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

AMBASSADOR BRANDON H. GROVE, JR

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Brandon, as we mentioned before, this interview is going to be focused more on the role of ambassadors, training both career and non-career, because you have been in a key position to observe this. I wonder if you could go into a little of your background as far as ambassadorships.

GROVE: I'd be glad to. For the past two and a half years I've been director of the Foreign Service Institute. This institute runs the Ambassadorial Seminar. Before that, I was a deputy assistant secretary in ARA responsible for Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America; consul general in Jerusalem from `1980 to '83; and ambassador to Zaire from '84 to '87. In the time that I have been at FSI, which is pretty much synonymous with the Bush years, we must have had some ten seminars of about 12 participants each, with spouses, which means that Tony Motley, who is the co- chairman of the seminar, and I have provided training to some 100 or so of our present ambassadors.

Q: What is the origin of this ambassadorial training? I mean, ambassadors have been with us since 1775 in one form or another, ministers in one guise or another, and it's been sort of a grab bag of how they're selected.

GROVE: I've gone through our files on that subject. The idea seems to have originated with Larry Eagleburger, in August of 1976, when he was still the Under Secretary for management in the department. He talked with George Springsteen, then the director of the Foreign Service Institute, and asked George to develop a brief seminar that would acquaint newly designated ambassadors with their responsibilities. Very shortly thereafter, there was a change in our own government as a result of the elections.

Q: This would be the Carter administration coming in after the Ford administration.

GROVE: That's correct. That would be 1976, and this began in '77. George worked on this at the Foreign Service Institute and talked to Larry's successor, as Under Secretary for management, Dick Moose, with the result that the first three seminars were held in 1977, in May, June, and July. Nothing like that had been done before.

Q: Ever?

GROVE: Ever. There had always been a briefing of ambassadors, but not the notion that ambassadors, and from the outset their spouses, should sit around the table in a give-and-take seminar setting and talk about ambassadorial functions. This was a new idea.

The sessions were planned to last two days and, after the first ones, were reduced to a day and a half (which I find a little surprising, but it's true).

The purposes that were stated in setting up the initial ambassadorial seminars were to train new ambassadors in their authorities and responsibilities; to describe the personnel assignment process; to emphasize EEO; to talk about...

Q: EEO being?

GROVE: Equal employment opportunities and fairness to women and minorities within the system. Relations with other agencies in the field were discussed. Consular matters were. And, interestingly, there was a focus on terrorism. These are very contemporary subjects for us today.

The seminar began with co-chairs. In the first several seminars, the pattern was, as it is now, to have somebody from the Foreign Service and a non-career ambassador jointly serve as co- chairs. The first co-chair was Ambassador Dean Brown, and the person from outside the service was Ann Armstrong, who had recently been our ambassador to Great Britain.

Q: And she was a political appointee.

GROVE: She was a political appointee.

They devised a session that would have a focus in particular on what they called "Managing a Mission--the First Three Months." And that, I am sure, addressed the many things that a new chief of mission and spouse would want to think about before arriving at post, all the way from internal relations within the embassy and the American community to the external aspects of their work. And there are parallels, as to what we do today along those lines.

There was also a workshop called "FSI Family Workshop." It was held separately for the spouses, while the ambassadors- designate had their afternoon of general briefing at the CIA. We maintain something similar today. The focus for the spouses, in 1977, included their involvement in the community in the host country and in the American community; a session on stress management; and discussion of official representation.

There was an ambassadorial handbook compiled, which was a notebook of various papers and copies of regulations, a copy of the president's letter to ambassadors, that would be useful.

Q: Could you explain what the president's letter to ambassadors is?

GROVE: This is a letter which originated at the beginning of the Kennedy administration, in 1961. It was initially an effort of Chester Bowles', who was then the Under Secretary of state (now a position we designate as the deputy secretary). He felt, particularly in the interagency context, that ambassadors should have instructions from the president, in writing, that dealt specifically with their authorities and responsibilities.

This occurred at the same time that, within our concept of how we should manage ourselves, the notion of "country team" evolved. I was at the time a staff aide, and a very junior one, to Ambassador Bowles. After he left his position as Under Secretary, I

remained as staff assistant to George Ball, and then became a special assistant to William H. Orrick, Jr., who was the Under Secretary for management at that time. So I was involved in the question of the letter and the country team concept quite directly.

This letter has had its sequel in every administration since the Kennedy administration, very much the same in its broad outlines, but with some interesting nuances as the years go by, reflecting what a president and National Security Council staff and secretary of state think is particularly important to an ambassador.

The present letter, signed by President Bush, is very recent in origin. It has taken nearly two years to get it approved. For the first time, it has strong emphasis on the reduction of US personnel overseas, on ethical considerations, and the need to manage a mission effectively at a time of decreasing budgetary and human resources. These factors are part of the times in which we live. But every administration has had its letter.

Q: So this letter is one part of the... you were mentioning some other things that are...

GROVE: I was mentioning the briefing book, or as they called it, the Ambassadorial Handbook, that was compiled in those days. I'd be glad to discuss the one that we have now, which, of course, is much more detailed...

Q: Well, we'll come to that later when we get to the... Well, why don't we talk about it now?

GROVE: I should really get a copy, but I can tell you that our focus is very much on ambassadorial authorities, as I will emphasize when I talk about what we do in the seminar now. The leading tab in there deals with authority under the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the current president's letter to ambassadors, and the letter from the secretary of state to chiefs of mission on their responsibilities and on developing goals and work plans.

Q: You know, Brandon, you're talking on this, you're saying it's a day and a half. They have a briefing at the CIA. There are roundtable discussions with the spouses included. All these matters. Each one is a pretty weighty proposition. In a day and a half?

GROVE: What I'm talking about, or perhaps I haven't been clear, is what they did in 1977. I have the first schedule and some notes that were made, in our files, about how that went. It's very different today. I was trying to describe how it began. It is now, at the present time, a five-day seminar for the first week, with a component for the second week as well.

Q: So this was the first. Was this designed, in the '76-'77 period, these first ones, were these just for political ambassadors or for all ambassadors?

GROVE: These were for all ambassadors and spouses, as I said earlier. An interesting question becomes the point at which you surface an ambassador-designate and say that this person is ready for the ambassadorial seminar.

When they first started out, the criterion was that you had to have full confirmation by the Senate. That's not just the Foreign Relations Committee, it's full confirmation by the Senate. Not a very good idea, because an ambassador-designate is well along the way to having worked into learning about the post, and is then under the pressures of leaving, probably within a few days after confirmation, to take up his or her duties. That was pretty quickly recognized, and, several years thereafter, the standard for being asked to attend this seminar became receipt of agrément from the host government.

Q: Agrément is the acceptance by the host government. The host government has a veto on who should be an ambassador, isn't that right?

GROVE: That is correct. The agrément is their formal acceptance of a proposed successor to the present ambassador.

That used to be the guidelines. We've gone even further now. We normally take people into the ambassadorial seminar when they have had their financial and security clearances, but before they are announced by the White House, in almost every case, and often before agrément is received. There are some risks in this. And indeed there have been one or two embarrassments over the past couple of years, in one instance, over agrément. In other instances (and there are only a few), for one reason or another a candidate has been asked to withdraw or has been withdrawn.

Doing this earlier in the process means you can take more time with the ambassador-designate and the information that you impart can be digested and applied in the course of Washington consultations.

As you know, there is not very much that an ambassador can do outside our State Department building before the White House announcement. The White House announcement occurs after certain internal factors have been satisfied. I am referring to the security clearances that are needed, the financial and ethical investigations, and obtaining agrément. When the White House has been informed that these procedures have occurred and are in order, the president sends the nomination to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Simultaneous with this process, is the announcement, by the press office in the White House, of the ambassadorial nomination. So these two things happen together. It's a very important benchmark in the process.

But the judgment was made, and I think it's a correct judgment, not to wait for all of that, but to get to people earlier.

Q: In the earlier training of ambassadors, somehow I have the impression that Shirley Temple Black was concerned with this early on in some capacity.

GROVE: Yes. Let me tell you a little about the evolution of it. I said that it began with Dean Brown and Ann Armstrong. The first few sessions of the seminar were run by them as co- chairs. Shirley Temple Black soon became involved in this process and ran seminars with David Newsom, for example, and also Dean Brown.

Q: I might mention for the record, Shirley Temple Black was ambassador to Ghana and representative to the United Nations and chief of protocol. As of 1990, she is ambassador to Czechoslovakia.

GROVE: That's right.

Q: And David Newsom was Under Secretary for political affairs and a career Foreign Service officer.

GROVE: And ambassador to a number of posts. The formula, for instance, when I took the seminar in 1984, was that Shirley Temple Black and David Newsom were its mainstays. From the outset, the director of FSI has involved himself. It depends on the degree of commitment that the director wants to devote to this effort as to how deep that involvement will be. But there has always been a considerable involvement.

When Shirley Temple Black left, and this coincides with my own arrival at FSI, I had to make the decision as to whether we wanted to find someone like her to be the anchor person, or whether we could run the seminar with just the person who was non-career--in this case, Ambassador Langhorne A. Motley--and myself. From the outset, I decided on the latter. Tony Motley, who is a former ambassador to Brazil, and then became assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs in the early years of the Reagan administration, has been involved with this seminar since July of 1985. And, since July of 1988, when I came to FSI, he and I have run it jointly.

Q: Well, then the evolution of this, it started out with a day and a half back in '77. Were you aware of any sort of feedback on this process? Particularly I'm thinking about the political ambassador. Because, after all, the normal Foreign Service officer has at least, if nothing else, understudied ambassadors or watched ambassadors in operation. But many political appointees have never been up against anything in the foreign affairs apparatus before.

