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

ARVA C. FLOYD

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Floyd]

Q This interview with Arva C. Floyd is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Today is March 20, 2000. Can we start at the beginning? Can you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

FLOYD: On October 19, 1925 in Kobe, Japan of American missionary parents. My father suffered what was then called a nervous breakdown and had to leave Japan when I was 18 months old, so I remember nothing of Japan. We came back to the United States, to Georgia.

Q: What's the background of your father?

FLOYD: He, as I said, was a missionary in Japan. He was an ordained Methodist minister. After this bout of bad health, he eventually pretty well recovered, and got a Ph.D. at Yale, and became a doctor of divinity. He joined the faculty of Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia, where he spent the rest of his career until he retired.

Q: Your father was from Georgia?

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: And your mother?

FLOYD: Also.

Q: Also from Georgia. Had she gone to university or college?

FLOYD: Yes, she had gone to Wesleyan College, I believe in Macon, Georgia, or near it, a quite well-known girls school back then. She got a B.A. She was an educated woman.

Q: So you grew up in Emory, or on the outskirts of Emory.

FLOYD: Not quite. I grew up in what was then the outskirts of Atlanta. My father had a regimen which required him to do a good deal of physical work, so he bought a small farm and he would commute back and forth to his classes at Emory. And we lived on the farm.

Q: Were you working on the farm?

FLOYD: Of course.

Q: I was asking the obvious.

FLOYD: He had a couple of cows, and grew vegetables, and had hay and corn for the animals. That was it. It was no big deal.

Q: Where did you go to school at the elementary level?

FLOYD: I began in Clayton, Georgia, which is up in the mountains of north Georgia. That's where my parents first moved, after they returned from Japan. I entered school there. Then, shortly thereafter, they moved down to near the Atlanta area, to a small town called Dunwoody – it's now one of the upscale suburbs of Atlanta – and continued on there. We had a little one-room, maybe there were two – I don't remember – clapboard schoolhouse. It had first, second and third grades in one room, and so on up. It had a big pot-bellied stove and three wonderful teachers. Then, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) came along and built us a modest brick structure, which did not improve the quality of instruction. It was as good as it could have been. I think, the new building made things more comfortable.

Q: You mention your teachers. What made them so good?

FLOYD: Personality, I think. They were dedicated people. They were of the generation when women of considerable ability would raise their kids and then begin teaching. My first, second and third grade teacher probably didn't have a college education; she undoubtedly had a teacher's certificate. She was a wonderful teacher and an extraordinarily affectionate woman – she had a heart as big as all outdoors. That's the way it went.

Q: How long did you go to this school?

FLOYD: Through seventh grade. In Georgia, at that time, we had seven grades of primary school and four years of high school.

Q: When you were in primary school, what particularly interested you – reading or other subjects?

FLOYD: Well, my father had an Encyclopedia Britannica. I read accounts of Civil War battles, Roman Carthage. Why battles; I don't know.

Q: How did you grow up thinking about the war between the states? I use that term advisedly.

FLOYD: Well, both my father and mother had quite liberal attitudes on the whole racial issue, and quite clearly deplored slavery and racial segregation. But other people, the general culture, was one in which the battlefield exploits of the Southern generals and forces were greatly admired.

Q: My grandfather was an officer with the 20th Corps with Sherman.

FLOYD: I see.

Q: He came from Wisconsin, and was in one of the German regiments.

FLOYD: He was on the other side.

Q: Yes. I think for all of us of this generation, the Civil War was a presence.

FLOYD: Very much so. My grandfather and grandmother would tell me stories about the Civil War. My maternal grandmother was born in Macon, and she talked about the siege of Macon.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

FLOYD: In the same area, outside of what was then a suburb of Atlanta. We were beyond the suburbs. I went to Chamblee High School.

Q: What was it like, having come from a small, good, but almost a family school? Was high school a change?

FLOYD: Yes, the quality of the teaching was far inferior to what I had had at the elementary level. There was a great deal of disorder in the classroom, a lot of noise. I can remember only one teacher that I really had a lot of respect for. The others basically presided over chaos. The teacher I had respect for was the math teacher, a female, who had suffered poliomyelitis or something like that. In any event, she was what we called crippled back then. I know you're not supposed to say that these days. She was very slight of build, she was very demanding. She clip-clopped around the room, and woe betide anybody who made noise or was disruptive. She had a dominant personality. And, I remember quite a bit of what she taught us.

Q: What about school activities? Did you get involved?

FLOYD: Sports, and proms.

Q: In high school, I think an awful lot of foreign service officers trained in girls and sports.

What about at home, having a father with his background. Was there much discussion of things going on?

FLOYD: Yes, I think quite a lot. We got the New York Times, Sunday edition. I remember during the run-up to World War II. My father's favorite commentator was someone named H. V. Kaltenborn, so we would listen to his radio broadcast; and, there would be a fair amount of discussion at the table.

Q: What about the New Deal and Franklin Roosevelt? How was he perceived? Nobody was neutral on this.

FLOYD: No, my father and mother were all for him. Georgia was a pretty poor place in those days. The notion that someone was doing something, quote unquote, was terribly important, and they thought he was a wonderful man and a great leader.

Q: You graduated from high school when?

FLOYD: '41 I think.

Q: Had you been following developments in Europe and in Asia at that time?

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: In a way, it was one of the great geography lessons of that generation learned.

FLOYD: Yes. Basically, even though my high school was a waste of time academically, my parents had books around, and I was pretty conversant with literature and what was going on. I was intrigued by the extent of the British and French Empire; I pored over the maps. And the New York Times, of course, was full of stories about the impending clash in Europe – especially after Pearl Harbor, of course.

Q: You graduated in '41, before Pearl Harbor, but what happened to you? What were your plans?

FLOYD: My plan was to go to college, which I did. I went to a junior college which was attached to a part of the institution of Emory University. I was 16-plus when I graduated. Then I was expecting to be called up, it was what every young man of his salt expected to have happen in those days. I was allowed to get through my two years of junior college, and was drafted immediately thereafter, in April of '44.

Q: What were you looking at doing, while you were in junior college? What were your courses?

FLOYD: In those days, as you know, one did a very general liberal arts education with a good deal of math and science involved. I took three or four chemistry courses, a couple of physics courses, two or three math courses, history, and German.

Q: When you were drafted in '44, what did you do?

FLOYD: I went to artillery basic training at Fort Bragg. From there, I went to infantry OCS (Officer Candidate School) at Fort Benning. Upon commissioning, I was sent to a couple of training assignments. Then, we moved from those into a division which was being reconstituted to go into the Pacific Theater – the 93rd Division. Then the bomb was dropped and the war ended, and I was sent to the army of occupation in Austria.

Q: So you were in Austria from when to when?

FLOYD: From January of '46 until about '49.

Q: What were you doing in the army of occupation?

FLOYD: Not much. We were occupying Austria; that's literally true. Our occupation forces were there just to establish a presence; they didn't have a very well-defined role. Apart from that, we did not do any training to speak of. We did a certain amount of desultory patrolling. My first assignment, for example, was to the area of Lintz, where we were right on the boundary of the American and Russian zones. Lintz had a suburb on the other side of the Danube, which was in the Russian zone, and people walked back and forth in huge numbers between the Russian sector and ours. They were going and coming from work, and we checked their passes. There were Russian guard post right next to ours. What that accomplished, I'm not sure. Probably nothing.

Q: Did this time in Austria give you an interest in foreign affairs?

FLOYD: Yes, looking back, I'm sure it did. I said that I was doing nothing much, but there were things that were very stimulating for me. For example, there was a hiatus in the time the two United Nations agencies were charged with looking after refugees. During that break, the Army had to take over that refugee camp. So I commanded a Jewish misplaced persons camp in what used to be one of the imperial watering holes of Austria, a place called Bad Gastein. The Jewish refugees were in all these luxury hotels. We then had to close them down and had to move the refugees to another camp. They were moved into eastern Austria; while they were still in Austria, they were headed in the wrong direction, as far as they were concerned. So that was not easy; but, there were no serious incidents, and they left peaceably.

Q: Were they being put into the Russian zone?

FLOYD: No; they remained in our zone, but farther east. It was simply a matter of consolidating the camps. Also, the political power was shifting. We were moving toward the Marshall Plan, or were into it maybe. A tourist resort like Bad Gastein was a great economic asset for Austria, and they wanted to free those hotels up so the Austrians could bring in more tourists, and earn foreign exchange and so forth.

Q: Dealing with Jewish refugees must have been rather difficult. I assume most of them were from the camps, weren't they?

FLOYD: Yes, they were.

Q: Did you get involved in the effort on the part of the Jewish agencies to get these people into Israel? This was at the height of the movement of European Jews to Israel.

FLOYD: No. The Army wasn't directly involved in that. We simply managed camps. But we were very well aware of all that was going on. For example, Bad Gastein was on the northern side of a mountain ridge which divided the British and the U.S. sectors, and there was a major train route, the Orient Express, which came through. At a given point, when the British army train evacuating British troops that had done their time, and were being demobilized and sent back to Britain came through that pass, some of the Jewish people in my camp planted bombs on the railway line, which was designed, if it had been done well, to send the train tumbling down a thousand feet of very steep slope. The explosion took place, but did not have the desired effect; the train was just slammed against the mountainside instead. These were the people from my camp who did it.

Q: Well, this, of course was the time when you had groups like the Stern gang and others in Palestine blowing up the King David Hotel. What was the reaction?

FLOYD: I was a little appalled that people who had been on my camp police force were involved in such a thing. We had a CID, criminal investigation division military detachment up in Bad Gastein, and this was their baby. They investigated that. I, as a camp commander, wasn't supposed to be doing that.

Q: Did you find any problems with a camp such as this in Austria, where anti-Semitism had remained a problem? At that time, how did you find the Austrians and the Jewish camp? How did these two mix together?

FLOYD: Well, there was no particular problem. Obviously, the Austrians resented it, but they had just lost the war. However, being technically a liberated power and not a defeated one, made a difference in the status of Austria. In any event, the Austrians knew quite well that they'd been beaten, and that they'd been defeated as part of Germany, and that the Holocaust was something that the whole wide world thought was an absolute horror and anti-Semitism was an equal horror. So the Austrians were careful to keep their sentiments to themselves. They never manifested them in any way. Austria had also

suffered from the after-effects of the war. People had enough to eat, but just barely. So there was no stomach on their part to be actively anti-Semitic. One assumed they resented it, but they never talked about it.

Q: How did you find the discipline within the camp? I would have thought that people would have wanted to get out and get on with life.

FLOYD: Well, there was some of that. They were quite free, and those who had professional skills of some kind and were good at German would move into, quote, the economy, unquote. They would just live at the camp and go out and do their things during the day. But, most of them were the poor and less well-educated Jewish people who came from Eastern Europe. There were a whole series of little closed societies, depending upon geographic origin and depending on their degree of religious orthodoxy, and so forth. And basically, it was self-managed in terms of the internal workings of it. We were simply there to preside, so to speak – to make sure that food got in, that the toilets worked and so forth. But, we were not involved in their day-to-day community activities; that was entirely their business. And of course, we were not trying to keep them; it was not a concentration camp; there was no fence around it; and, they could come and go as they pleased.

