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

DAVID HAMILTON SHINN

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INTERVIEW

Q: Let's start at the beginning. Where and when were you born?

SHINN: I was born in Yakima, Washington on June 9, 1940. My mother and father grew up in Iowa; they moved west after graduating from Cornell College in Iowa. They first moved to Boise where my father worked for the YMCA. Then they went to Spokane - I think still with the YMCA - and then to Yakima where they lived for most of their lives. My father continued to work for the YMCA. My mother was a house wife; she never worked outside the home. They were essentially small town people; I grew up in such an environment.

The Shinn family came from England. The spelling of the name has changed over the years. My mother's maiden name was Gelvin, a Protestant Irish family from Dublin.

Q: What did your parents major in at Cornell?

SHINN: My father was a "jock." He was the captain of the college wrestling team; he was on the football team. My guess is that he majored in physical education, but I am not sure of that. I think my mother majored in English.

Q: How did he get to the YMCA?

SHINN: I think it just interested him. He might just have fallen into it when he graduated. They graduated in the early years of the depression and I am sure the employment prospects were not great.

Q: Did you grow up in Yakima?

SHINN: I was born and grew up there. Yakima was an agricultural hub, next to an Indian reservation. So I had a very distinct recollection of the Yakama Indians when they came to town to shop, etc. It was a fairly small town - perhaps 25-30,000. It is now more than 50,000 inhabitants. There was a lot of farming activity in the surrounding area. It was at the time largely Anglo; we did have a small black population. Now it has a significant Hispanic population.

It was a very pleasant town to grow up in. I made close friends with some of my grade school classmates. I am still in contact with some of them. My educational experience was pretty average; I can't think of any unusual things that happened to me in elementary school. It was a very stable environment; I spent six years in the same school. I spent three years in the same junior high school and three years in the same high school. I had some friends with whom I attended the same schools from grade one to high school graduation. I stayed in Yakima for another two years while attending junior college. I spent my entire youth in Yakima.

Q: Was there a subject in school in which you became particularly interested?

SHINN: Starting in junior high I became very interested in geography. I was also interested in social studies, history, civics, government. But geography was at the head of the list; I attribute that to my strong interest in collecting stamps which I started at a very early age. That forced me to become acquainted with names of exotic countries. Some of them have disappeared, but at the time they were going concerns. In any case, this hobby piqued my interest in geography. I can remember one of my projects was the purchase of a roll of white butcher paper that I spread on the ping-pong table in the basement. I wrote as many of the world's countries as I could accommodate on the roll and then added key facts such as population, capital, type of government, trade items, etc. I learned a lot about many countries. The trajectory was stamp collecting to geography to the Foreign Service.

Q: While you were growing up, did the outside world intrude very much?

SHINN: Not really, at least in the sense that it had a direct impact on me or my family. Yakima is a provincial town. I did read avidly about the Korean War, even though I was barely a teenager. It was probably not a subject kids of my age took an interest in. I devoured all that was written in the newspaper about the subject. That was one of the few outside intrusions that I can recall. My father had a very modest income; foreign travel was not an option although we did visit neighboring British Columbia.

Q: What were your reading preferences?

SHINN: I went through phases. One phase covered the "Hardy Boys" series. I went through a science-fiction phase. I read "The National Geographic" thoroughly. I went through a phase when forestry excited me; I thought for a while that I might want to pursue the Forest Service as a career. In fact, I did spend four summers with it, but realized that my math and science and skills were not entirely up to the requirements. I did read a number of books on forestry and natural resources.

I would not characterize myself as a voracious reader in my youth although I read more than the average student. I had numerous jobs and spent a lot of time on recreational activities such as skiing and hiking. My parents did not own a TV set until I was well into my teens. I was also very active in student government in junior and high school.

Q: Did you have any siblings?

SHINN: I had a brother who was eight years older. Because of the age difference, we were not particularly close.

Q: Were the day's events discussed around the dinner table?

SHINN: Not a great deal, although we did discuss local issues. My brother was off at college as I was really growing up. My father was not particularly interested in foreign affairs; my mother was more interested. She tended to be more interested in what was going on outside the Yakima Valley. But she was very ill; in fact both of my parents died at a fairly young age - before I reached twenty. She was in and out of the hospital for much of my youth.

Q: Was there a daily newspaper that attracted your interest?

SHINN: I doubt that one could subscribe at the time to a paper like *The New York Times* in Yakima. You might have been able to get one of the Seattle papers, but we didn't. We relied on the daily *Yakima Republic* which frankly was not much of a newspaper when it came to international affairs. It did print some wire service reports, but that was the extent of the foreign coverage. The population was much more interested in local matters.

Q: Did your family show any interest in politics?

SHINN: Not really. They were not particularly political. Yakima was and still is very conservative. The John Birch Society had a serious presence, although it had no disciples in our family. Politics was not an issue discussed around the table nor did it seem to be of special interest to anyone in the family.

Q: What about the Cold War?

SHINN: That had an impact. In the 1950s and 1960s there were the bomb scares. A few of the wealthier people in Yakima built bomb shelters. No one in our income bracket could afford one. I doubt that we would have built one even if we could have afforded it. But there was a feeling of concern. We had regular air raid drills with sirens blasting from tops of school houses. There were regular tests on the radio. I have strong recollections of those precautions. We certainly were aware of the Cold War. Because of my interest in the Korean War, I may have followed the Cold War more closely than other young people.

Q: When you graduated from high school in 1958, you went to the local community college.

SHINN: I did. I was hoping to go to Washington State University where my brother had graduated. I applied for a scholarship, but didn't get it. So I changed directions and applied for a scholarship at the local community college; I received a full one there. I attended pretty much out of financial necessity. The college was just three blocks from my house. I lived at home and had a full scholarship; I spent nothing on my first two years of college. It turned out to be a propitious time to do that because my mother died during my first year at the community college and my father died during my second year. Under the circumstances, I would have spent a lot of time at home in any case.

Q: Did you have summer and spare time jobs?

SHINN: Always. I had a lawn mowing service, often using the old push-mower. Some of my clients lived far away and I had to bicycle to their properties. If they had a power mower, I would use that. I probably mowed as many as 12 lawns each week during the season. I had to reach most by bicycle. I made good money for those days, about $300 per summer.

After lawn mowing, I went to work for a car parking lot. I did that for about a year during school. That paid fairly well for someone my age. After graduating from high school, I worked for the Ranger District of the Snoqualmie National Forest. That lasted for about three months over four summers; I was a member of a fire suppression crew. When I wasn't doing that, I worked in the office as a clerk. That paid very good money because it involved a lot of overtime. Fires don't follow the clock. I cleared well over $1,000 for a summer's work.

Q: You mentioned that you were discouraged from joining the Forest Service because you needed a lot of science and math.

SHINN: To be competitive in the Forest Service, you need a strong background in those two disciplines. I was not that good in math; I did better in science, but I really wasn't that interested in either discipline. I concluded that although the Forest Service offered a nice career and a nice life-style, it really wasn't for me.

Q: When you finished junior college, what was the next step?

SHINN: I had pretty much decided that I was interested in the Foreign Service. I am not sure that I full understood what it was. I had made some preliminary inquiries. I was planning to get a degree from a four year college in any case. At the time, community colleges were viewed as a stepping stone to a four year college. They were not designed for either adult education or for a terminal two year degree. The vast majority of the graduates went on to a four year college or university.

I had done some research and decided that if I wanted to enter the diplomatic service, I should go to Washington, DC. I looked at universities there and managed to obtain a partial scholarship at GWU. Eventually, I completed three degrees there.

Q: Did your parents' death cut your ties to Yakima?

SHINN: Yes and no. The death of my parents certainly reduced my ties, but my brother continued to live in the area. During my community college days, I met a young lady whom I married before graduating from GWU. She and her family were also from Yakima. I never broke my ties to Yakima. We still use it as our legal residence. We visit every year and have property in Washington State. Yakima remains a second home.

Q: Your wife was born in Yakima?

SHINN: She was and grew up there. She was a year behind me in school and we didn't know each other until community college.

Q: Did the idea of going into the Foreign Service seem strange to your friends and neighbors?

SHINN: Very few people had ever heard of it. If the issue arose, it was a very short conversation. They didn't know what to say or what questions to ask; so they would move on to the next topic.

Q: Did you find any books on the Foreign Service?

SHINN: Frankly, I don't recall. There probably were some things that I read, but nothing

comes readily to mind.

Q: When did your wife join in Washington?

SHINN: I went to GWU alone in my junior year. Following our marriage in Yakima, she joined me in my senior year. In the meantime, she completed a year in business college in Yakima. She learned skills such as stenography, now a lost art. After we were married, she went to work as a secretary in the State Department while I was finishing at GWU.

Q: When did you graduate from GWU?

SHINN: I graduated with a BA in 1963 and MA in 1964. I joined the Foreign Service in January of 1964.

Q: It must have been an exciting time to be in Washington?

SHINN: It was fascinating during the Kennedy years. In looking back, this was a unique time live in Washington. The Kennedy era was incredible. Being new to Washington, I was more impressed than were people who had lived here for a long time. But it was an amazing period. When I first arrived, I moved into a rooming house on the GWU campus and shared a floor with a Cuban national. My roommate was a French teacher at GWU. Immediately I was in an entirely different world from what I was accustomed. During the Cuban missile crisis, I had a close-up perspective from my Cuban friend. It was a pretty heady time for someone from Yakima.

Q: What courses were you taking at GWU?

SHINN: The standard international affairs menu. It was called "The School of Government" at the time. The courses were in the area of government, including international law, international economics, European diplomatic history, American diplomatic history, world geography, social psychology, French.

Q: Were you exposed to Foreign Service officers?

SHINN: Yes, because I met students at GWU who were also interested in joining the Foreign Service. My wife, who was working in the State Department, opened other doors. We got to know socially some of the people who worked in career development and counseling - a function of the Office of Personnel. She worked for Esther Rice and Don Leidel, who later became ambassador to Bahrain. We are still in touch with Esther.

Q: While at GWU, did you get any feel for the role of Congress in foreign affairs?

SHINN: Not while at GWU as much as from working on the Hill during my master's degree. Out of necessity, I always had a job except during my two years as an undergraduate student at GWU when I had my hands full trying to catch up after two

years at a community college. By the time I started my master's degree, I initially worked at *The Washington Post* as a tour guide. I led groups through the building; this was a wonderful opportunity to learn how a newspaper worked. I met all of the key players at *The Post* at the time. I did that for a year.

Then I found that I needed to focus full time on my studies. After finishing the course work for the master's, I had some down time before joining the Foreign Service. It took a long time to get through the entrance process. I was told that I would be offered a job, but no one had a clue as to when that would be. We were running out of money; so I just went knocking on Congressional office doors and ended up working part time in the office of Senator Hugh Scott (R-Pa). I was answered written correspondence.

Scott had a great interest in China. He had a tremendous Chinese porcelain collection. He was very knowledgeable on that subject. He was a fine man for whom I had a great deal of respect.

Q: I assume that answering correspondence gave you a good feel for constituent work.

SHINN: It did. If I were to advise a young person on a useful way to prepare for the Foreign Service, I would suggest time working on the Hill. I was there only for three or four months, but even that was useful. I think Hill experience is absolutely crucial to a successful Foreign Service career. If you can't do it before joining the Service, one should try to get a Hill assignment during his or her career in the Service.

Q: You obviously passed the written part of the exam. What do you remember of the oral part?

SHINN: I know I was petrified. I was 22 years old. The style of the exam was totally different than it is now. One entered an austere room and faced three relatively senior Foreign Service officers. They were cordial enough at the beginning, but that "honeymoon" ended quickly. It then became a two-hour grilling on essentially substantive issues. The first questions were easy, e.g. what have you done, why do you want to join the Foreign Service, etc? Substantive questions followed. One of the questions dealt with the relationship between Japan and South Korea. I knew the answer from reading the newspapers, but it was not an area that I studied in any depth. I had focused more on Africa.

Another question that I really tripped over, even though it was probably the easiest question of all, concerned the difference between a passport and a visa. I gave the panel some chuckles as I struggled to give an answer. I didn't have a clue; I had never been outside the U.S. They thought it was funny that I didn't know the answer to that question.

The exam seemed to go well. I have always been able to think quickly on my feet. I attribute that to my experience in debate. I would also advise any one interested in joining the Foreign Service that they participate in debate at the high school and college levels. It

is one of the best ways to prepare for a Foreign Service career.

Q: Did your wife give you any inside clues about the Department and the Foreign Service?

SHINN: I am sure she did. Being in career development and counseling, she would pick up pieces of information. She was not in a position where she had access to inside information. In fact, when I took the written test, she had been employed only for a month or two. She was then a member of a secretarial pool; one would show up in the morning and be given an assignment which might change significantly each day. She eventually obtained a permanent job in career development and counseling.

Q: You got your master's degree in January 1964. What was your area of specialization?
SHINN: I was focusing on Africa. I decided after being accepted by the Foreign Service to focus on a geographic area where I could have the most impact and which might be most advantageous for my career. This was the time when the former African colonies were gaining their independence and it was apparent that the State Department was lacking expertise in the area. I concentrated on Africa in my MA program. I wrote my dissertation on the pan-Somali movement. I took available courses on Africa at GWU. I even took one of the first courses given by the Washington consortium program at Howard University. It had a much larger African studies program. That was unusual in the early 1960s; there weren't that many white students at Howard at the time. It was a good course and I learned a lot.

Q: With the advent of the Kennedy administration, Africa was considered the diplomatic frontier.

SHINN: It was. Soapy Williams was one of the first appointees of the Kennedy administration. He was the assistant secretary of State for African Affairs. There was a lot of optimism and enthusiasm about Africa; college campuses seemed interested in this "new" part of the world. I think the 1960s were the high water mark for Africa.

Q: You were in Washington when Kennedy was assassinated?

SHINN: I was. I was working for Senator Scott at the time. I was alone in an office when someone called to tell me that the president had been shot. I have powerful memories of the mourning period and the cortege, which we witnessed.

Q: You entered the Foreign Service on January 2, 1964. How did you find the A-100 course?

