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

AMBASSADOR RUSH W. TAYLOR, JR.

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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Taylor prior to his death.]

Q: Today is the First of April, 2009. This is an interview with Rush, that's R-U-S-H, W., stands for Walker, Taylor, T-A-Y-L-O-R, Jr. And let's start at the beginning.

Well first, the beginning, what does the Walker stand for, and the Rush?

TAYLOR: Okay. My family, my father's side of the family, comes from a little town in northern Mississippi, Corinth, Mississippi, it's called, which was one of the big battles in the Civil War.

Q: What was the name of it?

TAYLOR: Corinth. C-O-R-I-N-T-H.

Q: Oh, yes, yes, yes. That's where-

TAYLOR: One of the bloodiest battles of the war there. General Grant was coming down from Kentucky, down the Tennessee River, Corinth was a major railroad depot; it had the Charleston-Memphis going one way and the Mobile-Ohio going another. So by taking this little railroad junction they could strike their, you know, the process of splitting the South in two.

Q: And moving towards Vicksburg.

TAYLOR: And one group went to down to Vicksburg and the other went to Chattanooga and then to Atlanta. And that's where my family settled in the 1830s, my father's side of the family. They were from Virginia. They were Quakers and my great-great-grandfather was set very much on education. He wanted his kids, even though he had a lot of them, and their mother died when most of them were still fairly young, he really, really did everything he could to educate his kids. He moved from Virginia, up here in Loudoun County where he was born, down to Petersburg and then he got married in North Carolina and they worked a farm there and then Georgia; and then from Georgia- and the

city opened up, they moved out there and got several thousand acres of land. Unfortunately, the land wasn't very good but they prospered to an extent. And he was able to send my great-grandfather off to Philadelphia. He wanted to be a physician and at that time there was something called the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, which was one of the best in the country. He has written, this great-grandfather, a history of his life and times and all the Civil War stuff and going north. He talks about going up the Tennessee River and then up the Ohio River and taking a train from, I guess it was Southern Cincinnati up to Cleveland and then taking a train from Cleveland- no, I guess he took the ferry- what do you call the thing? The Eric Canal, riverboat, all the way to Albany and then down to New York and he finally gets to Philadelphia and studies medicine and he comes back the other way, through Charleston, South Carolina, of all places.

You asked where the name "Rush" came from. One of his professors was a Dr. Benjamin Rush.

Q: Very well known.

TAYLOR: Right. He had founded the school, actually. He was a good friend of Thomas Jefferson. He signed the Declaration of Independence for Pennsylvania. Actually, his son later- Richard Rush, became our ambassador to Great Britain. But the Rush family were still very, very involved with Jefferson College and he so admired Dr. Rush that he named one of his sons Rush and that's how I got that name.

Q: And the Walker?

TAYLOR: The Walkers were, during the Civil War, it was my grandmother's side of the family. He was a colonel and a big shot in northern Mississippi and quite active in politics. That area is known as Tishomingo County, that's a northern part of Mississippi up Alabama and Tennessee on the corners; they didn't want to secede from the Union, they wanted to stay part of the Union, the reason being the land up there was not amenable to slaves, to having slaves, and most of the population was slave-less. Unfortunately, I regret to say, my great-great-grandfather had about 100 or so slaves and they weren't freed until well into the war when General Grant finally came through. You talk about that era and it's hard to accept things that were going on then but apparently the people, the slaves that worked for my great-great-grandfather, were so devoted to him that, you know, this sounds like the violin strings or something, that they stayed on with him until his death. Then they took part of his land, they were given part of his land, and so that's how that side of the family went on.

My mother's family, also from Virginia, came down in 1868 or 1870, right after the Civil War, to southern Arkansas and again, were farmers and that's where my father met my mother. My father, when he was in first year at University of Mississippi, his father, who was also a physician, Dr. Charles Taylor, died of diabetes and my father had to leave college and get a job. The biggest employer in Corinth, Mississippi, at that time was the Curly Clothing Company; they made men's suits and whatnot. They had moved out of

making Confederate clothing, they moved up to Memphis and then to St. Louis and actually was one of the biggest clothing manufacturers in the country at that time. So out of pity or whatever they gave my father a job and his first job was selling clothing in Arkansas, where he met my mother. And as a result I ended up being born, second of two kids, in Little Rock.

Q: When were you born?

TAYLOR: Nineteen thirty-four, November 3, 1934.

Q: Were your mother and father, either of them, your father finished college?

TAYLOR: My mother didn't go to college and my father did not finish. My father was the first in about three generations that didn't finish college.

Q: It's interesting because I'm still talking to people who, which includes myself, who are of a generation where the majority of their parents weren't college graduates.

TAYLOR: Neither one of my parents went to college. But as I say, there had been, on both sides of the family, particularly on my father's side, I always got the feeling that my father's side of the family looked down upon my mother's side. They had been doctors and they had gone to Europe and, you know, were educated in the North and all that sort of stuff. They had bigger houses and a lot more sterling teapots and whatnot.

Q: Were you from a big family?

TAYLOR: No. My father had a brother and a sister. Actually my mother had something like seven brothers, seven or eight brothers and sisters. And they all did rather well. Her elder brother founded a company, helped found a company called Salton Rice, which was one of the largest rice producers in southern Arkansas. Her twin sister married a guy who became the secretary- not secretary of state, state treasurer of Arkansas for years and years. And her younger sister put herself through Little Rock High School, the same old Central High School that we saw on TV back in the '50s. But when she graduated she was first in her class and received a scholarship to Barnard College in New York City. Unfortunately the family couldn't pull together the wherewithal to get her up there. But she ended up marrying a fairly famous architect who designed a couple of our embassies; his name was Aydelott, and one in Manila and maybe one in Lima, I forget.

In any event, our family, we were poor as church mice. I remember we were Episcopalians and the Episcopal Church or Cathedral there in Little Rock was the stuffiest place; all these little old ladies with all their finery and jewels and the priests were all just so unctuous to the very wealthy. And I'm sure we must have stuck out like some character out of Dickens because we were, I mean, we had nothing to be ashamed of as far as family but we were just poor. And we went there and one of the priests there, a fellow named Cotesworth Pinckney Lewis, befriended us and just became very, very important to the family. He later became the rector of Bruton Parish down in

Williamsburg. He gave the famous speech when Lyndon Johnson was sitting there with Lady Bird, attacking the war in Vietnam, and of course Johnson was a captive audience and didn't appreciate that.

When I was born I'm told I was so sickly my father bought a Guernsey cow, which he gave to some old German neighbors who lived a block away from us. They had a large piece of land so we seemed to have had all the milk and cheese and whatnot to feed the neighborhood. And I remember too that what used to be a front yard with a fish pond and some sort of second class statuary had been turned into sort of a huge victory garden where we planted tomatoes and all sorts of vegetables to get us through rough times. My mother and father and grandmother read to me as much as – I mean, I don't know how they found the time to read so much or get the books but we seemed to have all the children's books that you could possibly imagine and I was familiar and knew them by heart.

Q: You were born in-

TAYLOR: Thirty-four, in Little Rock. In 1943 we moved down to a little place called Crockett, Texas, which is sort of in the heart of East Texas. It's called the Piney Woods. It's just absolutely beautiful country. Two of the largest national forests in the eastern part of the United States are in that area and dogwoods and redbud. Crockett was the center of my father's territory, he was working still for this clothing company, Merit Clothing Company it was called at the time. And he picked this town for two reasons: it reminded him a lot of Corinth, a beautiful little antebellum looking town and most of the houses had big white columns and a nice little cute courthouse. It was only about 5,000 but just a very beautiful little place. And we bought a house near town, it was about two-and-a-half miles out from the town. They say it was the earliest frame house built in the Republic of Texas. It was built in the early 1830s and Davey Crockett, on his way from Tennessee, to go fight in the Alamo, came through there. It was on the El Camino Real, which is the Royal Highway from Natchitoches, Louisiana, down to San Antonio and on to Mexico City. He stopped at this house. A friend of his from Tennessee, Crockett had been a politician back then, back in Tennessee, owned the house, a Colonel Gossett, and so Crockett stayed there a couple of days on his way to die in San Antonio. And it was a beautiful old place with huge trees and a lake behind it and just paradise. And because it was out from the rest of the town most of my friends were the black children who were sharecroppers, or their parents were sharecroppers, on my father's land. And I didn't really have that many close white friends but my black friends became – we were almost inseparable. I can remember from the time that school was out in the summer, I mean, I never had a shirt, just a pair of sandals and shorts and we went wild. I mean, we had places to go fishing, we would go hunting, fly kites, sell watermelons; I mean, it was just paradise.

Q: Well, in the first place, when you were there, were you still Episcopalians?

TAYLOR: Yes, we certainly were. At that time in Crockett the old Episcopal church that had been there before the Civil War had vanished. So my father found a couple of other

Episcopalian families and he founded, or refounded, what was called All Saints Episcopal Church there. He was one of the first wardens and my mother was the organist, because although she didn't have a college education she had taught herself to play the piano. And she had actually played piano for the silent movies in the '20s. She could really do ragtime that would make Scott Joplin proud.

I was really, really interested, somehow, in world affairs. And I can remember just as clearly today as then, December 1941 when we were sitting in the living room around this little radio in the corner and they announced that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I didn't really know what this meant but I could feel the anguish of my parents, and I guess my uncle was there, and I immediately started thinking of some of my older cousins who very soon were off to war and some of them not to come back. Even when we moved down to Crockett I remember stopping playing and going in around 6:00 in the evening and listening to the radio. Edward R. Murrow would come on and I loved listening to him, the "News of the World" or whatever and just really got into it. And one of my teachers in Crockett was an old lady, Katherine Hassell, and she taught geography. It was a wonderful course. We had the picture books of peasants stamping rose petals in Bulgaria and port wine in Portugal, but she really, really saw that I loved this stuff. She managed to get me eight boxes of really old "National Geographics," which I treasured. I must have looked at every one of them. I kept those things until my mother finally said, you know, when I went off to college, out these go, enough of this stuff. But that really gave me this love of geography and history.

Q: Also, World War II, I think, was the greatest geography lesson for young people because you knew where all these places- I mean, you just found out where Guadalcanal was.

TAYLOR: Well Normandy and the Italian campaign, you could follow it up. In high school I had a really exceptional teacher; he was the principal of the high school. His name was Schmidt, and he taught history, American history, in such a way that it was all personal. He would actually get you to try to visualize. His idea of teaching history was to try to put your own family into wherever period we were studying. And it worked pretty well. Later when I got to Harvard I took a course under a guy named Frederick Merck, who taught the Westward Movement, which was Frederick Jackson Turner. You know, how America is really based on the frontier thesis. And I now see what Schmidt was trying to do in high school. But he also instilled this real interest in history and geography. And early on, as my father told Senator Johnson, I really decided that I wanted to get out and not just see the world but I wanted to work in this other world. I mean, why someone from such an isolated, provincial place as Crockett, Texas, would dream of doing something like this is beyond me.

Q: Where did the family fall politically?

TAYLOR: We were, as I told you, Corinth was anti-slavery so they were Whigs back in the early period and supported Henry Clay. Henry Clay, as you know, wanted one compromise after another. When that became untenable they sort of drifted to the

Democratic Party, which was the only party that you could vote for in Mississippi; there was not a Republican Party except shortly after the war. But I guess they were middle of the road. My father called himself an Independent; my mother felt that Franklin Roosevelt was on the moon. I mean, he was just the savior, although her father had, much to the family's embarrassment, been a great supporter of Teddy Roosevelt, which in Arkansas at that time, I'm talking about, what, the teens, was pretty rare. So we were never really mainstream politically and also my father felt that politics itself was sort of dirty and beneath him.

Q: Well okay now, you're here, there and you're now in elementary school, your friends are basically black.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: How did your family treat the-

TAYLOR: This is a very interesting question.

Q: -obviously everything was segregated.

TAYLOR: Segregated. I mean, when I was a young boy, when we first moved to Crockett, I remember being sent back to Corinth to see some relatives. This black lady, the maid, she was called Cibi, and I were sent on ahead by a couple of weeks by ourselves. They put us on a train in Crockett and we had to sit in a black coach because they would not allow her in a white one and I wasn't going to sit up there by myself. We would get to a train station, whether it's in Texarkana or Little Rock or Memphis, we would get off the train to get a sandwich or some sort of refreshment, Coke, and we would have to go into the black only area to buy our food. And I thought to myself, my God, there's something really, really wrong with this situation.

And then, on Saturday afternoon sometimes when I wanted to go in to see a movie, a Disney or something, I would have to go with her and we would sit up in the balcony with the blacks because she was not allowed to go down and sit with me downstairs. Now this was before I could go by myself. So I witnessed segregation pretty early on and pretty real.

I'll tell you when it really got to me mostly though was my mother, bless her heart, she was determined that these black kids there on the farm with us, were going to get an education. There was no black school bus. We lived too far for those little kids to walk. I tried a couple of times riding my bike back to my school, which was closer than theirs and it's too long. But my mother got those kids, there were six of them, and we had this old Buick. She would get them scrubbed and every morning we would take the kids with me. She'd drop me off and then she would go across to the black part of town and take them to their school, Ralph Bunche. And some of my white friends, this is the time when, you were in eighth grade, something, ninth grade, and they started making fun of me and calling me some names that I don't want to go into because they were racist names,

because my mother was doing this and because I was riding with Negros. That's not the way they pronounced the name. But my mother sat me down and she said look. You play with these kids every day and they are your friends. And now you come and tell me that you're ashamed of being seen with them when I drop you all off at your school. And she said it's time for you to wake up and to make a decision in your life, that these friends are your friends no matter what. And if your white friends don't accept this or don't like it, that's their problem, but you're going to be true to yourself. And really, it was a hard lesson but it's something I lived through and it made so much of a change, particularly when I served in the Foreign Service in Africa. It changed my life completely.

Q: Well how did this teacher of yours, Mr. Schmidt, how was sort of the Civil War and slavery and segregation taught in school?

TAYLOR: You know what? Everybody looked the other way. The Civil War in Crockett was something right out of "Gone With the Wind." I mean, most of the old houses, the antebellum houses there, and there were a lot of them, were still occupied by the granddaughter or in some places maybe the daughter. We had one old house where the owner, Colonel Nunn, had actually, when I was a kid in Crockett he was still alive but he had been alive during the Civil War. He was a very old man but he was the head of the Republican Party for some reason. And the teachers, as I say, they just turned a blind eye. It's something that was just not spoken of.

Q: It's hard to go back to that. The Civil War was certainly not – as a kid for awhile I lived in Annapolis, Maryland, and it was a very Southern town; my brother went to the Naval Academy when we were there and I can recall my mother taking great delight in tweaking some of her Southern lady friends. I remember one time they sat there talking about how wonderful the South was and she said well my father – and this was true, it was her father, my grandfather – traveled extensively through the South and he said it was really a beautiful country. Oh, when was that? Oh, he was an officer with Sherman. Which was true.

TAYLOR: Oh, my.

Q: But these were still fighting words.

TAYLOR: Oh yes.

Q: We're talking about the 1940s then. People moved around so much but it was an issue then.

TAYLOR: It was still an issue, more so and obviously in Mississippi where you had Confederate and Union fortifications all around the town, and where half the town was in rubble.

But Texas was a little bit different. It was not like Arkansas and Mississippi where they had been really engaged in the war. I mean, there had been some battles-

Q: Oh, the Red River Campaign but not-

TAYLOR: But not, no real fighting. And you know the railroad didn't come through East Texas until the late '70s or '80s so it was isolated. And that's not to say that there wasn't really, really racism but it wasn't talked about. I mean, the Republicans would run a candidate and the only people who supported him were the blacks. But by and large the black population was so oppressed and so out of sight and so down below the sightline that you really didn't-

Q: Well looking at it as sort of an education now, you mentioned that your parents and grandmother read lots of books to you. Do you recall, when you, at a certain point- In the first place, were you a reader?

TAYLOR: Oh, absolutely. I can remember in Little Rock we had two major newspapers in Little Rock at that time, the morning paper was "The Arkansas Gazette" and the evening paper was "The Arkansas Democrat." But I couldn't wait for "The Arkansas Democrat" to come because they always had children's stories in it; there was something called "Uncle Wiggily," which was-

Q: Oh yes, Uncle Wiggily.

TAYLOR: -really stupid but God I loved Uncle Wiggily.

Q: Ver-ges, Verges, I think, was the-

TAYLOR: Yes, yes. And you know, it always ended with this, if the cock clucked does this and the frog does that and on and on. It's pretty silly. But I could remember running out and getting the paper.

And then this really poor little school, grammar school I went to in Little Rock. It's still there, I saw it when I went home for my aunt's funeral last summer. Woodruff Elementary School is still there, and God, it was built in 1900 and I don't think they've changed a glass pane since. But we had Munro Scott Leaf.

Q: Leaf Munro.

TAYLOR: Leaf Munro. And there was another one, the Billy Goats Gruff; books that now, my wife and I read to our kids and we're now reading to our grandkids. But we had enough of those books that we were able to carry them home. I don't know where Arkansas or Little Rock got the money but certainly they were there for the taking.

Q: Well by the time you got to Texas, did you find, I mean, were there any particular types of books that you particularly enjoyed reading?

TAYLOR: I devoured the Hardy Boys, and you know, stupid stuff like that. And then another book that I really, really liked when I was really young was the Swiss Family Robinson and going to a South Sea island and building tree houses and caves and all of that; I just loved that. But I read a lot of Civil War books and things like that. But I really read just about anything I could. I read the newspaper too, before most of my classmates were reading it.

Q: How about did movies play much of a role?

TAYLOR: Movies were very important. When I was 12 my father petitioned the county judge to let me drive a car, get a driver's license. I normally would have had to wait much longer, I think until 16, but I got a driver's license. At this point I started parting company with my black friends out in the farm area, started running around with a group of people downtown who became my best friends, my girlfriend and all that stuff. But yes, we went to every movie.

Q: Your grandmother was quite an influence in your-

TAYLOR: Actually both of them, both grandmothers, but particularly my mother's mother.

Q: How did they, both of your grandmothers, how did they view the world?

TAYLOR: You know, they had both suffered so much, my mother's mother through poverty and my father's mother, she was a fairly young woman when she lost her husband, a wealthy doctor, to diabetes. She was one of these little clinging vines sort of women who never was able, I don't think, to get her way out of a wet paper sack. I mean, she could cook but she loved to comb and brush her hair. She wasn't really into things that I thought like gardening; she would pick flowers but was she-

Q: Well it sounds like, you know, the-

TAYLOR: Antebellum.

Q: Antebellum, the Southern lady, you know.

TAYLOR: Gentility to the point of- Yes, she liked playing bridge and tea parties and holding her cup a stupid way. But she didn't have a life as far as I was concerned and she was totally reliant on her daughter and my father; the daughter lived in Memphis and we lived elsewhere so she split her time between us. Now my mother's mother, when we moved to Crockett and owned that farm, we had a herd of cows, we had huge gardens and she basically ran that thing. I mean, making cottage cheese and milk and we had strawberries; everything imaginable, pear trees and she knew how to can and preserve and cook. And also, she was so good with the black people, they just adored her. We had a lake behind the house. You'd get these old cane poles and she and the black ladies would, on Saturday afternoons, go down and fish all afternoon. And did pretty well. So

she fit in much better. But both of them sort of looked on life as, you know, it's been really rough; the Depression years, the war, losing a lot of their grandkids and they just accepted a lot of things. I mean, physical illness, lack of money, lack of independence. It's amazing to me how they maintained their sense of dignity with all that they went through.

Q: Well also too, your parents and grandparents went through the Great Depression, which mine did too.

TAYLOR: Must have been.

Q: I mean, this was really much more traumatic than World War II.

TAYLOR: Anything we can think about, yes.

Q: I mean, it's, you know, well I still feel some of the effects of it and I-

TAYLOR: I do too.

Q: I don't like to spend money.

TAYLOR: I know what you mean.

But talking about the Depression, one of the things that I remember, my father, because of his business, needed a really fine automobile. So right before World War II he bought this really, really fancy Buick, gray, two toned Buick. I was a first or second grader and my parents used to drive me up to my little grade school and drop me off. I know the people in that part of town, we were all poor as church mice, but they used to see me get out of that car and come over, a pack of them, and beat the hell out of me; you little rich brat, we're going to fix you. Finally my cousin came across one of them; they would attack me in packs too so there's not much you could do. He was a sixth grader and he was able to be my protector from then on. But I can remember the class hatred, really, of anyone who had more than you did. And my God, the only thing we had was that Buick.

One of the grandmothers in Little Rock made her money by sewing; she was a really good seamstress and she did little ballet tutu things for the little rich girls who were going to ballet school. So they would come over to the house. It was just a tiny little frame house and you could feel the class – they really looked down on us; I could feel that, you know.

Q: Well did you feel, I mean, did this class thing hurt you?

TAYLOR: No, because, you know, even though we were poor my house had all these antiques. It was stuffed with items from both grandparents' houses so it looked like something out of Scarlett O'Hara with these oil lamps. You know the big bowls with

flowers and gilded punch bowls and stuff. They must have looked crazy as hell in this little shotgun house. But I thought to myself, well, I'm just as good as anybody else.

Q: Well what about, was there a point where either your mother or your father said you're as good as anybody else, you're going to, you know, you've got to get ahead and all?

TAYLOR: I was always told that, you know, you can be anything you want. And the only thing with me is, because I was asthmatic if I ran too much I would get an asthma attack. I had to really be careful until I was in my teenage years. But I was given this utter confidence by both parents that you can make yourself into anything you want. And fortunately I was smart, intellectually, and excelled in school.

Q: Well did being smart, did this attract teachers?

TAYLOR: It did and it didn't. I think there were some teachers who I had, particularly along the way early on in Crockett, who thought little boys shouldn't be too smart; that only little girls should. I guess fourth grade really made a lasting impression. We had taken a math test and she gave me mine and she said little Rushie here is the only one who got 100; he got every one right. She said, that's so strange. Well, then we went through and we were checking them and I found that she had missed an error on mine so I took it up to her and I said Miss Smith, you have made a mistake here. Well that infuriated her. But the girl who turned out to be my girlfriend, we didn't get married or anything like that, but my closest girlfriend all the way to college, also, she had gotten a 99 and she thought that was the bravest, most courageous thing she had ever seen, and so honest. She still remembers that, the time I got up and gave away my 100.

But no, some of the teachers didn't feel that boys should excel intellectually.

Q: Well then, when you got to high school, where'd you go to high school?

TAYLOR: Crockett High School.

Q: What was Crockett High School like?

TAYLOR: Well, there were 50 in our class and I was president of the class freshman year; I was vice president of the honor society. I couldn't participate in sports because of asthma. I was manager of the football team and popular and had a great time. We had a good group of people. I look back on it and it was one of the most idyllic periods.

Q: What courses did you like and what courses didn't you like and how did that- the academic side of it?

TAYLOR: Well the academic side of it, for some reason, I had no particular guidance as to what I should take. I should have taken a language course but I didn't. I should have taken chemistry and physics but I didn't. I took every English course, obviously, you had

to take that. I took the math courses through trig. We had two history courses and a year of government, which I loved; one was world history and then American history. In the government course we were studying embassies and the Foreign Service in a small little chapter. I forget the name of this famous ambassador who was ambassador to the Court of St. James, but he was recounting the type of work he did as ambassador in London in whenever, the '20s. I remember telling the teacher, who was also our football coach, you know, one of these days I'm going to be an ambassador; that sounds just great. And when this little article about me came out much later, one of my classmates, a guy named Merle Locke, saw that I'd been appointed ambassador. He called me at the State Department, he said Rush Taylor, I cannot believe that you fulfilled that promise that you made to us back in high school, that you were going to do that. So it almost became an obsession, particularly when I got to Harvard.

High school was great. The most beautiful girl in high school was my sweetheart, I guess you could call it. She was Ann Arledge and just bright and pretty. She ended up becoming valedictorian and I was salutatorian of our graduating class. But about I guess junior year we met the principal. He said I want to divide you into those who think they'll be going to college and those who are not. I want you people who are going to college to start thinking about where you want to go, blah, blah, blah. So he said, Rush, since you love civics and history, I want you to think about University of Texas. And I actually had gone so far as to send in my money to stay at Breckinridge Hall as a freshman when I got to Austin for college. And this was about December/January of my senior year.

Q: Which year would it be?

TAYLOR: Fifty-two. And so my dad had been invited to a party at the house adjacent to us out there in the country, which was owned by a guy name Jeff Davis, who was the editor of the "Crockett Democrat," which was our leading local paper. And Davis was a leading democrat, with a small "d" or capital "D," I forget, in party politics as well. And he was giving a fundraiser for Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson. And Dad went down to the party. I guess he sought out Senator Johnson and said this kid of mine is smart, he's doing well in school and he's got a lot of confidence in himself and he keeps telling me wants to do something called Foreign Service. He says I have not a clue what it is, I'm not really for it, I'd like for him to go into medicine like his grandfather and great-grandfather. What can you tell me, what should I do with this boy? And Lyndon Johnson said he wants to go into the diplomatic service? And he made this really snide remark about well if he wants to join all those other pansies in the State Department then he's got to go to Harvard College; he says that's where they all go. And my father said what kind of place is this State Department? And Lyndon said oh, I'm just talking, but said no, make the boy go to Harvard and he'll have no trouble getting in the Foreign Service.

So my father, I don't think he had ever thought about Harvard; we certainly knew where it was and knew what it represented, which at that time was money and wealth and status and Yankee. But he came home and he was so excited. He said, you know, Senator Johnson has told me this; he said you are going to go to Harvard, boy.

Q: He woke you up actually, didn't he?

TAYLOR: Yes, he woke me out of bed. Said no Austin for you, and you know, forget Ann Arledge; you're going to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

So, at that time the only thing I knew about Harvard, the "Holiday" magazine had done a big pictorial thing on Harvard College. They were doing all the Ivy League. So we had the magazine and I looked through it and I saw all these guys in their little narrow coats and they looked like the Beatles, and little ties and lots of snow and I was only, what, 16; when I actually got on the train and went up to Harvard I was 17, which isn't very old to be going off halfway across the United States to college but that happened.

Q: Today is April 8, 2009, with Rush Taylor. So, where did we leave this off?

TAYLOR: I think we were talking about early memories of life in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Q: Yes. So your father tells you Harvard's the place, but how does it get from Crockett, East Texas to Harvard?

TAYLOR: Well that was a long story. How did I get in or afford it. I think I may have told you about James Bryant Conant, who later became U.S. ambassador to Germany.

Q: Yes, it was my first posting; he was ambassador.

TAYLOR: He was president of Harvard right after World War II and I think he probably did more than any modern president since Lowell or Eliot, back in the glory days, to bring that university into its fullness. And among the things he did was the general education, where you had to be grounded in the humanities and the social sciences and natural sciences so you had to take not only a major but you had to take courses in all of these various fields. But another thing he did when he became president; he said I'm tired of this being a New England school or a New York school or a Northern school; I want this to be an American, a national school. So he instituted something called geographic distribution and all of my SAT scores apparently were fairly good for the time; I couldn't have gotten in, I'm sure, competing with people from Phillips Exeter and Phillips Andover, from Crockett High School with 42 students in my class, without geographical distribution. Fortunately by this time my father was making pretty good money. I didn't need a scholarship. Actually, I didn't even apply. My mother had to get a job herself to help out but I think they estimated my freshman year at Harvard, this is '52, '52-'53, must have cost about $18,000, which for that time was a lot of money. Today it's inconsequential. But you could have bought a couple of cars, nice cars, for that.

And to prepare myself for the SAT test, we had a special set of groups that the principal of the school set up. My teachers volunteered; my English teacher, my math teacher, social sciences, history, geography. Government I didn't need help on. But they would come in after school, voluntarily. They did this for two, maybe three months right after Christmas, after this encounter with Senator Johnson, to start helping me get ready for

this thing. And they were strict. I had to give up a lot. I mean they didn't charge me tutoring fees and darn it if we didn't do it and I was ready to go off.

Q: Did you have to take any special entry exam or anything like this?

TAYLOR: Oh just the SAT, you know, the Scholastic Aptitude. I think it was the first time that it had been given down in East Texas. It took from around 9:00 in the morning and we didn't get out of there, this was a Saturday, until 4:00 in the afternoon. My science teacher came in to administer the test to us. It was an exhausting day. And although I felt I had done pretty well I was awfully glad that I still had that room reserved over at Austin.