GROVE: There has been a formal process of feedback since the first seminars. We attach a great deal of importance to that. We ask for the responses of participants, including spouses, to every single topic that is addressed and has a speaker, within the present structure of the ambassadorial seminar. I can tell you that since 1985, at least, because Tony and I discuss this all the time, in the time that he's been with it, no two seminars have ever been the same. Of the ten or so that I mentioned in which I've been directly involved, we are constantly fine-tuning, depending on the emphasis that we think needs to

be stressed. We base a lot of our decisions for change on the specific responses that we ask people to provide us. We ask them to be candid and tell us where the weak spots are.

Q: Well, how has it evolved now? It started with the one and a half day, and we're now talking about a much longer period of time.

GROVE: At the present time, the seminar is a nearly two- week experience for the ambassadors-designate; slightly different for their spouses. It has also undergone a change in the last nine months or so.

When this administration first came to office, there was a ballooning of political appointees, which is not surprising. The membership of our first four or five seminars was overwhelmingly non- career. There were also some seasoned and distinguished career ambassadors--some of them new, some of them taking the seminar for the second time because of changing circumstances--who were in each of these.

I say this because we initially conceived of the seminar as five days, focused on what you need to do, what you need to know to do your job right as a chief of mission. Since those first five seminars, the tables have turned. The present seminars are made up almost exclusively of career people. Tony Motley and I have found, as a consequence, that we can shorten such subjects as: Managing Your Mission; The Role of the DCM; The Organization and Structure of an Embassy Abroad and what this means in terms of Washing-ton agencies. We were easily able to reduce this by a day.

Q: This, by the way, reflects really the appointment process, doesn't it? I mean, when each political administration comes in, they always have a series of political appointments to be made. And then that process sort of peters out after awhile. It moves into the more, you might say, mundane people going off to the often smaller posts, in some more difficult countries, where it tends to be more career types.

GROVE: That's right. And that's a common experience with changes of administrations, even when the party is the same. To say the obvious, the Bush administration is as Republican as the Reagan administration. Many people thought that there would not be as clean a sweep of political appointees as indeed there has been. On the ambassadorial circuit, very few of the Reagan appointees were extended. Mike Mansfield, in Japan, of course comes to mind. But the overwhelming number of political appointees, as such, were people who had come from the Bush camp. The phenomenon, however, of an initial surge of political appointees, which throws the numbers off for people who follow such things, is very common in any change of administration.

Q: So this is something you can almost anticipate in advance.

GROVE: Yes, you can, and it causes you to think differently about how you want to present the material that people need to know.

I might say that we debated (and this occurred, I understand, also in 1977) separating out the career and the non- career ambassadors into separate kinds of seminars. That was not done, and I think it would be a big mistake to do so.

What we try to do, and what Tony Motley does extremely well from his vantage point, is to break down any sense of "We- They", as between the Foreign Service and political appointees, to emphasize that the community of ambassadors is indeed a family, they all have the same presidential commission, and they all have the same responsibilities under our Constitution. It would be a great mistake to break them out along these lines of distinction.

At the same time, we probably belabor some of the organizational and structural questions more than a career group of people would have preferred. And we also spend a lot of time being sensitive to explaining what our many acronyms mean-- something career people already know.

Q: This is why I keep interrupting you, to explain what acronyms are. Of course, you know, I mean, really, as an American institution, political appointed ambassadors have a far longer historical record than career officers. I mean, they represent the historical continuity of American foreign policy much more than a career type.

GROVE: They are the norm. I mentioned earlier that I worked with Chester Bowles when he was the Under Secretary of state. He initiated some extraordinary appointments. In fact, one of the things that he, I think, will be most remembered for is the amount of time and attention he paid, with the blessing of President Kennedy, in the early months of the Kennedy administration, to finding the best-qualified people outside of the Foreign Service to fill certain key posts.

Q: I think all of us will remember.

GROVE: I can cite some examples.

Q: Yes, would you?

GROVE: He selected Ambassador Reischauer to go to Japan.

Q: From Harvard University. His wife is Japanese. He was a scholar of the Far East, spoke Japanese.

GROVE: That's right. The president of Amherst, Charles Cole, went to Chile. The president of Oberlin, William Stevenson, went to the Philippines. The Harvard economist, Lincoln Gordon, went to Brazil. The president of the American University of Cairo, John Badeau, became our ambassador to Egypt.

Within the Foreign Service, for example, Bowles brought back George Kennan and sent him to Yugoslavia. The editor of *Look*, William Attwood, went to Guinea and, I believe, later to Kenya. Teodoro Moscoso went to Venezuela; he had been on the governor of Puerto Rico's staff. Ben Stephansky went to Bolivia. James Loeb to Peru.

Q: Ben Stephansky came out of the labor movement.

GROVE: That's correct.

Q: And had been an intimate of many of the leaders within the labor movement who later moved into strong political positions within Latin America, too.

GROVE: That's right. Bowles proposed James Bartlow Martin for the Dominican Republic. These are appointments in which he took, as I said...

Q: Galbraith to India. Did you mention...

GROVE: That is more President Kennedy's. That was less Bowles. Galbraith was really an appointment of the president's, in a personal sense. I can't think of any parallel, since Bowles's time, however, for an involvement by a secretary or deputy secretary of this depth, in trying to find, within American society, people of genuine distinction to send to key posts overseas.

Q: I wonder if we could develop this a little. You were there as a young assistant in Bowles's office. What prompted him to, say, go to presidents of universities or distinguished scholars to go as ambassadors. These obviously were not political payoffs. But why there, and not just saying: Well, let's just have a Latin American specialist within the Foreign Service? I mean, why did he take this route?

GROVE: He was a man of a very wide range of acquaintances. He had been the founding partner, along with Bill Benton, of Benton and Bowles, the advertising agency. He had been governor of Connecticut; a congressman from the Second District of Connecticut; a person very active in our public life. He had, by that time, also had his first ambassadorship to India. These were people he knew. Within the Democratic Party, he had been chairman of the platform committee and therefore very much involved with the ideological content and issue content of the Kennedy campaign. In each case, these were people whom he knew and knew well.

I think you could say that they were also people who would feel beholden to him for their appointments, recognizing that it was his initiative that had placed the hand on their shoulder and caused them to receive these appointments.

I think he was both reaching for the best, but also trying to build up a cadre of like-minded people, particularly in the developing world (and this list is exclusively in the developing world), because that's where so much of his interests lay.

George Ball, who was already in the department as the Under Secretary for economic affairs and then succeeded Bowles as the Under Secretary of the department, was more concerned with appointments in Europe, particularly western Europe, in which the European Community was evolving under Jean Monnet's intellectual leadership.

Q: You know, looking at it from a different angle, you could say there could be also a good, solid political thing, and this would add lustre to the Kennedy regime, by the fact that one was reaching, being different rather than going for, you know, the political types, that there was something different about the Kennedy administration process. Going for the best rather than those who got it through financial contributions or something like that.

GROVE: It was often a quest for the best and brightest, if one can use that phrase. It was also a reflection of the enthusiasm many people felt in those times, that government could be a good thing and could do things right and well.

Q: We can always backtrack any time you want, Brandon. But looking at the process as you've seen it, when you came, for example, you took something before you went out to Zaire?

GROVE: Yes, I took, it seems to me, a three- or four-day seminar, along with other newly designated...

Q: This was when?

GROVE: This was in 1984, approximately July of 1984.

Q: How did this serve you? You're a career officer, you've been around. You'd seen embassies at work and all. How helpful was this to you before going to Zaire?

GROVE: It was very helpful and, in fact, I wish I had paid even closer attention than I did. Like others of us who are career people, I think I probably underestimated how different the chief of mission function is from anything else you might have done. I had been, in effect, a chief of mission in Jerusalem and a DCM in East Berlin. I think only when I arrived in Kinshasa, and had the experience of being an ambassador at a large post, did I realize its complexity and the importance of telling people who go out as ambassadors as much as possible about the different kinds of things they're going to have to confront.

Let me say, in that connection, that the premise of the present ambassadorial seminar is this: Unless you have already been a chief of mission, the job of ambassador is going to be different from anything you have done before. Whether you're in the Foreign Service or whether you're in private life. Whether you've been a governor, or head of a corporation, or DCM in Paris. The chief of mission job is different, and the seminar is going to discuss what is different about that job.

Q: Could you give some idea of what is different about being an ambassador?

GROVE: Initially, the most important difference, I think, is the responsibility and authority that you have under our Constitution. Nowhere else in our Constitution, nowhere else in our system of regulations, of presidential instructions, are the functions of a senior position so well spelled out. It is a very wide-ranging authority in which to act. I think that if you read the succession of presidential letters to ambassadors that we discussed earlier, you will find that, from the outset, the ambassador is given everything he or she needs to do a job vigorously within the mission and in relation to the host country. It's more than being captain of a ship.

I always, on our first day, present the ambassadorial authorities portion myself, and am struck by the specificity of these responsibilities. They have no parallel in our government. I think that's the biggest single difference between being an ambassador and being something else. The deputy secretary doesn't have anything that specific. Nor indeed does the secretary of state, that specifically spelled out. Nor do the assistant secretaries, for example, within our organization. It remains a function uniquely defined.

Q: Well, you're talking about these responsibilities, and, after all, ambassadors are usually far from Washington, and so in many ways their responsibility is greater, because they are in charge in a foreign country, and yet we have people coming up two tracks: one, people have spent maybe 20 years at least getting a feel for the environment and all that, and then you have people coming out from a completely different background. I'm speaking about the political appointees. Obviously, some of them have been in and out of foreign affairs, but some have never been there. And all of a sudden they are given this overwhelming authority. What is your impression of how they, when it's sort of spelled out to them, what is the response, here, during the seminar?

GROVE: Do you mean specifically to the people who are non- career?

