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

WILLIAM D. MORGAN

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INTERVIEW

Q: Bill, what got you into the consular business as a career, rather than just an assignment along the way?

MORGAN: Stu, that's a very easy question to answer. The same thing that did you, perhaps; that's a fellow by the name of Loren Lawrence. He, you and I worked together in personnel some 20 years ago, and he came on board in PER as a far more experienced consular officer than I was. I had been in the Foreign Service maybe ten years and done all kinds of things. Those were back in the days when we didn't have "cones", as we now call them.

Q: Would you explain what a cone is?

MORGAN: It's a strange word that came from somewhere. I'm not sure what were its origins.

Q: I think it's a management term.

MORGAN: It's indeed a management term. But I do know what it means practically: and it's our functional specialty. In the Foreign Service, when you and I joined, we came in as Foreign Service officers. We didn't know where we were going to serve, and we didn't particularly care, except that we knew it probably would be an interesting career. Maybe we might even make it to the top, although there were no guarantees. But the route that we went wasn't very clear, and I as you had all kinds of assignments. I was a staff aide in Paris, I was a consular officer in a two-officer post in Birmingham, England, where you did everything, especially because the boss was "retired in place". We built a new consulate building and then but a few years later it closed. I was in Moscow as a publications procurement officer and as a political officer. I was then on the Soviet desk, and then to Personnel. So I had no conal identity, nor did the system.

Q: This would have been 1966?

MORGAN: 1966 to '68 is when I was in PER. Then the managers, for whatever reason, decided that in order better to program the resources of the Foreign Service and to react

more responsively to its needs, we'd better identify ourselves by specialty. So they came up with the four cones: political, economic, administrative and consular. While in Soviet affairs, my personnel "guru" Morris Draper said, "Why don't you come to Personnel? I think you need a little diversified experience. I think you've had enough time with Soviet affairs." That sounded all right to me.

I was put into a unit that turned out eventually to be the political cone, and then I was asked would I take over the consular cone, as well, because the incumbent was retiring. I said, "Sure." And that job as well as political for about six months. Then Lorie Lawrence came on board and he took over as the new head of the consular cone in PER. That's a long answer to a short question, but then we are supposed to be talking "history".

Q: Looking at it as a regular FSO, having done a variety of assignments, how did you view the consular service in the mid-1960s, as a career?

MORGAN: Particularly because of Lorie's inspiration, I saw it as a challenging function. I saw it as one that had been filled with technicians and was generally avoided by the Foreign Service officer generalists because it was highly technical and not looked at with much of a feeling of professionalism. But Lorie came from the senior job in Tel Aviv, and saw the need to revamp the function. And there were others; it wasn't just him, obviously. The demands on the consular function were increasing in areas of arrested Americans and drugs as well the changing and growing visa situation. The technician, the clerk, if you will, that had been, in large part, responsible for running the consular function, no longer could or should manage consular work. So it was time to give serious thought to changing the staffing and leadership. It was also realized by the system as a whole that the way we had been going was not going to work.

So, some major decisions were made far above my head, and I was not really cognizant of what they were until after the fact. Basically, it was decided that, "There will be no more staff corps." The clerk/technician can be translated into the word "staff corps," and the staff corps was declared finished as a means of staffing the consular function. Henceforth, all consular positions would be filled by Foreign Service officers. That was a major decision and was coincidental with the establishment of the cone system. So people were told, "Look, you will either leave the staff corps within a reasonable length of time and come in through a lateral entry system into the Foreign Service officer corps and compete as a Foreign Service officer, or you will retire." Lorie Lawrence used to say, "This will take us probably 20 years before its accomplished." And that is what happened. We have a consular function with no staff corps. But there are always voices saying: "Let's bring back the Staff Corps -- or something like it -- and save the poor FSOs from such onerous technical work."

Q: How did the officers who represented what in those days was termed the substantive functions, economic and political functions, and who pretty much were considered the upper crust of the Foreign Service, how did they view the changing of the consular function from that of technicians to actually drawing on regular officers?

MORGAN: I think anywhere from not accepting it, rejecting it out of hand, to ignoring it or thinking that it really wasn't relevant. It was certainly not universally acceptable as a management decision. The only exception to that--and I'm glossing over here--were those people who were not successful competitors as economic or political officers. Those unsuccessful could try to compete in this new approach to the consular function. Such movement was seen by some as: "they'll succeed, because anyone can do consular work." The administrative function was going through a comparable identity problem. But it wasn't as draconian a change as in the consular function since the staff corps still existed and made up a large part of the Admin cone. Admin types found themselves also looking at the consular function, but in positive terms: a working environment in which they could truly test their management skills. Many had come into the administrative function to be managers, and they discovered they weren't managing or they weren't in positions that encouraged such skills. Whereas, if they switched to the consular function, they indeed could manage, in the sense that their academic training and perhaps their own experience permitted them to. They had people to supervise -- lots of people -- and they had physical establishments that needed and welcomed their expertise more than seemed apparent in the administrative function.

Q: Your first major consular assignment was as consul general to Beirut in Lebanon in 1968. You stayed there for five years. How did you view this position?

MORGAN: Well, again, the short answer is Lorie Lawrence. He talked me into going to Beirut. I was supposed to go to Haiti as chief of the political section. I was trying to sell one of my clients, a political officer, to him to go to Beirut. He said, "No, no. You've convinced me completely. You're the one that should go to Beirut." And I said, "Fine." I had no problems with it. It certainly sounded interesting, but most importantly, because I had learned more about the new strengths, the new opportunities in the consular function. Also, Beirut, in those days, sounded like (and was) a wonderful place. Finally, one of my former bosses in PER, Bob Houghton, was going to go out as DCM, my boss, and that certainly sounded good. Additionally, the job called for somebody who could speak French. The answer to your question is: I really looked forward to it. It looked like a lot of fun. I was also 20 years younger.

Q: What were your principal tasks as the consul general? Would you describe the section and what you felt that you, as the consul general, could contribute?

MORGAN: I've got to amend part of your question: I was not consul general and could not be, for interesting reasons. The DCM had to bear the title of consul general, because somewhere back in Washington, they had worked out this arrangement that should Lebanon fall apart, God forbid, and someone stay there as a representative of our nation, because of severed diplomatic relations, the consul general could stay on and maintain consular relations. Obviously, it couldn't be the chief of the consular section, because he couldn't handle such a thing; it would be the DCM. So the DCM bore the "secret", if you

will, or at least not-well-advertised title of consul general. I was a consul, chief of the consular section. That's an aside.

Q: I think it's also important, in that in the late Sixties, even, the title of consul general was passed out very sparingly, no matter how large the section.

MORGAN: Yes, and in this case, because of its political relevance. In other words, there are places in the world where you can maintain a consular relationship with a country, or at least a lower than full diplomatic relationship. I don't know if that exists today.

Q: This happened, I believe, in Cambodia at one point, just about that time, and I think everyone was very concerned about it. As chief of the consular section, what were you doing?

MORGAN: The overriding job was protection and welfare work, even in those days, in '68 when I arrived. Although it was relatively peaceful, there were certainly enough problems around, hangovers from the '67 War. We had a large American community, and it still remembered well the '67 evacuation which, to many, was not well done. The embassy was seen by some as not supportive, and the evacuation wasn't well-programmed. That huge American community consisted of Lebanese Americans, academics, religious, wives of Lebanese, but largely business people, because that was then the Paris of the Middle East. The American business community was very, very strong -- and happy to be there! Coincidental with my arrival -- someone accused me of causing it -- was the increase in the drug arrests, mostly hashish, and the serious growing problem with drug use. So that whole area of protection of Americans was an enormous part of the job, and was growing. In the five years I was there, drugs were progressively more and more the name of the job.

