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

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INTERVIEW

Q: I wonder if you could give me a little about your background. Where did you come from?

CHASE: Well, I was born here in Washington, DC

Q: Good God!

CHASE: A native Washingtonian. I went to public school here. My father at that time was working for the Brookings Institute as an economist. Then things transpired and we moved to Columbus, Ohio, where he taught at Ohio State University. Lived there for quite a number of years, then went to Baltimore.

During the Depression, things were pretty rough. My father had lost his job at Ohio State, and we were trying to handle things in ways that kept body and soul together. I graduated from high school in Baltimore, and then went back to Ohio State for my freshman year in university, and then came back to Washington to go to George Washington University.

I went to high school at Baltimore City College, which was a public school, 3,500 boys, all white, but it was a school that cut across all sorts of boundaries. It was, then, an excellent school.

My mother took me to a talk my Sumner Wells, who was then deputy secretary of state, and he was a Baltimorean. And that got me interested in the Foreign Service, in part. Also I was interested in the Spanish Civil War that was then being fought.

Q: This was late '30s.

CHASE: My father and mother argued about which one of them got me interested in the Foreign Service. My mother went back to Sumner Wells, and my father talked about my interest and concern in the early '20s for the starving Romanians. That may be "starving Armenians," but as I've always told the story, it was the "starving Romanians."

Q: Did you finish college, or did the unpleasantness in Europe interrupt this?

CHASE: No, I graduated in 1942 from George Washington University in a school of Foreign Service. I was working at the time down at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in the Mine Countermeasures Unit. Had a Nobel Prize fellow, John Bardine, as my boss. Then as I graduated, I wanted to leave where I was doing just clerical work, and got a job in the War Shipping Administration as a junior economist. I lost my draft deferment and ended up in the Coast Guard. I ended up in a part of the Coast Guard called the Off-

Shore Picket Patrol, and we were out there looking for submarines--but we were using sailboats.

Q: Good gosh!

CHASE: And we were sailing along off New York Harbor a hundred miles or so, getting out into the Gulf Stream, with sound gear. And we would be posted out there listening for suspicious motors.

Q: Was the sailboat because of the lack of engine noise, or just because they didn't have enough of the other kind of boats?

CHASE: We didn't have any boats that would go out there and stay. We had motorboats that could churn up a lot of water, but they couldn't stay more than a few hours. We could stay for two weeks.

Q: Ah, I got you. So you did that for...?

CHASE: For three years. It was great in the summertime, and in wintertime it was a little bit uncomfortable.

Q: Did you continue your interest in sailing, or did this take care of it?

CHASE: I was out sailing just a few weeks ago on a 50-foot Hinkley. And I've sailed, in the Foreign Service, in Hamburg, Germany; Basra, Iraq; and the Philippines.

Q: The war was over in '45. What happened?

CHASE: I was in the Coast Guard and was getting rather bored. They told me, because of my bad eyesight, I was going to be put ashore, to do just shore-type work. And that wasn't going to be any fun. This was in November '44 and they were cutting back on all sorts of things. Then the Battle of the Bulge came off and a few other things. But they told me that if I would get a job that would have me go overseas, particularly in a combat zone, I would be given a discharge from the Coast Guard.

So I came down to Washington. My father was then working in the government. I had a friend who had joined the Diplomatic Couriers, and I thought well, maybe he could get me into the Courier Service. My father talked to some people, and he was told that the State Department was hiring vice consuls auxiliary.

The personnel office for the State Department was then in the Walker-Johnson Building on New York Avenue. The office for hiring the vice consuls auxiliary was on the Second Floor, and the office for the Diplomatic Couriers was on the Fifth Floor, so I got to the Second Floor and didn't get any further.

It was some months later before I finally did get out. I was interviewed, I think, in November, and just before Christmas I got an official invitation to join the vice consuls auxiliary.

Q: What were they looking for? Did you have any idea, when they were interviewing you?

CHASE: Join the Foreign Service. Some people were being sent out for doing all sorts of things. See, they hadn't had a Foreign Service examination. There hadn't been any recruitment to the professional service since 1941.

Q: So we're talking about early '45, is this right?

CHASE: Yes, it was early '45 when I reported for work here. The day of Roosevelt's funeral. They marched along and everybody was let out, so my first day of work I had half a day holiday. That was, I think, a Friday. We did, then, work on Saturdays, and it was either a Friday or Saturday that I went to work.

Q: Did you get any particular training before you were sent out?

CHASE: I went to see a fellow by the name of Walton Ferris. He was the one who interviewed me. When I got out of the Coast Guard, I was still in my sailor suit. He asked to see my discharge papers. I don't know if you know, but sailor suits don't have very many pockets. Well, I had to struggle around getting my wallet out, and in the course of putting things back together, my wallet fell on the floor and things rolled out, including the lucky coin that I had been carrying. I was told by Ferris to go up and get some civilian clothes and then come back to see him. So I asked the secretary there if she'd be so kind to look underneath the radiator for my lucky coin. She did. I went back then, about four or five days after I was in the State Department. I was then in a civilian suit, and I went in to see the secretary and she had my coin. Well, I was a bachelor, and this was an attractive, interesting girl, and I was just back in Washington and didn't know anybody, no women. So I was flipping my coin, talking to this girl, and all of a sudden Walton Ferris came back into the room. He looked at me: "How would you like to go to Basra?"

"Where's Basra?"

"It's in Iraq."

I was a little embarrassed to say I couldn't even think where Iraq was. I did know where Iran was. And I also knew that a Millsbaugh Commission had gone there, to see the war that had broken out. Not necessarily that my lucky coin was involved, but at least that had kept me dawdling in his office. I think Ferris had just come back from a meeting where they had learned that another vice consul auxiliary, who had been in training for

eight, ten months to go to Basra, had gone off on his final leave before departing, and they had received a telegram that day saying that he was joining the ministry instead.

Q: So there you were.

CHASE: They said, "Oh, if you're going to Basra..." I then was told to go to FSI, which was in the basement.

Q: FSI being the Foreign Service Institute.

CHASE: And go into training. They had a class there, and I went down to join this class. It was a month's course, and I got, I think, two weeks or less. About the only thing I got was a trip to New York City, where we were taken aboard some freighters that were going around the world carrying cargo, to see what the Coast Guard did, signing off papers. So then about four weeks after I got in the State Department, I went up to La Guardia Airport and took a plane going to Basra, Iraq.

Q: How did one go to Basra? The war was just over, in Europe, wasn't it?.

CHASE: The war was just over, in Europe; still in Japan. We flew out to Basra on an old DC-5, I think it was. It was an uncomfortable, four-motored plane, flying down to Bermuda for dinner. Then we flew all night and got to the Azores in the morning, and the next evening we arrived at Casablanca. Stayed in Casablanca for a couple of days till they could get another plane to fly me on to Cairo. I stayed in Cairo for about ten days before my number came up for a flight on to Abadan, where we had a big air base. People then were moving military equipment and personnel from Europe out to the Far East. So Cairo was a very busy hub, and Abadan was a big air base.

Q: How were you sort of melded into the system when you hit Iraq? Abadan was actually in Iran, but then how about with Iraq?

CHASE: The border didn't exist in those days. We had military troops all over. We'd just get in a car and drive across to Iran or Iraq. So a fellow from the consulate drove down, which is about a two-hour drive over a desert road, and he picked me up at the airport. I could telephone him from the airport and say, "I'm here." So they car came down, and I arrived. This was in the first of June, and it was damn hot.

Q: Yes, I spent two and a half years in Dhahran; the summers--it was warm. What type of work were you doing in our consulate in Basra, and how did you fit within the consulate there?

CHASE: It was an intriguing sort of experience. The principal officer, Les Sutton, was a very bright but a brittle personality. The fellow that I was sort of replacing, Les Stratton, was another character. And Sutton and Stratton had had periods of bitter feuding, in which they didn't talk to one another except on official business. There was a young

woman there by the name of Betty Morley, who comes from Orleans, Vermont, and she had arrived about two months before I had. There was supposed to be a third officer coming out, but nobody knew: Was I the third officer and somebody else to replace Stratton or not? I don't know.

In any case, when I arrived Sutton was so glad to see that Stratton was departing, and I was completely new and anxious to do anything. Sutton was about thirty, I was twenty-five, a generation apart but we got along together very, very well. I like and admired Les Sutton very much.

The work I was doing, I did strict consular work of visas, shipping and seamen, some administrative work. My title was to do economic work.

The post was an interesting post, and in some respects I think it was a marvelous place to have as my first experience. We went off to Kuwait when they opened up the oil wells. We were down there.

Our consular district, which had included Dhahran, where you were, had shrunk, so that we covered southern Iraq, Abadan, Khorramshahr, and Kuwait. And you say, well, how could we go into these other political jurisdictions? We did! And we signed off as United States consuls. I was the vice consul, nähe consul.

Q: How about dealing with the Iranians and Iraqis? Was this a time when, you might say, things were almost brushed aside, because of the war and because of our presence there, or were there problems in dealing with the local authorities?

CHASE: At that time the prestige of the United States was so great that anyone moving about with the officials colors of the United States government was given a tremendously warm welcome. Everybody tried to be helpful. They also continued to do those things that they had always been doing. The Iraqis and Iranians were basically compatible. There was a certain degree of friction. There was concern about the amount of goods that we brought in from the air base.

The customs officer, a guy by the name of Ringrow, an elderly British man who was chief of customs for Iraq (the whole country), did a very nice job of allowing us to do our thing. He had confidence that we weren't doing anything illegal, yet there was concern about what the Iraqis and Iranians were doing, in the sense of trade. Because sugar was rationed, gasoline was rationed, Scotch was rationed. The people were living very close. They didn't have very much in the way of clothing. All of the Iraqis and the British officials were wearing suits and dresses that predated the war. The port authority was *the* main thing. Basra Port was a big port, it handled all the imports. They also controlled the whole Shatt al-Arab, so that anything going to Abadan had to have a certain amount of clearance with the Iraqis.

Q: Did you have much of a problem with American crews there?

CHASE: Yes, we did have a problem with American crews. The American ship captains would come in and want to file a note of protest.

"What do you mean a note of protest?"

"A protest!"

-- "Having experienced rough and boisterous weather and fearing damage to ship and/or cargo, I hereforth enter this note of protest." --

You know, that official...

Q: Yes, there's a bit of jargon which helps you if there are any damaged goods, for insurance matters.

CHASE: And then there are crew list visas that had to be stamped. Also a number of disciplinary problems coming up. One crewman, coming off the boat in Basra, met a prostitute and wanted to give her a little present, so he went back to his boat and got a portable radio. And the Iraqi customs officer said, "What are you doing? You can't bring that into the country. You don't have clearance. If you want to pay customs on it, fine."

Well, this sailor got irritated with the customs official carrying out his duty, and so he picked up the radio and banged it over the customs official's head.

Well, the sailor was a big, strapping guy and the customs officer was fairly small, and his head was damaged. Well, the sailor was arrested, and so constant telephone calls: "We want a consul! We want to get out of here!"

We went up and represented him at the hearing. And the sailor was treated so gently, I thought it was criminal that this fellow was allowed to get away with it.

We had, also, among the sailors themselves, they'd run into battles. I was called off several times to go down to Khorramshahr to settle disputes where the crew refused to sail with the captain any longer. They said he was a danger to his ship.

We had some very colorful captains. Some captains would come back, every few months they were back there, ran a perfect ship, they were a delight to know, and never had a bit of trouble. They all got the sailors from the same pool, and why one captain had constant trouble and the other one didn't, I think it's management skills.

But going back to Iraqi, Iranian dealings. Yes, there was a degree of tension, because of Iraq being a government where all high officials were Sunni. The fellahin, the laboring class, was predominantly Shiite. And the Shiite had an emotional tie over to Iran, and there were quite a number of Iranian citizens there. We also had a bunch of Armenians,

about 10,000 Armenians. And the Russians came down and were trying to attract these people to emigrate back to their homeland in Armenia.

Q: The war was over rather shortly thereafter. At one point this was the major port for aid to the Soviet Union, and then all of a sudden it was cut off practically in midstream. Did this affect you? Was there a change in attitude towards the Soviet Union among you and the rest there or not?

CHASE: The Soviet ambassador made a couple of trips to Basra. He was staying, the first time, at the Basra Airport Hotel, and I went out there with Lester Sutton to call on him. We also met a number of the higher Iraqi officials.

I was very interested, watching the ambassador pouring whiskey for us all. The Iraqi official indicated: No, no, he was Muslim, he couldn't drink.

But then the Soviet said, "Well, here, just to make us all feel comfortable, I'll put this glass in front of you." And the glass was emptied.

The Soviet then put some more in, he was giving us all a little bit, and the Iraqi protested--a little feebly.

And then about the third time the Soviet's hand went to the bottle, the Iraqi's hand went to his glass to hold it out.

I was interested in that bit of liquid diplomacy.

What the Soviet was coming down there for I don't know. He didn't really tell us, other than just wanting to see the country. There were the Armenians out there, and I think he was looking the ground over altogether.

And then, oh, about a year later, I went over to Ahv z in Iran, which was the provincial capital. They have a Soviet consulate general there, and I went in and called on them, and called on the British and the French. They were all extremely hospitable to us, but by that time the shades of the Cold War were beginning, that we were suspicious of them.

But I might say that the Soviets were the most lavish in treating Bob Shot and myself. We were both vice consuls, and we also got the letter treatment. And I was wondering, after we toasted each other and ate and drank and talked about all sorts of things, as we were getting ready to go, they began asking us questions about how many British troops were there in the Basra area? And the bridge down there, could that carry a tank?

Well, then, on the international diplomacy. Iran and the British were having troubles over the AIOC, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. This was long before Mossadegh, but some of the same sorts of tensions. The British, to the horror of the United States, brought in several divisions of troops. They hadn't told Washington anything. They had brought

them all into southern Iraq, and we got involved in trying to find out how many British were there. They told us, in Basra, well, Washington has been briefed. We then heard from George Allen, who was our ambassador in Iran at the time, that the United States didn't know what was happening. So we began scouring around trying to find out just exactly who was there and what were the plans.