Q: Non-career, yes. Could we talk about that a bit?

GROVE: Could we talk about it in the sense of what traits any chief of mission--career or non-career--should have? In other words, what are the characteristics in common? Then, what are some of the differences between career and non-career? (At a high level of generalization, let me stress.) And see where that takes us?

Q: If you could also give any specific examples, it always adds a little more meat. We're talking about some of the qualities of career and non-career in dealing with the tasks at hand, from your observation of running these courses and also as an ambassador, too.

GROVE: There are some qualities, and these wouldn't be exhaustive, but there are some qualities that perhaps any ambassador should have. I believe that many of these apply to the spouse as well. And, just to be suggestive, let me try to enumerate a few.

I think any ambassador needs to have intelligence, integrity, dignity, and cross-cultural sensitivity. Such a person should also reflect openness and mirror the values in our own society. An ambassador should have knowledge of the country and the region to which he or she is accredited and the language of that region. This knowledge should include knowing the leaders and not just people in government, those from other walks of life in that country, among them the young people, the up-and-coming people in that country. There should be an understanding of the political and social systems, the history of the country, its customs, its values, its current issues in national life, the tensions within that country. And, on the other side of the coin, there should also be, in the ambassador's mind an understanding of that country's perception of the United States, in the ways that I have just enumerated.

I think that an ambassador should be forceful and persuasive in presenting US views and policies within the country--and not just to the government--but out in the countryside as well. An ambassador should represent the whole of our nation and be able to do that in a number of areas and not just narrowly in politics and economics. A chief of mission should have clout in Washington on these matters and leadership within his embassy or her embassy, as well as leadership in the role of unelected mayor of the American community abroad.

These are some, at least, of the characteristics that any ambassador--whether career or non-career--should have in rather full measure.

Q: Well, I mean, this is all well and good, but this is a, you know, very major check-off list. Coming, say, from the Foreign Service ranks, and I'm speaking as a 30-year veteran of the Foreign Service, I'm not sure that all ambassadors who are career meet this, but at least they have gone through a vetting process and all, so they have been exposed to some of this. But the selection of political ambassadors for the most part has absolutely nothing to do with these qualities you're mentioning. It's because of political contributions, closeness to powerful figures within the party in power. So you're dealing with pretty raw material. I mean, some of it is absolutely outstanding, but other than that... When you set up your program, you must have a tremendous range. I mean some people want to make sure that they are assigned a place in the Caribbean because they do like to swim. Others want to get to a difficult post and really roll up their sleeves and go to it. I'm speaking about the political appointees. How do you deal with this disparate group who may or may not come close to this list of qualities?

GROVE: It is a disparate group on both sides of the ledger. There are effective non-career political candidates. There are effective Foreign Service candidates. And there are ineffective people in both categories.

I am not one who has paid much attention to the numbers, for example, in terms of the ratio between Foreign Service appointees and those that are non-career. What matters more than these numbers is that, in each and every case, the best possible person has been

picked to represent the United States in a particular country. That's where the issue lies. If you use that as a yardstick, I think it is not too hard, in most cases, to measure how we come out: and that is not a monopoly on one side of the line or the other when it comes to career and non-career people.

Among non-career people, without going into any detail at all, names like Mike Mansfield, who was for a long time our ambassador to Japan; John Sherman Cooper, who opened our embassy in East Berlin; Elliot Richardson in London; Chester Bowles, on his first tour in India, in particular come to my mind. The list is a long one of extremely effective people. You and I would have no trouble, also, talking about people within the Foreign Service who have been very effective, whether at large or small posts.

I am impressed nevertheless, sitting in that seminar and looking around the room, by the unevenness in talent and, I think, a process of selection within the Foreign Service itself, that does not seem in every case to produce the best- qualified person whom we have in our own system for a particular post. I mean, it's quite evident when you are there.

Q: Well, let's talk a little about from the Foreign Service point of view. I've been doing this oral history program in which we have concentrated mainly on ambassadors, and the number of ambassadors who are serving in, say, particularly Africa, whose field has been Southeast Asia or Latin American, but there is no room for them there, so they are given, as a sort of a tombstone appointment, an ambassadorship to a small African post. They obviously can do the job, but they're not bringing any wealth of knowledge about Africa to them. And there are other ones of this nature. What's your impression of the selection process within the Foreign Service for ambassadorships?

GROVE: I think that process has been uneven throughout each administration. There is a tendency to reward people who have done well, as you have just suggested, by giving them embassies in which they might not even be particularly interested or for which they might not be particularly well qualified.

This is a huge dilemma to the Bureau of European Affairs, for example, whose posts have almost exclusively gone to political appointees, no matter which party is in power. Eastern Europe used to be the preserve left to Foreign Service people, but this is no longer true.

I think you probably should talk to people who know more about the assignment process than I do as to how these things happen. They vary a great deal. An element in the equation of appointments within our Foreign Service system is the role of the central system versus the geographic bureaus.

Occasionally, one side is predominantly stronger than the other. In the Carter years, I think, for example, the geographic bureaus held sway on many of their own appointments that were non-political. In other administrations and perhaps this one, the central system

plays a larger role. That's an interesting dynamic within our State Department structure itself.

Q: And often it's a reward, not a placement because that's the right person for the job, but it's a reward for previous work done perhaps elsewhere.

GROVE: That is right. And it's a problem to what ought to be a logic to career development within the Foreign Service if so many posts are to go to political appointees and with a great randomness. Some of our very small posts in recent years have gone to political appointees. If you have a system that is as chaotic as that, you are doing damage to the long-term career development and logic of professional development within the Foreign Service itself.

You have someone who has learned a language, for example, knows a lot about the country where it is spoken, is at a place in his career where logically he deserves the most serious consideration for assignment to the capital as ambassador, and a political appointment slides in. This turns the tables on such a person. The chances are that, because a chief of mission assignment is merited, this individual might instead find himself some place for which he is ill prepared.

That is not often recognized as harm to specialized knowledge in languages, in country experience, in knowing leaders, in knowing regions, that so many of our Foreign Service officers really have in abundance. And when the system at the top does have that element of quirkiness, in terms of ambassadorial assignments, things get off the track. I think that some of the unevenness in Foreign Service appointments that one can see on the surface may have to do with the fact that some people themselves are a little ill at ease about where they are going.

Q: Moving to the political appointees, the ones who, let's say, come with little practical experience within the government and all of a sudden are in a position of considerable authority and away from the czar, you might say, long away from the czar (if you're the ambassador somewhere, you're very much in charge), but who also have an ideological bent. We had people who came in, in the Carter administration, thinking that if we're only nice to people, everything will be fine. And then the Reagan administration came in, and the emphasis was much more on, you might say, a toughness. In both cases, there was a suspicion by many of the people that the Foreign Service was either being too soft or too callous. How do you deal with these people? Not the ones who are really well versed in government, who have been in and out, but the ones who come from outside, and particularly those with an ideological bent. How do you deal with them, and what's your impression of them at these seminars?

GROVE: Let me try to answer that by generalizing a little bit about some of the characteristics in non-career people. And, if you want, we could talk about some of the more salient characteristics in career people, recognizing that this is generalization, and

therefore dangerous, but that there are some pluses and minuses that may fit the breed one way or another.

On the question of policy, an ambassador is, after all, supposed to reflect the president personally. This is the personal representative of the president of the United States and therefore of the policy views of the president and of the administration. This is as true of Foreign Service ambassadors as it is of political appointees. You serve a president personally, and you take on the character of the administration as you represent our country abroad, at any given moment and under any given president. This can sometimes be difficult for Foreign Service people who, after all, have their own sets of values and political beliefs. It can cause non-career people to be excessive in their zeal, in an ideological way, in representing the United States abroad, often insensitively when this happens. But at the heart of the matter is that any ambassador is not the Department of State's ambassador but the president's ambassador. And that changes what you do and how you think in a number of ways if you're from the Foreign Service.

You asked me earlier what I thought were some of the things that I hadn't expected when I became a chief of mission, and I mentioned the scope and responsibility of the authorities themselves. I think a second thing is a true awareness of the extent to which you are the spokesman and advocator of the particular administration's views and goals in foreign policy. And you have to accept that. If you can't accept it, then you shouldn't be the chief of mission. Many people don't focus on that.

Q: Sometimes an administration will come in reflecting the president, thinking that if we do such and so, this will work-- if we're tougher or if we're more sensitive or what have you. Yet in some countries this is just going against everything, say, in the Islamic world or in the African world or Latin American world. Where do you stop being the president's spokesman and become the president's advisor, including saying: This is fine, this may work in Europe, but it's not going to work in Central Africa or something like that?

GROVE: That's a major responsibility of any ambassador, and I think courage is to be found on both sides. The Foreign Service is often very good at calling it as it is, realizing that this is not necessarily going to make you popular in Washington. It's a responsibility you have. That's why you're there as an ambassador. You're supposed to be able to figure out the environment in which you're functioning abroad and what that means for US interests, and then send it back for the way it is.

Q: Well, in your seminar, do you emphasize this, that you're there to reflect the views of the president, but at the same time you're supposed to tell the president, through the government, how it works in that particular area, and what works and what doesn't work, and how things are?

GROVE: Yes, we do emphasize that. We emphasize that in the context that it's not just the State Department that needs to know this, but so does the full panoply of executive agencies that are involved in foreign affairs.

Sometimes your problems can be very much with the Department of Defense or Treasury, for example. As ambassador, the congressional dimension is yours to cope with as well. That can be a rather large and sometimes troubling element, particularly if there are contentious issues in foreign policy on the Washington scene itself. You have to deal with congressional delegations and, when you're back, sometimes with congressional committees.