The other part of the assignment, of course, related to the ever-present visa issues that face most posts, but certainly were enormous in a country like Lebanon. All aspects of the visa function were involved: heavy volume, fraud, a feeling in most Lebanese' minds, sort of like the Filipino, that the United States owes a visa to all Lebanese because of this special, this historical relationship. Any Lebanese that wants to go to the United States should be able to go. The fact that they had to provide a document that some silly vice consul asks for, and they don't happen to have it, won't get in the way. They can simply go out and get it, sure, from their local pastor or whomever, the <u>mukhtar</u>, will provide it for them (for free?). This whole question of getting to the United States -- or as many of them put it to me, having a green card in their pocket for security reasons -- was something the U.S. owed Lebanese, especially Christians. The fact that there were a series of rules, regulations, criteria was irrelevant to a Lebanese, like to many Middle Easterners. Such impediments are there because some silly bureaucrat put them there, and they're there to be gotten around. It isn't a matter of breaking laws or anything; it's just that's the way it's done in the real world.

Q: I wanted to talk about some of these functions, but first let's go to the section. How well was it staffed? I'm really thinking more about the officers there. Was it a problem dealing with the officers in this type of work? How good were the officers?

MORGAN: A gross answer to your question is, no, it was not a problem. Five years there, looking back over that period, the pluses were far greater than the minuses, I think, in part because people that were assigned to Beirut were assigned, perhaps, with a degree of caution by the central establishment. It wasn't like an assignment to, say, Canada or to Europe, where perhaps less strong officers are sent.

Q: Just to digress for a minute, you and I both worked in personnel, and know that problem cases, personality, drinking, other types of problem cases, are sent to either close to the United States or to the larger . . .

MORGAN: Places where they can be buried, "assimilated".

Q: And one time I remember hearing that London had accumulated more than its share of problem cases.

MORGAN: I can prove that, if you'd like me to. But yes, we had problems in Beirut. We had a problem with drinking, we had problems with competence levels. As a whole, however, the officers who came to Beirut were good, and I would answer the question by saying not only did I think there was a degree of sensitivity in assignments, but I think the place brought people together. I mean, the excitement, the professional challenge, the integrated aspect of the mission. I will brag that I refused to look, from that assignment on, at the consular function as anything other than absolutely equal to all the other functions. I felt, as the leader of the consular section, my job was primarily to make sure everybody understood that. And if they didn't, then they were going to hear exactly why it was.

Q: Let's talk about that. As specifically as you can, how did you deal with the rest of the embassy?

MORGAN: On various levels. There was the section chief to section chief relationship, the country team meetings, sessions with the DCM, with the ambassador, all that institutional intercourse that goes on in a Mission. That was a normal way to sell your section.

Q: You felt that there was a selling job to be done.

MORGAN: Oh, absolutely. From day one to the last day, and through the rest of my career.

Q: I'm with you, but I'd like to get this down.

MORGAN: It won't sell itself. As a matter of fact, it will go the opposite direction if all consular officers are not conscious of this necessity. You've got to get out and sell your section.

Q: Far more than many of the other sections.

MORGAN: I think some of the others failed to sell their sections. I think they could have afforded to and it was needed in explaining the section's work and responsibilities to the whole Mission. I think USIA is very good at projecting its image. It knows, as an often maligned and misunderstood function, that it's got to speak up.

Q: What do you mean by selling?

MORGAN: Making clear that all your colleagues -- often it's the ambassador that's the least of the problems -- know what the consular section does and how all aspects of its work relate to Mission objectives. Junior officers often need to learn the most about the importance of consular work. There's nothing worse than an uninformed, self-impressed FSO-6 in the political section. They are the least understanding, the least wise, probably, because of lack of experience and immaturity. But how do you show that each segment of the embassy is affected by events in the consular section? In Lebanon, it was very easy. For example, everyone's got a visa client on their back. The intervention in Lebanon is probably one of the strongest in the world. I know of other countries where intervention is important but there is not a person that works for the Beirut embassy, on the FSN or on the officer level, that isn't attacked--you can use whatever verb you want--by local contacts all the time. They've got a cousin that needs a visa, and is 100% bona fide. So therefore, a consular officer has something that he can give them, or at least deal with.

Q: How would you deal with them on this type of thing? I'm talking about within the embassy. Is it a give and take?

MORGAN: Well, first of all, you deal with them professionally. In other words, you don't become defensive. You give them a clear-cut, non-bureaucratic, non-legalistic answer to whatever the question is. Keep smiling, keep laughing, keep translating the particular question into their terms. Use diplomacy, I guess, is the word. In other words, as a diplomat, you have to know how the other person feels about something, what they're suffering, what their hangups are, what the restrictions are. Put your own self into their position. Be collegial, show how you have a common interest. Never, ever throw the book at them; never say, "It's the law," or, "That's the way it will be," or, "No, I won't," or whatever. Just treat them as humans, and keep smiling.

Of course, you see all your colleagues socially, you see them in many modes, so that you've got the opportunity frequently to project your job. For example, we shared a chalet down on the beach with the DCM and several American families including one that was later a hostage, David Dodge. You're alone at the beach and you discover yourself with the DCM's wife. Lois Houghton loved to hear stories about our latest visa challenge or

details on our newest arrested American. That fed back to the DCM, but from a different perspective. In other words, there is a general network of information flowing from the consular section throughout the whole mission. Sometimes the stories were amusing, sometimes they were sexy, sometimes they were very substantive. Often they were stories related to the foreign policy issues of Lebanon and what it was going on internally that affected the U.S. So I don't think it's very hard to sell the consular function, especially at a post like Lebanon. But it was equally true in Paris a few years later.

Q: You're saying that to be the head of a consular section, it really requires diplomacy within the embassy, and the humor and using the fact that we're dealing with people to bring what the consular section does home to everybody else within the embassy.

MORGAN: Isn't that one of the strongest characteristics of consular work, that it's human, that it's people-related? And if you don't know how to do it with your own colleagues, then you've missed opportunity number one, because from then on, you're defeated. You don't get your budgets, you don't get sympathy, you don't get support you need. You've got to start with your post associates.

Q: Moving down to the other colleagues, your junior officers.

MORGAN: I'm going to move up to them.

Q: Moving in parallel to your other colleagues.

MORGAN: See, I don't fall into these traps, Stu, that are out there about "going down".

Q: But I'm speaking in chart terms, dealing with your junior officers. You had junior officers who were coming through, who were very much a product of the Sixties, which was a "show me" period, a challenging period, actually a fun period, I think, for most supervisors. Many of them were only spending a relatively short time within the consular section before they moved on to different functions on rotational things. How did you sell the consular function to get them to work correctly, but also to give them an appreciation for the consular function?

MORGAN: I think, picking up from the theme of collegial relationship with others, first off it is essential to make clear that I expected them also to work collegially with one and all. Maybe they couldn't sit down with the DCM's wife in the same way I could, but I expected at whatever level of the embassy they dealt with that they never should be defensive about what they were doing, and never be bureaucratic. It's much easier for a vice consul to start talking about the law, because they are so close to it and don't understand it necessarily as philosophically or historically as we older ones. The vice consul really is overwhelmed by all these legal and regulatory technicalities. "Don't get into that kind of an answer with colleagues. Do the same thing I'm doing." But more important, perhaps, or parallel, letting JOs know by example what I'm doing. Share with them on a daily basis, as they're working or formally at meetings or whatever, everything

that's going on. And maybe even telling some inside stories about how I got the political counselor, Bob Oakley, and I really snookered him last week by doing X, Y, and Z, or whatever. Make sure the JOs understand and feel that they belong to a very important organization, and to a sub-tribe as well, and let's have fun doing it. Let's get it out in the open, and let's be demonstrably professional. That's the other part of the question, because they were learning their new trade at the same time. I felt I must be on the visa line -actually and in spirit -- with them all the time. Equally important, you must have your door open all the time. They must know the boss is with them. Such things, I think, are but examples of how you can develop JOs. I think you've really got to translate your open-doorness and your on-the-line-with-themness into seeking at all times opportunities to discuss the substance of what's going on, the substance of the visa decision, the substance of the flow of people, the substance of the political problems in having the congressmen on your back constantly over clients that are arrested and obviously are good people and shouldn't be arrested because they're from Harvard or whatever. All of the issues that can really mislead and discourage junior officers, as they do senior officers, must be part of the training and development process, both for their own morale and pride, but also so they'll develop professionally. I never thought of JOs as rotational or "established" consular officer by the cone they were placed in. As far as I was concerned, they were junior officers learning some very important rules of diplomacy and professional development.