SHINN: It was one of the smaller classes. Recruitment into the Foreign Service was very limited at the time. There were 24 of us. The class got off to a rocky start because the course leaders immediately divided us into two groups. One half went to USAID for about three months where we purged personnel files. It was a pretty stupid move. I don't

remember the rationale beyond the fact that AID needed some extra hands. Maybe FSI didn't have enough room for all of us. In any event, a dozen new Foreign Service officers who knew nothing about the U.S. government were supposed to purge personnel files of extraneous material. How were we supposed to know what was "extraneous" and what should have been left in the files? We did get a few guidelines, but it was silly. Furthermore, the new officers started their careers with a bad taste. They had worked so hard to get into the Foreign Service and then were assigned to something in which they had no interest or skill. There was a lot of grumbling and unhappiness. On the other hand it was a humbling experience which isn't all bad. I don't remember what the other half of the class did. We joined up again for the regular A-100 course.

The A-100 course was a general overview of the Department and the government. It was a combination of practical and substantive issues; we had lectures from experts in various geographic and functional areas. We also heard about life in the Foreign Service and how one should prepare for it. Then there was a focus on consular work. I also took French language training.

It was a small enough class that we got to know each other quite well. I am still in touch with some of my class mates. John Yates was the last one to retire. He was most recently our ambassador to Cameroon. There is no one from my A-100 class left in the Foreign Service. Genta Hawkins and I were the penultimate retirees. I think the attrition rate was about average and I suspect the number of classmates who became ambassador was about average.

Q: Did you get involved in the Junior Officers' Association?

SHINN: I was a member, but not a very active one. I attended a number of their meetings in Washington. The 1960s were the halcyon days for younger officers, not only in the Foreign Service but throughout the country. "Youth was in." It was also a time when it was an advantage to be a white male. The 1960s and 1970s were good for people like me.

Q: I have heard that Genta Hawkins was considered somewhat of a "bomb thrower." She wanted change - she later became Director General of the Foreign Service!

SHINN: If Genta was a "bomb thrower," she was a very gentle one. She stayed within reasonable bounds. I was sympathetic to the views expressed by people like Tom Boyatt, Lannon Walker and Tex Harris who were trying to push the Department in directions it was reluctant to go. I eventually joined the board of directors of AFSA.

Q: It was the beginning of a change of the "old boy" network. And AFSA was beginning to change to being a labor union.

SHINN: It was a period of change which lasts even today.

Q: Were there others members of your class who had an interest in Africa?

SHINN: Several members of the class wanted to serve in Africa. I think all of them had at least one tour there eventually. Genta served in Cote d'Ivoire and eventually became ambassador to Namibia. Despite my interest in Africa, I ended up in the Middle East. I was initially assigned to Conakry, Guinea, looking forward to it and had gone to great length to get prepared. We ordered a car from France; it was on route to Conakry. We purchased a three month supply of foodstuffs that was on a ship to Guinea. Our household effects were on the dock in Baltimore waiting to be loaded. We had even gone to a cobbler shop to buy soles for shoes and special cutting tools. I had been told there were no shoe repair facilities in Conakry; I was prepared for the anything. All of this was very expensive for a new FSO; I dumped a lot of our savings into this assignment.

Nine days before we were to get on a plane to Conakry, I was told by my career counselor that my assignment had to be changed and that I would not be going to Conakry. I was told that the ambassador wanted an officer who had a spouse who would work part-time, but she had to be fluent in French. My French was not that terrific and my wife's was even less so. The Department canceled our assignment and someone else went to Conakry. At the time, we were devastated. But since we were dedicated to the Foreign Service, we swallowed hard and accepted our fate. It was not an auspicious beginning. In fact, our situation deteriorated because my career counselor promised to find us another African assignment; he just asked that we be patient. We extended the lease on our apartment in Arlington and waited for the next assignment. I would call the counselor every day to find out if anything had materialized; I would be told that they were still working on the problem. After a couple of weeks the counselor asked me to come to his office to talk about an African assignment. I raced to his office and asked where we were going. I was told: "Beirut!" I noted that that was not in Africa to which he said: "Oh, crap; it is all up there together somewhere!" That left me wondering about my career choice. I should note that this particular officer was selected out a few years later. In any case, we did not find this experience a good start in the Foreign Service.

Q: So you went to Beirut?

SHINN: Yes, and we loved it. It was a terrific assignment. It was one the best things that ever happened to us. We were there from late 1964 to mid-1966.

Q: What was Lebanon like in 1964?

SHINN: It was a wonderful country. It was the "garden spot of the Middle East." This was before the devastating war of 1967 which took place after we had left. Lebanon in 1964 was vibrant, alive and active. It was such an attractive country and so interesting historically. We lived on the Corniche - the waterfront - one block from the embassy. Even though the apartment was modest, it was fine for us. It was an idyllic arrangement as far as we were concerned. I unfortunately came down with viral meningitis, mumps and several other afflictions. I guess that is the price I had to pay for such a provincial upbringing. I did manage to catch these diseases in one tour and was spared them the rest

of my life.

Nevertheless, we thoroughly enjoyed Beirut. We traveled extensively in our Volkswagen. We covered every nook and cranny of Lebanon and then traveled through much of the Middle East.

Q: The Middle East was very quiet in this period, wasn't it?

SHINN: Yes, it was. I can remember driving through Jordan, including Petra, down to the Gulf of Aqaba. We visited the West Bank which was then under Jordanian control. We visited Israel after obtaining the special visa which could be removed from the passport. We took a jitney to Tel Aviv and spent a few days there. We visited Jerusalem. Of course, the boundaries have changed now. It was fascinating to visit the Holy Land with my wife and small child.

Q: What was your embassy assignment?

SHINN: I was part of a junior officer rotational program. It was the ideal arrangement. I spent a year in the consular section - six months in visa work and six in protection and welfare. Lebanon was a fascinating place for the latter function. It was also provided some interesting visa work since we had a lot of fraud cases. I also spent six months in the general services office and about six months in the economic-commercial section. I never worked in the political section.

Q: Let's talk about the consular work first. On the visa side, what were the pressures during your tour?

SHINN: They were pretty much the same as they are today minus the security concerns. There were people who said that they wanted to visit the U.S. for a short period, but who really were intent on immigrating permanently. Our job was to separate those who were going for just a visit from those who intended to remain in the U.S.

Q: Did you find it difficult at first to refuse a visa?

SHINN: It was hard, but you tend to get hard-nosed quickly. If you start making mistakes, you develop a track record of having been fooled by too many applicants. In those days, it was easier to keep track of people after they entered the U.S. Sometimes you learned from a friend that the applicant had no intention of returning to Lebanon. After being conned once or twice, you learn to be more careful. We had a Lebanese investigator on the staff that dealt with highly questionable cases. He would snoop around to verify the story told by the applicant. He had a pretty good record and a visa officer rarely went against his advice. I can remember a Middle East Airline stewardess, a very attractive young lady, who came in for a visa. He immediately told us to refuse the visa because she had no intention of returning. I listened to her story, went against our investigator's advice and issued a visitor's visa. About a month later, she came to my office to prove that she had

returned. The investigator was impressed.

Q: Did you have many Americans who were on drugs that needed help?

SHINN: I had surprisingly little involvement with drug cases. There were cases of Americans who were either peddling or abusing drugs, but I don't remember this being a major part of the workload in the consular section. The one case that I do remember involved a very wealthy, elderly Lebanese-American who had lived in the U.S. for a long time and had become rich. He returned to Beirut probably to live out his last days. He was living in a fairly nice apartment where he died under mysterious circumstances. The police maintained that he had committed suicide by cutting his neck; we really didn't buy that story because according to the police he walked out to his balcony after inflicting the wound and jumped over the ledge to the pavement below. The story just did not seem reasonable. I am not sure that we ever solved the mystery. In any case, as the consular officer, I had to pack up all of his belongings. He had an enormous number of stock certificates as well as statements from brokerage houses that he had been reviewing when this "suicide" took place. The papers were soaked in blood and stuck together. I had to pull them apart and examine them. That is one experience I will not forget - going through these blood soaked documents to try to make sense of the estate.

Q: Did you get involved in Lebanese community at all?

SHINN: To some extent. Being a junior officer, one does less of that than the more senior officers. We had Lebanese friends, some of whom were employees of the embassy. But we spent a lot of our spare time traveling around the country. During the winter, there was a wonderful ski area at Faraya. I was an avid skier. The embassy's beach house just south of Beirut was constructed on top of an old Roman ruin. The construction made a hash of the ruin, although most of it was adjacent to the beach house. In the winter, some terrific storms would slam against the ruins and carry some of the material out to a rocky area of the Mediterranean. Heavier items such as pottery shards and coins would lodge themselves in the cracks and crevices. We would spend summer days mining the rocks and crevices for these relics.

Q: Did you detect a view on Israel at the time from either the Lebanese perspective or that of our embassy?

SHINN: At the time, the Lebanese Christians, the Maronites, were in power in the country. They had a reasonably cordial relationship with Israel. The Muslims had a much stronger animosity towards Israel, but Americans tended to interact more with the Maronites than with the Muslims and may not have fully appreciated the sentiment. Israel was not a major issue in this period. In retrospect, I suspect there was a lot more animosity on the part of the Lebanese Muslims toward Israel than we were aware. We would hear about it in northern Lebanon where there were periodic anti-Israel demonstrations reflecting the population's unhappiness, but in Beirut the subject was rarely discussed.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SHINN: I served under two ambassadors. The first was Armin Meyer; he was followed by Dwight Porter. They were both excellent ambassadors. Dayton Mack was the head of the political section and Ray Hunt was the administrative officer. He was later assassinated in Italy.

Q: What were your first impressions of an American embassy?

SHINN: The junior officer rotational program gave me a good feel for State Department operations at an embassy. I did not obtain much understanding for some of the other agencies represented in the embassy because I didn't have that much contact with them. We had a small AID office; the USIA component was quite large; I learned about the activities of both of those agencies. Some of our best friends, who lived in the same building as we did, worked for USIA. In fact, we knew some of the USIA staff better than we did many of our State colleagues.

There was an Arabic language school in Beirut and we did get to know some of the students who attended the school. I did not study Arabic.

Q: Did the Beirut tour tempt you to focus more on the Arab world?

SHINN: No. I was still committed to Africa. I made no effort to learn Arabic or to pursue a second tour in the region.

Q: I should ask what happened to your worldly goods that were sent to Conakry.

SHINN: The transportation company managed to stop the French car before it was put on a ship. All the food was delivered and the embassy kindly sold all of it. We didn't lose a cent on that purchase. The household effects on the docks in Baltimore were sent to us in Beirut; they eventually showed up. It all worked out one way or another, but it was painful at the time.

Q: You had a child with you in Beirut?

SHINN: We arrived in Beirut with a three year old.

Q: You left Beirut in 1966. It was a good time to leave the Middle East.

SHINN: Yes. Beirut was not the post I had chosen nor was the Middle East my main area of interest. I was assigned after Beirut mainly through the intervention of inspectors who reviewed the operations of the embassy. I indicated to them that I was interested in going to an African post; I may have suggested that I would be interested in learning an African language. The inspectors were instrumental in getting me assigned to Swahili language

training, to be followed by an assignment to Kenya. That was very nice; it worked out well.

Q: Where did you take Swahili language training?

SHINN: In Washington at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: How did you take to this language?

SHINN: Language training was not easy, but I appreciated the opportunity to learn Swahili. It is not an overly difficult language, even though it is somewhat strange to one accustomed to European languages. It clearly required more effort than learning Spanish, for example, but it is not nearly as difficult as Arabic or Chinese. It is written in our script and about 40% of the vocabulary comes from Arabic. One can recognize these words even though they are pronounced differently.

Q: Did the language training also include area studies?

SHINN: We did attend a two week course on Africa at the time. It was probably similar to the one that is offered today. I did not have an opportunity for any study in depth. I was so consumed with language training. There may have been some projects that we undertook, which would have required some research into African issues. But that was minimal.

Q: When were you in Nairobi?

SHINN: From the summer of 1967 until the latter part of 1968. The tour was cut short because I was offered the opportunity to study at Northwestern University's African studies program. I told Personnel that I was just getting started in Kenya; I asked whether I could attend Northwestern a year later. I was told that the funds were available in 1968; they may not be available in 1969. It was strongly suggested that I take the sure bet rather than gamble on a possibility. I talked to the ambassador who suggested that I go to Northwestern while I could.

Q: What was Nairobi like in 1967?

SHINN: It was in a post-colonial phase. It was a lovely place to live with considerable European settler influence. Kenya was doing well economically. Crime had not yet become a serious problem. One had the feeling that Kenya would do well economically. I think most of us were pretty optimistic about Kenya's future. It was and still is a wonderful country to travel in. The U.S.-Kenya relationship was strong in those days. The Peace Corps had a large presence.

Jomo Kenyatta was President. Our ambassador was Glenn Ferguson. He had succeeded William Atwood, the author of the book "The Reds and the Blacks" which had been so

controversial. Ferguson and his wife Pattie were delightful people with whom we have stayed in contact over the years. He was a political appointee, close to Robert Kennedy, I believe. He had been director of the Peace Corps in Thailand. He went on to an illustrious career in academia.

We thoroughly enjoyed the Kenya assignment. It provided some unexpected benefits. I had been assigned originally as a consular officer, but never served in that section. Once I got into language training, Ralph Jones, the chief of the political section, said he wanted me in his section. The country was divided into regions and each member of the political section was assigned to cover certain regions. I was assigned to cover the coastal areas, which put me in charge of naval visits to Mombasa. An additional benefit was my assignment as the first American vice-consul to the Seychelles Islands. That was a wonderful opportunity because it is unusual for a junior officer to have such a niche all to himself. I made regular trips to the islands. The only way to get there was either by a very long boat ride, which we didn't do, or by an Albatross Flying Boat run by Pan-American on contract to the U.S. Air Force. It was a six or seven hour trip at about 1,000 feet altitude over the Indian Ocean. The plane would land in the harbor at Mahe. You would then either stay for an hour, the time it took to turn the plane around, or a week until the next flight. I chose to stay for a week so that I could meet all the necessary people. The Seychelles at the time was a British Crown Colony. I dealt with the governor, complete with white shorts and monocle, and his British staff as well as the young Seychelles political leaders, some of whom were left-wing. I would try to figure out where the Seychelles were going in the next five or ten years. We were interested in that question because we had a U.S. satellite tracking station on the main island staffed by about 120 Americans. I also did consular work for those folks.

It was a fascinating experience. The Seychelles is a complex of about 99 islands; I didn't visit all of them, but I did see quite a few.

Q: How were the Americans doing? Did they suffer from the isolation?