Q: Well how did your high school, your girlfriend but classmates and all, you know, you're pointed towards Harvard. That must have not set too well.

TAYLOR: No, it didn't. It was like going to the moon. I mean, somehow I always felt a little bit different. I mean, I got along, I had friends and led a normal life but there was something about our family; I had always from the very beginning sort of had it, and it's still in me, that because my great-grandfather had been a renowned physician and been the founder of the American Medical Association in Mississippi and on and on, that we were a little different and higher things were demanded. And for example, little things. I remember my friends would come home and they would have dinner at 6:00 in the evening. And we didn't eat dinner in my family until 7:30 and sometimes 8:00. My father always insisted that we have wine at dinner and I didn't think anything about that. I didn't drink it normally but I mean, it was there if I wanted it. They thought this was, you know, I mean, my God, what kind of people. They were all Baptist, Southern Baptist and I mean, even the Methodists were pretty much teetotalers. And my house, I think I mentioned earlier, was full of antiques and it was a pretty spooky old place. As I told you, Davey Crockett had stayed there on his way to the Alamo and it was old and big and outside of town; it was just a different life. And my parents, they had their friends too, but another thing that made us different was being Episcopalian. We weren't Catholic but we sure weren't Baptists. I've often tried to look upon it, and I don't think my brother felt it as much as I did, but also there were lots of books in my house. I mean, bookshelves and places where you could sit down and read whereas most of my friends, maybe they would have "Life" magazine or something on the coffee table, we had art books. And I told you neither my mother nor my father went to college but they were pretty cultivated people.

Q: Well it was an era where there was an awful lot of very conscious self-learning. I mean, people joined the book of the month club, which were good books. This was not sort of the trash novel of the thing. I mean, these were quite weighty books.

Also you mentioned the Episcopal Church; this was also the era where people who, in a small town and other places, if they had sort of aspirations of moving up the social scale would head to the Episcopal Church. I mean, there was a scale of things. The Catholic Church was off to one side, I mean, often they were looked down upon because so many of the people were of immigrant stock.

TAYLOR: Exactly.

Q: But there were the Catholics who went way back.

TAYLOR: Yes, one of the old Spanish families in Crockett was-

Q: But then the Episcopals were sort of on the top and then I think the Presbyterians and then you start moving down to various types of Baptist to the snake handlers.

TAYLOR: That's right. But we were definitely a little on the fringe. And when we moved to Crockett we went to the Methodist Church because there was no Episcopal Church. My dad actually, as I told you, helped refound the All Saints Episcopal Church. It had been pretty active until the Civil War and then had died out. But we were able to build a new church and got a good little congregation.

There was a thing at Harvard at that time, it's still there, it's called Memorial Hall. It was built to commemorate the war dead in the Civil War. One of the things that still ticks me off is, you know, a lot of Southerners had gone to Harvard prior to 1860, and there's one tiny little niche that was an afterthought. It was put in about maybe 1910 under Teddy Roosevelt, which commemorates the Southern war dead, those who died in the Confederacy.

But at any rate, this looming gothic, looks like something out of Charles Addams or Edward Gorey, all these battlements and things and the whole Harvard Yard had walls and iron gates and it was locked because it was still summertime. I don't guess any students were there for summer school. And I thought, oh God, what a hostile environment this thing is. And then on the other side was Harvard Square. It looked like a small version of Times Square, I mean, never stopped, newspapers from all over the world, all the languages.

We stayed at the Commander Hotel for a couple of nights and my parents saw my room and my roommates weren't there yet so I ended up staying a couple more days over at the Commander before moving in. I had always had my own, well, not always but for the last several years I'd had my own bedroom, my own bath and maids who made the bed and the whole works. And to be stuck in this tiny – this room is huge in comparison to the-

Q: The room we're in is about maybe 20 by 20.

TAYLOR: Yes. Well, it was called a suite. It was a living room, a bath and then these two tiny bedrooms. Strauss Hall, and it had been originally designed for two students per suite. We had four. I had this guy from Cleveland, Ohio, who shared my little nook, and then there was a guy from Brooklyn and another one from Long Island, way out on Long Island in the other two rooms. And it was dirty and it smelled and there was an old fireplace that people would occasionally burn trash of various sorts in and the place was just really grim. And certainly a place you wouldn't want to study or do anything. The

furniture was ratty; I mean, it looked like probably rats lived in it. And to go to dinner, or eat breakfast for that matter, lunch, we all trooped across the Harvard Yard to this sort of dining hall, and the food was God awful. I remember the first meal we had there, the liver looked like some green-purple, one of these, what do you call the stones, the opals from Australia. And it was just – you had these, thanks to the Navy having been stationed at Harvard during World War II, these round plates and the Irish ladies would just throw the stuff on there and it was really, really disgusting. I was thin to begin with and lost even more weight.

First of all, it was too damn cold to go over there in the morning in the snow for breakfast because I mean, I'm talking about a half-mile or a mile from where Strauss Hall was. And once you got there, I mean, if you had an appetite it was pretty well over. The roast beef was always so overcooked that you couldn't digest it. And the only thing that was good, they served these little things of ice cream, vanilla ice cream that had a raspberry H through the middle of it, for Harvard, and apparently it was the bequest of one of our early alumni. He said that every freshman should have all the ice cream he wanted in his will. Well we had that and that's the only thing I really subsisted on. That, and at night students, older students from the higher grades, would come by and sell, not hot dogs but donuts and chocolate milk and all that sort of stuff.

But, I really struggled. I had had no foreign language in high school and I was put into a French course with guys who had gone to some of the better New England prep schools. Obviously they hadn't done well because if they had they would not have been in the French course I was put in. But they were so much further ahead than I was that that was just a disaster. The amount of time I had to put into French, and it wasn't, you know, like the Foreign Service Institute where you can come in and start speaking and it was sort of fun; this is doing grammar and reading Montagne and Racine and stuff like that, which is pretty hard, I guess, even for fluent speakers but it was enormously difficult for me.

Then I took two of these general education courses I was telling you about. One was called Humanities I. We started off with "The Odyssey" and "The Iliad" and there was a guy named I. A. Richards, who was the professor who was supposed to be well known, but his real forte was old Balkan, Yugoslav folklore. And instead of learning about what theoretically we were reading he was always going back to his trips to Albania or Montenegro in the '30s and just totally irrelevant. So I was sort of lost in that one.

And the other two courses I took that year, one was sort of a physics course, which was the science part, and the professor spoke English with such a heavy French accent that it was almost impossible to know what he was saying. And basically that year was just a total loss.

Q: Did they have the equivalent of counselors or somebody-

TAYLOR: They did.

Q: -to sort of take, I mean, you know what I'm saying; if you have this open program and you're getting away from the prep school types, you've got to do something, or you should do something about them.

TAYLOR: I know but it was sink or swim. The only thing I did pretty well with, it was something called Gen Ed AH, or something like that, which was writing. And I really enjoyed that and did pretty damn well with even my lousy background. But no, they had counselors who would just say, well, you're not doing very well, and if you go back home you'll be a failure.

And you know, then my father had the audacity to send me this plaque, I don't know where he got it, but it was brass and heavily lettered and said, losers never win and winners never quit, or quitters never win. I don't know. But I thought, great. And this sounds really stupid looking back on it but I actually went to see the French consul, the consulate of France, in Boston, to try to sign up for the French Foreign Legion. I wanted out of there so bad. I hated it and I felt so lonely and I felt like I was such a disappointment to God, country and poor Mother and Daddy who were giving me all this money to do it.

But by February, after we'd taken the big exams in January, I had passed everything. I mean, it was no stellar performance, but I began to see that there was a system at Harvard. The main thing was to try to listen and take notes and then to repeat back everything that they said in your notes. I mean, it didn't work in French, obviously, but in some of the courses it really, really helped. And by the time I got through freshman year, I said I think I can master this thing. And of course, after freshman year you can start taking courses that you really like, so I started taking history and government and really, really became interested. We had some really good professors; Crane Brinton and, who was the guy who became John F. Kennedy's NSC (National Security Council); there were two brothers. Bundy.

Q: Yes. McGeorge Bundy and Bill Bundy.

TAYLOR: Yes. McGeorge taught this great government course that I really loved; that was sophomore year. But as I say, once you found out how the game was played I went from being sort of a C student to being a B plus, A minus.

Q: What about your colleagues, you know, the roommate from Brooklyn and Long Island? I mean, did you find you were sort of one of the guys or were you sort of cast off somewhere?

TAYLOR: At Harvard there was no clique. We were all sort of on our own. There was a clique at that time; those were called the Final Club clique; they had all gone to St. Paul's or Groton and they were in final clubs, the Porcellian Club or the Delphic Club. But the rest of us were just sort unwashed masses. I mean, looking back at Harvard, I didn't really have any close friends but no one had any really close friends.

Q: Well what about one of the elements, the _____ was not quite absorbed, the Jews; was this-

TAYLOR: There was already a 12 percent quota on the Jewish students, and they did represent a very, very powerful voice. Most of them, though, were pre-med; only a few of them were going to go, at that time, into law or finance or things like that. Most were pre-med. And that was another clique. But actually, as it turned out, one of my roommates sophomore year was Jewish and I still hear from him, Erwin Berg. We were all so different and we were all so focused on ourselves and on excelling and making something. I mean, the ambition was just so extreme there, to succeed. TAYLOR: We can finish off Harvard if you want. I don't know.

Q: How about McCarthyism? Was this something-?

TAYLOR: McCarthyism was something that you felt at Harvard. Harvard was just picked out as being a hotbed of communism.

Q: Well, the Harvard Crimson and all that.

TAYLOR: Yes, sure. Dr. Conant was so courageous and firm about this. Freshman year there was the big campaign between Adlai Ewing Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower, the '52 campaign, which was a watershed. And I remember just thinking that Adlai Stevenson was the greatest guy that had ever come along. I mean he represented a patrician refinement. When he spoke, I mean, it was Churchillian.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And he came to Harvard several times. At that time Massachusetts was not a Democratic state by any means; we had Senator Saltonstall and Senator Lodge as the two senators from Massachusetts. But he would always come with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, and he was a Unitarian, I guess, Stevenson, and the Unitarian church was right across the street from Strauss Hall, and so we had a great view of it. But he gave two really good foreign policy speeches, both at Harvard that year. He really captivated the school.

This was a period, too, when all of your professors – they would excuse themselves and say – I remember we had one old guy, the professor of government, his name was William Yandell Elliott, he taught Government I. He says I must go to Washington and testify before blah, blah, blah. I shall not be back for several weeks. In the meantime, you are to do this, read this; your section man will take charge of the lecture. Then we had a guy named Carl Liner, who was my history professor, he says I must go to Bonn, to help write the new German constitution.

Q: Liner wrote one of the major textbooks in American history.

TAYLOR: Yes. And off he would go. You know, these people were paid to be professors and obviously it meant very little to them. They had their tenure and they did, basically, what they wanted. But we always thought, well, is this what we're paying for?

As I told you, Conant left to go to Bonn, as ambassador, and then Nathan Pusey, came in as president. He was from Appleton, Wisconsin, and he was not the forceful character that Conant was. Harvard under Pusey sort of drifted a little bit from the stricter standards or the higher standards the evolved.

Looking back on it, you were so totally immersed in trying to make grades. I really wanted to graduate with honors, which fortunately I got cum laude. By the end of my sophomore year I switched to American history and really, really took off. I had some Samuel Eliot Morison; do you remember him?

Q: Oh yes. I've got his "History of United States Naval Operations in World War II."

TAYLOR: He taught us pre-Revolutionary history and the Revolutionary War. But he insisted that all of his classes be held at Harvard Hall, which is the old, really, I guess there at the time right after John Harvard, but he was incredible. At this time we had to wear coats and ties at all times when we were out of our rooms, no blue jeans and you know those crew neck sweaters we used to wear back in those days? I don't know whether they wear them anymore but Morison, could look in the back of the room and you might have a crew neck on and, you know, how would he know whether you had a tie on. He could spot someone and said go up, get it, keep motioning until the guy got up and walked to the front of the room. Morison had this fifth drawer full of ties. The guy would have to stand there and tie his tie in front of everyone. And he said, now, you are going to remember that when you come to my course you must look like a gentleman. I mean, this is 1950s and I thought who would dream of such a situation, particularly at Harvard now, where all they wear is blue jeans and tee shirts.

But also I got into the Hasty Pudding Club, Hasty Pudding Institute of 1770, which sounds like a snobbish little group.

Q: It's dramatic, isn't it?

TAYLOR: It's mostly dramatic, musicals, and a place to go, have a drink. And I made some friends there and it looked good on the résumé, I guess. But I really enjoyed the last couple of years.

Looking at my group, lots and lots went down to Wall Street, a lot of them into finance. But a lot, too, it seemed like there were more and more people going into education; getting their Masters, their PhDs and then being teachers. I mean, in my class, I think 10 of the major universities in the United States ended up having classmates as president who I'd gone to Harvard with. In my own class at Harvard, also, we had five ambassadors, the class of '56, which is a hell of a lot. We just had our fiftieth reunion a couple of years ago and five of us had made ambassador, out of one class, which is a lot.

And there were at least four or five, possible more, who had gone into the Foreign Service.

Q: Well did you find, do you think they disabused you about the Foreign Service?

TAYLOR: No. The more I found out about it the more I just knew that this was what I really, really wanted. I mean, this wanderlust, for one thing. I was just enamored with it.

Q: Well, being in American history I would have thought you would have gone for, you know, European history or something like that.

TAYLOR: At Harvard you had to pick a major and the major was what you were going to write your thesis in if you were going to do honors. I had no German, my French was weak. To do European history and to write a thesis I would have had to have been a lot more fluent in a foreign language than I was. And so, I mean, per force I went into American history. We had a great old professor and this, I'm sure of, is a man you probably never heard of. His name is Frederick Merck. Do you remember? He was the student – Frederick Jackson Turner, the Westward Movement.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: Turner had taught at Harvard and Merck was his anointed apostle. And he taught a great course on American history.

But I wrote my thesis on "Southern Attitudes Toward American Imperialism from the Sobourn Crisis to the Spanish American War." And the three readers gave me pretty good marks and as I say, I graduated with honors. My professor, the fellow who helped me with my thesis, was named May; he later became a fairly well known professor over there.

Q: Ernest May?

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: Oh yes, he's well known.

TAYLOR: But even though Harvard had widened their library the sources for my paper, which was about the South, were really not there and it was only thanks to May that we were able to get stuff up from the Library of Congress, which had some of the papers of those senators and congressmen involved. It was really a sterile exercise as I look back at it. It was mostly reading from the Congressional records and to plow through those things so much of it is just total rhetoric, oratory, to try to get to the substance of what they're saying.

During my time at Harvard too, the biggest thing, looking back on the social history of the time was, I guess it was, what year was it that segregation was overthrown by the Supreme Court? Brown versus Board of Education.

Q: 1954.

TAYLOR: I remember it was very warm and I heard the news and it seemed like such a huge event. But you know, we've talked about race relations in Little Rock and Crockett and my intermingling with blacks, you know. There was one black in my entire house at Harvard, a house is sort of like a college of Yale but Lowell House; one token black when I was there. I think that's just astounding.

Q: The McCarthy period was something that still sticks with me today. We didn't- I came into the Foreign Service in '55.

TAYLOR: Was Stassen around then?

Q: Stassen was around but was-

TAYLOR: Because he was pretty evil, too.

Q: There wasn't much about him but Dulles was the secretary of state and he was sort of renowned for calling for positive patriotism which seemed- he was seen not to take a very firm stand against McCarthyism and that I think most of us in the Foreign Service looked down upon him.

TAYLOR: Well, this is leaping ahead; my wife's father, Everett Bellows, we'll talk about him later because he's been a big influence on our life, but he was with the Marshall Plan during this period, working for Harriman in Paris. Harold Stassen was the head of what was then AID (United States Agency for International Development) and was a very, very ruthless person, going after so-called left wingers, homosexuals, you name it. And it was called Stassenization.

Q: Well, I've heard people were Stassenated.

TAYLOR: Stassenated, exactly. And my father-in-law, he was sort of an accolade of a guy named John Peurifoy.

Q: He was ambassador to Thailand.

TAYLOR: Among other places. But Peurifoy had been very high in the director general's office too. And because of my father-in-law's relationship with Peurifoy and the protection of State Department rights, you're not going to fire people indiscriminately; he was put on their list.

I mean, it was a dirty, evil period; it really was.

Q: It was, oh yes.

TAYLOR: I was not interested in college politics nor was I really, really interested in national politics. I had made up my mind that despite having my asthma I was going to serve in the United States, come hell or high water, or in the military service, in case I wanted to hold open the option of eventually going into politics. I felt that unless you had been in the military you probably, at least running in Crockett or somewhere down there, you better forget it. One of my buddies, a guy named Charlie Wilson, from the neighboring town of Trinity eventually came to Congress. You've probably seen the movie, "Charlie Wilson's War." Well, he was one of my drinking buddies from high school.

But I don't know, looking back on my life, Harvard was one of the profoundest forces for good and for expansion and for being the person that I've become, that happened. I mean, it was just a wonderful thing.

Q: I mean, it's possible for somebody to go there and come out very resentful and felt they'd been put down.

TAYLOR: No, I just felt that it opened up – I mean, thousands of new views and vistas. It was just such a wonderful experience. I mean, literally. And even today I think, I mean, I hear a Brahms symphony and I think gosh, thanks to Harvard I know how to listen to it.

Q: You graduated in 19-?

TAYLOR: Fifty-six.

Q: Fifty-six. And whither?

TAYLOR: Then I went to the University of Virginia Law School in Charlottesville.

Q: Today is the 6th of May, 2009, with Rush Taylor. Did you have any idea what you wanted to do?

TAYLOR: That was the problem. I was totally lost. I felt, leaving Harvard, that I was really, really being put out into the cold, cruel world and I wasn't at all prepared for it. And two things had happened. You would think that, well, at 21 and graduating from Harvard would be sort of top of the world but it was very disquieting, disconcerting. I had applied for a Rhodes Scholarship at Harvard during the winter only to go down to Texas and lost to a guy named Willie Morris, who became quite famous later as an author; he wrote "North Towards Home," and he was editor of "The Atlantic Monthly" and many other things; eventually taught English literature at the University of Mississippi.

So that sort of took the wind out of my sails, not winning. Then I said well surely that guy from Harvard is going to beat somebody from the University of Texas. But it didn't

work out that way. And second, in the spring of my senior year at Harvard, my father said you better get on the ball and decide what you're going to do for the rest of your life. And so I, sort of at the last possible moment, said I'm going to take the LSATs and maybe go to law school. Well, I took them but I was totally unprepared; I think I had gotten drunk the night before and stayed out too late, among other things, and was barely able to run from Lowell House, where I lived, up to a place, I think they gave the exams up in Radcliffe, which is way the hell across Cambridge. So in any event I screwed that up and my LSATs were very, very low. I didn't get into Harvard Law School so I went to the University of Virginia Law School instead.

I got this job working for a congressman, Congressman Dowdy, John Dowdy, of Texas. When I was a kid in junior high school down there he had been the district attorney and would travel around East Texas doing mostly murder trials and some of my buddies and I used to go off to the courthouse after school and sit in. I don't know why they let us in; some of them were pretty salacious. But in any event, Dowdy gave me a job on the condition that weekends I would come up and help him with getting campaign literature out, you know, just grunt work. And so the summer passed pretty fast.

Q: What had happened to this ambition that got you into Harvard?

TAYLOR: I felt like, frankly, that I wasn't ready to take the Foreign Service exam. I mean, what did I have to offer? And this was still Eisenhower; I mean, the Foreign Service hadn't started the big expansion that it was going to.

Well, I just wasn't ready to make that commitment at that time. So I spent the summer in Washington, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and in the fall went down to UVA. And the next three years, it reminds me of something out of a 19th Century novel, where a young man just really, really plows away his life, lives the good life on the support of his mother and father and doesn't really accomplish a darn thing.

I got down to Charlottesville and I got into a fairly fast, wealthy crowd. My father got me a car, it was only the second automobile I had, but I spent all the time on the road down to Randolph-Macon Women's College or Sweetbriar College for Young Women, which is basically a finishing school, and drinking and just totally debauching.

Q: University of Virginia had a reputation of being "the" party school.

TAYLOR: Oh, it was. And my roommates and I got a carriage house at one of the biggest mansions in Albemarle County; it was owned by Dr. Julio Suarez Yelban; his family had made fortunes in Cuba in the sugar trade back in the '20s and before and were smart enough to sell out before the collapse of '29, took their money and came to the United States. And this guy taught Spanish literature, classic Spanish literature at UVA. He married this gold digger wife from Alabama who had pretensions of leading the social world in Charlottesville, which they did. But anyway, this enormous house, it looked like a version of the governor's palace in Williamsburg and sat in Farmington Country Club.

Do you know anything about Charlottesville? Farmington is this really, really ultra swank golf course/country club thing. Well, I mean, we would go to polo games and ride horses and William Faulkner and his wife, he was the writer in residence, would come over for dinner and we would all- Mrs. Yelban sort of treated us like part of the family. But it just totally ruined me. I mean, here I was living like a little prince and forgetting law school. I mean, occasionally I would see some of my classmates; Teddy Kennedy was in my class. He had been kicked out of Harvard, as you know, earlier for allegedly cheating on a Spanish exam. Another one of my roommates was John Tunney, who later became senator from California, who was really a great guy. But it was really three years' waste.

Q: Well, let's talk just a bit about the law school. Did you go to class?

TAYLOR: I went to class and quite frankly the first year you only have exams, so to speak. You start in September, you go through May and then that's the exams that count. Well they had practice exams which we took in January and I came out in the top five of my class without even cracking a book. I mean, it was just that I didn't need to study, I thought. But, by getting too conceited and so self-confident I found that by not really reading the cases and quite frankly daydreaming through, I found the law so anathema to everything I felt. I didn't like the procedural parts of law; it reminded me of Dickens. Everything was stacked against what I considered was justice and truth.

Q: Sort of Little Dorrit on TV and the Department of Circum-

TAYLOR: Locution.

Q: -locution, you know, with stuff piling on the spiral staircase. I mean, nothing came out of it.

TAYLOR: Well the procedural thing is just a conundrum. I mean, if you don't go this route, I mean, you're lost in the maze and you have to go back. But also things like property law. I just found it unjust. And we took criminal law; constitutional law was sort of fun, I enjoyed that. But I didn't like it and I said God almighty, this convinces me I'm going to go in the Foreign Service. But my father was the sort of person that once you start something you're going to finish it. So he knew I was goofing off but he said I was going to go through with it, which I did, and three years later they came up to Charlottesville and saw me get another degree, for what it was worth. At that time I was really in a bind because my draft board back in Texas had been after me for quite some time; they were really out to get me. I wasn't rich, in any sense of the word, but from the standard of Crockett, Texas, we were living pretty well, I guess. There were people on the board who really, really had their eyes out. And I could have, quite frankly, gotten a waiver or something, because I had asthma. I could have gone to Dr. Dean, the local allergist down there and said hey come on, just tell them I'm not suitable. But I said, hey Taylor, maybe some day you might want to go into politics and it will look good if you have military service.

So I applied for the Marine Corps, officers training, and they said no way, not with your medical, you can't be an officer in the Marine Corps. And by this time the draft board said you are wanted and you're drafted. So here I find myself, what was it, three, four, five months after finishing law school, I'm on a troop train heading out to Houston, Texas, out to Camp Carson, Colorado, and so right on the slopes of Pikes Peak. There's a big hotel, the Broadmoor, out there but Camp Carson was hell on earth. And we get out there, first thing they shave our heads and you know, just, I mean, it was a shock. I'd never been around that many people; I mean, we slept something like 100 to a room, and it was, you know, you had to wait for a shower for 30 minutes and you were always late. And basic training consisted of getting up very early in the morning and doing your PT (physical therapy) and then you were sweaty but it was so damn cold that your clothes all froze and you would eat some hot soup or something and then you would start doing these classes. And that area up there, these little mesas would sort of appear out of nowhere on the ground; each one of our classes was on a different mesa, and by the time we would get out there to start studying – to whatever the class was, bayonet training or whatever, your canteen was frozen, you couldn't drink unless you heated it. This was December in Colorado and it was God awful. Fortunately this black kid from Houston and I became friends and that son of a gun, I mean, he saw I was suffering and so many times he said come on Taylor, he said let me help you with your backpack. We would make these 20 mile marches – thank God for him. And for a long, long time I kept in touch; I don't know what happened to him.

But finally we got through basic training. They were going to assign me to a place called Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri, which was a total hell hole. And I got my father to call up a friend of his, he was a friend of another congressman from East Texas, and got him to call the Pentagon. I got to go to something called special troops in Heidelberg, which sounded pretty good, and actually it was. It was the first time I'd been to Europe.

Q: Well you got to Europe, what was your-

TAYLOR: Rank?

Q: What were the dates of your time in the military?

TAYLOR: Let's see. I started Fort Carson – Camp Carson it was then, in late November, early December of 1960. And I got out of the military in December of '62, and started the Foreign Service in January of-

Q: Before we talk more about the military, I just want to catch one thing. The election of 1960 was quite an important one in American – this is Kennedy/Nixon. How did you feel about- Were you and your family engaged in this?

TAYLOR: My parents very much supported John Kennedy because Kennedy had spoken at my graduation at Harvard in 1956 and like Barack Obama today he was a really great orator and had a good speechwriter. And he just inspired confidence and was handsome. We were totally for Kennedy. But I was in Germany while the campaign was going on.

The place I stayed in Heidelberg was an old former SS barracks, just fantastic. It must have been built in the time of Kaiser Wilhelm because, I mean, stained glass windows and oak; it looked sort of like Harvard. And I remember most of my time in Heidelberg, because I was six foot-two, I was picked out to be in something called special troops, which meant that I was on parade duty most of the time, and if you weren't on parade duty you were over at the gym lifting weights. And we used to go around with these lard buckets or coffee cans where you put your trousers in your boots. Well you wanted to make like you had huge calves, calf muscles, so they would put these tin cans that had been hollowed out in there and so you looked really big. We had chromium helmets and the whole thing was just standing around sort of looking like toy soldiers.

And that was fine, as far as it goes. I mean, you got tired of going to the gym but at least at nights you were more or less free and Heidelberg was a great place to go. There were a lot of American tourists there, young women from Ivy League schools passing through. And by that time, you know, you didn't have to wear your uniform at night so, I mean, I had civilian clothes. The great thing that happened to me was that one day, I guess it was right after the Kennedy election, we got word from the personnel people, they said Taylor, we've looked you up on the computer or whatever and you speak French and blah, blah, blah, and we're sending you down to Geneva, Switzerland, for something called the Seventeen National Conference on Laos. Averell Harriman is going to lead the U.S. delegation and you're going to be working as a grunt for the American delegation there.

So I left Heidelberg by train in May of '61 and went to Geneva. Because Switzerland was neutral we couldn't wear military uniforms so I was able to order about 600 bucks of clothing. Our job was really to go and select telegrams and just be gophers. And there was a lady in there named Hildegard Shishkin, who was Governor Harriman's personal assistant, special assistant. She had been with the Marshall Plan back in Paris and Miss Shishkin took a liking to me. She would have these sort of cocktail parties, asking the senior members of the delegation to come by. I was always invited and Governor Harriman was there and I got to know him. And he became ill during the thing and I would go and not just deliver his telegrams. He was staying, the whole delegation, we were at the Hotel Jerome, which is right down in the fashionable part, near the chateau. I'd go and read his telegrams to him in the morning and he was still in his dressing gown, having breakfast and whatnot. But one day he said, Taylor, he said you know, what do you plan to do with your life? You ought to get an education and maybe try something like the Foreign Service. And I said, well, Governor, I already have a Harvard degree and UVA Law School. And he said, well, look. He said the Foreign Service board of examiners I know are going to be here in Europe. Kennedy was really trying to get more people into the Foreign Service. And he said they're coming to London and why don't I see – we'll get you over there? And I said well great. And I got to know Marie Harriman, you know, the lady, his first wife, who was an art collector and on weekends sometimes I would go with her. She had been in Switzerland with her children prior to World War II. For some reason she had left cribs and baby clothes and I don't know what, but we went

on these searches to try to find some of the stuff from that period. But they really were awfully nice and Governor Harriman- Did you know him?