Q: From what I gather, you are saying, from your experience--and I'd have to say from mine, too--that much of being a consul general or chief of the section consists of getting out and talking to your officers, sharing with them all the time. It's not a matter of sitting back and every once in a while having a staff meeting, delegating authority and all, but it's really explaining what's going on all the time. There's a lot of officer-to-officer contact in this.

MORGAN: Yes. You've got to be yourself. I mean, if you're a little shyer than I am or whatever is your own personality, you must be true to it. I can give you a set of rules right now that I lived by, but they're my rules; they might not apply to another person. But with that caveat, if you want to call it that, with one's own stylistic approach, I think it is imperative never the less to show to each and every officer, and FSN, naturally, that you understand and appreciate what they're doing, and you're helping them to learn how to correct things if they're not doing it right.

My habit--and again, maybe someone else won't do that--was that a day seldom went by in the last 20 years that I didn't find myself at every one's work station for at least a few moments. I remember in Paris, Joe Cheevers, who was head of the visa section; I think he thought I was trying to run his section. That's a very difficult problem that you have. You've got to balance what kind of relationship you have with subordinates, with a brandnew visa officer, with the immediate supervisor. The supervisor in between you and the more junior person might think, "Oh, what's he doing in there? He's usurping my authority," or something like that. The answer to that is very, very important: be certain to tell that supervisor soonest everything you did with that subordinate. It's a good

opportunity to give him a quick analysis of how you think that junior officer or FSN is doing or where you see some weaknesses. You can't take over that middle manager's supervisory role. On the other hand, I think you don't know what's going on, and you can't be "inspirational" or you can't perform the leadership function properly unless you have that relationship. Yes, there are other ways of doing that, such as by meetings, but there must be one-on-one interplay. I must say I've used staff meetings many, many a time to get the troops to vote for the things I really want, by having a democracy at work, which is sharing and getting out certain issues. Then the next thing you know, some vice consul's coming forward with the very thing you want them all to do. And it is his or her idea! So yes, there isn't just a one-on-one thing with the vice consul and going over a draft with him or a decision that he's made or how you're about to convince him how he really should reverse his refusal. That's part of it, but it's also the community of the section as a body politic.

Q: One other factor that we haven't brought up. Could you talk about dealing with a Foreign Service national? Obviously, particularly in the consular function, there are key individuals who represent continuity and often are not treated as well as they might by junior officers, who look on them as mere clerks.

MORGAN: Well, mere clerks--they look on them as servants, and in some cases, they look at them as worse than that, in the sense that they are often very maltreated by vice consuls. That is one of the first lessons that you teach vice consuls: how to work with FSNs. I wouldn't argue that you can't get along without them; the Soviets have just proved that we can get along without them in Moscow, I guess. But in any event, we have, as supervisors, a vital lesson to teach officer relationship with FSNs. It's a social lesson, but it's also a practical lesson. But beyond that, I think my experience over the years with FSNs has been a mixed one, perhaps because FSNs can be such a varied group of workers. You can have the most severe cases of poor professionalism, incompetence. In Beirut, we used to call it the chauffeur syndrome: promoted to get him out of the car pool. Where do you promote him? You promote him to the consular section, because the consular chief always can be conned into taking one more person. As a result you have a person brought into a section that they shouldn't have been in the first place, and then kept there through this marvelous thing called tenure. And you can't get rid of an incompetent if you don't know how to. Then you have, unfortunately, some FSNs who have been around too long and really aren't that effective any longer. I shouldn't start off with a negative, but there is that aspect. It is a reality. Sections have some plateaued FSNs that say, "We always did it this way," or "We can't change," or whatever. And how you work with such folk has been an incredible challenge to me.

The other side of the question is perhaps even more demanding. You've got people that are so bloody talented, are so wise, are so skilled, and in some cases, many years in the function; they're just topnotch. They know how to work with these constantly changing section chiefs and officers and so on. With these real professionals you suffer favoritism, and that, believe me, as a section chief, is perilous. How you make it clear that you don't favor somebody is an art, but I think it's essential to master it.

How do you take those extremes and those in the middle, too, and supervise wisely? As section chief, show by example and demonstrate that all of the FSNs are equal in terms of fair treatment. Skills are rewarded and incompetence corrected or punished. It's not easy.

Q: Another question. I'm moving off to dealing with the community at large, moving in gradual steps. How did you, as section chief, make sure that the public was well served? I assume in Lebanon, when the doors opened in the morning, you had a considerable number of people coming in every day.

MORGAN: Yes.

Q: It's always a concern to make sure that the experience is at least, if not pleasurable, at least it's not unpleasant.

MORGAN: The answer concerns both treatment of the American community as well as the Lebanese community. How do you make the physical setup responsive to both the clients coming in and to the staff, so it can perform effectively and responsively? What we had when I arrived in Beirut was an extraordinarily bad section lay out. It was an old apartment building, our embassy in Beirut, before it was finally blown up. It was bombed seriously while I was there, but after I left, they really had a go at it. How you redo an apartment house is not what the managers in those days were skilled at. So we had an extraordinarily inefficient operation, very bad security, poor people-flow, etc. And what it did--I'm now singling out the American clientele because this is important to me, how you, as section chief, balance the American community and the foreigners -- was show our most inefficient and bureaucratic side. The American community has first preference, and you should receive the best and fastest service. They pay your salary through their taxes, as any American will be quick to tell you if he doesn't get the kind of service he wants.

So how you assure (or create) a service-oriented, smooth-flowing layout for the foreigners, largely Lebanese, visa applicants and notarials -- and there were a lot of notarial services -- and for Americans as well -- was an overwhelming challenge. I'll quickly say I was incompetent to solve it but the space problem was mastered by the administrative counselor, Vic Dikeos. He knew that the only way to do it was by a massive restructuring. I kept saying, "Well, we don't have the money," blah, blah, blah, blah. I was clearly a typical small-thinking bureaucrat. He said, "I'll take care of the money, and I'll take care of the GSO labor. All I want out of you is to tell me how this place can run better." And fortunately, at the end of my first year, we completely destroyed the existing inefficient consular section and, through his leadership and supply of funds and encouragement, we restructured it. I guess my point is, you need others to help you. You not only need them because they have the money, but you also need them because they have the know-how and they've got the encouragement you need to succeed.

Lesson number one: get to know your admin counselor. Know him well and use him! But as a colleague who is working on the same team as you are.

Q: Put him on your side.

MORGAN: Yes. I didn't realize he was ahead of me. There aren't many out there that are ahead of you in support of the consular section but I have, fortunately, run into a few of them that are. I can't stress enough, and you know, like many of my colleagues over the last 20 years do, how important I think physical setup is. If the consular chief does not know how to plan and try and figure out what the flow of the people is and how it varies with the time of the day and the changing patterns of work load demands, he's not performing his function as a manager. So that's my first response to you of how do you react to the people-flow. The second one is the actual physical layout, restructuring where necessary. Of course, fortunately, in the 20 years, we've gone a long way on this aspect of a strong consular section. I have witnessed monumental changes in physical layout planning, which makes both the working conditions better and the professional staff reactions to the clients much, much better. It's for those reasons that we improve people-flow and physical layout, not to make it prettier or improve morale: those follow.