SHINN: A number of Americans married Seychelles women and brought them back to the U.S. A few went "native" and stayed on the islands after they were discharged. By and large, I think the Americans managed very well. They lived in a "little America" environment; it was a nice existence for them. They had American food and the trappings of a small town-USA. They also had glorious beaches and attractive local women. The climate was great; I don't think many resented being assigned to the Seychelles.

Q: Did you feel any resentment from the British on whose territory we now sent a vice-consul?

SHINN: I think my assignment did raise some suspicion in British minds. Some thought we might be stirring things. They would have preferred that we only talk to them. But they understood that we did have an interest in the Seychelles. The Brits understood that we needed to keep track of what was going on among the population. So I had *carte*

blanche to see whomever I wanted and to do whatever I wanted. They were very cooperative, but I did sense that some raised their eyebrows at my presence. I did spend time with people who were undoubtedly looking forward to independence and that may have raised some concern among the British authorities. Actually, I found these "rabble rousers" to be delightful people; one was France Albert Rene, who is now the prime minister. He was one of the more left wing politicians. I got to know him reasonably well and he turned out to be a decent sort.

Q: Were these people relatively well informed about what was going on outside the Seychelles?

SHINN: They were insulated. Rene's party, for ethnic reasons, had close connections to Tanzania, which at the time was very socialist. Tanzania had adopted some socialistic policies. Rene was studying them to see how they might be applied to the Seychelles. Those that he did try did not work that well. But beyond the African East Coast, I did not find that the Seychellois knew much about the rest of the world. The other opposition leader, who held power briefly, was Jimmy Mancham. He came from a large family that was prominent in the Seychelles. He had strong connections in London and had knowledge of the wider world. He traveled frequently between London and Victoria. His view of the world was different from that of Rene. Perhaps because of that, he did not stay in power for very long. Rene and his followers were closer to the local population.

Q: Was the Seychelles yet the popular destination for European vacationers?

SHINN: No. There was no airport. The only way you could reach the islands was by ship or amphibious craft. Occasionally a rich American would pull into port on his yacht. I remember tangling with one of them. He was the inventor of TANG; he made a fortune with this powdered drink. I just happen to be in the Seychelles the week his yacht pulled in. Initially, he was very friendly, but eventually he took an enormous dislike to me and to the commander of the tracking station. Apparently, we had not shown enough subservience. He ended up writing a piece about both of us which he dropped off at each subsequent port of call. It got back to the Department which read it for what it was: a diatribe by a bitter old man who had too much money. Nothing ever came of this episode, but at the time it shook me up - a young Foreign Service officer publicly reprimanded by a rich American.

Q: As far as your Kenya area, what interested you about what was going on at the coast?

SHINN: I was focusing on the political situation. The Swahili culture is predominant in the coastal areas, which is why I was assigned the area since I could speak the local language. And then there were the ship visits to Mombasa. I went there whenever a U.S. navy ship visited. I also did a lot of basic political reporting on the mood and views of the coastal inhabitants.

Q: Was there a naval officer resident in Mombasa?

SHINN: We did not have one at the time. We did later on. At one time, we even had a consulate in Mombasa, but not during my tour. One of our officers died of malaria while serving at that post. In my time, there weren't that many naval visits, perhaps one every six months. Furthermore, the ships were not big ones; they tended to be fairly self-sufficient once they docked. I didn't have to provide that many services; reliable local providers did most of the work. The visits were not onerous; my main job was to grease the skids when necessary and to help out when sailors got into trouble, an inevitable event. I remember one sailor who tore down a Kenyan flag and urinated on it in a public street. That was not a great experience. The fact that he was inebriated did not much help.

Q: How did you get him out of this predicament?

SHINN: This problem came to the attention of the ship's commanding officer before it came to my attention. An officer immediately went to the police station. The officer got the sailor to apologize profusely and the ship left immediately thereafter.

Q: What were the politics of Kenya during this tour?

SHINN: This was the era known as "Kikuyu domination." The president was a Kikuyu. That ethnic group held the power in the country. At the same time, other ethnic groups such as the Luo were trying to increase their political power. Tom Mboya, a bright young labor leader and a Luo, wanted to succeed Kenyatta. He was later assassinated. I had the sense that the Kikuyu were still deeply entrenched and would remain so while Kenyatta was around. After that, our crystal ball became cloudy; it was possible that after Kenyatta's demise, the political situation in Kenya would change drastically. As it happened, the situation did change, but in a more orderly fashion than we expected. Kenyatta's vice president, Daniel arap Moi, a Kalenjin, took power as Kenyatta's anointed successor. Kalenjins were a minority, but managed to develop a coalition with other ethnic groups and became the power brokers who controlled Kenya until recently.

Q: What tribes were on the coast?

SHINN: There was a series of small minority tribes. The Kamba, a fairly large tribe, lived just back from the coast. Some of the ethnic groups were known as Swahili; there were others that did not belong to that grouping; they lived in the hills above the Indian Ocean. There was no predominant tribe along the coast.

Q: Were they a factor in Kenyan politics?

SHINN: They were not insignificant because the coast was a highly populated area. So the coastal folks had some voting power and had to be taken into account. Furthermore, control of a coast is an important factor in any country; no regime wants its major port to be independent of central control. But the coastal people were politically marginalized.

Q: Kenya at the time took votes seriously - every vote counted.

SHINN: I think that is correct and I would argue that votes still matter in Kenya today, although Moi has been fairly adept at manipulating the system. Parliament has always been a strong, viable institution. It certainly was when I was there. It had a strong opposition which was quite outspoken. Kenya had and has a free press. So there exist several basic components of a democratic system, which so far has not come to fruition because of Moi's manipulations. Elections were something the population paid attention to.

Q: When you covered your area, what did you do, who did you se, where did you go?

SHINN: My beat was not parliament. Other officers in the section covered that institution. As the most junior officer in the section, in addition to my coastal and Seychelles assignments, I would get a lot of grunt work such as required reports. I also covered the Swahili press.

Q: Who would you see as you covered the coast?

SHINN: It was mostly civil servants, the Kenyan Navy and port officials. There would also be politicians and labor leaders. There was a fairly active labor organization on the coast dealing with Mombasa port activities. I had good relations with the police primarily because of the ship visits. They were useful contacts for other purposes as well. I would sometimes prowl the bars to see if I could get a feel for what was on the mind of the ordinary citizen. I traveled up and down the coast to follow the economics of the area. That would put me in touch with some members of the business community. There was a British consul in Mombasa whom I would always see.

Q: Tell us a little more about the economy.

SHINN: Tourism was just beginning along the coast. It is now a major component of the economy. During my time, the economy was relatively weak. There were a fair number of tourists visiting Tsavo National Park. That added to the economy, although it was not a major contributor to Mombasa's economy. There were two well known tourist locations - Malindi and Lamu. But in general, the coastal area was poor. Much of the economy relied on subsistence agriculture.

Q: Was your research on Somalia at all useful in Kenya?

SHINN: Somalia did not affect Mombasa very much, but did impact the northern part of the coast where Somalia and Kenya meet. Somalia's major impact was on Kenya's Northeastern province, which was inhabited by Somalis. Somalia claimed the province as its own and wanted to reincorporate it into Somalia. The Somali flag has a five pointed star. One represents former Italian Somalia, one the former British Somaliland, one Djibouti, one the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and the last the Northeastern province of

Kenya. My previous research on Somalia was relevant.

Q: Was Tanzania a factor in the politics of the Kenya coast?

SHINN: Not so much on the coast because there weren't very good transportation connections between the coastal regions of the two countries. The best connections are further inland. Tanzania loomed large in Kenya because of the old East African Community, which during this time was still a viable organization, although there were signs of fraying. Ultimately, it collapsed entirely; in fact, at one stage, the Kenyan-Tanzanian border was closed entirely. There was always some jealousy by the Tanzanians at Kenya's perceived economic success which Tanzania was not able to match, in part because of its socialist policies. Kenya was also seen, and rightly so, as having gained the greatest advantage from the East African Community. Both Uganda and Tanzania resented that very much; this was probably the principal cause of the Community's collapse. While we were in Kenya, there was a common East African currency, a common university system, a common shipping line, railroad and airline, and free and unencumbered movement of goods among the three member countries. They are trying to revive this concept, but I don't think it will ever return to its former importance.

Q: Did the British actually leave the running of the government to the Kenyans or did they keep control?

SHINN: The British hand was still noticeable in Kenya, probably more than in any other independent African country. In comparison to Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana or Sierra Leone, there was nothing comparable to the Kenyan situation. This was largely due to the small white settler community that remained after independence. At the time of independence, that community may have represented only about 1% or 2% of the population, but it had a major impact on the country; it controlled the largest farms and held a few key positions in the government such as the minister of agriculture. There were a fair number of British advisors in the Kenyatta government. British influence was substantial. In much of Africa, the U.S. has replaced the United Kingdom as the predominant foreign power; in Kenya, it is still probably the UK that exerts primary influence.

Q: Did the social life in Nairobi show this British influence?

SHINN: Absolutely, although we did not travel with that crowd. We would hear stories about that life style. I can recall one story about an American diplomat who reportedly just before our arrival had a convertible and traveled around town with a cheetah in the back seat. I think the story was true and was a reflection of the colonial mentality that the British left behind. The former life style continued in the British settler community and among some of the long time members of the expatriate community. Kenya attracted some interesting characters. I ran into one of them at a party to which we had been invited. I had no idea who was coming to the party. When we arrived, I mingled as was expected. I walked up to one person and we introduced ourselves. He told me that his name was Bill Holden; I asked him what he did. He said he was in the movie industry! I

never realized until the next day while talking with the host that I had been talking with Bill Holden the "movie star." I was left speechless because I had not recognized him.

Q: Did your seniors spend any time trying to improve your skills?

SHINN: I was actually very blessed in that regard. I had a supportive ambassador who encouraged his staff to take every possible opportunity to enjoy the tour and improve oneself. My immediate boss in the Political Section was Ralph Jones; the second in command was Russ Heater. I worked closely with both and they were most supportive. They would take time to teach me the finer points of reporting and other political work. I think that happens less often today. I could not have had a better introduction to political work than what I received in Nairobi. Heater was a talented labor affairs officer; he also followed parliament closely. He and Jones regularly included me in social events so that I could become acquainted with the various players even though I did not have any reporting responsibilities for those areas. It helped me understand the country better. Heater would review my work carefully; he did not nit-pick, but would take time to explain to me why I should take a different approach. His advice was always helpful. I was very fortunate in having Jones and Heater as supervisors.

Q: Too often people misunderstand the reason for political reporting. It is not like journalism reporting on events. A political officer has a specific audience whom he or she must target and write for.

SHINN: That is right and I learned that in the Kenya assignment. I had not learned that in Beirut because I did not serve in the political section there. I did write some commercial reports, but those are entirely different than political reports.

Q: You mentioned labor work. It was important in those days.

SHINN: It was much more important than today. My tour in Kenya was during a Democratic presidency. There was more focus on labor issues. George Meany loomed large and Irving Brown of the AFL-CIO was very interested in African labor movements. It was an important subject for reporting, particularly in a country like Kenya because it had a strong labor movement.

Q: How in a tribal society, did labor become so strong and important?

SHINN: It might well have happened because Kenya is a tribal society. Tom Mboya's union tended to be heavily Luo; it was built around that tribe. I am sure that was not by accident. I don't recall the tribal origins of the other labor leaders or whether their unions tended to be tribal, but I would guess that tribal allegiance contributed to the strength of the labor unions. Political party structure also tended to be ethnically based.

Q: How was Kenyatta viewed?

SHINN: He was revered. I was too junior to have met Kenyatta. I have always regretted that because he was one of the people that I wished I could have met. I met a lot of African presidents later in my Foreign Service career. As a Swahili language officer, I would be asked periodically to attend his rallies and report on his speeches; I also read the Swahili press since I was the only officer who could speak the language. That gave me a view of Kenyatta that others in the embassy did not have. He had a tendency at public events to say things that were never reported in the press. I remember on one occasion, while speaking in Swahili, Kenyatta criticized the Kenyan Asian community. That spread like wild fire among the Kenyans who heard the speech; it was exactly what they wanted to hear. He was not threatening, but at the same time, he was clearly putting the Asians on notice that they had better be good citizens or they might run into difficulties. His words were never reported in the English or Swahili press. He had an effect on people at rallies; he was charismatic and impacted his audience. He was a leader during the "Mau Mau" period and a true nationalist.

The only negative aspect of his leadership was his tendency to encourage Kikuyu domination. Some other ethnic members resented that, but as long as he was alive, he was seen as the leader of his country.

Q: Was our embassy in general quite positive on political developments in Kenya?
SHINN: I would say so, in general. It was concerned about the post-Kenyatta era.

Q: You mentioned Ambassador Atwood's book "The Red and the Black". I understand that it was not well received in Kenya.

SHINN: It was very badly received. Atwood preceded Ferguson as ambassador. The book was published as I arrived in Nairobi. Kenyatta and the government were very unhappy with the book. It revealed things about Kenya which were critical. I think what irritated the Kenyans more than anything was that Atwood took the opportunity to describe his private conversations with senior Kenya government officials, including Kenyatta, and published them for private gain, in their view. They viewed that as a violation of an ambassador's role. These days one hears of such conversations quite often and we don't think much of it, but then it was a new phenomenon. Kenyan anger towards Atwood was palpable; I can remember that many of the press articles in Swahili which I was translating were very critical of Atwood and his book. I should note that half of the book was on Guinea, where Atwood also served as ambassador. It was never much of problem there because the Guineans are French speakers and few of them could read the book. In any case, it never became an issue in Guinea.

Q: Atwood was a journalist; the book was well written. I remember the scuttlebutt in the Foreign Service which took the opportunity to point out that this was one of the problems with having political appointees who abused privileges to advance themselves after leaving the Service.

SHINN: I remember Ambassador Ferguson, who was also a political appointee, was

absolutely livid during the first part of his tour because he spent so much time trying to put out fires in order to minimize damage to the Kenya-U.S. relationship. The Kenyans were suspicious that Ferguson would also write a book after his tour. They were circumspect in what they would say to the American ambassador. The book caused a real problem.

Q: Did you and your wife get to know Kenyans fairly well?

SHINN: Not as well as we would have liked. That was in due in part because my tour was cut short. We were not in Nairobi long enough to become as closely acquainted with some Kenyans as we would have done during a full tour. There were some exceptions, but in general we found that the foreign community tended to spend a lot of time together. In addition, I think the Atwood book made the Kenyans a little suspicious of us and they did not want to get too close to Americans.