Q: Do you recall whether there was any concern about the exodus from Europe to Palestine? I use the term because Israel came in '48. The British were trying very hard to keep Jewish settlers from coming in. I was wondering whether you, as a camp commandant, got any orders to keep these people from moving around.

FLOYD: No. We weren't there to keep them from doing anything. Basically, these people had come out of a horrific experience. Most of them, as I said, were poor and not terribly well-educated. There were various American Jewish and other organizations who were trying to facilitate their immigration, either to the United States or to Israel or somewhere. And they were eager to go. But, there was also an enormous cultural and linguistic barrier. I spoke fairly good German at that point; it was not fluent, but I could make myself understood quite easily, as well as understand. But they spoke Yiddish, and I couldn't understand Yiddish; it was very, very difficult to pick up Yiddish. So, there wasn't any real exchange of opinions, except for those few who were educated.

Q: Had the educated already moved on?

FLOYD: I can't give you a net assessment of that. The whole population was in the process of moving on. It was just a matter of time before they moved on either to places like the United States, Canada, Australia, or to Israel. At that time, I was aware of all the troubles in Israel. The British mandate was still in existence. There were reports of the blowing up of the Shepherd Hotel, this, that and the other. But that did not play a part in the daily life of the Jewish inhabitants of the camp, who never confided to us what they thought. When you're dealing with Eastern Europeans, whether Jewish or otherwise, you're dealing with a very closed sort of people.

Q: And of course having gone through being the commandant of a camp...

FLOYD: They probably had a good deal of suspicion of what we were up to. We were feeding them, we were looking after them, but I don't think they regarded us as friends necessarily. And then, while on this subject, after that particular camp was closed out, I was transferred to a camp of Serbians, a few miles down the road. These were quite a different sort of people. They were Serbian royal army officers, who had been captured by the Germans and had been prisoners of war during the whole of the conflict. They had been liberated by us, by the Western Allies, and were treated as liberated Allied officers. When our policy changed toward Tito and his government, we tried to send them back to Yugoslavia, and they simply refused to go; they cut off the train. The upshot of this was that they were made displaced persons and a camp was built for them, where they got off the train. And I was briefly in charge of that.

Q: You probably had two of my Serbian teachers. I took Serbian here at the Foreign Service Institute in the early '60s. Two of our Serbian teachers were both former Yugoslav royal army officers. Jankovic and Popovic. I would have thought this would have been a difficult group to deal with.

FLOYD: No, quite the contrary. They had a strong internal sense of discipline. They kept their old ranks for their own purposes. There were generals, colonels, majors and so forth. Quite surprisingly, they agreed to go out and do manual work just to keep busy. I thought they were an extraordinary group of people in that they had maintained their morale, cohesion and self-respect, despite four years in a German prisoner of war camp, and, by then, two or three years in the displaced persons camp. Their lives had been destroyed, they had no where to go.

Q: Were you discharged after that?

FLOYD: Yes. There were a couple of years during which I went back to regular troop duty, and then I left. I had extended, I didn't have to stay as long as I did. I was enjoying Austria, as I was skiing and whatnot. So, I could have gone home earlier but I didn't. I left in '49.

Q: During this time, did you work on your German?

FLOYD: I spoke fluent broken German. My mastery of the grammar left something to be desired. When I went back to university after leaving the army, I studied German.

Q: Where did you go to university?

FLOYD: I returned to the main campus of Emory in Atlanta, and finished up at Edinburgh University in Scotland.

Q: Were you at Emory for a year or two?

FLOYD: Less than that; I was there about three quarters of a year.

Q: And why Edinburgh with all this interest in Germany?

FLOYD: When I was in Austria, I had met and become engaged to a French woman who was working at that time as a liaison officer with the French High Commission for Austria in Innsbruck. I had already formed the goal of getting into the Foreign Service; but I could not get into the Foreign Service if I had a foreign wife. So, we postponed marriage until I could get my education, pass the foreign service exam, and so forth. Edinburgh was on the same side of the Atlantic as she was, and Edinburgh gave me some credit for the work I'd already done in the States, to the extent of allowing me to pass all of the exams in two years, which normally had to be passed in three, which I managed to do. I got my degree – the Scottish M.A. – in a couple of years.

Q: Was there any concentration of study?

FLOYD: No. The Scottish system is a lot like ours: it was basically a general education, but you had to concentrate some – I concentrated in history and economics. I also studied French and German.

Q: How did you hear about the Foreign Service, and what attracted you to it?

FLOYD: Well, I was fascinated with Europe and with life abroad. There was already the sense that the Cold War was going to be as big a challenge in its own way as the Second World War had been. While we were not as united around the Cold War as we had been around the other (WWII), there was the same sense of duty and purpose about it, and I was attracted to it. I can't tell you exactly how but I decided that was what I wanted to do.

Q: So you took the Foreign Service exam when?

FLOYD: I took the exam, as nearly as I can remember, in '51. I took it in Austria after I had finished in Edinburgh. That was the written exam. Then I took the oral exam in Washington in '52.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions, or how the oral exam went?

FLOYD: The oral exam was not as highly structured then as it is now. It was basically designed to get you to talk and to give these people some sense of what you'd done and what kind of person you were. They asked me, for example, about my racial attitudes and family background. They asked knowledge questions, some of which I was able to answer and others of which I bombed on; but it didn't seem to matter. They asked me who Dr. X, or Mr. X was, referring, of course, to Kennan's article in Foreign Affairs. And I bombed on that one totally. But they told me I had passed, and it was a great relief.

Q: So you came into the Foreign Service then?

FLOYD: Very quickly thereafter. I was assigned in April in a temporary Civil Service status to the Department of State, when, eventually, my foreign affairs commission came through, I went to my first post, which was Indonesia.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service in '52. Did you have a class?

FLOYD: Yes, A-100, so-called.

Q: Do you recall what the composition of it was?

FLOYD: What do you mean exactly – we were all FSO-6s…

Q: Were there any women and minorities, or were they mostly veterans? Who were they?

FLOYD: There were two women, as nearly as I can recall, out of about 20-25. I don't remember any members of a minority. I'm sure I would have remembered if there had been. We were mostly veterans. There was a group of people like myself, who were in their late 20s and had been in the military, and then there were some in their early 20s, who had just come out of university.

Q: How did you find the A-100 course?

FLOYD: Terribly dull, but useful up to a point. There should have been a better way of doing it.

Q: Did you have any place you wanted to go?

FLOYD: I would have loved to go back to Europe, but that was not to be. I was sent to Indonesia. I did not like the idea of going to Indonesia; but after there, I ended up having a ball.

Q: You were in Indonesia from '52 to …

FLOYD: To early '55. I did about 2 ½ years there.

Q: What about the young lady in France?

FLOYD: Well, we married in the U.S. before I went out to Indonesia, so she accompanied me as my wife.

Q: Did you have any problem – if you married a foreigner, they always made you submit a resignation.

FLOYD: I was commissioned one day and got married the next. No, there was no problem.

Q: Indonesia in '52, what was it like?

FLOYD: Well, it was the early post-independence period. Djakarta is one of these huge oriental cities, which grew up around trade with Europe. It was not a traditional European city, but a teeming place that was not especially attractive or clean. Sukarno was still in the early triumphant days, a great national hero, and was running around making speeches. By and large, the Indonesians had the attitude that was typical of the newly-independent, so-called emerging countries. Sukarno was obviously somewhat of the left, and one of the originators of the Bandung Conference, which took place a couple months after I left Indonesia. It was one of the first meetings of the so-called non-aligned countries.

Q: What was your job?

FLOYD: Well, for me it was basically a training job. I worked in the administrative section for about a year, and then was put in charge of our little consular section, which was not very big. That's what I did.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

FLOYD: When I arrived, Merle Cochran. He had played a major role in negotiating with the Dutch over the independence of Indonesia. As a result, he was a man of many parts and great influence in Indonesia. He saw Sukarno frequently as he had easy entree to him. However, I did not have the impression that we were getting our way very much with the Indonesians. That initial influence he had was quite naturally dissipating as the Indonesians began to feel their oats. And, of course, Sukarno was one of the group of so-called charismatic leaders of the newly independent countries, like Kwame Nkrumah and a bunch of others, and he was not going to be dictated by anybody, much less the U.S. ambassador, whatever role he might have played to gain Indonesia its independence.

Q: How did you find dealing with the new Indonesian government in whatever work you were doing?

FLOYD: I frankly didn't have much dealing with the Indonesian government. Of course, it was a small embassy and I knew the people who were dealing with the Indonesian government. I think that on a person to person basis there was no particular problem; they didn't resent us or anything. Our role had been, of course, to encourage the Dutch to give them their independence; and, with respect to that issue, we were on the side of the angels. There was a Communist party there. While it was not a dominant force when I was there at all, it was something Washington worried about. But, there were no riots or great demonstrations; everything was pretty calm in Indonesia itself.

Q: What about the Chinese? Indonesia has a tendency to go off in an anti-Chinese direction. I'm talking about overseas Chinese. What was happening with them?

FLOYD: At that particular time, they were making money. And while the Chinese in Indonesia could sense they were always wary of what might happen, they were going about their business and were doing it very successfully. All of the larger indigenous businesses in Indonesia were Chinese-run. There was virtually no Indonesian-run commerce or industry at all. It was much easier for us, socially and otherwise, to deal with the Chinese for some reason, than with the Indonesians. It was easier to get on a friendly footing with them; conversation would be easier and the cultural gap between us seemed to be a great deal less broad.

Q: While the Dutch were mostly out when the Japanese were there in WWII, did you have the impression that the Dutch left a big gap when they finally pulled out, or had they provided only a superficial administration as colonial overlords?

FLOYD: I don't think it was superficial. The Dutch had been there since the 17th century. They had a very large Dutch colonial service. The Dutch had to worry about defending Indonesia, but it was otherwise not a matter of military significance for Holland. They had very substantial economic interests with the oil companies, trading companies and so forth. They were still there in great numbers while I was there. The anti-Sukarno revolution, the very broad-based uprising which took place several years after I left was a complete and total surprise to me. It revealed tensions and fault lines within Indonesian society nobody dreamed existed when I was there. Even the best specialists never knew there were such things. That of course meant the beginning of the end. Too strong a word, but thereafter, (now I'm not talking from personal experience, but from what I've read) the Dutch began to leave in large numbers, and the Chinese left by the tens of thousands. Of course, many of them were massacred in that uprising.

Q: Was there any change in ambassadors while you were there?

FLOYD: Yes, Hugh Cumming replaced Merle Cochran.

Q: How was he as ambassador?

FLOYD: Well, he was very assertive and very much in charge. He tended to play things very close to the chest. He kept the staff at a – I was very junior, so I certainly wasn't in his confidence, but others on the staff were. He was stern and highly intelligent, I would say. But I think like, most Americans and indeed like most foreigners, he didn't really have any sense of the things that were going on in Indonesia. And as I say, it was that uprising against Sukarno and against the so-called communists, which revealed the fault lines in Indonesian society which, when I was there, we didn't dream existed. I don't think Hugh Cumming had any sense of all of that; but then, nobody else did either.

Q: Were there concerns about communist penetration at that time? In '52, the Korean war was just ending...

FLOYD: Yes, communist penetration was the buzzword at the time. However, in Indonesia it was a misnomer, because the lower caste Indonesians tended to be caught up within a very left-wing party with some communist influence. They were very active, but it wasn't so much penetration, as they were already there.