And lo and behold, we met a young American, who was in the Indian Army. He had come out to the Middle East in 1939 with the old ambulance corps and had run all over the Middle East in the ambulance corps. When the United States got into the war, he had joined the Indian Army as a military police officer. In the course of things, he came into the consulate to say hello to us, and he began reeling off to us all the military units that were there and what was their equipment. He had it all at his fingertips.

So we were the ones who were able to get the message into Washington, telling them what was there, what was planned, whether there were any more coming.

In Iraq and in Iran and these other things, our responsibilities were trying to help promote the economy of Iraq, and also trying to find ways we could get a better hold on the economy with respect to the British. Prior to 1946, the British were the only ones allowed to have an ambassador in Baghdad.

We could not have any representation in Kuwait. And we were trying to find ways to know what was going on in Kuwait and what was happening with the oil development. They were doing lots of oil exploration, some of this being done by American groups. And we were trying to channel this into the State Department.

We were trying to find out about domestic peace and quiet in Iran and Iraq. Every once in a while, people of little tribes were going out and shooting up somebody else.

But my own personal career, then I went to Montreal.

Q: Before we get there, you raised something about attitude. Here the war is over, the United States now is exerting itself, really for the first time, particularly in an area such as the Persian Gulf. Although the oil companies might have been there, this had been a British preserve practically. Did you have the feeling, and maybe the others in the consulate, that the United States should have a piece of the action, and that you were in some form of competition, in a way, with the British?

CHASE: Yes, very definitely we were in competition with the British, but we regarded the British as friends. I personally, at least, didn't want to see the British humbled. I thought myself that a strong Britain is very important for the United States.

And in the Middle East, we were concerned about dates. Maybe this is not very dynamic now, but it was extremely important that we were importing from Iraq most of the dates that came to the United States. And we were interested in getting Zyr dates and al-Awe

dates of a certain quality, a certain degree of sugar content, and purity. The British government was anxious to feed the British Isles, and they were short as hell of food. So we were struggling with how can we get out what we need for the United States in the date market and the British not wanting to lose food.

We were also distressed that the date industry wasn't really doing anything other than letting the date trees grow. They weren't really pressing forward with improvements of the date, protecting the date from infestation. And we felt that the British were also lackadaisical in promoting the economy of Iraq.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the British were being too colonial and that they were sitting too hard on the Iraqis?

CHASE: Yes and no. The British were colonial. And there were some of these people out there who were just insufferably colonial.

The British Club would not let an Iraqi come into the British Club. There was an English woman doctor in town who was married to an Iraqi doctor. The British woman was invited to come into the British Club, but she could not bring her husband to a dance, to a dinner. Also, though, no Americans, at first, were allowed in the British Club except as guests, with several days prior notification. Finally, then, we were invited to come in an join the British Club on an associate status. We then could go to their parties and eat their food. But the British were very colonial, and there was a great deal of argument over protocol.

The British themselves weren't all that way, there were many of them who were just anxious to move ahead. But the British generally had a very good deal there. They were living so much better than they would be living if they were back in England. They felt the Iraqis were profiting by their reign, but that they were getting a good many of the goodies.

Iraqi culture was sharply stratified between the very wealthy and the very, very poor. We were somewhat in the tension there, when we would have some of the Iraqis who were against the British coming in and seeking to get American help and American support in one way or another.

Q: How did we deal with these?

CHASE: We didn't give them anything.

Q: We didn't have any secret agenda of trying to...

CHASE: We were trying to promote a more happy sort of democracy. But I can recall, when I went down to Kuwait one time and was talking to one of the leading potentates down there, explaining to him the benefits of democracy and how a democracy worked.

He was a very kind intellectual, who was not wanting to displease me but also wanting to say: "Well, look, over here, for so many hundreds of thousands of years we've done things a little bit differently. You have inequities and things that go wrong in your country with your democracy. We may have some of ours, but the poor people are protected, because the wealthy people have family and other ties to them. And we maintain communication." And he was, to a large extent, right.

Yes, I think the British were colonial, but not of the Indian type. There was a great deal of social intercourse between the Iraqis and Brits. Some of the British were constantly trying to degrade, demean the Iraqis and point out their faults. And enjoyed very much retreating to the British Club. But yet there were lots of the others who were extremely realistic of the way things were going and anxious to have the Iraqis, the Iranians, and Kuwaitis all develop.

Q: Now, moving on to your own personal career. Where did you go?

CHASE: I then went to Montreal. I arrived up there in February, 1948. It was very much a visa mill. That was not for me a happy experience, maybe since I'd come from Iraq, where I'd been the senior officer. When I left, I had been the principal officer. Going to Montreal, they said they had all the work, but they didn't have a desk for me that I could call my desk. It was just confusion.

And I never quite understood, all the time I was in Montreal, what in the hell were the 7-C documents. Why do they call it 7-C? The idea that there was a law, the Immigration Act of 1924, that detailed how these things would be done and the various regulations that would implement it, I never got any sort of training in that sort of thing. I was just told to look for a birth certificate and see whether or not there was any financial support. It was day in and day out, sitting at one desk or another desk, never knowing quite what was happening.

And then we were supposed to answer correspondence, people who inquire in: Well, why haven't I gotten my visa yet? I didn't really understand what I was doing. And it seemed that every day things were being done differently.

They were all very nice to me. I was the only bachelor on the staff. I got to know some of the other officers socially and had a good time--and met my first wife. She came into the office to get a student visa, to go down to Radcliffe to get in what eventually came out as the Harvard Business School. She came in and qualified for a visa. And after the visa was in her hand, I said something about would she accept a dinner invitation if I'd call up sometime. She didn't answer, but she didn't leave. We chatted along about other things, and finally I asked the question a second time. She acknowledged yes, if I'd call up, if she were free, she'd go out to dinner with me.

Q: I notice that you moved rather quickly to Hamburg.

CHASE: When I got to Montreal, I just didn't feel I was getting any place. I didn't enjoy it. Somebody came back from Washington and said they were looking for people to go to Germany in the refugee program, to issue visas to refugees. So I called up a fellow in personnel, who I knew was involved in this, and said that I'd be glad to volunteer for the program. And so about three days later a telegram came up, transferring me to Germany.

Q: You were in Hamburg from 1949 to '51. What was the situation in Hamburg?

CHASE: I was transferred from Montreal to Stuttgart. I can't tell you why, but anyway I was sent in charge of the refugee visa program. And I was told to do certain things, from Washington, before I left, and from the consul general for refugee work in Frankfurt. The consul general in Stuttgart didn't want me to take instructions from anybody but himself. So we did not get along together. Certainly two bosses is always difficult. Then I called up a fellow I knew in Frankfurt, Jim Suttleff, who was an aide to the consul general on refugee matters, and I said, "Look, things aren't going too well here. Is there anyplace else I could be assigned in Germany?" And he said he'd look into it. And then I was told that the consul general from Hamburg, Edward Gross, needed somebody to help with the visa section up there and would I be interested in that. I said, "Swell. Going up to the British Zone would be interesting." And they said, "Well, they need somebody up there because all the officers are bachelors." Gross was a bachelor. And they said, "The inspectors have come through and they said that the office just has to have some married people there, because no one can get to know the local community. So, Will Chase, you're married." I had gotten married just before I left Montreal--the same lady I gave the visa to. She didn't get to complete her program at MIT. So we were then transferred up to Hamburg and I was in charge of the visa section.
[FIRST OF SIDE B MISSING]

Q: ...the opportunity for Germans to emigrate. Prior to that, of course, there was a wartime restriction.

CHASE: After the war ended, the Germans, I'm sorry I can't recall exactly, but German citizens were not eligible for visas to emigrate to the United States. Maybe if they were parents of minor children, but not normal Germans. So just before I got to Germany, they had determined that yes, they were going to open it up. And there was a big hullabaloo whereby on a certain date the consulates in Germany would accept visa applications. Everybody wanted them, and they had to be sent in there, practically time-dated. We got thousands and thousands of letters, in every one of the offices, for visas, and each one of these was bundled up by the date it had arrived. And when I got to Hamburg, they hadn't even carded, they didn't know who all these people were. We knew that on a certain date we had so many people waiting there. So it was a matter of going through and carding them, knowing who they were, alphabetizing them, and getting up waiting list numbers.

Q: What was your impression of the situation in Hamburg? We're talking about the 1949-51 period. How was Hamburg in those days, and what were our contacts with the Germans?

CHASE: This was still occupied Germany. Max Brauer had become mayor. He was a German who had lived there, had been chased out by Hitler, gone to the United States and became a labor leader over here. Then he returned to Germany as a US citizen, and the people in Hamburg asked him to stay on to become their mayor. Actually, since Hamburg was an independent state, it was like he had become governor of the state. So he renounced his US citizenship, became a German again, and was immediately elected mayor. But then the British high commissioner sat on top of him, and he controlled, to a large extent, what was going on.

The streets of Hamburg still showed many of the remains of war. Broken buildings. Some buildings had been cleaned up, some were just in rubble.

As Americans, we went to the British high commissioner to get housing. They provided us all with housing.

While we were there, the influence of the occupying powers decreased. We went from the British being the, I can't recall the proper term for it: We were the authority, to where then we got the high commissioner. The Germans were beginning to manage their own internal affairs, but we were kind of riding shotgun to see that they didn't do something they shouldn't do. And that continued on for about three years, I think, before the Germans became independent.

Q: Is there anything else that happened there that you think we should cover before we move on to what must have been quite an interesting assignment?

CHASE: Hamburg was an interesting assignment. I was head of the visa section, then I became deputy land observer for the United States. The consul general was the land observer. It meant that I worked with the British authorities and how they were doing things.

In the idea of how our immigration laws were being applied, I became much more concerned with what I thought were the inequities of the old system. Many of these are still on the books today. That is, if a person was a Communist, they were forever and ever forbidden to come to the United States.

We had a case of a very imminent German woman. She'd been a judge, as I recall, and she applied for a visa to come to the United States. Well, in the course of events, through the British and American intelligence services, we identified that back in 1932-33 she had spoken at some Communist Party meetings in opposition to Hitler.

We had a son of a bitch of a guy who was a security officer for the consulate, and he said, "Oh, she's a Communist."

And I said, "Well, look, she denied she was a member of the Communist Party. She admits having attended these meetings, but she was against Hitler. She was working with anybody who would be against Hitler. She was not a member of the Communist Party. She never voted Communist. But the Communists were the only ones who were active, and so she associated with them."

I protested that she should get the visa, because since 1945 she'd only done good things insofar as promoting the development of a good Germany. We got representations from Max Brauer's office that she was well thought of. She had never had anything dealing with Communists since 1932. And yet in 1949 we denied her a visa and labeled her a Communist.

Q: Oh, boy.

CHASE: And this bothered the hell out of me. As we now know, we were constantly bringing in Nazis. And yet we were being so strict on these people who had done what they thought they could do to oppose Hitler, oppose fascism. There was a lot of sloppiness about how information was passed about and people being condemned.

We denied a visa to a young woman who had been convicted of having an abortion. But there had never been a court trial that she admitted that she had the abortion. And she was the wife of an American citizen. She was either a wife or she was engaged to a soldier. She was an awfully nice young girl, who had come though the war. These things bothered the hell out of me.

And I didn't like the favoritism we gave in the visa process to some of these people who had played footsies with the Nazis. This bothered the hell out of me.

Q: I think you're capturing a period. I went through that some years later in the mid-'50s when I was in Frankfurt with the refugee relief program. Anything that had any smell of Communist affiliation, as far as our visa business, was absolutely verboten. But we got very, very legalistic and said well, you haven't proved this or that, if somebody was involved with the Nazis. I mean, we had a lot of concentration camp guards who came through, and we couldn't deny them a visa unless we proved they were pushing somebody into the oven. And most of these said, "Well, I was in the SS, but I was a tailor." The SS certainly had a lot of tailors. And I'm sure you ran across this, too.

CHASE: The majority of Germans who had been in the armed forces never fought on the Western Front, they all fought on the Eastern Front.

Q: Who were these guys who were keeping us from getting to Berlin?

You mentioned your security officer. One of the things I found disturbing, I don't know if you did, but the almost Neanderthal types who seemed to drift into the security business, and who were trying to settle matters that needed an extreme political sophistication to

understand what was going on in Europe during the '30s and Forties. And yet we had men who seemed to have come right off the police beat in Boston or something. Did you find this?

CHASE: Yes, the people who were interested in pursuing this sort of thing were almost invariably not particularly well-educated. They weren't, I think, sophisticated. Not that I was necessarily sophisticated, but at least I was aware of a variety of currents, and that you can't look at a person one way and determine forever and ever what they're going to be in the future. There was this overwhelming number of security people, all sorts of checks being made, and the records weren't being well-handled. We also never told a person what the allegation against them was. We could maybe hint around about it, and if the person was smart, they would know how to approach it. But at the beginning, they didn't really know what to say.

Q: Well now, moving to a different subject, but almost the equivalent to the one that was going on in Basra. You were deputy land observer and you were watching the British as they were beginning to relinquish hold. What was your impression, as an American at that time, of the British occupation in that part of Germany? How did they feel about the Germans? I mean, was there a difference between how the Americans felt and the Germans felt, would you say, or not?

CHASE: Yes, there was a difference. To an extent, the British were suffering terrible things in England. They had an economy that was in shambles, and they were hoping to get things out of Germany to make their own economy function. On the other hand, the Americans were pouring all sorts of things in to build up the economy of Germany so that they could be a strong ally against the Soviet menace. The British were being pushed around by us, and the Germans were already acquiring considerable strength. They were blocking the British efforts to do the things that the British wanted done. The British weren't for much development of Germany because they were seeing the Germans as being competitors. We were all for development of Germany. We had the resources and the British didn't.

Q: You left Germany in 1951, and then what did you do?