Q: Had the social scene and facilities, like swimming clubs, pretty much integrated by this time?

SHINN: It was just beginning the process, but was still largely influenced by British colonialism. My wife and I joined the golf club, even though I did not play golf. I think there may have been a few Kenyan members. I played softball with an embassy group. By and large we were not very involved in the social set. My wife had our second child in Nairobi; that constricted our activities. We occasionally attended local theater productions. We traveled extensively around Kenya, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and visited most of the game parks. Kenya was a nice tour; there wasn't much excitement such as we encountered in subsequent assignments.

Q: In 1968, you were selected to attend Northwestern University. That was an interesting time to be on an American university campus. How did you find it?

SHINN: It was an exciting time to be on campus. Northwestern was, however, not at the center of student rebellion like, for example, the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Northwestern was calm and pretty normal in contrast to Wisconsin or even the University of Chicago. So it was easy to be at Northwestern and I was able to focus on the purpose of the assignment, i.e. to learn about Africa. The year was a pleasant academic experience. There were two Foreign Service officers at Northwestern at the time. This was unusual although 1968-69 was a big year for sending FSOs to academia for area studies.

Gwendolyn Carter was the head of the program at Northwestern. She is now deceased. She was renowned for her knowledge about Africa; she was widely published. I learned a lot at Northwestern; I met some people, both faculty and students, with whom I have remained in contact. Many of the graduate students were impressive; most of them were doing their Ph.D. studies. I stayed for one academic year, but transferred some of the credits to George Washington University, where I eventually received a Ph.D. in political

science in 1980. Campus life was routine and I didn't have to deal with major protest movements.

Q: Some universities have biases for which they are well known. How about Northwestern?

SHINN: The Northwestern program was inter-disciplinary, unlike programs at some other institutions that tended to emphasize political science, anthropology or fine arts. Northwestern tried to bring together both faculty and students who were interested in the whole picture; I think that was the strength of the program. I don't remember any particular political point of view or ideology that was being sold. Gwen Carter was exceptionally pragmatic.

Q: Were there people who had doubts about Africa's future?

SHINN: By 1968, there were signs that things in Africa were not going as well as people had hoped. Students and faculty at Northwestern were watching the situation more closely than the general public. They were concerned that the future might not be as bright as they had hoped at the beginning of the decade. There was a fair amount of discussion on this point. There was considerable concern about southern Africa and South Africa in particular. Some thought there might be a blood bath there. Apartheid was still the governing principle and the rule of the majority did not look like a probability. One of the courses I took focused on South Africa; I think Gwen Carter taught it. I can remember she asked the class what each of us thought of the future of South Africa. When it came my turn, I horrified some of my classmates by saying that there would be majority rule in South Africa before the end of the century. Some of my classmates just refused to believe it; they felt that the whites would be in control long after the turn of the century. In fact, majority rule came well before the end of the century. I was off the mark, but I remember that episode well because it shows how knowledgeable people in 1968 were thinking. Many felt there would be a blood bath and that white rule would continue for much longer than it did.

Q: Were you concentrating on any particular country or issue?

SHINN: I actually ended up focusing on Ethiopia, which was an interesting choice since that is where my career effectively ended. When I finished at Northwestern, I was assigned to the Washington desk handling Ethiopia and Somalia. My academic experience became quite relevant to my subsequent assignment.

Q: So after Northwestern, you were assigned to the East Africa Affairs division of the Bureau for African affairs in the Department.

SHINN: Right. I became the assistant desk officer for Ethiopia; after a few months, there was reorganization and I became the desk officer for Somalia and Djibouti, which at that time was still a French territory, and remained assistant for Ethiopia. I spent two years,

1969-71, working on Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. I then spent another year in the African Bureau as the desk officer for Uganda and Tanzania.

Q: Let's start with Ethiopia. What was the situation in that country in 1969?

SHINN: That was the beginning of some serious questions being raised about the viability of the emperor's rule and his governmental system. Eritrea was part of Ethiopia in those days. Throughout the 1960s, the largest American mission on the continent was in Addis Ababa. This was due in large part to the very important security-strategic relationship we had with Emperor Haile Selassie. We had a major communications facility outside of Asmara, in Eritrea, which at its peak employed about 3500 Americans. They were doing everything from super-secret intercepts of Soviet missile traffic to the more mundane activities such as relaying communications in that part of the world. It was a very important facility and was one of the key factors that caused us to maintain our close relationship with the emperor. We did recognize that Haile Selassie was getting along in years; we were also aware that the Eritrean liberation forces were gaining strength and were beginning to cause problems not far from the communications station. While I was on the desk, there was a growing concern about the future of the American presence in Kagnew, the name of the communications facility. With each passing year, the situation got worse, ending with the overthrow of the emperor in 1974. That was the beginning of the end of American influence in Ethiopia.

Q: Because of Kagnew, did we have to support Ethiopia over Somalia in their continual struggle of the Ogden?

SHINN: No question about that. As it happened, when we finally had to make a decision about whose claims we supported, the emperor had been overthrown and a Marxist-Leninist government was in the process of establishing itself in Addis Ababa. The Soviets had shifted their allegiance from Somalia to Ethiopia, where they replaced us. By the late 1970s, we were essentially out of the picture in Ethiopia; we then replaced the Soviets in Somalia.

Q: In the 1969-71 period, were there any crises that arose in Ethiopia?

SHINN: Our major problem was how to handle the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which was fighting for Eritrean independence, and how to respond to the emperor's constant requests for military assistance. The Ethiopians considered the EPLF to be a direct threat to their regime. We considered the EPLF as a threat to the Kagnew facility.

There were a lot of other issues as well. We were concerned by the very slow progress Ethiopia was making in its modernization drive. It was a conservative society that resisted change. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church had tremendous influence; it was even more conservative. Somalia was always present as an issue. There were periodic border disputes between the two countries that were a challenge to U.S. policy since we were

trying to maintain close relations with both countries. By and large, we avoided taking sides; we were helped by the fact that the fighting during this period never became so severe that the U.S. had to consider intervention.

We had a significant military and economic assistance programs to Ethiopia. My recollection is that we had very small programs in Somalia. I think that disparity made it quite obvious whom we favored.

Q: Did we have any plans for Haile Selassie's succession?

SHINN: By the time I left the desk in 1971, we had no plans even though the emperor was then in his early 70s. The operating assumption was that the crown prince would succeed to the throne. He had been designated as the heir-apparent even though he was not a very strong individual. This raised some questions whether the planned succession would ever take place. While I was on the desk, the assumption was that the crown prince would eventually become emperor. Of course, that never happened because of the military coup which sent the crown prince into exile. In fact, there was no one in imperial Ethiopia with the stature or the capacity to hold Ethiopia together. At the end of his reign, the emperor was becoming senile.

Q: Did we view the EPLF as a legitimate and potentially important force?

SHINN: I think views were beginning to change in the early 1970s about the Eritrean liberation groups; the EPLF was becoming to be seen as a real threat with local support. The ELF was also a factor. There previously had been a tendency to view them primarily as a "bandit" groups. But it became apparent that the EPLF and ELF were serious organizations that could not be wished away. I don't think that anyone in 1971 would have bet that these groups had a chance of overthrowing the Ethiopian government in the foreseeable future, but we knew enough about them by then to consider them a serious concern which would not soon disappear.

Q: How was the reporting from Asmara? Did it tilt away from the views of the embassy?

SHINN: My recollection is that Asmara's reporting was reasonably independent. They had to be a little careful because they always had to look over their shoulders; they knew that the ambassador wrote the efficiency rating for the consul general. I suppose that only previous consul generals could say definitively how much they hedged their reporting, but the reporting that I saw was pretty straight forward and honest. It did present a somewhat different point of view from the embassy; I don't remember any major clashes.

Q: Did you have the impression that Eritrea was essentially an occupied country?

SHINN: That is not my recollection of the situation in the period up to 1971, I am sure that was the case later on.

Q: Was anything going on in Djibouti?

SHINN: I visited Djibouti once during this assignment; it was very French and full of Foreign Legionaries. Djibouti served as a major entrepot for Ethiopia but was otherwise not a significant issue during my tour. The French are still there as are American troops now as a result of 9/11. The Germans also have a presence. The French significantly reduced their numbers after Djibouti gained its independence. During the period we are discussing, virtually no one paid attention to what was happening in Djibouti. The embassy in Paris probably cared more than did the African Bureau.

Q: What was the situation in Somalia at this time?

SHINN: There was constant tension between the Somali position and the Ethiopian position. The reporting from Mogadishu would give us the Somali view on the border dispute and the embassy in Addis Ababa the Ethiopian view. We also had an office in Hargeisa (Somaliland) which we closed while I was on the desk. There were no raging fights, however, between our ambassadors in Mogadishu and Addis Ababa.

Q: As I recall from my INR days, Kagnew was being replaced in this period, slowly but surely, by satellites.

SHINN: That is correct. We were in the process of phasing out Kagnew. At its peak in the mid-1960s, there were 3,500 personnel at Kagnew. I don't remember what the numbers were when I left the desk, but they would have been smaller. The draw-down continued after I left so that by the time we were thrown out of Kagnew, after the overthrow of Haile Selassie, the staff there was quite small. In part that was due to technical reasons. We didn't need all the capabilities of the station. It was also due to security reasons; we were concerned about the safety of the Americans there.

Q: You moved to the Tanzania-Uganda desk in 1971.

SHINN: That is right. I worked on those two countries for a year until mid-1972. Uganda was a very busy place because Idi Amin was running the country. This was the beginning of his regime and we were trying to figure out whether he was as crazy as he appeared to be. We ultimately concluded that he really was.

The main issue during my year on the desk was the kidnaping and ultimate assassination of two Americans. One was a freelance newspaper reporter by the name of Strow, a member of the prominent brewing family. I dealt with his father, Peter. He was a person with considerable political clout in the U.S. I had frequent conversations with him during 1971-72. The other person who died was a school teacher in Kampala. The reporter had gone to Mbarara in southern Uganda to write a story on dissident activities. He obviously found out too much; he was killed by the local military as was the school teacher. The perpetrators burned both bodies. It took the embassy a long time to trace them and discover the horrible truth. Finally, when we did get enough proof; we informed the

families who naturally were very distressed. The best that could be said about this episode was that we were able to find out what had happened. This incident took up an enormous amount of time during that year; it started soon after I arrived on the desk and was not completed until shortly before I left.

Q: Did we consider closing our embassy?

SHINN: Not as I recall. I don't think our staff in Kampala was in any personal danger. Amin made sure that security was good.

Q: How did we deal with Idi Amin?

SHINN: Our embassy saw him regularly. That was not easy. On the one hand, he was very much in charge of a country with which we wanted good relations. It had a bright economic future; there was a certain amount of American business interest in the country. On the other hand, Amin was a very, very difficult person who became increasingly so with each year he remained in power.

Q: I assume that we were getting reports about his behavior.

SHINN: I am sure we were. The negative stories increased as his reign continued and he became increasingly bizarre. In 1972 he began to expel the Asian community. That began a major issue which caused an enormous amount of negative publicity for Uganda. It was an early indication of Amin's "unusual" behavior. The West was not happy with him but many Ugandans applauded the decision.

Amin was a brutal ruler. He wasn't at all bothered by disposing of people who displeased him. There had been some signs of a developing democratic movement in Uganda which were rapidly stamped out by Amin.

Q: What was going on in Tanzania?

SHINN: It was quiet and peaceful. It was following a socialist course under President Nyerere. Our relations were not particularly warm; in fact there were obvious ideological tensions between us. Nyerere was a firm adherent of socialism. We had a correct relationship, but nothing of great import occurred in the 1971-72 period. There were some interesting developments in Zanzibar that did not much policy interest.

Q: Was it yet apparent that Tanzania's socialist path was to be a disastrous one?

SHINN: Not at this time. I will discuss this when we get to my tour in Tanzania. There may have been some expression of concern from the embassy, but I don't believe that anyone foresaw the dire consequences that Nyerere's policies would have. At least I don't remember any major warning flags being waved.

Q: Then in 1972, you were assigned to Tanzania.

SHINN: Correct; we went to Dar es Salaam. I was assigned to the political section. We were there for two years until mid-1974.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SHINN: Beverly Carter. He had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the African Bureau and asked me to join his staff. I got to know him while he was working in Washington. I jumped at the opportunity because I wanted to return to East Africa. I also wanted to use my Swahili again and Tanzania was the place for that.

It was a fascinating tour. The embassy was not very large. The political section consisted of one Foreign Service officer, which gave me considerable freedom to pursue matters that I thought were of interest. My supervisor was the DCM, Gordon Beyer. It was an interesting time to be in Dar because so many African liberation groups either had their headquarters there or had some form of representation. It was part of my responsibility to keep in contact with them. That was not easy since we were perceived by these groups as the "enemy." The U.S. supported the white ruled colonial regimes. Portugal was still holding on to Mozambique and Angola. FRELIMO had its headquarters in Dar. At least two of the Angola "liberation" fronts had representation there. There were also liberation groups in Dar from Namibia, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and South Africa.

Q: What was Tanzania like?

SHINN: Economically it was still doing reasonably well in this period. The stores were well stocked and food was plentiful. There were a few indicators that suggested there was stormy economical weather ahead. The storm did not come, however, until after the completion of my tour.

Tanzanians were very suspicious of Americans because of heavy anti-American propaganda from the government. It was very hard to develop close contacts with Tanzanians. They were concerned that if they became too well acquainted with Americans, they might come under suspicion themselves. In fact, there were some instances when that happened.

Tanzania was a beautiful country to travel in. During my tour, I spent a lot of time trying to understand the policy of *ujamaa,* familyhood or cooperative action. There is not an exact English translation. It was essentially Nyerere's national policy for restructuring Tanzanian society. He hoped to bring peasant farmers, who were scattered throughout the country, into a structured village life. There were some examples of success; in those cases, life for these farmers probably improved. On the other hand, there were far more examples of unmitigated disasters, either through bad planning or because of ill conceived decisions about resettlement. In some cases, the farmers were moved at the point of a gun, put into military trucks and carted off to a new location that was to be their

home and farm. In some cases, there weren't adequate water supplies; in other cases the soil was poor. In those situations, the settlers stayed for a short time and then disappeared and moved to where they could survive. Any evaluation of *ujamaa* has to be done carefully. By and large, I concluded that it was a failed policy, but there were some successes. I visited some villages that clearly provided better living conditions than those previously experienced by those farmers. Nevertheless, the failures were far more numerous than the successes.