Related to that, of course, is how do you provide a faster and more efficient service? How do you take 500 visa applicants coming at you and figure out how to move quickly those who don't need careful screening versus how do you slow down and process more attentively -- spend your officer and FSN time more effectively -- those that need more scrutiny? Same with the Americans or with the non-visa function, for example, the notarials. How do you have a place that is targeted for those people, so they know they're not going to be all mixed up with visa applicants in the waiting areas? How do you keep the minimum number of people in the waiting area? Flow the people through, get them serviced more quickly, and thereby, I think, do a more professional job? And how do you sort out those that really need the time? When the mother of the prisoner arrives, how do you make sure she isn't caught up in the visa line? Whatever you want to call all that bag of logistical management questions -- the reaction to the crowds -- the issue is the heart of the management of the consular section.

Q: Let's move on now to dealing with the American community. You were saying they wanted support from the embassy.

MORGAN: They wanted leadership. They, I'm pleased to say, are not like some other Americans abroad: opposed to the American Embassy, opposed to the U.S. government role. I guess they knew in Lebanon that the American Government was thoroughly sensitive to Middle East issues. We have been accused, those of us who served in Arab countries, of being tilted. But I think it was very clear to all people that Embassy Beirut understood what the problems were, and we understood the concerns of American business, academic and general community.

For example, the American school. I was on the board of the American Community School, a very important, very, very good school. Most consular officers do find themselves on such boards. But here we had, through the five-year period, a real identifiable security questions. Security from a hashish trafficking and use standpoint, security from an evacuation standpoint, security from a life-threatening standpoint. It was in the late Sixties and early Seventies, when children were less self-disciplined than they were before and are now. So you had all these security issues in a very lovely and free-wheeling place. The kids could go skiing in the morning and go to the beach in the afternoon. Who wants to go to school or avoid hashish dealers? So the role of the chief of the consular section in that part of the community was demonstrably center stage. I look back proudly to many a story concerning the principal or teachers or parents of how they could call Bill Morgan or call the American Embassy, and get a straightforward, helpful answer, and they got it right away. "Can we go to Damascus today?" Fine. "He told me no, and boy, we don't go." I mean, that a real support relationship.

And this same responsibility of consular support concerns equally the business community. There, of course, it was the entire embassy. The school was more oriented towards the USIA operation and the consular function, but when you deal with the business community, it was all across the board. The political section, the economic and commercial section, and so on. And that relationship, from the consular standpoint, was absolutely vital. There, of course, with the business side, it was citizenship services, notarials. Also, general advise proffered. You met these people socially, and you proved to them that you were not only a fellow American, but you were professionally qualified. As the security and political troubles got worse and worse, it was vital that you conveyed the right degree of caution. You don't send out letters saying, "Today thou shalt not do the following." No, you can't do that. The E&E plan -- the evacuation plan -- in 1967, was implemented when we evacuated Americans. But it wasn't as successful as some thought it should be. That was one of the consular section's primary functions. How does it work? Well, an evacuation starts with knowledge of the number of Americans present in the country. Did the Americans register at the embassy? Not all. Did anybody tell them they had to? No. Did anybody encourage them? It's not like the British, where you must, otherwise you might lose your nationality.

So, shortly after I arrived I started a two- to three-year campaign to convince everyone that it was in their interest to register. We established a system in which all of the wardens, these individual embassy officers assigned responsibility for different parts of Lebanon, became more and more involved with their particular areas. We set up a mailing-address system, which was the basis for letters to registered Americans. I started, for the first time, a "Dear Fellow American," letter. This way all Americans got, every couple of months, for example at Christmas, a letter, but it also carried a message, a sense of relationship with the embassy, a sense of "someone does care." It also gave me an opportunity to do two things: first, flow information out to the American community, tell them, as things got worse, "Maybe you might want to send your mother-in-law home now," or "Maybe you better think about such things." But very carefully worded.

Secondly, it provided the embassy with a refined evacuation listing. For example, I would get a telephone call, "Bill, I didn't get your letter."

"Well, are you registered?"

"I don't know. I told my wife to register. Didn't she do it?"

"Well, I don't know. Let me go look. No, you're not registered with us."

"Oh, well, I'll be in there tomorrow and register." As a result, we went from something like a 25% registry to 95%. So, after my departure in '73, in later evacuations we knew who was there. We knew how to contact them better. Just one example of how important it is to establish a relationship with the community particularly in a troubled area.

Q: Bill, let's move to some of the problems. Could you talk about how you dealt there with the drug problem? Any specific cases of both using your officers and your position?

MORGAN: Yes, I think this five-year period in Lebanon is historic because it not only was the real beginning of the drug issue on an international scale, but also it was in a country where the absolute finest hashish in the world was grown. Of course, the competition among world-wide dealers was tremendous. It affected us as consular officers, as an embassy, watching the drug tragedy just explode. I remember when I first arrived there, we had one prisoner, and he was a merchant sailor who had been on a ship in Naples, I think it was, and came down to Beirut for a nice weekend, and he got arrested for robbery. He'd got involved in some drunken brawl and robbery. That was my prisoner.

When I left, five years later, the average count was 25 prisoners, 100% of them drugs, and maybe 25% were females, and 50% to 75% were university graduates, all those "nice, young people" that weren't supposed to be involved in this sort of thing, obviously caught in situations where they were totally "innocent".

Q: Caught in situations totally innocent?

MORGAN: At the airport, coming in on the way to somewhere, and they had a suitcase with a false bottom, and they didn't know that Joe, back in New York, had loaded the bottom part of the suitcase with all this stuff. Or leaving the country with hashish in great quantities. You know, kids! The local American minister's son and a dozen others picked up by the police and taken off to jail. I got a call at 11:00 o'clock at night during a dinner party I was giving, from the minister, saying, "My son is arrested, and he's off in jail." That's another part of the problem in Lebanon. It wasn't only the magnitude and the growth and sadness of it all, but it was the conditions. I mean, jails were horrible. The Sands prison was a Turkish 500-year-old prison that you wouldn't believe. I can still hear the words, "Konsul hon." It means, "The consul's here," as I would arrive at the prison, and the guard would scream out across the entrance area, "Watch out. Here comes the American consul!" And I did go, indeed. You talk about relations with the vice consuls

and junior officers, yes, I had one officer and then two officers that did nothing but protection and welfare work. You bet your life I got involved, you know, not just to set an example or whatever, but because I got a telephone call, and you couldn't very well say, "All right, fine," especially to the Reverend or a friend, that you're sending your vice consul.

Q: How would you deal with these cases?

MORGAN: Well, you dealt with them the way, of course, we're all told to deal with them. You react instantly, and if you don't hear about it relatively instantly, you let police or the Lebanese attorney general know. They were quite good about this. Then you charge off, or whoever gets the call, to jail. Unfortunately, sometimes you learn first from the newspapers or the grapevine.

Q: You went, or was it usually another officer?

MORGAN: Usually another officer. Well, in the beginning, when I first went there, when it wasn't a major problem, I found myself more involved. But when it got into three or four arrests a week or more, like the student bunch, I think there were 18 kids that were arrested in one fell swoop, it was more and more the chief of the American protection unit and/or one of the vice consuls; often the duty officer. I don't know why, but I guess it seems always these things take place off hours. You are called, usually, at 10:00 o'clock at night or during cocktails or something like that, and you have to react right away.

