Williams, who was a senior OC officer, there was me who was a new OC officer, and the two of us in jobs that were undergraded for what we were doing. When Personnel started looking around for somebody--first Haiti, and then for Jamaica--they knew that there were the two of us there. Dick and I had called back and said, "Look, this is really silly to have two officers at this level." We had said, "If you've got something that you want filled, just ask us about it. The two of us will sit here because we're not exactly unhappy, but if there's something good you might ask us."

So basically what happened was they started asking Dick first, would he like to go here, and would he like to go to there? And if Dick said no, then I got the next shot at it, which was how I got Jamaica. Basically, Jamaica is known as a very tough post. It's one of our major visa issuance posts. It's a country that has high fraud, high corruption, active narcotics trade, and high crime, and is just known as a very tough consular post.

Q: I was a Personnel officer back in the '60s and I recall having to deal with a Consul General who had to leave there on a stretcher basically because of the violence, and putting somebody else in.

SWIFT: It was a very tough post, and it's one that people tried to avoid. I think it was a terribly bad rap because I found it delightful, but never mind. At any rate, when they offered it to me, I sort of crossed my fingers because Dick was very, very tempted, but he had problems with his kids. He didn't want to move them, one was almost a senior in high school, had one more year to go. He didn't to wreck her schooling, so he decided to stay in Athens. So therefore it got offered to me, and I said, "I'll go." So off I went.

Q: You served in Kingston as Consul General from '86 to '89. What was the situation, political and economic, in Jamaica during this period.

SWIFT: The conservative government under Seaga had been in power since '82, I guess. It had come in as a reform government, and had done very well in calming things down a bit, but it had basically, as in any democratic country, it had been in too long. The left had by that time reformed itself and gotten back a lot of respectability. Over the three years that I was there Michael Manley took his liberal party and put it back together, put it on its feet, and won the election. It was an interesting time to be there because our ambassador, who was a political ambassador, felt very, very strongly...it was very interesting, he felt very strongly that an ambassador had a duty to talk to all sides of the political spectrum. So over the period, even when it looked like Seaga was going to stay in power, he had made a real effort to talk to Michael Manley, and to...

Q: Manley had not been persona grata with the United States.

SWIFT: Absolutely not. He had been a real radical in his previous period in charge of the government, and I think that he had seen the light. He had seen that his policies had not helped Jamaica, and Jamaica's economy. And that Seaga's policies really had done a lot better, and Seaga had put the country back on an economic path forward. At the same time, in the way things go in that sort of thing, Seaga had not paid enough attention to things like health care, and to the problems of the lower classes. So when Manley came back in, he had a mandate to try and redress, but he moved a lot more toward the center. And in his conversations with our ambassador, I think that it became clear to our ambassador that Manley really had changed. There was a great deal of doubt as to whether he had really changed, but I think Sotirhos was convinced that he had changed, and he was right.

Q: Sotirhos?

SWIFT: Michael Sotirhos, and he was right. You actually wonder, as a matter of fact, how much Sotirhos's openness toward Manley helped Manley move back toward the center. It was a very interesting period. Sotirhos was/is a real character, very strong minded. This was his first ambassadorial position abroad and he made lots of mistakes in the beginning, and learned very quickly. His idea, and I always sympathized with it, a lot of people hated it, the ambassador to a country is the ambassador, and he is not to be outshadowed by anybody else in his embassy, that if anybody is going to get publicity, it is going to be the ambassador, and not the Consul General, and not the PAO or whoever it is. He told me flat out before I went down, that he did not want to see my picture on the front pages. I said that was fine with me, I didn't want to see my picture on the front page either, but it was a switch in the way the Consul General had acted down there. Because from the time of Mike Carpenter the Consul General had become really very much of an imperial Consul General. Mike had done some very good things in going out very publicly to explain what the U.S. embassy was doing in terms of visa issuance, or denial, and had, I think, done a very good job in getting it fixed in Jamaican's minds that they did not have a right to come work in the United States, that they had to qualify for visas to come to the United States. Basically speaking Jamaicans felt that our visa process was just a method of keeping them from their God-given right to work in the United States. But Mike had been a very, very strong Consul General, and a very public one. Arlene Render, who followed him, had also been a very public Consul General to the point that the Consul General was probably more popular, or at least more sought after in Jamaica, than the ambassador. Arlene left Jamaica early on her own volition. I think the handwriting was clear on the wall that she was not going to be able to work with Sotirhos. And Sotirhos was not going to be able to work with her.

Sotirhos didn't know me from Adam when I became his Consul General. I'll never forget a conversation we had up in Washington before I went down. I assumed that I had been assigned by the Foreign Service, and here I was in Washington, home leave, and on my way down to this posting, and I assumed that my job was all set. And it became quite clear to me in talking to Ambassador Sotirhos that had I said something wrong, or had I struck him as somebody he didn't want, that he was going to break that assignment right then and there. He was not going to have me be a very public consul general. And this was interesting, because basically the one thing that I had not liked about the job, was that I did not want to be galloping around the country making speeches. It was not something that I really thought would be fun. I was willing to do it, I wanted the job, and I went into it thinking I was going to have to. And when Sotirhos said, "I do not want you doing this, I'm going to make the speeches, you're not going to," I said, dandy, fine, wonderful. I thought that was superb, I was delighted to stay back and run the consular section, and do some Out Reach, but not in the very public way that the Consul General had done before. It took a lot of doing to follow these instructions when I got down to Jamaica.

When I first walked into the country I was being asked every time I turned around to go on talk shows, to speak to the Chamber of Commerce, to do this and do that. And I would take these invitations and send them up to the ambassador's office. And often I would find that they would say, "No, no, we don't want the ambassador. We want you." And I'd say, "but..." And after about six or eight months of this, what had previously come to the Consul General, started naturally going to the ambassador instead. I thought he was right.

Q: It makes sense if an ambassador is willing to pick this up. Now to follow through on this, did the ambassador take on the very important issue of publicizing how we operated our immigration laws? Did he engage on it?

SWIFT: Not really, but by the time he got there they pretty well understood it. And what he did, which I was ever thankful for, and I was so lucky--I didn't quite realize how lucky I was at the time--was that his attitude was that it was the Consul General's authority to issue or deny visas. And what he did, wherever he went because he got hit for visas all over the place, was he simply said, "Look, my Consul General is in charge of visas. She statutorily has the authority. I do not have the authority, and I will not become involved." And he did not become involved in any visa, he turned it right off. And he ordered all of his embassy officers to also stay away from visas stuff.

Q: I can imagine this pervaded the entire operation.

SWIFT: Oh, yes. It was funny. Sometimes he really almost went too far. I would hear him say to people, "I'm sorry. I sympathize with what you're telling me, but I do not have the authority to make such a decision. You will have to go to my Consul General because I have no authority to do that. The Consul General in this case has the authority, and I don't have it." It strengthened my hand in dealing with things. Now, if he felt that the consular section had made a mistake in the way they handled something, if we had been rude, if he couldn't figure out were we applying the law properly, or something like that, then he would call me and he would say, "Ann, I have had this complaint, or that complaint, could you look into it for me, and assure me that there's nothing in it." And usually the things that he came to me on, and they were few and far between, we would have mishandled, or it would have been strange, or there was a perfectly straight forward explanation for it. But he would always give me the opportunity to look into it, straighten it out, and work it that way. He would never come and say, "You will issue a visa to somebody." He never ever did that to me. The DCM did, who was Foreign Service.

Q: What was his background?

SWIFT: His background was that he's a New York businessman, of Greek Orthodox in extraction. He was a commercial interior design person. In other words, he had done the interior designs of things like Marriott. A big businessman, and close to Bush. He'd run Bush's minority campaign, and had had a great influence with the Greek community, and with a lot of other minority communities.

Q: When you went out to Kingston I assume you stopped by the visa office, what were you getting from that as far as their concerns and problems with the Kingston operation?