Again, I think that one of the very useful functions of an ambassador returning to Washington is to go to these agencies and to these individual senators, congressmen, and their staffs, to help explain what it looks like on the scene, to carry these people along with the administration's policy to the extent it's possible to do so by seeking access and by being open with them and by arguing the logic of what we're trying to get done. At least ideally that's how it ought to work.

Q: In your seminars are there any particular areas where some of the points you're trying to get across sort of stick in the craw of career or non-career people, where you find that there is sort of a resistance or you have trouble getting across, on either side?

GROVE: Perhaps, Stu, I should take a moment to try to think out loud about some of the characteristics sometimes prevalent among career people and non-career people. I talked about what I thought ambassadors should have in common as a base from which to depart. But I have had occasion, over the last two and a half years, to think about the differences, if there are any that can be even vaguely defined, between people who come to these jobs from private life and those within the Foreign Service. If you'd like, I'll be glad to talk about that now.

But let me stress that these aren't hard judgments, these are matters of observation, and they're highly generalized. I want to put in a strong word of caution.

Let me talk first about non-career people who come to us and become ambassadors, and in the sense of pluses and minuses, or strengths and weaknesses.

Very often these people are successes in what they did before, and they're accustomed to success. They have come to public prominence and to a candidate's knowledge because they have been in politics or headed corporations or have done one thing or another that permitted them, for example, to make large contributions to a campaign. The point is that they are used to success.

This can be a minus and a handicap once they are ambassadors if they go to difficult countries. I think one of the toughest things for non-career people to understand is that holding the line, in terms of an American/foreign country relationship, can itself be a good outcome. That surviving real stresses and strains can be a reflection of success in a relationship. People who don't know this by having been in our profession are often shocked that they can't get more done more quickly, and achieve the public recognition

they are used to having, for their work as ambassador. Accolades don't come the same way they have been coming, for a great many of them, up to that point in their lives.

Non-career people are often good with other people. They've got a good sense of public relations. Many of them are extroverted in a positive sense. They have a keen nose for public diplomacy, for dealing with the media. Many of them are smart negotiators, particularly those who have come from the business world. A good sense of how to cut a deal. Many of them are gifted leaders in terms of organization. Sophisticated in the kinds of training that they have had and experience they have had in running things. Not immediately translatable in every way to running an embassy. But there is a lot there of managerial experience and sophistication that can be very impressive. They tend also to be problem solvers. Their instinct is to get things resolved and to move on from there: something, as I suggested earlier, that doesn't happen that readily in foreign policy, where monstrosities like the Berlin Wall go on for decades and you learn to live with them.

At the same time, such people can lack depth in understanding the foreign policy issues themselves, and are often inexperienced in how the bureaucracy works. I think one of the most notable differences between even the very best non-career and Foreign Service ambassadorial appointees is that the Foreign Service side of the house knows the bureaucratic map, and the political people tend to be increasingly horrified as they understand how our bureaucracy either does or does not work.

People who come from outside the Foreign Service, on the other hand, often have a very sophisticated understanding of our political system and how it works. This is true of somebody like Mike Mansfield or John Sherman Cooper.

Q: Both were senators.

GROVE: Both senators. People who have been very much involved in elections, who understand the way other politicians think. To a remarkable extent, such people can quickly empathize with leaders of other countries. They feel that they've shared the same dilemmas, that they have a unique understanding of what political heat is really all about.

On the debit side of the ledger, again, political appointees sometimes come to their jobs with too much enthusiasm about what they can get done, an unrealistic view of the prospects in the relationship, and an insecurity which can be quite translatable to an embassy staff, about their role, about their authority, and about what they should do when they get out of bed in the morning and go to the chancery.

I happen to have served under more political ambassadors than career ambassadors. They need careful handling (and this is where the DCM comes in), careful understanding in terms of what their sense of goals and objectives is, and an understanding, on the part of the DCM and the embassy staff, of the inevitable adjustment that a non-career person goes through in arriving at an embassy if they haven't had a lot to do with embassies

before. That said, non-career people can be a lot of fun at a post, for many of the reasons I mentioned before.

At FSI, we emphasize the DCM function strongly. I alluded to it earlier because the most intimate relationship at an embassy is between the ambassador and DCM. It becomes very complicated, potentially at least, if the ambassador is non- career and inexperienced in foreign affairs. FSI has a two- week, mandatory DCM seminar, in which we talk about many things, but none more strongly than the need for a "psychological contract" between the ambassador and DCM. It's critical, in the relationship, to the prospects for success of an inexperienced political ambassador or a veteran Foreign Service officer.

I'd be glad to say some things now about Foreign Service people, again at a high level of generalization and subjectivity, and with the apologies that are due for this kind of sloppy shorthand.

Q: Please do.

GROVE: Foreign Service people, and I would include in that people who have had extensive experience in foreign affairs in other agencies: USIA, AID, occasionally the military, occasionally CIA (so that's a generic term, and I don't mean it narrowly), very often have great depth in languages, areas, and issues in specific context, when it comes to individual countries or regions, and even globally: a sense of United States purpose worldwide, which they have acquired over many years of experience. They are the experts in a very real way more often than not. They are, if they're any good at all, very savvy about bureaucratic politics. They know how the Sixth and Seventh Floors in the State Department work.

Q: Sixth Floor being where the geographic bureaus are.

GROVE: The assistant secretary level.

Q: And the Seventh Floor being where the secretary of state and his subordinates are.

GROVE: Just as important, they understand the interagency process, the legitimate roles of other departments, sometimes the preponderant role in given issues of departments such as the military, Treasury, Agriculture, for example. Not to the exclusion of the primacy of the secretary of state in foreign affairs. On occasion the legitimate, preponderant interests of other departments and agencies in foreign affairs issues is something clearly understood by good people on the Foreign Service side.

They are experienced in the conduct of diplomacy because, from vice consul on, they have had a number of assignments, probably in different parts of the world. And by the conduct of diplomacy, I mean their being at home within the foreign culture itself. Not just among other diplomats at a post, and not just with the government, but in that culture. They are in fact recognized by everyone in the host country concerned with foreigners as

being professional outsiders from the United States. There are subtleties. I think style is important. And there are certain rules that govern this. We all know people who have this quality of being experienced and at home in the conduct of diplomacy in its largest measure.

Those within the Foreign Service, I think, have a concept of service itself, of service to country, which is very strong. It transcends the partisan feelings that each one of us has, is more extended and expansive than the immediate allegiances of political appointees to any given administration, but does not in any sense mean that the Foreign Service person would be less loyal or less dedicated or less supportive.

It's just qualitatively different, this concept of service, because you've lived it all your life. You've lived it through hardships. You've lived it in the sense of developing a long view of the US purpose and of the nature of US representation, the financing of programs, the structure of embassies, the staffing of embassies. All of these things are matters on which we've worked one way or another in our careers. The communications between embassies and the department, and the whole world of what that relationship means.

To refer to a point I made earlier about non-career people, those in the Foreign Service often recognize that strained relations can be the best you can hope for under the circumstances, and are not so "success driven" as some of their political colleagues can be.

Now there are also, of course, weaknesses that Foreign Service people have and display, and they're not necessarily generic any more than the strengths or weaknesses of political people. But they are, to some extent at least, recognizable in people who have, particularly for the first time, become ambassadors from among our own ranks.

These weaknesses can include micro-managing--the ambassador who just can't let go of the details of the operation of an embassy, or the economic section if that person primarily had economic experience, or of the political section if that person is primarily someone who has been a political officer; can't release to the DCM what the DCM needs to have to be the manager of an embassy under the direction of the ambassador. That's a big problem for many of our colleagues.

Sometimes I think Foreign Service people tend to take a smaller view of their responsibilities than they should. By that, for example, I mean that the outreach to the American business community is sometimes astonishingly poor. It is hard for some of us to realize that dealing with American business representatives, actively promoting American trade and exports, is a central responsibility of an ambassador. It's a new function for some people; they're not as good at it sometimes as they should be.

I also think Foreign Service officers occasionally are media-shy and public relations-shy, too timid in public diplomacy. I don't mean any heavy-handed propagandistic efforts. I do mean utilizing those tools that USIA provides, speaking engagements, a press policy, to

maximum effect to accomplish US purposes. Sometimes maximum effect means lying low and doing practically nothing. But, on other occasions, we could do better in seizing the possibilities, in a media age, for very broad communication with the people of a country about ourselves as people, that modern-day media techniques provide.

Sometimes Foreign Service officers are too much focused not just on Washington but on the Department of State. This is not to denigrate the primacy of the secretary of state, the responsibility of assistant secretaries for conduct of our foreign policy, or their origins within the State Department themselves. It is to say that there are other legitimate players, and that you are the president's ambassador and not the State Department's ambassador.

This may shock some people, but Tony Motley and I stress that throughout the ambassadorial seminar. You are the president's ambassador. And there are times when you will disagree with the State Department, when you will, from your vantage point, believe that another agency is closer to the mark in what it is advocating than are the views of the Department of State. This is a tough dilemma. Handling that, arguing it, is very delicate. It takes a certain amount of courage, but it's essential to do it. When I say that some of us have too much of a fixation on Washington, what I mean is that we sometimes don't do that enough. When we fail to provide a broader view about the interagency aspects that you deal with in an embassy, I think we're letting the team in the State Department down.

Finally, it's also true that how you fare as an ambassador, if you're a Foreign Service officer or from other agencies in the government, as we were saying earlier, is likely to affect your future. You are within a personnel system as such. It is very hard not to remember that. It is hard not to think of perhaps another chief of mission post if you do well in this job. You want to do it right. You want to please your superiors in Washington. You don't have a president to go to who is backing you, the way many political people do in relations that are genuinely personal ones with the president. Your home and the place to which you will return after three years in your assignment is the Department of State. And that can be inhibiting. There's no getting around that. That's the system as it is. I'm not saying that it should be taken on in any foolish sense. But I think one would be naive not to recognize that this does pose some constraints sometimes on people in their performance, if they are career people, at posts abroad.