CHASE: Oh, I might mention, going clear back. I told you when I came into the Foreign Service I was appointed as a vice consul auxiliary. When I was in Basra, they offered written examinations--the first time for written examinations for FSOs. I said that I wanted to take the examination. The exam was to be given on a certain date in Basra--the same date throughout the whole world. Well, I waited for the examination papers to arrive, and waited for them to arrive, and waited for them to arrive, and they weren't there. We finally sent a telegram: Where are the exams? And they cabled back: The exams had been mailed at a certain time and hoped that they'd get there. Well, the day before the exam had to be taken, a sea-mail bag arrived, and it contained on the bottom a big, brown envelope which was the examination. So the next morning I took the exam. And Lester Sutton sent in a telegram to say that I'd taken the examination, and that he had

monitored it, and that the papers would be sent back. Well, then we got a reply, and apparently they were mixed up. There were lots and lots of people at posts all over the world who never got the exams. They were all sent out by sea-mail and mine got there. The department then was concerned about: Was there some hanky-panky? Well, we had to tell the name of the ship that it came on and the name of the bag, and that it had gotten to Basra, legally, the day before the exam had to be administered. So I got my exam, and I passed--barely.

Then, some months later, they had an oral examination panel that came to Europe to administer the oral exam. I had to hitchhike my way up to Paris to take the examination. Well, I was lucky in this, in a sense. When I got into the board, they knew I had hitchhiked up, and apparently this pleased the board very much. The clerk of the board told me later on: "Oh, you passed before you ever got into the room."

Q: So you were a regular Foreign Service officer at that point.

CHASE: Yes, I was appointed under the Rogers Act. I think it was two weeks before the Foreign Service Act of 1946 came in.

Q: The Rogers Act was the early one of 1924.

CHASE: So then my next post after Hamburg was Haifa, Israel. I had been transferred to Port Said to be principal officer there. I wrote a letter to the fellow in Port Said and said that I was going to replace him. And apparently this guy took the position that he didn't want to leave Port Said, and he protested and screamed. So, since he refused to leave, the Department then decided to find me another place to go and they offered me Haifa, and I said yes.

I was principal officer there. It handled the immigrant visa work for all of Israel. It's a port city, again. I had a staff of about four or five officers and about eighteen trained locals.

Q: What was the political situation, from your point of view, during this period, '51 to '55?

CHASE: Israel became an independent country in '48, and it was in the throes of trying to find its way in the world when I arrived in '51. There were large numbers of immigrants coming from Eastern Europe and from Europe in general. The country had very little in the way of resources. They were still trying to find their way around in how to organize themselves.

The Mapai Party was then *the* party. It is now the Labor Party of Peres, but it was a little bit different mix. Mapai, and its main economic instrument, Histadrut, ruled all things happening in Israel. There was this emotional zeal of: We're building a Jewish State.

There was a good bit of feeling against the Arabs. The Arabs had been dealt with pretty miserably. Sometimes you could say security was a legitimate excuse, but lots of it was just mendacious.

I was back in Israel, in 1980, I think it was, the last time, and meeting my old friends, so many of them, who had all been supporters of Mapai in the old days, have now become right-wingers, supporting Likud, Begin, Shamir, and that crowd. And there is a much tighter animosity toward the Arabs. The Israelis in general, over this continuum, I think have done wonderful things in developing a country--in every way other than learning how to get along with their Arab neighbors.

Q: Well now, at the time, did you do any reporting, or was this pretty much left to the embassy?

CHASE: No, we did a lot of reporting.

Q: How about on the Arab-Israeli relations?

CHASE: I was the main officer for reporting on Arab affairs in Israel. I would go up to the Arab communities and talk with them about their problems, trying to find out what was happening.

I recall, in the course of events, I wrote a report which in essence was criticizing the Greek Orthodox Church. Almost immediately, the Greek consul general from Jerusalem called me up and said, Oh, would I have lunch with him? He obviously had learned what I had said in my report, and he was down there to try and protect his flock, in showing me how much they all cooperated and worked together and were doing constructive things.

The Jewish Israelis were sometimes concerned about my seeing as many Arabs as I saw. They were distrustful of the Arabs and kind of wondering what was I doing.

Q: Things, of course, have changed so much, but at that time, as far as American relations with Israel were concerned, were you getting any sort of feedback from the embassy or from the desk or something, saying: Cool it, don't get too involved with reporting on the Arabs?

CHASE: No, I was being encouraged to do it. I mean, this was in my job description. This was one of the reasons I was down there. I was petroleum reporting officer for all of Israel, and I was to maintain contact with the Arab community and report on how they were feeling. I also reported on what was going on in Haifa. The desk officer at the time said that, as for learning what the atmosphere was on the streets of Israel, he found my letters more informative than the embassy's.

Q: Who was our ambassador at that time?

CHASE: Monnett B. Davis. He was a South American ambassador. He died in Israel December 26, 1953. After his death, Francis Russell was chargé for about a year or a year and half, and then the next ambassador was Lawson, who came out of Greece.

Q: You were sort of bounced around and had no particular designation. Did you have any feel for what was the embassy attitude and the Foreign Service attitude, within the desk, the embassy, and your post, towards Israel at that time?

CHASE: Oh, I went down to the embassy staff meetings. At least once a month I was down in Tel Aviv, meeting the ambassador, the chargé, the DCM, and the other people.

Q: Would you describe it as saying that we were looking upon developments in Israel enthusiastically, or objectively, or somewhat removed, or how, within that context?

CHASE: At that time, we were not nearly as committed to Israel as we are today. We were on the way to. Everyone knew that there would have been no Israel except for the United States' support in 1948, and that Israel was looking to us for financial and economic support.

Just as I was arriving, I think it was, our first real AID mission was established. I can't remember the name of the fellow, but he came in with something like $30 billion to be spent over three years. It was one of these first large grants of money to help the Israeli economic infrastructure.

I think there were a number of things that were going along in relation to Israel that I, as consul in Haifa, was not privy to. But I was very much privy to the thrust of our program that Israel shall succeed.

Q: Were you getting any reflections, either through communications or contacts with the Foreign Service establishment that was in the Arab posts around there, about developments there, saying what the hell, I mean, you know, this isn't going to be very good for us?

CHASE: Yes, I talked to Beirut frequently. I went over to Amman. I had met Roy Atherton in Stuttgart, and then he arrived in Damascus about that time and I saw him over there.

There was quite a lot of tension in the Foreign Service per se, as to whether the United States was being too deeply committed to the Israeli side. Were we conscious of what it was costing us among the Arabs?

I would respond to that sort of argument along the lines that whether Israel should or should not have been created was no longer the question. Israel was there, and the thing that we had to do was try to make Israel as successful as we could, to provide safety, a home for the Jewish population. But we also to had to promote Israel's interests among

the Arab States, to develop a modus vivendi. And so, in my reporting on the Arabs, it was: What are the things that Israel is doing vis-à-vis the Arabs that are unnecessarily causing animosities and disputes and problems, that in the long run, which I think until today, are hampering Israel's real security and safety.

Q: Well now, how about dealing with Israeli authorities? Did you find this quite different from, say, dealing with what was developing in Germany or in Iraq or something? I mean, how did you find the people you dealt with in Haifa?

CHASE: There are lots of differences in each one of these countries of how they view problems and what is their method of operation. But as for me, as an American Foreign Service officer, I constantly worked on the principle of trying to be sympathetic to their problems, and saying I want to be able to tell Washington as accurately as possible how they see things and what are they trying to do. You use different words, you use a little different manner when working one group or the other, but the Israelis were very cordial to me, very open.

I might go back to Basra, Iraq, one incident that I found very amusing, on final reflection. As economic officer, I was supposed to be reporting on these companies that were doing business, and filling out WTDRs, World Trade Directory reports.

I was asked to get the report on one company, and so I went around and talked to a banker, and said, "What will you tell me about this company?" I got back a little, sterile sort of bank statement.

I asked around, and I drove up and saw where their offices were. I knew the fellow socially, and I met him. A week or so after I got the request, I finally got to the point where I thought, well, I'll just have to go and talk to this guy. I didn't really know what to say, and I talked to Lester Sutton to find out what I should do. I didn't get much guidance.

Finally, I got into the man's office, and he had to leave. So I was kind of looking around over his desk: Where are the letters from? And what are the stamps? I thought, "How is this going to happen?"

So I sat around the office, and the fellow came back, and we chatted about various things. I must have gotten some message over to him, because finally he suddenly discovered that I wanted to know what his company was doing. And I had not told him that at all.

Once he realized that I was interested in his company, my gosh, books came off the desk, off the shelves, everything. He was showing me this contract, that contract. And I then finally discovered that there's nothing that a businessman wants to do more than talk about his own business.

And this sort of thing, of how does one get information, I learned from this one incident that frequently you have to tell the person: Look, I'm in there to talk to you because I want to know what you're doing.

And so, when I was in Israel, going in to talk to people about the business, I asked them, "Where do you get your supplies? Where do you sell your things?"

I can tell you all some interesting tales about the fine oils and essence industry. At that time, one of the major companies in the world was located in Israel. And I said, "Well, why are you here?"

And he said, "Freight costs are nothing. It's all knowledge of how the things go together, and it's skill." And he said, "So an American company was making hickory smoked hams, and hickory wood was becoming expensive, so he was trying to find an essence that would give his hams the same flavor. So he sent me over a variety of his hams and said, `Can you make an essence that will produce this?'" All of his competitors in the United States were running into the same problem, and he wanted to get a source that none of the other people would know about, so he thought: "Israel! They don't know about hams over there."

Well, they know about hams. And this friend of mine, who happened to be a Sephardic Jew from the Netherlands, a very erudite guy, figured out how to make this essence, so this was one of his customers. And he said, "I can compete with anybody, because the basic raw materials come from worldwide, the market is worldwide."

But then, going in and talking to, say, the military authorities who were ruling the Arab quarters of Israel, just go in and ask them: "Why did you seize somebody's land? Why don't you give him back his buses?" And they very rarely ever came and said, "Well, really, that's not an appropriate question to ask."

I did, though, find out an Israeli that I happened to meet and got to know. He was married to an American girl. And he asked me to take a drive with him one day. And in the course of the drive, he said, "Did you get a letter from Congressman Bolton?" (Frances Bolton from Cleveland.) "What is she writing you? Why did she write you?" And it turned out that he knew all about the letter. Then he said, "Israeli Intelligence have asked me to form a friendship with you and find out what you're doing."

I then had a local employee, a very smart Romanian Jew who was doing a certain amount of economic and political work for me. And when he left, he said, "Look, if my replacement doesn't tell you that he has been approached by Israeli Intelligence in a matter of a few months, be suspicious of him." This fellow came to the United States and graduated from some New York City school. He broke all records with complete A's.

Israeli Intelligence, I was aware, due to these various things, were interested not just in what I was doing, but I knew they were certainly indeed looking into what all of our US government people were doing. And so Pollard was approached eventually.

Q: We're talking about a famous cause célèbre, a man named Pollard who was caught in the United States, having stolen and transmitted masses of top secret documents for the Israelis. This was in the late 1980s.

CHASE: I did not know that Eisenhower approved the sale to the Israelis of equipment that let them start on their atomic energy business. That was the type of secret that I was not aware of. And it happened while I was there.

Q: Were there problems for you dealing with expatriate Americans, particularly American Jews who went to Israel to settle there? If they had difficulties, did you get involved in this sort of thing?

CHASE: Very definitely. At that time, you know that an American citizen could lose his citizenship through a whole series of acts: leaving the United States to avoid the draft; voting in a foreign election; becoming naturalized in a foreign state. And I can't recall all the rest.

Q: Holding offices. It was up until the mid-'60s, I think, when this was overturned by the Supreme Court.

CHASE: Certain ones of these things were stock. I remember the American community asked me to come to a meeting and discuss this issue of why did they lose their citizenship if they did certain things. I was using a variety of analogies to try and say that you can't serve two gods at the same time. If you are an American citizen, wonderful. If you give your allegiance over to Israel, that's wonderful. But don't try and do two at the same time. All our laws are to prevent people from being put in a position where they'll have a conflict of interest.

Then we ran into a situation of taking away citizenship from people who had voted in Israeli elections. The people had an identity card, and so when they came in to get their passport renewed, we said, "Well, where's your identity card?" So we'd look in the identity card to see if there was a voting stamp there. And that's how the Israelis controlled who voted, by putting a stamp in their identity card.

Well, a number of these people said, "I didn't vote! I didn't vote! I didn't vote!" Here it was in their card.

As this went along, we then discovered that, particularly in some of the people we'd seen, the kibbutz would hold everybody's identity card, and as the person would come in to vote, they'd give them the identity card so they could go to the next room and vote. However, as the end of the day was approaching, and they had a number of ID cards that

hadn't been voted, they would take them over and vote them. And so some of these Americans were losing their citizenship improperly.

We had a woman by the name of Sylvia Bernstein, a very wonderful lady. Her father was a prominent federal judge up in Philadelphia. Sylvia lived in a kibbutz, and she did not vote, she said, but her ID card said she had. We took away her citizenship. She came to me and said, "Look, we are friends. I want to just tell you, you have done a terrible misdeed." (I hadn't done it, my predecessor did it. But I would have done it.) And she said, "I did not vote." And she began to tell me of how this thing was going on in the kibbutz. We then went through, oh, quite a number of months of talking to various people, and finally we presented a report to the Department of State that we believed Sylvia Bernstein was telling the truth when she said she had not voted. And so, on this occasion, the citizenship was restored.

Then I had another friend who was a draft evader.

Q: American draft evader or Israeli?

CHASE: American draft evader. I can remember the day he came into the office. I had called him in and said I wanted to see his passport. So he gave me his passport and I threw it on my desk and I said, "I have to tell you that you're no longer a US citizen." He got his citizenship back later on, of course, through these court proceedings. He was one of these interesting guys, but on this question of dual nationality, like a number of these other Americans, he wanted to be a citizen of both countries.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the American citizenship was something (which I've run across in other countries) that they wanted to keep in their hip pocket in case things got bad, but their real commitment was to the state they were in? I found this true in Greece, for example.