SWIFT: It was just the high fraud, and they were just putting IVACS, the computerized immigration processing into place. I got there just after they had installed all the new computer equipment, and they had gone through a very, very rough installation period. They were then trying to convert the hand-written visa control cards onto the computerized system. They were about a third of the way through that. As usual, I do not think we had done it very well. I had installed IVACS in Athens, and I had had the luxury...I knew we were going to do it, and on the way out to Athens I had stopped by London. Everybody thought I was absolutely nuts, and had gotten this wonderful privilege to go by London, but I knew that London had a big IVACS system up and running, and running well. So I stopped by there, and talked to them about the mistakes that they had made when they installed it, and the sorts of decisions you had to make on screening out the material, what sort of material you put in, what sort of material you didn't, how you got prepared to convert to a computerized system. And then before we ever got the equipment...or just as we were getting the equipment in the training period, I managed to get enough money together actually out of Athens resources, to bring down the head of the IV section in London, and have her sit there with my FSNs, she was an FSN, and with my officers may I point out, and show us how to convert the material to go into the machines. It was a great help and made us go much more smoothly, and made our transition much better. We did a lot of file cleaning ahead of time so that we didn't put junk into the machine.

In Kingston, of course, they had a much greater data base, but they didn't do any cleaning at all. They didn't do any preparation work for the installation. So we spent the next year and a half, after we got the thing up and running, cleaning the data base. I thought that was the wrong way to do it, but there was no way I could tell them to stop in the middle of it, and reconvert.

Actually I think Arlene Render had done a very good job of organizing the section. She had also just gone through a big modernization...my only problem is that I hate pink, and Arlene liked pink, so the whole blasted place...my office was all pink and grays. I mean it was pretty, but I just don't like pink. It was very modern and very nice, but it was my most unfavorite color in the world which I then lived with for three years. At any rate, they'd done a major reconstruction of the section, and done a very good job at it I think. I mean there are a few glitches, but basically speaking it was a very smoothly set up section. I came into basically a very good situation.

Q: Could you describe the immigrant and non-immigrant situation there?

SWIFT: I guess we were the fourth largest immigrant visa issuing office in the world. And we were like the tenth largest non-immigrant visa issuing post. During the period I was there we had just a major surge in non-immigrant visa issuance. I kept being worried about it, why is this happening to us? I calmed down a bit after I discovered it was

happening throughout Latin America, throughout the Caribbean, and to a certain extent throughout the world. I think because of the shifting value of the dollar. It was easier for people to find the money to go up to the States. But the NIV section was under heavy, heavy pressure, and of course we had big lines around. The whole idea was to make sure you didn't have huge lines around the embassy--to process visas quickly, fast, and with the minimum of heartburn. And the same over on the IV side.

The IV unit basically was easier to run than the non-immigrant visa because it was easier to control the crowds. It was easier to control your flow-through because you had absolute control over the scheduling. Our problem in the IV section was getting the computer software working, and getting ourselves so that we could understand it, and then working on fraud which was endemic. But on the IV side it was a flow sort of thing. As we had a steadily increasing visa load, and no more officers, how did you smooth out your procedures and develop new ones so that you could cope with all of this.

Q: What was the flow--the immigrant and non-immigrant flow. Where did you see it going to the United States? What were people after, and how did this work?

SWIFT: The immigrant flow was, generally speaking, families going up to join their father or mother, whoever it was. And then a lot of fifth preference, brothers, relatives. Jamaicans generally speaking, live up and down the eastern seaboard, and to a less degree across into Texas, but basically Florida, the New York area, Washington, Boston, Chicago a bit. They came in, usually fairly simple people from the countryside, with low skills, reading ability. They come in with the advantage that they speak English, and they've all had a certain level of education, not terribly high at the lower economic scales, but they usually could read and write. And they went up to the States and basically, our feeling was, did not go on welfare at all. Hard working and willing to take...typical immigrants...willing to take the lower class jobs. Jamaicans make very, very good immigrants.

The only problem that we were having while I was there, was the whole drug business, which I get incensed about when I look at what we have done to the rest of the world. But at any rate, Jamaica was a high marijuana producing area, and we had a big drug program which was not completely ineffective, aimed at destruction of marijuana. The problem was that many high ranking Jamaicans were involved in the marijuana trade. It was one of the major sources of income for the Jamaican economy, and, of course, it was illegal. There was huge traffic back and forth between the States and Jamaica of marijuana. It was just starting to more over into cocaine. It's not a cocaine producing area, but it was starting to turn into a cocaine transit area, or an area where the big drug dealers were using cocaine to purchase marijuana. In other words, they would come in and rather than paying for marijuana all in dollars, they would pay for a certain amount with cocaine, which was then starting to give Jamaica, at least in the higher levels of society, a cocaine problem. But at any rate this affected us in the visa section because we had to be very, very careful to make sure who we were allowing up, and we had a high percentage of

people we would turn down because they were known to be, or suspected to be, involved in the drug trafficking.

And at the time I was down there, it was the time at which there was a big outroar up here in Washington because the crack cocaine distribution rings up and down the eastern seaboard, and across into Texas and Kansas City were run by Jamaicans.

Q: I remember. The word was Jamaican gangs are very dangerous, they kill a lot of people.

SWIFT: And indeed they do. The problem with that sort, and the reason you saw it all disappear off the front pages, was that it's very easy to speak of Jamaican gangs. The problem was that Jamaicans, like any other portion of our society, the Irish, etc., had been around a long time. So that a lot of these so-called Jamaican gangs were in reality Jamaican-American gangs. American citizens of Jamaican extraction. And there were a lot of immigrant Jamaicans, and a lot of illegal Jamaicans involved in this. But a high percentage of these people were Americans. So the black community in Washington got outraged by the way the press was treating this. It was like that...they turned off discussing the Jamaican drug running gangs still existing.

The problem with the Jamaicans, and the problem with Jamaican society, is for some reason or other there is a very, very strong streak of violence in it. There were a lot of sociological studies of the areas that the Jamaican slaves were transported out of whatever their cultural background was. The Jamaicans are fiercely, fiercely independent. Certain groups of Jamaicans fought the British to a standstill, and never were conquered. The slaves revolted and went up into the hills, and actually in some cases made treaties with the British that gave them hunks of the country under their control. It's as though the American Indians fought us to a standstill. The Jamaican blacks, some of them managed to rule parts of Jamaica without much interference from the Brits. So they are a very, very proud people. Unfortunately when I was there, in the early '80s, the various political factions had armed themselves, and had sort of hired thugs to do their guarding work. And when Seaga came in, they dismantled a lot of these private armies. And what this meant was that a lot of people were left without employment, but with guns. And what ended up filling the breach was the drug trade, where the drug traffickers took these guys on as their runners, and their controllers. And they're very, very trigger happy. So a lot of the shooting, and a lot of the very quickness to go to guns, was in that culture, and was transported into the States.

Now the Jamaicans would say that it is your drug trafficking that is misleading our good Jamaicans who go up there, our poor kids go up there, and get corrupted by your American gangs. And to a certain extent that was true. So it was a very difficult problem to deal with.

Q: From your point of view running the consular section as it impacted on the visa work, how did this drug thing translate?

SWIFT: Well, what it meant was that we had a very close working relationship, both with the intelligence community, and with DEA.

Q: Drug Enforcement Agency.

SWIFT: ...to track, and try to give whatever help we could from the Visa Section to DEA to keep these people from getting into the States. Which meant that they would give us information, we'd enter it into our machines, and try and track some of this stuff.

The other side of this was, that the drug dealers were closely involved with the fake document industry in Jamaica. There were vibrant, charging, document production rings, which had their base in smuggling normal Jamaicans up to the States to be illegal aliens. But the narcotic rings got into that because they needed fake documentation, they needed fake passports, they needed all of this sort of stuff, and they were willing to pay huge prices for it. The Jamaican working class themselves would pay $3,000, $4,000, and $5,000 dollars to get documentation which they thought would get them through the embassy, and get them a visa. But the smuggling rings would pay much more than that. So there was a close interconnection between the narcotics people, and the document rings.