Q: Well now, do you get involved, maybe I'm using the term somewhat facetiously, in the bonding between particularly the political appointee and the DCM? Does the DCM selection come during the seminar? Or do you give some guidelines of what to look for in a DCM, to people who are coming from outside the service?

GROVE: We have a separate session on the role of the DCM, and we give it a great deal of importance. What you say is exactly right. Often the DCM selection process is occurring simultaneously with the ambassadorial seminar.

I've had, as has Tony Motley, several chiefs of mission- designate come to me and say, "Look, I don't know these people, but the Director General's office has just given me these four names. What should I do? Whom should I pick?"

We spend a lot of time describing, for our Foreign Service colleagues as well, what the relationship between ambassador and DCM should really be. When I was talking about some of the drawbacks among at least a few of our professional colleagues, I mentioned micro-managing right up front. That is no help to a DCM.

We, with the ambassadors, suggest to them that there are at least three things they ought to look for and establish in the relationship with the DCM. The first is to empower the DCM as general manager of the entire mission; the second is to seek a relationship of total confidence in which the DCM feels free to say, on occasion, "Wait a minute, boss!"; and the third is to develop the DCM into a competent and credible charge in the ambassador's absence.

We carefully parallel what we tell ambassadors with what we tell DCMs. In other words, we are trying to achieve the best possible mesh between the ambassadorial seminar and the DCM seminar.

The bridge, in this case, happens to be me, because I speak in the ambassadorial seminars as co-chairman, and do a rather long opening session with the DCMs in which I talk about what I think the ambassador is going to want from you, DCM, and what you should want from the ambassador. By following the same lines of thought (and Tony and I fully agree on what should be said) in both these fora, we try to help that relationship as much as we can. If the ambassador-DCM relationship doesn't work out, the post is in trouble, and the DCM is in very big trouble.

If you want, I can briefly summarize what we say to both groups. In both cases, we emphasize the need for what you might call a psychological contract between the ambassador and the DCM. That means an understanding of expectations. The ambassador should, at the outset, tell the DCM how he or she would like the post to run, what their relationship should be, what the DCM is expected to do, what he or she as ambassador would like to do themselves, what their management style is. That takes some discussion, and the sooner that's done, the better. That I think is central to the success of the DCM relationship, and we stress this with the ambassadors.

Q: What about one of the things that I understand has become quite a problem, and that is getting more women as DCMs? Because this is the route to ambassadorships within professional ranks. But there has been a resistance, often in the case of women ambassadors who don't want to have a woman DCM (at least I've understood this), because they're afraid this gives a top-heavy feel to an embassy. Do you have problems with this or working on this?

GROVE: Here, the news is good, I think in part because of the class action suit, which was recently resolved, a suit brought by women against the Department of State. There has been a significant increase in the number of women filling DCM positions, and certainly in the number of women filling chiefs of mission positions. It's too bad that it took this kind of an event to cause this to happen. But it's quite visible as a phenomenon. I haven't had any experience with a woman ambassador and a woman DCM at the same post; I can't comment on that. But, increasingly, women and minorities are on the lists of DCM candidates submitted to an ambassador.

The present director general of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Perkins, feels that the ambassador should consciously select a minority or a woman candidate for DCM if these people are qualified, and expects ambassadors to pay especial attention to getting such people into DCM positions.

Q: So in your helping with the sort of the bonding here, this is not, under present circumstances, much of a problem as far as women, minorities, and all that.

GROVE: I don't think so. I think the essence of the ambassador-DCM relationship is personal chemistry. You can heighten people's sensitivity to something like the psychological contract, but, in the last analysis, it's either going to work or not going to work on the basis of personalities.

In this equation, the spouses are also important. The ambassador's spouse, particularly if the ambassador is a political appointee, is a person the DCM must take into the account in terms of managing the mission and satisfying the ambassador. The DCM's spouse plays, inevitably, an important role vis-à-vis the ambassador's spouse. I think there a psychological contract is also needed.

The sensitivities on the Foreign Service side, which would be the DCM side, simply have to be heightened when people who have had no experience with an embassy arrive at a post and are understandably at a loss and confused about a great deal that goes on. The Foreign Service people have to be careful to recognize this as an inevitable phenomenon, and not be the know- it-alls. It may well be that the DCM has been chargé for months in advance of a new ambassador. The DCM, as former chargé, has to step back from a role to which you can get very quickly and pleasantly accustomed. There is a lot of built-in friction just waiting to happen.

Q: I know we're under a time constraint. Do you have almost special one-on-one briefings? There are some ambassadors, coming particularly from the political side, who are under intense, say, public discussion about their qualifications, etc., etc. I mean there are always worst-case appointees that political pundits in Washington pick up and emphasize, so that they are going to their posts under considerable handicap, because, in a sense, the American press has said: This person really isn't qualified. Do you work with them on how to live with this and to turn it around?

GROVE: Sometimes we do. It is particularly Tony Motley who is sensitive to these matters and in a position to act upon them. I can think of several cases of people who needed a little bit of talking to, on the political side. He has found it easy in at least some of these cases to do that.

One of Tony Motley's main objectives has been to break down the barriers and the suspicions between political people and career people. And he does that forcefully, eloquently, and with a wonderful sense of humor throughout the seminar. I don't know what we would do if we didn't have him.

He establishes his credibility with the political appointees at the outset of the seminar. We complement each other as two individuals--sometimes consciously--but, in any event, inevitably, throughout the seminar, with Tony's superb outreach and credibility with people from the business community and private life. No matter how much I might argue, as a Foreign Service officer, for instance, that barriers should break down and that the career people at an embassy really want the ambassador to succeed, it's nowhere near as credible as when Tony Motley makes these points. So I become a kind of Mister Foreign Service, and he becomes a sort of Mister Outside. We're a team in this, and we do address the tensions which prompted your question, in personal ways.

Sometimes, political people will come to me as well, privately, about what they should do or what might be most effective. I get phone calls sometimes.

Q: I was going to ask, do you get feedback?

GROVE: Yes.

Q: I mean, you've become sort of the den mother of ambassadors, both political and career types abroad, from time to time?

GROVE: I'm happy to say, not very often, but from time to time. And sometimes it's quite touching. Yes, I sometimes get calls for advice. What I do is try to put people back in the system as promptly as I can. Usually it is from a political ambassador who either wants to keep his DCM, or get rid of his DCM, or isn't happy with the DCM list. That is the strain that runs through the telephone calls, for example, or the exchanges in person that I encounter after the seminar. The way to deal with that is simply to refer them to the director general, to talk about the system, to hear them out and to counsel them if you can spot some obvious difficulty that is troubling them.

Q: December 21, 1990. This is the second interview with Ambassador Brandon H. Grove, Jr. What does the "H" stand for?

GROVE: Hambright, my grandmother's maiden name.

Q: We are concentrating this series of interviews on the ambassadorial seminar, the training of new ambassadors. Brandon, I wonder if you could go into some detail about how this seminar is set up at present and where you see it going and its effectiveness.

GROVE: I'd be glad to. I can only talk, of course, for the last two and a half years, in which I have taken a very active part in shaping it and in the delivery of the seminar. Let me say that we do this with two people. Langhorne Motley, known as Tony Motley, is the co-chairman of the seminar. He is a former ambassador to Brazil and assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs. He has more experience with the seminar through time than I have. But the two of us shape its content and make sure it's as contemporary as we know how to make it and as interesting as we know how to make it. And by that I mean as useful to people who are going out to these jobs as ambassadors, most of them for the first time, as possible.

It's essentially a how-to kind of course or discussion. It's how to get things done and how to stay out of trouble, basically, for people who are going to be ambassadors.

We sit around a large table in one of the conference rooms of the State Department, spouses alongside their husbands. We have a schedule which is very full.

Q: You say "spouses alongside their husbands," but it can often be spouses alongside their wives, too, as a matter of fact.

GROVE: I should say "spouses alongside the ambassadors- designate." At any rate, they're both at the table.

The atmosphere is very informal. We mean it to be a discussion and not a lecture series. We want as many questions as we can get. We try to involve people who have been ambassadors before, whether from private life or the Foreign Service, in the presentation of material and in the discussion that follows. We try to define the job--what is the job of ambassador?--and then take the mystery out of it.

The heart of the seminar is the matter of ambassadorial authorities--where does an ambassador get authority to act? Then we discuss how that authority can be used, and how it can be the basis for uniting people from various agencies in the country team within the embassy.

After the introductory portion of the seminar on the first day, which is always a Monday, we make that the first item of business and discuss Section 207 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which contains the definition of ambassadorial authority, as well as the president's letter to each ambassador.

These two documents, in particular, form the basis of specific authority, rooted in the law itself, for anyone who becomes an ambassador. Whether you're at a very big post or a very small one, the authorities are exactly the same.

The president's letter has been circulated by the president to the head of every foreign affairs department and agency here in Washington, so employees of other agencies know exactly what the ambassador has been told and empowered to do.

In discussing the president's letter, and that portion of the seminar falls largely to me, I actually go through it phrase-by-phrase, in what the French call an analysis of text, to discuss not only what it says and what it means, but how it got to read that way. We make comparisons with earlier versions of the letter, and we walk people through every word and phrase, and open up discussion as to what it means throughout that letter. There isn't anybody who leaves the ambassadorial seminar who hasn't given serious thought to every word that's in that letter.

There are some other key building blocks in this seminar. They get bigger or smaller in size depending on the times in which we live and the emphasis of a president or the Congress, or the Department of State itself in what it wants to get done.