You take along your "welcome kit", which we all had in our homes, to the jail or to the airport or wherever. What you did, of course, first and foremost, was to make sure that the individual saw both your ability and your limitations. Ability, in the sense that you were a fellow American and you could make clear that," I sympathize with you, and I'm sorry you got yourself into this trouble. I'm not making any judgment. Don't ask me to make any. I'm not a judge, and I'm not going to play that role, and I can't get you out of jail, but I can do some things for you." Then you proceed through what you could do. I guess mostly it's a cathartic relief to a person who is in a terribly emotional state. How can you, as a fellow American, get the person to calm down if they are excited, and specifically face the realities of the arrest that they're in the middle of? And you don't immediately say that your crime could get you 30 years in jail or even execution, but you make sure they realize that they've got some pretty heavy things ahead of them. Then you take out the famous list of lawyers, and you tell them that they need some legal advice, and you can't give it, other than you can tell them something about the legal system. Of course, you do. And you don't say all the things you might like to say or know, because that isn't the setting. But you do want them to realize, because they'll hear it other ways, and that is that there are ways of buying themselves through this particular situation or paying off the lawyer, the police or the judge, and discovering that it doesn't work or that isn't the way you do business or whatever.

Q: This is a problem that I think all of us have faced in certain countries. An American is in trouble. You know that the system is such that often the best way to get out of it is a payoff of some kind, and this is how the system work, to a certain extent. Yet you are doing a great disservice to the American if you take a holier-than-thou attitude and say, "Well, we don't accept payoffs," because then they end up in jail in a very difficult situation.

MORGAN: Yes.

Q: But how do you deal with that particular problem?

MORGAN: Based on my experience, in Lebanon at least, the problem was relatively easy, because my officers and I could say to anybody, "I know of no example where a person paid off and succeeded, and I know of lots of examples where they gouged them and they got nothing. Now, I'm not saying it doesn't exist. I'm just merely saying from my own experience, the chances are you will pay and you will get nothing for it. But that's your decision. If you have a lawyer that tells you he can pay off the judge, think very carefully. I can't say it isn't possible. I can't say it isn't actually not possible in the United States. It doesn't usually work, but you are only going to be able to face that yourself. All I can say to you, as your consular officer, is think very carefully about this. You will hear as I have heard of lots of stories of corruption here. I would say more important than corruption in this country is greed, the 'buck', the Lebanese pound, or whatever. They are very enterprising business people here, and they have dealt with it thousands of years and longer than you have. Go very carefully. Also, listen very carefully to what the judge is saying and what the authorities are saying. Many of them are quite honest, and you're going to have to live with yourself through this."

Stu, the real answer to the question was a "Lebanese solution", We had, fortunately, a Lebanese government, which included Armenians. The government's chief psychiatrist, I don't think that's what he was called, but that's what he was, was an Armenian by the name of Manougian. He ran a mental hospital just outside of Beirut which included a very, relatively speaking compared to the other prisons of Lebanon, tolerably pleasant drug detention center. And what he did was work out with me--and I use the word "work out," that's too strong for it--a "solution" for American prisoners. He thought it was wrong that Americans and Europeans, given their cultural, historical background, should be exposed to some of the criminals that were in the Sands prison and even in the women's prison. He established, with the Lebanese authorities and the attorney general, that the act of drug use was a psychotic act and that those so convicted should be detained in his mental facility. The act of smuggling drugs wasn't. But if he could be convinced (by a "good" Lebanese lawyer) that the person who was smuggling drugs, in fact, used drugs -fessed up to their use of drugs -- then they would be transferred, eventually, based on "psychotic behavior", to a far more civilized setting. That was the answer in Lebanon to the arrest of many of the American drug traffickers.

Q: I might say that this was in its own way, almost exactly the same time when I was in Greece, the way it worked with us, too.

MORGAN: There were solutions. There are local solutions to this legal problem. A person is caught and they go through a legal system, and the legal system of that country is a variation of the legal system in our country. So there is usually a varied form of punishment in various countries --different than the American solution and therefor not understood by Americans arrested or the next-of-kin.

Q: I think one of the great powers of the consul is the fact that most foreign authorities don't want to have a lot of foreigners in their jails. It's a bother and an expense to them, and so that often you can use the local authorities to figure a way to eventually get them out of the country.

MORGAN: The Lebanese were caught in a quandary that other countries get caught in, and that is they were pressed by the United States, in this case, in two different directions. One is to stop the drug trafficking, stop the hashish growth. We had an good-sized DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] operation in Lebanon. We put considerable pressure in our anti-drug efforts on the Lebanese authorities, of which I was the Mission coordinator. I wore both hats. There's always the question, can you wear both hats? Can you protect an American and at the same time try to act as the coordinator against drugs in the country? The answer to that is yes, you can.

Q: I took just the reverse position in Greece at the same time. I refused to wear both hats.

MORGAN: Well, we could argue this, but we won't take up the time. The point being that the Lebanese found themselves under this double pressure. So they wanted to get rid of American prisoners. But at the same time, they had to have an impeccable record of not being soft or duplicitous on drug traffickers. Other countries were involved too, the Danes and the French and the British and other Arabs were all being arrested for the same thing. So there had to be equitable treatment, and the American sometime "suffered" from this equitable treatment.

When it went too far, whenever we found ourselves with the Lebanese "misbehaving", for example, if there wasn't proper notification of arrest, or we felt that a judge really was being inequitable, or we had something--in all cases it had to be something measurable -- I would go to the attorney general, a very important person in Lebanon. Sometimes I would go with the ambassador or DCM, depending on the level of representation that we wished to bring. Here again, there was always present a certain political reality. We haven't talked about this, but as far as serving as a consular officer in Lebanon, there was never a moment in anything I did that it wasn't "political" in nature. By that I mean that not only the Lebanese situation but also because of the realities of the Middle East there were dangers that related to consular problems and involved Lebanese society.

Something we haven't talked about at all, that I found in my last couple of years there involved protecting U.S. interests in Syria. We had no diplomatic relations with Syria. In '67, they cut ties with the United States, and there was no entry to that bordering country. I mean, no American was allowed into Syria. Then in 1969 it began to open. The Syrians advised the Italians who represented us that certain Americans might enter. I was one of the first officials to go into Syria but only as the consul; this goes back to the role you can play as a consular officer. Then came the apprehension of the military attaché from Beirut. The Major was a student at the U.S. Army Middle East area studies program there. He was caught taking photographs of strategic Mt. Hermon on an open road on the way to Damascus. He was arrested, maltreated and was kept for three or four months. This was not dealt with directly on a diplomatic level, because we had no diplomatic relations but on a consular basis. The only way the Syrians would permit negotiations to take place was through the Italians and with me, as the consular officer. So that is an example of a very political world in which a consular officer can find himself.

Q: How did you deal with this case, the military attaché?

MORGAN: In ways that are traditional and ways that aren't. The traditional way is through the Italian representative. Of course you found out all you could about the charges against the attaché. But unfortunately, the good major in question did himself in. He had an Official passport for his Beirut assignment which he used initially to identify himself. When he saw the pressures coming, he pulled out his other passport, Diplomatic, which showed him as the attaché in Amman, Jordan, which, of course, he wasn't yet.

Q: He was an Arabic language and area student.

MORGAN: Yes, exactly. He had been assigned to Jordan, but he hadn't got there yet. So he just did a whole series of extraordinarily contradictory and suspicious things that if you're caught doing them, is bad enough. But if you're by Syrian intelligence agents who are convinced that an American attaché is obviously working not only for the Defense Department, but for the CIA and for the Israeli Government and Lord knows for whom else. I mean, they have no alternative but to throw the book at you.