Q: Was the Soviet embassy a noted presence?

FLOYD: Yes, they were there certainly. Then, it was the depths of the Cold War. and junior foreign service people were not supposed to socialize with the Soviets especially. We weren't told not to, but we weren't encouraged to do so either; and, they weren't looking to associate with us. The mainland Chinese were not there then. The Soviets were obviously interested, but I don't think the Soviets had any real control over these people at all. It was a native movement based upon native, local, home-grown social tensions, which dated way back before the Western era and which took on this coloration of leftism that I'm talking about.

Q: When you were doing visa and consular work, were there many Indonesians going to be trained in the United States?

FLOYD: Yes. A fair number were being sent by our aid program. It wasn't called USAID (United States Agency for International Development) then. I forget what it was called. But, quite frankly, and for reasons why I can't explain, it's a cultural thing, as the most enterprising of the people throughout Southeast Asia tended to be Chinese.

Q: So in '55 you left Indonesia. Whither?

FLOYD: South Africa.

Q: Still within that orbit.

FLOYD: Well, South Africa's a long way from Indonesia.

Q: You went to South Africa, where did you go?

FLOYD: I went to the consulate in Durban, in Natal. From '55, I think I spent three years there, maybe until early '59.

Q: What was the situation like in South Africa, particularly in Durban?

FLOYD: Well, superficially it was quite calm. There weren't riots or any surface manifestations of tension. Durban was basically a white city. There was a certain undercurrent of unease, but life went on and people had lots of parties, social life was

very active. The economy and the country were prosperous. When people gathered or met with foreigners they would ask all the usual questions about where we were going and what's going to happen, and this, that and the other. But they weren't morbid, or even frightened about it.

Q: Was there a consul general there? Who was in charge?

FLOYD: Claude Hall.

Q: What was his background?

FLOYD: He was an old Foreign Service officer and had made a career at it. He'd been there quite a few years when I got there. He was a Baltimorean. He had been a scientist in his early training, and went out to South Africa on some sort of astronomical venture and when that didn't pan out well, rumor had it that he dropped the mirror of the telescope. Whether that actually happened or not, I don't know. In any event, he left that undertaking, and moved laterally into the Foreign Service.

Q: Our embassy was moved back and forth between Pretoria and Capetown. Who was our ambassador?

FLOYD: Tom Wailes for most of the time, followed by Henry Byroade.

Q: Did you feel part of an African service, or was there really an African service at that time?

FLOYD: Not when I arrived there, no, that began a bit later. As a matter of fact, when I left South Africa, which I think was in '59, I joined a group of 20 junior Foreign Service officers who were making a study tour through Africa. We were supposed to be the core of the Africa specialists, who everybody thought we'd need. John Kennedy was on the horizon already, I think at that time. In any event, there was a lot of talk that we were going to lose Africa just like we quote, lost Asia, unquote. So we had to be prepared. John Foster Dulles was secretary of state, and he recognized the need for this kind of specialization. So, this was the first effort to form a group of Africa specialists.

Q: While you were there, '55 to '58, things were beginning to change in the United States. Segregation. Little Rock must have happened around that time...

FLOYD: Brown v. Board of Education, I think...

Q: '55, wasn't it? And then the big thing was Central High in Little Rock, where Eisenhower finally had to send in the airborne. Was this a topic of much conversation?

FLOYD: Well, yes, an awful lot of conversation. But the fact you have to remember is that it was very difficult for us to have any real social interaction with Africans. They

lived in their townships, which were segregated areas well outside the city. It wasn't forbidden, either by South African law or by our own policies, and once or twice we had black South Africans to our house for dinner; but, it was not an easy matter at all as they had to come some distance. Was there much talk about it? Yes. But, what I heard was talk between with the wives; I don't know what was being talked about in the townships.

Q: In your contact with whites in Durban, did you notice if there was a division between those of Dutch and English descent?

FLOYD: Oh, very much so. While I was there, the first-generation people of British descent, or people who had arrived there directly from the U.K., tended to be businesspeople. They, therefore, had the more practical approach to these issues. They were not ideological; nor had any kind of religious sense of the destiny of the race. They were not necessarily more liberal within the usual meaning of that word; but, they were certainly more flexible in their thinking patterns about it. They thought that it only made sense to employ as many black people as could be employed in manufacturing and business and so forth. They thought that the past laws were an abomination and labor people should be able to move freely. The local chambers of commerce and industry were always advocating that sort of thing. While the Afrikaners in Durban were invariably a minority, they were very, very rigid in their support of apartheid.

Q: Were we under any instructions to try to do something, or were we more passive observers at the time?

FLOYD: Well, we (the embassy and consulates) were trying to cultivate people of non-white racial groups to the extent that we could. We were encouraged to meet as many of these people as we could. In Durban, there was a large Indian minority, and they were much easier to socialize with. They were not subject to the same sort of rigid discrimination and segregation that blacks were. We socialized with them quite a lot, although they were not a major player.

We, the U.S., had a lot of things on our plate. Also, we could not, in all fairness, presume to reform South Africa; it was simply beyond our power to do so, and we had what we thought, I think correctly, much more important things to do at the time.

Q: Did you have much in the way of naval visits?

FLOYD: Yes, but these were basically social events. U.S. vessels which had been deployed to the Indian Ocean would make a port call, but it had no strategic or military significance.

Q: How about getting out and traveling around?

FLOYD: Yes, all of the embassy and consular people traveled a lot within South Africa. It's a beautiful country. Did you have anything in particular in mind?

Q: No, I was just wondering whether we were getting out and reporting on what was happening and that sort of thing.

FLOYD: Well, we did a lot of reporting on what was happening, but we didn't have the impression that Washington was terribly interested. They didn't want anything bad to happen; that was about it.

Q: What type of work were you doing there?

FLOYD: It was a two-man post with two Foreign Service people. Another person came in later. I did a good deal of commercial work and consular work, and also general reporting. I was encouraged by the embassy to do so, and they seemed to like my reports, so I kept writing them.

Q: What about on the commercial side? Were you up against a Commonwealth barrier? How were American firms treated?

FLOYD: No, I can't recite exactly what the tariff barriers may have been, but the bigger American companies, those that did a fair amount of business in South Africa, set up either their own assembly plants or their own distribution facilities and were doing quite well in South Africa, as were the British from the U.K. Relations among these businesspeople were always extremely good; there were no problems there at all. The automobile companies, Ford and General Motors, were set up in Port Elizabeth. There were also a couple of tire companies. A lot of the big American brand names were very deeply involved in South Africa, including the manufacturers of corn products and others.

Q: Were the Afrikaners a breed apart?

FLOYD: Yes, they were definitely a breed apart - certainly in Durban. They were a minority among the white group. The Afrikaners had no particular tradition of commerce and business. The Afrikaners basically went into government service and into professions, where they would serve Afrikaners basically. There was very little commercial tradition among them, and they were not very successful when they did so. The South African government tended to favor state-owned enterprises in things like petroleum where they could hire Afrikaners to work within those big state-owned firms. That was their way of countering the English-speaking predominance in the private sector.

Q: Were the Soviet Union and communist influence considered a problem at that point?

FLOYD: Well, there was a lot of concern about communist influence within the ANC (African National Congress), and communist, quote agitators, unquote, in Johannesburg – this sort of thing. But it was not the sort of thing that anybody worried about on a daily basis; people weren't transfixed by it. At the time, most of us in the Foreign Service

assumed that there was an alliance of convenience between the local communist party and the ANC. The local communist party, interestingly enough, was largely white Afrikaner, other whites, coloreds, and some Indians. By coloreds I mean mixed race in the South African sense. The ANC were quite prepared to deal with them. I learned later, when I worked in the Intelligence and Research Bureau in the Department of State after leaving South Africa, that, by and large, the communists were not terribly successful in manipulating the African National Congress. The African National Congress would use the communists to further their own causes and followed tactics of their own devising. The notion that the stupid blacks were being dominated by clever communists was popular in the mythology of a lot of people, but did not reflect the reality as I learned it to be when I went into the issue in some depth.

Q: How were we seeing South Africa in the next few decades?

FLOYD: Do you mean what did we think about it?

Q: Yes. What did we think would happen? Obviously, here is a relatively small group of whites, some mixed, and a large African population. Ghana was decolonized and other nations were seeking their freedom. Africa was going to change.

FLOYD: Obviously, that was the issue on everybody's mind. Most people at the embassies and consulates thought there would be some kind of uprising much more quickly than in fact happened. As a result everyone thought it was up to us to start cultivating ties with black people, and side more openly in terms of our general diplomatic and political posture with the African side of the thing, than Washington was prepared to do.

Q: While you were there, did you get any major visits from anybody, or was South Africa pretty much off the congressional or official trip circuit?

FLOYD: Well, we got lots of visits, but no major ones that I can think of. Nelson Rockefeller came down but I'm not sure what he was doing. I think he was collecting skins, or something like that.

Q: In early '59, you moved on.

FLOYD: Yes. Then I made a tour of Africa with 20 or so Foreign Service people.

Q: Did we talk a bit about that? There were several periods of groups going around. I think Loy Henderson made a trip, too.

FLOYD: That was later.

Q: This was a little like Stanley and Livingston, getting out there and figuring out what makes a place tick, and what are we going to do. What was your impression as you went

around yourself?

FLOYD: We were sent; it was a learning experience for us. We spent about two-and-a-half, three months. We started in Accra, Ghana, where we spent about three weeks listening to specialists, who were mostly white. We also talked to a lot of the African political leaders. We toured the bush; we got out into the villages and were shown around. We more or less repeated that with other stops along the way. We stopped briefly in Nigeria, and then moved on to East Africa for another series of lectures from people such as Julius Nyerere and more trips into the countryside. We then went down to northern Rhodesia, where Kenneth Kaunda spoke to us. I'm getting a little vague on the names, but I remember it was a great tour. It was very, very educational and informative. We weren't there to develop any kind of view as to where Africa was headed; we were there to get some sense of what the cultures and people were like, so that we would be better prepared to carry out an assignment in either Africa or at the Department of State.

Q: What was the feeling among the group? Was it exciting getting in on the ground floor of something, or was it routine?

FLOYD: I think everybody was very enthralled and interested by the idea. Everybody realized that this kind of thing would be very hard to work out for yourself. We literally went back into numerous villages, which had barely ever been touched by a modern way of life. We ate their food; they would dance and we would try to dance with them; and they thought it was great to have these visitors coming in. It was unique, and we could hardly have done anything like that otherwise. If we'd waited until we were assigned to an African embassy or something of that sort, then we would already have been somewhat removed, because of our diplomatic status. We were like students.

Q: Who was in charge?

FLOYD: A Foreign Service officer named Fred Hadsel.

Q: By the time you were through with this tour, were you all pretty well recruited into the Africa Bureau and feeling this was what you wanted to do?

FLOYD: I think so, yes. This was because we were all junior, and had the sense that if we stayed with African affairs, we could probably get more responsibility more quickly, than if we went elsewhere.

Q: I remember that around 1958, I was finishing my first tour in Frankfurt, Germany. I applied to go to Kano, Nigeria, which they were talking about opening, but didn't. I got caught up in that excitement. However, I ended up in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Africa and the Near East were all together in the same bureau at the time.