Let me explain what I mean by that. One of our biggest growth areas, in terms of time we spend in this seminar, is the area of ethics. We now spend two hours with a legal advisor at the State Department, who deals with ethical matters and explains in detail what ambassadors and their families can do, should not do, should not even appear to be doing.

Q: Can you give some examples of where problems might occur or have occurred in the past, where ambassadors can run afoul or have problems?

GROVE: The whole question of monies and how they can be spent: expenses for the residence, expenses for entertaining, whom can you entertain at the taxpayers' cost, whose entertainment you must yourself pick up.

For instance, if you have an American business group visiting a post and you give a luncheon for them, that is a legitimate expense under reimbursement. If you want to give a Christmas party for your own staff, even though all of them work directly for the United States government, that's entirely out of your own pocket.

We speak of business people. There are many things you can and should do to help them; there are also a few things that you cannot do, in terms of giving preferential treatment to a particular company when there are other American companies who are interested in the same kind of market. We discuss that.

You can talk about some seemingly small things, like who gets to use official cars. To what extent should a spouse (let's assume it's a woman in this case) use a car? Is it legitimate, for instance, to go down to the beauty parlor and get your hair done, and tie up a driver for two hours or so, even if the visit is for some official entertaining that the spouse will be going to? There are many specific questions that need to be talked about.

Can you pay for Christmas cards by charging the cost of those cards, for example, or any holiday greeting cards, to the United States government?

The list is long. The issues are more serious; I just picked some of the more colorful ones. But the seminar portion with the legal advisor is one that has grown considerably and focuses, as the Bush administration has itself focused, on appearance as well as wrong-doing itself.

We have a yardstick we apply, which is not a bad one to think about. If you, as an ambassador, are in a quandary about what you ought to do and you're wondering a little bit whether it is all right or maybe has some question attached to it, in terms of its propriety or its wisdom, our solution for that is: In your own head, make up a brief account of what you are planning to do as if you had actually done it. Write it up, in your mind, as a news story. And then ask yourself how you would like to read that account in, say, *The Washington Post*. If you feel comfortable with that, well, that's fine, you're probably on the right track. If you have a queasy reaction, you'd better take a second look. And that has to do with the matter of appearances.

Further on the subject of ethics, we have expanded the portion in the seminar given by the inspector general of the Department of State. The inspection process has become more sophisticated over recent years. Throughout the executive branch, inspectors general now have greatly enhanced authorities and report directly to the cabinet secretary.

Inspection of Foreign Service posts is a major undertaking, a very serious one. We provide every opportunity for the inspector general, Sherman Funk, who is frank and open in dealing with ambassadors and DCMs, to explore the rules. We talk about the most frequently made mistakes, as the inspectors have uncovered these throughout the years. We have some cautionary words. And, above all, we provide an opportunity for people around that table, spouses as well as ambassadors- designate, to put their own questions to the inspector general.

There are a distressing number of cases of malfeasance and misfeasance, wrong-doing of various kinds. One would hardly believe them to be occurring, but they do. Inculcating in people both the seriousness of knowing the regulations, and the weight of their responsibilities in enforcing them upon themselves and their mission staffs, is a major priority of our seminar.

Another bigger building block among those I referred to on the landscape of the seminar is the work we do in the area of security and in counterterrorism. These are difficult times. The security briefings cover the kinds of information an ambassador and the immediate family need to know about the residence, and the chancery. We talk at some length about the Marine guards we have at virtually every overseas post now. We also talk about counterterrorism and how you handle threats from the outside that are specifically directed against an embassy or a person.

There are, of course, a rather large number of what you might think of as stand-alone subjects that you have to cover for people who are going to head our embassies abroad, and we deal with them, always trying to be contemporary in what people need to know, and to look to the future for trends. What is likely to change? What are these ambassadors going to see by way of new developments in such areas as personnel, the assignment process, the promotion process, the budget--both the State Department's operating budget and what is known as the 150 Account within our budget, which includes foreign aid, security assistance, (which is military assistance), and economic assistance under our foreign aid programs. The budget presentation is new; we've only had that for two years. But it seemed to Tony and me that people really ought to have an understanding of what the whole pie looks like and where they fit into it.

We have a session on protocol. What state visits are. What the different kinds of visits by foreign dignitaries are. When an ambassador is likely to come home if the chief of state of his country visits the United States, or when that is not likely to occur. The occasions, for instance, on which a spouse will be brought back at government expense. I find that people have very different kinds of questions about protocol, if they're about to sit down in the ambassador's chair, than they've had throughout their careers, simply because the vantage point is different when you're the ambassador.

Q: This is from the career side people.

GROVE: Of course, those who are new to the State Department are just full of questions. We have a number of handouts, one being a book on protocol itself, which everybody gets.

Q: Those of us who have come up within the Foreign Service have learned to live with protocol, but how about those coming from outside? Protocol seems in many ways very un-American and a little bit almost prissy. Do you find a certain resistance or resentment about all the protocol procedures from some of these people who are coming in from outside the career service?

GROVE: Quite the contrary. I think the people who come from the outside are particularly interested in getting it right. They are proud of the responsibilities they are going to be taking on. Very patriotic people. And a little nervous about where some of the knives and forks should go, or where to place the receiving line, or how to seat people at a table. Dedicated to doing it just perfectly. They want to represent the United States in the best possible way. So do people in the Foreign Service, but we're more used to it. We've probably done more seating plans for more ambassadors and chargés and consuls general than we'd like to remember. It's easier for us. But there's a very positive kind of eagerness to find out how best to represent the president when they are in their official roles abroad. And I think that's much to be admired.

Q: Oh, yes. Oh, I agree.

GROVE: I didn't say what the answer was, I don't think, to who gets to pay for holiday greeting cards. The answer is that you do personally. People really cannot understand that. The same is true for calling cards.

We talk about the kinds of stationery you should use, and make the point to be careful what you write on government stationery. I advise people to take their own stationery, a personal kind with just your name on the top of the page, so that anybody hearing from you if you are an ambassador will know the difference between a letter that is official and one that's personal. And that ties back, again, to the emphasis on ethics and appearances that we were discussing earlier.

There are a number of questions in the medical area that a State Department doctor discusses. AIDS has become a global problem and is frightening. There are problems of AIDS at a number of posts. There are certainly many countries, and not just in Africa or Haiti, in which the AIDS rate is very high. What are the threats, really? How do you handle that at a post? What do you do, for instance, about the residence staff who are people from the country itself to which you are accredited? If the cook is fixing the salad and slices, let's say, his finger, and a drop of blood falls in the salad, are you endangered? (The answer is no.) But we talk about these questions. Do flies, or mosquitoes more specifically, carry AIDS if they've bitten a person who has AIDS and have drawn blood from that person? These are real life questions.

Q: Oh, absolutely, particularly with something as deadly as AIDS.

GROVE: Exactly. We talk about that. (The answer, there again, is no.) In the medical portion, we discuss not only AIDS, but other more generalized problems, including the suppression of malaria--a very complex thing in terms of the kind of drugs we use and their side effects.

We discuss alcoholism. What to do if a person in a family or a member of the embassy staff is an alcoholic? What procedures should the chief of mission follow, in dealing with that person? What authority does the ambassador have if the problem is as serious as that?

We talk about medical evacuations. More often than we like, people become ill or are involved in an accident at a post and need to be taken out of a country if the medical facilities are not good. How do you handle it? Who pays for it? What kind of help can you get in transportation? These are examples of some of the subjects that come up.

We have a strengthened session on consular work.

Q: I'm speaking as a retired consular specialist, so many ambassadors from within our service, I mean career people, have ignored this. I think George Kennan, in the time I served with him, came down to the consular section once, in Belgrade. How does this work?

GROVE: Motley and I tell all those ambassadors that the people in their consular sections are going to see more of the local population than the rest of the embassy combined; that their contacts are direct; that the services we provide American citizens abroad, but also the inhabitants of the country who come to us, for instance, if they want a visa, speak for the whole tone and quality of the embassy. We tell them to get down to the consular section right away when they get there, walk through it, see what it looks like, see whether they're proud of it. Is that the way you want your embassy to look to most of the people who are going to get a look at your embassy? If the answer to that is no, fix it.

We tell them that the junior officers within a consular section (a large part of a consular section is often first-tour junior officers) have some interesting experiences of their own. They're new to the Foreign Service. They see a lot of younger people in the community. They deserve special attention within the embassy, in terms of bringing them into what an embassy does, including them in events that an ambassador or a deputy chief of mission give socially. We also point out that many visiting congressmen and senators like to go to a consular section, to see what it's like. That by far the overwhelming percentage of mail that the State Department receives from the Congress is on consular affairs. I think it's something like seventy percent.

Q: I think it's up close to ninety, but I could be wrong.

GROVE: It could be close to ninety. I remembered it as being extremely high. And it comes from people, usually Americans, not satisfied with the treatment they have received abroad. Such letters get bounced right back to the embassy for a response, through the State Department again.

Q: And the response is signed by the ambassador.

GROVE: Signed by the ambassador, you're right. And the fewer of those you need to sign, the better off you are. We really drive that point home.

There's a very sobering side of consular work, as for example in the crash of Pan Am 103.

Q: This was in Scotland, due to a terrorist bomb in 1988.

GROVE: Lockerbie. This time, I think. About this time of year, in December.

Q: Just about this time. It was just before Christmas.

GROVE: In some ways that was not well handled. There has been a report on that incident that we bring to the attention of ambassadors-designate, which finds fault in the handling of the incident by some of our consular people. We are in an effort throughout the department to improve that area of work.

Let me talk about the future. We are now at the end of 1990, after a year of tremendous change in the world. After all, 13 months ago the Berlin Wall was still up. We're at a time of economic downturn in our own country, and we don't know when that's going to end. We are at a moment at which American troops in large numbers are in the Gulf, in response to the crisis with Iraq, and we don't know how that is going to end.