Q: No.

TAYLOR: God, what a gentleman. I mean, he was just superb. And at any event, I did go off to London that summer and took the oral exam and passed and by, what, November was getting ready to go back to the United States and go into the Foreign Service.

Q: You had to take the oral you had to take the written exam.

TAYLOR: I had taken the written, actually, in Bonn, before I went off to Geneva, and had passed that.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions when you took the oral exam?

TAYLOR: Yes, I do. The first one was, well Taylor, you're in London and we're interested in the Hanoverian Monarchy and you're been serving over there in Germany. Can you tell us how the fact that George the First was a Hanoverian, how that changed the ascendancy of Parliament, of the king and all that? And of course it was obvious the king didn't speak very good English. And what else? They said we notice that you're an Episcopalian and could you tell us about the Reformation with Henry the Eighth? I mean, why this comes up on a Foreign Service exam?

Q: Well, they'd never touch it now with a ten foot pole today, anything dealing with religion, but in those days you could.

TAYLOR: And, I mean, that was a fairly easy one. What else did they want to know? There had been a hijacking of a Portuguese- Admiral Delgado, a Portuguese admiral had hijacked a Portuguese naval vessel and tried to take it to Brazil. They wanted to know what the situation with Salazar was in Portugal and how was it that the United States could have a fascist dictatorship like Portugal be part of NATO. They were really fairly easy questions. One thing they really, really avoided was politics, American domestic politics. I mean, they were really, really wary of that one. They asked me a couple of cultural type questions, you know, try to differentiate between, I think it was Handle and Schuman; I forget but it was things that, quite frankly I was baffled as to what any of this had to do with-

Q: Well, you know, the exam, I think it probably basically remains the same. They want to see how you conduct yourself. You know, can you put things together and can you accept challenges and if you don't know, can you admit it. You know that sort of thing. That's what they're really after because supposedly the written exam says you know a lot of stuff and so they want to see how you handle yourself, really.

TAYLOR: Well Harriman told me, he said, dress your preppiest, or something like that and I was already preppy anyway so that part was alright. But it took place at our embassy there, on Grosvenor Square?

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And that was a pretty impressive place to be at the time and walking in there, I said, God, this looks really, really good.

And I remember afterward, as a sort of good luck thing, I decided to take a taxi and I went to St. Paul's Cathedral, and they were having some sort of an afternoon service so I guess it was Evensong and it was sung – Evensong in the dome. It's so fantastic. I had such good vibes out there, well, I've got it, and literally within I guess the next day I heard that I'd passed. So the big thing now was to get the hell out of the Army and out of Germany and back to Washington to start my Foreign Service class.

So I came back to the United States and spent a few weeks with my family in Crockett and then came up to Washington to start my A-100 course. The two guys that taught this course, our section of it, was a man named Thomas Jefferson Duffield and the other was Chester Beaman. And I'll be perfectly frank, seeing those guys, you would think that they maybe managed the local Woolworth's back in Crockett. They didn't have any couth. One of them had been consul in Port Said. I know that's all he could talk about and talking about entertaining in Port Said. The other one had been vice consul or consul at our consulate in Saigon during the French period.

And these guys, I'm coming across as a snob, maybe that's what I am, but their dress, their demeanor, I was so put off and disappointed.

Q: Well let me ask you a question. You've gotten this far; you're just a kid from Crockett, East Texas; you end up at Harvard, you go to the University of Virginia Law School, you're dealing with the Harrimans and all; who were you by the time you got into the Foreign Service?

TAYLOR: I was a split personality. I was going around with some of the richest people in the United States, both at Harvard and UVA, and yet I was from – I mean, it's not that we were dirt poor back in Crockett but we certainly…

One of my Foreign Service early bosses, the DCM (deputy chief of mission) in my first post said Taylor, you've got a bit of a chip on your shoulder and says, you've got to work on that. But I don't know, I was a kid that had been ridiculed at Harvard as a freshman because I wore Levis and cowboy boots and a big silver buckle. And I quickly saw that in this world on the East Coast you've got to play the game.

You were two people. And even accents. I mean, when I would go home I had to have this very southern accent and when I was at Washington, UVA, up in this area, I was more of the Harvard accent.

So our class, this A-100 class, I think we had more ambassadors than probably any class-

Q: Well, who were some of the people in your class?

TAYLOR: Well, you know, probably the most impressive ones were not really the ones that eventually became the most famous. Frank Wisner, for example, was in our class. And Frank was this real small, little rich mama's boy. And no one thought that he was going to do anything. There were a number of people that you thought might succeed but at that time we were sort of, I don't know, we had no concept of what it took to get ahead. And I remember the first trip we took, we went over to see the McCormick Spice place over in Baltimore, which was to introduce us to the foreign commercial service sort of thing. Then we went up to the United Nations and our big deal there, the big speech was the Cypriot ambassador to the UN, which to me was sort of a real letdown. I mean, God, they could have done better than this. So the whole Foreign Service training, to me, was just rotten. I mean, didn't really do very much except, I don't know, it was sort of alienating.

One of the things about having been in Geneva for that conference is President and Mrs. Kennedy, well, the President, after Paris, he came to Geneva and then they went off to Vienna, I think it was, where they saw Khrushchev. But God, what a guy. He was just so impressive. And as I told you, I'd known Teddy, his brother, while at UVA. And we just thought that the United States can do and will – I mean, we ruled the world. It was a very, very heady time and it was fun to be, at least I thought it was, to be part of this. I mean, as a lowly member, albeit.

Q: You said you found the consular training good.

TAYLOR: It was excellent. I mean, really, really nuts and bolts. How to do things so that, I mean, if you ended up, as I did, in Yaounde, Cameroon, as a vice consul, you knew exactly what to do and I mean, it was just, after that other what I considered a waste of time of the A-100, this was really, really useful. I still remember some of it.

Q: Where did you want to go?

TAYLOR: I wanted to go to French speaking Africa, Francophone Africa. For one thing I wanted to get French under my belt. And two, here again, it was all of these new little countries; I mean, Chad and Togo and Cameroon and places like that. No one had ever heard of them. It was just a new frontier. So I had decided early that that's what I wanted.

I was told by, actually by one guy, that probably I should have listened to, that I should have picked Vietnam, which maybe I should but I didn't. But the consular course was good; I went to French training. And here comes a part of the Foreign Service that has dogged me ever since. I selected to go to Yaounde for – it's called Central Complement Officer. They would put you in one section two years, you would do political, economic, consular, admin, I guess, yes. And I got this wire back, telegram saying do not come as

planned in late August. We do not have housing and the other person, Allen Holmes, who I kept following through my entire career, who became ambassador to Portugal, he and his wife are still here. So until they leave we don't have housing. I mean, it was just bungling. I decided instead of flying down, there was one old TWA thing that I think went all the way down to Leopoldville or Kinshasa about once a week. I took a steamship out of New Orleans and shipped my little car, and it took me eight weeks. We went from New Orleans to Halifax, Nova Scotia. We stopped at Cape Fear. You name it. I mean, I went down the coast to Madingo-Kayes in Congo, or whatever. I wish to hell I had done that trip before I read "Moby Dick" at Harvard because I really had an idea, a really good idea of the horrors of being at sea and the people that worked on that damn tramp steamer were truly people out of Herman Melville. It was harrowing. But also the missionaries were on it.

We had missionaries who were also aboard the thing. It was something out of Catherine Ann Porter's "Ship of Fools." It was a great experience. I wouldn't want to repeat it.

We stopped at a little place called Santa Isabella Fernando Po. And Fernando Po and Rio Moony were two little Spanish enclaves near Cameroon. We sailed into Santa Isabella, it must have been around 7:00 in the morning. It's a volcanic island, and right across the straits is Mount Cameroon, which is an enormous thing, and everything, with the sunrise, was pink and aqua and light blue and green; it was, I mean, you couldn't imagine it, it was so beautiful, it was just incredible. And Santa Isabella at the time was a sleepy little Spanish provincial city with tiles and a little cathedral and, oh, just something else.

In any event, we sailed from there over to Douala where I got off the boat. Our vice consul met the boat and got my car off. And then it was by train from Douala up to Yaounde.

Q: Yaounde being the capital of-

TAYLOR: Of Cameroon. And the ambassador to Cameroon at the time was a guy named Leland Barrows, who had also been with the Marshall Plan and had been something of an economist. A lot of these Marshall Plan people seem to have been brought in.

Q: Right at the beginning it was the place where they rewarded the European types. It didn't work out too well because most of them really weren't up to Yaounde after the halls of Paris, you know.

TAYLOR: I'll tell you. This guy, he and his wife were something out of Grant Wood, American Gothic.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: Standing there with a pitchfork. I mean, they looked like it and they acted like it. They both were Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Kansas, but they had really never picked up the savoir faire. They were fish out of water in Cameroon. And their

DCM was a guy named Moffly, I forget his first name, but he was from a Philadelphia family and had gone to Haverford or some such place. But he had been Consul General in Turin and married to some really attractive young American model 30 years younger than him. Charlie Moffly was his name. But Moffly and the Barrows didn't like each other particularly and the entire embassy was sort of dysfunctional. No one seemed to know why we were there or what we were supposed to be doing. And I thought to myself – I was parked, for the first five or six months, in the consular section; at least I had a job. I mean, I could issue visas and I could go to weddings of missionaries up in the interior or wherever and give them documentation or birth certificates for children. But most of the other people were just sort of wandering around looking for a raison d'être. And I was so bored I volunteered to teach English at the USIA (United States Information Agency) at night.

Q: Well you were hitting the place at a time – there'd been a famous trip a year, a couple of years before with Loy Henderson, who was our senior Foreign Service officer, went around – all these African countries were becoming decolonized and a decision was made, we are going to have somebody in each one because the thought had been maybe we can put something in Dakar, which is how we used to have it when there was all colonial.

TAYLOR: Exactly, yes. Dakar and Brazzaville were-

Q: Yes, yes. And you know, they could kind of do it. But the decision was made at that time, not long or not much earlier than when you arrived, to have somebody in every place, to have the flag in each place.

TAYLOR: Well, we had an embassy that would have served a country the size of Portugal. I mean, everything was there; AID mission, USIA, and just two people in the political section, for God's sake, economic promotional counselor.

Q: Well what was the sort of political economic situation in the Cameroon at the time?

TAYLOR: The political situation was nil. The French had turned it over to a guy named Ahmadou Ahidjo, who was from the northern part of the country. He had immediately wiped out any semblance of democratic representative rule. And the French supported him to the hilt because they were supplying all the money for, really, to keep the government running and they pulled the strings. And the French ambassador was this arrogant little Napoleon who resented like hell having this huge American mission; he was very, very suspicious, as well he might be. What the hell are these Americans doing in here?

Q: Yes, this was certainly a period we went through for some time-

TAYLOR: For too long, too long.

Q: You know, just trying to figure out-

TAYLOR: What was our reason to be there?

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And I'm not sure we've still even figured it out now.

Q: Still, no.

TAYLOR: But I remember that a lot of the young junior officers were getting into trouble, too, politically. They felt that they had to go out and do some political reporting. By doing political reporting they were really inciting not unrest but political agitation and getting PNG'd (persona non grata). So, I mean, you were damned if you do and damned if you don't.

But I loved the consular part and I did it so well that I was sent down to our little post in Libreville, Gabon. It was completely screwed up in the consular section. They said, Taylor, we need you down here for at least six weeks to help. The other man had either gotten sick or had some sexual problem, something, he left. But when I got there there were literally waste baskets full of stuff that hadn't been acted on, you know, really, it's not crucial business but it was crucial to the people that it involved, people who wanted visas or any other thing that a consular officer can and should be doing. And it wasn't that difficult; it was just so damn time consuming. So I was working 10 hours a day just trying to get through the backlog and clean that mess up. And there again, we had another ambassador, Ambassador Darlington, who was a businessman from Massachusetts. He and his wife were very sweet and nice, and I'm not saying that Leland Barrows and Irene Barrows were not sweet and nice either; they were good people. They just didn't seem to have a clue as to what they were supposed to be doing.

Q: Well, one has to look at the era. It took us and in a way it should have been apparent to all, you know, a couple of decades to develop an Africa corps in the Foreign Service.

TAYLOR: It really did.

Q: We had been running Africa out of Dakar and Kenya, I guess, and South Africa, and that's pretty much it.

TAYLOR: Yes. One of the guys in Embassy Yaounde who really was good was Dick Matheron. He went on to be ambassador to Swaziland. They had sent him to either UCLA (University of California-Los Angeles) or Stanford, which had an African Studies program, and he had really profited and got to understand tribalism and some of the problems that were really just below the surface. And another guy was John Blane, who was later our ambassador to Chad. Both of them were really fine officers. But I'll tell you, there was just a lot of – I was a bachelor, there was a lot of drinking, there was a lot of sleeping around, a lot of hanky panky that, you know, in today's Foreign Service, man, I'm sure it wouldn't exist or be condoned.

And one of the things that happened while I was there, of course, was the assassination of President Kennedy. I was taking a shower and on VOA (Voice of America) I heard the news from Dallas that President Kennedy had been shot and they didn't know yet whether he was dead. I was transfixed. I got out of the shower, started getting dressed and it said he's dead. I went to a cocktail party at the home of a colleague and told the ambassador and I mean, he was just, couldn't believe it. You're making this up. And no, Mr. Ambassador, the President has been killed, shot, assassinated. So the party just ended. We went, some of us, to Ambassador Barrow's residence and had been there only about 15 minutes when we hear all these sirens coming and policemen on motorcycles and here comes President Ahidjo, and he came in and he was weeping, the president of Cameroon. He said I cannot believe this, he said, you know, he was our hope. He was the world's hope. And he said I cannot believe this has happened. And he says, ooh, where is Tex-as and all this sort of thing and Barrows was trying to explain to him, and he said well Rush there is a Texan. He looked at me like well.

Q: You're one of those tribals.

TAYLOR: Yes, watch this guy. But I mean, it was so moving to see this guy, he was a young Muslim leader, very charismatic, very good looking, beautiful wife, and he was crying about the death of our president.

Q: Well I was in Yugoslavia and it had the same effect there.

TAYLOR: With the communists?

Q: With the communists. The whole sort of Politburo was at the Catholic cathedral in Belgrade, which they never would have gone to at any other time. Flags were half mast all over Yugoslavia.

TAYLOR: We had a memorial service at the Yaounde cathedral, the archbishop led the mass. Yaounde at that time was a city, a very small little town, of about 60,000 and there must have been 10,000 people gathered in and around.

Q: It's hard for those who haven't experienced to understand the depth of this. It was a world event.

TAYLOR: Oh, it was totally.

Q: I mean, all over. It was not an American limited thing.

TAYLOR: And you just felt so lost. I mean, my God, why? And I remember sending a personal telegram to Teddy Kennedy and getting a very, very nice reply back. So that really knocked us flat.

And then I developed some sort of a problem with, I don't know, I was not eating properly and I'm sure that the servants at my house were not using the sanitary procedures that they should have but anyhow, I got pretty sick and was evacuated with some sort of intestinal problems up to a military hospital in Frankfurt. And came on back and things went along and just waiting to get out of there and to my post, whatever it was going to be.

Q: Well, just talk a bit about the French. I mean, were you, if nothing else, an observer of the French and how they deal with Africa or not?

TAYLOR: The French policy was that this is ours. This is our backyard. I mean, you people, you Americans, you are free to do what you wish in the Caribbean, in South America, but this is for us. And you don't forget it.

And our assistance, our economic assistance, was so miserably small in comparison to what they were doing. Of course, I mean, they would give these grants, the assistance, aid to the Cameroonians but the Cameroonians had to spend every cent of it in France for French products. But the French system controlled everything that that government did; they had no wiggle room, particularly in the economic realm. One of the things that I was so critical about with our ambassador; I don't know whether you've ever heard of a man named, I think his name is Pechu. He was one of the leading ministers in the Petain government, collaborationist with Hitler's regime. He had just sold out to Germany during the Vichy era. His son had fled or had sought refuge in Yaounde. He had this big villa right outside of Yaounde, where he would entertain. Because he was totally ostracized by the French the only people who would accept his invitation were Americans and maybe a few, well Germans, Italians. But our ambassador and his wife just became totally, I don't know, creatures of this guy and it was just so disgusting. I mean, if you knew anything about him and his family, to see an American ambassador in bed with the family of a Nazi collaborator.

But in any event, time passed relatively quickly and I was getting ready to go when all of a sudden we had the news that we were going to get a Foreign Service inspection team. Things were not going well in Libreville; well, I told you about the consular fiasco down there and trying to clean that up. The only post that we had in that area that was really, really well run was Bangui, over in the Central African Republic. And we had a guy named Tony Ross who was their ambassador. Have you ever heard of Tony Ross?

Q: Oh yes.

TAYLOR: Oh God; what a splendid, wonderful gentleman, and his wife, Andrea. I had really good friends from my class back here at FSI who had drawn that as their first post and it was night and day. Tony and Andrea had spent some time in Africa before; I think he had been vice consul in Guinea, Guinea Conakry; he'd been in Dakar. They were the first of the African hands. But their embassy was inclusive. They really got out and tried to, I mean, the French would snub them but they didn't care. They were just wonderful, vital people and even though their government was even more corrupt than ours, the

Bangui government, they did make a difference, particularly on the cultural side. Our cultural events were sort of sterile. The head of our cultural affairs office in Yaounde was the most racist, anti-white guy, and had a terrible chip on his shoulder. Once I bummed a ride with him; I was told to go to the foreign ministry and pick up something, and I said Mr. Powell, may I ride up – he was going too, and I said may I hitch a ride with you? He later told the DCM, he says you know, Taylor pushed himself into the car and I don't know, made such a big deal out of it. But he didn't like the fact that I was teaching English, which he thought, perhaps being a Southerner or something I was racially prejudiced. It was just a bunch of crap. Everyone knew that the guy was a terrible, terrible racist, and God only knows what became of him.

Q: But he was black.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: Which was more or less an oddity at the time. Well, were you regretting your – or did you see light at the end of the tunnel?

TAYLOR: You know, quite frankly, at that age I was having fun. I mean, Don Long and I were carousing and I was going with my French group for bridge. I liked sightseeing in Africa, I went to all sorts of places.

Near the end and before the inspection which was coming up, one of our secretaries was going home. We gave her a big, big party. On the plane that she took was on was our courier, the American courier. We were having some very serious trouble in the Congo at the time. That plane took off. Several hours later the ambassador called me and said, I'm sending you to Douala immediately, on the next train down there. The plane has crashed into Mount Cameroon on takeoff from Douala. So I got down there. Wingate Lloyd and I were told that we were to go up there and find the courier's bags because there was some very sensitive material in them. Mount Cameroon is one of the highest mountains in West Africa and it is jungle from the bottom almost to the very tiptop. So Wingate and I had gotten a party of Africans together to help us get up to the top. It took us a day and a half, camping out, and it was brutally hot and wet and horrible. The Africans were hacking a way for us to get up there. When we finally reached the plane site the plane was intact, it had not gone into flame. All of the bodies had gone into terrible decomposition, the smell was awful, the bloating was horrible. And we found our courier. Someone had cut the straps and the diplomatic bag was gone. And the supposition was that the French had gotten there before us. How, I don't know, but it was very, very odd.

And then my next task was to identify Nicole, the young secretary who was going home on home leave. And thank God I had gone to the airport in Yaounde to see her off because I remember exactly what she was wearing; it was impossible to look at a face and tell but I saw the little plaid thing and she had a little pin, cheap costume jewelry, sort of a star little thing, and I was able to say, we've got to get this body down. So Wingate and I and our group, we had done what we could, the bag was gone, we got her corpse and took her back to the bottom and got her up to Yaounde by train. And damn it, it still

gives me a bad feeling. The State Department was quite willing to ship her body back to the United States for burial but they said no, we're not interested. So we buried her there at the little cemetery in Yaounde, which just, I still can't get it out of my mind.

Q: Yes, I find that incredible.

TAYLOR: I do too, just really, really bad.

Okay, now from the depths of that to something that was one of the great experiences of my Foreign Service career. The inspectors arrived and they were led by a man named Kidder. Have you heard of Ambassador Kidder?

Q: Yes. I interviewed him; he was a long, long time ago.

TAYLOR: What a delightful – Randy Kidder. And his wife, Dorothy, who was one of the wealthiest women in the United States.

Q: They had an apartment at the Watergate when I interviewed him.

TAYLOR: Oh God, I loved her. She had been the only daughter of the biggest merchant- What's the big department store in Boston?

Q: Sure. It's Filene's, or something.

TAYLOR: Yes. Her family had owned the Filene's Department Store. And she was an only child and Randy Kidder was, I guess, really good looking, well bred, met all the perks so they got married and he went into the Foreign Service and with her money they did very, very well indeed. Well, he was at this point leading this inspection group and for some reason they both just took a maternal, paternal interest in me. They didn't like the Barrows, who were not their cup of tea at all. So instead of hanging out with the DCM and the ambassador, they spent all of their spare time at my place. Ambassador Kidder drank pretty heavily, and at one point went to sleep on the dining table. But God, they were fun and I don't know, it was just a breath of fresh air. And everything just clicked. And they said Rush, where are you thinking about for your next post? I said you know, it's really open. I haven't made up my mind. They said well we've got a place where, we can't tell you now, but we think you're going to really, really, really like it. And within about three weeks after they left I got a telegram saying that I had been chosen to be the special assistant to the American ambassador in Rome, Italy, and that I was to come to Rome after Italian training and, I don't know, taking some courses in NATO or whatever. But I remember, Ambassador Barrows was furious because the code clerk had instead of putting "Rome," he had changed the word and put Lome. And he said well you're going to be special assistant to the ambassador in Lome. And Barrows overreacted, chewed out the communications section. Maybe it was a poor joke, I don't know, but you know, it just showed to me his lack of humor.

I come back to the Foreign Service Institute to study Italian; and I already have French, now Italian. And that was a pretty damn difficult- Have you tried switching your Romance languages? It's not as easy as it might seem.

I got this call from Irene Barrows, saying please call. And I called her up and she said, Rush, Ambassador Barrows and I are staying here in Washington with some old friends from the Marshall Plan days; he is now, this person whom they were staying with, Everett Bellows, is now the senior vice president of the Olin Corporation and they have a house here and an apartment in New York. He is in Australia somewhere but his wife would like to know if you could come to dinner Saturday night; it'll just be en famille, the ambassador, myself, Mrs. Bellows and their daughter Joanna. And sure. I may have given the impression that the Barrows were perhaps worse than they were; they meant well and they were sweet, decent people.

So I'm over Saturday night and I meet one of the most attractive young women, and I'd met a lot of attractive women by that time, and was totally captivated by this daughter of Mrs. Bellows, Joanna Bellows, who had just finished Harvard, Radcliffe, it was – women couldn't go to Harvard then, and who was in the Foreign Service, working for a guy named Bill Crockett in the administrative area. We had dinner and a great time was had by all and Bellows had a beautiful home, which I'm actually now living in, my wife and I. I'm giving away the secret, but Joanna and I, we went downstairs to play pool, in the pool room, and I just thought that she was the greatest young lady. I mean, it was literally love at first sight. And unfortunately, she was leaving to go to, for, I think it was six weeks in India with this group from Crockett's office to do some sort of survey in Madras and all over the place. So we went out, after that we went out for drinks that night and I saw her a couple more times before she left. But man, I was smitten and apparently it was the other way, she was too.

So, to meet a long story short she comes back from India, she cuts her trip short, we go up and stay at her father's apartment up in New York for a couple of weekends and decided to get married before going to Rome. And I remember her father calls us, her father is, by this time, is back from Australia and calls up Ambassador Barrows and said Leland, can you vouch for this young man? I mean, you brought him into my home. And he was really basically putting Barrows on. But Barrows said well, and after a long pause said yes, I would be honored if he were to propose to my daughter and so that was that.

Well the next story, and we will get to that next time, is Italy and one of the saddest, one of the parts of the Foreign Service I really regret was our reception in Rome.

Do you know Freddy Reinhardt?

Q: I know him.

TAYLOR: And his wife, Solie Tootle Reinhardt? That was her name, Solie Tootle. The reason that the Kidders had picked me is because the DCM, Frank Meloy, who is their friend, had been instructed by Mrs. Reinhardt that she wanted a good looking, tall,

unattached aide. Ambassador Reinhardt didn't like to go to the opera, he didn't like to do this, that and the other, and she needed a boy toy escort.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: Well, I arrive with a wife. But that's the next story.

Q: Okay.

TAYLOR: I mean, this really makes the Foreign Service look cheap and tawdry and, I don't know, not as glamorous or as serious as it should be. But this is the way things happen.

Q: Well this is the way things happen. There's a story, and this goes way back, but where our ambassador to Mexico wired the Department and said please send a polo playing third secretary.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: That could happen.

Q: Yes. At the same time people were, you know, going through very difficult times. I mean, sometimes you're up, sometimes you're down and sometimes it's just silly.

TAYLOR: Yes. It wouldn't have been so bad if it was just me because I'm pretty hard stuff. But it involved my wife too.

Q: Alright. Now, we'll pick this up the next time in Rome. And you went to Rome when?

TAYLOR: I arrived in Rome in January of '65.

Q: Today is the 13th of May, 2009, with Rush Taylor. You're going to Rome. Okay, would you, once again, put in context, you were hired as Mrs. Reinhardt's Toy Boy, or whatever.

TAYLOR: Well something like that.

Q: As an escort.

TAYLOR: The Kidders, Randolph and Dottie Kidder, as I told you, had come through Africa with an inspection team and had sort of taken a liking to me and had passed on to their good friend Francis Meloy, who was the DCM in Rome, that I would make the outstanding candidate. I was a bachelor, personable, etc., etc., and just what Mrs. Reinhardt was looking for. Ambassador Reinhardt was a very quiet, shy homebody who

didn't like going out in the evening, particularly to the social gatherings that Mrs. Reinhardt preferred.

In any event, this was a pretty big fall; that fall we were having an election campaign for president with Lyndon Johnson, my fellow Texan, who was running against a guy named Barry Goldwater.

In '64, it was the dirtiest, filthiest campaign I ever remember and quite frankly, even though LBJ had had a role in my own career, my getting into Harvard and thus going into the State Department, he just had this aura of political dirty tricks back in Texas. You know, they called him Landside Lyndon for his, what was it, 81 votes or something like that, that he won the senate seat the first time in 1948. But even worse was Goldwater, and I remember my then-fiancé and I were watching television the night that they picked up Johnson's special assistant, Walter Jenkins, at the YMCA.

Q: Messing around with boys or men in the men's room in-

TAYLOR: Yes, and I mean, this was just a cause célèbre, a major scandal. It was also the campaign that they were pulling daisies in the, I guess the Johnson campaign.

Q: Johnson, who was making out that Goldwater would get us into-

TAYLOR: Nuclear- Armageddon, right. So the whole thing just was a turnoff but I voted for LBJ, and it was really the last election that I really found I wanted to participate in until I guess George Bush, Sr., ran in '88.

My new wife, Joanne, poor thing, because she was marrying a fellow Foreign Service officer, under the rules of the game as they then existed had to resign her commission. It was a shame because I've always felt that she would have probably done well, better in the career than I did, actually. But she had no real regrets and sooner than later we were off. We got married January 5 and we left for Rome, I think it was the 7th, there to find that Mrs. Reinhardt was very, very upset and, I mean, to the point of being really sort of hateful. And this is not the best way to start a marriage but you cope and we found a cute little apartment across from the Castello San Angelo down in the old part of the town, and we were making do.

Embassy Rome at that time was something out of a gothic novel. You know the embassy building itself, was the home of the Queen Mother.

Q: Yes, Princess Marguerite or something.

TAYLOR: Exactly. And the place was just a mausoleum inside. The ambassador had his own little private staircase so that he didn't have to mingle in the elevator with the regular staff as they were coming and going. He was so terribly shy that he preferred coming up quietly, and he had this enormous corner office. The office, I guess, had been a ballroom. There was a little desk over in the front corner. The staff aide, me, and two secretaries,

one named Betty Foster and myself were out there in the anteroom. And I might go into this; it's something I found in the Foreign Service quite a bit at that period particularly: these old women, I mean, when I say old, they were in 50s, early 60s, who were unmarried, who for one reason or another had become totally devoted to whatever ambassador they were serving. And this particular one, Betty Foster, had really worked for Ambassador Douglas MacArthur for years and years, you know, the famous general's nephew.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And I think he was Douglas too, wasn't he?