FLOYD: Then, by the end there, we had an African bureau shortly thereafter which was independent.

Q: What did your wife think about an African specialization?

FLOYD: She was quite interested in it. She would have preferred to be in Europe, but she learned to love it. She was enthralled by South Africa. She had quite a gift for languages. She went out and studied Zulu; she was amused by it and interested by it. She learned enough Zulu to speak with the servants and to go shopping.

Q: In '59, whither?

FLOYD: Back to the Department of State, where I was assigned to the Intelligence and Research Bureau, INR, doing political analysis on Africa.

Q: You were there from '59 to when?

FLOYD: I was one year in the INR and one year in the Africa Bureau, roughly.

Q: So essentially, '59 and '60 you were in the African INR.

FLOYD: Something like that.

Q: Bob Blum was Mr. Africa at the time, wasn't he.

FLOYD: He was my boss.

Q: What was your area?

FLOYD: I was given the area of French-speaking Africa, basically.

Q: We probably overlapped a bit. I came in in the summer of '60, and was given the Horn of Africa. I knew your name was familiar. During these years, '59 and '60, it was rather exciting, wasn't it? Things were beginning to pop in French West Africa.

FLOYD: Yes. The movement toward independence came a little bit later. Certainly they were moving in that direction. There were two insurgencies in Cameroon. There was also an insurgency in Madagascar, which I wasn't involved with. The French, at that time, were talking in terms of "la communauté," rather than independence.

Q: One of the things one became aware of at that time in talking to other people, was that the French had a major concern that the United States might start fishing in their protected area, in their "chasse gardée." Were we thinking about it at all?

FLOYD: Oh heavens, no. Africa was always a secondary area of concern for us. If the French wanted to stay and look after these countries, fine. There were individuals who thought that this French neo-colonialism was a bad idea; but, as far as the people who

made policy were concerned, they were quite happy for that to go on. And, while the word neo-colonialism, looking back on it, was a nasty word, it describes a relationship which was probably pretty good for the countries concerned. We now know that most of the African countries were simply not prepared, quote unquote, to govern themselves in a democratic system, or to manage their own economy. So, the more European involvement, the better it was for the Africans, by and large. And, the notion that Africa was in some sense being exploited by this neo-colonialist relationship was absurd. They were getting more in aid and in transfer payments than anything else. Their mineral resources were not enormous. The crops they grew were by and large grown elsewhere as well and they were sold as commodities on the world market. Their problems were always that the prices they were being paid were not high enough as there was simply too much production elsewhere. There was nothing to exploit really.

Q: Probably, the only country that might have been exploited to a certain extent was the Belgian Congo. Did the Congo fall in your area?

FLOYD: To some extent. But, of course, this was at the very, very beginning. There was no real political activity, as such, in the Congo, until the Belgian government suddenly decided it was going to loosen the reins a little bit. This resulted in an uprising of little consequence, whereupon the Belgians panicked and left. But there was not much run-up to this; these were not long in preparation.

Q: To capture the period, '59 and '60, would you say that among your fellow officers and yourself there was a feeling of optimism about these African countries – brave new world and all this?

FLOYD: There was some of that. There was a sense that they had to learn, they would learn in their own way, that aid programs were the answer, and that Africa would develop in due course. Looking at what actually happened, there was an enormous amount of ungrounded optimism.

Q: I recall picking up some of that. It was an exciting place for people to go to.

FLOYD: Although I, to some extent, was caught up in it, I have to say that I was much more jaded, personally; I didn't really think that this was going to be a brave new world or that their problems were going to be resolved. I wasn't sure that concessionary aid programs, such as building dams all over the place and so forth, were going to do much. Be that as it may, I was still surprised by the fact that things actually went downhill, so as you well know, precipitously, in most of the ways that matter.

Q: In '60 you moved over to the African Bureau itself. What were you doing there?

FLOYD: I was in charge of Senegal and Mali.

Q: And you did that from '60 until when?

FLOYD: Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania, until about ’62, late ’61. A couple of years roughly.

Q: Senegal was the major country there, wasn’t it?

FLOYD: Yes, Senegal was certainly more advanced, in the usual sense of that word. However, we paid a good deal of attention to Mali because it had been left-leaning. Modibo Keita, the president of Mali, Sekou Toure, the president of Guinea, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana formed this loose kind of alliance. They were the more anti-Western bunch, and they got themselves involved in a non-aligned movement.

Q: Who was the president of Senegal?.

FLOYD: Leopold Senghor.

Q: Was he a senator in France, and a poet...

FLOYD: Yes; he was a former senator and a member of parliament from Senegal, a man of letters of some distinction, and a French poet. Senegal, of course, had had a much longer and deeper exposure to French influence than any of the other liberated French colonies, and was, as a result, much more sophisticated intellectually. They were one of the few newly-independent African countries to effect a peaceful transfer of power when Senghor left. And, to the best of my knowledge, while there have been occasional coups and things like that, I don’t think there’s been a military uprising or military takeover since independence. They’ve done relatively well that way. They’re still poor; they’re not going very far economically; but, there was a certain depth into their political culture that the other African countries didn’t have.

Q: Were we fairly comfortable with how Senegal was doing?

FLOYD: At the time that I stopped following it, yes. On the other hand, Mali didn’t do at all well, in spite of our interest in it. Keita was kicked out and confined; and the military took over; and, it hasn’t been a good story at all. Much the same in Guinea. People thought that Sekou Toure was one of the great dominant leaders, who was going to come out of Africa. There was a much darker side to all of that. He produced nothing of any real lasting consequence.

Q: He had a rather brutal regime.

FLOYD: Quite brutal, yes.

Q: The Kennedy Administration came in while you were there. Soapy Williams was the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs; he came in with quite a splash.

FLOYD: He did, yes.

Q: Was there an effort among those of you that were looking at this to try to calm him down, to keep him from getting over-enthusiastic? What was happening in your area?

FLOYD: No, no. We were caught up in the excitement. It started, actually, during the Eisenhower years. Sekou Toure the Guinean president, was the first sub-Saharan, black African leader to be invited to the United States on a state visit, I think, apart from perhaps Liberia. This was during the time of John Foster Dulles. I got myself trained as a French interpreter while I was working at INR as I was sort of bored with INR. I thought that if I got myself trained as a French interpreter, I might get some trips out of it. The first trip I got was to interpret for Sekou Toure, which was not quite what I expected.

Q: How did you find him as a person?

FLOYD: Well, you never felt there was a great distance between oneself and him. He was a man of enormous eloquence. He could speak impromptu; he had a powerful speaking voice, and he had these rhythmic cadences that would come out. I would not be doing simultaneous, but sequential interpreting, as he went around the States and addressed these different groups. They were just entranced by him. Since I had to do the interpretation, I realized that there was more rhythm and force to what he said, than there was actual meaning. He wasn't saying very much, but he was making a very powerful impression. He was an extraordinarily talented man in that respect. I don't think he had much formal education; I don't know how much he had had, but he was able to handle French grammatically perfectly, and with great fluency and eloquence. There was the sense about the Guineans – him and his entourage – a deep suspicion about everything that had happened or might happen. They were in foreign territory, and they knew it; and Africans, perhaps more than other people, tend to be very suspicious of outsiders. So it was a pins and needles kind of experience; you felt the slightest thing could touch off a firestorm. It was not a relaxing experience at all, but it was fascinating.

Q: Obviously, one of the things we want these leaders and their entourages to do is to come and see the United States and appreciate it. But if somebody is coming and highly suspicious, they can also find things to support those suspicions. Do you think this was a positive experience for him?

FLOYD: The fact that we invited him was a positive experience for him. If I made Toure sound like an ingénue or something like that, I didn't mean to. He was a very savvy political operator, and he knew that in having refused to join the French communauté, he was isolated. He needed an opening in our direction, and we were quite happy to make that kind of gesture at the time, because the Republicans wanted to show that they were not in the business of losing Africa as they had supposedly lost China. It led on to some aid programs, I suppose; but, what impression he formed of the United States I don't know, other than he was undoubtedly struck by how friendly people were. I think he went away with the sense that Americans were not inherently racist in any manner of speaking.

But, then, everything turned sour for him, and what kind of impression he had, didn't really matter.

Q: Was Mauritania this sort of a sand pile that we had little interest in?

FLOYD: Pretty much a sand pile that we had little interest in. This was still in the Republican days. These people would come to address the United Nations and then would always try to migrate down to Washington. One of the first to do that was the Mauritanian, William Tubman, he came down to see Eisenhower right in the middle of a snowstorm, a blizzard.

Q: Were you at the meeting?

FLOYD: I didn't interpret for the meeting; I was there to greet him at the railway station. He came down by train.

I was involved in the Modibo Keita, the president of Mali, came over, along with Sukarno of Indonesia, I guess it was just the two of them, to report to President Kennedy about the doings of the non-aligned meeting in Belgrade. That was the meeting that took place right after Nikita Khrushchev had broken the test ban moratorium, which had infuriated Kennedy and the entire administration.

Modibo Keita, the president of Mali, and Sukarno of Indonesia, were deputized by the non-aligned meeting in Belgrade to come over and report on the proceedings to Kennedy, and in particular, to explain why they had not criticized the Soviets. Well, Kennedy wanted an explanation as to why they had not criticized the Soviets' breach of the test ban moratorium. I sat in on the meeting in which this conversation took place. I would say that while Keita was a man of great dignity, he was obviously not possessed of a brilliant intellect. He was certainly not on the same level as Senghor and nothing like as eloquent as Toure. So, Keita was largely silent during the proceedings.

Sukarno had obviously met Kennedy before. He had an almost scrofulous look about him at this stage. He had also deteriorated a great deal physically. He was, in my opinion, a little ridiculous with his marshall's baton and his military uniform, when his only military act, to my knowledge, had been to walk 30 miles to surrender to the Dutch. This all struck me as very ridiculous.

I rather expected that Jack Kennedy would simply blow them over. But he didn't do that. He was nervous; it was not the kind of commanding Kennedy that one normally imagines. His voice had a kind of catch to it. He made his point, but he didn't make it in any overwhelming sort of way. It was not a terribly impressive performance on the part of any of these three gentlemen. I don't remember precisely, at this late date, what exactly was said, but that was my general impression of it.

Kennedy, however, was at that time still caught up in his own electoral thesis that Africa

was the continent that we couldn't risk losing in the future as we had "lost Asia", before. So, the following day, he invited Keita to come over to the White House informally, and to talk with him. This was the Malian we were talking about. He took him up into the personal living quarters, and he made quite an effort to be friendly, inquiring about Malian attitudes and Malian prospects. For Kennedy to do this with the chief of state of a second or third-rate African country was quite striking, and showed that, at that point in his administration, he still thought Africa was very important.

Q: I must say that it was after the Belgrade conference of the non-aligned nations that Nehru made the comment that was interpreted as, "well, while a Soviet test bomb isn't bad, an American test bomb is bad."

FLOYD: Very much in character.

Q: It soured our relationship with that whole non-aligned group, really. We figured these were a bunch of either soft liberals or communist dupes.

FLOYD: I would say that while all of them had acquired a good deal of facility with the language of the left. They were basically people trying to follow their own interests as they saw it and that while people like Keita or Sukarno weren't great statesmen, I don't think they were anybody's dupes.