There are, however, some implications for training in all of these events, and we have placed new emphasis on some of the things we do in the ambassadorial seminar to reflect the times in which we live and the directions in which we move. Let me give you some examples of this.

At the outset of our talk, I mentioned that it was Larry Eagleburger, then the Under Secretary of state for management, who...

Q: Former ambassador to Yugoslavia.

GROVE: And now deputy secretary of state, who had come up with the idea, in 1977, of having an ambassadorial seminar, for the first time ever, for people going out to posts. It is Larry, more recently, who has made a major effort in the department to strengthen the services we provide US business overseas.

This is a time at which competition globally for markets is virtually cutthroat. We have greatly strengthened the portion of the seminar that deals with an ambassador's handling of US business people who come to visit, the kinds of services the embassy should provide to American businessmen traveling abroad, the kinds of things a staff should know and be responsive to in furthering American business.

One of the ways we do this is to have a prominent American businessman, with a long background of international experience, spend about two hours with the seminar, talking about a businessman's point of view when that person is abroad and dealing with an embassy. It's extremely useful and probably prompts as many questions from participants in the seminar as any other portion of the program we offer. It's not entirely a tale of horror stories, although a number of cases always come up in which an embassy has been callous or disinterested when businessmen have come by asking for briefings or assistance that they legitimately should expect and receive.

Larry Eagleburger has recently put together what he calls a "Bill of Rights for American Businessmen." It's a very useful document that formed part of a speech he gave. We distribute that to everybody in the seminar and emphasize that handling American businessmen and business interests overseas is not just the ambassador's responsibility, or narrowly the economic section's responsibility, it's a mission-wide responsibility. That is a new emphasis, reflecting our national interests at this moment in history.

Another one is public diplomacy. We have what may be the first segment ever in the ambassadorial seminars on public diplomacy itself. We live in a media age. So much of

what people know about the world, see, and receive as information on world affairs, comes over the radio, or through CNN, which even Saddam Hussein watches in Baghdad.

Q: CNN being the cable news channel which is broadcast all over the world.

GROVE: That's right. A continuous cable network news channel all over the world. For better or for worse, these impressions are the dominant ones in a global population. What an ambassador does at a post in public diplomacy is increasingly important. There are many speeches that can be made in fora one might not usually think about, that can constitute outreach to younger people or more special groups within a given society, speeches that convey the American message in a variety of ways.

We emphasize the assets that the United States Information Agency has at its USIS offices overseas. There are programs that send visitors from the United States to various countries and regions--some of them are musicians, some are doctors, some are writers, some of them are experts in cinema--that are great assets to a post. There are many things that you can do in the field of public diplomacy that you need to know about, or you're not likely to call upon your public affairs officer to get them done.

We try to talk about what one might call a media policy for the ambassador. What kinds of relations with the press should there be? Should there be regular briefings? Should there ever be a press conference? How do you want to handle that? Are you going to have backgrounders for maybe just the American correspondents? There are a great many questions that a press officer helps an ambassador with. That's another aspect of public diplomacy we now address.

A third new area for us is what we call the human side of crisis management. Things go wrong abroad. Sometimes they're natural disasters. You will remember the earthquake in Mexico. Sometimes it's a plane crash. For example, we talked about Pan Am 103, which crashed at Lockerbie. Sometimes they are riots and violence, caused by political instability or economic chaos in a particular country. There have been many examples of that.

What are the responsibilities of an ambassador in dealing with that sort of crisis? At what point do you evacuate Americans from your post? What are the authorities for sending Americans home? We've had many evacuations throughout the world in the last two and a half years. How do you handle the American community, including those that are not government people, as you see a crisis building up? In the Philippines, that's been a continuing concern of our ambassador, Nick Platt, who has had a very difficult time in that regard in his tenure in Manila. How do you deal with grief? How do you handle people when your consular section and others must convey the bad news that someone has lost their life? Very often it's the embassy that first has this news.

We now have special films FSI has developed in bereavement counseling. We have training we have developed in stress management under crisis. If there is one of these

disasters, a small number of people at a post or in a consular section can get overworked very quickly. What do you do about that? How can you mobilize the whole mission to work as a team and spell each other out when the going gets tough and will be sustained because of the nature of the problem? What are your responsibilities to the American community? We have business people, missionaries, private citizens, students, and of course the Peace Corps, who can be far-flung throughout the country. How do you get in touch with them? What do you tell them if you think a crisis is brewing? How do you help get them out? There's a lot here to talk about, and it is only recently that we have systematically addressed these subjects.

So, in response to the world of the 1990s, I think that emphasis on assisting US business overseas, public diplomacy, and crisis management are changes that were clearly needed in an always- evolving ambassadorial seminar.

I should add a word about EEO, Equal Employment Opportunity, because this is another concern of ours: the fair treatment of minorities and women, which has received increasing emphasis in the seminars over the past several years. We have a specific speaker now, the head of our EEO office in the Department of State, who gives a talk to the members of the seminar about these responsibilities.

What I have described so far are the first four days of a first week in which spouses and ambassadors-designate sit around that table in the department. I'd like to move on to two other aspects of the program that are noteworthy.

We have, within the Foreign Service Institute, an extraordinarily innovative organization known as the Overseas Briefing Center. The OBC has developed for the ambassadorial seminar a special program for spouses, which begins at the end of the first four days. This is a new development, again, responsive to the times, that I would like to describe briefly to you--emphasizing that a spouse can be either male or female.

Sometime during the first four days, Mrs. Baker invites the spouses to lunch, usually on about...

Q: This is the secretary of state's wife.

GROVE: The secretary of state's wife, that's right. She has a luncheon on the Eighth Floor, to which she invites the spouses of ambassadors-designate and certain people in the department who have something to convey to this group so as to make her event, in effect, a working luncheon. I can't think of any time when a male spouse has gone to that luncheon to discuss community issues, various other matters of concern to spouses, particularly our family liaison program at embassies-- and not found it useful.

In the early days of the seminar, there was also a session graciously offered by Mrs. Bush at the White House. For about the first five seminars, spouses were invited to tea with Mrs. Bush, who talked to them about her experiences when she was with her husband in

China, and when the president was at the UN. She has first-hand experience at being a spouse abroad. These sessions included her tour of the White House. We've not been able to do that recently; because of pressures on her schedule, it has not worked out. But that was a wonderful addition, again, something the Overseas Briefing Center arranged.

Let me talk about the day at the Overseas Briefing Center spent with spouses, because it's one of the keystones of the seminar program.

It begins with a morning discussion of issues such as, for example, representational entertainment. (That means official entertaining done by an ambassador and spouse.) What is it all about? How is it best handled? How do you maintain your own personal interests while you're supporting your spouse? Increasingly, people have separate careers, separate things they do. If you're at a large post, you can find yourself overwhelmed by social obligations that are extended to an ambassador and spouse. How do you handle that? How do you handle public versus private life? How do you find time alone together as husband and wife with all of the demands that are made?

What are the employment opportunities abroad for a spouse who wants to work, or perhaps has had specialized and senior responsibilities in an area of work in the United States and suddenly finds himself or herself adrift in a country where either those kinds of jobs are not open, or the labor laws themselves prevent spouses from working? What can be done about that?

We talk about such matters as schooling. How do you address the question whether you ought to send a child off to boarding school? Things like this that are family oriented are dealt with by the OBC during that day.

Then, there are two panels, the first made up of American spouses who have been abroad with husbands or wives who have been the ambassadors. Four or five of the people get together with the spouses in our seminar for a brainstorming session. There are three or four case studies we have developed that reflect the kind of situations spouses can find themselves in. How do you handle the ambassador's secretary? What should you expect or not expect from that person? What is a social secretary? How do you deal with the administrative section? Let's say that the bathtub has overflowed and you've got a crisis. Do <u>you</u> call up? Who calls up? How do you deal with a series of prickly social situations most effectively?

If there is a male spouse in the ambassadorial seminar, we find a male spouse who has served abroad and include that person in the panel. They very willingly do this. So you get one man talking to another man, in the full context of that particular session of the OBC, about what it feels like to be "husband of". That has been useful and popular with men who go abroad as "husband of". How does it feel to not be at the head of the receiving line, or in the customary male roles of our own society? There are a lot of serious things to talk about, and people do that very responsibly, whether they are non-career or Foreign Service. It's been a successful and a good idea.

I have spoken of the panel of US spouses. We also get together a panel of three or four wives of diplomats accredited to Washington.

Q: These would be foreign diplomats.

GROVE: Yes, wives whose husbands are ambassadors here in Washington. We talk about cross-cultural sensitivity: what is their reaction to being in the United States? We have people in one panel that might come from Pakistan, Italy, Colombia, and, let us say, South Africa. These are very different countries, and very different cultures. How do they feel when they come to Washington? What surprised them most? How did they make cross-cultural adjustments? How do they entertain? What do they find useful? How do they find time with their spouses? Did they have careers? That is always an immensely successful session.

The wives of ambassadors accredited to Washington are amazed that we do such things in the Department of State. I've never heard from any one of them that anything remotely like this is done by any other country.

Finally, I want to say a word about the media training that we provide as part of the ambassadorial seminar. It occurs during the second week of the seminar for the first three days, and is part of the greatly increased emphasis on public diplomacy I referred to earlier. It takes place at the Foreign Service Institute itself, where we have a television studio.

On the first day, ambassadors and spouses come here for a full day of joint training. How do you handle the media? What do you do if somebody sticks a microphone in your face and asks you a difficult question. There is a great deal to be said and discussed in this area. We have a skilled consultant who does this. We give everybody a few seconds on television. It's an immensely enjoyable part of the seminar for virtually everybody.