Q: He was Douglas the second.

TAYLOR: Yes. And she had worked for the MacArthurs in Japan and other places before that even. But Mrs. MacArthur had objected to her liaison with some Marine Corps sergeant or something like that and there had been a hullabaloo and so they sent her off to work for Freddy Reinhardt. And because her own life was so barren and empty, I mean, she just idolized the Reinhardts and particularly G. Frederick, and became enormously protective, to the point, really, that she really kept away people who should have had free access, including the DCM, not to mention myself. I could come and go because I was below the radar screen. But Reinhardt himself got the job because of his close relationship with Dean Rusk. Rusk had been, as a young graduate student, hired by Reinhardt's mother, who was dean of a college, I think it was Reed College, or something like that.

But in any event it was a nice little liberal arts school and Dean Rusk got his first job thanks to Freddie Reinhardt's mother, who was the president of the place. And many, many years later Reinhardt was – he had had a pretty damned good career himself; he had been ambassador to Egypt, he was ambassador to Saigon; he spoke fluent Russian but he had zero charisma, and, as I say, he was just morbidly shy. And along the way he had married this lady from West Virginia whose name was Solie. Tootle was her last name. And Solie had sort of become a part of the American effort to liberate Europe and had joined up with American forces in North Africa and I think she was with the Red Cross. And they had come up Italy and on and on and she had landed in Paris, where she got a job with the Marshall Plan. And actually, my father-in-law was with the Marshall Plan too and I told you the Harriman connection. And they sort of vaguely knew each other and also the president of the Olin Corporation at the time had been with the Marshall Plan so he had, I think had actually dated Solie, too. But she had a certain reputation of being a real party girl and she was not unattractive. She was fairly chic, in her 40s at this time. They had had four children, boom, boom, boom; I think the eldest was nine or 10 and the youngest was just maybe two. So I mean, and then she was running the huge residence, Villa Taverna, which was a mammoth job. So, I mean, I sympathized with the woman. She had a social secretary, the Baroness Radinska, who was a leftover from the Hapsburgs who had come down to Rome in the 20s or something like that with the Czech legation to the Vatican. She had become a hanger on and worked for various airline

companies and somehow ended up being Mrs. Reinhardt's social secretary. Well, there were those two and then there was my friend Allen Holmes, who I replaced, later Ambassador Holmes.

Q: H. Allen Holmes.

TAYLOR: Yes. I replaced him in Yaounde and then again in Rome, and his wife was very close to Mrs. Reinhardt and Baroness Radinska. But I mean, they just made life so miserable for Joanna. It became a real strain on our relations, not to mention the fact that she, my wife, became pregnant in March or April, or something like that, and was very, very sick and in and out of the hospital. Her mother had to come over a couple of times. And in the meantime we were moved out of our beautiful little place down in the old part of Rome and put into a very fashionable penthouse, up by the embassy, the residence, so that I could be more on call for the three or four receptions a week. And these receptions were not fun affairs. I mean, it was like a herd of cattle being brought through. No one really knew each other; no one wanted to know each other. I remember one of them, we had a guy named Senator McGovern of South Dakota. He was so bored at one of these receptions that he went up to Freddie Reinhardt and says, you know, I've got to get out of here, I've got important meetings down at the Hotel Excelsior, etc. Can I get your driver to drive me in? And the ambassador said, well, unfortunately, I don't have one but he called me over and said Rush, would you give the senator a lift downtown, blah, blah, blah.

So I did, I had this little white Mustang convertible, two doors, tiny little back seat. This jerk, instead of sitting up in the front seat with me, tries to get in the back seat. I mean, so that he's chauffeur driven. Senator George McGovern, liberal Democrat. And so I fixed it so that I slammed the front seat back and his knees were under his chin. And I said, I'm sorry, sir, you know, it's a very small car, and really you should sit up here. Oh, no, no, I'm fine. So I got him down there and you know, he gets out, he didn't say thank you or anything. Well I would never vote for him for dog catcher; I mean, what a total jerk. But that was the sort of thing, I mean, cardinals and bishops and it was just – the parties there were the most boring.

The Reinhardts went around with this crowd of has-been Torino nobility or, you know, even before that and there were hangers on from Egypt who had been kicked out when Farouk left. And they were totally divorced from the realities of political life. Who they thought they were representing.

I was talking to my wife not long ago. We never had any USIA affairs that appealed to the Italian people. The only thing I remember going to with Reinhardt was some sort of space exhibit and it was held out in the Cine Citta.

Q: Cinema City.

TAYLOR: Yes. And no one really, Italians, went, maybe a few government of- Italy hangers on.

Q: Well one of the problems was, I ran into some of this in Naples. You had these people with titles of the old nobility and somehow or another their purpose in life was to get invited to parties where somebody else was paying for the-

TAYLOR: The food and the drink.

Q: -for the food. And you know, titles are extremely unimpressive in a republic.

TAYLOR: They make no sense. But yet this was the life that Mrs. Reinhardt was leading.

One time she required all of us, even lowly staff like myself, we had to give a sit down dinner for 14, which for a pregnant wife, just married was a challenge. Fortunately we had the wherewithal, financially, to pull it together. On our guest list was Princess Doria Pamphilj and her husband Commander Pogson, a young English guy that she had married. Well, Princess Doria Pamphilj was more British than Italian because her mother had been the nurse to the old prince and her grandmother had been Scottish royalty or some such. In any event, she was just an adorable, kind, sweet, also pregnant young lady and we became very, very close friends and used to go over to their palace. They had everything. But they were just so sweet, down to earth.

Q: Did you get any feel for the politics of the era?

TAYLOR: You know, I only recall Reinhardt going over to the foreign ministry twice in the two years that I was there? The Christian Democratic Coalition sort of sputtered on.

Q: And went through this changing of ministers, the same people – the same five or six.

TAYLOR: Same Andreotti, Moro, the whole usual team. But I mean, it was just a faceless sort of blah. And the embassy itself was – Francis Meloy; did you know him? He left Rome and he became Ambassador to the Dominican Republic then he went on to Guatemala and did such a good job in Guatemala that Henry Kissinger sent him to Beirut, where he and his chauffeur were assassinated.

But just an example of Mrs. Reinhardt's cruelty to people. The minister was, I would say probably gay, I mean, I don't know for sure but I mean, he gave all indications and no one really gave two bits. But she went out of her way to be cruel. I mean, we would be at these luncheons for Lady Bird's brother-in-law or sister-in-law or something like that, and these were things that she put together at the last minute. So Frank Meloy and I and Joanna would have to go over there. But, I mean, Frank said I've got to get back, I'm expecting so and so. Oh, Frank, darling, and she'd give the limp wrist, say, you're giving a tea party too, oh how sweet. And she would humiliate this man for no reason. And it was just cruel.

The economic counselor – his wife, a very attractive Austrian lady – he was having an affair with some slut, and the whole place was just-

Q: Did you get any feel for the young officers in the place, particularly, I mean, often there's a cabal of young officers-

TAYLOR: Yes, my best friends.

Q: -in the embassy who are doing their own thing, or not?

TAYLOR: Well, there was myself, there was a guy named Bliss Eldridge, who was and is probably my best friend in the Foreign Service and his wife, from New Orleans; there was a guy named Goody Cooke, who went on to be ambassador to the Central African Republic.

Q: Goodwin, Cooke.

TAYLOR: A good guy.

Q: Goody worked for me in Belgrade.

TAYLOR: I liked him a lot.

Q: Yes. He's up at Syracuse.

TAYLOR: Yes. He was there a long time. Is he still there?

Q: I think so but I'm not sure.

TAYLOR: Alan Holmes, who went on to be ambassador to Portugal. There was no raison d'être for that whole damn embassy except for Mrs. Reinhardt's sort of superficial, silly social life. And the ambassador, I don't know what was wrong with the man. Maybe he was burned out; maybe he was bored; maybe he realized that the U.S. ambassador in Rome, all the action was really in the Department, the Italian ambassador to here was really on the ball and, you know, had immediate access both at the White House and at the State Department. So, I mean, we were just there, floating around.

Q: Was this discouraging, I mean, how did you feel about the career or was this just something to get through?

TAYLOR: You know, quite frankly, I actually told Ambassador Reinhardt that I was seriously interested in pursuing something else, and he said oh, don't do that Rush. The ambassador still had his own yacht which we could plow around in the Grand Canal and whatnot. But again, it was this ostentatious, European titled nothings.

Q: And of course Europe was going through all sorts of things elsewhere.

TAYLOR: Of course it was. I mean, NATO was being kicked out of Paris. One of the things I remember was Ambassador Reinhardt was always talking to Betty and me about how he wanted to avoid like the plague being called back to be assistant secretary for European Affairs. For one reason, he didn't have the money to support that big family he had amassed and, two, I think that she would have died from not having the social life.

There's some funny vignettes that I've got to put in here about the Reinhardts. I mean, they're not all evil and bad and she's not the woman that I paint her out to be, totally devoid of any human dignity or kindness. We were always invited over for a Christmas dinner and Easter dinner and, you know, that sort of stuff. But Christmas dinner, the ambassador had the plum puddings, you know, they were brought in by liveried footmen. They weren't flaming enough so twice he marched them out, had them come back in with, we assumed, more brandy on the damn things. But no, they had gotten so fed up that they went back and put lighter fluid all over the stuff. And by this time we had had two helpings of the stuff, which I didn't like anyway, but the ambassador insisted that everyone have another one. Well, of course we bit into it, ah ha, lighter fluid, and I thought he was going to have apoplexy. And well, that was that Christmas dinner.

But they were so sweet about some things. We brought our little, what, three, four month old baby over there for Christmas dinner and put her up there in the big canopy bed. They took one of their servants, told her to look after her.

Then we went over for Easter and they had these gay footmen over there who took great pleasure in decorating and their idea of decorating was so baroque and so rococo; it had to be seen to be believed. But this one, they outdid themselves. They had these huge plastic dome-like things which the table was about like half a football field long and frescoed ceilings and into these clear plastic domes they'd put moss carpets and little mirrored things that were supposed to be lakes and spring flowers. And then they took little ducklings and chicks and little baby rabbits and put them in this thing and those were our centerpieces. Well during the course of Easter dinner people noticed that the plastic was getting steamed up and pretty soon the little rabbits would come over with their tongues hanging out, trying to get out of there. There was no oxygen. And so we had to stop dinner and things were chaos, run, try to pick these heavy lids off these three animal traps so that these wretched animals could live and not die there in front of us. But I mean, it was just something out of a Marx Brothers film, or worse.

Looking back on it, it was not the most happy period in my life.

Well you know, I didn't read my full efficiency report until years and years later. In the '80s I was head of a board myself for promotion for guys from, I think it was three to four or something like that, and I looked through it and I found it. Ambassador Reinhardt had written some very, very nice things about me and one of the things that I remembered very well, he said Taylor actually looks like the brother or the twin of the Marlboro Man. You know, he's rugged and good looking and unfortunately he's a little more, what do you call it, introverted than extroverted but I think he will go to the very top of the

Foreign Service; and I mean, very nice stuff. And there was an actor who was very popular in Italy, an American guy, who did all these spaghetti westerns.

Q: Oh, you mean Clint Eastwood.

TAYLOR: Clint Eastwood. And so he said Taylor could be Clint Eastwood's double. That was neither here nor there. But he also, I thought he was really rough on my wife but he was very kind; he said, and his young wife looks like Liv Ullman. You know the Swedish movie star? Which she did, at the time. He came to a very unhappy end. After I left Rome I came back and worked for Wells Stabler on the Italian desk for two years. While I was there Reinhardt had been, how do you call it, moved out of Rome. I guess Rusk was on his way out, and they put in this economist. I have never seen a man so dejected and so unhappy. I actually took Reinhardt out to lunch at the Watergate and we got a bottle of wine and he was talking about what he was going to do with his life. He ended up getting a job up in Basel, Switzerland, or somewhere up there, Winterthur, for a private, some sort of private research group.

Q: You were there from when to when?

TAYLOR: From '65 to '67. And at the end of my tour things got so awful that I asked Frank Meloy, I said look Frank, I've got only about four months to go. Let me out of here. And I said there's a guy up in Milan who would love to have my job as staff aide and let me just go up to Florence.

Merit Kootz was just a delightful person and his wife was a cellist. They were something out of "Barchester Towers," just exuding niceness and we had a great time up there, except the day after my birthday, in '67, we had something called the Florence Flood. I was admin officer and quite frankly, have never worked so damn hard in all my life. I mean, the whole building was flooded; the cellar, the sub cellar and what we were afraid of is the damn thing was going to collapse.

Have you seen the little consulate there, right on the Arno? On the Amerigo Vespucci.

Q: I just finished seeing an Italian movie which had several scenes of youths coming and, army and like college students and all coming to rescue documents.

TAYLOR: Oh my God. The Santa Croce, the big old sort of abbey was nearby. But the night of the flood they were having an international horse show and the horses from all over the world had been brought to the hippodrome not too terribly far from where we were, and they left the horses in their stalls and you could hear them screaming as they were drowning. And the noise of, there must have been 20, 50 horses dying from drowning. I mean, it lives with me still.

I got Joanna on a flight out of there and I stayed on for three or four more months to help clean up and get my admin things going and got all sorts of commendations and a really, really nice senator from Rhode Island, Claiborne Pell, who had been a Foreign Service

officer himself. What a great guy. He came by and he stayed with us for two or three days and instead of going over to one of the big hotels he had on a pair of blue jeans and he came over and actually helped. I mean, here's a guy, a senator from the United States, who was pulling up his sleeves and helping clean out debris. It really impressed me.

But finally we got out of Italy and back to the Department. I was put on the Italian desk and really enjoyed my couple of years there.

Q: You were doing this, I mean, this is-?

TAYLOR: Sixty-seven to '69.

Q: Sixty-seven to '69. While you were in Italy did the Vietnam War intrude at all or was this sort of another world?

TAYLOR: You know, we had maybe two so-called demonstrations and I would say not more than 50 or 150 people were brought out by the communist party to march around in front of the embassy. But it really wasn't making a big impression yet.

Q: In the European Bureau; who were you were working for?

TAYLOR: Well, there was Wells Stabler. Did you know him? He became my ambassador to Spain.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And a really, really fine guy. He went out of his way, that any time he went over to the Italian embassy we would have breakfast with Italian officials coming through; I would go with him and, you know, I didn't add that much. I spoke pretty good Italian but so did he. He was fulfilling what Leland Barrows did not do in Cameroon and Frederick Reinhardt did not do in Rome, which was to sort of let me see by osmosis if nothing else how things happened, what went on. And one of the very nice things he did: there was a person on the Italian desk, if you would call it that, at the NSC (National Security Council). This was Larry Eagleburger. And Stabler was very, very fond of Larry, who was very bright, and I got to sit in on the meetings with him occasionally.

But this was an interesting time in the Department. They were playing with new ideas to make the Department more dynamic, more efficient, more workable, more productive, so they were putting these country directors – do you remember when that was the vogue? And with us it was Italy, Switzerland and Austria, which made no sense whatsoever. But poor Stabler had to spend so much time on Swiss affairs and it was really trivia. And there again, Italian politics was just sort of humming along; I mean, no one had yet assassinated or captured Aldo Moro.

Q: Well in the Italian Affairs, was there anything going?

TAYLOR: There was zero. I mean, really and truly, looking back on it there was just nothing. And how poor Wells Stabler managed to get a promotion and get the hell out of there, I don't know. There was nothing that you could write on his efficiency report that he got accomplished.

Q: How did you find the Italian embassy?

TAYLOR: Well, back in Yaounde, I dated the daughter of the Italian ambassador in Yaounde. And so when we got to Washington some friends that I'd known in Africa, West Africa, were at the embassy and I got to know them and they were just marvelous, good, you know, good, open friends, tennis and whatnot. But they were more here for playboy- for tennis, going out to Northern Virginia to ride horses on the weekend; it was sort of a lark for them, I think. I don't think they were really down to get to know American politicians or anything like that.

Q: Was there any concern at that time with radical groups? You know, like the Red Brigade and all?

TAYLOR: That was before; came later. In any event I extricated myself after two years there by being chosen to go up to something called SS, which was the executive secretariat. Jerry Bremer went that route too.

I got up there and they were saying that only the best of the best, you know, ever get these jobs, and it was true. I didn't have to work in the operations center; I got to work in the actual, line officer, it was called. And fortunately for me, I was given the worst areas. When I say "worst," the people couldn't write or they didn't know how to formulate ideas or they didn't know how to manipulate the bureaucracy. I was given African Affairs and a few things, scientific- beyond the EUR, ERA, the big EA, where all the real pros went. And because of that I really got to learn about how to write, how to manipulate the bureaucracy, how to, if you want to get a memo through; it's almost like playing hockey. You know, you've got to know what it is you've got, what you want, and how to get there through the bureaucracy. And these poor people in West Africa or, for that matter, South Africa, had not a clue of how to play the bureaucracy of the State Department. And I became really, really useful to them and by being useful to them I also learned a hell of a lot in, as I say, in writing, knowing how you phrase something so it will get the attention of someone, and the answer that you want back, and I thoroughly enjoyed this.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

TAYLOR: Let's see. After EUR I went down to Norfolk, Virginian, for the Army Staff College for about six months, so I got up to SS in '68, summer of '68. And I loved it. I had taken some really great trips to Europe with the secretary of defense at that time. I went on an almost 45 day trip with Vice President Agnew; we went to 19 countries. Nixon wanted to get him out of the country and also to try to teach him something about foreign affairs. But while I was away I got a call from Ted Eliot. He was the head of SS.

They said you have been selected to be special assistant to the Secretary of State, which is a story in itself.

Secretary William Rogers had come in during this same period. And, if you think Reinhardt was out of it in Rome, this guy was, either through design, choice or what have you, he just never found or wanted to find a role in the Department of State, and seemed perfectly willing to basically just warm his chair. And he had relied on a guy named Petterson, Richard Petterson, who was the Counselor, who he appointed as counselor to be his sort of entrée, the guy was going to be his guru, the mentor to help him get control of this damn organization. Petterson was himself not really capable or part of the bureaucracy and really misled him a lot. I mean, the person that was his principle assistant there, Rogers' assistant, was a guy named Okun, Herb Okun. Have you ever heard of him?

Q: Herb and I came into the Foreign Service together. Did you have the feeling that Rogers was sort of almost a figurehead and that Kissinger was running things?

TAYLOR: Oh totally. There was no question about it. When I think of ministerial visits we got very few. I mean, Rogers gave the usual State Department luncheons for the president of Romania or some other communist dictator but no one really took him seriously, and I'm not sure he took himself seriously.

Q: How did this reflect on your work in talking to people in the State Department? Were you picking up feelings of, you know, State Department is being bypassed?

TAYLOR: Yes. And during this same time, it's something you were talking about, the Young Turks come out of the woodwork. And you know, I sympathize. Well actually Ted Eliot, who was head of SS at the time, had been peripherally with that group but no, I mean, I think there was a feeling in the department, we got these letters of, you know, that you wouldn't have dreamed of writing about Cambodia, that the State Department has no meaning, no purpose and it was totally adrift. I mean, we went through the motions, I mean, Middle Eastern talks. I went with Rogers a couple of times to Israel, Saudi Arabia, you know, the usual circuit; it was meaningless. We met a guy, Sisco was the head of NEA-

Q: Joe Sisco.

TAYLOR: He was probably, of the people that were around Rogers, he was substantively the soundest but the problem is that you could have Thomas Jefferson sitting over there as your advisor and it didn't matter because everything was being decided at the White House between Kissinger and Nixon. And disarmament; there was nothing really at the State Department. We had people writing memos and even going to testify on the Hill, but it was no big deal because no one up there really cared what the Secretary of State had to say. So it was a pathetic period for the Department of State. After two years of that I was more than ready to get out of there.

Q: You were there from when to when?

TAYLOR: Sixty-nine to ’71; ’72 maybe; ’72.

Q: Were you at all getting the feeling that you were on sort of the high track, you know the staff aide: The aide track is often the way to move to higher reaches but at the same time, you know, looking at it from a practical point of view, you know, it’s all inherited somebody else’s authority.

TAYLOR: Yes, you’re a-

Q: And you know, I mean, this is true in the army and corporations and all that.

TAYLOR: Al Haig and the army.

Q: Yes. I mean, you know, it’s fine but it doesn’t- there isn’t much substance.

TAYLOR: No, there wasn’t. I told you, both in Italy and in the Department. Well, the desk was different. I mean, even though we had a portfolio that wasn’t very interesting and wasn’t engaging, wasn’t really important i.e. Italy, at least I was learning some of the rudiments of my profession. But sitting up there, I mean, in your little glass box and you’re separated from your peers to a great degree. I mean, they bring you your lunch on trays at your desk so you didn’t even go down to the cafeteria that much.

Q: Did you feel like part of the system or were you sort of one of the members of the cord, you know, where people would come up and whisper in your ear, can you get me this?

TAYLOR: Oh I had constant, day in and day out, people, Rush, I’ve got this memo that, whatever, Law of the Sea or something, and you know, is there any way you can get the secretary to look at it and get an opinion? I mean, even people saying could you get the secretary to sign this photograph, you know, autograph this photograph of me at this meeting with him? And yes, a lot of that stuff of even assistant secretaries coming up and trying to be nice and this, that and the other. But I was smart enough to realize it wasn’t me that they-

Q: Yes. Well this of course is one of the problems.

TAYLOR: Fortunately, Bob Brewster, my friend from EUR-EX had then become deputy director general for personnel. I said, Bob, I cannot take this anymore. I mean, it’s just the same team. And he said well, what would you like to do? And I said I really want to do something substantive. Then again, I want to get my hands dirty. And I told him about the little consulate in Florence, how much I enjoyed that for six months. And so we looked at Haiti and there was a political job open there. Then, and this was the luckiest moment in my Foreign Service career, the consulate in Oporto, Portugal, opened up. It was a real dream job and I applied for it. Unfortunately, the country director for Spain and Portugal, had his own candidate that he wanted for that job. And he had written to

Ridgway Knight, who was the ambassador, saying I don't know what Taylor has to bring to this post but I suggest that my candidate should get it. And Ridgway Knight had called up his friend, Bob Brewster, and said, Bob, what's going on here? The country director for Spain and for Iberia is dumping on personnel's candidate. And Brewster said, Rush, go to Secretary Rogers and tell him to write a letter to Ridgway Knight and something like that: Dear Ridgway, it is with great regret that I have consented for Rush to leave my office after two-and-a-half years as special assistant. You can be assured that you will be getting one of the finest, brightest, blah, blah, blah officers in the career service. I'm sure that you'll be really glad that this happened. So Ridgway Knight gets this letter, sends a copy back to the country director of Iberia who realizes he's been trumped and he's all smiles and off I go to Portuguese language training.

Portugal, well, just, Salazar was dead and Caetano was coming in; it was called the Portugal Spring.

Q: You were there from when to when?

TAYLOR: Portugal? Seventy-two to '75.

Q: Ah yes.

TAYLOR: The revolution.

Q: Wonderful.

TAYLOR: It was the greatest, most fun I've ever had in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well could you talk about what had Portugal been like that you were able to pick up just before you got there? I mean, under Salazar, you know. I mean, what had it been?

TAYLOR: It had been an autocracy. The great mass of people had been limited in the education they could get, the economy was still in the 1920s. It was an agriculture society producing the basic food stuffs for you and your family with just a little bit, not much, to trade or barter. The farms were teeny tiny because each son was allowed to get his part so that you would have what had been a vineyard for maybe 20, 50 hectares was down to tiny little plots. But the banks ruled, the banks and certain exporting groups, which controlled all the trade with Angola and Mozambique; it was totally in the hands of about, I would say 25, 30 families, the entire country. And Salazar was living in a, basically, a monastic existence outside of Lisbon; he prayed every day. The Church was given unlimited powers over education. It was almost medieval, it was so backward. In the '60s, under Salazar, they had had their first outbreaks of violence in both Luanda and Lourenço Marques, with people wanting freedom, liberation. I mean, after all, France was giving her colonies independence, as was England but Portugal was tightening up. And by tightening up they had to get more and more of these young, uneducated farm boys for the military who had no stake in this system and had no real stake in keeping the colonies; they got nothing from it. But what they did get was being sent down there to get

malaria, to be wounded and even that early, under Salazar, there were already rumblings that this just was untenable. But the United States, we were embracing Portugal, we had the NATO alliance, we had a very large military mission, we were helping in our way with keeping those colonies under control. After all, if they went we feared they could fall to the communists. I mean, this was the shortsightedness of our foreign policy at the time.

But you've got to know something about the country, too. The city of Oporto, first of all, racially it's totally different from the southern part, from Lisbon. The people in northern Portugal are Celts; they are like the people in Ireland and Scotland and you look at them, they're mostly blue eyed, a lot of red hair. They are very, very hard working people and extremely talented and bright at anything they try to do. They have always been out of touch with the government in Lisbon. Under the Salazar regime all of the skirmishes and the attempts to overthrow Salazar took place in the environs of Oporto. They believed in classical democracy, liberalism, and really and truly they were still living in a sort of a 19th century respect for a liberal type democracy. They had the biggest stock exchange up there and the nobility had never been really strong in Northern Portugal, which had allowed the merchant class to come in. There was an enormous British influence in Northern Portugal. When the British were kicked out of Bordeaux the wine merchants moved down to Oporto, to import wine. The British pushed for liberal ideas and sort of a democratic system, whereas the South tended toward your large landed estates, as the big landowners, more of a peasant/upper class divide.

In any event, before I'd gotten there, about two years, they'd had a legislative election under Caetano.

Q: Who was the successor to Salazar but it was a peaceful succession.

TAYLOR: Yes, hand picked and maybe Salazar didn't realize how liberal Caetano was but if he did he had Américo Thomaz, the president, who was a former admiral and really, really right wing still in power. So we had a right wing president and a liberal leaning prime minister. But Oporto, when the new house of delegates, assemblymen were elected, we had five very liberal members of parliament for the first time in 40 years, and they were all right there in the city of Oporto. Also we had the bishop of Oporto, who had never really kowtowed to the state/Catholic Church. He had been speaking out more and more openly in the '60s for separation of Church and state, individual freedoms, liberty of press; people were being beaten for posting notices on lampposts back in those days. The bishop of Oporto became so outspoken in his anti-government positions that he had to go to the Vatican and he was not allowed to come back. So the bishopric of Oporto, which is, I think, probably older than Lisbon, was, for about five or six years, there was no bishop.

And there was particularly unrest among the students. This was a time when you look at other European countries, the European Union was taking form, these kids in the middle class and upper middle class were having all the influences, particularly from the

Netherlands, France, Britain, and there was a growing ferment of why can't we get out of this prison.

Q: Well because all one has to do is look back to '68, I think, that the students essentially rose in, certainly in Germany and-

TAYLOR: Sixty-eight in France, exactly. Very heady times.

Q: Very heady times around. Now, did Spain play any role?

TAYLOR: The Portuguese loathed the Spanish and the Spanish looked down on the Portuguese to the point of they were non-existent. And actually Franco and Salazar, I mean, as you said, they had ruled there on that peninsula for the better part of half a century but there was no closeness there and the two forms of government actually were somewhat different. Salazar never took to the trappings of fascism and the Italian bombastic carryings on.

But what happened, these young liberals, one of whom became a friend of mine, Sá Carneiro, became eventually the prime minister, went down to Lisbon, to the national assembly, and instead of keeping quiet they started speaking up, which caused them considerable personal problems. The government knew how to put the screws on people. One of them had a glass factory; he stopped getting orders from the military for his goods. The slightest thing you did to go out of line, you felt it.

Well, my predecessor as consul had recommended that Sá Carneiro be given a USIA grant to come to the United States, a leadership grant. Ambassador Ridgway Knight had gone along with this. Then, I guess several weeks before Carneiro was supposed to leave for New York, Ridgway Knight was called to the foreign ministry. The government, and this is the Caetano government, cannot accept this; this man is a dissident, we're not sure of his loyalty, support for the government's policies, particularly in Africa, and we do not want him to go to the United States. Well, this was a real blow to the United States; I mean, it was known everywhere that we bowed down and instead of sending the man we said no. Ridgway Knight made a terrible error and he said we can't allow him to go. And so, when I got there a couple of months later, we arrived in August of '72, the first thing I did was I started calling on every deputy in my region. Northern Portugal from Coimbra, down the university city in the middle of the country all the way to Galicia up in Spain was our consular district. That's where most of the Americans of Portuguese origin were from, those who settled in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, you know, the fishing folk up in there.