I spent a lot of time traveling around Tanzania examining this *ujamaa* policy. It was a relatively easy country to get around. It gave me an opportunity to visit some of the most spectacular game parks in East Africa. I also visited the northern border area, near Lake Tanganyika, where refugees from the civil war between the Hutu and the Tutsi in Burundi had fled. I met with some of them and reported on their situation. I made the occasional obligatory trip to Zanzibar which was a nice diversion. We had a consulate in Zanzibar that handled the reporting. I found Zanzibar a very pleasant place to visit.

Q: What made Nyerere so suspicious of the United States?

SHINN: There were several factors. One was the educational experience of most of the Tanzanian leadership, most of whom shared Nyerere's suspicions. In fact, I think it was a predominant feeling in Africa in the early 1970s. Tanzania was a strong supporter of African liberation groups and there was a belief that we were propping up some of the colonial powers, especially the Portuguese and to a lesser extent, the white regimes in northern and southern Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa. Tanzania viewed the U.S. as the "enemy," i.e. we were standing in the way of independence for some countries that Nyerere strongly supported. We found ourselves in a very difficult position.
Nyerere had economic policies which were clearly not "free market." While we did not push this economic policy reform agenda then as we do today, Nyerere understood that his view of managing an economy was radically different from ours. We didn't have much in common with the Tanzanian leadership.

Q: Were we trying to bring any influence to bear through some of our programs like Peace Corps or AID?

SHINN: We had a Peace Corps program in the 1960s, which had been stopped before I arrived. We had AID projects and a few of them were significant. One was a typical Cold War project. The Chinese had built the famous Tanzania-Zambia railway from the port of Dar es Salaam to Zambia. We had said this railroad could not be built and would have nothing to do with its construction. We did not believe that it was economically viable. Instead, we built a road that essentially ran parallel to the railroad. Both projects were successes in their own right. Both were finished and both carried traffic. I don't know the economic benefits and costs of each, but the Chinese got more attention and credit for their efforts than we did for ours. The decision to build the road was in part, I believe, to take the spotlight away from the Chinese. It was part of our Cold War strategy. There were other AID projects as well.

Q: Many people who served in Africa in this period have commented that the Chinese did not mingle at all with the local population. They did their work and then retreated to their dwellings not to be seen again until the next day at work. Is that your recollection as well?

SHINN: I recall very distinctly that the Chinese kept entirely to themselves. First of all, there was a language problem; very few Chinese spoke either Swahili or English. Furthermore, the Chinese *modus operandi* was to work hard all day and then return to the separate Chinese barracks and do the same thing the next day. There was virtually no contact between Chinese and Tanzanians and certainly none with Americans. My guess is that this created a certain amount of suspicion, if not resentment, of the Chinese. The bottom line was that they did get the job done. The Tanzanians appreciated that. The Chinese did stay on after completion of the laying of the tracks to help the Tanzanians manage the railroad for an extended period of time. They got high marks from the Tanzanian government for that project, but they did not win any Tanzanian hearts on the basis of personal relationships.

Q: Were the Soviets at all active in Tanzania?

SHINN: I don't recall any significant Soviet activity in Tanzania. The Chinese represented the communist world.

Q: How about the British?

SHINN: They were visible. They had some assistance projects, but I don't recall any of them being particularly significant. They tended to focus more on Kenya and Uganda. In the period we are discussing, the East African Community broke up, i.e. Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. The common railroad, shipping organization, universities, airlines, etc. all came apart and each service broke up into three national components.

Q: What kind of assignments did the ambassador give you?

SHINN: For the most part, I was doing the normal work of a political reporting officer. I wrote the vast majority of the political reports, which I found very rewarding. We did not have the situation where the ambassador or DCM was effectively the political reporting officer. They did report their meetings, but rarely went beyond that. The DCM did some additional reporting, but it was not extensive. So I was responsible for the bulk of the political reporting. That was fine with me. When the Ambassador and DCM were absent from post, I served as charge' on a couple of occasions even though there were more senior officers at post. I had been at post longer than they and perhaps that explained the ambassador's choice. In any event, I felt that Ambassador Carter used me effectively. Carter was a very good ambassador. Morale was high in the embassy.

Q: How did the embassy view Nyerere?

SHINN: We had a lot of respect for Nyerere, in part because he was honest and modest. He lived austerely. As far as anyone could tell, he was totally uncorrupt. He was intelligent and well educated. For his master's degree, he had translated one of Shakespeare's plays - *Julius Caesar,* I believe - into Swahili. We had a high personal opinion of Nyerere. Our problem was with his political and economic philosophy.

Q: Nyerere was the darling of the European left. Was it a presence in Tanzania?

SHINN: Absolutely. The Nordics had some of the largest assistance programs in the country. Some of their programs surpassed ours. They were visible; their presence was surprisingly large for small countries.

Q: Did we have contacts with the Nordics?

SHINN: Yes. They were enthusiastic about Tanzania. Some were realistic enough to recognize that the economic directions in Tanzania might not be successful. They were willing to give it a try, even though they might have had some skepticism. Embassy relations with the Nordics were fine.

Q: How difficult was it for you have access for your reporting?

SHINN: It was not easy. Contacts were difficult. I could travel freely throughout the country, except for that part that borders Mozambique. That was off-limits to foreign diplomats; I never visited there. But the rest of the country was open. When I made a trip, I was probably watched carefully by Tanzanian security. There were a couple of instances when I knew I was being followed. It was not easy to contact Tanzanians. You had to work at getting appointments. Tanzanians were not anxious to be seen with Americans. It was a difficult assignment for a political officer in terms of contacts.

Q: What about the media?

SHINN: Most of it was government controlled. There was a party paper; there was a government paper. I don't remember whether there was an independent paper.

Q: Tell us a little about Zanzibar during this period.

SHINN: It was still a pleasant place to visit, but economically it was not doing well. It was dependant on the clove trade for its economic well being; that was already showing signs of decline because of competition from countries like Indonesia. The real deterioration had not yet set in; Zanzibar was muddling through. It was a quaint place, not visited much by tourists. It had a tense relationship with the mainland.

Q: I think a number of American officials were declared "persona non grata" - e.g. Frank Carlucci. Were you careful when you were in Zanzibar?

SHINN: Not really; that phase had passed in Zanzibar. As I mentioned, we had a small consulate there. Our consul felt that he had reasonable access; I think the consulate functioned normally.

Q: Did the problems in Burundi and Rwanda have any effect on our standing in Tanzania?

SHINN: I mentioned earlier the problems created by the Burundi refugees. The fighting there in 1972 created a significant refugee problem for Tanzania. They were not as large a group as the Rwandan refugees who crossed into Tanzania in 1994 during the genocide in Rwanda. Nevertheless, the Burundi refugees were a burden on Tanzania. As I mentioned, I visited the refugee camps.

Tanzania was a pleasant assignment. From the family optic, it was our favorite assignment. We had time to take advantage of the Indian Ocean - sailing, swimming, shelling and water skiing. The job requirements did not take all of my time; the working hours were reasonable, leaving time for recreational activities.

Q: You left Tanzania in 1974 and were assigned to Mauritania.

SHINN: Yes, to Nouakchott. It was considerably different than Tanzania. It was a difficult assignment; the living conditions were much harsher. We lived on a compound. Nouakchott is on the edge of the Sahara desert. It does border the Atlantic Ocean, but is not that usable because of the severe weather conditions that exist for much of the year. There are sand storms, dangerous undertows or sharks lurking offshore. Entering the water required considerable vigilance.

This was another two year assignment. I was anxious to have this first opportunity to serve as a deputy chief of mission. I saw that as an important career progression. In retrospect, this was probably our most difficult tour.

Q: Who was our ambassador?

SHINN: Holsey Handyside.

Q: He and I entered the Foreign Service at the same time. I remember he left the Senior Seminar early to take the Mauritania job. He was a very hard charger and serious man. Tell us how you saw him.

SHINN: He was a character - intense and intelligent. Whenever we think of Holsey, we envisage him pacing the compound, which he did regularly. He was single. He was focused and always looking for the best possible results. He suffered fools badly. He did a good job in Mauritania. I have a lot of respect for Holsey, but he was not the easiest boss to work for. Compound living did not allow much distance between people but we got

along fine.

My biggest career scare came when our youngest son set a fire in our backyard garden and nearly burned down the compound. Holsey was not amused.

I learned a lot from Handyside and found the assignment to be a good career experience. Nouakchott was a good mission to learn about being a DCM. Furthermore, it happened to be an interesting time to be in Mauritania. In the mid-1970s, there were important political developments that were of interest to Washington.

The main issue was the Polisario, which was beginning to loom in importance. Supported by Algeria, it consisted of Saharawi, some of whom lived in the western part of the desert that constituted a former Spanish colony known as the Western Sahara. In order to escape Moroccan rule, the Saharawi migrated to Algeria, which then became their main sponsor. The Polisario, a liberation organization, wanted an independent Western Sahara to be called the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

During my time in Mauritania, Morocco and Mauritania divided the Western Sahara between them. The Moroccans took two-thirds of the country and Mauritania took the remaining southern third, leaving the Polisario empty-handed. The Polisario did not accept this arrangement and began its insurgency. The Mauritanians were a lot easier to attack than the Moroccans. The Polisario periodically crossed into Mauritania and lobbed mortar rounds into Nouakchott. Unfortunately, the embassy compound bordered the presidential compound. The Polisario's aim was not very good and their mortar shells found their way into our compound. That was not welcomed by our staff and families. Fortunately, the buildings on the compound were surrounded by sand; the shells tended to bury themselves in the sand. As a result, we did not suffer any significant damage, although it had an impact on morale.

I remember one occasion when the mortars were hitting the compound. After exploding, fragments hit our bedroom windows. They didn't have enough force to shatter the glass; it was more like throwing pebbles at the windows. We didn't know how serious the attack was. I can remember trying to stuff our kids under a bed which did not have enough height to accommodate them. Sometimes, under pressure, you do stupid things. Ultimately, we took them into a hallway that was protected by double walls. The shelling did not last very long, perhaps an hour. Then the rebels got into their Land Cruisers and retreated back across the Sahara Desert. It was an exciting period.

Q: How was the government at the time and how did you deal with it?

SHINN: The prime minister was Mokhtar Ould Daddah with whom we had a reasonably good relationship. The government was still somewhat wedded to African socialism; economically and ideologically we didn't always see eye to eye. But I don't recall any particular issues or incidents that disturbed our relationship. Mauritania had a large iron ore mining project in the northern part of the country. It was run by the French. The

Mauritanians wanted to keep the project functioning because it was a large foreign exchange earner. Polisario attacks periodically shut down the operation.

Q: Did we have any interests in Mauritania?

SHINN: Not really. It was very much part of the French "sphere of influence." We had minimal business interests there. Boeing tried to sell some of their planes; we spent a lot of time working on that, although I don't think we succeeded. We did have a couple of CODELs. Charles Diggs visited the country. But in general, our interests in Mauritania were limited.

Q: Mauritania was part of the AF bureau. Did it fit there or might have come under the jurisdiction of NEA?

SHINN: In fact, it does not fit neatly in either. In AF, we always had a problem with issues that touched on both Mauritania and Morocco, which was part of NEA. It was no contest; NEA would always win any dispute between the two bureaus. So any Mauritania-Morocco disputes were resolved with the U.S. supporting Morocco. Fortunately, we didn't have any serious problems between the two countries during my tour in Mauritania. But we did feel that we were always an after-thought as far as Washington was concerned. Morocco was the preferred client.

Q: It has been said that some of our ambassadors in Rabat developed a strong case of "clientitis" for his majesty. Did you have that feeling?

SHINN: I don't really recall that it was a significant issue during my tour. I don't recall who our ambassador to Morocco was at the time.

Q: Were there any problems between Mauritania and Senegal or Mali?

SHINN: There were serious issues between Mauritania and Senegal because the ethnic group living in southern Mauritania is related to the ethnic group living in northern Senegal. This ethnic group has nothing in common with the Moors in Mauritania. The Senegal-Mauritania border was arbitrary. There were always issues concerning the southern Mauritanians, e.g. whether they had adequate representation in government and equal access to state economic resources. I think the general conclusion was that they were not treated equally.

Q: Did the French play a major role in Mauritania in this period?

SHINN: They did. Their embassy was the most important one in the country. French business interests also dominated.

Q: Did you feel isolated in Mauritania?

SHINN: We did, both physically and intellectually. Mauritania does not loom large on the world stage. Physically, it was hard to get in and out of the country. Often we would have to go through Dakar in Senegal to leave the region. Nouakchott had an airport, but it was difficult to reach your destination directly. We didn't get many visitors. We used Dakar as a supply base. We visited the Canary Islands for a change of scenery.

Q: As DCM, you had responsibility for the management of the embassy. Did you have problems with the staff because of the isolation and location?

SHINN: We did. Since this was my first DCM assignment, it was a learning experience. I made my share of mistakes, particularly in the management area, but the difficult nature of the post made it inevitable that we would have some personnel problems. Nouakchott is a hard place. It was and, I suspect, still is a post which has morale problems. I am sure that there were periods when the morale was high, but I am also sure they were the exception rather than the rule. I don't think that morale was particularly high during my tour. We had to work hard to keep people happy; there was not much for them to do.

Q: I would guess it was difficult to get a single person, particularly a woman, to come to that post.

SHINN: Very much so. As a result, we had only one secretary for the ambassador, the DCM and the political officer. She was the spouse of the administrative officer. We had a number of "tandem" assignments, both husband and wife working, either officially or unofficially.

Q: In 1976 you were transferred to Seattle, Washington. What was there?

SHINN: I was assigned to the Pearson program which still exists today, although it is a shadow of its former self. It is a program which enables Foreign Service officers to work throughout the country in state and local government to become better acquainted with the U.S. I worked in the mayor's office in Seattle for 18 months.

Q: I would guess it was a fascinating experience.

SHINN: It was. My wife and I are from Washington State; it gave our family an opportunity to reacquaint with relatives after four fairly tough years overseas. Our children were 13 and 9 at the time. The assignment enabled us to place them in American schools, living the "American way" close to their relatives. It was a pleasant interlude.

It was a good experience for me as well; I learned how a large city government functions. One would not think that 18 months in a mayor's office would have much bearing on Foreign Service assignments, beyond getting to know your country better. In fact, I found it to be quite relevant to my future assignments.

Q: What did you do in the mayor's office?