Q: How did you deal with that?

SWIFT: It's very, very difficult to deal with alien smuggling and with document rings. We're not policemen, we're not investigators, although in our consular section we had a fraud unit. It was very hard to keep my fraud unit people from becoming real live police investigators. We had a very close connection with the Jamaican police authorities, and, as I said, very close relations with our intelligence agencies, and with our embassy security people, and with DEA.

Ordinarily at an embassy, for instance like in Athens, your intelligence agencies, and your DEA, really doesn't care much about the consular section, because there's not this close connection between what they're doing, and the visa section. In Jamaica it was very, very close. It was obvious to them that if they could get at the counterfeit document producers, they could stop some of this trafficking. So by convincing the intelligence agencies that it was in their interest to target the counterfeit document producers, I got help from DEA and things that would not be available to me otherwise.

Q: How effective did you think your section was in getting on top of the fraud problem?

SWIFT: Oh, not very effective at all. It's a very, very hard thing to control. When the ability to reproduce documents with all your fancy new modern FAX machines is so high, and when it was so easy for a Jamaican to change his name, change his identity, and come in with a totally new set of documents with very good documents to back it up. What we tried to do was pick out patterns. This kind of documentation is suspect. Therefore, when

it appears in front of you, you look at it six times harder. But it was very difficult to do. As fast as we'd crack down and break one ring or scam, another one would leap into its place because the commercial advantage to producing these documents was so high. And the government itself...the other thing was convincing the Jamaican government that fake document production was against their best interest. There was a tendency by the Jamaican government, and should I say by the US government, to regard counterfeiting of documents as a civil offense, rather than a criminal offense. And your fines are low. Even in the United States, how many prosecutions do you see for issuance of fake passports and fake birth certificates? Very few, and the fines are low, and the jail sentences are minimal if you get caught at doing this stuff. It's no different in Jamaica as it was in the States.

One of the leaders of the document production rings was a very, very interesting lady who had a huge following because she was seen as sort of a Robin Hood. She helped all of these poor Jamaicans to get up and join their families. She was very popular, and she'd get put in jail. She was caught two or three different times, I mean by my predecessors. I caught her too but my predecessors had gotten her tossed into jail, and she'd get out, and she'd be treated as a hero while she was in jail because she was...part of their Jamaican ethic is to have the little guy taking on the big guy, and fooling him, and tricking him. And this lady was absolutely seen by the Jamaican people, and I think even by a lot of people in the Jamaican government, as somebody who was very bright, brazen, and fun, and wasn't doing anything harmful really. This wasn't seen as something that was bad...okay, so you fake a visa, or you fake papers. You're just helping some poor Jamaican get around these darn US immigration laws which are kind of foolish in the first place. We were up against that all the time.

Q: There is nothing more frustrating for young officers coming to deal with a situation where they know they're dealing with something that's probably bigger than they are, they're supposed to enforce the law and people are getting by.

SWIFT: Very, very, very tough. It's very tough to keep young officers from getting bitter, and aggressive, and difficult in that sort of situation. They know they're being lied to. They know everybody is running around. They know they can turn visas down, but they also know that they've got to have a decent ground to turn them down on. The Jamaicans will come right on in there, and lie to you to your face, and then they'll get very hostile when you turn them down for a visa. They're very strong minded sort of people. And it's a really tough visa line situation. It's very hard for the officers to keep their balance, and keep their senses of humor which is basically what you have to do. You have to regard it as you are doing your absolute best to administer US immigration law, and that your job is to let people into the States, not to block them from going to the States. But you have to keep the ones out that you think are illegitimate. And that's your job. And they're going to get mad at you, and it looks like they're mad at you personally. But they aren't really mad at you. They are mad at the law, and they're mad at the fact that you're applying the law to them.

Q: Did you spend a lot of time as sort of the section physiologist?

SWIFT: We tried hard. It was really tough, because groups of junior officers take on their own characteristics. And when I got there the characteristic of the consulate was basically us against them. And it was real tough.

Q: Us against them was us against the visa applicants.

SWIFT: It was very, very tough, and it was very tough to change. A lot of the change came not particularly because of anything that I did, but because of a new group of officers coming in who came in with a much more of an outreach attitude toward Jamaican society. And that helped. When they were willing to get out, and get involved in Jamaican society, then they regarded Jamaicans much less as the enemy, and much more as people who they could be friendly with. But it was a very tough thing to do, and even the most involved officers would still lose their tempers and get mad. I had officers who went and married Jamaicans, and still you would find them on the line losing their temper. There was nothing personal in it, it was just that they were losing their tempers. So it was tough. I mean the best you could hope in Jamaica was to have a reputation that you were fair. You couldn't be loved because you were carrying out laws that the Jamaicans just didn't like. If you were fair they would accept it.

Q: What about Congressional pressure? Phone rates were low, and a lot of these Jamaicans would be brought up to be, as we're seeing as of today, the problem of domestic servants at least initially, and there's nothing that gets an American citizen more upset than knowing that they aren't going to have somebody to look after their children, or wash the dishes.

SWIFT: Right. And a lot of Americans would come down on holiday, and would go to these big Jamaican resorts or some place, and they'd have lots of money, and they would meet wonderful Jamaicans who were just dying to come up to the States with them to help them out with their kids, or whatever it was. The Americans would just simply not understand that our laws would object to this. They had the money to pay these people, they were delighted to have them up and pay them a going rate in the States, and here was this wonderful person who was thoroughly qualified, and we were saying no. Then they'd call their Congressman and we'd get a Congressional...we spent hours answering Congressional mail and telephone calls and all that sort of stuff...hours and hours.

Q: How were you supported by the visa office?

SWIFT: At the time that I was down there the visa office was very weak, and I would say that our support from the visa office was minimal, thank you. Especially during the period that I was there, we had the problem of farm workers where the '86 bill permitted people who were up in the States as farm workers to convert to immigrant status under a very complicated set of laws. It ended up not applying, but it may yet apply, to Jamaican cane workers which was a major amount of people. But we thought that we were going to be

flooded, just overrun, with applicants for this program. As it turned out it wasn't too bad, but we were really concerned at one point that we were going to just sink underneath this. And we got very little support from the visa office, and we were not happy about it. I spent a good deal of time screaming at the visa office, and finally gave up and just started talking to Mexico. It turned out to be much better because they were having the same sorts of problems.

Q: That's our embassy in Mexico as far as technical advice.

SWIFT: In order to find out what was going on. Basically we needed information. We needed to know where the bill was, where it was going, how it was going to be applied, what were the various aspects of it. And we were not getting this out of the visa office, so as I say, I started calling Mexico, and they knew a lot more about it because they were dealing directly with it.

Q: How about the protection problem? During this period, and I suppose even now, I would be very dubious about going to Jamaica for a vacation. I hear about violence, robberies. It must have had quite an impact on you.

SWIFT: It was a problem. As long as you were up on the north coast, it was reasonably okay. The north coast being the tourist areas. And as long as you weren't out in the back woods. We had, just before I got there, a very nasty incident of some people who were robbed and raped. Some missionaries that were up there out in the back woods and they thought they were perfectly safe, and they were not. We had a lot of sort of minor incidents. We had not very many major ones. When I was there, there was very little direct robbery aimed at tourists. Now the problem that we had was that there was, and especially in the period just as I got there, there were armed gangs roaming around in the hills above Kingston who were coming down and robbing houses. When I say armed gangs, I mean these guys were armed with M-16s, and heavy weapons.

Q: The M-16 is the standard infantry rifle of the United States.