But I started calling on these deputies and I made a special point of seeing Sá Carneiro first. He was a little man, about five three, five four. In his office, he was up on a sort of podium so that when he was up on his little platform or stage, actually, he came to about my height. He was very vain but also very bright and really, really a hero, in that he was willing to take risks for pushing liberalization in his country. And I wrote to Ambassador Knight about this meeting and the fact that Sá Carneiro said, yes, he was bitter, but that

he was willing to let bygones be bygones and work with the United States. And Knight then invited him to a luncheon in Lisbon at the residence, along with some other liberals. We were gradually able to get somewhat back into their good graces but there was still a suspicion of the liberal movement in the United States of America.

We had a visit around this time from Barbara Watson. She came to Portugal, and for years and years, no one of any importance from the United States had gone up there. But Barbara was a friend of my wife and I and she decided to come up and spend a long weekend in Oporto and, as usual, we gave a reception for people like that. Well, the bishop had just been allowed to return and he was, without question, one of the most empowering, physical presences.

Q: Well she's one of our goddesses and I'm a consular officer and she was the assistant secretary for consular affairs, an African American woman of, I think Jamaican descent.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: Who came from a family of New York judges and all.

TAYLOR: A good friend of Colin Powell's family.

Q: Yes. I mean, this is sort of-

TAYLOR: She was an aristocrat in every sense.

Q: You said it, oh boy.

TAYLOR: But not only did she have an incredible presence but the bishop did too. The residence of the consul in Oporto is just a gorgeous old house and we could give parties for 150 people and you'd still think the place was empty. Barbara Watson was in the receiving line and lo and behold the bishop, we had sent him an invitation, not dreaming that he would come; he never left the palace. He was smart enough to say look, here is a black American official coming to this city at a time when everything, every gesture, everything counts. He wanted to be seen there, with Americans and with her particularly, because of what was going on in Africa at that time too, in Angola and Mozambique. They had a really nice chat. She said that her government, the United States Government, I mean, you know, that's odd to have consular people talking this way, but she was saying we need to open up and let in new ideas and this is a new day. She mentioned what had been going on in France and other countries and in the United States. She said we have demonstrations and she said demonstrations are healthy and any exchange of ideas and openness. Well, I mean, this made the papers, an American official, pictures of she and the bishop shaking hands and all sorts of things. But it really made an impact, not only there but down in Lisbon.

In my consular travels, we would go out to places like Chaves, other cities which had big military compounds. There were all sorts of rumors that the infantry base up in Northern

Portugal, there had been a fire of unknown origin or there had been shooting heard down at Aveiro. There was a growing sense of tension. And when Joanna and I would take the train back and forth from Lisbon we were always just surrounded by these young kids who were 17, 18 years old, country boys, their shoes didn't fit, their uniforms didn't fit and they didn't know what the hell they were doing; troop transports taking them down to Lisbon to ship them off on a boat to God only knows where, Guinea-Bissau. And more and more rumors of people whose children or relatives were suffering casualties in this war. It was just a growing feeling that something, the lid of this place was going to blow. And indeed, on the 25th of April in 1975 we woke up and instead of hearing the usual propaganda on the morning radio show they were playing a Chopin polonaise and saying keep calm, and the armed forces have assumed control and everyone is alright. And I was going to go to work. It was a Friday, and my driver was out there and so we drove all over the city. I probably said put out the American flag on the front of the car, man, I don't care who knows where we are, what we're doing. But there was not a sign of anyone except that there were a few soldiers stationed at strategic points along the line. And all of the soldiers had their rifles, bayonets, but they had red carnations in the barrel. And they would wave and give you the thumbs up when they saw the American flag. And they called it the peaceful revolution and indeed, there was only one casualty, fatality, and that was a kid down south who had somehow fallen off his truck or something like that.

Q: What were you getting from the embassy?

TAYLOR: The embassy was totally out of it.

Q: Because you know, I've talked to people like-

TAYLOR: Wingate Lloyd?

Q: Yes, but also obviously Frank Carlucci but before that, oh my God, anyway, the desk officer, and saying that you had an embassy which was-

TAYLOR: Dysfunctional.

Q: -you know, I mean, sort of very old timeish, sort of almost the country club type thing.

TAYLOR: Our DCM had been a polo player.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: I mean literally.

Q: Well this is what I understand. And this was his main-

TAYLOR: But I mean, I am glad you brought up Frank Carlucci because that's another story.

Q: Well we'll come to him but before, let's talk about before that. I mean, were you finding yourself reporting, gee, there's unrest here, or these people-

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: And what were you getting from the embassy?

TAYLOR: From Knight, he was smarter than Freddie Reinhardt; they were good pals and come into the Foreign Service together. But he was married to this French supermodel who was Madam Chic and who felt like they had been put out to pasture because he had been ambassador to Brussels before and the Lisbon society was completely beneath her dignity. He was the second guy that I worked with the in the Foreign Service whose father or uncle or something had been a great American artist; Ridgway Knight's father was one of the early American impressionists and, I mean, really good stuff, and the paintings, he had studied in Honfleur and some of the places with some of the really good French impressionists. But he had been trained as a wine merchant, Ridgway Knight. He was, what do you call, an expert in-

Q: Vintner.

TAYLOR: Yes, wine, and had just sort of fallen into the Foreign Service on some quelque chose affaire, you know, something to do. He understood that things were happening but he was on his way out and he really could care less. The person who succeeded him was a complete airhead; his name was Stuart Nash Scott. He had been brought down by William Rogers, when I was in Rogers' office, to take over as the chief lawyer in the State Department. And when Kissinger came in, Kissinger had his own man from another law firm in New York City, who he wanted, so Stuart was given Lisbon. And he arrived just when things were really ready to boil. He came up to Oporto for his first visit, it was in March? Yes, it was March because the revolution was in April, and all hell broke loose in the one of the military barracks between Oporto and Lisbon. Troops had started getting in their military vehicles and driving toward Lisbon before they would stop and turned around. And someone knew that something really was up because General Spínola, who was the most liberal of the military types, had written a book, Portugal and the Future. He had been their leader in going south. He had written about why Portugal must change course. But Stuart Scott Nash was just over his head and the guy who was his DCM, who was, what's his name?

Q: He was a horseback rider.

TAYLOR: Yes. And his father was an Anglican-Episcopal bishop or something. Richard Francis Post.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: And Post's wife had been a congressman's daughter and there was money but they had polo ponies.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: I never will forget this labor union guy from the Washington UAW had come over to Portugal to see pre-revolution what we could do. Labor unions were obviously outlawed in Portugal but if he could meet with some sort of workers' representatives. I was chaperoning him around and he said Rush you won't believe, he says, I was in Lisbon a couple of days before this and it was Saturday and he said your DCM, who was the chargé d'affaires at the moment, met us in red, what do you call those, riding habit?

Q: Yes, riding habit.

TAYLOR: And you know, with his quirt and I mean, he said it was just something I can't imagine a Foreign Service in 1975 capable of being this retrograde. And what can you say?

My dealings with the Carlucci regime were not that great. First of all, Ambassador Carlucci, in order to get his then-girlfriend, later his wife, a position in Embassy Lisbon, abolished a position up at my post. We had three Americans and 60 locals, but to make room for his girlfriend we lost one of our officers. We really needed the officer, particularly as we were going into this new mode. I couldn't cover it all. That area was as big as Virginia, almost, I mean, it looks on the map. But with those roads and mountains up there it was impossible to get around. And we had a consular officer who was deluged with the amount of work. So I ended up, my wife, actually, was doing most of the admin work.

He had come up for "Porgy and Bess." We had a metropolitan opera touring group who had been in Lisbon and then they came up to Oporto. It was one of the most lavish productions I've ever seen and all of the singers are obviously black, terribly accomplished, and coming at this time, right during the revolution, to have this group of young black Americans in my city was just manna from heaven. I got them on every TV program; they were giving interviews and just loving it. And after the big production, we had given a midnight reception with about 300 people and Carlucci. That group not only did it give us a shot in the arm but it was just perfect timing, like the visit of the consular chief earlier on. This was a real coup as far as PR (public relations).

Q: This is the Young Turks and the army who were, at least nominally Marxist stuff and all, how was that playing in your area?

TAYLOR: Actually what happened in Northern Portugal was a complete flip flop. The revolution was so well orchestrated and organized, within hours after the coup d'état on the 25th of April, all of the book shops had Maoist, Russian communist displays, books in Portuguese of all Lenin's works, Marx's works, all Mao's works; the communist party, Cunhal, was just ready, poised to take over. I'm not saying that I know for a fact that the

leaders of the coup d'état themselves were not communists but the communist party, which was the best organized underground party in that country, and the Maoists, to an extent, were ready to try to capitalize on it and take control.

Going back to the wretched interim ambassador, Stuart Nash Scott, he sent me a copy of a telegram he had written to Kissinger shortly after the coup d'état and he had gone to meet Cunhal, Alvaro Cunhal, who was the head of the communist party. He had been imprisoned on this small rock off the coast of Oporto for years and years. Scott said, and it reminds me of something more recent, I looked into the eyes of Alvaro Cunhal and I can assure you, Secretary Kissinger, this is a man that we can deal with in all good faith and all honesty. And Kissinger apparently just asked Jerry Bremer, apparently Kissinger just went ballistic and he said that's it and he got Scott out immediately and put in Carlucci. At least Carlucci had the energy and the guts to get in there and try to do something. But the communists took it a little too far.

The head of the police in the old regime said, Taylor, the Maoists are going to try to take over the consulate, your consulate, I don't know really what to do. He said, you know, the police are sort of wavering. So I called up the general who was the new leader of the revolutionary armed forces. I said, General, his daughter was studying at MIT, I said we need your help. Could you possibly send over some troops? And he said, oh, no question about it; he said I don't want any problems with the United States. So I made sure that we got pictures; here were Portuguese army troops, I mean full battle gear, around my consulate, which is in downtown Oporto. It made all the papers and it sort of touched a heartstring in Portugal. You know, why do we have our troops guarding our friends' consulate? I mean, this is something that's so wrong. Guarding them from whom?

And the thing about Northern Portugal and Oporto during this period is they had been the most liberal hotbed before but they became far, far more conservative than the people down in Lisbon. I mean, they saw what the communists were.

Q: Well I'm told that the head of the communist party-

TAYLOR: Cunhal.

Q: -was sort of a real hard line old Stalinist.

TAYLOR: Oh, my God; he was.

Q: That he was COP and, you know, just had no concept of how to deal with it.

TAYLOR: He just went too far too quickly.

In the meantime, this General Spínola was called on to organize a sort of interim government, that summer of '75. And he picked my good friend, Sá Carneiro, who had been one of the liberal deputies from Oporto, to be his number two. And things rolled along but the left wing was pushing, pushing, pushing; the left wing parts of the armed

forces decided to have an education campaign in Northern Portugal. These people up there, they were supposedly too rural, they were bumpkins, they were still living in the Middle Ages; we've got to get up there and educate them on their rights. The armed forces movement, were sending in the same sorts of people that they would use in Africa, in Angola and Mozambique, to go to the villages and instead of working with them tell them this is how you've got to do things. So more and more we were having young armed forces guys going into some of these rural areas of Northern Portugal who were getting stoned, tarred and feathered, put on donkeys and sent out. And the archbishop of Braga , who was "the" archbishop in Portugal and the only one, he was a very, very right wing friend of Salazar and Caetano. He'd flown into Lisbon and then taken the flight up to Oporto. They strip searched him and totally humiliated him. This got out and Braga is an ancient pilgrimage town; hundreds of the parish priests were still able to do their work and hundreds and hundreds of Catholics filled the streets of Braga, welcoming him back, shouting no to the MN forces, armed forces and yes to freedom, yes to Catholicism, yes to traditions, yes to Portugal. And during the summer of '75 and in the autumn there was almost an armed insurrection in Northern Portugal against Lisbon and against the armed forces movement, which unfortunately, the embassy ignored. They were so busy, I'm sure, with their own things but then again, Herb Okun, who was the DCM, I think he-

Q: Your friend.

TAYLOR: Yes. And I think Herb, in his wisdom, thought that all knowledge was at the embassy in Lisbon and that he and Carlucci were just supermen who could, you know, they didn't need any sort of help, advice or anything else.

When I got back to Washington I told everybody I could find, CIA, INR, Portuguese desk, that Northern Portugal was really ready to go up in flames. And I'm not exaggerating; it was a tinder box. But fortunately they got the message back through Washington to Lisbon and Carlucci got going. The next time he was spending three weeks going on a tour of Northern Portugal, stopping at every village just about.

Q: Were you getting any feel for the really major battle that was going on between the Kissinger Washington and Carlucci in Lisbon in that you know, one gets, certainly from Carlucci, is that Kissinger was ready to write off Portugal.

TAYLOR: Oh yes.

Q: And Carlucci was saying hold on, something can be done. And it did turn around. And this is a very major episode.

TAYLOR: Well Kissinger was ready to- that's quite right. He said let's inoculate Western Europe with Portugal; they need a nice virus. But Carlucci- When you say he was the sort of _____, to an extent he was, in the sense that he fought to have Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho the head of COPCON (Operation Command of the continent) and things like that. But he totally neglected one half of his country for a good long period. And it really wasn't until I got back to the United States and really, I mean,

painted a picture of, here, the United States can take a stand, if nothing else, to stop this wave of extremism coming from the left.

In the Fall, I guess, the president at the time was going to have a huge, huge rally in Lisbon. This is the general who was the interim president, whose deputy was my buddy. And he was calling on all the supporters of the centrists, he called it the – he borrowed this phrase from Nixon, what was it?

Q: Silent majority.

TAYLOR: Silent majority. He wants the silent majority to come down to the big soccer- not soccer, the-

Q: Bull ring?

TAYLOR: -bull ring in Lisbon for a gigantic rally. So the armed forces, on September 11 or something like that, sets up roadblocks on all the highways leading out of the North. There were only two major ones, and thousands and thousands of people. I mean, we could see our neighbors all over Oporto getting in their cars at around 2:00 in the morning to drive down to this rally. And of course they got to certain key crossings, across the rivers in Central Portugal, and they were turned back. And at this point, this is when the revolution really swung dangerously to the left. The leftist members of the armed forces cabal used this as an excuse to really crack down. They got rid of the liberal- the government, the interim government and put in these two just communists, Gonçalves and a guy named Costa Gomes. And at this time Kissinger sent his good friend General Walters.

Q: Vernon Walters.

TAYLOR: Vernon Walters came out and had this meeting with the general, Costa Gomes. Then Walters said you know, forget it. This is the same general who had said Portugal must look to Romania as a model. And Walters went back and told Kissinger it was all over. But fortunately I think that people of Northern Portugal were courageous and for the same reasons that they opposed the Salazar government they opposed this leftist government and they eventually prevailed. And it was the small little farmers and merchants who had this sort of innate sense of what is right and what is wrong and what can be accomplished and what can't; they're very pragmatic and they didn't want anything to do with the type of "socialism" that was being foisted upon them.

So that was a fantastic two years; it was just so much fun every moment.

Q: Well were you- I assume, obviously, you were reporting what was going on.

TAYLOR: It was very difficult to get stuff down there because half the time our communications were cut. Finally they put in a deal, a radio in my attic at the residence that you were able, in case of a dire emergency use.

One of the things I'd done when I wasn't doing this revolution stuff was getting American firms up into Northern Portugal. I got Continental Tires; we got Texas Instruments to set up companies up there, which are still thriving, and so by the time I left after three years I had about 175 Americans working there, plus all the Americans who had, you know, gone to the United States and come back plus the retirees who were living over there because it was cheaper. And I mean, I was sort of concerned at times about getting these people out of there; it would have been a real problem.

Q: Well did you find- Was there a difference- The troops that were there, were they mostly from the Northern area and were they of a different caliber than the troops in the South?

TAYLOR: Yes, to a great extent most of our soldiers, the forces, were recruits, conscripts, from the North, with one exception. We had a brigade of truckers who were really, I think they were from somewhere down close to the Algarve, but they were really, totally in the clutches of the left wing. And early on we had this meeting of the Centrist Right Democratic Christian Party. The embassy had sent up a kid from the political section to attend their rally. Damn it if the barracks next to the hall where they were having their assembly didn't decide they were going to take all of them captive, as hostages, and one of our embassy employees was there. And this is the sort of thing that sort of ticks me off about Carlucci and his buddy, Okun. They didn't even take the time to let me know that this guy was coming out, but yet, as soon as the word got out that they were being detained, who had to go over and try to negotiate getting him out of there? They were so arrogant, intellectually and otherwise. I mean, Carlucci and Okun gave me rave reviews on efficiency reports but that doesn't really do the job.

Q: How about your relations, did you have much contact with the Portuguese desk?

TAYLOR: That group?

Q: I mean, you know, from Washington. Did you get visitors up there?

TAYLOR: Once. Actually, Wells Stabler's brother-in-law came up from there during the sort of peaceful three or four months. He really understood that we were out there on the front lines and that things were 100 percent different in Oporto than they were down in Lisbon. And, his name's Lukens, Al Lukens, a good man. He had been in Central African Republic; his wife and children had all died on a plane down there years ago.

But no, the desk knew what was going on, much better, I think, than Carlucci. I mean, he has a big ego and I think he thought everything revolved around him to a great extent. By the time I was leaving my friend Sá Carneiro was on the ascendance again and ended up being prime minister for two years.

Q: Well you left when?

TAYLOR: I left in ’75, summer of ’75.

Q: How stood things?

TAYLOR: What was happening is the socialist party under Soares, it was called the PPD, the Popular Democratic Party under Sá Carneiro, were beginning to really start holding rallies to show that the communist forces, which were in the ascent at the time, that they weren’t the only alternatives. And there again, two of those rallies at Oporto at the soccer stadiums, you know, armed thugs tried to come in and literally disrupt them. And these guys had guts to get out there, particularly Soares, who became president, but Sá Carneiro too, to get up there. I mean they could have been shot so easily or their families beaten up; you dared not go out on the streets. I was pretty lucky at the time. Joanna and I were riding around town one night, however, when – you know, you never knew when you were going to be involved – these groups of leftists were trying to take over a police station and the police station didn’t want to give up. So I mean, we were caught in the crossfire, right there in the heart of the city. And it was not that unusual.

Q: Was there a representative of the officer corps in Oporto that was-

TAYLOR: Oh yes.

Q: -equivalent to a, you know, during the time of our reconstruction major generals we sent in the South? I mean, in other words, was there sort of a proconsul there?

TAYLOR: Not really because the nature of the armed forces itself was very fragmented. There was no real leadership, and that was one of the problems, perhaps one of the salvations because the left wing types who were trying to infiltrate and take over the movement were being sort of blocked. My best contact up there was a guy named Esmaures. I think I told you his daughter and son-in-law were in the United States. He was very bright, middle of the road; I mean, he certainly saw the reasons for getting out of Africa. They were losing the war and also it was just morally indefensible what they were doing. At the same time he sure as hell didn’t want to turn the country into another Romania, which one of his colleagues, President Costa Gomes was trying to do. Another guy, who was not so good, who was one of my close contacts, was a fellow named Coravacho, Colonel Coravacho. He was a real scumbag. And he kept getting on the television and warning us about a group called the Army for the Liberation of Portugal. And he said that they were all gathered over in Spain. Spain was still run by Francisco Franco and they were just waiting to come in, en masse, to retake the country, which was totally BS. I mean, from the reporting that we saw from Spain and people from the Embassy Madrid the border over there, they saw nothing, no existence of this group. I’m sure that there were people, right wing types, who had some mercenaries, perhaps, in their pay and dispersed over there but I think it was totally fictitious that there was such a group.

Soon as this Portuguese military movement – they were fragmented and I think they began to realize that they had bitten off more than they could chew. But there was no one

in the North who had the control that the people in Lisbon seemed to have. And we were sort of left to fend for ourselves, which is not unusual, I think; historically that has been the story of Portugal.

Q: So you left there in?

TAYLOR: Seventy-five; August of '75.

Q: Today is the 22nd of May, 2009, with Rush Taylor. And Rush, we are in Oporto.

TAYLOR: I was just winding up my tour as consul, U.S. consul in Oporto. We were right in the midst of the Portuguese revolution, the Revolution of the Red Carnations, or whatever it was called.

The Northern part of the country where I was stationed was totally out of touch with the people in Lisbon, the military junta down there who were all very left wing. The city of Lisbon was going right along with a path to socialism as defined by the MFA, which is the movement of the armed forces. The people in Oporto were holding out for liberalism, which they had done under the Salazar-Caetano era and made them out of step with the rest of the country during that period and they were still out of step. But even more important was that during this period thousands and thousands of people called The Return were coming out of Angola and Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Most of them were from the northern part of the country and they had been kicked out of Angola and other Portuguese overseas possessions when the armed forces turned over the government to the locals. And thousands of these people, all they had was the clothes on their back, really, were streaming into Oporto; the train station was packed with these wretched people who had no money. The only place they could go was to relatives' homes there in the North. The armed forces were sending out to every village army and air force types. These were trying to tell the peasantry, the petit bourgeoisie, that their day of glory had arrived, that things were going to change, that this was the moment to seize power, to change the balance of centuries, and basically trying to teach them how to be communists or "socialists." And unlike the southern part of the country, which had had large landowners, employing sort of sharecropper types or peasants, the northern part was cut into tiny, tiny little pieces of land owned by the individual proprietor/farmer, whether they made vino verde or whatever they did for a living; they eked it out but they owned their land. They had a stake in the society that existed, the result being that they took very unkindly to the armed forces and started kicking them out and causing some pretty violent reactions as they pushed these soldiers back onto the train or bus and got them back to Lisbon.

Kenneth Maxwell, who was the best scholar on Portugal and Brazil, had been in the country since the revolution of the 25th of April, '74. He described this as the _____, the hot summer in the northern part of Portugal. He said that it looked like there was going to be a real secession, the country splitting in two, starting north of the city of _____ the old university city in the middle of the country. As I said, the situation in Lisbon in the South was totally different. The military government had the

reins of power down there and the people supported them wholeheartedly. But things were beginning to shift very much in the North. The socialist party had their first big rally, which hadn't been broken up by the military. The democratic party, led by Sá Carneiro, also had a huge rally, and in the spring of '75 they had elections. The entire northern part of Portugal, with the exception of the downtown part of Oporto, voted for the conservative party, socialists, and the democratic party whereas the South tended to support Cunhal, the communist, and some of the even more Maoist groups.

But I tried my damnedest to report to Ambassador Carlucci and the DCM, Herb Okun, what was going on. Whether they read them or not, it appears that they probably did, but it certainly didn't make much impression. When I left Oporto that summer, in August of '75, I got back to Washington and was talking to Al Lukens, who was on the Spanish/Portuguese desk. I was telling him what was the actual situation, and he said, well, we're not getting this from our embassy in Lisbon; they're reporting that the game is basically up. So he said, you go up and see a guy named Walker Diamanti, who was in INR. I had known him years ago, before that, when I was on the Italian desk. And I spent about two or three hours with Walker. Then he went to his boss and the result being that they wrote this pretty strong telegram, back to Embassy Lisbon and said get the hell out of that embassy and get out into the countryside and see what the rest of the world there is doing. And my successor later told me that Ambassador Carlucci spent about three to four weeks.

Vern Penner followed me and later became ambassador to Capo Verde. Penner and Carlucci drove around the north and some of my Portuguese friends wrote me and said we see them every night playing tennis. Carlucci was a big tennis player, and the MFA, the state controlled media, is trying to make this out as its pleasure tour. But I mean, it really did a lot of good to get the American ambassador there in situ so that the people saw that they did have some support somewhere.

By this time I was off to probably one of the worst assignments in my Foreign Service career I had felt honored to be selected at the time as one of the youngest DCMs in the entire Foreign Service, albeit to a small place, Nassau, Bahamas. But my wife had misgivings and in retrospect I should have bailed out. Carlucci had wanted me to go to Brazil; he said that's where you're going to get good experience and go there but for some reason that possibility fell through. And I kept getting these strange sort of telephone inquiries from Al Lukens, who was the country director there for Portugal. He was saying, there are some doubts, the ambassador in Nassau, who was a guy named Seymour Weiss, seems to have some reservations about you. And I should have taken that as no way should I go down there. But for some reason personnel was deciding to make a case and pushed me into this assignment, even though, I later learned, the ambassador really was opposed to it.

So I got down there in late August of '75. Ambassador Weiss was a career member of the State Department. He wasn't a Foreign Service officer; he was on the Civil Service side. Ambassador Weiss was big in ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) and political-military affairs. And he had gone to school at the University of Chicago; he had

been one of these guys who had been with Scoop Jackson, the senator from Washington State.

Weiss had devoted his entire career to political-military affairs and particularly nuclear balance and nuclear force stuff. Somehow he had really earned the ire of Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State, who had, in a fit of anger, called up Larry Eagleburger over in the management job. Kissinger said get this guy out of here, and he arrives as ambassador to Nassau. I apparently offended Weiss when I had been staff assistant in Secretary Rogers' office. He had wanted to push this memo in on Rogers without going through the system of the executive secretariat and Ted Eliot, which was really a no-no, and quite frankly, Rogers wasn't that interested in the subject anyway. So I said, no, you've got to go through the regular route. Well he was totally annoyed, I guess, because it later showed itself. Similarly, the DCM whose place I took, a lady names Roz Ridgway, had written some law of the sea memo, tuna fish off Ecuador or something like that – a memo which she too wanted to foist on Rogers. He had no interest whatsoever and his damn in-box was stacked high anyway. So when that one did not come through the system I bucked it back to the executive secretariat and said you know, this is just overkill. Well Ted Eliot, in order to save his own skin with this nice young lady, said it's Taylor in there who did it, you know, he's playing God or whatever. Well she hated my guts as well. So I didn't get a very warm reception when my wife and three daughters and I arrived in Nassau. And quite frankly it didn't get much better because there was absolutely nothing to do down there. The only thing you could do is play sort of narcotics cop because of the drug trafficking. Or you could get involved with stopping Haitian "immigrants" who were coming through by boat. In other words, working with the naval attaché was about the only viable way to pass one's time. But it was boring as hell.

There was a place called Lyford Cay, where the richest of the rich Americans basically had come there to avoid American taxes. We had Sir John Templeton, who founded a big financial growth fund. I mean, multi, multi millionaires but most of these people were so totally decadent. We went to a couple of parties including Sean Connery and his French wife; it was pretty drunken orgy sort of stuff and it just wasn't my cup of tea. I mean, the beaches were beautiful and my wife and family and I enjoyed getting out to the so-called outer islands but as far as a career, zilch. And Ambassador Seymour Weiss was, in addition to being bored out of his mind, I mean here, imagine a man who was totally interested and immersed in the Soviet-American arms issues finding himself down there. He did enjoy putting on a frock coat and going over to the governor's palace where I guess the former prince of Wales had lived with Mrs. Simpson for awhile. He was also very, very sick. He had some sort of a stomach problem which later, I think, killed him. But he was in great pain and it was just a really lousy situation. The head of the consular section was selling visas, which we had to track that down and he went to jail.

Another problem with Nassau, though, was crime. I mean, it was rampant. These poor Bahamian kids had no way to make money except off the tourist trade and the tourist trade totally corrupted them; not totally, but it certainly wasn't the best influence on their young lives. In any event, our house was broken into twice while we were there. The first time the intruder was a young American who was high on cocaine and, fortunately, I was

able to talk to him while my wife was able to call the Marines to get them up to get him. He had broken through the glass French doors and busted his hand and he was bleeding all over the place and that was really awful. And then the second time was just a petty little Bahamian crook who had gotten so far as our bedroom door and my wife saw his foot. It was just a really, really bad experience.

Q: How long were you there?

TAYLOR: Three long years.

Q: Oh my God.

TAYLOR: And three long years of really doing nothing.

Q: Why didn't you get the hell out?