But back to your opening question. The first method of dealing with the Syrians was through the normal traditional diplomatic route via the Italians. The other was through the not-normal route. You dealt, as we know now too well as a result of the hostage situations, with all kinds of factions in Lebanon. You contacted the Shiites, the Christians, you dealt with the Druze, and with anyone on all levels of authority. You had the help of the political section and at other times you dealt with the contacts individually. I mean, there were occasions when the Italian protector would come to Beirut, and we'd literally meet in a park, because we knew that G-2 the Syrian intelligence authorities were an extraordinarily enterprising group, and maybe had techniques better than the KGB in some ways. At certain sensitive times you couldn't afford to use telephones or even meet in each other's embassies. So you dealt in all sorts of ways. You had to strike a deal with the Syrians, is what it amounted to, and a deal was finally arranged. I went to the border

where the Italian rep brought the liberated Major to the Lebanese side. LeCarre stuff! He was all beaten up and his teeth were knocked out. He was in bad condition. As a tangential consular story, his mother had been with him in Beirut over the previous year. She was frequently in my section, "What are you doing? What is the latest? Why don't you get my son out?" This was of course understandable. She came the day after we got him back. He was in the hospital, actually evacuated by an Army plane to Weisbaden. She insisted on staying behind in Lebanon. She liked her digs there and so on. She walked in and said, "I want you to arrange for my going to Damascus as a tourist. I want to go to the Souks and do some shopping." That's right. One can't believe what people will do nor how a consular officer must keep his cool at all times.

Q: I just raised my eyebrows.

MORGAN: You raised your eyebrows. (Laughter) I did more than that to her. I think that's one of the times I might have lost my cool in my profession. (Laughter) But what I'm trying to say here is--that you can take such an isolated, perhaps dramatic and sexy story, but they occur repeatedly in our trade. The chief of the consular section, be it in a country like Lebanon, or in most countries, are frequently faced with issues which have real political and diplomatic aspects or implications. How you negotiate with the government over all kinds of issues is a daily job challenge.

Q: Deals were being struck.

MORGAN: Well, deals are normal. I don't want to make them shady.

Q: No, but I'm saying there is a negotiating process.

MORGAN: You're a diplomat. You work for the Foreign Service. You are a part of U.S.-X country relations, and the consular function isn't just adjudicating visas, fending off or evaluating influence brought to bear on a visa issuance. It's rather the flow of people, questions of brain drain. The French, for example, used to enjoy discussing with me our visa processing, how our sections were set up, how we handled refugees, how you allow French diplomats to work in the U.S. So you've got a non-technical aspect of consular work that, to me, is fundamental to the consular function. Call it political, call it managerial or whatever you want. But it relates to a country-to-country relationship, at times becoming sensitive, and certainly involving other elements of the embassy.

Going back to your very opening question, it isn't hard to establish good relationships in a Mission. These come naturally over issues of mutual concern. All you have to do is prove yourself competent to deal with your colleague on a basis of mutual interest and respect. In other words, understand what the political implications are. If you don't, if you say, "That's political. I don't understand it," or "That's an economic issue," or "That's a commercial issue," you've just sealed your fate. Then you are a technician. You might as well go back "down" to your section and forget it. But in so doing you're not performing your total job.

Q: Bill, we'll pick up various themes as we go, but I want to move on to some of your other assignments, the different aspects. You were saying both the ability to get out of a problem and a sense of humor. Did you find that you were looking for something different than some of your colleagues who represented other functions were looking for?

MORGAN: In their own functions?

Q: Yes.

MORGAN: Well, other than those two qualities, and I think they are welcome qualities in all the functions, there is a third. I'd like to think other functions need it but in consular it's absolutely vital: the human relationship. How do you like people? Do you enjoy taking on people's problems? One of our favorite questions in BEX was: "candidate, you're in Cairo and there's this person arrested down at the Sphinx. What will you do?" To me, the determinant in the response was did the aspiring J.O. get up off his backside and go to try and solve the problem, or did he sit there with the telephone and grope for it to go away. In other words, are they avoiding human contact, a person-oriented situation? Do they want to hide in their office? Or do they really look forward to going out to the Sphinx? That, to me, was a vital job requirement.

Q: Moving on after BEX to your next assignment, you were in the Inspection Corps. This was something new, wasn't it?

MORGAN: Yes, it was brand-new. As a matter of fact, the job I wanted was Chief of American Services. I wanted to replace Alan Gise, but good old Walyntinowicz, who was then head of CA, said, "No, I have a greater opportunity for you. I want you to be the first consular officer in S/IG," which was then the acronym for the Inspection Corps. I said, "What are you talking about? I'm not qualified to be an inspector." "Oh, yes, you are. You have the rank and you have the experience. I worked vigorously against S/IG's biases and convinced them that they needed a consular officer". I must admit I had fun and it was a great assignment. Because of my experience in Lebanon and other postings I was indeed qualified. Also, I had a fine bunch of fellow-inspectors who appreciated my efforts to teach them the real essence of the consular function. This was even more satisfying, in a sense, because a report, an inspection, the end result--Mexico, for example--is so consular oriented. You participate in the inspection fully and work closely with your fellow inspectors, particularly the senior inspector, and truly prove that the consular operations are fully substantive and vital to the total Mission objectives.

Q: Using Mexico as an example, how did you show the substance of consular work to both the other inspectors and even to the embassy itself?

MORGAN: I guess the basic way of doing it is making it very clear that the consular section and its work, which many colleagues would like to see as "separate from" the real Mission, is, in fact, and essential and integral part. For example, the visa crowds around

the embassy: how John Jova, our very qualified, distinguished ambassador in Mexico, reacted to this and other consular issues. At the end of six weeks of inspection, in which the whole team spent at least 50% of our time in the consular function, including in the constituent posts, we sat down with the ambassador. "We went over with interest," the senior inspector told Jova, "the listing of the Mission's objectives and issues. We see nothing here of the role of the consular function." "Well, that isn't substantive," replied the Ambassador. Then the Senior Inspector asked, "How much time do you spend on such things as prisoners and the drug issue and visa intervention and management issues such as the crowds around your embassy?" "Oh, I spend 60, 70% of my time." And then the obvious reaction: "Well, if you spend that much of your time, then clearly consular issues are substantive."

The point is that too many people -- even those well-intentioned -- don't look at consular as being a part of a Mission's fundamental objectives, and they are indeed.

Q: When you're saying "people," you're talking the professional Foreign Service officer corps, those not engaged, although every one of whom has probably served a time as a vice consul.

MORGAN: So many of our senior colleagues say: "My best days were back when I was a vice consul; I just loved that assignment." But it sounds so tendentious. condescending. So many don't mean that in fact it was such an important learning and interesting experience.

Q: So you found yourself as a salesman both as a consular officer, but also as an inspector, and also as an examiner, again going back to the salesman idea, to explain to people how important not only this function is, not because you're doing it, but it is such a vital part of what the Foreign Service is about, but it's not recognized as such.

MORGAN: It's salesmanship in the sense that you're getting people informed and you have a "product" that must be sold. But I'd like to raise it one level above that definition.

I remember Barbara Watson, God rest her soul, took the top of my head off once when I said that I was "conning" my colleagues. I said, "Oh, no, Barbara, I don't mean that as acting as a con artist; I mean it rather as gaining the confidence of. In other words, getting people to look at you confidently and seeing that what you're doing is in their interest, that you're not out there to harm them or to compete with them or do damage, but, in fact, to help them. So in that sense, we are salesmen ... and "con artists".