SWIFT: Yes, a fully automatic, nasty gun. So they were scary people. We had guards but there were some very, very nasty incidents that were going on just as I got down there. And just as I got down there the army went after these gangs that were up in the hills, and simply wiped them out. And that made the situation a little bit better. But just before I left, things started getting again nastier. It was never good. There was a lot of burglary, and that sort of stuff in Kingston. But just before I left, we had some serious murders of people in the American community because they ran afoul of somebody--either a house breaker, or something went wrong with their servants, and their servants came back and simply wiped them away. It was not nice. The head of the Jamaican Chamber of Commerce was murdered, a Jamaican friend of mine--or the father of a Jamaican friend of mine--was shot by robbers in his business. The violence hit the upper classes, rather than simply bubbling down in the ghettos. It came up and struck at the upper classes as well.

Q: You mentioned that you had not received much support from the visa office at that time, but you came back to at least start off...when did you leave Jamaica?

SWIFT: I left Jamaica in '89.

Q: When in '89?

SWIFT: Summer.

Q: So this is about the time when we had a new head of consular affairs, wasn't it?

SWIFT: No. When I came back Joan Clark was still running Consular Affairs, and Betty Tamposi was sort of interning. Because she had so little experience, the idea was to bring her in...it was absolutely one of the stupidest ideas that I think anybody had ever invented. But the idea was to bring her in to understudy with Joan Clark...it was outrageous.

Q: ...this is done that way.

SWIFT: It was absolutely outrageous, it was terrible. The idea was to bring her in, and let her learn on the scene for three or four months. As it turned out, I think she came in like May or June, and Joan didn't leave until October...Betty was sworn in either sometime late September or early October. It was dreadful, it was simply dreadful.

Q: But you came back in...

SWIFT: I came back in July.

Q: And what was your assignment?

SWIFT: My assignment was to be the Deputy Executive Director of the bureau. So basically I was coming back into an administrative job. The head of the Executive Director of consular has always been a civil servant. The Deputy has always been Foreign Service, and a major portion of the Deputy's job has always been assignments of consular people abroad. But the person who does the Deputy job does a lot of the work with assignments of consular officers, and then does a lot of the overseas looking at staffing, and installation of equipment abroad.

Q: What was your feeling...I think you have already given part of this, the ambience of consular affairs with the head office?

SWIFT: It was a very tough period because we were in transition. They had just gone through China, and had had a lot of criticism over the way the evacuation went during Tiananmen Square...

Q: This was the student revolt in Peking and other places.

SWIFT: There had been a two year period where the Chinese had loosened up on their society, and of course this was before Eastern Europe revolted, and before the breakup of the Soviet Union, and what happened was the whole communist world was loosening up. At this point probably China was almost ahead...well, it wasn't ahead because you had perestroika and all this sort of stuff was going on in the Soviet Union, the Chinese were following in step with this, and the Chinese student and young intellectual people decided probably to push too hard. I don't know too much about it, but the government decided that they were going to crack down on this, and you had demonstrations. China went up in flames, and the army put it down. And there were a lot of Americans, because American tourism was way up, there were a lot of Americans caught in China when this crackdown came. There was bloodshed in Tiananmen Square, the big square in Peking, and a lot of Americans had to be evacuated. So CA had to deal with that. There was a lot of criticism that we didn't get people out fast enough. It was not really true, but never mind.

You also had Pan Am 103 about six months before where this American airliner had been bombed by as it turned out Libyans, and it had killed about 300 people. There was a major controversy going on about the Administration, and in particular the Consular Service's handling of the families in this crash. So we were undergoing all sorts of Congressional investigations, and testimony and that sort of stuff.

So when I came into the bureau on the American Services side, things were really tough. Joan is a very strong, and very effective administrator, but she had taken power away from her Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and lodged it in her front office. So the bulk of her work she did out of the front office, rather than decentralizing it out to the bureaus. We had a political...well, I guess he left sometime early in that year, but we had had a political appointee director of Overseas Citizen Services, OCS.

Q: When you say political, was this...

SWIFT: A political appointee, who had been a very nice person, but not a really good strong leader of the section. And Joan and her front office had really taken power into the front office. So things were sort of rocky throughout CA. Morale was not good, and we had Betty Tamposi coming in, and nobody knew what she was, or what she was going to be like, or anything, and she was very, very isolated up in the front office. So it was a very odd situation to say the least, plus you had the freeing up...when I got into EX you had the freeing up of Jewish immigration out of the Soviet Union to the United States. And we were trying to figure out how to handle that, and that was a huge project which Joan Clark was very heavily focused on. Where Joan was most effective, was when she was working on something that was creative new, and a real innovation. And that's what she was doing when I came in, and I got pulled into it a little.

It took totally reconfiguring the embassy consular section in Moscow. It took inventing an entire new way of processing visas which has now become standard, or has become a new part of the way that consular will handle stuff. Basically bringing a lot of the work back to be handled in the States by computer exchange. But Joan was starting all of that, and I mean just riding over everybody in order to get it accomplished, including most of us, because we really didn't think it could be done, and she was absolutely dead right, and she did it, and a great deal of credit to her.

Q: This was the beginning of the processing by large organizations geared to do nothing but process documents being sent from the country.

SWIFT: Well, the way it works is that ordinarily a lot of your documentation, and petitions, all of the paperwork, had up until this point been handled in embassies abroad. What Joan said was that given this situation where we have a huge number of petitions being filed, in this case for refugees, but for people to come out of the Soviet Union...the dimensions of it was just staggering. Up until the early part of '89 we maybe got 40 or 50 refugees and immigrants out of the country a year. All of a sudden we were talking about a program of 50,000 to 80,000. You're doing 10,000 visas or refugee petitions a month. It was just staggering the difference, and we were absolutely unprepared for it, didn't know how to do it. Huge amounts of paper were required to do this. And the problem was that along with this, the Russians had gone to the system where they wouldn't let us have FSNs anymore, or we wouldn't let the Russian FSNs work for us. So our entire staffing of our embassy in Moscow was with Americans, a very expensive procedure. And the number of Americans we could have in the embassy was tightly controlled by the Russians on a reciprocal basis over here. So it was just a mess. We didn't have enough officers to do the work, we didn't have the FSN corps. There was no way you could expand Moscow quickly. So therefore Joan said, "Let's take all of the paperwork and do it in Washington." And this meant computerizing, it meant finding people with the language ability to do it. It took working out systems as basic as when you would print up the refugee applications in the States, how the hell did you get 100,000 refugee applications to Moscow, within a time frame that was very, very short. It was an administrative nightmare.

We worked through it, and set up a system where most of the paperwork was done in the States, and that was the forerunner to what is now the Visa Processing Center that they've set up. It was done for refugees, and for some of the immigrant visa work. But now the new center that they've set up all visa petitions, rather than being farmed out to the embassies directly, now come through the center in the States where they're processed, where they're divided up. The current ones are logged in and then sent out to the embassies, the non-current ones, the ones where you won't be interviewing anybody for a year, or two or three years, are now being held in Washington, and at a future date will be held up in New Hampshire at this big processing center.

But what it does is it takes a lot of the paperwork off of the embassy, and frees up the embassies to do the interviewing work, and the immediate work. Its a superb system, and

its working like a dream. It had had a few rocky moments, but its genesis was all in this period of trying to handle the Soviet immigration.

Q: You weren't there too long, were you?

SWIFT: I was there in CA/EX until late November. What happened was that, myself and several others, looked and saw Betty Tamposi, who was going to be our new Assistant Secretary, obviously not learning very much sitting up there, and really isolated. In a terrible position where she was supposed to be the new Assistant Secretary, she's 32 or 34, and being treated like a child. It was a normal reaction from a very experienced front office, where this person had no real position. But at any rate it was terrible. So I went up, and several of the rest of us did, and we tried to ease her in, and teach her about things. So I got to know her, and when Joan left and Betty took over, she started doing a lot of studies to see how she wanted to reconfigure the consular bureau. I worked with her on a lot of those studies, and thought I would get killed by all of my friends.