CHASE: Some would be perfectly comfortable stating it that blatantly. The majority of them would say: "We are true Americans, and we believe that there is no possibility of a conflict of interest between Israel and the United States." They wanted to participate in the local activities. They would say, "Look, our children go to the schools. We are being affected in various ways, and we think we should be allowed to do this."

You see, it wasn't against the law. And I, at least, felt convinced that the law was correct. I can recall I was up in Canada when the whole thing was declared unconstitutional. I thought, "My God, those Supreme Court people are jerks." And then I got, as quickly as I could, a copy of the whole decision. I began reading through, and I came to the conclusion, "My gosh, they're absolutely right. The Constitution doesn't give the legislative power to take away citizenship."

Q: We've now reached the point where we can move from Haifa to your next position, which was in Ankara. I have you being there from 1955 to '59. Does this make you a Middle East hand or something?

CHASE: I have a lot of affection for the Middle East, but I never became a linguist. I think I would have continued further in the Middle East except that one of my children had school problems and I felt it was best that we stick to places where I could get better schooling, or at least hopefully better schools. Like a lot of these things, your career doesn't always evolve quite the way you'd think you would like it, but it turned out well.

I liked Ankara. When I first got there, I arrived on, I think it was the 4th of July, and Webb Balance, the administrative officer, came down to the hotel and said, "Well, how do you like going down to Izmir?" This took me by surprise. I suddenly found out that the consul down in Izmir was leaving, and the new one wasn't going to come for quite some time, and that he wanted me to be down there to run the office. So I went on down and I had a good time in Izmir, I enjoyed it.

It was interesting to me that, when I had been living in Israel, Cyprus was a place that we used to visit from time to time, and the problem with EOKA, the Greek community of Cyprus that wanted to join Greece. First of all, the British were resisting, and then it became the Turks who were resisting, since a very sizable portion of the population is Turk. I became aware of these tensions over in Cyprus, from visits when I was in Israel, and when I was en route from Haifa to Ankara, I had stopped off there while the boat had stopped there, and all these notices about EOKA dangers.

Well, I ended up and went down to Izmir. My first job in Ankara, I'd been sent there to be one of the political officers. The Izmir trade fair was coming up. That is a big international trade fair, and there was going to be an American building there for us to show off our wares. We wanted to know what was happening there, we also wanted to see a great deal what the Soviets were doing, what were the Eastern Europeans doing.

I'd been intrigued with Turkey for quite some time, even going back to Basra days. I can recall a John Van Ness, who was a missionary out there, and his daughter then married Bill Brewer, who was in the Foreign Service and became Ambassador Brewer. And John Van Ness was saying, "The Palestine situation, what we need are a few Turks to take care of that."

And Turks do have, I think rather successfully, a managerial sense. They know what it is to run things. You can argue whether it's done well or not, but being an administrator, be it a governmental administrator or a business administrator, being an administrator or director is an admired profession in Turkey. The government pays fairly low salaries, and families would subsidize one of their members if they would go into the government. So they're used to it.

Well, in Izmir, it is definitely Middle Eastern, with a heavy overlay of remembrances of things Greek.

Q: It used to be Smyrna.

CHASE: I know that the Greek consuls general would call it somehow Smyrna, but not I.

Speaking of a colonial atmosphere, this was a Levantine sort of an atmosphere: tobacco growers, agriculturalists, a foreign community of missionaries, business people, educators who had been living there, some of them for generations. They weren't Turks, they were French, they were British, they were what have you; it was a colorful sort of an environment.

They came up to celebrating the occupation of Smyrna, the beginning of Izmir, and I was the only foreign consul who went down for these celebrations of the Turkish National Day. The people invited me, but it was not a formal sort of a thing, and I found out that the foreign consular people were aloof to it. It wasn't that they weren't welcome, they just didn't become involved. I went down, and the Turks very much noticed that an American was there. And they appreciated it.

The commanding general took me off and said, "You notice that." Down at the dock where the main formalities were taking place, the ships were in the Mediterranean moorings, with the stern to the dock. And here, right there in front of the reviewing stand, was a Greek ship with a Greek flag. And the general said, "Past things are past." Nothing was said against Greeks, it was all completely neutral. This was a day that we had occupied Izmir--not occupied it from whom--but occupied it. And I was quite intrigued with the way that they were phrasing it and trying to say we are in NATO with Greece and Britain.

However, a few days later I was down at this big international fair. I'd been in one exhibit and when I came out of it I noticed there was some fire and a certain excitement around. All of a sudden I realized that it was the Greek pavilion that had been torched. This was relating very much to the Cyprus issue. The Turks had been fairly quiet, but, for reasons that are still under debate, anti-Greek riots took place in Istanbul, and in Izmir they torched the Greek pavilion.

I got into my car with my wife and we started driving down to the Greek consul general's home, to warn him and tell him what was happening. We got there, and as we came up, the first head people of the mob had outrun our car. They had gotten there first and they had torched the house. The Greek consul general, his wife, and a child were there, but they were able to escape through the back door. Nobody was injured. But about three o'clock in the morning, I was wakened by the Greek consul general calling me and saying he wanted to come and seek asylum at the American Consulate. So we gave him asylum. His wife and child, oh, everything they had had been destroyed; it was quite a sad event.

For the next four and a half years that I was in Turkey, my occupation was Cyprus and the Greek-Turkish...

Q: How did you get involved?

CHASE: I was a political officer in the embassy. Now that was the thing I was working on.

Q: This is very interesting because we have had quite a few interviews with people who, mostly later on, but who were involved, but almost always from the Cypriot point of view.

CHASE: Toby Belcher among others.

Q: Yes, well, I mean they just happened to be there on this. Every time you talk about Cyprus, you have to talk about a specific time, but really it doesn't change a bit, I guess, the feelings. This was '55 to '59, what was, let's say, the official Turkish attitude at that time, as opposed to maybe the street attitude, towards Greece and Cyprus?

CHASE: I think, in talking to the Turks I met when I was on Cyprus: shopkeepers, fellows with me out sailing, Turks, and the Greeks, it's like a number of these areas where you have a minority, that if a Turk went in to get a job on Cyprus in a bank, he would maybe be hired to be the janitor, but he would never dream of becoming a clerk. He hit an economic ceiling that he couldn't penetrate. And, seeing what was happening to the Arabs in Israel, again you hit your ceiling, you become very, very much constrained.

The Turks would tell me on Cyprus about, "Look, if there's an earthquake over there in Turkey, the spring that I get my water from here in Cyprus turns muddy." So there are connections.

But when I arrived in Turkey, the first few weeks I was there, I was aware that people were very conscious of things Greek, and that some of this was completely unrelated to the Cyprus issue. There is enough other history of the Turks and the Greeks having problems.

I was asked to go down to Istanbul and talk to the various members of the community. The ambassador didn't like what the consul general in Istanbul was sending in, but he liked the things I was reporting, so he asked me to go and look around in Istanbul--which the consul general in Istanbul didn't particularly appreciate.

Q: The ambassador was Fletcher Warren at that time?

CHASE: No, that was Avra Warren.

Q: What was the Istanbul man sending in that the Ankara man didn't care for from the consul general in Istanbul? Do you know?

CHASE: Oh, it was in part this issue of how deep-seated, how much animosity is there between the Turks and the Greeks; how much was this a definite governmental-directed, government-managed riot that took place; how much was it that maybe the government encouraged or suggested that it be done, and then the dam of self-control was removed and the natural desire for anger at the Greeks took over. And so, as I believe, the ambassador was disturbed that the Istanbul consul general was sending in too much: This is a government-directed, -run, -managed plot. And he wanted to find out a little bit more of comments from people who would say that this is a thing that the Turkish people are deeply concerned about. And from my reporting in Izmir, he had liked the things I was sending in from there. So when I was returned to Ankara and took up my assigned position as political officer, he then asked me to look into this thing and see what I could find out.

Q: After you looked into this, how did you see the official Turkish attitude towards the Cyprus problem and Greeks? Again, we're talking about the '50s.

CHASE: At that time, the Turkish government began to feel that Greece was trying to put a stranglehold around them: taking up all the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, going through Rhodes and Cyprus, that this would be encircling them. There are a whole lot of other things that kind of filtered into this and fed it along the way. But at the time, in '55 when I arrived in Turkey, the Turks were not particularly concerned about Cyprus, in that they were convinced that the British were going to stay on forever.

Q: When did the British leave?

CHASE: Just when I left, in '59. It was the Geneva Accord, when Menderes and (I can't think of the name of the fellow in Greece) finally met and signed an accord which established the dual Greek-Turkish government of Cyprus.

But at the same time that I was arriving, the British had given signs that they were going to pull out and turn the island over. So from '55 to '59, the Turks were adamant that Britain will not leave Cyprus under conditions which will allow Cyprus to be joined to Greece. At the beginning (and to an extent I still think there is a lot to it), the Turks didn't have any really latent, deep anger with Greece. But they did react, and I think it was popular, they reacted, saying that Greece is fine, it's over there, but they will not come and dominate us.

Q: It's funny. I served, as you know, some years later in Greece, and I had the feeling in Greece that the Greeks used the Turks as the bogeyman all the time. Anything that happened, they were concentrated on Turkey. Whereas the Turks, from my distant observation, really weren't that interested in the Greeks per se. I mean, they were more concerned about the Soviets and others, and that the Greeks were an annoyance but not a major preoccupation--unless they started messing around in Cyprus with the minority there.

CHASE: I would agree with that. The Turks didn't have an obsession with things Greek. Generally, they couldn't care less about what the Greeks were doing. They felt rather superior to the Greeks. They were very much concerned about the Soviets. They were concerned about the Kurds in eastern Turkey. They were concerned about Syria and Iraq and Iran, their neighbors there. They share water and population and transportation problems. At one time, we had tried very much to get the Turks to become involved with the Arab-Israeli thing. The Turks weren't particularly willing to be brought into that squabble.

Q: When you were there, this was the Menderes government. What was your observation of the role of the Turkish military at that time?

CHASE: Whenever you start talking about Turkey, modern Turkey, I think that it's important to start out almost with a little summary of Ataturk and his six principles.

Ataturk instilled in the Turks a terrific sense of nationalism and self-confidence, an attitude on the relationship of people to the government, government to the people, and the importance of democracy. Even though Ataturk was a dictator, he was devoted to the concept of real democracy.

And the spirit of democracy was such that the military have never felt that they can do anything other than support Ataturk and his devotion to democracy. The military was in the background, solely as a defense of the homeland, not for interfering with politics. And they got, I think, reluctantly dragged into the political fray with the Menderes government and then several other subsequent governments not being able to govern properly. And so the military took on the mantle of governmental rule most reluctantly.

Q: Did you have the feeling in your dealings at that time that the civilian government was sort of taking a more pragmatic stand on the Cyprus issue, and that at least the leaders of the military really wanted to have at the Greeks, at least on Cyprus?

CHASE: The military didn't want to become involved with Cyprus. They looked at Cyprus as being something that wasn't their bag, because they were concerned with the Soviets and Eastern Europe, and somewhat with the Arab frontier, but that was more of a peacekeeping thing. See, at that time the Baghdad Pact was alive, and the Turks were very much key supporters of the Baghdad Pact. These were the areas that they were thinking about, and Greece wasn't a threat to them. In a military thing, they'd see Cyprus as something that was going to be handled through negotiation and through diplomacy.

Q: How about in our embassy? You have the Cyprus thing, and these negotiations were going on. Were we playing any role, from your vantage point, during the gradual breaking away by the British from responsibility in Cyprus?

CHASE: Oh, we played a very active role in the Cyprus dispute. We didn't ever become a party at the negotiating table, but we were constantly in the background, arguing with the Brits, the Greeks, and the Turks about let's keep this thing as a diplomatic tug of war, not a military tug of war. In fact, none of us even really thought of that as being a realistic concern. This did not come out, really, in the conversations, about the threat of a military intervention.

But we were constantly trying to assess what were the minimum conditions that the Turks would accept, what were the minimum conditions that the Brits would accept, and what were the minimum that the Greeks would accept. I think that we did fairly early come out with the thought that Cyprus should not become a part of Greece, enosis should not be fomented.

We toyed with trying to push the British to continue on to rule there. But the British were broke and they were getting their soldiers killed, so they thought they had to pull out.

We talked to Makarios, in trying to get Makarios to be rational. Maybe coming from the Turkish background, I think Makarios was a dirty old scoundrel. Toby Belcher, I know, liked him. I think Toby also realized...

Q: Toby Belcher was our ambassador...

CHASE: He was our consul general. We of course had in Cyprus at that time some very major installations: USIA, the CIA, and our radio transmitters. So we had an interest, and to a large extent I think it's still there.

Q: Actually, it was a place where a lot of our interests intertwined. We had bases we considered very important at that period in Greece, in Turkey, and in Cyprus. So there was no feeling that we should just duck it and let everybody else play a hand?

CHASE: No, no, we were an active participant even though we shied away from acknowledging that we were a part of the negotiation.

Q: What was the reaction in the embassy and with yourself to the agreement that was signed in Geneva, the Geneva Accords on Cyprus in '59?

CHASE: [A sigh of relief] At last. We knew it was tricky and it might not succeed, but we were just so relieved that we thought "thank goodness". I arrived in Turkey with the almost breakdown of Greek-Turkish relations, and when I left, here the two governments had signed an accord. It was the answer to the maiden's prayer. With good will, we had a feeling that this is a viable solution. That if the Greeks and the Turks on the island would really try to make this succeed, it could succeed. That each side's basic interests were protected. There was enough opportunity for them to make a successful marriage.

Q: While you were there, what was the embassy and sort of from your vantage point the view of the "Soviet menace" as far as Turkey was concerned?

CHASE: Did we think there was a true Soviet menace?

Q: Yes.

CHASE: I'd say absolutely yes.

Q: In what regard? What was our nightmare that would happen? How would the Soviets do something in Turkey? Invasion? Subversion?