TAYLOR: Oh, I tried. But what was happening is Weiss got sick and he left. Then, right before the election, Jimmy Carter and President Ford, Larry Eagleburger sent us the lieutenant governor of Wisconsin, a guy named Jack Olson, whose family had owned some sort of a tourist thing up in central Wisconsin. He was an appointment after the election and he arrives as ambassador. He stayed from late November until January or February and then they jerked him out. One of the Carter contributors, a guy named Bill Schwartz, an Atlanta businessman comes in. So, I mean, it was just inconvenient to leave and it was hell. It was the worst damn experience I've ever had.

Q: This was from 19-

TAYLOR: Seventy-six; 1976 to '79.

Q: What was the government like there?

TAYLOR: Well, we had a man named Lyndon Pindling, and it was basically a one party state. The opposition was totally discredited; the opposition were called the Bay Street Boys because they were backers of the previous British colonial government. But it was so corrupt; everybody had their hands in the pockets and there were kickbacks from the hotels and from the casinos and it was just- it reeked of corruption.

Q: Was there a white society and a black society or how did things-?

TAYLOR: No. The British had been able to pull this off but there was not really racism, no. I mean, it was a very cohesive-

Q: Cohesive corruption.

TAYLOR: Yes. And the blacks were accepted out at Lyford Cay at the receptions and the dinners and whatnot, not that they particularly wanted to go unless I guess they had other interests in mind. But racially it was totally mixed.

Q: What was the drug situation?

TAYLOR: You know, narcotics was only beginning to be a problem. I mean, it was almost non-existent. The big problems were there were Haitians, poor wretched people who were running ashore or their boats were hitting rocks and trying to save them. But narcotics were not yet the big problem that they later became.

Q: How about Cubans?

TAYLOR: The Bahamian government had very, very formal arm's length relations with the Cubans and the Cubans knew that if they tried to go into the Bahamian territory they were going to get into some trouble, probably be picked up and incarcerated and not allowed to go to the United States. So we didn't get that much flow of Cubans.

Q: What about immigration? I mean, were you getting calls from your wealthy Americans, get my maid into-?

TAYLOR: Oh yes, yes. Mrs. Templeton came to me infuriated that I wasn't able just to order Ruth Brookes to produce visas for these European servants. Yes, all the time and I'm sure that they felt, well, if we can pay off the people in the Bahamian government why can't we pay off these Americans. And I guess they were with my friend, the head of the consular section who ended up in jail. I've basically tried to repress his name. He ended up in the Miami federal prison.

Q: Were you there when he was caught?

TAYLOR: I was there when they started the investigation. I was back in Washington when they finally had his trial. But he was just a rotten egg; he was selling visas. Needed the money, I guess. But it was really, really a cesspool.

Q: Well then what happened?

TAYLOR: Okay, well I finally got the hell out of there and that was one of the happiest days in my life. One of the things we did do was we had the signing of the Panama Canal treaties while I was there so I got to come back to Washington and meet President Carter. Each one of us escorted our president or prime minister back to Washington for the signing ceremonies. I mean, there was a big to do.

So I got assigned to the National War College. I was there for a year. Then I had a choice of going into the NATO Affairs office. A friend of mine said, Rush, come on, let's get you back into the European Affairs circuit. And instead of doing that I ran into an old friend of mine, Robert Brewster, who had been in EUR when I was in EUR, who had

been in the executive secretariat when I was in Rogers' office. And he had gone on to be ambassador to Ecuador but he was back now as deputy inspector general. He said, Rush, I've got a really great position for you. It's two years and I want you to write up being my sort of special assistant and do all the reports and particularly the classified, you know, nitty gritty of what's going on and how we can clean it up. And it sounded pretty exciting and it involved a considerable amount of travel. So, I went with Bob Brewster. And there again I was sidetracked. Because back in those days, even today, the inspector general doesn't have the respect or the acceptance. How did you feel when you were an officer about the IG corps? Did they come to you in Naples or in some of your posts?

Q: Yes. And there was a time, I think this is still the time when we looked upon them as being unhelpful because a little later they had a revision and it was- looked more as "I gotcha" type thing.

TAYLOR: It became definitely that after. But during the period I was there, Ambassador Sayre had been there before and then there was Ted Eliot and then Bob Brewster. At this point they were still trying to serve as a management tool to catch problems before they get too big. If there was someone who was a square peg in a round hole as far as assignments, to take care of that. I was sent out on one inspection thing to, a special one that was really a messy thing in Pretoria where we had had an admin officer, counselor for administration who was literally corrupting his young admin assistants and causing them to commit pretty heinous crimes as far as stealing and taking money that wasn't theirs and doing some pretty bad stuff. And the ambassador there I remember treated us like we had perhaps bubonic plaque. I mean, he said what are you doing here? This is my embassy. And we tried to be very diplomatic about it; we said you've got a problem, but neither he nor the DCM seemed to really give a damn. I mean, they were too busy with the political side of the house and admin was something that you just, like consular affairs at the time, that you tended to brush aside. At least a lot of the political cone officers, I found, were doing that.

Q: Well you're right.

TAYLOR: He was Ambassador Edmondson and his DCM was a guy named Walker. But by and large it was an uneventful two years and as I say, I was sort of outside the mainstream. I made a real mistake. I started off in African Affairs, went to European Affairs then I was technically in ARA, which was Nassau. So I was a fish out of water or a sojourner without a home. And after that I made another mistake. A friend of mine named David Passage, who was at that time head of the press office in Russia, and I'd known him back in SS said, I have a really great job here as director of the press office. You can even, if you want to, go in to be one of the junior spokesmen for the department.

Well, I went into the press office for two years. The Secretary of State at the time was Al Haig, and the head of the executive secretariat was our friend, L. Paul Bremer, who was a total control freak.

Q: It's Lewis, by the way.

TAYLOR: But in any event, Haig had chosen a guy from "Time" magazine to be his spokesman and to be head of the Bureau of Public Affairs. His name was Dean Fisher, and Dean Fisher was totally inept at the bureaucracy and finding a place or finding a role. And there was a strained relationship between him and Haig. Actually, I think it was a strained relationship between Haig and just about everyone in the Department. And the Reagan White House wasn't that happy. And then after Haig's real mess up on the day of the attempted assassination when he runs to the microphone and tells the world that he's in charge, with poor George Bush flying back from Austin, it was not the most harmonious of relationships. And I had a guy that I worked for, he was the deputy spokesman, his name was Alan Greenburg, and quite frankly, I mean, he's one of the few people in my professional or otherwise that I really loathed, I mean, I just couldn't stand him and obviously the feeling was mutual.

So, we went along for two years of that, busy as hell because it seemed like we had one foreign policy crisis after another. The hours were long and it was satisfying, gratifying in some bays to work with Bob Schieffer and some really good people like the Kalb brothers, who were good, hard nosed newsmen but who were real good professionals and who respected the State Department and the professionals that worked in the Foreign Service. But by and large it led nowhere as far as my career and was another two years lost, as far as "getting ahead."

At this point I was really sort of out to pasture. I didn't have that many really great contacts and my CV (curriculum vitae) didn't look that hot. I mean, I'd been the rising young star after Oporto. I'd made FSO-3 when I was mid 30s or early 30s and I had been an FSO-3 for about seven or eight years and it was getting pretty tense there. And I was then asked by George Vest, who was an old friend from the Rogers period and was now the Director General of personnel, to come up and help with a problem that they had. It was called the CIP, Communications Information Policy. Have you ever come across this?

Q: Oh yes.

TAYLOR: With Diana Lady Dougan?

Q: This was the matrix, wasn't it?

TAYLOR: She had been brought in by the Reagan Administration to give State a voice in all of the international telecommunication union conferences, what we were going to do with the Internet. It was not so much internally how we were going to manage our communications but rather how the United States was going to play this on the international stage. And this woman was one of the most gifted, extraordinarily beautiful, dedicated people I have ever met in my life but totally scatterbrained. I mean, she was almost dyslexic in the sense that it was impossible for her to stay on a subject and follow it through or, quite frankly, implement a policy. Did you know George Vest at all?

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: What a great guy. He was such a fine Southern gentleman, you know, and a great Foreign Service officer. And he said, Rush, I need someone like you who's been around the Department, who we trust, and I want you to go help Diana stay out of trouble. And as I didn't have anything else on the horizon I said sure.

Well that turned into an almost a five year assignment which was so much fun and I felt that we were really accomplishing something. There was a guy named Dante Fascell, who was the congressman from Miami and chair of the House Committee on Foreign Relations. His pet project, almost obsession, was to get the Department of State out front in the foreign policy arena on implementing a good, coherent communications and information policy, particularly with regard to satellites but also everything from the Internet to VOA (Voice of America). We were having real problems back in those days with jamming of our propaganda – I shouldn't call it propaganda, of our information programs.

And my first job down there with Diana was to work with a guy who I just love to this day; he's like a father to me. His name is Leonard Marks. Did you ever meet him?

Q: Oh yes. Head of USIA.

TAYLOR: Yes. Leonard had been a very close friend of Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird. It was Marks who had told Lady Bird to use her inheritance to buy a radio station and television station in Austin, Texas, back in the mid '40s, which led to, of course, part of the Johnson family fortune. But Leonard went on under Johnson to be head of USIA, and then they had a fallout, a really big fallout, and he became organizer of Democrats for Nixon, rather than going along with Hubert Humphrey, etc., etc. And by the time I met him, it was the early '80s, '82 or something like that, he had been named by the Reagan Administration to head up this conference in Geneva on reallocating the bands, the waves, shortwave radio. We were working with the guys from Deutsche Welle, the British, particularly with the British, and the French, they were very, very cooperative, to get some sort of acceptable arrangement whereby the Russians and the Chinese didn't constantly try to get our programs off the air. I spent about a year and a half on this. Leonard sent me off to Pakistan and India and Saudi Arabia, all over the world, trying to build up support for the American policies, which I won't bore you with in detail. But we got back and thanks to his leadership and vision and his ability to get people to work together we did a really smashing job, he did, in getting just about everything the West wanted. And these were times when, I mean, we weren't really close friends with the Russians and the Chinese. Yes, we cooperated with the Chinese to some extent but with the Russians it was dog eat dog. For him to accomplish what he did got him the plaudits of a lot of Reagan's closest friends, including his then head of USIA, Charles Z. Wick.

Behind the scenes during this time Dante Fascell was demanding, I mean really demanding, he controlled our purse strings to a great extent, we the State Department, that the Secretary of State, Shultz, create a new bureau called the Bureau for

Communications and Information Policy. And State kept saying, no, it's got a home in the economic bureau. We don't really need it, we don't have the positions. Well this went on and got more and more heated and finally Fascell just said you're going to do it and you're going to like it and you're going to give them enough positions. Well suddenly we were a bureau, much to the chagrin of everyone. I mean, Vest sort of went along with it because he saw that it was inevitable, but I was consumed with having to find people. I mean, there are not very many Foreign Service officers who can go in, myself included, and speak with any authority about some of these very arcane FCC (Federal Communications Commissions) rules and regulations and how they should be implemented on an international basis. So we had to get people from outside, from academia, from the Commerce Department, from the FCC to come in and work at State and to try to set up a little bureau which could take its place, rightful place as part of the triumvirate to do international communications. And to a certain extent we succeeded. Unfortunately after Diana Dougan left, she I think had health problems, George Bush Sr. appointed this total airhead of a person, a lady, to come in and be head of the bureau and she almost wrecked- well she wrecked it very quickly. A friend of mine, Parker Borg had in the meantime taken my place as number two and he bailed out after about six or seven months, saying it's just impossible to work for the woman. And by this time Fascell was retiring or had retired and so the whole thing just reverted back. I think now it's a 12 man office in EB (economic bureau) and perhaps it's doing the job it should, who knows. I don't know. Sometimes the State Department is very shortsighted, I found, on policy matters where there is a very big foreign policy component in international communications and State just sort of says, well, let the Commerce Department or let someone else do it. I mean, they'll say, it's just not our purview.

Q: Did you, while you were with the communications side, get involved in the Cuban mess, radio, TV?

TAYLOR: Oh, Radio Marti, yes, yes, yes.

Q: Could you talk a little about that?

TAYLOR: That was handled by the White House and we were the ones who were to implement it. And the political decisions had already been made, the Republican Party had allied itself with the Cuban American ascendancy in Miami and they demanded that we pull this off. And, to a large extent it was rather pro forma. I mean, USIA hired more people to man Radio Marti and we dealt with the parameters of attempts at jamming and other things. But during this period AF had asked me to go out because of my Portuguese and take over as acting DCM in Guinea-Bissau, which I was able to do for about six months and that was sort of interesting.

Q: What was happening? You were there from when to when?

TAYLOR: In '86. One of the strange things about that place, the Soviet ambassador was an old, hard line communist who was dying of throat cancer but he still, I mean, he ruled that place. And it was fun to hang around him and watch him and talk to him. He had

total disdain if not racial undisguised contempt for the local people. He reminded me of a German who had been on the continent about 100 years earlier, a fellow named Nautigal, who was the German that the Kaiser sent out to get Cameroon and Togo and Southwestern Africa, Windhoek. I mean, this guy looked upon the people, literally, as these are chess pieces and man, we've got to have ours too and that's the way he ruled Guinea-Bissau. One thing I saw was that so many of the people that I'd known back in Oporto, left wing army officers, I kept running into them down there. They saw a way of making a fast buck and they had turned into some of the most rampant uncontrolled capitalists I have ever seen, without disregard of political theory or anything else. They were there for the money, whether it was getting government contracts to help with the port facilities or build new roads. I mean, they were there with escudos in mind, the Portuguese currency.

But it was fun. The military attaché from Dakar came down and we went all over the place. There were these little islands called the Bijagos, which are now the drug running center of West Africa. At the time they were totally untouched by, almost unspoiled by Europe or colonialism. So we went out there and there was also a little town south of Guinea-Bissau where they had this huge statue of Ulysses Grant. Back in the late 1860s or early 1870s, he had helped with a demarcation of French and Portuguese territorial interests there. So the Portuguese had built this thing and it was out in the middle of nowhere, vines running over it. I got some great photographs of that. But that's a sidelight.

In the summer of 1988 I got rumors that I was being considered for a number of ambassadorships. In any event, we got a message one night, it was in October, I guess, of '88, that I had been chosen as ambassador to Lome in West Africa, Togo. And I had known where Togo was because on my first trip to Africa, on my way to Douala, we had stopped there. And apparently at that time it had a reputation as being a sort of Switzerland, well it was; everything was done just like it was under the Germans. There were beautiful little parks like Switzerland with the usual annual flowers growing; it had trains that worked on time and the dictator there, a fellow named Eyadéma, had been in charge since almost '63 or '64. The first president of Togo, a fellow named Sylvanus Olympio, had been the first African president to be invited to the White House by John Kennedy. And he was a classical liberal, very, very of Portuguese origins, very pro American and he was looked upon very, very suspiciously by the French. And we talked about this one time earlier about how the French looked on West Africa as their own backyard and it was theirs and man, you better not forget it. Well, the French saw Olympio's going to Washington, the Kennedy brother, Teddy, had been one of the representatives along with Louis Armstrong who had gone out for the independence celebrations. There is some, I think not conclusive, but some persuasive thought out there that the French had been part of Olympio's demise. He was actually assassinated on the steps of the American embassy in Lome. And one of the young military leaders had played a part in this scene was none other than Sergeant Eyadéma.

Q: Today is the 29th of May, 2009, with Rush Taylor. And Rush, where are we?

TAYLOR: Let's see. We have just left the office of communications information policy and I'm on my way to West Africa to be ambassador to Lome in Togo.

Q: Okay, you were in Togo from when to when?

TAYLOR: Let's see. I arrived in the summer of '88 and stayed until '91.

Q: Let's talk, in general terms, what's Togo got at that time and then about our relations. But first just about Togo.

TAYLOR: Well let me tell you something that happened on the way. We were all required, any of us going to Francophone Africa, to stop in Paris for a week and be briefed or debriefed by the French authorities. And I had a really, really interesting couple of days at the Quai d'Orsay with old Africa hands in the French foreign ministry. And at one point I stupidly said something about democracy and working at improving democracy or something really naïve to this old Frenchman, who really took me down; he was just furious. He said, young man, don't you ever put Africa and democracy in the same sentence. He said that's an impossibility. And he said, you Americans, he said one thing you've got to realize is that we French, we're very wise and we've been there for 150 years and one of the things we found is that politics in Africa involves only two things and that's family and tribe. And he says once you go beyond that the African nationhood or statehood or whatnot doesn't really exist. And he says whether it's Houphouet-Boigny of Ivory Coast or any of the classic leaders of French Africa they're all like the man who rules your little country, Togo, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, it's all getting together a coalition of tribes and then working through the familiar patterns and building coalitions.

After Togo I went to Guinea and I was in Cameroon when I started my career, but it is so true, and particularly in Togo. There were three ethnic groupings: there were the Kabiye people up in the north, who under colonialism, from the very beginning, from the first Portuguese who came through there on their way to Lagos, on the way to the Cape of Good Hope, the people of the coast had been brought into the light and sort of allowed to get the best parts of European contact whereas the people of the north, they were the ones who actually passed through these southern ports onto the slave ships going over to the new world. And so the Kabiye up north had had a really miserable existence for 150, 250 years. The people on the coast, first there were the Portuguese in Porto-Novo there in Togo, and they had basically picked up most of the European standards, ideas, religion, although it was somewhat superficial, and they had become the ruling class. The first president of independent Togo was a guy named Sylvanus Olympio, who was a descendent of Portuguese merchants and Brazilian slaves because a lot of Brazilian slaves went back to work as colonial administrators for the Europeans.

So you have the Kabiye in the north; and the Ewe, who were the sort of dominant group in and around the capital city of Lome. Then over by the border with Benin there was another group called the Ga, who had come in medieval times from Ghana and settled there and they were the real intellectuals, if you will. Also, they were very venal in the

sense that any way they could make a buck at whatever price, they did. But Togo as far as value, as far as produce or anything else, had only one export. It was a very sad little country in the sense that it had been the Germans who had first settled it and made it into a colony, had given it everything, particularly the Kaiser. It was to be an example of what German colonialism could do. So the city of Lome still had beautiful little public parks with gazebos and little German church spires on both Catholic and Lutheran churches; everywhere were flowers and the little railroad stations.

When World War I ended, the Germans obviously defeated, and the British were on one side, in Ghana, and the French were on the other side in Benin, what had been called Dahomey before, so they decided that with Togo they would split it, as they did with Cameroon. And by splitting it they made a fairly small country even smaller. And then later the British were told by the UN that they were going to have to do a plebiscite. This is in the '50s. But because the votes were pretty well fixed that one sliver of what was left of the other sliver went to Ghana. So Togo just became basically one old railroad going through Lome way up into the interior and one of the best paved superhighways in the middle of Africa that went up to Ouagadougou up in Upper Volta, which was the sort of inland traffic, where all the lorries and the trucks. Lome was the port city for that interior.

I was saying that we only had one export, phosphates, one of the richest phosphate mines in the world. The proceeds from that mine supported the Togolese government for at least 20, almost 25 years until the phosphate began running out, which happened right about the time that I was there. Eyadéma has seized power by force. He was an army sergeant who had served in Dien Bien Phu with the French colonial army in Vietnam. He had been a cook in the French army. He had been mustered out and gone back and joined the Togolese army and there was this growing resentment that people like the first president didn't really represent all of the people of Togo. I mean, he supposedly only represented the moneyed aristocratic wealthy class of the south, and I think that's basically true. Certainly no one cared about the Kabiye people or the people of the interior and Gnassingbé Eyadéma, this army sergeant, said he was going to redress that. So he took power and put in a puppet man named Grunitzky, from a German family, who ruled for a couple of years at which point Gnassingbé Eyadéma decided that he would take full power and he declared himself president. In doing so he cracked down on the Ewe people; there was absolutely no freedom of anything, freedom of speech or the right to gather or certainly there were no free elections. And it really became a pretty harsh totalitarian state. At the same time old Houphouet-Boigny, who looked upon himself as the wise man of Africa, took Eyadéma under his wing and tried to soften the edges and make him a little more palatable to the Europeans.

Q: Houphouet-Boigny was the president of-

TAYLOR: Cote d'Ivoire.

Q: Cote d'Ivoire.

TAYLOR: Right. And he was the sort of doyenne of West African leaders. And by the time I got there Eyadéma had succeeded in making himself sort of the essential key man of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), the West African regional gathering, and he was president of ECOWAS any number of times. If a coup d'état arose, whether in Gambia or Mali or anyplace else, Eyadéma was the first name on the spot or his representatives, trying to make the transition more peaceful, trying to get whatever leadership or the military, mostly military, to at least obey some of the outward basics of democratic government. But he was looked upon by the French particularly, and by the United States too, as the man that you would go to if there was a problem anywhere in West Africa. He had the background and the ability to sort of resolve disputes.

As luck would have it, when I arrived there was going to be an ECOWAS conference within a couple of days. so I had to go get my credentials presented very, very quickly so that I could be part of the show out at the airport. Any head of state that came to Lome, all the diplomatic corps, and there must have been, amazingly enough for such a small country, about 19 or 20 of us, we would troop to the airport and wait around for an intolerably long time in the heat for some head of state. Along with us were thousands, and literally thousands, of young men and women, teenagers, who were dressed in these really colorful costumes who would sing this sort of rap music together in unison and dance around. This was something that Eyadéma had picked up from his buddy Mobutu down in Zaire, that you get the animator out there before you give a speech or before anything to get the crowd worked up. So it was quite a circus.

This whole period in French West Africa was, quite frankly, one of some difficulty for the African leaders. On the international stage the Soviet Union was collapsing. French President Mitterrand had made a big speech about the winds of show, how no longer were the French and the European Union going to be devoting or going to be benignly looking on some dictatorship just because it was anti-communist; no longer did they have to allow the Soviet-Western rivalry to play out in West Africa. And for the United States, George Bush the first, or George H.W. Bush, had made a couple of speeches in which he too said, you know, we're going to be looking at a more liberal, humane approach by the governments of West Africa. So there was some pressure being put on; I had to go over a couple of times and protest something that somebody in Togo had said or done, putting some members of the Human Rights Commission in jail or something like that. I mean, it was no longer just patting on the back and looking the other way.

One of the things my predecessor had done, he was a very bright man, David Korn, and he had really pushed Eyadéma for the creation of the first council on human rights. Anything like that in this part of West Africa was non-existent before then. And it really had some teeth. Reagan and then Bush put money into it, to fund the thing. And the French were somewhat skeptical at first but they basically went along. They had sort of looked at it as a creature of the Americans and looked at it somewhat askance. But I was so lucky to have that thing going. It allowed a lot of the intellectuals at the University of Benin, which was our big undergraduate college in Lome, teachers, students an outlet where they would have meetings. Most of the meetings, by the way, I'm not sure, they were held either at the USIA building there across from the embassy or over at my

residence. The ambassador's residence had this big area where we could sit about 350 people in the yard. You could get chairs and a podium put up there and loudspeakers and so we had a couple of meetings there. But it really gave a place for the lawyers and the so-called "dissidents," because they really weren't allowed to go that far, to meet and air problems and go through the pretensions of having some sort of liberal discussion of issues. And obviously the government had infiltrated; they always had their people there and it was well known. But I had this to work with when I got there.

David had left also a really, really good team at the embassy. I asked the DCM, Tibor Nagy, to stay on. He was an admin officer who had served with David in Ethiopia and David brought him over to Lome.

The admin officer was a guy named Huggins, Joe Huggins, really first rate, black American who went on to be ambassador to Botswana. The econ/commercial officer was one of the brightest, most talented young men, Louis Mazel. Lou had been a Democratic campaign operative up in Massachusetts and had worked electing Barney Frank and some of the real stars of the party. But the kid was just so bright and so full of energy; I mean, he could go around Lome and find five opportunities for an American company to sell something. He ended up getting Giant Food Company here in Washington to send thousands of dollars of merchandise over to one of the supermarkets there in Lome and it sold like hotcakes and it just became a great success; people were coming from all over West Africa to shop at Grand Marche or whatever it was called.

Because of all of these really, really good people I had it made as far as being ambassador and quite frankly it was just a pleasure every day to go down there and work with them because they were all just full of energy and drive. Right off the bat my country director, a lady named Frances Cook came through and we took our first trip. There was a Korean sugar beet factory way up into the interior, about two day's drive. On the way we stopped at a place where the French and Germans had built this really large hydroelectric dam which supplied most of the power to the country. In doing so they had taken particular pains to allow this sort of swampland to grow up, which had become a real oasis for the hippopotami. And there were hippopotami everywhere and it was really a great little tourist attraction; we got a lot of Scandinavian tourists into the country at that point.

But the little country was really thriving in a certain sense. You have to look at what was going on on either side. Jerry Rawlings was ruling over in Ghana with an iron fist and there was no investment whatsoever. On the other side was an idiot president, Mathieu Kérékou, who kept seeing images of Jesus Christ everywhere he went. He was really a dingbat and he also professed socialism of a sort, so there was no investment there. So perforce all the investment available was going to Lome. The Germans had built a beautiful little port, I mean, it was state-of-the-art so big ships could – although there's no natural harbor there – come and discharge cargo; and because of the good railroad and highway infrastructure it became a real transit point for the interior of West Africa.

What was not really known, and I certainly didn't realize it at the time, was how tenuous or how really problematical this phosphates mine was. Productivity was going down and

without the phosphate Eyadéma couldn't run the type of government, the autocracy. Basically every leading person would go off. A young, a bright young man would go off to school in Europe. He would study at a university or he would go to University of California, as the minister of foreign affairs, a guy named Adoda did. When they came back there was nothing really to do except get a government job. Eyadéma once told me, he said, Taylor, you know, I have to give everyone a place at the trough. He said, everyone needs to feed; and he said there's a limited room so you have to keep changing ministers but at least the people are rewarded for whatever they did, whether getting a Masters in history at UCLA or government in Paris. And the ministers in the government were so intelligent and bright and you felt so damn sorry that there was not really a future for them, politically or commercially or economically. There was just a limit as to how far they could go. And every day from my office you would see hundreds, literally, of little boys and girls, the little boys had on khaki shorts and impeccably laundered white shirts, going through the mud with their little schoolbags on their backs, and you would wonder, where in the hell are these little kids, what's going to happen to them?

Q: Well let's talk a bit about phosphate. ?

TAYLOR: Well there are two countries, Morocco and at that time Togo. Togo doesn't produce that much any more, if any. But you have to have a vein. I mean, it's like bauxite. It comes in an area just like any other ore. It's not too expensive to extract. By a process of mixing it with water you make it into sort of a gooey stuff and you put pipes out into the ocean and ships can come and fill up with this gooey mess and sail off. It's dried and used for fertilizer. I guess it's also used in armaments, to wit the truck that blew up down in Oklahoma City back in the '90s.

Q: But I mean, it's obviously like anything else it's a finite thing.

TAYLOR: Very finite and-

Q: And were there explorations going on for other things or could they afford to look for other things?

TAYLOR: We were constantly trying to find other things. For example, I had a delegation from Dole Pineapple who wanted to come in and see if they could raise pineapple there. And they looked at three countries, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Cameroon. They liked Togo, the government was reasonably more honest than the other two, the living situation for expatriates was the best in West Africa but the rainfall was just a little low. So I mean we kept looking. The French and the Belgium ambassadors started trying to raise this- You go into a grocery store or something and you see these little pot plants of houseplants, you know, ferns and jade plants and all that stuff. They tried to set up flower markets, things like that they could fly Sabena and Air France. You know, it's only what, eight hours away, six hours. And raise that stuff down there and that didn't take off. I mean, we were looking for anything we could to try to prop the government up.

Q: The people would work, I take it.

TAYLOR: Oh- The Togolese people?

Q: Yes, I mean-

TAYLOR: Hard working people. I mean, they had the German work ethic. It was very much impressed on them. The German culture was still there and the work ethic was very, very evident.

I became a pretty good friend in support of the president of the Human Rights Commission, who was a fellow called Metra, which means lawyer, and he said Taylor, I really need you to come up. My constituency, we're having this schoolhouse opening and it would be a real honor, blah, blah, blah. So Joanna and I went up there. We left the car by the road and had to go, it seemed, two miles into this brush, just grasses and small trees about up to your shoulder, this narrow little path. And suddenly, I was walking on this path, fortunately I was in front of my wife, they cut the head off this goat with blood spewing everywhere, all over my suit, which wasn't very pleasing. This was an honor. They were "preserving" for me, to go over the bloody path to make my speech. Well I was so close to throwing up that it really, really took all the fortitude and guts I had just to stay out there in the heat with blood all over me and give my little speech in French to the wild applause of the villagers.