As inspectors, you're also selling consular work -- you're gaining the confidence of your fellow inspectors -- so the team as a whole can do a better inspection job. As an inspector, there's a constant exchange of information. The political inspector, for example, is gathering information about the consular function when he examines the political section. Over drinks and dinner in the evening or in more formal meetings you share stories, facts and impressions to produce a total evaluation of the mission. Now, as the consular

inspector, of course, you do more than inspect the consular section, you inspect generally other agencies. I've evaluated DEA, USIA, INS, VA, etc. I've also examined complete posts as an inspector. In reality you are a full, real team member. You're not an auditor examines the books, as S/IG looked at the way to evaluate the consular function when I joined them. Eventually, S/IG asked me to write up a series of guidelines on how to inspect the consular function, to focus on real management issues. In those days, we didn't know how to spell the word management, yet inspectors were expected to examine the management of the post. In sum, I believe a solid salesmanship was called for -- toward fellow inspectors and to the total mission. It was a tremendous experience. I so enjoyed it. I think now have three or four consular-qualified inspectors as permanent slots in S/IG.

Q: Our time is moving on, so I want to talk to you about the time you were deputy director in the Visa Office. Could you tell me just what was your prime function?

MORGAN: Trying to make sense out of the visa function, I guess. We had in the field mostly junior officers facing difficult situations, trying to understand the role of a Congress of the United States which wrote a law and State which produced a series of regulations. On the other hand, I had to manage a large office, 104 folks, half of whom were civil service employees. Many of them were lawyers and staff support people, certain of whom thought people in the field were incompetents or just "don't understand laws or the realities of Washington." In the field were FSOs who ere on first tour, counting their days until they could get out of consular work, or others who were there to learn our trade. I guess that was my prime function: balancing these at times conflicting forces.

Q: There has always been, I'd say probably more than almost in any other function, a lack of communication between the field officer and Washington. I speak as generally a field officer, managing the visa program and having the feeling that in Washington, the visa office is continually trying to second-guess your judgment, particularly to make sure that the congressional people do get their way.

MORGAN: Yes. That's exactly the point. That's precisely what I faced: trying to juggle these conflicting interests and attitudes. In fact, that was the fun of the job, because I was accepted -- I guess is the right word -- by those people who weren't from the field. In other words, the Dick Scullys and the Carl Shepherds, those folks that were the permanent establishment. I'm convinced they did not look at me as the enemy from the field, but rather, somebody who was trying to find the balance between the legal and Congressional demands and the "how do you do it under a hot sun and pressures of Kingston or Bujumbura?" That was my job, to find a balance, and I enjoyed it very much. Again, we can go back to some of the things we talked about before--gaining the confidence of everybody, keeping a good sense of humor, knowing what everybody's doing, getting around. I remember Julio Arias, who was then my boss as director of the Visa Office. He wondered, "Why do you go around to these different offices?" I explained to him something that wasn't completely the truth that I had too big a pot belly,

and I wanted to reduce it, and the only way I could do it was getting actively around. His style was somewhat different. But I felt that in the job I was in, sort of caught between, if you will, that I had to make sure every one of those 104 people knew that I understood what they were doing and I was with them as well as with the field officers.

The other part of my job was the bigger one, namely finding ways to institutionalize the reconciliation of differences by better communication. We worked very, very hard on making sure the regulations were rewritten in real English, that they were timely, that when they got out to the field they were seen as a welcomed addition to the Bible.

Another communications devise we used was consular conferences. I started up a system where the field came in responding to those specific questions. In other words, the conferences avoided pontificating about this, that, or the other thing, but rather were designed to discuss real problems. Also I emphasized the importance of giving timely responses. I signed off on every cable that went to the field. I made sure that the message answered the question and was not pedantic, legalistic or insulting. There were certain folks in VO who enjoyed putting down those in the field. Some of them didn't even realize what they were doing or that their style of response was not comprehensive and useful in the real-world end of the visa line.

Q: The cable that comes out saying, "As you should have known."

MORGAN: Precisely. Not a cable went out like that when I was there, even though there were a few I would have liked to have said that, because believe me, the field often should have known better. Let me put it differently. I would say to anyone who was writing a cable to the field, "I want you to write that response to a junior officer in Kathmandu, and I want that first-tour junior officer to understand every single thing you said in that message, no matter how complex it is. And I want him to appreciate getting that response. And if he doesn't, then you haven't done your job right."

Q: Before we move on, I'd like to talk about congressional influence and pressure.

MORGAN: Yes. We haven't talked about that. It's been out there in the shadows. Like lawyers, congressmen are in reality our friends and supporters. It's how you express your support for them that is vital to mutual understanding. Congressmen, as far as I'm concerned, have been the greatest asset to the Foreign Service. Many of my colleagues, I'm afraid, don't recognize their role under the Constitution. They're looked at as the enemy. A consular officer who looks at a congressman as an enemy is in deep trouble, because the congressman not only has written most of the laws that define our work in the consular area, but they're the ones that help us, even though they are the ones that send the "congressionals". Those are the famous "missiles" we're so frustrated to receive and anxious to get rid of. I don't find congressionals so bad at all. As far as I'm concerned, a congressional says one of two things, either the congressman wants to get re-elected and needs his constituent's vote or he really thinks you should reexamine what you did, Mr. Consul. Or both.

Q: A congressional, by the way, for the record, is a letter from and to a congressman, replying to a query.

MORGAN: Right. Because the congressman's problem, as many a congressman has so told me, is getting re-elected, and the way you do it is by getting people to vote for you; i.e., constituent support. The second thing that a Congressional does is underline that we perhaps are not reacting to a particular case the way we should. If you are adjudicating or acting correctly, if you have given it fair hearing and made your judgment correctly, you won't hear another peep out of the congressman. All he wants is an answer that is sensible and that he can send on to his constituent. But if you are doing something wrong--that's perhaps too strong--but if it's something you could do differently or better, it brings the problem to you and the immediate supervisor.

Q: I found that a congressional letter is the greatest thermometer to what's going on in your section.

MORGAN: It's a management tool.

Q: As the manager. If something comes up that doesn't look right, the answer, then I want to know more. It's a very good tool.

MORGAN: And you do it by starting off with the vice consul, asking, "I know you're right, but could you fill me in?" In other words, don't let the congressional be a bad thing. As a matter of fact, you can be very sympathetic and curse out the congressional while establishing the facts.

The real thrust of your question was: how does Congress work with the Visa Office. Tremendously well, with very few exceptions. I can broaden this beyond just the Visa Office to prisoner problems or whatever. In most cases, congressmen do not get up on a hobby horse or on a political cause when they're dealt with honestly, frankly and professionally. Once in a while, you'll get a congressman who gets taken away with his "cause": I had one from California. We had this female prisoner in Lebanon. But the intervening congressman just couldn't get off the fact that this lovely young lady was in jail. In all due respect to him, I'm not questioning his judgment, but I'm saying that he really brought incredible pressure on us and challenged our professionalism. I must say it kept our feet to the fire, though. But my bottom line was, "I'm not going to treat her differently just because there's a congressman that has brought particular pressure." I feel that she has gotten the same treatment that all other prisoners who didn't graduate from Stanford or don't have a congressman behind them, then I'm satisfied we're acting correctly. This is a very important message: Don't let the congressional cause you, as an officer, to tilt in a judgment that would be inequitable to other prisoners or visa applicants. That's easy to maintain, but it's true. I repeat, if you tell the congressman what the problem is -- I don't care whether it's refusing to let a South African into the United States and you're responding to Jesse Helms or vice versa -- give him the answer,

including that in some cases it's simply because the Secretary of State -- the Executive Branch that is -- has so decided. You can pass the buck on truly sensitive ones, because they do go to a higher level. Tell him what the facts are. Usually it's a staff aide that's the problem. If you get the senator or the congressman on the phone, it's no problem at all. First of all, he doesn't know the facts too well, and secondly, he's very good at listening to you. Whereas the staff aide is perhaps gone a little bit too far in committing the senator to an action that in fact can't be done.

Q: Moving off this subject to being consul general in Paris, what was different there as a consul general than in Lebanon?