CHASE: There are a couple of things to be considered. One, we had extensive military capability in the country. We had an extensive espionage network.

Q: Not espionage, but a listening post.

CHASE: Not just listening posts. The U-2s came out. But then there are a couple of other little incidents that you may recall. We were flying military aircraft along that Soviet border to pick up what the Soviets were doing towards scrambling their planes and what sorts of radio signals that they were doing. So that our planes were going along that border.

There's a story that I, I know I'm right, but I talked to a friend of mine who was there at the time and he doesn't remember it the way I remember it. And I know I'm right. One of our planes that we knew was doing this, and the Soviets were protesting all the time, we flew a plane out there, and the dirty old Soviets shot the damn thing down. It had actually penetrated into Soviet airspace and it crashed in Soviet airspace. We denounced the Soviets for their taking hostile action at a friendly aircraft, but we all knew what was happening. We then demanded that the bodies of the airmen be returned. As I remember it, we never got back all the bodies, and there was suspicion that maybe some of these people survived the crash and were prisoners of war over there. This friend of mine, Bill Helsitz, went there to the border and asked about the..., they were talking to the Soviets, our military people did the talking, Bill just watched, and saying, "Well, where are the other bodies?" And the Soviets said, "These are all." I don't know and I've not found anybody else able to go back and clarify this, whether I even remember this and whether even I made a mistake and I remember it incorrectly, but the idea was that they'd shot down one of our planes, and the plane had gotten into Soviet space because those dirty old Ruskies fiddling with the navigational stuff, so that as our planes flew in, they jostled those things around so our plane didn't realize precisely where he was and he strayed over into the other side. Now there's that incident. And the Turks were very much concerned about that.

Now the other thing was, in 1956, I think it was, all of a sudden we were becoming very much interested in the study of clouds, and we started putting up big balloons in the air.

And we were flying them so they were drifting across the Soviet Union. What we had was all sorts of camera and this stuff, hoping that the balloons would carry way over into the Philippines or China or someplace where we could recover them. And the Soviets objected to this strenuously--these crazy guys. These balloons were being floated from Turkey, and we got a couple of them brought back. They never got across the border, and we picked them up and brought them in and put them in the parking lot back of the embassy. And so here were these damn things laying out there. And you could walk over and see the lenses that they had. These were very definitely spy jobs. What made us have trouble with the Turks was that all of a sudden, out of Washington, we apologized to the Russians and we said we wouldn't do it any more--and we didn't tell the Turks until afterwards.

We were rather high-handed with the Turkish military. And a number of our officer were, I think, rather superciliously arrogant with them. But the Turks were definitely concerned by what the Soviets would do if we weren't there. As long as we were there, they were ready to thumb their noses at the Russians. The idea that there could be an atomic war, the Turkish people we talked with in the Foreign Office said, "Well, we Turks have fought the Russians, what is it, a hundred times over the so many centuries." They had a long history of major wars. And they said, "Well, we lose some, we win some, but we will not let the Soviets push us around." And atomic weapons? "We all have to die sometime." They were tough.

And Joseph Alsop, the columnist, came out there because there was a big hullabaloo over the threat of atomic war. And the Turks were being put upon by the Soviets with threats. Joe Alsop came in and he talked with us, and he was just so distressed. And he came to Ankara, which was supposed to be the center of the hurricane, and everything was peaceful. The Turks said, "The Russians are making a fuss. They've made fusses before. We are here, and we will not move." And Joseph Alsop was quite irritated at the Turks because he wanted them to be more excited.

Q: He wanted a story. There were three events that happened while you were there. Two in 1956: the Hungarian uprising and the Suez Canal attack on Egypt by Israel, France, and Britain. How did Turkey react to Suez?

CHASE: Let me just add that there was another major event that took place, and that was our invasion of Lebanon.

Q: That comes later. I was going to ask, July, that would be '58.

CHASE: Yes, '58, that was later. But the invasion of the Suez Canal, I was in Ankara at that time. The Turks weren't too much concerned. Our embassy was more concerned than anything else. The Turks were somewhat disdainful towards the Arabs, and they did not like Nasser. They very much disliked Nasser. Remember when Nasser formed a union with...

Q: Yes, the United Arab Republic, I think. Was this the one with Syria?

CHASE: Yes, with Syria. I can remember there was a Turkoman at the Foreign Office. With glee he said, "You know, Nasser shouldn't have ever made that visit to Damascus. Because the Syrians looked at Nasser, when they saw him in the flesh, and said, "My God, we've allowed ourselves to be ruled by a nigger." They didn't like Nasser from the beginning, and anything that could cut Nasser down was in their interests.

Now I have to add the note that I was out of Turkey during part of this time. I had gone back to the States on home leave and taking the mid-career course.

Q: Well, now, coming back, from '56 to '58, there you had two things almost: July 14, the overthrow of the Iraqi ruler, Hassan, and the end of the Baghdad Pact in effect, or at least Iraq and the Baghdad Pact. And also, almost concurrently, was our invasion, or whatever you want to call it, of Lebanon.

CHASE: The Turks were badly shook up by the collapse of the Iraqi government. They didn't have any deep affections for the Iraqis, but at least they felt that they gave them a security, and it also gave them a greater degree of eminence, because they were members of this viable Baghdad Pact. And they were getting a number of goodies from the United States. You talk about the military, they were always interested in getting better planes, better ships, better technological equipment from the United States. They knew where their bread and butter was coming from. And with the Baghdad Pact collapse, this made them feel uneasy. For one reason: What does this mean in Iran? They were aware that the forces that overthrew King Faisal were also operating in Iran. They didn't want to have Arab nationalism, they didn't want to have a turbulent neighbor. They were enough annoyed with what was going on in Syria, they didn't want to have also Iraq as a problem.

Q: And how about our going into Lebanon?

CHASE: They were very much concerned with Lebanon, the feeling that this was one of those points of igniting further troubles in the Middle East. Chamoun was one that they felt deserved and needed support, and they had advised us to find ways to give Chamoun support. When the final decision was made...

Q: Chamoun was the president of Lebanon at the time.

CHASE: Yes. Bob McClintock was our ambassador in Lebanon at the time. But our planes that were going in there to help support our invasion came out of Europe, and they flew down and landed in Adana at our air base down there. The planes were coming in low and landing, sweeping in, just these big planes, there was lots of noise. And the evening news that was then on the radio was talking about Adana members attending some sort of farm fair, and he was kissing babies...What are all these planes? They called up the radio station and they couldn't get any news. The people at Adana were just scared to their wit's end. They didn't know what was happening, why all these planes were

coming in, and they needed at least an indication that the Turkish government knew what was going on in their own country. But the Turkish people were very happy. The government was happy and the people were happy with the invasion of Lebanon.

Q: Mainly because it seemed to be stopping a spread of sort of what was then called Nasserism.

CHASE: Nasser was not involved in Lebanon. But it was a spread of disintegration. They feared communal rioting. That's happened now in Lebanon.

One other aspect of this. Thinking of Turkey as a country, and that Turkey is one of the countries that I think is very much misunderstood in the American public. The Turks have a tremendous history. We went in there in 1947 with a Truman Doctrine, and the way Turkey looked then, and the way Turkey looks today is so different. The average bus ride, as I understood, public bus fare was only something two or three miles long in 1947, because the buses couldn't go any place; there were no roads.

[START OF SIDE B MISSING]

Q: ...50 miles.

CHASE: Fifty miles. I may be wrong. It took our road man, who went over there to build roads in '47, he said when he got to Ankara and went to a place called Konya, which is about 130 miles south of Ankara, it had been a three-day drive to go down there, and now it's about a two-hour drive. Now this has made over that country terrifically, all the different infrastructures that they had. If you think of the old Point Four Program, remember that glorious slogan? It also goes back to Truman with the Marshall Plan maybe. Israel is also a country that has had a tremendous development. The country is just revolutionized because of massive infusion of capital and technical know-how. Turkey has also been changed from one country to a completely different country because of a tremendous amount of foreign help.

Q: I think this is a very interesting picture of Turkey at that period, which is one that we don't have in our collection. You came back to Washington then. First you were with Consular Affairs '59 to '61.

CHASE: I came back as a special assistant to Johnny Haines, who was administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. At that time, it did have SY as part of it.

Q: And what were you doing mainly?

CHASE: I was in his office, working with Roland Welch and Ralph Hilton to try to find ways to run consular activities more efficiently. Roland Welch had been the fellow who developed the so-called Montreal Plan of visa processing. He was special assistant to Lloyd Henderson as a career minister. Ralph Hilton and I were in Haines's office, and the

three of us were working together to find what could we do to promote better consular operations, through technology, training, publicity. And I stayed there for about two years on that job.

Q: How much, looking at this, did Consular Affairs grasp the attention of the Department of State per se? Did you find that it was sort of hard to get anybody's interest at the working level to think about it, or was this considered...?

CHASE: It was a back issue people weren't considering as important. The geographic bureaus were very much interested in running their consular sections, and they didn't want SCA to interfere with them. On technical advice and things like that, that was all right. The Montreal Plan of visa operations was only then being installed in these various offices. Roland Welch was roaming the world, visiting posts in order to help these offices actually get this system going.

Q: Did you get any feel for the interrelationship of the various bureaus? Did some seem stronger and more confident than others? What was your impression?

CHASE: Oh, yes, there's quite a difference. EUR, the European Bureau, was running a tight ship. They knew what they were doing, and they were giving the consular operations a lot of direction that was dynamic, and they knew what they wanted to accomplish. I thought ARA, Latin America, was a poorly run office altogether.

Q: It's had this reputation for years, you could almost say a century. Why?

CHASE: Later on I was assigned to the assistant secretary's office in ARA as kind of a staff assistant, special assistant. When I was there, I again had the feeling that it was being run very poorly. Ed Martin came in. He had no ARA background, but he was a tough cookie, and he, I think, did a great deal for making the bureau pull itself up and run better. There's an awful lot of localitis in all these offices, but ARA, I think, has been asleep at the switch for ages. Now NEA, the Near Eastern area, on political, economic, personnelwise they, I think, like the EUR, had a lot of talent, they knew how to handle the talent, and they did a good job. ARA was not that way. FE, the Far Eastern area, I didn't have that strong a feeling of how good they were. I think they were pretty good, but I thought EUR was probably the best run, and NEA next best.

Q: You had these three assignments. What were you doing in Personnel?

CHASE: I got a job that was rather a confused job, because Personnel at the time didn't really know what it was trying to do. They had a number of little gimmicks that they were playing with. I was in the Planning Division of Personnel, working on the development of language-designated positions, tours of duty, and rotational assignments.

Q: And then you moved on. You said you were in ARA.

CHASE: Then I went from Personnel, it was again where they were cutting back on staff. I think that Personnel at that time was having troubles knowing what it was really doing and how it was doing it. That is, in the planning. In the assignments offices and things, I think they were possibly doing a lot better. But planning, no.

Q: Mainly because of time constraints, I'd like to move on to Ottawa.

CHASE: Then I went up to Ottawa because my tour time at the department was coming to an end, four years, and that was a place I could go to and get schooling for my children, which was at that time very important. So I looked around to find a job that I could grab, and it turned out to be in Ottawa as head of the embassy consul section and also coordinator of consular activities throughout Canada.

Q: You served there from '63 to '68. Canada has always had, particularly in this period, a real spread of consulates. How did they fit into the system? Were they purely working offices, for the local visas, passports, and that sort of thing, or did they play much of a role in our overall American-Canadian policy at the time we're talking about?

CHASE: Back in history, we had, in 1900 I think it was, forty-some consular posts up in Canada. When I was there, there were ten consular posts. If you think of certain functions being important, then you need the number offices to carry out these activities. So that when we had forty, that was a time when there was a lot of shipping going backing forth, and their crews left visas all over the place. When I was there, each one of the offices, I think, was carrying out a very important function. There was not a marginal post among them, at least at the beginning.

Canada itself is big. It's so much like the United States. But to an extent, if you go around in Canada, it's an archipelago. It's a whole lot of little islands of activity that don't always relate one to the other; they're little principalities.

So that Newfoundland has its problems and it's a perspective. We had some important military establishments up there. And whether we were going to be able to carry them out required we had a consulate there that would keep in touch with the Newfie government and see things were done.

In Halifax, the consulate general is at the site of the Military Atlantic Command for Canada. I think it's one of the three major headquarters. It has some other important industries, coal mining and things. They gave out quite a number of visas.

St. John, over in New Brunswick, was there just as really an immigrant visa-issuing mill. If you don't have immigrants, there's no reason to have a consulate. New Brunswick is economically unimportant, politically unimportant.

Then in Quebec Province is Quebec City, which is the capital of the province, and if you're thinking about what is going on in Quebec right now, the same forces were afoot

then. Montreal was not only a big, major visa-issuing post, but it also is the hub of the economy, the political, the education.

So that each one of these posts is important.

Windsor, again, it's important or it's not important. See, a lot of aliens were living in the United States. They weren't eligible for adjustment of visa status. It was arranged that they could enter Canada and then come back into the United States. And that was Windsor's business, and St. John's business.

Q: Well, how about the ambassador, Walton Butterworth? Did he pay much attention to the consulates? He was involved in other things. I mean, these were in many ways performing more technical functions, weren't they?

CHASE: Butterworth knew what was going on, and he kept his fingers on those things that were important. It was surprising to me the way he would come into a consular problem that would interest him, that was affecting the political and economic relationships of Canada, and he knew exactly what he wanted to know about that. Some of these public relations things, the draft dodger issue, Americans fleeing to Canada to escape the draft, Butterworth knew about that very, very definitely. And yet whether Montreal gave out a hundred visas a day or five visas a day, he wouldn't be interested in that.

Q: What was our attitude? The Vietnam War was peaking at this point, and people were using Canada as a means to get away. What was sort of both the official and you might say what was the attitude of the ambassador, in other words, towards these people? I mean, they're making their choice, let 'em live with it, or do something to 'em?