Basically what we tried to convince her to do was to take the authority that had been centralized in the front office, and give it back out to the bureaus. Decentralize, more away from this very centralized system which Joan Clark ran, and ran quite effectively, but ran because of her talents. Joan and the staff that she originally had around her, Phyllis Buscko, everybody just goes into hysterics when you talk about Phyllis, they ran a very, very effective front office. They really got things going. I think what Joan had found, and what Betty was later to find, was that anything that Joan wanted to do, somebody would oppose. The passport office would oppose it, the visa office would oppose it, OCS would oppose it. She would ask for it to be done, and it wouldn't get done, which is why I think she centralized things into the front office, so that she could tell Phyllis go do this, and Phyllis would ram it down the bureaucracy's throat.

Well, that did not seem to me to be the best way to do things. It seemed to me the most efficient way to do it, is to name DASs who would do what you wanted to do.

Q: DAS, Deputy Assistant Secretaries.

SWIFT: ...and then get the Deputy Assistant Secretaries to make their bureaucracies function. One of the problems with the visa office was that the visa office didn't have true authority, and therefore they just sort of sat on their tails, and out in the field you felt they weren't responsive to you. And it was true.

At any rate, that was one of the things we tried to do. I think Betty found often the same problem, where she, up in the front office wanted something done, and she would find the visa office saying, "No way, I won't do this." It wasn't as bad because what she had was a new crew of Deputy Assistant Secretaries who were trying to do what she was wanting us to do.

At any rate, we were handling Pan Am 103, and Betty very much wanted to change the way that we handled Pan Am 103 type incidents. Joan had tended to stand back from the problem. Of course, Joan Clark and the people in OCS had been the ones who handled the crisis, had been the ones who had gotten all the criticism. Betty came in as somebody who was not involved with it, and one of her really major talents was her ability to reach out to people. This was a problem for OCS because with the Pan Am 103 she basically sympathized very, very strongly with the Pan Am 103 families in what they said. She was too new I think at that point to really thoroughly understand exactly why things had gone wrong. And she tended to agree with the families that it was obviously all the State Department's fault, and it was her job to come in and fix it. She reflected this up on the Hill, and she reflected this with the families. And it went a long way to convincing both the Hill and the families that the State Department was extremely serious about getting better techniques to handle people in crisis. And that was a very positive thing. It did not help the State Department officers who of course had gone through this crisis, and really had tried to do things, and hadn't been able to function as well as they should have because the systems weren't in place. And because the political dynamics of the whole thing, it was a terrorist incident that occurred at a time that U.S. government policy was to ignore terrorist incidents because the theory was if you ignored them, and didn't give much credence to them, that then they wouldn't encourage terrorist to move. What this meant was the families of all of these American citizens who had been killed in this terrorist incident, got very little attention. And with some of the mishandling, or the lack of handling, that went on with things like the lack of ceremony, the lack of out reach to the families...it wasn't exactly lack of out reach, it was lack of...at any rate, it was difficult. But what Betty did basically was side with the families, and of course this made her troops very unhappy.

We were getting into crisis after crisis, and we had no Deputy Assistant Secretary in OCS. She was looking for a deputy and couldn't find one, and she kept saying to me, "You take it, Ann." I had already done OCS, and I knew what it was about, and I knew how much work it was, and I knew it was all night every night. I really wanted the visa office, thank you very much, because I felt I could be helpful over at the visa office and visas were really my interest. I like management, and I really didn't feel I needed to do OCS again. But in the end a couple of her candidates who were superb got offered other things, and she came to me and said, "You've really got to do this. You've got to do it because I need somebody in there now." So I said I would do it on a temporary basis, and ended up doing it for three years.

Q: You were Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Citizen Services. Before we talk about that, could you analyze...Betty Tamposi became a headline figure at the very end of the Bush administration because she was responsible for going into the passport files to try to find derogatory information of now President Clinton, who at that time was Governor Clinton, the candidate, and became sort of a dirty word in American politics as far as what a political appointee can do. How do you estimate her? You've already talked about her initial problems there, but dealing with her later on.

SWIFT: It was a very difficult situation I think for everybody. Betty had been a New Hampshire state legislator, she'd run the budget for New Hampshire. Her family was big political supporters for Sununu, and for Bush, and she got her position completely through political pull. She'd been up at Harvard at the Kennedy School for Government. She'd run for Congress and lost. And she was 34, she was young. She was probably far more qualified to be a Deputy...she fell sort of in between in her qualifications for a job. She was a little bit too high ranking to be a Deputy which would have been better, and she was really not experienced enough to be an Assistant Secretary. But that was what she was offered, and the State Department tried to block it. When I say the State Department tried to block it, our head of administration, Ivan Selin tried to block it, who was himself a political appointee. He looked at Betty and saw her lack of credentials for doing anything like this, and said, "This is dumb," and interviewed her, tried to block it, and was told by the White House, "You will take this person." So they took her and put her in there.

She had zip experience in foreign affairs. She had been, I think, in Italy as a student at one point, and that was it. She never had anything to do with foreign affairs. She was very, very, very naive in foreign affairs. She learned as she went along, and when she first came in she simply did not understand either the foreign affairs establishment, or international relations. She was superb at, because that had been her thing, at the political side of things. At out reach to American citizens, at feeling the pulse of which way...I mean she understood the PanAm 103 situation like nobody in the State Department could have. She understood what it was. She understood how to meet the challenge, and how defuse the situation and move forward. She understood that.

She knew nothing about consular affairs, absolutely nothing, and she had a major handicap which is that she as far as any of us could figure out, has got to have been some sort of dyslexia which means that she cannot easily read documents. And the Foreign Service is very much a culture of paper. You have got to be a quick study in paper. In an Assistant Secretary's position you get pounds of paper every day. You have cables coming in from abroad on what the political situation is, and what's happening at various consulates around the world, what crises are occurring. An Assistant Secretary will have her mail screened down to about one inch three times a day, but still its a major amount of written material that you have to be able to scan very quickly, or you have to work out some sort of system where somebody comes in and briefs you orally. The best combination is that you have a staff assistant that comes in and briefs you very quickly on something and says, "You might want to look at this cable and that cable," and gets it down to a very manageable amount. You have all of the intelligence stuff coming in. But you can't get away from reading, and Betty was not good at reading, and this was one of the things that caused early tension between her and Joan Clark because Joan gave Betty, as you would for somebody you were trying to train in, massive amounts of material on the consular service and how it worked. And Betty didn't read it. It then gave the consular service, and Joan Clark, the feeling that Betty was dumb, that she was uninterested, that she was a dilettante, and didn't care to work. I don't think that was the case. I think it was a problem of physically being unable to absorb the kinds of masses of information which

all of us in the Service have to do. I am slightly dyslexic myself, and I have a great deal of sympathy for that sort of problem. She would have been much better served, I think, to have 'fessed up early on. So this is a problem that we could work around. Because she was able to work around it, and she could read. It wasn't a question that she couldn't read, it was just not a thing that came easily to her. And her work habits were unbelievable for most of us. What she was doing was, her family stayed up in New Hampshire, she went up to New Hampshire over the weekends, and she would come back and do more work than any human being should possibly do during the week in order to stay up and ahead, and keep things moving. So she would expect her staff to stay with her until 12:00, 1:00, 2:00 a.m. in the morning, especially if something was going on crazy, and it made it very tough working conditions.

She was able, I thought, to do some very good things. As we were talking earlier, not on this tape, a political appointee coming in, especially one who does have connections to the White House, and later she worked up connections with Baker...

Q: Secretary of State, James Baker.