SHINN: I worked in the office of policy planning. The city had put a lot of resources into it and gave it a high profile. They wanted the office to determine the future of the city. The head of the office did not know what to do with me when I arrived. It was like someone landing from Mars. They had no idea what my interests or skills were. We discussed what I might contribute to the city. The city was paying part of my salary, although not a significant part. They thought well enough of Foreign Service officers to contribute towards my salary.

I spent much of my time doing a study on city government reorganization. It ended up being about 400 pages long. It could have just occupied shelf space, but by pure chance, at about the time I finished the study, the question of merging city government with the Metropolitan Transit Authority became a hot political issue. My study was carefully documented; I did a lot of research for it. It concluded that no reorganization was warranted. The mayor used it for his political purposes because he also felt that no reorganization was desirable or required.

The rest of my time was devoted to identifying options for sewer planning which was a hot environmental issue. The city was still dumping untreated waste into Puget Sound; alternatives were very expensive. I worked with a number of experts, creating a template of possible options that might be pursued. The goal was to improve sewage treatment, without incurring an expense that was beyond the taxpayer's capacity. This issue was totally new to me; I had a real learning experience.

I also served as the mayor's representative on the Seattle-Tacoma airport commission. I dealt with policy issues some of which had international implications.

Q: The World's Fair had been held. Was it your impression that it had some lasting effects on Seattle?

SHINN: I think there were. The Space Needle alone had become a drawing card in terms of tourism. It is the direct result of the World's Fair. I don't remember whether the Fair itself was a money maker for Seattle, but I don't think Seattle has any regrets about hosting the Fair.

Q: Was Seattle at this time reaching out for a "sister city" relationship with one overseas?

SHINN: Yes. One member of the policy planning staff, Bill Stafford, was very active in this endeavor. He is still in Seattle, although he has left city government. He is one of the most effective people I know in tapping federal government grants. In fact, he is the one who discovered the Pearson program that led to my assignment as well as other Foreign Service officers to Seattle. Seattle has international ties to the Far East: Japan, Taiwan, China, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea. The city was interested in shoring up its economic links with those countries. The nearby presence of the Boeing headquarters,

now moved to Chicago, generated an enormous amount of interest in international trade. The large port of Seattle received most of the trade that came by sea to the Northwest. Linkages to other countries were important for Seattle. I didn't have anything to do with this aspect of municipal governance. There were others who focused on this issue. Most of the trade and commerce issues were left to state authorities.

Q: In doing your study of the city's organization, what did you use for your analysis?

SHINN: I looked at other governmental reorganizations that had occurred or been considered around the U.S. Some were completed; others had been considered and rejected. I tried to determine whether any of the lessons learned were adaptable to Seattle. I recall looking closely, for example, at Dade County in Florida. There were about five or six cases that I studied closely. I was looking primarily at city-county and city-local authority relationships.

Q: What were the political dynamics that you had to take into account?

SHINN: Seattle was, and I think still is, considered a "clean" city. The politicians have been of a high caliber. Elections are hotly contested and conducted without scandal. Minorities have done surprisingly well, even though the city is heavily Anglo with a significant Asian minority. Seattle has had a black mayor even though the African-American community is probably no larger than 5%. Voters in Seattle value competence; if someone is perceived to have been successful and have political skills, he or she has a good chance of being elected. People spend a lot of time trying to elect their candidate. The process results in a generally effective government.

Q: Was there any evidence at the time of a disaffected younger generation?

SHINN: I think there was some of that. Seattle is a liberal city and open to new ideas; environmentalists are strong there. It is an international city. It is a very livable city with some beautiful vistas. It does attract, however, a lot of "free spirits."

Q: That brings us up to 1976. What happened next?

SHINN: I returned to Washington. An opportunity was dangled, but ultimately not offered. I had actually been assigned to Political-Military affairs, but told by Personnel not to show up in the job because the NSC might want me as the African "expert." NSC Adviser Brzezinski took his time making a decision; I found myself in limbo for several weeks, which was quite disconcerting. The Office of Political-Military affairs was unhappy; I was unhappy. Ultimately, a political appointee got the NSC job, someone who was closely connected to the AFL-CIO. That was disappointing. Having burned my bridges with PM, I "walked the halls" trying to find a job. I ran into Beverly Carter, my old boss from Tanzania, who asked whether I would be interested in joining his staff. He was heading up a new office that Ben Reed, the Undersecretary for Management, had an interest in. The office was responsible for liaison with state and local governments. That

was interesting since I had just returned from working in Seattle. I accepted and became Carter's deputy in a very small office.

It was a fascinating assignment since this new office was plowing uncharted territory. I had an opportunity to travel throughout the U.S. visiting all kinds of state and local institutions while trying to establish contacts with the State Department. It was also frustrating because it was difficult to get anyone in the Department of State to take this function seriously. After Carter and I left the office, it was abolished. As much as I enjoyed the contact with state and local officials, the job was a frustration. I had the impression that I was constantly banging my head against a wall. We were never understood and rarely accepted by the State Department bureaucracy.

Q: What was Reed's rationale for this office?

SHINN: I think he had a good idea, although I am not sure how realistic it was. He wanted this office to work closely with our embassies overseas. Eventually, we managed to assign three or four people whose main responsibility was to track and become closely acquainted with foreign state and local institutions. Embassy Bonn was one of these. The idea was that the officer would look at what was going on in these institutions, determine what innovations were being developed and to report on them. Then we in the department would see if these new concepts had any relevance to American state and local institutions and disseminate the information to them.

We did some of that. I am not sure it turned out to be very successful, but we worked hard and we may have had some impact. When you establish an office like this, governors and mayors find out and they quickly turn to such an office with much more mundane problems. For example, a governor might have a trade mission going to China; he or she would request that we organize its itinerary and schedule. It was hard to tell a governor that this was not what we were established to do. We ended up being the contact office in the department for all sorts of tasks that governors and mayors felt needed backstopping. The more we tried to help local officials, the more our existence became known and the more time we had to spend on the governors' and mayors' agendas than on our own. Although the office generated a lot of good will for the Department and developed a new constituency, it was one of the first that the Reagan administration got rid of. I would have thought that people who had worked in a governor's office, as many of Reagan's people had, would have seen the advantage of working with their former colleagues. But they didn't and eventually closed the office.

Q: Was there ever a point when Reid or others decided that just generating a new constituency was adequate justification for the existence of the office?

SHINN: That argument sold well in the Carter administration. It was never a problem during that period. Eventually, Bev Carter retired and I ended up as acting director. It gave me an enormous amount of authority. Carter had the title of "ambassador-at-large"; I didn't get that, but I was allowed to act in the same manner as he had. He met regularly

with Jack Watson in the White House. When Carter retired, I took over and met with Watson and his staff. Watson had the president's "ear" and could see the president whenever he wanted. President Carter and his immediate staff were quite enthusiastic about the liaison program with state and local governments. We had plenty of latitude in our activities as long as President Carter was in office. When the administration changed, the whole enterprise fell apart. This was about the time that I left the office in 1981.

Q: Where did you go then?

SHINN: I was assigned to Cameroon. I had not sought that assignment, but my time in Washington was up and the personnel system came up with this opening, much to my surprise. The system treated me well during my career. Some of my other assignments came from my own contacts, but in this case, it was the system that placed me.

Hume Horan, whom I had not known, but had met once or twice, was going to Cameroon as ambassador and was looking for a DCM. I learned to have enormous respect for Horan. His philosophy was to find a DCM who he thought would become an ambassador. He thought that I fulfilled that requirement and selected me from a list given him by Personnel. I went to Yaounde for two years, coinciding with Horan's time there.

Q: What was the situation in the Cameroon in 1981? What were our interests there?

SHINN: When I arrived, President Ahidjo was still in power, having been the leader since independence. His government was very Francophone despite the fact that it had a significant Anglophone minority. We had cordial, but not particularly warm, relations with this government. The French were the dominant foreign power in Cameroon.

When I first arrived, our embassy in Yaounde also had responsibility for Equatorial Guinea. Horan was accredited to Equatorial Guinea and the U.S. had an office in Malabo. That changed in 1982 when we appointed a separate ambassador to EG. But when I first got to Cameroon, we made regular trips to Malabo for reporting and contact work. Later, we continued to support that embassy through the consulate general in Douala, Cameroon. Douala was just across the water from Malabo. We spent a lot of time supporting Malabo.

The principal issue with Cameroon concerned foreign assistance. We had a relatively large aid program, which was reasonably successful. The most interesting political development in Cameroon during my tour was Ahidjo's voluntary resignation in 1982. He went to France to live and turned the government over to his hand-picked successor, Paul Biya. By the time I left, Biya was firmly ensconced in the presidency. It was interesting to watch this peaceful transition; there was no violence. It was one of the few instances in which an African president voluntarily resigned; everybody was quite happy with the transition and it worked well.

Oil had also been discovered in Cameroon. It had not been exploited to any great extent,

so that no economic benefit had yet accrued. Everybody assumed that oil would give Cameroon a bright economic future. Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be the case, but that was the expectation in the early 1980s.

The other major issue, which was of interest to Washington, concerned activities on the Cameroon-Chad border. Chad was going through a civil war. The capital of Chad, N'Djamena, is across the Chari River from Cameroon. On the Cameroon side of the river is a town named Kousseri where the embassy had a safe house. We used it occasionally as a place to monitor events in Chad. For a while we had no personnel in Chad because of the poor security situation in that country. Eventually, we did assign a *charge d'affaires*. The embassy in Yaounde was responsible for the support of the small staff at embassy N'Djamena.

From my point of view, the most interesting part of the assignment to Yaounde was to fill in for Peter Moffat, the *charge d'affaires* in N'Djamena, Chad, which I did twice. On the first occasion, he took annual leave for several weeks. He did not have an experienced officer who could fill in for him; I was sent from Yaounde. It was a wonderful opportunity to run my own operation as small as it was. I arrived in Kousseri the day before the Goukouni Oueddei government fell. The rebels led by Hissene Habre took over from Goukouni Oueddei. There were several days of fighting in N'Djamena. The fighting spilled across the Chari River into Kousseri where evacuated staff from N'Djamena and others from Yaounde came under fire for part of an afternoon. We returned to N'Djamena when it became clear that Habre was firmly in control. We established relations with the new president and I stayed for several weeks until Moffat returned. It was one of those opportunities in the Foreign Service when you happen to be in the right place at the right time. If you handle things well in the eyes of Washington, it becomes a career enhancing situation.

Q: How did we evaluate Habre?

SHINN: He had been in government before, but never as head of state. Hissene Habre was one tough cookie. He was a fighter. He was reasonably well educated, but didn't have any major academic credentials. He was in charge because he was tougher and nastier than most of his rivals. He was a leader; people did follow him. He led his men into N'Djamena and defeated all other armed factions. I found him an interesting individual and in a roughish kind of way, a likeable person because he knew what he wanted. He wanted good relations with the U.S. I believe there had been some covert contacts with him before he took power. There certainly had been reports of U.S. support for Habre when he started his campaign from the Sudan border. We may have supported him because he was opposed to Chadian elements that were being supported by Libya.

I had a brief and successful relationship with Habre. He remained in power until 1990. He was overthrown by General Idriss Deby. His reign brought a prolonged period of dictatorial stability to Chad.

My tour in Chad came at an exciting time. N'Djamena was basically a destroyed city; the main street was all shot up. It was the Wild West. Incidents of violence continued. I remember playing tennis one afternoon on the embassy compound, which overlooked the Chari River. All of a sudden, I heard things zinging past my ear and realized that they were bullets. We had no idea where they were coming from, but we didn't stick around to find out. The game was quickly called! But that was the way Chad was at the time. It was not unusual to hear live fire filling the air.

Q: What was the situation in Equatorial Guinea?

SHINN: It was a pretty sad place at the time. I don't believe that anyone knew then about the huge oil reserves that have been found since. I would guess it is now in the process of a complete transformation. During my time, it was a very poor country run by a dictator who is still in power. It was hard to do anything there; everything was a struggle. Even the weather worked against one. Malabo was just depressing - hot and humid. Mosquitoes loved it. I found it one of the most difficult places in Africa. I always felt sorry for Allan Hardy, the first American ambassador there. He worked very hard to set up the embassy but had an abbreviated Foreign Service career after that assignment. Malabo was just a real tough place to work; Nouakchott was "Paris" compared to Malabo.

Q: Tell us a little about how Ambassador Horan operated.

SHINN: He believed in giving responsibility to people. Hume is one of the smartest people I ever met. He is just incredibly intelligent and one of the best read persons I have ever encountered. He reads in four or five languages. He was a person with strategic vision. He knew how to go about achieving the goals he had set. He tried to get good people around him so that much of the tactical work could be carried out by the staff. He would oversee what was going on, but let his people carry out the day-to-day operations, although he would gladly pitch in wherever he might be needed. Hume will always be known for his management style: get good people to work for you, set out clear goals and then let the staff find the best way to achieve those goals.

He is now studying Japanese. Undoubtedly, he will master that language as well. He was one of the best, if not the best, Arabic language officer in the Foreign Service. I remember after being an observer to one conversation involving Hume in Arabic in the Sudan. One northern Sudanese in the conversation shook his head and said that Hume's Arabic was better than his. He was shocked that an American could speak the language better than many Arabs. He was literally shaking from this demoralizing discovery.

Q: Was there any great concern when Ahidjo resigned and was succeeded Biya?

SHINN: There was some concern because Ahidjo had been Cameroon's only president. So this was a major change. On the other hand, people had high hopes for Biya. He was considered to be the modernizing influence behind Ahidjo. Ahidjo represented the past and Biya the future. He was well educated and even though a Francophone spoke

excellent English. He was seen as someone who could bring the Francophones and the Anglophones together to launch Cameroon on an harmonious new track.

For the rest of my tour, our hopes for Biya seemed to be coming to fruition. Unfortunately, the whole structure came apart a few months later. There was a lot of fighting in Yaounde between members of various political parties and Biya did not handle it very well. He is still in power today, but I am told that the country has not really progressed as it should have. Corruption seems to have taken over.

Q: What was the history of Cameroon?

SHINN: It was a German colony until the end of WW I. Then it was divided with the largest part coming under French rule and the balance under British rule. Following a referendum, the English speaking part joined the Francophone portion at independence. By the 1980's the German influence was long gone; there was no sign of it.

Q: Had the English speakers been absorbed when you were there?

SHINN: Not totally. They were a minority that always felt they had not been given equality. They hadn't.