CHASE: We were concerned by the political implications of this. The total number of draft evaders was really pretty small. It was, though, something that was embarrassing to us. Since it was embarrassing, we were trying to do various things to downplay it, so the newspapers, both in the United States and Canada, wouldn't do anything about it. They wouldn't give these people publicity. I had lots of talks with draft dodgers, and I also had lots of talks with the draft boards down in the United States, and finally evolved the approach that we had to handle this issue very carefully because we were also going to be violating the United States' civil liberties. And also really almost a third of the Canadian men, during the draft ages, were technically US draft dodgers.

Q: Because of going to school in the United States?

CHASE: They were going to these schools, yes. Some were dual nationals. You'd have a person who had lived all their life in New Brunswick and yet when their mother was expecting them, instead of going to a hospital in Canada, which was remote, they went across the border to a hospital in the United States. So this child, a hundred percent Canadian but by accident had been born in the United States.

As the child was growing up, there would be a little bit of a funny affair at the border. The family would come up and they'd say, "What's your nationality?"

And they'd say, "We're all Canadian."

And the immigration officer would say, "Where were you born?"

The fellow says, "In Maine."

"You're an American citizen, come on in, you Yank. What are you going to do, associate with all these Canucks up here?" And they'd joke along in this way.

That little kid, over the years, going back and forth, always "American citizen."

Then at eighteen years six months, the immigration officer says, "Where's your draft card?"

"I'm a Canadian!"

"Hell you are, you're an American. You've been coming in here all the time." And so then the fellow would say, "Well, then you're refusing to register for the draft?"

"You're damn right I am."

"All right, abandon residence in the United States to avoid the draft." Or he'd tell him, "Okay, go up to the consulates and renounce your citizenship."

And then the consular officers also told him he had to renounce his citizenship because he didn't want to register for the draft. And so I then instructed my consular officer, I said, "For Christ's sake, look at this case realistically. Is this fellow a Canadian or is he an American? It's just an accident of birth that he is a US citizen. And what you do is you fill it out, saying: `I am renouncing my citizenship because I realize there are conflicts in the citizenship. I don't want to be a dual national, I only want to only be a single national.'"

Q: In other words, not to taint it for later on.

CHASE: Right, why taint it? Well, we had a whole lot of these little cases, where a lot of Canadians were being labeled draft dodgers.

And then Butterworth and I had a long conversation with the head of the Canadian National Bank. His son went down to Harvard to get a degree, was offered a good job, and the job was going to involve his taking up residency down there in the United States.

So he went down and did his work, and this went along very happily. And then along came the draft notice.

Well, the fellow, first of all, thought that he would never be called, thought he'd have a draft deferment. But eventually, by God, he has no alternative, he has come. So then he comes back to Daddy and says, "I've got to get out of the United States, I can't stay there any longer, I'll be drafted. But also I will then make myself permanently ineligible to go back to the United States."

Well, a whole lot of different politicians called up, saying can't you help this young man? He came and called on Butterworth, and Butterworth asked me to come in, and we talked to him. And finally this fellow really admitted that he was a goddamn draft dodger. When the things were good in the United States, he'd taken it. When the things began to become difficult, he suddenly remembered he wasn't an American.

And that sort of, what do they call it, summer soldier? really that concept still irritates me. And Butterworth, in various ways, said, "Look, in this life it's a matter of making choices. And if you make a choice and you accept the goodies, you then have to pay the piper when that comes around."

Now for the other side, the Canadian who just was tricked into it, he had utmost sympathy. And what we found out, though, our US Draft Boards were purposely picking up Canadians, because they'd look over their roster and they knew Johnny and Bill and Jim all had families living in their districts, but Oscar from Canada doesn't have anybody around here, so we'll draft him. There was an awful lot of skullduggery. On these things, the draft issue was a very maligned issue. It was a political issue.

We did have a major case that I think got me in particularly good graces with Butterworth and Joe Scott, the DCM. We had an FBI agent come up into Canada and conduct an investigation without clearance, as if he was doing it down in the United States. This was again a draft dodger case, and that really hit the fan.

And we had another case of a fellow who was actually involved in drugs, Revard. He was living in Montreal and had a network going down into Mexico. His runner was picked up at the border. The fellow had a telephone number; it turned out to be a public telephone. We discovered who he was, and we then began to try and extradite him to the United States for drugs. And then this fellow found a way that he began to bribe people. In fact, there was a lead that was going into Pearson's cabinet, Lester Pearson, the prime minister. So here was one of our people, the Customs at this time working legitimately. We were going after Revard, and all of a sudden the trail of this was leading us around to bribery within the Pearson cabinet, which, if the thing had developed the way it appeared to be, Pearson would have been disgraced and thrown out of office.

Q: So how did that resolve itself?

CHASE: The real thing there was to realize what the danger was and be sure that the prosecution of Revard was handled in a way that didn't go beyond anything other than to get Revard. We eventually were pretty sure that this other trail wouldn't involve bribery of the cabinet, but it was a danger there if it had come out. This Revard, the FBI going up there... There were some other consular problems that did threaten our...

Q: But it was not a quiet, non-challenging post.

CHASE: As much as I had disliked my assignment to Montreal I liked my assignment to Ottawa.

Q: You then went from a place which had a lot of business to one that was just overwhelming in business practically. This was Manila. You were there from '68 to '70. How did that assignment come about, and what were you doing?

CHASE: Well, I was the consul general in Manila. I was in charge of the consular office.

Q: I remember, because I was consul general in Saigon at the same time, and we used to look at your operation from some distance away.

CHASE: We had fifty, sixty people in the consular section. And it was a... The Philippines had made official protests, because by law 20,000 immigrant visas could be issued to Filipinos, and we had missed, the year before I got there. The Filipinos were complaining of discrimination. For reasons, my predecessor hadn't been able to get things going, so I was asked to go over there and make the consular section produce.

Q: Your immediate challenge was the management one then?

CHASE: Yes.

Q: Was immigration the main job of the consulate? You must have had quite a few other things.

CHASE: Well, immigration and nonimmigrant visas, and we had a very high rate of fraud.

Q: Was this fraud within the section, or was this fraud just fraudulent documents?

CHASE: Any place you could think of fraud occurring, it occurred. Fraudulent documents, fraudulent saying I'm going over there to visit my dying mother who's visiting or something else, that can be fraud. Everyone was saying, well, I have to come back to the Philippines, and going in as a fraudulent nonimmigrant, that's one sort of fraud. Then we had a great deal of fraud in finding out who is making the application for the immigrant visa. And fraud to the extent of fraudulent documents: fraudulent police

records, fraudulent education, like for the third preference professional, fraudulent for that. Then we had quite a lot of fraud, too, of people claiming to be US citizens who weren't.

We had a case of a fellow who made application as the spouse of a US citizen. He admitted he had been married before, and that marriage had been terminated in the death of his wife. Had the death certificate. We questioned the death certificate of the wife, whether it was valid, and got a suspicion it wasn't valid. The fellow then came in with a picture of himself in mourning in front of the tomb of his wife. Well, we had a local investigator, and in the course of his wanderings around, he ended up in the fellow's town and even ended up in bed with the wife. I didn't find out about being in bed with the wife until later. But he said, "Oh, yes, she's alive." The husband was threatening the wife that he'd have her killed if she ever revealed that she wasn't dead.

Then an American citizen who claimed that a child was his. He acknowledged that he and his wife were not married at the time the child was born, but he said, "It's my child, and I was there." We got evidence that this possibly wasn't altogether correct. At the Catholic maternity ward that the birth took place on, the investigator went to the office and noticed that the pen that had written the entry before and the one after wasn't quite the same ink, didn't look the same, and that there were some erasures or something on this document. It was a bound volume which confirmed that this child was born at a certain time and all that. Well, the investigator, talking to the nun, finally the nun broke down and signed the confession that she had altered the record.

We said to the fellow, "Well, look, you couldn't be the father of the child because you were in Washington, DC at the time the child had to be conceived."

And he said, "Oh, I made a trip to the Philippines."

And he went through all sorts of things to establish that he had made a mysterious 24-hour visit to the Philippines.

Now there was a fellow who was kind of a friend of mine in the passport office, who was under all sorts of pressure from Congress to get this child documented. In fact, we were getting telegrams saying: "We want a telegram from you by tomorrow morning to confirm that the US passport was issued to this child."

I told the fellow who was head of the passport section, I said, "Look, just sign the passport. It has to be issued."

And the fellow said, "No, I won't."

I said, "Well, I sympathize with you on this. You don't believe this child is a citizen. I don't believe he is a citizen. But look, the State Department has told us to do it. They

have seen all the evidence and they say we gotta do it. So look, you fix up the passport and bring it in to me and I'll sign it."

It took me about two days to get that fellow to even let his clerks go ahead and issue it. He always had an excuse. And I was getting quite furious, because I knew it was a fraud. So finally we got the passport issued.

And some months later, after we kept sending in these other bits of reports as we found them out, we then got a word from the department that, yes, they agreed that it was a fraud and so they were prosecuting this lieutenant commander in the Navy for malicious activities. I think he maybe got a bad note in his file someplace or other.

But this officer in the passport office, who had angered me a little bit, he said, "Look, you were right, it was a fraud, but they are a loving family. They are approaching this as if they are father, son, wife. Why not let them have the sense that this is a true, binding notion?"

And I said, "Look, the laws just aren't built that way. If you want to have the laws made to conform to that, fine, I'm willing to carry out." You know the guy I'm speaking of, I'm sure. His opinion on this lasted I think for about six, eight, ten months, and they were finally reversed, that love and affection didn't give citizenship.

Q: What was your impression of the Philippine government and the officials you dealt with?

CHASE: Corrupt.

Q: Just corrupt.

CHASE: I would say corrupt. The Philippine women were attractive, they were smart, and I generally thought that I could believe them. The Philippine men were just malicious--maybe in a very nice way. They are two-faced. There were some wonderful people out there, but so many of them were so bad. Now I should add in this that I am a little bit hypersensitive on them, in that one of my sons was shot by hoodlums.

Q: Yes, I remember.

CHASE: That kind of affected all my attitude toward them. Not just the attitude of the fact that my son was shot, but it gave me a personal relationship with a whole slew of different people, where I just found that they were doing everything a little bit wrong.

The police officer who went to court and said, "I arrested Eric Yagelo with the pistol." He told me later, "He didn't have the pistol when I arrested him. I had to go to his house and I found the pistol there. The maid let me in, and I told the maid that she'd be arrested for prostitution if she ever let anyone know that I'd come inside the house." I mean, he was an

awfully nice guy, but he was instructed by Marcos to prosecute the case against the people who shot my son. And so he broke the law in every which way it was possible. He got the guilty party, but absolutely no due process.

Q: Often the consular section can see a relationship between parties, within the embassy and outside, better than anyone else, because consular officers have things to give away, visas, passports to issue that people want. What was the relation, would you say, between the line of officers, economic, but particularly the political officers, and even the military officers and whatever you would call it, the ruling class of the Philippines, the very wealthy people? Was it close, too close, or objective? We're talking about a period of time, '68 to '69.

CHASE: Were you trying to imply were we being patsies for Marcos?

Q: Well, I'm not sure that Marcos was considered as bad a person then, but I'm just thinking almost of a class thing. I mean, were we co-opted by the ruling class of the Philippines?

CHASE: No. I think I know the accusation or the implication. I have been in some countries, I've known some diplomatic officers who can't see any evil in the people with whom they're associating all the time. I've been some other places where the officers can only see evil. But in the Philippines I never got any idea that any of us were being co-opted by the nice parties that we were attending. We knew that these people were entertaining us for their reasons. Some of these people were wonderful people, true blue. We also knew that a lot of them were completely Machiavellian, and I don't think that we were being hoodwinked. Because I think that in my relationship with them, when I was seeing our political officers, our ambassador dealing with them, that we were doing what we thought was necessary to advance the interests of the United States.

Q: You came back in 1970 to Personnel. You were in Personnel for three years and then were with Consular Affairs. What were you doing in Personnel?

CHASE: You're a career counseling officer, for one thing.

Q: I remember, as career counseling officer, basically you had a stint where you were helping people get assigned. You put me into Athens as I recall.

CHASE: I think I did. And I hope you felt that was a good assignment.

Q: Oh, it was a very good assignment. Particularly after Saigon, I was just delighted. You were working with senior officers then mainly, weren't you, or mid-career officers?

CHASE: Mid-career officers.

Q: During this period, the Vietnam business was still going hot. How did this play on the personnel system from your seat? I mean, getting people there, who was going there, was it hard, were there problems?

CHASE: If you go to various parts of the service, AID officers, almost everyone employed by AID had one, two, three assignments in Vietnam. Some, their whole careers were Vietnam. In the regular Foreign Service, we had a large number of people who were going in as junior officers, who went over to do a variety...

Q: CORDS, I think.

CHASE: CORDS, yes. We made all sorts of promises to these people that you go there and you'll get any assignment you want when you finish up. The promise was made in good faith but absolutely never carried out. There was generally a desire to help them, but we tried to be good to everybody. Now with you, of course, we had to be honest.

Q: I had been a placement officer myself, I knew the lingo.

CHASE: I think that it was a certain amount of dishonesty, unfortunately. But an awful lot of the people were glad to go. They didn't object too much.

Q: Well, there were some very interesting assignments, more responsibility for many than they would have in ten years in the Foreign Service.

CHASE: I recall I was somewhat involved with one officer who was assigned to Vietnam, who definitely didn't want to go. He had only been married about a year or so. I think you were there at the time. The officer went, and very quickly thereafter his marriage broke up, which I felt just terrible about. I didn't like the way we forced this fellow to go to Vietnam, and I think the way we handled the whole thing was bad.

Q: Well, there were a lot of pressures at that time. Were you feeling any of the results of the junior officer movement that was going on? It was probably the only time in the Foreign Service that being a junior officer had a certain amount of clout within the service.

CHASE: I think I know the origin.

Q: JEFSOC or something.