Q: But I think this was the perception.

FLOYD: Oh, the perception was definitely that.

Q: Yes, the perception was that. I think this might be a good place to stop. We'll pick it up next time. We've gotten to about 1962, and we've talked about your time with the African Bureau. Where did you go then?

FLOYD: I went to Martinique in the French West Indies after that, and then to Brussels, Belgium.

Q: We'll talk about Martinique next time.

FLOYD: We can get that done quickly.

Q: Okay.

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Today is the fifth of June 2000. In 1962, you were in Martinique, you were there from when to when, the years?

FLOYD: '62 to '64.

Q: What were you doing there?

FLOYD: I was the American consul for the French West Indies – Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guyana.

Q: What was our representation like there?

FLOYD: Well, we had a consulate located in Martinique for all three of the so-called Caribbean departments of France. We had a consul, a vice consul, plus a USIA (United States Information Agency) information service officer, a library and so forth.

Q: What were our interests in Martinique at that time?

FLOYD: Well, we didn't have any enormous direct interests. I think, strangely enough, it was a reflection of the Cold War. The islands, both Martinique and Guadeloupe, had fairly significant communist parties. It was a superior decolonization. I think the basic reason for having a post there was the notion that France might at some point tire of these places, and if so, they could become a bit of a nuisance in our backyard with their strong left orientation.

Q: What about Cuba? Castro was going strong in this period. Was Cuba playing a role as far as what you were doing?

FLOYD: Oh, indirectly. Cuba was the nearest incarnation of the communist menace. The people on the island were very conscious of Cuba, but not really fascinated by Cuba and not really much influenced by Cuba directly.

Q: Did Martinique, being a French enclave, have a different thought process or different outlook than most of the other islands in the area?

FLOYD: To some extent, yes. These islands weren't much concerned with, and had very little intercourse of any kind the neighboring islands. They were focused on France. But, that being said, the West Indies is the West Indies and all its component islands have enormous similarities: they were descendants of ex-slaves, they were poor and so forth. The French subsidized the two islands and French Guyana very heavily. The local people – the local left of the Martinique and Guadeloupian political spectrum were very much interested in having what they called autonomy; but, they never pronounced the word 'independence,' because they knew that if they tried to become independent or did become independent, they would lose these very, very substantial subsidies that were flowing in from France. So they made that compromise.

Q: This was a period, too, when many of the French possessions in Africa became independent, and depending on how they became independent, the French left and pulled everything out and said, "May you rot in hell," almost like they did with Guinea, when

they chose total independence.

FLOYD: Sort of, yes.

Q: "If you didn't cooperate."

FLOYD: Guinea did not cooperate. Most of the other French African colonies left on good terms with France. The island, that is to say the educated, politically-conscious portion of the population, which was not very large, followed all this to some extent. The mayor of Fort-de-France was a disciple and close friend of Leopold Senghor, who was president of Senegal, and the originator or father of the school of thought that there is a strong cultural similarity among people of African descent wherever you find them.

Q: Negritude.

FLOYD: Negritude was the name he gave. The mayor of Fort-de-France was also a poet, I don't know how good, and a member of the National Assembly in France. He had a career much like Senghor's.

Q: De Gaulle was pursuing a pretty independent line at this time. Were we trying to do anything on the French national scale, such as having influence? Were there any concerns with instructions from Washington about how to deal with the Gaullist government in one of its outposts?

FLOYD: No; Washington was almost totally indifferent to what was going on in the French West Indies. They wanted reports to come in, but they didn't really much care. As I said, I think we were a kind of insurance policy there in the event that the French got tired of the islands and decided to abandon them. The British were in the process of doing that. This is not written down anywhere at that time, but I can't imagine any other reason for our being there.

Q: How were your relations with the French? Who did you deal with?

FLOYD: The prefect. Same organization as the metropolitan kind and they were good, generally speaking. The prefects are not political animals; they are basically there to run their prefecture. They have oversight over an awful lot of things that go on, but they take their instruction from the Ministry of the Interior in France. We had good relations with them. Socially, we saw them often. I should add that they, of course, had a certain residual suspicion as to what we were up to, and that there was a local French office of security which was similar to the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) in its function except that it had a good deal more autonomy than I think the FBI has. And then there was something corresponding to our CIA. And I think our telephones were probably being tapped and we were being followed by them. But at the same time, we met these people socially and otherwise, and sometimes I cooperated with them; it was a friendly relationship. I think everybody was simply doing their thing – going through the motions

– but nobody was hostile.

Q: Was there any residue of the Vichy years? Martinique had been standing out there by itself during WWII, and I think they had an admiral during the war who was a strong Vichyite, and they had a cruiser and a couple of other vessels during the war that were sort of sitting there, and I was wondering if there was a residue of this.

FLOYD: No residue at all. The local politics were totally dominated by the Antilleans. There was a small population of people. There was a small group of native whites which was influential and important in the local economy. I suppose they might well have been Vichyites at one point, but that was gone.

Q: Sometimes these animosities hang on. Well, after being in a place that was obviously not a focal point of world interest for two years, you were off to Belgium in '64?

FLOYD: That's right.

Q: And you were there from '64 to when?

FLOYD: '64 to '69. I had, in effect, two assignments in Belgium; they were two entirely different functions.

Q: What was your first assignment?

FLOYD: I was a political officer.

Q: There's always been this division between the two parts of the country. What was the situation in '64, when you were there in Belgium?

FLOYD: That's an ongoing problem for the Belgians; I don't think they'll ever resolve it totally. It in a sense it defined everything. People considered themselves either Francophone or Flemings. The Socialist Party, as did all the political parties, had their two different wings – one Flemish and one Francophone or French-speaking. But at the same time, things were worked out to the point where there was a quite systematic division of responsibility in the government among the French-speaking and Flemish-speaking Belgians. There was no violence while I was there.

Things were basically worked out with the exception of one issue, which was the issue of Brussels and how to deal with it. Brussels was a basically French-speaking city located in Flanders, the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium. Like most large cities, it was growing, so it was a dynamic element, which made it hard to work out any sort of permanent modus operendi. But I think that's about all you need to say about it. It complicated life for the Belgians, in terms of governing the country in a variety of ways. In most respects, they worked out an arrangement that they could live with and was acceptable to both sides.

Q: How did we work it? I assume most of our officers didn't speak Flemish. Was that a problem?

FLOYD: Not really. The Flemings, the older ones, people of about my age or older, and most of the educated Flemings spoke French. The younger people were consciously avoiding learning French, to a certain extent: they were very oriented toward English. Most educated Flemings spoke quite good English, as well.

Q: What slice of the political spectrum were you dealing with?

FLOYD: Domestic politics up to a point, but also following Belgian-U.S. relations – the triangle we had with the Belgians and the Congolese. I was basically reporting on what the Belgians were doing.

Q: Belgium and its issues related to colonies were not settled at this time, were they? There were problems in the Congo.

FLOYD: There were enormous problems. I arrived in Brussels right after the independence of the Congo, which was a very chaotic time. We were cooperating with the Belgians in trying to rescue Belgians and others who were being held in Stanleyville, essentially as hostages, by the political group which controlled the area up in the north. And there was a rescue attempt of these people, in which Belgian parachutists …

Q: This was Operation Dragon Rouge [Operation Red Dragon].

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: Did you get involved in this sort of thing?

FLOYD: It was well along, when I arrived. I was following it, along with other issues, in the political sector. I was not very directly involved.

Q: The ambassador, when you arrived, was Douglas MacArthur?

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of his operation?

FLOYD: Well, he's a very strong-willed, self-centered man. I think he basically did a pretty good job. He was difficult to work with. He had a very idiosyncratic personality, and was very domineering toward his subordinates, but he wasn't there long after I arrived. He left.

Q: Who took his place?

FLOYD: Ridgway Knight, who was much more suave and easy-going. He was a very active ambassador, but not nearly so domineering as MacArthur.

Q: Was there a bureaucratic battle within the State Department between the African bureau dealing with the Congo and the European bureau dealing with Belgium?

FLOYD: To a point, I guess; but, there was not very much of it. The Belgians had no real interior ambitions for Africa. King Leopold had found himself a colony, which he then passed on to Belgium. They had some interest in it, but once there was a prospect that there would be violence if Belgium wanted to hang onto the place, the Belgians lost interest quickly. Belgian companies played a prominent role in the Congo; Union Minière was the biggest of the mining companies down in Katanga Province, so they had that interest.

Independence arrived very chaotically, as you remember, and with a good deal of local violence; and Belgians fled in large numbers. So there was a Belgian population there after everything settled down, but it was much smaller than it had been. The Belgians, basically, were interested in preserving and protecting to the extent they could, their economic interests there. They also did not want the Congo to "become communist". They were partners with us in the North Atlantic Alliance. Kennedy, who was in office then, tended to take Africa and the threat of communist domination or influence in Africa much more seriously, at least during the beginning of his administration, than the previous republican administration had taken it, and the Belgians welcomed this.

Basically, we got along pretty well with the Belgians, and therefore there were no real conflicts with the African desk. I mean, the African desk couldn't, wouldn't have had the kind of parochial concern they might have had if the Congo then had been any kind of functioning political entity. It wasn't; it was terribly torn apart; it was a huge, gigantic sore in the middle of Africa. Everybody wanted to try to stabilize things, and to get some sort of acceptable and responsible, effective government in power. So that's the long answer.

Q: Within Belgium, were there any reverberations within the Belgian body politic from the disassociation of France from NATO and the movement of the NATO structure there, other than the physical thing of all of a sudden ending up with some more embassies?

FLOYD: There wasn't much, frankly. The Belgians deplored anything which would call into the question the integrity of the Atlantic alliance, and the effectiveness of NATO. They were a small country, and they'd been invaded many times over – that's all an old story. As small countries go, they had a fairly strong residual sense of the need to protect their security with respect to involvement with outside countries. Belgium was also a neighbor of France, and the southern part of Belgium, the Walloons area, had long-standing cultural, sometimes family, ties with France. So the Belgians simply just wanted to stay out of trouble and to maintain what they could of the security environment.

The things the French did were disruptive up to a point, but it was in large measure, in my opinion, a matter of posturing. The French recognized that they needed the United States in Europe; they wouldn't admit it, but they would occasionally acknowledge it. However, they wanted to take some distance from us symbolically and politically and so forth, without really undermining the security arrangement which existed.

In dealing with Belgium, you've got to remember that Belgium is not really a nation-state at all; Belgian national pride, national assertiveness and so forth, almost doesn't exist. You've got these two separate communities we talked about. So any Belgian government is likely to be a government which simply tries to make do. That was their attitude during the trouble with France over NATO.

Q: Did you go to party meetings and things of this nature much?

FLOYD: I didn't too much, no. We had an officer in the section who did a good deal of that, but I did not. I saw these people a lot, but I was not directly concerned with party political stuff.

Q: Were we at all concerned about the communist party in Belgium at the time?

FLOYD: No.

Q: There wasn't the third of the vote going to the communists that there was in France, or Italy was there?

FLOYD: They had one or two senators and maybe five deputies, but that was the extent of it. They wouldn't even have had that except for the proportional representation system. They were not a factor.

Q: A lot of countries were having the chicken wars and various trade confrontations. Sounds like things were on a pretty even keel.