SWIFT: ...and was therefore able to give consular a voice on the seventh floor, and in the Secretary's very small inner circle. This was a period when the State Department was being run by a very small group of people. Betty was not a member of the group of people, but she had relations with Margaret Tutwiler who was Press Secretary, and really one of Baker's very close associates. And Betty was able, when necessary, to talk to Baker directly. She proved her ability to help Baker during the Kuwait crisis because she did a very, very effective outreach to the Kuwait hostage families. During the period that some very tough decisions were being made as to whether we would invade Kuwait or not, Betty managed to defuse the families by literally going out, and going around the country, and talking to all the families. There was a drum beat starting to come up from the families that the administration was ignoring their hostages in Kuwait and Iraq, and that the administration should make peace. The families were split. Either the administration should make peace immediately and get their people out, or the administration should invade right then. But it was the sort of situation that had the families gotten out of control, and gotten to the papers with charges against the government. During PanAm 103 we had been charged with being unfeeling, and nasty, and awful to families. Had the Kuwait families had the feeling that the State Department was ignoring their plight, and not taking care of them, I think it is quite possible that Bush's ability to make decisions in a calm fashion might have been compromised, the way Carter's were during the Iran Hostage situation. Betty going out and talking to these families really helped, and Bush and Baker knew that.

Q: There was a rather uncertain period August through December of 1990 Saddam Hussein of Iraq invaded and Kuwait took it over. And we had a lot of Americans both in Kuwait and in Iraq, and they weren't being allowed out...these were civilians, they were called guests, but they weren't getting out. Some were dribbling out but nobody quite knew what it was, it wasn't just Americans, there were British. Did she call on you at all

to plump your reactions as having been a hostage in Iran, to get a feel for what somebody in that situation...

SWIFT: Oh, yes, she did obviously, and we set up massive systems to take care of the families. It was a huge effort, and in the beginning we tried to do it with using State Department employees, both Civil Service and Foreign Service, drawn from the State Department to man telephone banks, to talk to the families, and to answer their questions, and to try to locate people...we had upwards of 3,000 - 4,000 Americans stuck in this situation in the beginning, and we manned telephone banks. We had to try and figure out who was where, and who was what. The first month of the crisis was just chaos because there were 3,000 - 4,000 Americans caught in this situation, men, women and children. Toward the beginning of September Hussein allowed the families to leave, but kept the men, and started calling them guests, or whatever. In the beginning they were rounded up and held in hotels and places, then he started shipping them out in groups to sites where he felt if an attack came from the United States these sites would be ones that would be hit. So basically what he was doing was tying our American citizens to the war of these places that we were going to have to bomb.

That went on until December when for some reason which is absolutely beyond all of us, Hussein let everybody go. So Bush was never faced with the necessity, of bombing our own people. Through the period in December this was always an open possibility that we would do air strikes, and we would kill a lot of our own people. And as you can imagine, it was a very chaotic situation.

What Betty did was give us full support for what we were doing to set up systems to handle the families. It was an amazing mess. When it became quite obvious that we weren't going to be able to handle it using our own staff...at one point we were using the entire staff of the State Department. We were calling on officers from all divisions, not just consular affairs. We were pulling people from all over the State Department to man these telephone banks, which meant as well that we had to train them in how to handle people in crisis, we had to set up rosters. We all knew that it was much, much better to go one on one with the families, but when you have 3,000 it is almost impossible to do. After Hussein released the bulk of the families, and we were able to fly them out on evacuation flights, then we were down to a group of about 500-600, something like that. At any rate, it was a much smaller, and a much more manageable group.

I kept pounding on the fact that we had to have case officers, and that it was ineffective to use a rotating system of Foreign Service officers, active Foreign Service officers wouldn't work. We looked at all sorts of ways of doing this, all sorts of ways of contracting it out. It became quite clear to us...usually in a crisis you're able to handle the crisis because the crisis is only of a two or three week duration. This was obviously going to become a long-term crisis...it went on for almost a year in the end. But we convinced the Department that they were going to have to give us the money to hire people to be case officers, and we went out to retired Foreign Service officers, brought them in, trained them, and turned them into case officers. It worked beautifully.

Betty gave us her full support to do this, and it worked very well. Now I won't say there weren't times at which her management style didn't make things harder. There were, and I don't want to go into all of that. I think that she was positive in this, and I think that even her people who had the most difficult times with her...during this period she fired her deputy Mary Ryan. She nearly fired me. She had been known up in New Hampshire as being very, very difficult to work for. She had a reputation of being very hard on the staff, and being very difficult, and it was true. I'm here to tell you. It was hard which is why what happened happened in the end. People did not stand up to her. It was very hard to stand up to her. I had to get really angry before I would really take her on. I took her on a couple of times.

The problem with Betty was the same problem of a lot of the appointees who came in from the Bush administration. Reagan, even though he was very much more conservative than Carter, had come in, taken over the State Department and put his own people in. But George Shultz had used Foreign Service officers to run his policy. And maybe he got co-opted by the State Department, but I don't think he did. I think he ran us. I mean I think he said, "This is the direction in which we will go," and then he trusted the Foreign Service, and the State Department, to run his policies for him, which is the correct way to do things, I think. The Bush people, basically because he had this terribly personalized system of management...he was very, very loyal to his people always, to a fault, too much probably. But the Bush White House literally gave all of their political appointees a lecture on don't trust the bureaucracy. Now this probably came from Bush's own relationship with the bureaucracy where he saw how seductive the bureaucracy could be, which it is. The bureaucracy will co-opt people coming in to work with it, and Bush's orders to his people was, "don't you trust those bureaucrats. Don't you trust them. You push them around. You do want you want. I don't want to hear you agreeing with them. I want you following our policies, and if you have to get rough with them, you get rough with them."

So the people who came in at high levels to the State Department, with a few exceptions, tended to be exceptionally arrogant and very, very suspicious of us. And always ready to accuse us of trying to destroy their policies. And Betty was probably a prime example...it's not just Betty, I saw it with several of the others. But Betty was very, very suspicious of us, and whenever we would try to talk her out of something, or move her in a different direction she would get upset. If you were trying to follow out her policies and you tried to work with the seventh floor without telling her intimately, moment to moment, what went on, or if you went and worked with them without telling her, it would drive her nuts. And she would get very, very suspicious, and very angry at you. Of course, the Foreign Service and the bureaucracy is very used to doing things informally. There is a lot of paper that flows, but at the same time in order to get that paper to flow you've got to talk to the staffs of the Under Secretaries, and of the Secretary, in order to make them understand what the ideas in the papers are so they don't block them. Betty wouldn't let us do that. She wanted to do all of it at these high levels. And the problem with that was that her grasp of the intricacies of these policies wasn't all that good. And therefore she would

go upstairs and confuse things. But she wouldn't let us go upstairs. And if we went and did things and didn't tell her exactly what we were doing, and she found out about it, she would go berserk. I mean truly and really berserk, to the point where she would simply order people not to have any contact with the upper floors. And this made working relationships exceptionally difficult. My feeling was that it was partly her personality, but also partly the instructions that she was under. You make those bureaucrats do what you want. You don't get run over by them. And her way of doing that was not subtle. It was to pull you in and just ream you out. And there were times that she reamed me out, that she was right to the extent that I had made a mistake, and I hadn't come back to her, and told her. She was never right that I was trying to go behind her back. I never did that. I wouldn't go behind her back. I would go tell her exactly what was going on. It was tough to work for her.

Q: Did you see any impact on the visa operation in this type of thing?