CHASE: Yes. You see, we also had the idea of coning and tracking, which I think, while I had certain ideas that coning and tracking was good [TAPE ENDED, SOMETHING MISSING]

Q: ...which refers to basically people being more in the specialty rather than doing sort of a mixture of jobs.

CHASE: A person is a consular officer forever, he's an economic officer forever, a political officer forever. There are certain interfunctional jobs, so to say, where it's a little bit of this and a little bit of that. It's a good concept, it has some validity, but I think it caused a lot of heartache, among the junior officers in particular. And I think we now have pretty well moved out of that.

Q: There have always been accusations in the Foreign Service that it's very much an old boy network, who you know, where you get assigned, and if you get the right assignment you get promoted and move up. You know, we're always looking at eras, and this was '70 to '73, how much was the assignment process one of people with maybe the best faith in the world but if they knew somebody, it was easier to say well, that person would fit in such and such a job, and then just take a name, how much would you say it was by word of mouth and how much by sort of the automatic assignment process?

CHASE: Oh, in some respects I think I would deny that that sort of old boy network applied, yet I know that to an extent it did. But it was not a malicious thing. We would work with officers, be they consular, economic, or political, trying to find the best available assignments for each person each time. And there was never any thought that that SOB, we're going to give him the shaft and give him just what he doesn't want. As mad as we would get at officers for harassing us and causing troubles and bringing pressure to bear, I don't know of any time that we ever let that influence us so that we did something to get even with somebody. I don't think that ever happened.

Q: Well, what about the protégé system within the Foreign Service? In other words, as I do some interviews, looking at people with careers who have moved on, particularly those who became ambassadors, a significant number of them served as staff aides, often for the same person in a couple of jobs. I mean, they were given assignments usually as staff aides or within the department, which usually placed them into positions where they were going to come to the notice of more senior officers, and often this seems to have worked. Did you have a feeling about this?

CHASE: If an officer does well and his record is great, then people are coming in and saying look, we want that officer to go into this assignment or that assignment. And you know that when you assign the person to a plum job that he's going to do a good job. It's unfortunate, but not all officers perform as well as others. There are different caliber levels.

Q: There's a judgement process within the assignment process. The assignment officers have a pretty good fix on who is more capable than others.

CHASE: Well, we sat next to God, maybe we were God. Yes, we had to make a judgement call. You'd try to figure out are the two people going to get along together? Will the officer really be able to perform? If an officer is in one position and doesn't do well, then the next job you give him has a different challenge mix. I'm sure that you had

your experiences, that some people working for you did swell and some people didn't. And sometimes the person who did well for you one time maybe didn't do as well for you the next time.

I know of one officer I admired very highly, and he got assigned to be principal officer of a very important post. Gee, he arrived and nothing happened. I have never been able to figure out what went wrong. And my only suspicion is this officer had done very well when he worked as a second in command, but when he got to be first in command and had to dress himself, he fell apart.

Q: Oh, it happens. Well, just one further thing on this. In Personnel, there wasn't, I take it, at this time a great deal of pressure from AFSA, the American Foreign Service Association, which is sort of the union of the Foreign Service.

CHASE: It's a professional organization.

Q: Okay, all right, in fact, you worked for them later on, so you've got the lingo down. But it was not a very active organization within Personnel at that particular time.

CHASE: When I was in Personnel, AFSA was just moving in.

Q: Just beginning to move in.

CHASE: They were gearing themselves up. There were the young Turks that had taken over in AFSA and were beginning to make demands as if they were an exclusive bargaining unit, which they later on became. I went to several meetings with AFSA people, where they were outlining what they were thinking and where they wanted to push the Foreign Service. And at that time I was saying well, I basically agree with unions, but you, AFSA, keep out of my network, we're doing the right thing.

Q: This is always, you might say, it depends on you are where you sit, isn't it?

CHASE: Well, at that time AFSA letters were being published and circulars were being distributed making certain complaints. One of these complaints was to the effect that we, the Foreign Service, were discriminating against women. Hogwash! I love women.

I later on suddenly began to think about that, and I know that I in my Foreign Service career have discriminated blatantly against women. Maybe I shouldn't tell you this, but I think it should go on the record, that I sat on the promotions panel for junior officers, and at the last day, as we were about to sign off our list, the thing came up to us and they had a name that wasn't familiar. We looked it over and saw it, and they said, "Oh, that lady has just married." In fact, she married one of her fellow officers. Then we put the things together and said, "Oh, yes, yes, what happened, where's her husband? Is he on the list?" And we discovered we hadn't promoted him. They had come into the service at the same time together, they were coming up for promotion together, and now as a wedding

present, we were going to promote the wife over the husband? And we looked at it, "Can we find a way to promote the husband?" No, he was just too far down the list. So, to save the marital harmony, we took the wife's name off the promotion list.

Q: Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

CHASE: Yep, yep, but that's what we did.

Q: This was the thinking at the time, and one has to acknowledge this.

CHASE: Our sense of values was then much different. And I can recall in the Foreign Service the first time I knew of one of my friends who was going to have a woman as his boss. We all thought, my gosh, how can you work in this situation, have a woman as your boss? Then as times went along, and I had a woman boss, Barbara Watson, long before that I had turned the corner and I thought Barbara Watson was a terrific boss.

Q: Most of us who have gone through this, I mean, it's really almost a necessary thing, at least for men of our generation to go through, and usually brought us around to become true believers. Shall we go to when you worked for Barbara Watson? You worked for Consular Affairs in what, special...?

CHASE: I was director of the Office of Special Consular Services, which was the office responsible for protecting Americans overseas in cases of arrest, death, estates. We did legal services relating to people being overseas. We did shipping and seamen, a whole potpourri of things.

Q: You did this from '73 to '75. I wonder if you could explain the role of Consular Affairs as you saw it, and Barbara Watson, who was sort of a dominating figure at that time, how she operated and what her influence was.

CHASE: I'm not sure I understand what aspect of it... Let me say, I admired Barbara Watson terrifically. She was, I think, very much devoted to making consular activities respected and ensuring that the work was done well. She was a person that was always approachable. I used to meet her once a week for staff meetings. On quite a number of occasions we went on trips together. I admired her terrifically. She had, most of the time I was there, Frances Knight in the passport office. While theoretically subordinate to the assistant secretary, Frances Knight had political access that gave her a high degree of independence. And she insisted upon her independence in all sorts of ways.

There had been a person who had been director of the SCS, I can't think what his name is right now. He had also been a longtime civil servant, never moved, never saw anything overseas. He was neanderthal in his management style, he was petty, but he couldn't be moved.

Barbara Watson had the problem of dealing with these various people, and to an extent the only way she could handle it was to let the calendar take its toll at the appointed year. And so when these people reached that mandatory age, they struggled to hang on in one way or another but eventually were forced to retire under Civil Service laws. They could retire with good pensions, but they wanted to continue on.

It was working under that constraint that she had the title, but she didn't have the authority. Trying to really control what was going on in the passport office under Frances Knight, Barbara had a terrific time of trying to keep that Right Wing rigidity under some sort of leash.

With the former head of my office, I think it was a matter of tolerating inefficiency.

Q: What caused you your major concerns?

CHASE: When I was in SCS?

Q: Yes.

CHASE: Oh, they varied, a number of things. In one respect, I was very much concerned about proper training for people going overseas to do these jobs. FSI had a good program, but there wasn't that continuation of how can you really continue to give guidance and have the work being done efficiently and accurately. Because so frequently, in each post, much of the SCS work, as well as much of the consular work, is done by newcomers to the service. They don't have any history of knowing what's gone on before.

Q: So often a job is given to a junior officer for one tour who then moves on elsewhere, and so somebody dealing on a consular matter has a very good chance of running into somebody who's brand new, not only to the consular work but also to the Foreign Service.

CHASE: I can recall making mistakes myself when I was a new officer, not realizing that people would present problems to me under frameworks that would lead me to make the wrong decision.

Trying to be sure that the people had adequate guidance, we were running into a lot of trouble with Americans being imprisoned overseas. All the time I was there, the number of jailings was escalating, much of it drug-related.

Q: A great many of these were not at a very high professional level. A great many of these were fairly young kids who might have been involved in a very petty way of moving maybe some hashish or marijuana or something. I mean, it wasn't the hard-core professionalism we ran into later on, at least from my experience in Athens.

CHASE: Well, a number of these people were the newels, so to say, that related to those drug cases. We had two cases that ended up in the movies. One was this fellow in Turkey, Hayes, who was transporting hashish and got caught. He had a difficult time in jail, but most of his difficulties were self-generated.

Q: He was in a Turkish jail, and the movie was Midnight Express.

CHASE: Yes, and very little of that film was true. Hayes was just a troublemaker. I don't think this came out in the movie, but to an extent he was free, he shouldn't have been caught. Because he got on the plane, the plane was getting ready to take off, and some mechanical thing completely unrelated to him, and then it was after he came off the second time in Istanbul that he finally was picked up. It was unfair that they prosecuted him for one drug charge, which he appealed, and they then doubled the ante, they increased the number of charges. I don't think that the prosecutor should up the ante, penalize a person for appealing.

Then we had another case that was much more interesting. It was called that Antakya Seven, where a group of people loaded up a Volkswagen van in Beirut and were driving back to Germany, and they were picked up at Antakya, coming into southern Turkey. The van was loaded up with stuff, and this group of seven, three women and four men, were thrown in jail. And they had all sorts of adventures.

You've got to be careful, you can jump the wrong way. Turkish jails in general are not particularly good, but no jail is. And the Turkish jailers weren't overly brutal. In fact, when this Antakya Seven were finally being moved from one jail to another jail, partly in response to the complaints about what was going on, this one woman said she took the hand of her jailer and said, "I don't want to leave you. I don't want to leave you. I love you." The prisoner was being treated basically humanely. The place was basically clean. Everybody was cooperative, there was no bickering, no fighting. And yet she was going to have leave this area where she had gotten a degree of security, and going off to something that was maybe a little glitzier but would be completely impersonal.

Q: Well, this is true. It's exactly the same. I remember watching a case, from the Greek point of view, because if they'd made it, they probably would have ended up in Greece and might have ended up in jail, too. The Greek prisons were rather primitive, but there was far less brutality and regimentation than there would be in any American jail. As long as they didn't bother the guards and stayed in their cells or courtyards, they could do what they wanted almost.

CHASE: We had one military person in jail in Izmir. This was at the same period, not when I was there. And he volunteered that he'd heard about Hayes's case and he said, "Look, I've been in jails all over the world. I've been in a number of jails in the United States. And if I have to spend time in jail, let me spend it here in the Turkish jail."

The consular officers in Turkey, I think, made a lot of effort to protect the American citizens.

In Mexico, we had a problem, and we'd had this also in several other posts, that somehow or other, when the person was picked up for drugs, there was a certain vindictiveness by the consular officer, so that protection was sometimes really withheld. We had this case in Mexico, and it became a serious problem. Barbara Watson and I went down to Mexico to straighten it out and get the consular officers. And it was interesting that it came from the consul general and his senior officer.

This one officer, I had fought against his getting any assignment. He wasn't a consular officer, he was a political officer who had run into troubles, and I didn't want him as a consular officer. I battled away and made a bad name for myself in Personnel. And the assignment was forced through. The guy was a nice guy. I've had drinks with him and I've had dinners with him. He's a nice guy, but he just didn't have the sense he was born with when it was coming to this prison case. And he didn't have a real feel for consular work either. He arranged that the consular officers were not giving protection to prisoners when they were put in jail, and that got us into one hell of a lot of hot water.

Now we had also cases of the same mentality but in the other extreme in which the consular officer saw his sole job as getting every American out of jail. Don't let any of them stay in jail at all. They would do everything to get the person out of jail and also moved on to another consular district. That attitude I objected to.

So we had these jail problems. Now the other side of the jail... Down in Chile... Remember *Missing*?

Q: Yes, there was a movie called Missing*, I believe it came from a book, about the overthrow of Allende.*

CHASE: Yes, and that took hours and months and my whole time there almost.

Q: As I recall, it was the case of a young man who, it was alleged, had been at least friendly to the Leftist side of the Left-Right argument down there. And again it was alleged that the ambassador and the consul and all basically told the Right Wing coup that you can do anything you want with this guy. The idea is so abhorrent, it just doesn't parse in Foreign Service terms, but it was bought in a book and in a movie.

CHASE: First we had the war, we had the Allende, we had a number of these occasions when there was civil unrest of one sort or another. We had to turn out and set up these task forces, where for 24 hours around the clock people are answering calls from loved ones in the United States, and you're trying to direct the people in the field to give as much support as possible.

Q: Let's go back to the Chile case, this young man who was missing and presumed dead. I don't know if they ever found his body. How did you deal with this? The accusation was made that we just weren't doing anything to try to help the family find their son.

CHASE: The revolt took place, and there was quite a lot of turmoil down in Chile. We were receiving all sorts of messages from the embassy as to where fighting was and what was happening.

At the same time, we were instructing our consular section to locate all the American citizens, set up rosters, and see what we could do to ensure their safety and also help them communicate with family and friends back in the United States.

The consular people went around to where all these detention centers were and had it announced: "Look, here is the American consul, is there any American citizen here who wants to talk to him?" If we could find out there was an American there, even if the person didn't ask to speak to us, the consular officer went in and tried to confront the person and say, "Who are you? What do we know about you? Can we give you any help?"

We also went to the hospitals, went to the morgues, always looking out to see anybody who was American. Also trying to be sure that our telephone lines were open if somebody was calling up to say they needed help or that they may have heard that some American down the street was arrested. We had a fair idea as to how many Americans were around, through just the general registration of Americans.

With the Chile case, there was a group of about three or four Americans that we could not seem to locate anyplace. The consular people went and talked to the people who last saw them alive to get information as to where were they going when they were being arrested and what have you. We then went to the places where we thought the people were being taken and insisted upon the right of going through and looking at every dead person. We did as many things as we possibly could to find Hamil. We were browbeating the Chileans at all levels in the official government as to where was this fellow.