FLOYD: There were no serious commercial squabbles of that nature. What there was, and there wasn't much, it would have been sorted out within the GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) organization.

Q: You said you had two jobs while you were in Brussels from '64 to '69. What was the second?

FLOYD: A second tour. I came back as political-military counselor. My biggest responsibility was to negotiate logistical arrangements for using Belgian territory in one way or another, replacing the logistical facilities we had lost in France. Partly, it was a line-of-communications matter. By line-of-communications, I mean a supply line into a possible central front. We wanted authority and some sort of understanding with the Belgians, that if war should break out, we could come in and supply either through ports

or, if necessary, over the beach, quote unquote; that we would have staging areas that could be set aside for our use, and that this would be part of Belgian war planning. We weren't looking for bases or anything of that sort. It was a matter of cooperating with the Belgians. These were basically military questions, and the negotiations were done jointly by the embassy; usually me or the ambassador if necessary, on the one hand, and the European Command on the other. In other words, as you remember, we had dual hats in that the U.S. Commander of Europe was also the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR). But, under his U.S. hat, he had a large American staff, which were concerned with logistics, supplies, training, and so forth, of the American forces in Germany. So, that's the way we handled it. All these things were highly sensitive areas for the Belgians of course, which is why the embassy insisted that we lead the negotiations, at least nominally and that the American embassy person present would present the U.S. side. Belgium is a very small country, they're sensitive to anybody who is not conscious of their prerogatives and their rights and so forth.

Q: So, in many ways, you were working with the Belgians and with our military – it was almost a dual negotiation, wasn't it?

FLOYD: That's right. With our own military, we didn't have any serious problems, really; it was a matter of coordination, understanding and so forth; I wouldn't call it exactly a negotiation. With the Belgians, we did want some fairly specific assurances that were not at the treaty level, nor even government-to-government agreements. These were just understandings within the NATO context as to what areas and routes we could use, and where we could store things which would be needed in the event of a crisis. For example, trucks: if we had had to use Belgian territory to supply essential fronts, we would have needed transportation, so we wanted to place in Belgium large numbers of vehicles of all sorts which could be used when needed. Of course, it had to be worked out with the Belgian military as it has implications for Belgian war planning including in their planning for how they would protect and look after the needs of their citizen population in wartime and related areas. So, it got fairly complicated at times; but, basically, these were business-like talks without much suspicion or animosity.

Q: What was your and your colleagues impression of the Belgian military at this time?

FLOYD: I don't think any of the small European countries had any military establishment that could compare to ours or that anybody would take very seriously. The Belgians had elite paratroop units and Air Force units, which were first-class; these were small elites, that were not amorphous, draftee-oriented military establishments. And, as I've said before, as there was no national sense in Belgium, Belgium has almost no military pride. They were proud of their heroism during World War I and so forth.

Q: In World War II, the king let the Belgians down by surrendering rather quickly didn't he?

FLOYD: The king saw what was going on and drew the necessary conclusion. There was

no bitterness about that, to my knowledge.

Q: Were there any problems that resulted from having to deal with a country that almost has a split personality or a lack of a cohesive national identity? Did you have to make sure that you paid attention to one group and then to the other group all the time?

FLOYD: Yes, some; but, given the fact that power was very much divided in the Belgian government and in Belgian politics between the two groups, if you dealt with the people who had authority and counted, you were going to be, *ipso facto*, dealing with the right people. No, that wasn't really a problem. The suspicion and low-level conflict between these two groups didn't extend to that level. Obviously, we'd only seen French-speaking people, but that was never an issue.

Q: So you left Belgium in '69.

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: Where'd you go then?

FLOYD: Back to Washington. I went into the European bureau in Washington and into an office called the NATO and Regional European Security Office.

Q: You were there from '69 to...

FLOYD: I'd say from '69 to about '73 or '74. A long time.

Q: This was the advent of the Nixon Administration and all. In the European bureau, was this essentially a NATO-type thing, or were you looking at the European community as it developed? What were you looking at?

FLOYD: We were looking at NATO and then, more broadly at the European Security Conference, which came along later. We were basically political-military. We had a separate office, in the European bureau, whose work was more political and economic. We dealt with the issues of the European Community, GATT, and so forth.

Q: What were your major concerns during the '69 to '74 period?

FLOYD: The major concerns were twofold, in terms of time spent. One was the gradually-emerging Soviet détente effort, or put otherwise, the political co-existence effort, which eventually became known as the European Security Conference. It took a long time to develop, but it became a constant with us. The other thing was the issue of keeping our troops in Europe. Congress was constantly aimed at forcing the U.S. government to reduce the number of our troops on the continent of Europe. And the State Department joined the Defense Department in thinking this reduction of troops in Europe would be a very bad idea because of the symbolism, as well as the purely military aspect.

So, we would organize ourselves to support those in the Congress who were against the idea. We would supply them with information and pre-drafted speeches, and other things.

Q: From your perspective, what was behind this movement to reduce the number of troops in Europe?

FLOYD: A combination of things. It was, to some extent, a reflection of the traditional American isolationism or detachment from too much direct involvement in Europe. While that spirit was much stronger before WWII and seemed to disappear when we went in to the war, it hadn't died. Another was, I suppose, the attitude of the left which very broadly and generally distrusted military matters and thought that things could be resolved diplomatically. They thought, "Why do we need all these troops there?" And finally, there was also a certain impatience based on the idea that the European military effort was not anything comparable to ours, in terms of the portion of gross national product, or of whatever measure you wanted to use, and that if the Europeans didn't want to do a hell of a lot to defend themselves, why should we be there? A combination of those three answers.

Q: Were you working on getting other European countries to pay more for their military?

FLOYD: Incessantly, but with very middling results.

Q: Let's go around. How about Germany – how were they?

FLOYD: Germany was an important special case. The whole network of agreements under which Germany became West Germany and both Germanys became independent states and members of NATO had set certain limits on what the Germans could do militarily. Those limits, of course, conflicted with our later interest in seeing some kind of rough balance with the Soviet Union. But the west Europeans would not have tolerated a breach in the agreements, and the Germans themselves were not interested in breaching those agreements.

The British made a pretty good effort. They kept a fair number of troops in Europe, and their people in Europe were usually well-trained. The French – you could say were somewhat concerned with the French. Their military sector in Germany where the French troops were stationed, was quite close to the French border; this reflected the immediate post-war pattern of where the forces were. The French, of course, put a good deal of effort into their nuclear development program. What you would find in dealing with the Europeans is that the relative size of their efforts was proportionate to their gross national product and their population.

If you're an American citizen and somebody tells you that by increasing your defense spending you can have some effect upon national security, you don't dismiss this as ridiculous. If you're a citizen of France, Britain, or Germany, it's at least plausible. When you get down to the level of Belgium or Denmark, you can't make the argument. All you

can tell them really is – and it would never be said directly or publicly – "Look, if we don't do anything, the United States is going to get fed up and go home. So you've got to do something." But even that didn't go very far. And some historian discovered through research that there was a basic similarity in the level of effort of these countries, running well back into the 19th century. However, the citizenry understood that every quote, country, unquote, needed an army and that that was one of the attributes of sovereignty and that that meant spending a little money on it. In spite of that argument, I don't think the Belgian post World War II military effort in NATO is up to the same level in terms of the sacrifices demanded of its citizens in the middle of the 19th century.

Q: So, your work with your colleagues was going out from time and time and trying to drum up more support?

FLOYD: When we were in Belgium, yes, that's what would happen. When I was political-military counsel, I was the one who did most of that. I talked to pol-military and to others; I'd try to pick out people who had some influence, either in the political area or journalists and I'd give them information and make them understand the American viewpoint. This was something we had to do. In all honesty, I can't claim that I had any particular influence on what happened.

Q: You didn't set yourself a goal of getting one more tank company out there on the front?

FLOYD: Nope.

Q: What about the quest for détente? You were there during the period when this was part of our effort. Kissinger and Nixon were both very much involved in this. How did the European bureau regard these efforts?

FLOYD: I think they were moderately in favor of it. It depends on what you mean by détente, of course. The word can cover a multitude of different things. Everybody, if you thought about it a little bit, recognized that if you wanted to maintain an American military presence in Europe at a significant level, and if you wanted well-equipped and substantial American forces more generally, the U.S. government had to be seen to be willing to negotiate and to find some way to resolve some of the problems diplomatically. Therefore, one tried to negotiate. If you look at it intelligently, and given the facts of the American political scene, the two sides of it – maintaining the military and our force levels on the one hand and negotiating on the other hand – were complimentary.

In the case of Europe, probably, the forces of the left and people in general had somewhat less realistic notions about what could be accomplished with negotiation than did the bulk of the American people. I'm not sure of that, but that was our impression. The socialist parties in Europe, generally speaking, tended to have a certain level of expectation concerning what you could accomplish in discussions and negotiations with the Russians. Basically, the two sides, while complimentary, also had some tensions: the more the

Europeans became enamored of détente – whatever that word might have meant – the less they did in the military area, which created more tension with respect to congress, which was already impatient with European efforts.

You had to be open to negotiations to some extent, but if there was too much optimism, too high expectations of what you could achieve, this could be damaging to the other aspects of the mutual security situation.

Q: How did the war in Vietnam look? It was winding down, but had a devastating effect on our military. Was that something that was reflected in what you were working on? Were you picking up problems from that?

FLOYD: Well, yes; the Belgian reaction to it was in many ways like the domestic reaction in the U.S. Of course, Belgian men were not in combat in Vietnam. The political left in Europe was very hostile to the whole American intervention in Vietnam; the moderates took a somewhat different view; and, of course, the right – to the extent that one existed in Belgium – was in favor of it. We didn't get involved much in Vietnam. Everybody knew the Europeans had mixed feelings about it. I think European governments, by and large, saw that the United States had a real dilemma here. We had an alliance with Belgium, and an alliance with Europe, and if we hadn't tried to carry out our obligations under the Southeast Asian Treaty, then the Japanese and, to some extent, the Europeans themselves, would have questioned the integrity of our commitment to them. But, they thought we could have done it better, and they wished it would go away.

Q: What were you getting about Soviet intentions at this time? We were trying to ease relations, but was there concern at this point that something could trigger a massive attack through the Fulda Gap or something like that?

FLOYD: I don't think many people laid awake at night worrying about that. The basic view was that the Soviets had extremely powerful forces across East Germany, and you couldn't ignore these and the general weight and shadow they cast over Europe, but that it was possible to deter the Soviets in such as was that they would never see any clear advantage to themselves and there would always be great risk to themselves in making any kind of move. That was the simple view.

Q: Did you get involved in nuclear problems – planning or anything like that?

FLOYD: No, frankly; not much.

Q: With the French, they'd had time to get used to their new role of being out of the military side of NATO, though they were still in the political side. But, had we reached a way of working both with the French and with the in NATO so that although the French were out, they were still in?

FLOYD: Well, there was a good deal of friction. All of the U.S. presidents who were in

office during these years wanted to avoid any public squabbling with de Gaulle or with his successor; as a result, they would always emphasize the political side. The rest of us had to take our cue from that, whatever our personal feelings might have been about French conduct. And we simply tried to make the best of it. That's what it came down to. The question always was: how can you really expect, for example, that the United States would go to war if Europe were invaded? The sophisticated answer to that would be: since we were involved in Europe, the Russians couldn't attack Western Europe without engaging U.S. forces, as the dynamic of that would inevitably draw in the U.S. Moreover, the Russians knew these facts as well as we did; therefore, they were going to be deterred.