SWIFT: No, I had played with it and I thought I'd better stop. Yes, there was an impact in her way of operating...she had a long way to go to earn the respect of the consular service. Because when she came in, she was viewed by Joan Clark, and by everybody, as being a total ignoramus dumb-dumb, who had not a brain in her head, who was too young for the job, and shouldn't be given the authority, and that this was a major mistake, and should not have been done. Now, as it turned out, obviously Joan was right in most aspects. I don't think she was completely right, and I think by not really giving Betty the full benefit of the doubt in the very beginning, that Joan made Betty even more suspicious of us. Now, as it turned out, with hindsight, Joan was absolutely right. But in the Foreign Service with these political people, you have got to take them in and do your best. I mean, that is the job of the civil service in our system. We must follow out the policies of whatever administration comes in, or get out. And this was very difficult for all of us. Those of us who worked for Betty felt it was our job to make Betty look the best we could. And there were times at which she did not understand a policy, or she did not understand all the ramifications of what was happening, or she was going off in some direction which we all knew was wrong, and we couldn't turn her aside. Or we could turn her aside, and we did a lot of covering for her, all of us, in order to give her credibility so that the consular service didn't get too badly dumped on. I mean this was a great deal of what we were doing, and it is a real problem, and its one that none of us quite know how to handle. When you're looking at something that's very difficult, should you just quit. Should you walk away from it and say, "This is impossible. This is no good. This is not working, and if you guys upstairs won't do something about it, if you at the senior levels of the State Department won't do something about it, I'm out of here." Or do you do your best to make the thing work? And this is remembering that you're working with somebody who has some very great talents in some directions, and some parts that are not so good.

Yes, it's a real question, and my feeling is that at the end the problems that all of us had seen with the way Betty worked, got her. And they came around and they really destroyed her. It was the sort of things that made it very hard to work for her. It was her insistence,

her energy, her demands that you do things right now, and do it my way. I nearly got murdered, as I say, in the middle of the Kuwait situation because Betty wanted to get some stuff up to the Secretary, it was very similar to the sort of thing that Carmen was in the middle of.

Q: Carmen DiPlacido, acting head of passport services, and got in trouble because of this Clinton episode.

SWIFT: But she had just come back from a trip abroad, I had a staff that had been working around the clock for three and a half to four weeks, and was running dead flat out. When you're managing things you've got to be very careful because if you lose your staff, you're in big bad trouble. Betty wanted to get some information up to the Secretary. I felt that if she did it the way she wanted to do it, number one, her information was going to be incorrect; and secondly, she was going to pressure my staff to the point that they weren't going to be able to function in dealing with American citizens. I tried to change what she was trying to do. And I mean she nearly fired me for it. Now she had every right to fire me because indeed I was, in that situation, trying to slow down what she wanted to do, and get it back under control, and get it so the information going up would be accurate, and it wouldn't destroy the people. And I really didn't think the Secretary wanted the stuff right at that minute, and I am almost dead positive that I'm right on that, but Betty didn't think so, and she was determined that it was going to happen, and she moved me aside. She just told me, "Get out of here." Okey dokey.

But that is the way she operated, and I think that is probably the way that she operated when she got this Clinton passport search.

Q: You had left.

SWIFT: I had left. I was away. But I knew the searches were going on. I mean I had come over that day and heard that they were underway. I'd talked to Carmen. My assumption was that they were following the normal routes to do a search, which would be...I mean when you got a request for a search from whatever it was, you'd go in and you'd look through your stuff to see what was there. But you wouldn't do it in midnight searches, and that sort of stuff. What happened when Betty would get involved in something, whether it was getting this information up to the Secretary in the middle of Kuwait, or whether it was doing a speech, or whatever it was, Betty would throw herself into it with all of her energy. And the problem was she had the authority to do it. She had the authority to tell people to stay after work. She had the authority to spend all night to hold people over working in the evenings. And she really had an attitude toward work which said that working after hours is no big thing. I mean, doing work up until 12:00 or 2:00 a.m. in the morning, was not unusual in that office. Most other offices in the State Department are pretty bad about working after hours. You will usually find somebody around the State Department at 7:00, 8:00, 9:00 at night, especially on the top floors, but Betty carried it to an extreme. She worked her staff really weird hours because she was so energetic herself that she demanded the same energy and movement out of the rest of her staff. And this is

what she did, I think, in this situation. She had this request and she felt it was very, very urgent. She felt it was urgent, I think, because she was being pushed by the White House. I may be wrong in that, but I think that is what was happening. And she conveyed that to her staff, which unfortunately went along with her. And rather than saying, "Whoa, Betty, you stay out of this. We will do what is necessary, and what is required, and you stay out of it so that there's no appearance that we are doing something unusual." She got into it with all four feet flaying, and really...I mean had Carmen told her, "No he wouldn't do this," she would have found somebody else to do it. And she had the authority to do it.

Q: We're talking about a midnight search of the files that were repository, and rumors had come out that now President Clinton, but then Governor Clinton, when a Rhodes Scholar student at Oxford had been opposed to the war in Vietnam, and sent in a letter inquiring about giving up his American citizenship. This was the heat of the campaign. Had there been such a letter, which was ridiculous on the face of it, but there were some true believers who were supporting Bush, had this actually been the case, it would have blown Clinton out of the water. When the facts came out of this midnight search, and her role in it, it caused her being fired, and investigations going on, it was front page stuff, and did a great disservice to the consular service, and really to the Bush administration.

SWIFT: Well, I think it came close to putting the final nail in Bush's campaign. What had happened in this period was that Bush had really gotten his campaign going too late. And when he got completely involved in the campaign, he tried to do what he had done to Dukakis. He tried to go after Clinton's character, rather than dealing with the issues. He was very much attacking Clinton on the basis of personality. And therefore they were trying to find anything that could be found that showed that Clinton was un-American in his early years. Clinton had been against the war, and so Bush was trying to show, and the Bush campaign was trying to show, that not only had Clinton been against the war, which a lot of people had been, but that Clinton had taken actions which meant that he wasn't even American. Had the Bush administration been able to prove something like that, it probably would have made a major impact on the campaign.

In this case, when it became very, very evident that the Bush administration was trying character assassination, and was searching files and things at midnight, using government employees to search files, it was so distasteful to the American public, that it backfired on Bush, I think, very, very much. And after this episode, Bush was unable really to beat the drums which he had been doing up until that point on Clinton's record on Vietnam. So it really helped Clinton, I think, and really backfired on Bush, which I think was well deserved.

Q: Why don't we stop here on this. Let me just for the record, getting ready to go to London as Consul General. And you have been seconded for a while to the Carnegie Endowment with the...

SWIFT: Well, not exactly. Carnegie does not take people on government salary. So what I'm doing, they have a immigration project that they have been working on for a couple of

years, and in my estimation they're probably the foremost experts in town on immigration. And so when I had a space to fill, there are an awful lot of senior Foreign Service officers wandering around, I worked out an agreement with consular bureau, where I'm still on consular bureau's rolls, but I'm working with the experts over at Carnegie on immigration projects. We've been working on Haiti, and I'll now go back to my original thing, which was working on how to make the U.S. government more efficient in its control of immigration policies.

Q: The theme of this whole project is really on migration. I wonder if you could talk a bit about the role of the State Department, or lack of role, in visa policy, and how you see...really we're not talking about visa policy, we're talking about immigration policy because it includes refugees. What is the American system, and State's role?

SWIFT: It's really interesting because when I came back, and when I said earlier that I really had wanted to be head of the visa office, what I was thinking of was that it was a big management job. I had been frustrated in the field by the way the visa office was acting, and I wanted to turn the visa office into a much greater support mechanism, a much more informative mechanism for the field. And that was my view of why I wanted to go to the visa office. And as far as immigration was concerned, I sort of viewed immigration as yuk. All of this stuff that Diego Asencio had done with trying to make a new organization to do immigration. Diego had focused his attention on the immigration Act of '86 trying to get a new immigration Act sponsored to legalize aliens in the country. I found all of that beyond me. I wasn't interested in it. I didn't like it.