I should say that our military attaché knew he'd seen Hamil a couple of days before down in the port city, and yet the military and CIA had no reason to feel that even they wanted this fellow arrested. He was nothing. He was unknown to us for any reason of interest. We were, though, interested when he was missing to locate him.

We kept pressing the Chileans in respect to all the deceased, of who were they and what was happening. We were sending telegrams back and forth concerning teeth, fingerprints, dentures, anything that was distinguishing. And we just couldn't find him.

Eventually, though, when the whole flock of unidentified people was shrinking, the Chileans were coming out, you got down to a smaller number, and they then identified a fingerprint. It wasn't the same fingerprint. It had been one of these fingerprints that had

been put through and carded. I don't know how they do it with fingerprints, but it's HJ167 or something like that. One of the major characteristics was not Hamil's, but the others seemed to be somewhat similar. So then they called for to look through those fingerprints again, and they found out that there had been a mistake in categorizing. Like when you get down to a typewriter and you spell one word and the word "cad" becomes "had." It's still logical, but there is a major error made and it's a... until it seemed to be a completely innocent error.

As despicable as the Chileans did so many things, this, insofar as we could determine, was not done with real malice aforethought. And very definitely our consular officer down there I think did a splendid job, and our ambassador did a wonderful job, in the way they kept pressing and pressing to try and locate what had happened to this fellow.

We had a case in SDS of a telegram coming in from Paris that they had just received word from the French police that an American citizen had died. And they gave us his name, his passport number, next of kin. We passed on the information, as much as we had, and then got back more to try and find out what it was all about. This fellow apparently had been bludgeoned to death out on the highway someplace.

The family was distressed, but they had a cousin who was in Spain, and they asked the cousin if he'd go up to Paris and identify the remains and see what he could find out. So we did all the communication, we got the cousin up there. The cousin said yes, this is my so and so. They helped get the information of how did the death occur. The family, in their sorrow and agony, said yes, they wanted the remains to be sent home. So a coffin was arranged, the remains embalmed and sent back to the United States, and it was buried.

About a week after the funeral, the poor mother in Pittsburgh picked up the phone when it rang. She said, "Hello." And this distant voice says, "Hey, Mom, how are you?" It was her son calling from England.

As this whole thing came out, the son, when traveling through France, had met up with somebody else and they'd buddied it along together. Both of them were bearded and rather disheveled. The son woke up one morning and his passport was missing, his money was missing, and his friend was missing. So this young chap, a resourceful young fellow, made his way along up the coast. He wanted to get to England and he got over to England. He went along and picked up some money here and there, like a normal flower child of that time, and he was having a fine time. But he hadn't spoken to his family, so he called home--only to discover that he was officially dead.

The other chap, nobody quite knew who he was, had apparently come to a no-good end. But seeing that bearded face and the same general physique of the friend, the cousin had identified him and said yes, and nothing had happened, they hadn't opened up the coffin when they brought him home to the United States, so nobody saw him until he was buried.

The family, of course, was overjoyed that they had their son back again. But a few weeks later, the father wrote to the State Department: "I want my money back on flying the coffin over!"

Q: Oh, God. Well, you retired in '75, is that right?

CHASE: Yes.

Q: When you retired, you then became involved for awhile with AFSA.

CHASE: Yes, I became a counselor for AFSA. I'm not a lawyer, but I had the diplomatic title of counsel. We were handling labor-management negotiations with the State Department, in accordance to a contract that had been agreed to between the AFSA, which was acting as a union under a law of Congress. We had the rights to negotiate with the State Department on all sorts of matters relating to working conditions, not salaries.

Q: When was this?

CHASE: That was '76 to '80. I also handled grievances, which were also being handled under a statute. If an employee felt that he had been discriminated against or subjected to some sort of unfair treatment, he could file a grievance.

Q: Well, this was the period of the real change in relations within the department, where the association was playing a much broader role in assignments and in grievance procedures. Not assignments, but the whole way the Foreign Service dealt with people, allowances, everything else. How would you describe how it was working from your vantage point there? What were you dealing with, and how were things resolved?

CHASE: Let me divide this into two different categories.

Grievances, which took up about fifty percent of my time. If an employee had a complaint that his personnel folder contained false or inaccurate, malicious information, he could grieve that this be removed from his file. If his assignment wasn't handled in accordance to prescribed regulations. If he was eligible for a school allowance for his children, a housing allowance or shipping allowance, something else where the regulations were not being properly carried out in his view, he would come to us, or he could go directly to the grievance office, and make a complaint.

There is a procedure whereby the complaint would be accepted by the State Department, AID, or USIA, all the foreign affairs agencies. The agency would examine it from their viewpoint to see did they agree or disagree that something had gone wrong.

We would then negotiate, on behalf of the employee, to see if a solution could be reached that would be acceptable to the employee.

To a very large extent, the State Department was making thousands of personnel decisions every day. There was a very minuscule number that were being handled really improperly. I believe that by correcting these mistakes, the department became a much better organization. It became much more understanding, and bureaucrats learned that they can make errors.

Sometimes the employee would make a complaint and we would battle it through and find out that the employee who thought he had a case just didn't have a case. The act that he was complaining against was perfectly legitimate and had frequently a very logical reason that he might not like.

If we could not reach an agreement with the agency, at the agency level, we then had the right to appeal to the Foreign Service grievance panel. This is a group of professional labor-management negotiators, together with a number of Foreign Service retirees. They would form a panel of three people, normally three, and they would then hear us argue. It was like going to court: witnesses being sworn, a record of the case being completed. And then the grievance board would sit back and render a decision; they would find for the employee or they'd find for the agency.

In this process, as I said, I think the agencies learned a lot. I think, by publishing these decisions, without the names of anyone involved, I think the employees also learned a lot, that they learned something about how these decisions are made.

Now a very good friend of mine in the Foreign Service was going along with a good career, and something went wrong. He didn't get promoted and things didn't happen right. Ten years went by, and the fellow was getting long in the tooth at his grade. And we found out that in his performance file there was a series of very vile denunciations, very malicious accusations made by a senior person, who happened to be a civil servant. The officer had never been informed of this, and this was being seen by promotion panels every year. While I was in Personnel, we discovered it was there, and we brought it to the officer's attention, saying, "Look, you'd better come up and look at your file." He looked at this and he was aghast and he said, "That has got to come out."

This was before we had a grievance procedure, but it was also after Lloyd Henderson, as Under Secretary for administration, had established a procedure where in Personnel we had a grievance office. So this officer heard the complaint, he took a look at the file, and he said, "Oh, gee, this is bad." And so the information was taken away. It had been there so long, there was no sense in going back to try and identify who had put it in there. But it was there, and this officer's career was very badly damaged by this incident.

We've had other cases where a file has contained wrong information. Sometimes somebody has just got a mad on. A supervisor can be mad and he'll write something and put it in the file and it's wrong. The officer can now grieve and get that removed

immediately. Now the employees are normally shown everything before it goes in the file, so they can start proceedings right away.

But to turn the corner, we had bureaucratic little mix-ups. The wife of an officer down in Buenos Aires was seriously ill and had to be flown up to Panama for an operation. And then, after a necessary recovery, she could fly back to her post.

When a person is seriously ill and cannot travel alone, the regulations provide that the government can hire somebody to accompany--it could be a nurse, it could be a doctor, depending upon the situation--and take the patient back to where the patient needs to go.

In this particular case I'm speaking of, the employee left Buenos Aires and went to Panama to be with his wife for the operation. When she was out of the hospital for a necessary number of days, then he accompanied her when she needed to have somebody accompany her. So he got back to post and filed an application for reimbursement of just his transportation costs for accompanying his wife. His application for travel was refused; his wife's was approved. He then said, "Well, why? It says here in the regulations that when an accompaniment has to be along, that can be paid." Well, in this case, they turned him down, and he kept being told: "No, no, no, disallowed, disallowed, disallowed."

So he wrote up to AFSA. And I called up this fellow who had been making the decision and said, "Why aren't you approving this? What's wrong?"

And he said, "We can't do that. He claims he wants reimbursement for traveling Buenos Aires to Panama to Buenos Aires."

I said, "Well, that's what the regulations provide."

He said, "No, no, no. He is allowed to be compensated for accompanying his wife on the trip from Panama to Buenos Aires." And he said, "Well, the person who does the accompanying has to then get back to Panama, so that's all right."

This bureaucrat was willing to approve it as long as the request came through to go from Panama to Buenos Aires and return, rather than Buenos Aires to Panama and return. This guy, I've known him for years, and why he talked himself into being so stupid I don't know. The thing was, not only was he stupid, but he wouldn't tell the fellow what was happening and why, so he could make the request.

Years before, coming home from Turkey, we flew to Germany and then we took a boat back to New York. My wife was taken ill, and we were put off the boat at Southampton. We had to spend a week in Southampton until she was fit to travel again.

When I came home, I said, "Well, look, I would like to get per diem for the week I was in Southampton. This was not at my pleasure, it was one of these unexpected requirements

of government travel: illness en route." And I was told: "No, no, no, you can't do that." I didn't have enough sense to look at the regulations or know what I was doing. Anyway, I filled in my application, but I put on a covering sheet, and I said, "Look, this is my travel voucher. However, I still think that the period in Southampton should be paid for."

I got a telephone call several weeks later from some woman in Travel saying, "We have read your papers and you're absolutely right. You're eligible for it."

And I said, "Well, I was told I couldn't have it."

She said, "Well, whoever told you that was wrong."

Well, I had talked to somebody in the Travel Bureau, somebody who had given me the wrong information. When it got to the so-called experts down the line, they saw it and said, "Yes, the officer is entitled to it."

Now these little things go wrong in any organization. There must be a system that you can allow for a complaint. That it is not that I am complaining against you for having done me in, that I say it's the system, and it goes through another channel. And I think this has brought a lot of honesty.

Now my other aspects of negotiation would be, when I was working for AFSA in the council, we would go into periodic meetings with various parts of the Department of State, arguing about regulations that were being drafted that impacted on the working conditions: Is this legitimate? Are you accomplishing a purpose? What's the impact on employees? Has the employee's concern been considered?

Not infrequently everything was hunky-dory. Most of the time it was hunky-dory. But every once in a while we would find that they hadn't thought the thing through.

The unfortunate part of this is, we then at AFSA became almost part of the clearance process. They would draft up the regulation, and they'd say, "Well, AFSA is going to review this, and if something needs to be done, they'll tell us about it." And they did sloppy drafting. They just didn't think through what they were accomplishing. And frequently it wasn't a matter of our coming in with conflicting viewpoints, we'd just say, "Look, this doesn't make sense." And they'd say, "My God, you're right." And they'd change it; no argument. So AFSA, I think, was doing a wonderful job.

Now one of my labor negotiating friends was an arbitrator. He's one of the country's leading arbitrators, and he was approached by a labor union which was having troubles in their own office. And they said, "How should we approach this sort of situation?"

The arbitrator said, "Look, first of all, you think you're a labor union, so therefore you've been turning to labor union people to give you advice. What you have to do is go to one of your manufacturer's lawyers to represent you. Because you are an employer now,

you're not a labor union. You are the employer. You have to get the perspective. It's like playing chess. If you're playing hard and you're working, and you're seeing the moves, you have to once in a while get up and walk around the board and see what it looks like from the other standpoint. Then you can play more effectively."

Q: One last question that I'd like to ask is, if a young person came to you and said, "Mr. Chase, what about the Foreign Service as a career for me?", how would you respond? We're talking about 1990 now.

CHASE: Well, let me say that when I joined, it was an outstanding opportunity, and I think that I was extremely fortunate in getting into the Foreign Service. The pay wasn't great, but it was basically, generally better than what the rest of the government agencies paid. The opportunities for working and living I think are just stupendous, and I enjoyed the Foreign Service and I loved my career. Sometimes I had troubles, yes, but it was a good career.

At the present time I continue to believe that there are tremendous opportunities in the Foreign Service, and I would recommend to anyone who is interested in world problems that the Foreign Service is a wonderful way of seeing the world and becoming involved in the world's problems, and maybe making a significant contribution to solutions.

I think the salary that our people are paid, salary and fringe benefits, aren't as good as they should be.

And I think that the certain demands of really becoming to an extent an expatriate should be recognized. We spend so much time outside of the United States.

I wish the hell CIA's influence would become lessened. CIA does a lot of great work, but why aren't those functions transferred over to the political and economic section? We actually are frequently talking to the same people, we're doing the same thing, but somehow there's a mystique that the CIA can get things done.

Q: Well, if two people come up, and one person tells you something is such and such and is quite open, and the other person comes in and tells you the exact same thing but I got this from a secret source, guess which one is going to be acted on?

CHASE: Yes. I think the State Department for years has abdicated in letting CIA operations become bigger and bigger. And they have allowed their own perspectives to be narrowed, that a political officer will only talk to the Foreign Office. Throughout the whole government, they don't roam out to the press. We don't have as much time.

I think that the language training that is now being carried out is just so much better than anything that I ever experienced.

I also believe in professionalism, to the extent that I think the Foreign Service is a way of life, and we, the employee and the government, prosper if people come in by the age 30 with the idea of having a lifetime career in the Foreign Service. Bringing people in at the age of 40 or 50, I don't think that gives them the best of vision to understanding these problems.

The American people too frequently have an idea that all you have to do is explain something sensibly to these foreigners, and the foreigners will then realize their mistakes and come over. Or if they don't come over, it means that they're stupid or that they're Communist.

In Iraq, a Muslim country; in Israel, a Jewish country; in the Philippines, a Catholic country, there is a mentality that is perfectly logical. Why do we drive on the right-hand side of the road or the left-hand side of the road? There's no sensible way for having a lot of these things, but you must understand, trust them to figure this out, and they do things differently. If you read the books, you can come up to all sorts of misunderstandings of what they're doing. Because the system works through people, the United States must know how the people in that foreign country are seeing things, and translate it to their terms. (That's a little bit jumbled.)

Q: I got you, though. Okay, well, I thank you very much. This has been fun.

End of interview