MORGAN: Of course, the dangers of being blown up, for example, are reduced. You were looking at a more civilized setting, so your living was easier, although living in Paris isn't always the easiest thing in the world. But let me tick off the similarities. First, getting to know your colleagues and working with them well is identical to the Beirut, S/IG and VO situations. There was no difference whatsoever in how you work with your colleagues, gain their confidence and relate to the consular function. Secondly, we also had a physical relocation problem in Paris that was basic and involved the entire embassy. On the other hand, the visa function involved much less intercession; as a matter of fact, next to nothing. So, visa pressures were less but the volume was far worse. We were in Paris during the Iranian hostage crisis when our embassy was held imprisoned. We had a tremendous influx of Iranians at that time.

Q: You were there in Paris between 1978 and '81.

MORGAN: Right. Exactly. The visa responsibilities were largely a function of volume and people movement logistics. The basis of our visa business was the legitimate French and European applicants weighed against the third-country nationals who were the problem cases, particularly Iranians. And the physical layout lessons I learned from Beirut became applicable in Paris. We had to relocate the section, and that was a battle far more difficult than in Beirut.

The similarities with the American community were there. The Americans weren't as concerned about security issues, but they were very sensitive that the American Embassy understood their concerns. I was on the board of the American Chamber of Commerce and the American Hospital of Paris. I was vice-president of the American Club of Paris, an organization that were very, very closely tied to Embassy objectives. The Consul General was role-playing but that role was clearly in U.S. interests in France and with the American community.

The thing that's different--and I want to emphasize that most issues really were the same as in Lebanon -- was my role as supervising consul general over five constituent posts. I would say that took up about a third of my time. These constituent posts were constantly being closed or threatened to be closed. We also had, in some cases, prima donnas as Principal Officers. In other cases, we had not too qualified people. They were almost all

two-officer posts. The small- post-syndrome versus the big embassy, was endemic: "no one ever listens to me and no one ever cares what I'm doing," versus "they don't know what they're doing out there in the consulates." The role, as supervising consul general, as well as guiding the consular function, was a ball-juggling but very fascinating responsibility.

Q: What were the posts?

MORGAN: Lyon, Bordeaux, Nice, Marseille, and Strasbourg. We closed Nice while I was there, and then we reopened it. I think we closed it again. I can't remember. But the issue: Can a consular cone officer supervise principal officers who are economic or political cone? Yes, if he ranks them and writes their efficiency reports. It's amazing what he can do. And second, if he gains their confidence and says, "Look, I'm with you." Traveling out to the constituent posts repeatedly, sitting down with the admin and other FSNs, commiserating with the principal officer and understanding where they feel they're being misused or misunderstood. Security. I traveled repeatedly with the Embassy security officer to these posts, because security in France was becoming ever more important. Remember, we lost an assistant military attaché and almost a DCM and Commercial Counselor.

Q: Bill, you were talking about being the supervising consul general in Paris. I'd like to move on to your last purely consular assignment. You were consul general in Montreal. There it was quite a different role. You had consular affairs, political reporting, economic reporting, the whole works. Looking at it from a consular officer, how well do you think you were trained to move into what we call a broader or more diversified role?

MORGAN: I would argue that my training in the consular function was largely in management areas and therefor prepared me for juggling the various demands as a post program director. So the quick answer is yes, perfectly trained. I think specifically, the experiences I had with S/IG, BEX, in Paris and Beirut and so on, all, in one way or another, exposed me to the issues that I faced in Montreal.

But what I want to answer first is the question you haven't asked, and that is how did I get the assignment. That, I think, is more relevant because I didn't necessarily seek out Montreal. I was told that Montreal was going to go again to a political officer, and that it was consular designated. I don't know if we have designations any longer to principal officerships, but Barbara Watson got that thing going a number of years ago. (Barbara was former Administrator, then Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs for a goodly number of years under Carter and before.) By designating certain principal officerships for the consular function was the only way you could fight the system to get a consular officer into a senior Consulate General slot. "Obviously a consular officer is not substantively qualified to manage a post, because he isn't competent to deal in political and economic matters", was and is the bias consular officers must face to attain top consulate general positions.

Q: In the framework of how the personnel system, run by political officers and economic officers, felt.

MORGAN: Yes. That's the way our system has worked and it probably always will. In those early days, this was the only way you could possibly force the system to assign a consular officer to a Program Direction job.

Q: This was 1981 to 1985.

MORGAN: That's when I was in Montreal. But this phenomenon of designation of post took place ten years before that. I was told almost, "You've got to go to Montreal, because it's in the hands of a political officer now, and the only way we can maintain Montreal, which is highly consular, like Toronto, is to have a consular officer fill the slot." It was a good opportunity, and I looked forward to it professionally, but I did feel that when you get to be more senior in our business, you are a symbol. I'd been around a lot of younger officers, and I do know that they look to see, "Am I going to make it to the top or not?" I feel that those of us who do achieve senior ranks should, indeed, go into those jobs. Lorie Lawrence felt that when he went to Jamaica as ambassador and then to Grenada. He felt it important to show that we can go into the competitive jobs at the senior level. Yes, you've got to have qualifications, but based on my own experience, I know a consular-cone officer can develop such qualifications. It's a long answer, but I wanted to go on record to say that the battle to maintain competitiveness on the highest level must be kept up, because the system is tilted and will always turn towards the "substantive officer" as better qualified for such opportunities. I would argue they are, however, less qualified in many cases as senior managers.

Q: Being the consul general, having political reporting, economic reporting, other responsibilities. How did you deal with the consular section?

MORGAN: Carefully. Rule number one was: I'm not in charge of the consular section. Ann Campbell, when I arrived, was the chief. She welcomed me with open arms. I think it was sort of like the famous two lies in the Foreign Service: the inspector, when he gets off a plane asserts, I'm very glad to be here;" and the ambassador answers, "I'm very glad that you've come." I shouldn't say that. I believe Ann, indeed, did welcome me, because she had known me over the years and believed that some of the experiences I had would be of use to her.

But you know, it is that same question we talked about in Beirut. How does the senior boss find himself involved with subordinates without the middle-level supervisor feeling caught in the middle? Ann was replaced by Mike Mahoney, quite different in his approach to how Morgan should be the consul general. Back to your question: you make sure that the intermediate supervisor knows everything you're doing as you "muddle" in his section. In the Montreal case, none of the other sections had the staffing size --8 to 10 officers -- that the consular section had. You walk a tightrope, because you've got experience, you've got opinions. In some cases, you know what's being done by a

subordinate is not right, but you want the correction to come from the chief of the consular section. So, by lots of chatting and lots of sharing of information and maybe a little drama now and then, you work out that relationship. But this same approach also applies to managing the other sections, particularly Admin and the other agencies.

Another issue that we haven't talked about, surfaced in Paris, but it really came out in Montreal. That is, when you're consul general, you don't realize the authority you've got and the way you're looked at by subordinates. You think you're still one of the troops, and you aren't. Worse yet, you can feel you're exceptionally important and you have incredible authority, and you can forget that you're simply a bit older, more experienced. Or you can go the other way, avoiding the reality of being in a command position. It's a tightrope, too, the specific role the principal officer has to play. How do you remain one of the guys, at the same time be the leader?

Q: Bill, I think we might wrap this up at this point.

MORGAN: It was great fun. If I had to do it over again, I'd do exactly the way I did it, but hopefully learning better from my mistakes.

Q: I think this is true. I think we represent people who came in just as the wave was beginning to crest. The Foreign Service is beginning to recognize the consular function as an equal--a grudging recognition, I might add.

MORGAN: When I left Paris, as well as other posts, I remember I said, "I had a lot of fun." If you can't leave an assignment saying you enjoyed it you haven't been in the right assignment. And if a consular officer can't have fun being a consular officer, you better go do something else. Go be a bored political officer.

Q: Thank you.

End of interview