So when I got into this project I was coming at it slightly mystified. I really wasn't really quite sure what in the world we were doing, except that I didn't like what I had seen over a period of three years sitting down in OCS, being in the staff meetings up in the front office, and listening to discussions going on about various things that were happening on the Hill. I was very, very frustrated. I had no right to be frustrated, so I tried to hold my peace because it was not my world. But I was very frustrated by what I saw as a lack of ability by the State Department to go up on the Hill and influence the direction that our immigration policy was going. I wanted us to be more active both from the point of view of overall immigration policy (who should get let into the country) and from the point of view of the crazy ways that the Congress would legislate for us to physically run these programs (the lottery programs etc.). These programs come out of left field at you, and are administrative nightmares, because we hadn't coordinated well enough with the Congress, and the Congress had just sort of run away with these crazy ideas.
And I couldn't figure out why we had such little effect as the State Department on something that I felt very important.

So I've now been over at Carnegie about four or five months. And it has been a real eye opener, its been a lot of fun to be over here. And basically I tend to agree with Carnegie that the problem is that throughout actually U.S. history, U.S. immigration policy has been made by the Congress. It has not been made by the Executive. The Executive has had a minor role in immigration mainly because immigration to the United States has

always been taken as a given. There may have been certain segments of immigration, such as the Chinese that there have been exclusion acts against, but basically the bottom line in the United States has always been that we've been an receiving country for immigrants. We've tried to control this in various ways. But each new law has really been made by the Congress, not by the Executive, and there has been very little leadership from the Executive in law making.

And in the '80s it got totally out of control with every special interest group jumping in, and getting their little segment of the bill done. And again this was done with very little leadership, I think, from the Executive. Basically speaking what happened was the Executive turned over to the Republican leadership and the Congress the right to speak for the Executive. The bills were sort of clobbered together by special interest groups. Now this was at a time in our history, in the '80s, where the economy was booming, where everybody thought we needed huge amounts of immigration. So they did these crazy programs, the farm worker program which ended up letting in about a million migrant farm workers...

Q: Mostly Mexican and Caribbean.

SWIFT: Mostly Mexican, some Caribbean, but mostly Mexican. The law raised the numbers of immigration into the United States by about 40 percent from about 400,000 - 450,000, to almost 800,000 now in the various categories. It's a little bit under, its about 40 percent, my figures are slightly off. But at any rate, this was done without much leadership from the Executive. I think to a great extent because it is such a sensitive issue politically within the United States, within these various ethnic pressure groups, and for the employers of the farm laborers. And it was regarded as a low interest problem by the Executive. There was no interest group sitting out there saying we shouldn't let more people in because the economy was booming. And they passed these two laws in '86 and in '90 just as the economy went downhill, and then all of a sudden people are looking at this mass of immigration and saying, what are we doing? And saying, why was this done? Why did it happen? Well it happened because nobody was paying any attention, and because we thought we needed the immigration.

At any rate, Carnegie feels, and I completely agree, that the Executive really should take more leadership in the formation of our migration policy. Migration has never, anywhere in the world, been paid much attention to, at least not since the huge displaced persons during the Second World War. Nobody has really paid much attention to it. And now, for the first time I think in years, you're suddenly getting international attention to it. The southern tier countries, the underdeveloped countries, regard exportation of their populations, particularly their workers, up into the northern tier countries, the industrialized countries, as a right. They have high birth rates, and they need to get people out of their countries. And the northern tier countries regard the ability to guard their borders, and guard their own markets, and their own economies, as a right. And you're going to get increasing friction between the two, which is now being looked at in terms of migration rather than as something that was just sort of a sideline. Its now being looked at

as an issue in international forums. The European Common Market has looked at this very, very hard looking to see how they will control migration flows.

And you overlay that with the question of refugees coming out of disturbed areas, out of Somalia, out of Yugoslavia, out of Haiti, and it has become an issue which is much more front and center for the U.S. government. Its very, very interesting, and yet we have no central policy making place within the U.S. government to deal with these issues.

Q: Its hard to say where it would fall. The State Department is really only issuing the tickets but not on the basic impact.

SWIFT: One of the problems that I see is exactly that. The visa office itself...Dick Scully will give you long lectures about this...basically says it is not our role in the State Department to influence immigration policy. It is our role to give advice to the Congress on how, once they have decided what immigration policy is going to be, how to implement it. How to implement whatever they decide needs to be done. But it is not our role to try and guide what that policy will be. The INS says the same sort of thing. They are an implementing agency, not a policy forming agency, although they have some policy forming responsibilities. HEW is the same. They're just supposed to take care of these people when they come in. Now Labor comes the closest to having a policy. Labor is supposed to figure out the impact of immigration on the U.S. market, and on U.S. labor, and make sure that it is equitable. They've never had the power to do that. So they don't have much to do with it. The Domestic Policy Council is suppose to coordinate all of this. And when I was in CA they did a very halfhearted job of trying to do it.

Now Asencio and his commission...a lot of people have suggested establishing a new organization, as the Canadians have done, which would incorporate the visa issuance, the refugee parts, the parts out of labor, the labor certification stuff, and INS, all together into one agency which would then look at migration into the United States as a whole. It is basically a very intelligent, very good idea, which will probably never happen because there are fiefdoms up on the Hill, they're simply not going to let it happen unless the Executive were to decide that this was a critical issue for the Executive, at which point maybe an administration could force this through Congress. Immigration is much more important nowadays, and was one of the first foreign policy issues that the Clinton administration had to handle--the Haiti problem. However, the minute they get Haiti figured out, and when they get Bosnia figured out, its going to go on the back burner again. And the economy as it turns up...yes, its all good and fine to say you don't want to take that many immigrants in, but which ones are you going to cut back? Which ones are the Latinos going to want cut back, which ones are the blacks going to want to cut back, which ones are the Irish-Americans going to want to cut back? We are an immigrant country.

But I feel very, very strongly that State should have a much stronger voice in migration policy because we're going to have to. We have to know what the Congress is thinking. We have to be absolutely in tune with what U.S. immigration policy is because the State

Department is going to be representing the United States in international conferences on migration abroad. And if we aren't very, very clear in what U.S. migration policy is, and how that fits with international migration policies, what the EC is doing, what Japan is doing, what all these other countries are doing. If we don't have that organized, and if we don't have a clear understanding of what we're doing, we're going to get ourselves into one problem after another. Our Haiti policy, our policy toward migration, the refugee policy from Haiti, is in direct contradiction of what we do with the Vietnamese. Direct contradiction. And people have just thrown their hands up, and said, well its just different. This is really unacceptable for a country which tries to be a leader in this sort of thing. You can't have that sort of craziness. You've got to figure out a consistent policy, and we're not set up in the State Department to do it.

CA lost the immigration portfolio in 1990, because Betty Tamposi was so inexperienced, and because she was not respected on the seventh floor, and because VO itself was not interested in taking any sort of leadership role. You had a very vibrant duo--Princeton Lyman, and Priscilla Clapp--over in the refugee bureau and two years ago we lost migration policy to the refugee bureau. This was, as a matter of fact at that point, right. We didn't have the capability to do it. RP had it, and they took it over. The problem is that RP, being good bureaucrats, see their role as looking at migration policy abroad. And I've had them say to me that their role is to do migration abroad, and they do not have anything to do with immigration into the United States. That's CA's role, and that does not work. You've got to have somebody in the State Department that looks both at refugee flows, at migration flows, at U.S. immigration into the United States, at the problem of people coming into the United States and claiming asylum which is getting to be 100,000 - 150,000 a year. That's a sizeable amount. At population growth, and how does population growth spur migration flows. I mean the whole question. Now we're getting there.

This new bureau for global issues will include in it RP, HA which has the asylum policy at the moment, environment and population, so at least you will have them all under one Under Secretary. I think it would be better to put CA and all of them further together, an idea that horrifies RP. CA thinks its fine. At any rate, that's what I'm doing.

Q: Okay, very great. Thank you very much Ann. I really appreciate this interview. Good luck when you go out to your challenging post...

SWIFT: Don't laugh at London, its a big post.

Q: Its a big post and its a big job. Good luck.

End of interview