This guy had studied in France; he was a very, very good lawyer and he was head of the Human Rights Commission, but he was so into voodoo and tribal practices that you often wondered how these two things could exist in one person. I mean, a very modern Paris-trained lawyer who also has all the cultural baggage of a very primitive society. It was frightening and at the same time it gave you a real pause, you know, where are we and where are we trying to go.

One of the other things that I really enjoyed when we got there was they had just opened up this sort of Gold's Gym place and so Huggins, the admin officer and I, used to work out over there. The Marines all went over there. And we met one of the young men who worked there, a guy named Patrick Minsa, who you'll hear more about. My wife and I eventually brought him back to the United States and he now has a master's degree from George Mason and is making about $200,000 a year as a computer specialist. But he was one of the footnotes to being over there.

This was also the time when the first satellite television things were going in. I was able to get a satellite TV antenna for USIA. We got these really great American basketball games. And I told the USIA director, we've got to capitalize on this. Most of the players are black, it's a great game, they love America anyway. Out there in the courtyard of USIA at night we would get 300 or more people for basketball games. It became the most popular thing. There are only two or three movie houses and this was free.

Q: Were the people, were they tall, were they into basketball?

TAYLOR: The Togolese people are really, yes, they're athletically built; their big support was for soccer. But baseball was not popular; American football was not popular but they loved basketball, mainly because the players were black, the good ones, and so that was a big hit culturally.

About two months after I got there, I got a call from the minister of culture, information and culture. His name was Amegbo and he was one of the Ghant people from the south who had really sold out to Eyadéma. I mean, they got their rewards. But he called me over to his office; he said Taylor, I really need to talk to you seriously about something. He said, President Eyadéma has taken a real liking to you and even more important than that – I seemed to be on television all the time. Everything I did I was on the evening television. He said he feels that the people of Lome have this bond with you, that they like hearing you and seeing you and he wants you to take a more active role to really get out and make more speeches and make more visits. I said, well, my God, I'm already going out two or three times a week; I mean, what else can I do? He said well, he said just letting you know that he really, really thinks that there's a PR success, you really, really are helping us out. I said well, glad to oblige but there are limits. But from that time on everything I did was televised. And I mean, sometimes if there was a 30 minute evening news program and I would be on for 15 or 20 minutes. And you know, the most ridiculous things; welcoming a cargo ship full of American rice or we had the U.S. Navy ship come through with a band, and just anything that you could think of.

Q: Well I'm just wondering, you know, to use a diplomatic term, this really must have pissed off the French ambassador.

TAYLOR: Oh, he was just absolutely livid. Because he and his German counterpart, took times being doyenne; one year the French, one year the Germans. Well Eyadéma, before that, at these big dinners that we had, the diplomatic corps dinners and there were constant heads of state from other little countries around there, only the French and the German ambassadors sat up on the high table. Eyadéma said no, he wants three. So from then on it was the American also. And previously, for the honors, parades and all that, the president was flanked by the French and the German. Well, it was now the French sometimes but always the American and either the German or the French.

Q: Well were you concerned, as you say Eyadéma was not the most liberal democrat.

TAYLOR: No, no, not at all.

Q: And that you might be getting a little too close.

TAYLOR: Oh absolutely, yes.

Q: In a way he was snuggling up to you.

TAYLOR: The Ewe people were so enraptured with the United States of America and I guess for the first time in several years they had an activist ambassador who really didn't mind publicity. But of course I felt bad. But at the same time, as I told Washington, the African desk, I said look, I'm going to do this to a point but at the same time I'm going to get my rewards too. And I was able to get away with stuff with my human rights commission that no one, I mean, you know, we started issuing documents, papers; we invited foreign journalists to come and talk to us. And it became more than just a little social knitting club.

Q: I mean, could you, for example, I assume Eyadéma was putting people in jail for being dissidents.

TAYLOR: At that time yes but not really that much.

Q: So, I mean, if he was moving too far away from the human rights side could you nudge him?

TAYLOR: Yes. For example, if one of his ministers gave a speech, as he did in Brazzaville, saying that democracy is not the right way, I would go to him and say, Mr. President, this is not the way that we want Togo to be going. You know, Togo has- I would tell him, you have this great image abroad of being one of the more liberalizing influences here in West Africa, and he would say yes, I'll have to talk to whoever it was.

Eyadéma had this palace by the oceanfront. When I would go in, it was this marble vaulted, looked like something out of ancient Rome, and he was sitting at this sort of marble desk with flags and whatever on either side. Usually I would come with a lot of papers that I would want to lay out and I didn't want to sit back in a little chair, 20 feet away, juggling papers. So I pulled my chair and picked it up and took it right in front of his desk and sat like this. He looked at me. He was astounded and then he broke into this big smile and he said ah, c'est _____, Monsieur L'Ambassador, trés bien. People usually would come, his own people, on their knees to come in and give him a piece of paper, and I mean, it was quite a bit of fun. From then on, every time I came in, two soldiers would come in in front of me carrying a chair and put it right in front of him. And I told the French ambassador about this, he said mon dieu, c'est impossible. I don't believe it. He said the old man permits this? I said yes.

In any event, as my wife said the first time she saw the two of us on TV, said that old man looks at you like he really, really likes you. And I don't know whether he really, really liked me but I think he respected me and I think he saw that I could do him some good.

Q: Well I think to that to some extent this is repeated on individual relationships of chiefs of states in many of the smaller African countries because the American ambassador was somewhat outside. They were not tainted with this colonial stuff.

TAYLOR: Exactly.

Q: And these guys lived in a cocoon and they kind of like somebody that could talk to them.

TAYLOR: Yes.

Q: You know, anybody, you know, and without real problems and repercussions.

TAYLOR: Yes. The first two weeks I was in Lome the Ghanaian ambassador had given me this really, really sensational article from some paper up in London that he had picked up, talking about Eyadéma in the most unflattering terms and saying what a hypocrite and dictator and idiot and on and on and on. Well he gave me a Xerox copy of the thing, which I took over to the embassy, read and threw in the wastebasket; it was trash. Well about two days after the head of the Togolese intelligence service called on me. Said Monsieur Taylor, we have a problem. And he showed me this article and he said it's not something you sent back to Washington to your government, is it? I said oh for Christ sake, look at the top of it. It says London, England, such and such a date, and it even gives the paper's name. I said it's trash and I threw it in the trash. Well, we all knew that we had some of the, what do you call it?

Q: Cleaning.

TAYLOR: Cleaning staff, who were picking out wastebaskets, but quite frankly, with something like that I didn't care. And I told him, I said look, the Ghanaian ambassador gave me this and you can ask him where he got it but I said I'm sure you can also ask your ambassador in London to go and they'll give you the whole article – the magazine the article came from. But Eyadéma apparently liked my frank, open, unapologetic response to this little situation.

Q: Well did you find- How were relations between the central government with Eyadéma and the tribal situation there?

TAYLOR: He was a master at manipulating. Well, first of all, they had the French system so everything was controlled from the capital, from Lome. And your little districts, all the prefects were government men and loyal. But he would send Ewes and, what do you call it, Ghant people up to the north and he would bring the Kabiyes down to be prefects in the southern provinces. But Togo, like all West Africa, has a Muslim-Christian animist divide, right through the center, which recently caused Cote d'Ivoire to split in two, almost.

Q: Well, this is a north/south thing almost.

TAYLOR: Yes. And right through the middle of Togo. And one of the things that Eyadéma told me at the time, he says you know, of all the things that concerns me it's the Muslim population in the north. He said they don't seem to be part of or want to be part with the rest of us, with the nation. And he said, quite frankly, of all the challenges, and

he said you'll probably notice when you go up there that I've got the best schools, the best, what do you call it, infirmaries, small hospitals. We try to do twice as much there as say, down south, because that's there the problem is going to be. So he was looking ahead and that's long before there were problems in Lagos.

Q: What about the military? In the first place, was there a French military contingent and what about his military?

TAYLOR: He had one of the best military forces in West Africa, mainly because, I would say, half or 60 percent of all revenue, and that includes the phosphates, went to the military. And the reason for this originally was that the French had been very, very afraid, as they usually are, of the Anglo influences in Ghana. They thought that the Ghanaians were going to invade their dear little – the French looked on West Africa, their part, Francophone West Africa, as their little sand pile.

Q: Was it _____ or something?

TAYLOR: Yes. And it was they who originally built up that Togolese army to counteract any so-called "threat" from Ghana. And once it got started it became a self-perpetuating thing; it just grew and it was so well trained. The French had continuance down there, the air force, army, navy not so much but they had large training missions and they were very good at it. From a military level there was a real bond with the French.

Q: Were we doing anything, I mean outside of your activism, to compete with the French?

TAYLOR: We couldn't. I mean we were just spread too thin and, quite frankly, even though Hank Cohen (head of the Africa Bureau at State) kept telling all of us in West Africa, he says, God, you people in Lome and Bamako and Ouagadougou, I mean, a vote from your country in the UN General Assembly is just as important as Buenos Aires or whatever. But I mean, there's no way we could spend, you would have to take everything you'd had and make it into something like, we had a visit from an American zydeco. Do you know what zydeco is, the Louisiana Bayou music, the French-Creole stuff?

Q: Oh yes.

TAYLOR: This is Queen Ida and Her Zydeco Band. They were supposed to go to Ghana, to a big, big concert. But Jerry Rawlings was angry at America and wouldn't let them land there, so then they came over to Lome. We were able within three days to put on a concert; I think we got 8,000 people for an outdoor concert of Queen Ida and Her Zydeco Band. We put banners all over the street and advertised it as free and American culture and she spoke sort of a French patois from New Orleans. And the French were just livid. They were putting on Moliere and Racine and were getting, you know, maybe 500 people who were bored and going to sleep and here we were, we were doing things like that.

Q: You were there from when to when again?

TAYLOR: From ’88 to ’91.

Q: This is when the, still the Soviets were pulling out, weren’t they?

TAYLOR: Yes. The Russian embassy in Togo at the time was pathetic.

Q: It was called the Soviet embassy at the time.

TAYLOR: Yes, Soviet, exactly. The ambassador was a charming old gentleman and he and his wife were just so refined and lovely, lovely people. I had told you that I really liked the old Soviet ambassador up in Guinea-Bissau when I had been chargé up there but in that case the man was a real old Bolshevik. This guy could have been Tolstoy, the one in Lome. In any event, they had their little grandson with them, who was about eight years old. The best Western school in Lome, outside of the French lycée, was the American School. The Russian made it known that he desperately wanted to get his little grandson into the American School but he didn’t have any money. So we arranged for the kid to go to the school.

You know, one of my best friends there also was the Chinese ambassador.

Q: We’re talking about Mainland Chinese now?

TAYLOR: Yes, Beijing. There was no Taiwan representation; there was North Korea, who were very, very active and mean as hell. I mean, they were really vicious in the sense of just being downright sort of angry at everything and particularly at us; they loathed the United States. In any event, the Chinese were extremely friendly and my wife and the Chinese ambassador became very good friends and we probably spent more time at their house, residence, than any of the other ambassadors in Lome. They were really doing some good work too. They had some Chinese doctors in town who were helping out with some of the most serious cases. This was before AIDS or anything like that so it was really malaria and a few cases of leprosy and river blindness and stuff like that but God, they were doing good work. And they built a few, what do you call, stadiums but nothing massive. The Koreans, on the other hand, had built the huge concert hall where Queen Ida had performed in Lome, and there were statues of Eyadéma or Eyadéma’s mother, who all looked exactly like North Koreans, sort of at strategic points around the town.

One of supervisors told me this, the assistant secretary, said Rush, you’ve got to get those North Koreans out of there. He said you do that and it will be a special bonus on your efficiency report. So with my great friendship with Eyadéma, every time I saw him I was telling him how much better it would be if we had a representative from South Korea. And he said, oh, we’ll look at it. He said, you know Taylor, I’ve had these people in here since I took power in ’65; that’s a long time. He says I just can’t throw them out on the street. I said, well Mr. President, just keep thinking about it and it will really, really look good, particularly in Washington. And he was very interested in staying on the right side

of Washington. He had gone to the UN back in the '80s under Reagan/Bush when the first Bush was vice president and had met for about an hour with the vice president and had gotten something out of the conversation. He felt that George Bush, well, after all, he's a former ambassador himself, he had been at the UN, and he really knew a lot about Africa. And so Eyadéma was very, very interested in getting on the good side of then President Bush, when I was there.

One of the things that happened right around this time was that we were having some very, very serious problems up in Monrovia and the government there, under a guy named Doe-

Q: Samuel Doe.

TAYLOR: Yes. Was just collapsing. I mean, it was the most brutal; it was embarrassing for all of us in Africa to have this sort of thing going on. But one night I got a call from the communications people and they said Ambassador, there's an "eyes only" telegram, can you come over to the embassy? God, it was 2:00 in the morning, and they said it's for your immediate action. So I got in the car and drove over there and it was from James Baker. He said you're asked to go see the president ASAP and one, get his permission to have Samuel Doe come to Lome as a political exile within the possibly next 12 to 24 hours and report back to us, blah, blah, blah. So I knew the president never went to sleep anyway and he usually stayed at the military compound, which was not too far from the embassy. He had given me his personal phone number and I was able to call him up and I said Mr. President, I'm so sorry to bother you , blah, blah, blah, and I said could I come see you? I've got a message from our Secretary of State.

And I went over and he received me graciously and he was always very jovial. I told him the gist of what Baker wanted and he said ah, this is no great matter. I already have the former president of the Central African Republic here; he listed two or three other West African presidents who had or maybe were still residing in Lome. One was this Ange Patassé, he was the one from Bangui, but he said no, that's no problem. He said there are two things that you've got to do. He said you've got to get me the assurances. You will make it clear, both in Washington and from the embassy in Lome, that it was at your request that I'm doing this; I'm just not doing it out of the blue. I want a request from President Bush saying that you have asked me to receive this man. And two, he said, you know, quite frankly, things are not so great with phosphates now and I would hope that your government could foot the bill for taking on Doe. He said it costs money. He says I've got all these guest houses – that he had built and there was a whole village of these, they looked like McMansions here in North Arlington that he had built for heads of state when they came to conferences in Lome; he said I can always put him in one of those. He'll probably want a palace but that's something else. So I said okay, Mr. President, let me get on back to the embassy and I'll be back to you. Of course Washington said sure, we'll make your request public; sure we'll foot the bill.

But in the meantime, our ambassador up in Monrovia was then to go see Mr. Doe, Samuel Doe, and he explained to him that we had a helicopter waiting that was ready to

fly him out to a ship and then get him safe passage to Lome, Togo, where he would be an honored guest of the Togolese president. Doe said to the American ambassador, you must be insane, you must be out of your mind. Me in Lome, Togo? He says my God, I don't even speak French. He said if you want me out of Monrovia I will go two places; one is Oxford, England, where I shall study law, or I go to UCLA and also study law; but he said Lome, never.

Q: You know, and later there were TV shots showing him being tortured to death.

TAYLOR: He had both testicles cut off and was tortured over several days. And Eyadéma and I saw each other-

Q: This is Charles Taylor's group, wasn't it?

TAYLOR: Yes. Eyadéma said mon dieu, _____. I mean, he could have come here and lived forever in peace and quiet and my God, he said I would have treated him as a brother, but he said you know, what can you do?

But what it did for Eyadéma was it made him some real friends. Baker remembered it, Hank Cohen remembered it and oddly enough even George Bush remembered it.

1988 was the year of the Lockerbie airplane bombing. Two of the people on the plane I had seen off earlier in Lome because we had a large regional AID conference there, and two of the finest AID officers had actually led the group and both were dead in Lockerbie. I'm saying this because around this time I received another "eyes only" from James Baker. It asked me to go to President Eyadéma and ask him if we could have the bombing mechanism that was used – I think it was 1985 or '86 – when they were going to blow up the American ambassador's house and the Grand Marché, the big market in Lome. He went on to say there are certain similarities between the mechanism that we have found in the debris at Lockerbie and the photographs that we had taken, thanks to the French and Togolese secret service, at the time of the bombings in Togo. What they had done is placed a bomb in the big mailbox. The American embassy residence in Lome is this huge German gothic palace with a wall around it, and it had this old fashioned letter box where I guess many years ago people could actually put mail. And they had put a bomb in there that, quite frankly, had it gone off would have blown the place to smithereens. Likewise they had put one in this huge central market. You know African markets, how they sell everything from goats to chickens to vegetables, clothing, everything. There's a lot of used American clothing. They call it, white dead people's clothing; they ship it by bales over there, tee shirts and whatnot.

In any event, the French had found out about this plot to put these bombs there and had followed it and had tracked it down to Libya. They were able to take the bombs out without them exploding, so things went all right. So Eyadéma again said, oh, God, yes, we would love to see these criminals brought to justice anywhere. And so he said, I will get a special courier. And I said no, no, we can get a guy out who will take it to Washington immediately. So he said, fine. So that got him some more brownie points.

Q: Well what about the Libyans? What were they up to? Because the Libyans were all over that place, weren't they?

TAYLOR: The Libyans were all over West Africa. And for some reason they really didn't like Eyadéma. For one reason, he didn't play along with them, he didn't accept their assistance. They looked upon him as a bit of a troublemaker because in his role as president of ECOWAS, the West African economic conference, he was always pressuring – when he was taking up for poor Chad, for one thing, and Niger as well

Q: We had what was known as the Toyota Wars in Chad.

TAYLOR: Yes. And the Libyans were just pushing anywhere they could, all around the perimeters of their boundaries. So Eyadéma was a pretty forceful, vocal opponent of what they were and what they were trying to do. And I already told you he was unsure of the Islamic influence in that part of Africa and he looked on Libya as being not so kosher. In any event, for the Libyans – why they wanted to, I guess we never really knew – the idea was maybe just to destabilize another little Francophone country and cause as much chaos as possible.

Q: They seemed to be just troublemaking rather than having a real master plan.

TAYLOR: There was no master plan that we could figure out.

Q: Well Qadhafi is still around, but his mental stability is questionable.

TAYLOR: In any event, the package was sent back to Washington. And about June of that summer, this is what, 1990, I got another message from Baker and he said, perhaps it will be no surprise that President Bush has decided to invite the Togolese president on an official visit to Washington. This was at a time when that was real currency. I mean, no one from that area was getting invitations; Bush didn't really, really hand them out that much and Togo was tiny.

Q: Yes, I'm just looking at it here from distance; it looks like sort of cartographer's mistake, a little – the pen must have quivered.

TAYLOR: And my colleagues in Lagos and some of the larger countries were totally ticked off. Taylor, how did you mange this? You know. Well, I didn't manage it at all; it was the president of Togo who had really toed the line.

And before we get into Washington, though, there are a couple of things I'd like to talk about. Our ambassador over in Accra on one side of me and in Porto-Novo on the other side spent, I think, half of their time in Lome. We had really beautiful hotels there; the Deux Fevrier, which is a tall sort of penthouse looking thing, and then on the beach there was another really first class hotel; there were about, I would say, 12 or 15 really, at least two star restaurants, French, Chinese, German. I mean, you could go to Lome, stay at a

great hotel, luxury hotel, go out for a first class dinner with wine and the whole thing; you could live like you're in Europe. Well you sure as hell couldn't do that in Benin or Ghana at that time under Jerry Rawlings so I don't blame these guys. They said also, they felt so cooped up. My friend in Ghana said he saw Jerry Rawlings maybe twice a year and the guy treated him like dirt. So they tended to come over. And we were talking and they said you know, Hank Cohen is new and he's just replaced Chet, what's his name?

Q: Crocker?

TAYLOR: Crocker. And why don't we get an ambassador's conference here in Lome or in West Africa? So I wrote the telegram back to Washington, saying that we really need to get sort of new marching orders, where we are, where we're going, what we're trying to do, what's our raison d'être. And you know, I suggested we have it in Abidjan; it's a bigger city. But they bought the idea in Washington and they said no, we're going to have it in Lome. We had three major airlines coming in, there was no great problem, and as I already told you the infrastructure. So I told old President Eyadéma about it; he said ah, mon dieu. He says I must play a role. When we got all the 20-some odd American ambassadors in Lome he gets all the animateur of the entire nation out to welcome them at the airport; he throws a lavish dinner. I mean, it just goes overboard, American flags all over the city. At this time the French ambassador takes a leave and leaves the city. He goes off to the North, he's just so upset. And you know, it's just blaring on television all the time, kerchiefs. Actually Ken was there, waving, making speeches and it was like nothing anyone else ever did or remembers.

But one of the things, too, that I wanted to mention is – have you ever read Bruce Chatwin, any of his books? He wrote something called "In Patagonia." He's a British, young British guy who died of AIDS about seven or eight years ago. One of his first big successes was called "The Viceroy of Ouidah," and it tells the story of this Portuguese slave.

Q: Yes, I think I did.

TAYLOR: Slave port called Ouidah, which is on the border between Togo and Benin. One of the things ambassadors had to do then was there was the grand chief of _____, which is on the Portuguese border, and the grand chief was the voodoo king of that whole area. And each year he would have an audience and part of the audience, in addition to having us sitting there drinking this God awful palm wine, was to get all of these young men and women who would go into a trance and become dogs or apes or something, I don't know. It was the vilest afternoon I think my wife and I ever spent, except the time they killed the goat. But literally, for 30 minutes, you see these humans walking, or rolling, around on the floor; it was like some Pentecostal group meeting back in East Texas, probably.

Q: You didn't have to handle the snake?

TAYLOR: No, no but that's part of it, though. But it was just showing that the difference – we're talking about the luxury hotels, the French wine over in Lome and then 12 miles, 24 miles away in _____, you could have been with, I don't know, a 19th century European explorer marching into this place and seeing it. But the German ambassador and his wife and Joanna and I decided to go on from _____ over to Ouidah, which was about 10 miles away. And there indeed there's an old cathedral built by the Portuguese and this fort that's now a world historic monument. It is a Portuguese fort and in between the cathedral and the fort is this voodoo snake lair. I don't know what the other word is. Where the snakes have to be fed every day and there are these huge God awful pythons. Well the German ambassador's wife had just this horrible, horrible antipathy for snakes and as she was saying, looking very sweetly at the cage, one of these damn things comes out and she faints. So my God, Joanna and I have to get ice out of the ice chest and put it on her face. It was very, very comical in a way but at the same time so real and so, I don't know, outside of the norm it just sort of sums up the entire tour, of having these violent extremes.

Another really, really important thing that happened at this stage was that the vice president of the World Bank comes to Lome. And he's saying that it's damn well time for West Africa, particularly, to catch up with the tigers of Asia. He says, now, damn it, there's no reason why Ghana or Togo or one of our countries here cannot equal the successes of – what are some of the successes? Not Cambodia or Laos but Thailand or Malaysia or whatever.

Q: Well these are, everybody says that these are extremely industrious people, in West Africa.

TAYLOR: And smart. I mean, really, really intelligent. My God, I think of the little kid that I brought over here from the gym center, Patrick, put him through school and as I say, he's making more money than I ever made. But be that as it may, this guy gives a speech. He was talking about making these free zones. The local government abolishes all taxes, basically just falls on their face to get foreign investment. They abolish all the labor laws and everything to set up sweat shops so that they can make shirts and blue jeans and the stuff that was then manufactured in Asia. I guess most of it's from Sri Lanka and _____ now. But he was saying that it took three things: a stable government, an educated, industrious population, preferably who spoke one or more Western European languages, and then this willingness to institute sort of anti-labor legislation. I met the guy, he was a friend of the foreign minister and the foreign minister had me out to a private dinner at his house to talk a little more about it. And he was saying that he didn't mention it at the speech at the hotel, but that quite frankly Togo has everything. You've got a large, young, smart population, you've got Eyadéma who's been here 30 years and it's stable. And he wasn't arresting a lot of people at this time either; that came later. But he said, you know, it's really something I'm going to work for. Well he talked to USAID and USAID came up with this program. They were going to choose one country in West Africa which was going to be the pilot of setting up a free zone, seeing if we could replicate in West Africa what had been done in Asia. And God, the competition got so fierce; every country wanted it. And I got Eyadéma aboard. I said,

Mr. President, you know, the phosphate thing is gone, I don't know what the hell we're going to do. We were trying to raise cotton up north, that's too dry. And he got on it, he said yes, yes, we've got to do this. He got his, again, he was able, because of his party, his power, he could turn out thousands on the street at the drop of a hat, and he got thousands to march to the American embassy demanding that Togo be chosen to be the recipient of the American government free zone grant.

Well, things got a little dicey because Cameroon was also very much in the running. And it's interesting, these are both former German colonies and they were winning on everything and State and USIA were to choose them. And it finally became so, so much of a battle between the Togolese and the Cameroonians that, I had made friends with this guy Kevin Callwood, who was then head of OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) for Africa. I said, Kevin, can't we find enough money to fund both a free trade zone in Lome and another one over in Douala in Cameroon? And eventually that's what they did. And the day that the U.S. Government announced that Togo was going to get this Eyadéma called me over to the palace and he actually, first and only time he ever did this, he came over and he gave me such a bear hug, he was just so happy. And pretty soon we had about 20 U.S. officials out there; I mean, things were really moving. Senator Nancy Kassebaum's son-in-law, who was with OPIC, came over to lead the American team that was to set this up.

Q: Nancy Kassebaum was from Kansas.

TAYLOR: Right. And her daughter had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo. And she had been to Lome many, many times in the past. But the thing was really just taking off. And I'm trying to think of the name, there's an American firm that builds these huge shopping centers, lots of enterprises, they were looking at it. We were getting all sorts of feelers from around the world of people who were interested in locating in the zone. Because one of the things about Togo, they were bilingual; they spoke both English and French. Eyadéma had, when he took over, since the country had been half British, half French, made sure that the educational system still – they still spoke English. But also the scientists were a little more advanced there as far as the teaching than in other countries so they were really, really doing good.

And at this point we get Eyadéma in Washington. Did you ever hear of this guy, Joseph Verner Reed?

Q: Oh yes.

TAYLOR: Chief of Protocol.

Q: He was Chief of Protocol. But he was also, wasn't he also ambassador to Morocco.

TAYLOR: Morocco, yes. He had represented Ronald Reagan at Eyadéma's 30th or 35th anniversary of taking power, something like that. He had been royally entertained and had a soft spot in his heart for the old man. He saw to it that when Eyadéma came for his

official visit he got every honor that was possible, including the fife and drum show over at the Defense Department. I forget who the secretary of defense was; I think it was Cheney, met him and they had a briefing for him down in the bowels of the Pentagon, you know, the laying of the wreath at the tomb of the unknowns. Bush couldn't have been more gracious at the meeting and at the luncheon that followed; took him up to meet Barbara Bush in the White House, brought his wife over for tea. I mean, a lot, they just went all stops. And Larry Eagleburger had arranged a visit. Baker was in Tokyo at the time but the State Department at that time really felt that this old guy had gone to bat for us on any number of things. One of the things, though, that Bush was very, very insistent of, he said Mr. President, we've got to have more movement on the human rights front. He says I know you are the only Francophone country who has a viable human rights commission but we've got to put action where words are. There were some in Eyadéma's party, a little mumbling, rumbling about that was sort of under the table.

The group went on down to Atlanta because Andrew Young had been out to Lome that spring to try to get Togo to vote for Atlanta for the '92 Olympics, or something like that. They went to Houston because it was Bush's hometown. They went up to Columbus, Ohio, where he got an honorary degree. I mean, it was just a hell of a successful visit.

Q: You went with him?

TAYLOR: I came to Washington, I did the Washington part but I flew on back home, I didn't go all over the States with him. And you know, things were going just beautifully.

I had told Eyadéma that I was leaving the post before we went to Washington and he was very, very upset. When we got to Washington Ambassador Reed pulled me aside, the Chief of Protocol, and said Rush, there's a bit of a dilemma here. He said President Eyadéma is insisting that he speak to President Bush and have Bush demand that you stay in Lome. And I said, well, you know, obviously I'm not leaving for my own personal convenience; I've got some real serious family problems. And he said, well, it's not the sort of thing a president does anyway, is to demand someone stay at post and particularly under the circumstances. So he says, I have told and I will tell again President Eyadéma that what has got to happen has got to happen and you will be leaving in the end of August.