You could ask the same question about our allied governments: how could we be sure that Belgium, for example, would abide by its obligations under the treaty and allow American forces, in the event of need, to use their territory logistically? Well, the short answer is that you couldn't, really, but that it's difficult to imagine these countries pulling out by themselves. The problem with the French action was that we – by we I mean American policy – wanted, through NATO and all of the NATO arrangements to create the strong presumption that in the event of hostilities, people would honor their obligations. It was important to give the Russians that sense; it was also important to give the Western Europeans that sense. Without it, they wouldn't have felt secure, the extraordinary economic development of Europe in those days probably wouldn't have taken place, and so on and so on. The problem with what the French did is that it tended to undermine that presumption. It didn't go far enough to undo the whole dispensation, but it was troublesome.

Q: You arrived in '69. At the time you were leaving in '74, how did you feel our position had developed in political-military relations in Europe? Had it changed?

FLOYD: Well, yes. For one, NATO and the Soviets had agreed to start negotiations on what we called a Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR), which was a negotiation about the possible reduction of foreign forces in the area covered by the negotiations. In other words, this was the withdrawal of some Soviet forces from Eastern Europe and the withdrawal of some U.S. forces back to the continental U.S. from Western Europe. These were long, drawn-out negotiations and nothing ever came of them; but, they were underway. That was part of the general détente picture which hadn't existed when I arrived.

From about 1970, maybe 1971, the alliance had begun to move toward and eventually to start the process of the so-called European Security Council. It started with exploratory talks in Helsinki, which worked out over a period of months an agenda for the main event, followed by negotiations in Geneva, which fleshed out that agenda and worked out a whole set of declaratory understandings, which were first approved at the ministerial level in Helsinki and later endorsed at the head of state level.

Q: You left in '74. Whither?

FLOYD: I left to go to the Senior Seminar.

Q: You were in the Senior Seminar '74 to '75.

FLOYD: Right.

Q: How did you find the Seminar?

FLOYD: I thought it was very well done, interesting and very stimulating by and large. It was a great intellectual break to leave whatever you might have been doing to get involved in something like that. It was a reintroduction to the United States for me. The focus of it, really, was on American society and what was going on here. I learned a lot. I think it was a very sensible focus for most of us. Our careers were obviously focusing on foreign affairs. It encompassed a good deal of travel throughout the U.S.; we were exposed to local people and local concerns. I think I would give them high marks.

Q: Normally in this course you are given a project. What was your project? Do you remember?

FLOYD: Yes. I worked on a piece relating to the nuclear non-proliferation problem. The focus was on how the development of the so-called nuclear fuel cycle and our obligation under the non-proliferation treaty to help countries develop their civilian, peaceful nuclear energy program tended to intersect with and get entangled with programs which could help these countries become military nuclear powers. I basically analyzed that situation and offered a few suggestions for coping with a couple of the current problems.

I overlooked something when I told you what I did from '74. I went directly from the European bureau - I was still attached there administratively - and I joined our negotiating team in Geneva for the second phase of the negotiations for the European Security Council. We tended to downplay these negotiations, while they were underway. We didn't send a full-time negotiator out there; we had U.S. ambassadors from nearby places in Europe come over and do it. They did double-duty – in their bilateral assignment to the country to which they were accredited and in their position at the conference – with the result that the senior career fellow who was there would often be running the U.S. delegation. That was my role for several months. It was very interesting.

I went from there to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) in Washington, DC. It had an office of international relations, with an assistant director of the agency as director for the office. I was supposed to be the deputy assistant director for this office of international relations. It turned out I was the acting director for about a year, because the fellow who had been tapped to come in and run the show couldn't get accredited as he couldn't get approved by the Senate.

Q: Why was that? Was this a problem of outlook or the person?

FLOYD: A combination of both as seen through the lens of Jesse Helms. I don't know what the specifics were. The fellow who was supposed to get the job was John Newhouse, who was a fairly well-known journalist and writer on strategic and other matters. He was a very nice, intelligent fellow. He would have done a good job, I'm sure. He had somehow gone afoul of and gotten entangled with Jesse.

Q: When you were there, how were these negotiations? Were we making progress? How did you feel about the negotiations at the time you were dealing with them?

FLOYD: Well, we made gradual progress. It was a very slow-going matter, because we had about 30 countries participating. The conference had 2 ½ basic agendas. One was to be a declaration on the principal governing relations between states. What the Soviets had long wanted was an agreement, as formal as they could get it, which recognized to the extent that they could get it, the permanence of the divisions of Europe and the existing boundaries of Europe. They were never going to get a non-aggression treaty, which they occasionally proposed; but they wanted something.

One of the reasons they weren't going to get much at all is that, of course, we couldn't afford politically to recognize the permanence of the division of Germany; nor could we do anything which even suggested that the quadripartite rights, which went back to the post-World War II agreement and which implied special Allied rights in Berlin, would be undermined. So, finally, the Soviets fell back onto an effort to get a kind of UN-like declaration on the integrity of nation-states, the inviolability of frontiers and so forth. That was one area of the negotiations.

The other area of the negotiations, which was of more interest to the Western democracies, was the so-called freer movement of people, ideas and information. And finally, it was called a conference on security and cooperation in Europe, so we felt that the conference had to make some sort of declaratory gesture with respect to economic and trade relations, and also with respect to military aspects. So those were the 2 ½ or 3 ½ areas.

Q: What area were you dealing with?

FLOYD: Well, at the time I was in Geneva, all of them really. I was acting head of the delegation or deputy to the ambassador if he was there. So I followed them all. The true centerpieces really were the declaration of inviolability of frontiers and the so-called freedom of movement idea. I may pursue this a little bit, and I think it has a certain general interest.

The sense during the period of preparation before the conference began and when it was just a proposal and the concern of the United States government, was that this was just a conference for show; but, that while it had no real substance to it and was just another of the Soviet peaceful co-existence, so-called initiatives, if we went off and signed an agreement with the Russians about nothing in particular but which sounded good, it

would greatly undermine support for our military activities. We were also afraid that the European countries would get caught up in détente fever and would basically give the Soviets whatever they wanted, in the way of a declaratory outcome. It turned out that people also assumed that the Soviets were being very cunning and were very patient negotiators and that they would inevitably, at the end of the day, wear down and wear out Allied negotiators, and would get the better end of the deal.

None of those things happened. The Europeans suddenly became interested in these negotiations and took a much firmer attitude towards the Russians than we were sometimes inclined to take because Henry Kissinger was very involved in SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) and other things, and didn't want to bother the Russians over this, unnecessarily. So that worry came to nothing. The Soviets got very little out of these negotiations that could have done them any good. They got so worn down by the U.S., and especially by the Europeans, that the declaration, which had begun as the substitute for this general declaration and non-aggression pact that the Soviets had long wanted, came down eventually to the statement that the parties agreed that they would not assault the frontiers of other states. That not only says almost nothing, but the use of the word "assault" in English is very bizarre, and doesn't sound right. What happened there is that that was the word the Soviets used in their English version of their own proposal. So we decided, cleverly, that the Soviets didn't know how to write English, and we would just leave them with their own words. That would make the whole thing even more ridiculous.

And finally, the Russians actually had some problems with respect to all of this. While the Helsinki declaration dealing with international relations and the principal relations among states, (or however it was entitled), didn't go beyond anything that was said in the U.N. charter or in other U.N. declarations, the fact that it was negotiated among these European states, east and west and others, gave it a kind of symbolism in Eastern Europe which the U.N. document didn't have. You suddenly had Helsinki groups spreading all over Eastern Europe. These were reformists, who really became a thorn in the side of the Eastern European communist governments, as well as the Soviet Union. So, all of this came out far better than one might have expected. It was, as I indicated, basically a declaratory type of exercise and didn't result in any hard agreement. But the Soviets probably came out with the shorter end of the stick.

Q: Some people have called this one of the factors causing the breakup of the Soviet Union as it did allow a cover for dissidents and all.

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: And the Soviets were never really able to deal with this.

FLOYD: They had great trouble dealing with it. And, as I said, they got very little out of it. There was a specific area where this really did hurt the Russians. This is interesting. I was not then involved in Europe; I was following this from this country. But, we all

remember that at a given point the East Germans, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, were suddenly trying to leave East Germany in much larger numbers than before. This was a real problem for the East Germans and, therefore, for the Russians. One of the things the East Germans were doing was to get into Czechoslovakia in some fashion; but then, the Czechs, who had a very hard-line communist government, wouldn't allow them to go across the border from Czechoslovakia into Germany.

So this stream of potential refugees from East Germany got itself diverted into Hungary. And from Hungary, you can cross the border into Austria, which some of them were doing. So the East Germans got furious and, of course, the Soviets also got furious at the Hungarians for allowing this, and protested saying, "We have these agreements which require us to honor each others' political concerns, and so forth." And the response of the Hungarians was, "Yes, but there's this international treaty which overrides this, the Helsinki Agreement, that talks about the freer movement of people. So we can't do anything about this." One thing wrong with the argument is that the Helsinki Agreement was never a treaty. But never mind; it made the Hungarians feel more comfortable in allowing the East Germans on; so sure, that was a major factor.

Q: At the time that you were dealing with this off and on, did you have the feeling that this was not number one on the priority with Henry Kissinger and company?

FLOYD: Oh, very much so. Henry never understood it, really. He wasn't interested in it; he didn't ever really get his mind around it. It was generally assumed that our negotiators in Helsinki were expected, certainly by the Russians and maybe also by Henry, I don't know to what extent this might have been true, to simply give away the ball game right there, quickly. That didn't happen; and the Russians were fairly disturbed by this, apparently. They made their objections to Washington; but, Henry was not about to do anything which would publicly show his hand in this, because he realized that whatever he might think of this whole process, it was the only détente initiative that the Western Europeans had available to them at that time.

Many of the Europeans were involved in the MBFR negotiations – the force reduction negotiations, but that was kind of low-profile and didn't attract much public interest. But the Helsinki negotiations were a highly public thing, and the Europeans didn't want anybody to give away the store openly in public. In fact, as I indicated earlier, they were much firmer about much of this stuff. So, the suspicion of what Henry Kissinger might do if he ever got his hands on the process was such that when the so-called Geneva phase, the second phase of this story after Helsinki – Helsinki worked out the agenda; Geneva negotiated all of the texts which fell under it – started, we in European affairs decided we were not going to give our negotiator any written instructions as doing so would have meant clearing it with the National Security Council staff, and that would have invited the kind of interest from Henry Kissinger we didn't want. We just let it start, to let it keep a low profile. We just explained to him what the issues were and so forth.

Some of the traditional career diplomats who went over as deputy head of delegation and

often head of delegation, were stunned by this whole approach; they couldn't conceive of such an arrangement. They were appalled by it, so they didn't stay any longer than they had to. However, we had a third-ranking member of the delegation over there who knew the issues and was very active, and he filled in.

Q: Who was that?

FLOYD: Jack, John Maresca. He was there for a while, and I went over later as the deputy head of delegation.