The major tension in Cameroon was between the Francophone and the Anglophone, not ethnic or tribal although the language divide does represent to some extent an ethnic divide. But while I was there, the language question was the pre-eminent dividing factor.

Q: Was this another French area?

SHINN: Somewhat less so than most of French-speaking Africa. The Anglophones had influence; they tended to seek out other English speakers. As a result, it was easier to work there than in Mauritania or Chad, for example. The French were not as influential as I have noted in other areas.

Q: Were any of the communist countries or Libya trying to get a foothold in Cameroon?

SHINN: They tried, but did not make any significant gains.

Q: How about events in Nigeria?

SHINN: Nigeria was producing oil and it was earning foreign exchange, but the extraction and distribution got tied up in corruption, as it did later in Cameroon. That has been the "albatross" around the Nigerian oil industry.

There were periodic border problems between Nigeria and Cameroon. Some of these issues are only now being settled. There were occasional border disputes. Relations between Nigeria and Cameroon were not always friendly.

Q: Did you get any visits by high officials?

SHINN: We had some CODELs; I don't recall anyone above the assistant secretary level coming to see us. There may have been, but I don't remember any.

Q: I know this was the time when Chet Crocker spent all of his life on Southern Africa. What were your relationships with the AF bureau?

SHINN: Policy for Cameroon was largely left to lower levels. We had a close relationship with the Central African Division, but the AF front office was concentrating on southern Africa. There wasn't much interest in what was going on in Central Africa. What interest there may have been focused on the Congo which was the neighborhood heavy weight. All other countries were of relatively minor significance, which in some respects was a blessing. I learned during my career that I would rather be left alone by Washington than have it breathing down my neck.

Q: You left Cameroon in 1983 and went to Sudan.

SHINN: Right. I joined Hume Horan as his DCM. It was a very different situation. It was an active post in which Washington had considerable interest. I stayed in Sudan until 1986.

Q: When you arrived in Khartoum in 1983, what was the situation?

SHINN: Sudan was entering a very interesting era of change. Jaafar Nimeiri was the president and very much in charge. Just months before I arrived, he had made a number of significant changes that led to a resumption of civil war and ultimately to his overthrow. One of the steps he took was to unravel the 1972 Addis-Ababa agreement that had ended the war between northerners and southerners. By changing elements of the agreement, Nimeiri so angered the south that John Garang, then a colonel in the Sudanese Army, fled south and founded the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). At about the same time, Nimeiri instituted a harsh version of sharia law, which was anathema to southerners and some northerners. By the time I arrived, these new directions were well under way. We spent a lot of time thereafter in the embassy weighing the consequences of Nimeiri's new policy and the future of the Sudan.

Q: Had we by 1983 gotten over the assassination of Cleo Noel and Moore or was there still some lingering resentment about the death and the subsequent mishandling of the crime by the Sudanese?

SHINN: I think that episode was pretty much behind us by this time. They were killed by the Black September group and not the government. The incident was very badly handled by the government, but in the meantime Sudan by late 1983 was the recipient of one of the largest economic development and military assistance programs funded by the U.S. A

couple of years later, we supported in Sudan one of the largest famine relief programs in Africa. The U.S. had taken an interest in the Nimeiri government, which was friendly towards Washington. Our largesse was due in major part to the Cold War.

Q: What did the embassy believe was behind Nimeiri's new policies?

SHINN: The U.S. government was certainly concerned about Nimeiri's new directions. The harsh form of sharia was our greatest concern. Early in 1983 the U.S. did not envision return to a severe civil war. But the sharia issue had a dramatic impact. The U.S. wanted at a minimum removal of its harshest aspects. We made demarches and frequently spoke to officials about the problems sharia was creating. By 1984, we became concerned about the stability and viability of the Nimeiri government.

Q: Nimeiri was a former military officer. What brought him to mix religion and government?

SHINN: At the time, we attributed Nimeiri's new policy to a religious conversion. In hindsight, I am not sure that was a correct diagnosis. He may have been more motivated by political maneuvering to neutralize the growing Islamic forces in the Sudan. He understood this new phenomenon; I am not sure that foreign observers did. There may have been an element of personal conversion, but I am not sure that was all there was to it. We will probably never know for sure what motivated Nimeiri. At the time, we may have over-emphasized his personal conviction and minimized the political calculation.

Q: How did Hume Horan run the embassy and how did he use you, as his DCM?

SHINN: I think he ran the embassy in the traditional fashion. Hume was the "outside" person and the DCM was "Mr. Inside." He was the face of America in Sudan; he carried out the high level governmental contacts. I was looked to for the day-to-day management of a multi-faceted embassy. I was looked to for the coordination of the various U.S. agencies in Sudan, making sure we were all marching to the same tune. We had a large military assistance program, a large economic assistance program, an active USIS program in addition to the State Department personnel and the Agency. Every major component in the U.S. foreign policy establishment was represented. We also had a small AID office in Juba in the southern part of the country. It was periodically staffed by Americans and sometimes headed by Foreign Service locals.

I did have a special portfolio, contact with the southern Sudanese. It was easier for me to do that because it did not interfere with the ambassador's contact with the government. The southerners were viewed as the opposition in Khartoum.

Q: How were the embassy-CIA station relations? I believe that before your time, there had been some serious frictions between these elements. Was that under control by the time you got there?

SHINN: The relations were excellent during my tour. I give Horan primary credit for that. He, as ambassador, is responsible for insuring that the Station reports to him and does not conduct activities on its own. Horan did delegate a lot of the day-to-day business to me for dealing with all agencies, including the Station. I don't think we had any problems during 1983-86.

Q: What were the power centers in Sudan during your period?

SHINN: There were several. There was the Nimeiri government. Then there were a few political parties that had some independence. Sometimes they were aligned with Nimeiri; sometimes they were in opposition, but we maintained contact with them regardless of their situation at any given moment. One was the UMMA party led by Sadiq al-Mahdi. Another was the Democratic Unionist Party, led by Muhammad Uthman al-Mirghani. There was a new element that was growing increasingly powerful. It was the National Islamic Front led by Hassan al-Turabi. We had to work hard to establish contact with that group so that we could understand where it was coming from. We had pretty good contacts with the top leadership, but we didn't know the people below Hassan al-Turabi very well. There was the southern element that continued to work with Nimeiri. The second vice-president, Joseph Lagu, was a southerner as were some other government officials. Lagu was deeply concerned about the future, but remained part of the government. We saw him regularly. There were also several political parties representing southern Sudanese who opposed the Nimeiri government.

Q: Was there a religious element in the Sudan which was trying to play an active political role that gave us concern?

SHINN: Fundamentalist power was within the National Islamic Front. I don't recall any separate religious element operating in the political sphere.

Q: For a long time, we have heard and read reports of the miserable living conditions in the south. How did the embassy find it?

SHINN: During this period, Juba and several other towns in the south were essentially enclaves. If you traveled outside the towns, you couldn't be sure who was in control. Inside the towns, there was relative peace and quiet. The whole area was underdeveloped. The infrastructure was exceedingly limited, which was one of the major southern complaints. It was evident that the government had done precious little to improve the standard of living for southerners. Southern Sudan resembled other parts of Africa below the Sahara, not Arab North Africa. It was clear that this part of the Sudan was not part of the Arab world; one could have been in northern Uganda or northern Kenya.

Q: What were the southerner's attitudes towards us?

SHINN: They were very interested in the role the U.S. could play in Sudan. At the time, we had little, if any, contact, with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

(SPLM/A). They were operating in the bush and were very hard to reach. Our contacts, therefore, were with southerners who lived in or visited Khartoum. Many were clearly sympathetic to the SPLM, but they would not acknowledge that they represented the organization. It was obvious, however, that they were unhappy with the government and were supporting John Garang, the leader of the SPLM/A.

Q: What was our policy toward this growing split between north and south Sudan?

SHINN: We were never enthusiastic about Sudan splitting into two parts. We were deeply concerned that if the country spit into two, it might splinter into five or six pieces. This possible fragmentation might not have been confined to the south. Darfur in the western part of Sudan might have argued for its independence. There were various parts of the south that might have claimed independence. I don't think it would have been in anyone's interest to have Sudan splinter into many parts. At the same time, we were concerned about Khartoum's neglect of the south, particularly economic neglect.

Q: What were Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia and other neighbors up to at this time?

SHINN: Egypt has always had one policy toward the Sudan: no division of the country. It had to remain unified. The White Nile passes through both southern and northern Sudan; after being joined by rivers from Ethiopia, the Nile becomes Egypt's life line. It was not in Egypt's interest to deal with one more country when it came to matters relating to the Nile. That has been Egypt's position for many years.

Libya's policy, on the other hand, has not always been that clear. It is usually close to Egypt's policy. On the other hand, it has periodically had bad relations with Sudan. While I was in Khartoum, the Libyans bombed the radio station in Omdurman. Two Libyan planes dropped a few bombs; there was minor damage. It was an indication of Libya's view of Nimeiri at the time. The Libyans have also maintained fairly close relations with John Garang, using the excuse that they were trying to help reconcile the SPLA and the Khartoum regime. They have, in fact, on several occasions tried to play the mediator's role. Libyan policy has always been more difficult to understand.

Ethiopia has gone back and forth on the issue of support for the SPLA. The present government in Addis Ababa prefers a unified Sudan. When Mengistu Haile Mariam was in power from 1974 to 1991, Ethiopia gave considerable support to the SPLA. Ethiopia was a refuge for the SPLA, which operated freely out of Ethiopia. This unquestioned support for the SPLA ended in 1991 when Meles Zenawi took power, although some assistance resumed several years later. Ethiopia has good relations with both the SPLM and Khartoum today.

Uganda has also gone back and forth. It has generally been sympathetic to the SPLA, but its degree of enthusiasm has waxed and waned over the years. Kenya, on the other hand, has clearly tried to maintain neutrality. Eritrea has generally been supportive of northern dissidents and the SPLA, but has improved somewhat its relations with Khartoum.

Q: During 1983-86, the Cold War was still on. How did it affect our view of Sudan?

SHINN: It clearly played a role. The Soviets were not particularly active in Sudan for reasons that have never been clear to me. I would have thought they might have made a greater effort in Sudan, but they didn't. We had no way of knowing whether they had plans to become more engaged in Sudan; we operated on the assumption that at some point the Soviets would become active. The Soviet Union disintegrated in the late 1980s. They never became as active in the 1980s as they had been in the 1960s and even the 1970s. But clearly, while I was in Khartoum, the Soviets showed little interest or were given no encouragement by Khartoum. Of course, that was our goal. We treated Sudan as a Cold War patron and gave considerable support to Nimeiri.

There was another issue in Sudan which played a prominent role in our relationship - the transit of the Falasha Jews from Ethiopia to Israel. Many of them crossed the Ethiopian border into the Sudan as a result of drought, the ongoing civil war in Ethiopia and due to the fact that they were being treated as third class citizens by their own government. Many became refugees in Sudan living in miserable circumstances. They numbered several thousand. The U.S. played a major role in assisting their relocation to Israel. That was a very sensitive issue for Nimeiri, particularly once he had instituted sharia. His support of Falasha emigration to Israel was dangerous and contributed to his eventual downfall.

Q: How did you get involved?

SHINN: My role was relatively minor. The person in the embassy who was responsible for coordinating all embassy activities in support of this emigration was initially our refugee officer, Jerry Weaver. He was an AID employee, but on loan to the embassy and working for me. I followed the process, but this issue became so important that Ambassador Horan took charge and directed the policy aspects of the most delicate parts of the ex-filtration. Jerry had successfully arranged for their movement from the Ethiopia-Sudan border area by bus to Khartoum and then by commercial flights that eventually reached Israel. That operation worked well for several months and most of the Falasha left Sudan in that way.

The American Jewish community then put enormous pressure on the U.S. to move quickly the remaining Falasha because their physical condition had reportedly deteriorated. Vice-President Bush came to Khartoum; he had a number of issues on his agenda. The most important was to get Nimeiri's agreement to a special one-time movement of all remaining Falasha from the border area. Nimeiri agreed and eight or nine C-130s flew to the border area where the Falasha had assembled and took them to Israel. Although there were less than 1,000 remaining, they all left in one day. Soon thereafter, Nimeiri's regime began to crumble. There were many reasons, but his agreement to allow the movement of the Falasha to Israel was one of them.

Q: What did we think was the reason that brought Nimeiri around to allowing this emigration?

SHINN: The U.S. strong armed Nimeiri and may have made some promises of assistance. Nimeiri had nothing to gain from this project and a lot to lose, except for the positive support he might get from the U.S.

Q: Were we concerned about the publicity that this ex-filtration might generate in our or in the Israeli press?

SHINN: There was no free press in Sudan, so that was not an issue. The story did get out rather quickly after the C-130's departed. That was one of the problems we created for Nimeiri. The rescue operation was reported in such detail by the *Los Angeles Times* that it was clear the story had been leaked by someone in the embassy. It was an embarrassment for the Sudanese government and Nimeiri in particular. Prior to this event, when we were ex-filtrating the Falasha commercially, I was surprised that there was so little leakage about that operation. Later on, of course, the story was told in great detail, but at the time, there was very little media attention.

Q: Where you still in the Sudan when Nimeiri began to encounter difficulties?

SHINN: Yes. It was a particularly interesting period because Nimeiri was going to the U.S. for an official visit. This was part of his payoff for helping on the Falasha matter. This occurred at a time when the situation in the country was clearly deteriorating. There were periodic riots and major protests in the streets, some in front of the embassy. Bread prices had increased sharply; gas lines were exceedingly long. The country was clearly in dire straits. Yet Nimeiri decided to go to Washington and carry on as if all was well. Ambassador Horan went to Washington ahead of Nimeiri and was waiting for him in Washington. I can recall going to the airport as the American *charge d'affaires*. It was Nimeiri's style to convoke the diplomatic corps to the airport whenever he left and returned. It was mid-morning. Khartoum is on a flat plain. From the airport you can see much of Khartoum in the distance. As the diplomatic corps was lining up to greet Nimeiri, you could see plumes of smoke rising from various parts of the city. The mobs, knowing that the president was leaving, began to torch cars and a few buildings. By the time the presidential plane was going down the runway for take-off, you could see fires burning in the city. It was Kafkaesque. Here was the president leaving his country for a visit to the U.S. and his capital was burning. Security forces held things together for a while longer, but the country disintegrated several days later. Nimeiri took up exile in Cairo.

Q: Who overthrew the Nimeiri regime?