On the second day, however, we separate out the ambassadors-designate. The spouses by then will have completed the program we offer them. Each ambassador-designate has about 45 minutes alone with our media consultant for one-on-one television counseling. The ambassador-designate is interviewed, asked a bit about personal history, and then usually is thrown a couple of zingers by way of questions, to see how he or she will react. This is then played back privately by the media expert, and there is a discussion of where the strong points are, where the weak points are, how you can take over the interview yourself.

This is an activity that receives high praise from those who participate in it, because you will get that microphone stuck in your face some day, and if you haven't had a chance to think about how to organize your thoughts or even how to organize your facial expression, you're running the risk of not looking very good and not being very effective in the message you want to get across, in an age where the media is virtually everything.

On the third day we get together journalists in town, some of them prominent ones, in a meet-the-press format. We group the ambassadors-designate into units of three or four each, and we set them up for half an hour with the panel of journalists, copying the format of a program like *Meet the Press*.

These journalists know where the ambassadors are headed, and they've done some homework about the issues in relations between a given country and the United States. They then try to make up the most difficult questions they can, and ask these to the ambassadors-designate.

Q: I take it that this is all under an agreement that this will not go out beyond.

GROVE: Absolutely. These are people on contract and the activity is recognized as a training seminar. We tell the ambassadors the same thing. Obviously they can't get into anything classified, but they couldn't with a journalist anyway. This is purely training.

After such a session, the group as a whole, including the journalists, sits down and plays the tape. Sometimes they play it a number of times. The journalists, from their vantage points, will tell an ambassador-designate where he or she was good--and that's often the case; often people are very good--or where they could have been better. The journalists (now this, believe me, will not happen anywhere else) are on your side, telling you how you can look better, where you were strong, or where you looked as if you didn't know the answer, or where, when you looked away from the camera, you looked as if you were dissembling.

This combination, then, of the first four days of training, the work with the Overseas Briefing Center, and media training, make up what now constitutes the ambassadorial seminar.

Q: Excellent. A couple of questions, Brandon, more on, you might say, specifics. Do you get to a nuts-and-bolts thing of how to handle instructions from the department? Every ambassador will receive a series of instructions. The professional usually knows when that instruction comes from the desk officer and is a fairly routine one and when somebody really means it. Most of the time it makes no difference, but there are times. I think of Ambassador Ed Peck telling about the time he was in charge of our interest section in Iraq. The number one goal was to develop better relations with Saddam Hussein. But number two was to bring Iraq into the role of supporting Israel. I mean, this is absolutely ridiculous. There are times when blanket instructions just don't pertain and may be even counterproductive if you give too much weight to them. Do you explain how to deal with this type of thing to somebody who isn't used to our system?

GROVE: That's an excellent question, and we go into it at some length, not just in the ambassadorial seminar, but in the same way with the DCMs in the DCM seminar. I mentioned earlier that we try to make the ambassadorial and the deputy chief of mission

seminars as congruent as possible, because the ambassador and the DCM are a team; they are the managers of any embassy abroad.

One of the things we deal with under ambassadorial authority is the question of: Who's your boss? Who can give you an order, you the ambassador? To whom do you report? Do you report directly and always to the president? Do you report directly and always to the secretary of state?

From these considerations there derives the flow of messages, instructions, and what have you that reach an embassy. There is need at the embassy to be as fully in touch with Washington as possible about what is going on. This is done at many levels.

In some countries, the telephone gets used (and sometimes overused) in phone calls back to Washington as to where a given issue is, or what answers can be expected to a particular question, what might be coming down the pike next.

There is also a form of communication known as the official-informal telegram, which is narrowly circulated in the Department of State, and can be used to find out the kinds of information I have just referred to.

When an ambassador gets an instruction that he or she doesn't like, it's a difficult problem. If it's a bolt from the blue, it suggests that the ambassador may be more out of touch with what's going on in the department than he should be. If it is within the context of a known issue but off the mark, we suggest that there is nothing wrong in going back and either questioning it or pointing out your assessment of what the consequences would be, the adverse consequences, if indeed you were to carry out these steps the way you've been asked to. Not only is there nothing wrong in that, it's the responsibility of a chief of mission to raise such questions.

There are some instructions that you must not carry out. The subject of ambassadorial authorities drew a lot more interest after the Iran-Contra Affair, Tony Motley tells me, than it had before, simply because there was an ambassador who had taken an instruction from a member of the staff of the National Security Council who had no business instructing an ambassador. This became a cause célèbre, and the ambassador was reprimanded by the secretary of state.

So how do you disagree? When do you disagree? Tony Motley recommends the technique of letting people in Washington know what you are going to do, with a reasonable deadline for them to countermand you if they wish to do so. It's his "unless otherwise directed" approach.

If you think there is something that needs to be done, but you need Washington's blessing to do it, Motley points out that it is one thing to send off a cable to the department saying "Shall I do X?" which causes a lot of head-scratching and delay in Washington while people try to figure it out, and quite another thing to say "Unless otherwise directed, on

Friday of next week I plan to go to the Foreign Ministry and tell them X." You either get messages back from Washington saying "For heavens sake, don't do that!" or, more frequently, "Go ahead."

You've taken the problem over; you have suggested the solution; and you are in charge of the handling of that issue. That's one technique to emphasize in this whole business of instructions and decisions, authority and responsibility.

Q: Another question. You talk about the presidential letter, which always emphasizes the ambassador is in charge of all these disparate agencies. At many posts, you might say the State Department contingent represents not more than ten or twenty percent of the entire embassy. We are always trying to cut down on the number of people, but some of the agencies tend to grow. The military and AID are particular ones. And when ambassadors have tried to cut down on staff, it usually ends up with the State Department contingent going down while none of the other people supposedly under the ambassador, representing other agencies, remain about the same, because there is no real control over who's sent out, although the ambassador has... How do you deal with this problem?

GROVE: We have a lot of help in dealing with it now, because President Bush's letter to ambassadors, for the first time, is specific on overseas staffing. The point is made that it must be as lean as possible. And there are three reasons for this.

The first is budget constraint. It costs an awful lot to send people overseas.

The second is that there clearly are, in many areas, too many people doing work that is not essential, or that can be done elsewhere or not at all.

The third is security. The larger your mission staff overseas, the greater a profile you have, the greater a target you are, from a security point of view.

Ambassadors are now armed with an instruction to take a look at their staffs when they arrive at post--and this is specifically all agencies at the post--and to recommend to the secretary of state reductions where they should be made and any increases if those are warranted.

This is a change. It is a stronger mandate than chiefs of mission have had in the past. But I can tell you that it is still far from easy to reduce other agency staffs by even one or two people, never mind the contract persons who come trooping through a country, particularly in connection with our AID programs. There is a built-in resistance in the Washington bureaucracy to trimming down. Ambassadors have to be careful that their recommendations have a decent chance of succeeding, and that they make their cases as forcefully as possible when they urge reductions in staff.

You're right, it's too often the State Department that cuts down while everyone else expands.

Q: A final question, Brandon. Politically powerful ambassadors sometimes try to staff their embassies at the upper levels with personal assistants that they bring from outside, with not the best consequences. By bringing these people in, in a way it's duplicating, which unfortunately is the case today, of, you might say, how the secretary of state has come into the State Department, by bringing an outside team in. But, anyway, as far as ambassadors go, do you work to try to dissuade them from bringing what amounts to their personal assistants to come in from outside or they say they've always worked with them? Because this tends to cut off the rest of the embassy from the ambassador and not allow the full expertise of the embassy to be focused on helping the ambassador.

GROVE: I agree with that. If we are asked, and often this is something that comes up in conversation with someone who is going to be an ambassador, whether it's a good idea to bring your personal staff aide or your secretary from private life, both Tony Motley and I discourage them from doing so. There are two reasons.

The first is that these people probably know virtually nothing about an embassy, how it's organized, what it is supposed to do, how to write a State Department telegram, our filing system, the acronyms we use mercilessly in our professional lives. The learning curve is a slow and long one for such people, and hardest of all, I think, for the secretaries who usually are not even given any training, or don't want the training that is offered to them before they go out to post. I've seen this happen several times--with dire consequences.

The second difficulty is the one you described. If there are, at a very large post, say, both a secretary and a special assistant to an ambassador who come from private life, it increases the front office's isolation from the rest of the embassy staff. It's extremely hard on the DCM, who is supposed to be the general manager of the embassy, and whose access to the ambassador on a continuing basis is simply critical to the DCM's ability to function.

If there is an intervening layer at the top, it has greatly complicated the management task. Often a special assistant will single out a few subjects for concern. They might be in the political area or the economic area. And the political or economic people in the embassy working on these problems are quickly confused as to whether they should report directly to this person, through their own counselor, to the DCM, or what have you. It can be very hard on lines of communication, responsibility, and authority.

In my judgment, a person assigned abroad as a chief of mission should be happy to accept the professional staff that is at post, and should make an effort, working with the DCM and others in Washington, to make sure that the staff is the best they can find, through time, as changes inevitably occur in embassy assignments. It is this core staff that is on your side if you're the ambassador. Your embassy staff wants you to succeed. This is a message we drive home to people who are political appointees. They are on your side; they want you to succeed. If you look bad or if you don't succeed, it reflects on them. It's a message that people are sometimes slow to understand and deals with the "We-They"

problem I referred to at the outset of our discussion. Sometimes, at a very large post, an ambassador will bring a personal secretary who deals purely with personal matters. That's fine. But that's different.

Q: Well, I don't think I have anything further to ask. I think we've covered this rather fully. Do you have anything?

GROVE: Stu, I don't. If you have anything that isn't clear or anything that can be expanded on, don't hesitate to let me know. I've enjoyed this. I thank you for asking me to talk.

Q: Thank you.

End of interview