Q: Some time ago I interviewed George Vest. George said he was one of the professionals who was there and that he would find out from the Swedes or somebody like that, that Henry Kissinger had told Dobrynin, who was the Soviet ambassador, who had told the East German ambassador, who then told the Swedish ambassador that he really didn't think much of this whole process and all that – in other words, being undercut at home.

FLOYD: Yes. George was never that specific with me. I was in Helsinki for part of the time while George was deputy. I can't say that George ever said anything like that to me. Everybody involved knew that this was the situation. I don't know how, possibly by osmosis, but everybody understood that George would probably be under some pressure. George never complained about it; he was very professional and handled it admirably. Yes, that was the understanding.

We did not, as a matter of fact, play that active a role in Helsinki. We began to play a more active role toward the end of it. The whole thing in Helsinki lasted about six months. After we were well into it, I assume that George felt that Henry Kissinger would have long since realized that he couldn't simply give the thing away, and felt more secure in seeing the U.S. delegation take a more activist role. So we did, toward the end of the Helsinki phase, become more active.

Q: But, in many ways, this was, in our perspective at least, a start, a way to let the Europeans do something.

FLOYD: Well, yes, but I wouldn't phrase it that way. They had a great yearning to do something and to be seen by their own public as doing something; so, we recognized that it would be very difficult to keep them away from this. Our effort was to get them on board with an agenda which was reasonably balanced and which had some things in it which pointed to the difficulties of East-West relations and not just to those areas of common interest. That particular agenda item was the one dealing with freer movement; this was a constant reminder that there was still a Berlin Wall, there was still barbed wire; and, we largely succeeded in that. And, much to the Soviets' disgust, they found that if they were going to have this conference, they were going to have to give us what was then called the third basket, or the third agenda item, which the Soviets referred to as cultural relations, basically, and the West referred to as freedom of movement.

But Henry liked mutual balanced force reduction, because that allowed him to say that we can't reduce our forces in Europe, and that we're trying to negotiate a mutual, balanced force reduction, and that if you in the Congress pull our forces out, then you're undermining the reduction. He liked that; he was deeply involved in SALT, of course. But this other thing, was, as far as he was concerned, a distraction; he didn't understand it. He was suspicious of anything which was operating outside of his total control on the U.S. side; and, he never took total control of this. This was partly thanks to the scheming of people who were in the European bureau at the time and didn't want him in on the effort, because we knew that in NATO itself, during the run-up to the Helsinki talks and after they had begun, it would have been disastrous if the U.S. hadn't played a part in developing these positions globally. The Allies would have been very disturbed by our lack of any sort of participation. The word would have gotten out, and it could have become a nasty irritant in our relations with our Western European allies.

So we were determined to keep Henry, to the extent that we could, away from things. And we were able to protect ourselves, protect our flank, so to speak, by getting William Rogers involved. He was a friend of Nixon's and an accomplished lawyer, but this sort of stuff didn't interest him very much. But he did want to sort of go through the motions of being Secretary of State, and this particular undertaking offered him that opportunity. He could make trips to Europe, and do this, that and the other. He went to all the NATO meetings, of course, and he began to look upon this as his thing. So, while he was never very assertive about it and never really understood it much, we were able to use his involvement as a kind of buffer; Henry didn't want to take him on directly, let's put it that way. And as long as Rogers was standing there and nominally involved, that made it easier for us to keep the National Security Council staff out of things.

Q: Such is the development of foreign policy.

FLOYD: That's right. Well, coming back from Europe, actually, after the NATO ministerial, the alliance did accept the notion of preparing for the talks in Helsinki. People were saying, "My God! How are we going to work on this? How are we going to prepare these negotiations through the politically complicated process of NATO if the NSC staff is going to get involved? They'll never understand it; they'll never clear anything, and nothing will ever get out." And I suggested that it was simple: what you had to do was to get William Rogers to write a memorandum to the President in which he said, in effect, that, "I'm going to be preparing for these negotiations, and here are the kinds of positions we think we will be taking," and just send it. And then Henry would be blocked.

And that's what happened. We began to do things. We got Rogers to sign this thing, he was delighted; he didn't know we were trying to conspire against Henry Kissinger, or maybe he did and rather liked the idea, I guess. It kept him front and center. And then we just began doing things. We set up multi-agency task forces to deal with all these separate agenda items and began to develop positions. The NSC staff eventually came and sat in on those, but they didn't interfere too much. We were able, at least, to keep up

appearances.

Q: A world that's not unknown to the United States.

FLOYD: Certainly not.

Q: Well, you came out of the Senior Seminar when?

FLOYD: It must have been '76, and, at that time, I was deeply involved in a divorce. I couldn't think of going overseas as I had young children I wanted to be close to. So my assignments became less interesting thereafter.

Q: After dealing with this, where did you go? What did you do?

FLOYD: I had a couple of special projects. Then, eventually, I was assigned as foreign policy advisor to the commandant of the Coast Guard. Then, after a couple of years of doing that, I became a member of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service for a couple of years, and then I retired.

Q: Well, let's talk a little about the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard came front and center prior to your time there. This was when an Estonian or Lithuanian seaman jumped ship and was picked up by the Coast Guard and they returned him to the Soviets. This caused all sorts of political hell up and down the line because it was felt that there was not a good system of protecting somebody who had done that. I take it that was one of the reasons for the creation of this job, wasn't it?

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

FLOYD: Well, maybe four years after this. That was what brought about the creation of the position. A couple of people preceded me in this job. Then the position became very active during the Mariel episode when Castro dumped all of his people...

Q: This was '77, or '78.

FLOYD: Something like that. I came in after that. I was there from about '78 to '80

Q: What were you doing with the Coast Guard?

FLOYD: I worked on special projects that the commandant was interested in. Basically, once the Cuban thing was over, and this one-time horrific event people had done things to avoid any possibility of, including establishing that position so it would never happen again, there wasn't much excuse for that position, quite frankly. We had to create things to do. The Coast Guard, strangely enough, has got a lot of international involvement

through its aids to navigation, through its search and rescue obligations, and through its environmental side of things encompassing their clean-up responsibilities for offshore ocean oil spills and things like that.

This particular commandant that I worked for wanted to use the foreign involvement of the Coast Guard to raise the political profile of the Coast Guard, thereby helping them with their eternal budgetary problems. So he wanted to be active internationally, which he managed to do up to a point. He traveled down to the Caribbean frequently. The British Caribbean islands at that time had become independent. We had the Cuban problem and the problem of Grenada, where a small force of about 40 men moved into Grenada and established a kind of quote, military dictatorship, unquote, that terrified all kinds of independent countries around them. So they welcomed any attention they could get from the United States. They looked up to the Coast Guard commandant as a father figure. The kinds of navies, quote unquote, that they had were basically kinds of decrepit coast guards. So the Coast Guard could help them out in various ways – not in terms of foreign aid, but with advice and with technical training and whatnot.

So the commandant built on that and decided that he wanted to have a conference of Caribbean coast guards. This was the most bizarre conference you can possibly imagine, because he had to invite everybody and there was nothing much to do, frankly. But the commandant wanted it, so we had to have it. And I had to invent an agenda and invent materials to put into the agenda and organize the whole thing.

He wanted to go to China and he went. The Coast Guard has some function with respect to internal river navigation in the United States, and the Chinese had the same problems. And there were some areas of interest for the Chinese, and the Chinese were at this time in the early stages of the Deng Xiao Ping era, and were looking to be open to the United States, so they welcomed our coming. We had some nice talks with the Chinese. I don't think anything much ever came of it, but it was not utterly ridiculous to be doing that kind of thing. So that's the way it developed. I kept busy on these and other things that would come up.

Q: So you ended up at the Board of Examiners.

FLOYD: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of the board you were dealing with, of the system as it keeps evolving? You retired when?

FLOYD: '84, June of '84. I would have been there from about June of '82 to '84.

Q: What was your impression of the system for examining the potential candidates coming into the Foreign Service?

FLOYD: I think the system was really good. We had a professional testing agency that

developed the written exam. I think they did a pretty professional job of it. That was a weeding-out exam. Then they had the oral exam, which is a one-day exam, which we conducted. That's what we were there for. It gave a different view of the candidates. The things that went on were sensible, in my opinion.

We interviewed, there were two-on-one interviews of each candidate. Then, in the afternoon, we would grade them. We worked out our own questions to ask them on the various things. The candidates were required to do a couple of essay-type productions to show another dimension of their skills. The testing agency invented a kind of international scenario in a mythical country where certain problems would come up, and the group would meet as a so-called embassy task force to discuss these problems. This gave you a sense of how well they could handle themselves in a group setting, and how much practical common sense they had. I thought it was quite good. I wouldn't have changed much about it. It changed later for essentially political reasons, I think.

Q: How about the candidates? What were your impressions of the people you were seeing?

FLOYD: We had a tiny minority of brilliant people. Overall, I was not very favorably impressed with the bulk of the candidates. I thought that they were unable to organize their thoughts very well. You asked them a general question and most of them found it very difficult to develop a coherent train of thought. One thing would lead to another. They had (I'm using a phrase which I didn't invent) what you might call 'magpie brains.' That is, their heads were full of pieces of twigs and pretty colored glass which they dropped in their nests to create a pattern there.

One thing that we did after the oral exam was to conduct a so-called final scoring and assessment in which you put together their results in the oral and written exams, and whatever outcome there had been from the background investigation. Among the documents that you would often look at in making this final assessment would be their college transcript. I was appalled at the sort of courses that these people were able to take. No focus; there were all kinds of bizarre titles of courses and you could hardly figure out what they were about. If they majored in history, there would be one course about the major restoration of Japan and something else about colonial Africa. The course requirements were pretty bizarre and jumbled. And, even if they seemed to have a coherent major, the courses would be so scattered around that it would be impossible for anybody to get any kind of world view or any kind of coherent body of knowledge out of that exposure. In my opinion, this reflected in the performance of these people in the exam. They were not terribly articulate. Essay writing tended to be bad. Granted they were under pressure as they had limited time, and they had to pick a subject with which they were familiar and then write about it. However, most everybody would write a stream-of-consciousness piece, which has no beginning, no end and no middle. Although the sentences were sometimes nicely constructed and so forth, the pieces just didn't have much substance.

Q: What were our efforts at the time in recruiting women and minorities?

FLOYD: There was a lot of effort to get women and minorities in. For a while, minorities didn't have to meet quite the same standards in the written components of the exam that the regular exam-takers, that is to say, whites did. They were allowed to come in with a slightly lower score, provided they acquitted themselves well in the orals and they could get in.

With both minorities and women, there were active recruitment efforts to get them interested at the colleges where they were studying so that they would apply for the exam. There were no quotas at the time, or later; although, we had some guidelines. If not enough minorities and women passed, then there was great discomfort all around. So, while there were no quotas in the legal sense, there were some *de facto* quotas.

And later on, after I left, the whole written exam was turned around. Before, the women had trouble passing it. Later, a class action suit was brought by females: too much of the exam dealt with the sort of things that a lot of women don't find congenial, such as deadly factual stuff, economics, and so forth and not enough of it was discursive and human-oriented. As a result, the written exam was radically changed, so that the passing percentages were almost equal. That was after I left.

Q: So you retired in...

FLOYD: June of '84.

Q: Well, this is probably a good place to stop.

FLOYD: I enjoyed it.

Q: Great.

End of interview