So this is about the end of July when all this is going on. We went back to Lome and the good-bye parties and whatnot, which the French ambassador doesn't attend a one of them, just really becomes sort of openly hostile where he had been covertly hostile before. But I'm the first ambassador that was ever given something called the Order of Mono. It sounds like mononucleosis but the Mono is the main river that flows through Togo. There was this hydroelectric dam built on it Nangbeto. And the medal, all of the trappings if you do something civic, virtue all that sort of stuff, anything commendable you get – well, it's pretty damn rare. I'm the first foreign ambassador ever to get one and this totally made the French ambassador go overboard because he had to attend the pinning on service and he had to shake my hand afterward. But I've got it in a box somewhere and you know, it was a nice, nice gesture. When I went back to Togo about

five years after that on business, I was working for a bank, Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation, and I wore my little pin when I went to see the president. He was very, very touched.

Why don't we leave it now, if you don't mind.

Q: Okay. You want to put where you want to start, so you know where you are going to start.

TAYLOR: Sure. We basically finished Togo. Let me just say, have you ever read a book, it's sort of a crime novel, really, a British authoress, actually she's from New Zealand, her name is Ngaio Marsh.

Q: Oh yes, sure, mystery stories. Inspector Roderick Alleyn.

TAYLOR: Aristocratic type. One of her novels was called "Black As He's Painted," and it is the portrait – the book concerns this West African president who is homely as a mud fence and who has gotten to power by not the most Etonian, perhaps, methods but who, at heart, is a pretty good man. I know it had been said that Eyadéma killed his predecessor, that he had tortured any number of people but I do think he loved his country. And I do think that at the bottom of what he tried to do was to redress the inequalities between the interior people that he represented with the so-called "aristocratic" Portuguese-French coastal assimilated types. And he went too far and he didn't know when to back off and, of course, that eventually caused a major eruption a month after I left Lome.

The day I left Lome I was called up to go see Joseph Koffigoh. He was one of the best attorneys in the city and one of my really, really strong colleagues in the Human Rights Committee. He said, Rush, come on over, I've got a real problem here. He had this young student who had been beaten, I don't even want to tell you how awful the kid's face, he was 17, 18, a university student from the University of Benin. He had been passing out pamphlets. You know, this is a period where next door Benin, they've already thrown out their president, the Cold War is over, the East-West rivalry is over, President Rawlings in Ghana is trying to bring on some more trappings of democracy and ANA was still holding firm. And I had told him, the last time I saw him, I said Mr. President, don't forget what President Bush kept reiterating, that things are changing. And I know that you don't like hearing winds of change, whether it's from Mitterrand or from Bush but I said you know, the center can't hold forever. And they had taken this kid and he had obviously been tortured. So I said, oh, shit. I'm leaving, I'm flying out of here tonight. What we are going to do is I'm going to call up the Chief of Protocol over at the presidency and tell him that there will be a statement coming from the Human Rights Commission and myself condemning any treatment of Togolese citizens, children, students, in this manner and that we are sure, both the Human Rights Commission and I as departing ambassador of the United States of America, that the president will take all steps to ensure that his forces, whether military, policy or whatever, follow the basic rights that he's adhered to, blah, blah, blah.

And so this thing came out and I got some really, really, pretty vicious calls from some of the members of the government. On the other hand I got some pretty praiseful calls too. But right as we left all hell broke loose. They put these kids on trial and it was a foregone conclusion that they were going to be sentenced for long years in prison, and Lome erupted as just a torch had struck it. I mean, kids were getting anything they could to burn. I was already in the United States but I was watching it on television and reading about it. And VOA was wanting me to go online and I said no, I'm not going to. I'm staying out of it. My time has passed, I've done what I could. But that was the end of the period of tranquility and progress because with that happening any hopes for a free zone and all the work that OPIC and AID and the World Bank were putting into manufacturing stuff or intellectual communications a la Bombay was finished. I mean, no one was going to invest in a country that had showed the fragility that it showed and the lack of leadership. So Togo really went down the tube. And when I've been back, the last time I was back there five years ago, it was a ghost town. All of the hotels were basically closed, all the expatriates were gone, subsistence, people were lucky to eat. I've never seen a place in Africa with so many malnourished kids. And the old man himself is dead, has died now; his son is president and is doing a lousy job. He just put his brother in jail for leading an alleged coup. My friend Koffigoh who I told you is the last person I worked with the day I left, went on to become prime minister for a couple of years, was threatened with death and basically cowed into becoming a puppet. And the military, the Kabiye military, continues to rule but they don't have – what they rule over is non-existent. I mean, there's nothing to rule over, there's nothing to share anymore.

Q: But it's sad.

TAYLOR: It is. It is so sad and it didn't have to happen. And the old man just went overboard and wouldn't give up.

But you know, Hank Cohen has got a thesis on Togo. He said that he blames what happened in Togo not entirely on Eyadéma and his regime, but he said the liberals who took over. At one point they had really forced Eyadéma's hand and he was going to go back to his palace and sort of wash his hands of the whole thing. But then the liberal forces at the university, particularly, kept demanding more, and they wanted trials and they wanted retribution for things that happened in the past. And Cohen wrote this little booklet, he said the same thing happened in Zaire. But he said where the opposition, when they took power, were willing to forget and forgive, as had happened in Benin, for example, right next door –

Q: Or in South Africa.

TAYLOR: Or in South Africa where things went very, very well. But where they were just so insistent on retaliation in Togo it was bound to fail. And Hank is probably the best Africanist. The guy is just brilliant and such a fine guy too. And he was personally distressed by this because he really thought it had a chance and to see it collapse.

Q: Today is the 5th of June, 2009, with Rush Taylor. And Rush, you were in Togo from when to when?

TAYLOR: Eighty-eight, '88 to '91.

Q: And so, do you have anything else to put in?

TAYLOR: No, we've done Togo, I think.

Q: Okay. So what did you do after Togo?

TAYLOR: When I had been deputy director of the Office of International Communications Policy I had led the United States campaign to elect the director general of the satellite, world satellite group. It was something that was formed by Richard Nixon back in the '60s, I guess, and what it did was it launched communication satellites which made international communications available to Third World countries, and it was headquartered here in Washington. Traditionally the United States had always had the director general slot but the French at this point decided that this tradition should no longer be adhered to. So the whole election of the new director general of INTELSAT was up for grabs. COMSAT was the American part of INTELSAT. The gentleman who was our candidate turned out to be a fellow named Dean Birch. You probably remember Dean Birch from his days with Barry Goldwater.

Q: Yes.

TAYLOR: He was campaign director for Goldwater for President, from Arizona, and he then went on to be chairman of the Republican National Committee for some years. He was a particularly close friend of George Bush and it was no surprise that Dean Birch in all these meantime years had been practicing communications law and actually had represented us at one of those satellite conventions at Geneva which the International Telecommunications Union puts on from time to time. His name came up and it came to me to lead the worldwide campaign to get the guy elected. And as I say, it should have been pro forma but it wasn't and we had some very, very serious problems with the Francophone speaking world and Birch got in by the skin of his teeth. We had traveled quite a bit together around the world and had really, really worked on some speeches and everything else to get him elected. And he always said that when I left the Foreign Service he hoped that I would come and join him at INTELSAT. Well, I thought this was a great idea, coming back from Togo. Unfortunately, for him and for me, he was diagnosed with a very, very serious type of cancer and he died within several months.

So I had to get out and get busy. I had resigned from the Foreign Service. I had my retirement as an ambassador but I mean, I was still in my late 50s, or mid 50s, and needed to do something. So I looked around and there's a headhunter's group out in Chicago called Spencer Stuart. Spencer Stuart was a big campaign organizer for Richard Nixon and he had left, I think, White House personnel to go out and put this management team together. They found out that I was looking for a job and called me up and said how

would I like to go off to West Africa, of all places; I mean, I'd just been there. It seems that there was an opening at a company called CBG, which is the _____ up north of Conakry. And the salary was, for a Foreign Service officer, exceptionally lucrative and the fact that for the first $72,000, I think, you don't have to pay income tax on a job like that. I mean, it was just too good to turn down, even though it meant that probably I was going to be going over there most of the time by myself because Joanna, my wife, would have to stay here with the family.

In any event, I did go through all the interview process, which was very convoluted. It's the world's largest bauxite mine, employing about, I would say 20,000, and it had been set up by basically the Rockefeller brothers in the '50s, early '60s when there was a mass market for aluminum products at that time, everything from airplanes to automobiles and housing window frames. And the Rockefellers had some friends in France with Pechiney, the big French aluminum giant. So in any event, a long story, these bauxite deposits were in interior Guinea, which is a most inhospitable area; malarial swamps, tidal, huge tidal rivers and about 50 kilometers into the interior you run into these, not so much mesas as pretty good sized little mountains. And the bauxite happened to be on the tips of these various mesa mountain sorts of things. So they had developed a process where they built a train from a city that they actually built out of nothing called Kamsar, which is, as I say, about 100 kilometers north of Conakry on the coastline, and they put in railroad tracks going into the interior which carried these huge, huge bauxite cars.

And each train would have about 50 of these cars. You've seen these coal cars here in Virginia. These things were even bigger. And what they would do is go blow the tops off the mesas, then bring in these huge, huge dirt digger sorts of equipment, and mining for bauxite is just a really dirty job. I mean, for every piece of bauxite or powdered bauxite, powder that size you have to get a big huge thing of mud. And so they would load this stuff, mud-bauxite, into these coal-type cars, bring them back to Kamsar and there they invented this factory where each coal car was lifted the height of a six story building and dumped. And then it had to go through the process of having air blown into it, had to be heated, crushed, grinded; I mean, enormous amounts of power to get this rock and mud into some sort of condition so that then they could take it and ships would come into the little Kamsar port and through pipes they would get this sort of powdery stuff into the ship's hold and it would be taken off to the United States. We had all of the major aluminum companies of the world, the French, the Canadians, the United States, Australia, I think the Dutch, had stakes in this venture. And it turned out to be sort of an unmanageable grouping.

The titular head of the thing was in Pittsburgh, Alcoa, and Alcan up in Montreal played its part. But the partners themselves had trouble getting along and to find people who would go to this God awful hell hole who also spoke French was a real difficult task.

This little former colony, Guinea, was the only colony that voted not to join the French Union of independent states. The leader was Sékou Touré, who was sort of a, I don't know, modern day populist dictator com criminal. He was just not a very good person. And he was a Malinke, which is the northern Muslim tribe; there are three tribes in this

country that have constant internecine warfare among them. How they've managed to stay together this long is beyond me. The French didn't want to go back there because they had been treated so really badly and every couple of weeks, even when I was there, some wretched French businessman or tourist would be picked up, harassed for no reason and then sent off to France. They were really vindictive.

Our crew is mostly French Canadians. And have you ever worked or been around French Canadians? Well, they're a special breed, too, and they sort of look upon everyone who is not a French Canadian as an alien and someone who doesn't have their best interest at heart. They are a very difficult group. Adding them to the mixture of the three warring tribes who were held together by the local army, you've got a real mélange that was almost impossible to govern, and this was my task as director general of the CBG, to come in and try to bring peace and harmony. Oh, it was an impossible task.

The first time I sort of ran into problems was when one of our leading or head accountants, who was also a Malinke, was taking lectures at the University of Chicago at our expense; what we would gain out of it is questionable but because he was a Malinke and because he had special friends down in the government in Guinea. The Guinean government owned part of it and all the other partners owned the 50 percent.

In any event, while he was away some of the people were out to get him, and there were knives for everybody, they went through the books over the weekend and came to me the following week and said Ambassador Taylor, we have proof, here it is, that our friend is stealing money, he's building houses for his relatives, he's taking this blah, blah, blah. So I talked to my counterpart who was a very nice Guinean gentleman, Suma, who was a Soussou, and we talked about it and I said you know, this is just unbearable. Everyone now knows that this damn _____ has stolen so much money and we've got to take some action. I said let's bring him home and let's really discipline him. I think, you know, we'll make the call later as to what should be done with him but I quite frankly think the guy should be sacked. We've got Sunday to make some rules here that you just don't get away with this kind of stuff. And I must say that my judgment in that thing was flawed, and it was flawed because I had been in the director general's office, that we had talked about the other day, where you were trying to get good, decent, honest management. And when something like this happens, I mean, you just can't turn your back to it, I thought.

In any event, Mr. Suma, my counterpart, went along and said sure, sure, you're right, and he didn't particularly like man anyway because he was a Malinke and Suma was Soussou. So things rocked around and pretty soon, a couple of weeks later, I found that my friend Suma had been recalled to Conakry, he had been fired for following this white guy's dictatorial policy of not having ethnic sensitivity toward African norms and mores and trying to play American Wall Street lawyer here in Kamsar. Well, I lived through that one and the guy was never reinstated. But stupid stuff kept happening. I mean, the local _____, who is sort of the governor in that area who had a grudge against the poor man would come and arrest him at night and take him off to this horrible hell of a jail, and it was just dog eat dog.

Q: Under Sékou Touré, who was gone by this time-

TAYLOR: Sékou Touré was gone.

Q: -but there was, I mean, he used to put people in jail and not feed them.

TAYLOR: Not only that but, you know, there is a group of people who artistically are probably _____ in all of Africa as far as their carvings and statuary and stuff; they're called the Baga people, who live down in the marshlands in the coastal regions of Guinea. And they are animists and for years and years they were allowed to practice whatever they call their religion; I mean, some of them pretended to be Anglicans or Catholics but by and large they lived like they did prior to the French and the British coming. But, under Sékou Touré, these people were literally forced to accept Islam and I mean, tortured and beaten and finally, of course, they put on the outside trappings just like the Jews in Northern Portugal had done during the Inquisition, but it was just a brutal, messy sort of thing. And quite frankly the whole place was just so riddled with graft and corruption.

The Guinean government lived off of this; this was their bread and butter. Without it, I mean, they would have collapsed. When I had been in Guinea-Bissau a couple of years before there was a young colonel named Lansana Conte who took over as president of Guinea when the old Sékou Touré died. Conte happened to be a Soussou but he was diabetic, he had asthma, he was basically a pervert who had always, when I saw him, he had a bevy of young girls. I mean, when I say young girls I mean 11, 12, sort of sitting around. And it was just beyond disgusting. But the guy would come up there about once or twice a year because he had a so-called palace that the Westerners had built for him. But he was no more of a saint than his predecessor, perhaps even worse. The army ruled the roost and as long as they were given money from things went on.

We were talking about Togo being sort of an example of a progressive little country when Eyadéma down there was invited to Washington to see Bush. I don't think any Guinean has or ever will be invited to see anyone over here. I mean, they just had a change of government about two months ago where another colonel has taken over and it looks to be – they arrested most of the _____ people and it looks to be even worse.

But getting back to my spell there, I was making lots of money and we didn't have any labor strikes, problems, while I was there which I think was one plus because the guy before me, a Canadian who had been the director general, was just plagued by one labor unrest after another.

The next thing that happened, though, is my mine director up in the Boke it was called, the interior place where they were actually tearing down mountaintops. By the way, the environmental negatives of all of this were just appalling.

Q: I was wondering was there any, I mean, obviously this was not – people weren't flying over and taking pictures particularly; it's not like Canada or something but how about the environmental thing?

TAYLOR: Well it was awful; it was just terrible. I mean, flying down from Rabat down the coast to whatchamacallit, Conakry, the capital, you could see the smokestack out of Kamsar. I mean, dust was spreading; dust and particles all the way down 150 kilometers south to Conakry; it was just a mess. And ships coming in there, cleaning out their insides, polluting the water. One thing about it; our method of mining wasn't as bad as a rival aluminum group south of us, who used a water method of getting the bauxite separated and who left these horrible sludge pits which were just hundreds of kilometers of them, which are just waiting to collapse and run into the estuary streams, rivers.

But in any event, the gentleman up in Boke, who was a Welshman who was my director of mines; he was a strange little fellow. I've never been around many Welshmen but I'm told that he represented them very well. I mean, he had a terrible temper and was very unwilling to accept the point of view of anyone except himself. And his Guinean counterpart and he just locked horns and there was a constant battle royal between the two. And there was no way the Guinean government was going to remove their man and our man was one of the best mining engineers probably in Africa at that point. We were in a very difficult point of expanding so that we needed him even more because our first little mountaintop that the Rockefellers had started on, we had used up all the good bauxite so now we're having to build a huge bridge out in the middle of nowhere to the next mountaintop so that we can start ruining that part of the environment.

In any event, these two just could not get along and the director of mines had the ear of the chief engineer down in Kamsar, where I was, plus my boss, who had an office in Brussels and one in Pittsburgh, a guy named John Gilby. And they told me that I should really think hard about firing the African, that we ought to sack him. And I said, you know, let me talk to our director of personnel, a French Canadian guy, and he said Rush, there's nothing documented that we can use to get rid of this man. You would just be creating an even bigger furor and not only that, as I told him, it would be a political scandal to fire this high ranking Guinean.

So I refused and the Welshman took offense and all hell broke loose as far as he and his boss in Kamsar. At this point I just threw in the towel; I said, you know, I've been here a year and a half of this stuff and I tried as best I can to keep this thing under control but you can have it. And quite frankly the guy, Gilby, in Brussels, was the type of supervisor who would say one thing to you, something else to somebody else and something else and so no one really knew where they stood. So it came to pass that I just packed up and said look, it's time to leave. And they paid me off for my contract. But it was one of the happiest days ever when I said bye-bye to Kamsar.

Fortunately, I had put a lot in the bank and was able to play around for awhile. But it left a really bad impression for me about the so-called private sector. We in the Foreign Service are too often led to believe that everything outside of the government, everything

"private" is better, more dynamic. That was not the case with CBG and the aluminum mining giants of the world. It just could not have been more poorly organized, managed or run. I mean, albeit they were trying to be in a partnership with one of the most corrupt little countries in Western Africa, it still could have been better than it was.

So I got back to Washington and-

Q: This would be about '89, '90?

TAYLOR: No, we're about '93, '94. Came on back to Washington. A friend of mine called me. He was a former ambassador to Sierra Leone, said, hey, Rush – and he was now representing the government of Angola. He said we're looking for someone to lead the U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce. Have you ever heard of that? No? Well, it was basically an organization set up by the Kennedys. Robert's son, Joe, had started the Citgo oil company and some of their oil came out of Angola; most of it, I think, comes out of Venezuela. But they and a group out of Hartford, Connecticut, which is called Equator Bank.

Equator Bank was a group of American bankers who back in the '60s had looked at a map just like we just did and said gee, there must be money for American banking in Africa. Well, little did they know. Perhaps it says something about their expertise. But they had founded this bank and would go around all over Africa trying to lend money to various ventures. I guess enough of them did not fail so that they at least made a profit and they had a very handsome headquarters in Hartford.

But their big opening had been to Angola. Angola had very few banking, diplomatic or any other relationships with the West. This Equator Bank was able to get in there and if, for example, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank was going to be giving money to Angola or if an oil company owed money, royalties to Angola, the Equator would come in and do bridge loans and give them the cash early, charging them high interest for the nicety of Angola having money in the pocket. These two groups, along with some of the American oil companies, set up this U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce to be sort of a lobby, on one hand political in Washington with the State Department and some of the other organizations, but also it really did try to go out and find investors for Angola, which was not so easy to do.

But at any rate, I took this thing over for a year and we really did well. We got President dos Santos over here for a State visit to see President Clinton, and I really felt that we helped too. UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) was still in power at the time and they had their own offices and we, in our own small way, were able to bridge some of the gaps between the two opposing factions. But what this led to was that the president of Equator Bank came to me – the U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce we used the offices of Equator Bank over here on K Street, they're nice digs, and I mean, I saw the Equator people all the time, so they said, Rush, we want you to be senior vice president in Washington, representative for the bank in Washington. And why not? I knew very little about banking but I certainly knew what it was that they were interested

in doing, which is if AID was giving contracts – organizing a banking system in Liberia or what have you – you know who to talk to and how to get it done. But they were under the misimpression that African ambassadors serving in Washington somehow either had clout or the ability to lead investors to their country. Most of them were here because they had screwed up in Africa in their own capital or because they had been paid off to get out of the way. They were basically hacks without any-

Q: The British would call them remittance men.

TAYLOR: That's exactly what they were. And some with even shadier reputations than that. But the very idea, which is my job is supposed to be going out and seeing, I think there were 57 or maybe 67 African ambassadors around, something like that, and you know, every African head of state coming to town, making sure that Equator Bank got to see the head of state. And the truth of the matter is that banking in Africa, whether it's Togo or Guinea or wherever, is a head of state, I mean, chief of government sort of prerogative and that's where the money is. It's not something that is going to be divested and allow junior ministers or ministers or ambassadors to decide which bank government funds get invested with or how they're used. And as a result, after a couple of years of this, we weren't showing much profit at the Washington office so despite many, many tries I parted company with Equator Bank and basically, since that point, have been sort of living the life of a retired Foreign Service officer.

Q: Well, with this bank, I mean, were other banks successful?

TAYLOR: No.

Q: I mean, wasn't it possible to have a bank, you know, with, I mean, to say to Angola and in a way set up a branch bank in Luanda?

TAYLOR: Yes, American banks. I mean, a number of New York banks, after the peace process with UNITA and the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) and Angola got underway, CitiGroup, all of them moved in there. Equator had been taken over, by the way, a couple of years before I got there by Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation, which is the third largest in the world. But it was sort of a stepchild and the only reason they wanted it is because when they showed a map of where they were they could put about 16 other countries, you know, we have a loan in Cameroon or we have a loan in Mali or whatnot. But most of the loans that I saw that had been made in the years prior to my coming to Equator had not born fruit. I think they made some money in Uganda, a little bit in Ethiopia; they made a lot of money in Angola but by loaning money to private sector Portuguese types, colonial types, who needed quick cash to do some, I don't know. I was often concerned about some of the dealings of our group down in Angola.

Q: Well did you find that, having been a Foreign Service officer, I mean you kind of look upon, you know, you're always stepping to one side looking at the culture and all.

TAYLOR: Here, here.

Q: I would think that Africa and the banking world would be awash with people trying to make quick deals.

TAYLOR: Oh, absolutely.

Q: And you know, that very same reason, even the fancy banks probably couldn't help but fall into the corruption cum incompetence.

TAYLOR: Yes, paybacks, kickbacks; everything had a price. And I know, I was trying to work out a deal with a group called Ecobank, which CitiBank was trying to set up in West Africa for the ECOWAS countries. The head of that thing was a former minister in Togo, the minister of commerce. He was a pretty smart guy but I think it's fair to say that he was crooked as a snake. I mean, the guy made a fortune out of his government service. And it wasn't that they felt that they were doing something wrong; this was their modus Vivendi.

But one of the strange things about all this. When I was both with Equator and also the Chamber of Commerce, I would go down to Angola and who would I see but these former communists from Portugal. Do you remember the general and the colonels? There they all were, now that Portugal had gotten back on the mainstream, here they were living in big villas making money with "import/export." It was pretty sad. Not as sad as Guinea.

Q: Well did you find yourself, you know, some of these deals like, well they call them blood diamonds; were the banks getting into that or into the arm trade?

TAYLOR: No, we were not doing that. But I mean, I know for sure that the bank wasn't but I do know a lot of people who were involved. And this brings up something that I haven't talked or alluded to; there is something called the African, what is it, U.S.-African Leadership. It was a group of businessmen- U.S.-Africa; I forget what it was called. It was led by a former ambassador, David Miller.

Q: Yes, David Miller. He served in Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Yes, I've interviewed him.

TAYLOR: Very bright guy and he did a fantastic job in organizing this thing, which was the first real attempt to bring American businessmen into contact on a legitimate basis with their African counterparts and with African governments. And one of his deputies was a guy named Kevin Callwood, who had worked in the State Department in African Affairs when I was in Lome. But that first leadership group were replaced by a gentleman who used to date Jackie Kennedy. Not date, but escort her around New York.

Q: Maurice Tempelsman?

TAYLOR: That's exactly-

Q: He was involved with diamonds.

TAYLOR: Diamonds, yes, and Sierra Leone and Angola. Equator Bank had been part of this group mainly because it was so small and it was sort of British tinged, wasn't truly American. So it sort of tried to swim along behind the whale, getting tidbits, and that's why they were very, very active in Miller's African group. But Tempelsman took over the group and the whole tone changed and I'm not so sure that it did or does serve the purposes for which it was intended.

You're so right that there is so much right below the surface or on the side. There were these groups in Angola who were trying to ship all sorts of waste, and when I say waste, everything from nuclear to you name it, to Angola and of course there was a price that was being paid for this sort of stuff. And it was just totally disgusting, some of it. We weren't involved, ourselves, but I mean, you saw it.

Q: Well did you get a feel that you'd been with the African bureau, that sort of the State Department people, I mean, this is sort of going below the surface and not really registering with them or-?

TAYLOR: I had the feeling that most of the people in our embassies in Africa, if they knew what was going on, tried to blot it out or look the other way. But at the same time, what can the American ambassador in Conakry do about it? Not very much. I mean, Alcoa is involved in this beautiful little project up there in the north, and is it environmentally sound? Do they even given a hoot? No. So what can Ambassador Smith or somebody in Conakry do about it? Not very much.

Ditto, I mean, the ambassador in Luanda. I mean, he knew; he was bright enough to know what was going on but that government was so totally corrupt from the top down that it was just impossible to even dig away a little bit of it.

Q: Well did you run into sort of the view of the people who were dealing with Africa? I mean a certain group, that somehow Africa was the center of paradise and that, you know, I mean, all things sort of good and beautiful were there? You know, becoming more on the extreme liberal side or not?

TAYLOR: No, I think most of the people, whether from the liberal side or the conservative side saw Africa for what it was, just such a lost chance of doing anything for them or having them do anything for themselves. When I read the news about two or three weeks ago, the coup d'état in Lome, threatened coup d'état, there was the coup d'état in February when the old dictator up in Conakry passed away; I mean, the same old thing. The military comes in, rides around the city in their trucks and fire shots. And everyone is cowed and what are they going to do, get out there and dance and sing and you know, welcome the messiah.

This is another thing about Africa and Conakry. I've been to a lot of places in my life, India and China and you name it, but I have never, ever seen such environmental

degradation as I did in the capital city of Conakry. It was built by the French in the 1880s or so on this beautiful little peninsula that goes out into this beautiful harbor with little islands and it must have been a paradise once upon a time. And now there is so much plastic and garbage and filth floating on all sides and the buildings are crumbling down and there's this massive humanity without sanitation, without water; I mean, it's just pestilence. It looks like something out of Hieronymus Bosch. It's pathetic.

Q: Did you, during the various times you were there, what about the Non-Governmental Organizations? So many went to Africa to do good, you know. I mean, did you find that-

TAYLOR: Well missionaries were pretty restricted in Guinea because of the heavy Muslim influence in the government. In other places, Sierra Leone, where I was for awhile, Guinea-Bissau, the Catholic Church from Portugal; Togo, we had lots and lots of American missionaries who, I mean, they were running schools for the blind. There was an old leprosy place. And our little Peace Corps was doing damn well in Togo, too. There's a really, really good little book, it's called "The Village of Waiting," it was written by a Peace Corps volunteer who is now the senior political writer for "The New Yorker." He wrote "Assassin's Gate," about Iraq. George Packer. And he writes about his experience as a Peace Corps volunteer when I was there in the '90s, late '80s, early '90s, and talks about some of the projects he was involved in. I mean, just bringing fresh water, very rudimentary sanitation; some of the things those kids were doing is incredible. The only problem with them is they would love to race their little motorbikes up and down and so half the time we were seeing them in and out of hospitals and putting them in the guest bedroom over at the embassy residence because they had broken legs and there was no one to feed them. But they were good, good people and doing a wonderful job. And our AID program was pretty good there, too, although I'm just not sure that we have the capacity, even if we devoted tons of money, lots more money I don't think it would make that much of a mark.

In any event, Africa seen from the government side looked a lot nicer than it did from the private sector but quite frankly, it wasn't a shock to me.

Q: Okay, well we'll end it here.

TAYLOR: Yes, and all I can say is, we were talking a little about private sector versus the government; I'm so proud and I'm just so thankful that I had a chance to work in the U.S. Department of State and be a career Foreign Service officer. It was a great experience and I am just so fortunate.

Q: Okay.

End of interview