SHINN: It was the mobs in the streets. They exerted pressure, forcing the military to intervene to avoid total chaos. The mobs were huge; the anger was great. Authority completely broke down. Chaos would have ensued. General Suwar El Dahab, the chief of

the armed forces, intervened. He was a very religious man. When he took power, he announced he would remain in power for one year; elections would follow. He kept his word and elections took place in 1986. They were generally free and fair, although voting in the south was very limited because the civil war was raging. But in the rest of Sudan, the elections were deemed to be fair and free.

Q: After Nimeiri's departure, how did you find the Suwar El Dahab's government?

SHINN: We had a much more formal relationship. We had been very close to Nimeiri as the next government well knew. It wanted continued U.S. assistance and support, but did not wish to be as close as Nimeiri had been. Contacts were more difficult. Suwar El Dahab put civilians in many of the ministerial positions. They represented a variety of backgrounds and political thought, from far right to far left. We had good relations with some of them; others were more difficult to deal with. It was a testy period for us, but it was manageable.

Q: Were there any armed Islamic fundamentalists in the Sudan?

SHINN: There was a small Muslim Brotherhood element in the Sudan, but the National Islamic Front (NIF) was the most important fundamentalist group. The Brotherhood, which I believed existed as a distinct group, was not really a factor in politics. The NIF played a significant role in the government.

Q: I have been told that many of these fundamentalist groups are very hard to reach by Americans? Was that true in the Sudan?

SHINN: It was hard. Hume Horan had the advantage of speaking outstanding Arabic. At a minimum, he was able to deal with these groups in their language. I didn't speak Arabic and was at a distinct disadvantage. Of course, dealing with these extremists required more than language; it demanded an ability to identify them and to gain their confidence. We spent a lot of time just trying to figure out who was worth approaching. Many of the extremists were very young, just having graduated from the university. They were not people with whom we previously had any contact. They had no incentive or interest in seeking us out; we were probably viewed as the enemy. We had to make major efforts to meet with these elements.

We had good contact with Suwar El Dahab even before Nimeiri was overthrown, but we knew very little about some of the people around him.

Q: Were the Iran-Iraq tensions evident in Khartoum at all?

SHINN: I don't remember that being a major issue. I did not follow it myself. There may have been some reflections of those tensions in Sudanese political circles, but I don't remember it becoming an issue.

Q: Did Saudi Arabia play a role in the Sudan?

SHINN: The two countries had close relations in the intelligence area during the Nimeiri government. Saudi relations with the NIF were less cordial. There were probably other Sudan-Saudi Arabia activities of which we were not fully cognizant. Saudi funds certainly entered the Sudan, some governmental and some private.

Q: Did oil play much of a factor?

SHINN: Yes and No. It was not a factor as an income source for the government because it had not yet been sufficiently developed. But it was a huge factor in our relationship with Sudan because Chevron had the license in the northern border area; other oil companies had rights much further south. At this stage, Chevron was the only company that had found significant quantities of oil. It was excited about the exploitation potential. Chevron sank large amounts in its development and exploitation efforts. It considered Sudan as a major potential source of oil. That complicated our dealings with the southerners because the oil was located either in a border area or in the south. In fact, the SPLA attacked Chevron facilities on several occasions; one resulted in a number of deaths. Chevron was forced to close its facilities, I think in 1984, and pulled its staff back to Khartoum hoping to wait out the southern insurrection. It waited for a long time until it became apparent that the situation was deteriorating. Then Chevron decided to close its Sudan operations. It was replaced much later by non-American companies.

Q: How effective did you think our assistance - both military and economic - programs were?

SHINN: One of our economic assistance programs was famine relief and I think that was effective. Development aid, looked at over a long term, was probably not too effective. I would be hard pressed to cite specific results from any project that is still viable today. Some of these projects may be functioning today, but I think the majority have disappeared. Any projects in the south were lost long ago due to the civil war. I would give American development aid a "C" grade at best.

The military aid was effective in that it cemented our relationship with the Nimeiri regime and was probably useful in working with successor regimes. We provided F-5 aircraft, most of which crashed due to pilot error or were shot down by the SPLA in the south. Ultimately, I think all of those airplanes were lost. In that circumstance, it is hard to say whether the program was a success.

Q: Did our close relationships with Israel cause us problems?

SHINN: They certainly skewed our policies on the Falasha issue, although most of the pressure to move them from Sudan to Israel came from the U.S. Jewish community, not from Israel. Otherwise, I don't think the U.S. relationship with Israel had much impact on our relationship with Sudan.

Q: I would guess that there were some elements in Israel which might have concluded that the absorption of the Falasha might be real problem for a small state like Israel.

SHINN: There were definitely conflicting views in Israel. There were elements that strongly supported the immigration as well as others who preferred that it not take place. The final Israeli policy was to support the ex-filtration and to bring the Falashas to Israel. Eventually, the Israelis arranged to bring the rest of the tribe directly from Ethiopia.

Q: Did you feel that except for the Falasha issue there was enough interest in the Sudan in the Department?

SHINN: The African Bureau had sufficient interest. I don't remember that any other part of the Department showed much interest in Sudan issues, but since we received our guidance from AF, I am not sure how we were viewed by other parts of the Department. AF had an interest in Sudan because Khartoum was one of the two largest operations in the bureau. That could not be ignored, even if the issues did not fit well in AF policy concerns. Africanists are not particularly interested in a predominantly Arab country, but you just can't ignore an embassy that employed over 200 Americans at its zenith.

Q: How did you find living in a predominantly Arab country?

SHINN: Khartoum was a hardship post; living was not easy. It was isolated, hot and dusty. Occasionally, haboobs or walls of dirt would blow into Khartoum. Fortunately, that did not happen very often, but it was a challenge when it did. Living conditions were harsh.

On the other hand, we found that the Sudanese were wonderful people. They are among the most hospitable people that I ever encountered in the Foreign Service. It is difficult not to like the Sudanese. Even the Islamic fundamentalists tended to be engaging and interesting individuals. They were pleasant people. From that point of view, our tour was most enjoyable. But it was a tough assignment because of the physical conditions and the constant tension due to security problems.

Q: The British felt that they had left the Sudan in pretty good shape. Did you see much evidence of that?

SHINN: We saw it in terms of Sudanese who had been educated. As for the physical infrastructure, there weren't many signs of colonial success left. Even when I returned to Khartoum two months ago, it was a city that looks pretty shabby and has experienced minimal economic development. I don't think the British left much behind, but they did leave a talented, well educated group of people in the north. The British pretty much ignored the south with obvious consequences. They can rightfully be proud of what they left in northern Sudan in the way of an educational system. The University of Khartoum is still a vibrant academic institution. There are also some highly regarded private

universities. There was a special affinity among the British toward Sudan.

Q: What about the role of women?

SHINN: Sudan is a male dominated, Arab society. Women were not particularly noticeable in senior positions. There were some, but not many. That is still true today. The women were generally confined to the home. They do not wear *burkas*; they do wear head scarves. During my recent visit, I was told that 60% of the students at the University of Khartoum were females. Sudan is not like Saudi Arabia or even some of the Gulf States. There is considerably more freedom of movement and opportunity for expression by women.

Q: Was there any threat to the embassy during the Nimeiri overthrow?

SHINN: There was always the perception of a threat. The mobs, during the overthrow of the Nimeiri government, passed in front of the embassy to make a point. They knew the Americans were Nimeiri's primary supporters; the embassy was a logical place to demonstrate. I can remember standing on the roof of the chancery watching the crowds go by. It was a mild-mannered crowd even though there might have been an occasional demonstrator who shook his fist at us. There were also a few offensive signs, but there were never any attempts to charge the embassy or to throw stones at it. The embassy was never touched even though it was just a few feet from the main road. I never felt threatened. There was an attempt by Libyan elements to assassinate one of the embassy communicators.

Q: How about other missions? Did they play any major role?

SHINN: We were the main player during this period. The British were important; the Dutch, the Egyptians and the Germans had some influence. But that was about it.

Q: Did we cooperate closely with the Egyptians and the relatively new Mubarak regime?

SHINN: We had good relations with the Egyptian embassy in Khartoum. Egypt always assumed that it knew more about Sudan and had better relations with it than any other government. There engaged in a certain amount of self-delusion. I don't recall how much interaction the U.S. had with Mubarak on Sudan issues.

Q: When you left in 1986, what were your views about Sudan's future?

SHINN: I was fairly optimistic because Sadiq al-Mahdi had been elected prime minister by the new parliament following generally good elections. His UMMA party had won the single largest block of votes in parliament. The government was, as far as I can remember, a coalition of several parties. I overlapped with this new government for about six months. Things were looking pretty good. The new leadership was saying all the right things about ending the war with the south, although it never happened.

On the other hand, as I was about to leave we had to evacuate many embassy staff again. The first evacuation came following the attempted assassination of one of our communicators. We came to the conclusion that the perpetrators were Libyans. The communicator survived, but the attempt raised Washington's concerns. Since we had no way of knowing whether this was an isolated incident or part of a broader campaign, we sent all dependents home and reduced the size of the staff in Khartoum significantly. Then in 1986 there was a second evacuation, but I must admit that I am not sure today why it took place. We again sent out all the dependents and reduced the size of the embassy. Despite my optimistic view of Sudan's future, there were serious concerns about the stability of the country and our future there.

Q: That gets us to 1986. What was your next assignment?

SHINN: I attended the senior seminar at FSI in Arlington. I found that a pleasant interlude. It was a way to recharge batteries after three stressful years in Khartoum and two less stressful years as DCM in Cameroon. The senior seminar was a way to decompress, learn more about the United States and get ready for the next assignment.

Q: The senior seminar focuses on the United States. Was there anything new that you learned about your country?

SHINN: I can't single out anything and I had somewhat of an advantage because I had traveled widely already in the U.S. I think the year reinforced some of the conclusions about the U.S. that I had already reached from previous experiences. I did see some new areas that I had not seen before. I learned more about how the military functions, became re-acquainted with Foreign Service friends and met some new ones from a variety of agencies.

Q: After the senior seminar, what was next?

SHINN: I was nominated and approved by the Senate as ambassador to Burkina Faso. That was a three year tour from 1987 to 1990. Burkina Faso was not a country of major interest to the U.S. It is relatively small and relatively unimportant. On the other hand, it had just passed through serious internal problems. President Thomas Sankara had just been assassinated and one of his close aides, Blaise Compaore, took power. He remains in power today.

My three years in Ouagadougou were routine, the best term I can come up with to describe my ambassadorial tour. I did whatever was expected to represent the U.S.: delivering demarches, making public affairs appearances, visiting every corner of the country. We did have a few ups and downs in our relationship with the Compaore regime, which was not overly friendly toward the U.S. There was a wariness about our intentions in this part of Africa.

Our mission was relatively small. We had USAID, USIA and a station. There were no Peace Corps or Defense Attache. About mid-way through my tour, Compaore began to cozy up to Libya and Charles Taylor in Liberia. He began to take a less friendly attitude toward the U.S. At one point, I was recalled by Washington as an indication of our displeasure with Burkina Faso's attitude. I stayed in Washington for about two weeks before going back. For the rest of my tour, the relationship was correct and normal. France was the key player in Burkina Faso. Perhaps the Dutch, Germans and the Soviets were as influential as we were. We just played the game like a lot of other countries. We reported as well as we could about what was going in the country, but I never felt that Washington was particularly anxious to hear from us.

Q: What was Burkina Faso like?

SHINN: It is a nice little country. It is homogeneous and predominantly Muslim, but there are significant Christian elements in the country. It is ethnically divided, but there are a couple of ethnic groups like the Mossi that have dominated the political landscape. It is easy to travel around Burkina; it is compact and the roads are fairly good. There isn't very much to see there.

It is a poor country with a basic economy. It manages to feed its people and life goes on in a traditional manner. Burkina Faso does not have any diamond mines or oil fields, resources that have led some of its neighbors to disastrous consequences. The country has essentially no resources except for its people which it exports in large numbers. There were about three million of them in the Ivory Coast contributing, according to some, to the problems in that country. Burkinabe are hard workers; they tend to do the kind of work that other West Africans are reluctant to undertake. Labor is the major export.

Q: Did UN issues arise very often?

SHINN: No more often than in other African countries. We were not very successful in getting Burkina Faso to vote with us. If it did, it was sheer coincidence. They tended to vote with the majority of "left leaning" African states. They would be on the same side with Guinea or Ghana.

Q: What attracted Burkina Faso to Charles Taylor?

SHINN: It was a curious phenomenon. I saw no reason why Compaore would find it useful to have close relations with Charles Taylor. I didn't see that there was anything in it for Burkina Faso. Allegedly, Charles Taylor was living in Burkina Faso during my tour. He later migrated to Liberia and took power. There may have been a personal connection between the two men or Libya may have been behind this strange relationship. It may have offered Burkina Faso financial assistance in return for support of Charles Taylor, whom Libya supported. Burkina Faso may have been a Libyan proxy. Otherwise, I see no reason why Compaore would have a close relationship with Taylor.

Q: How were your relations with the French?

SHINN: They were good. I dealt with two different French ambassadors in my three years. They were cordial, but they made it clear that of all the ambassadors in Ouagadougou they were "top banana." I never tried to challenge that view.

Q: Was the Sahel food supply a major issue while you were in Burkina Faso?

SHINN: I came well after the serious Sahel famine of the 1970s. There were periodic food shortages in the Sahel from 1987-90, but nothing like the magnitude of the earlier famine.

I had enough time in Ouagadougou to devote time to the West African softball league. We had very active teams in Ouagadougou and in neighboring countries and we took seriously the tournaments in places like Bamako, Niamey, Lome and Ouagadougou. I pitched. As ambassador I had my choice of positions to play. We did okay.

Q: Did you have any problems in getting staff?

SHINN: We did not have a long list of people who were bidding for an assignment to Burkina Faso, but we filled all the positions. The staff in general was good; there were a few problem cases. We had an inspection which turned out poorly, in part due to staffing problems. Some of these problems came to a head right before the inspection. The timing was unfortunate and it caused me a lot of anguish. The buck does stop with the ambassador.

One of the problems concerned marijuana usage among the Marine guards. Another concerned physical harassment of an embassy spouse. There were also a couple of charges of sexual harassment which turned out to be essentially misunderstandings. This was a period when there was enormous sensitivity about treatment of women. Some of our older staff had not learned that times had changed and that acceptable language in their youth was no longer so. This kind of problem is particularly troublesome in a small mission. We fixed the problems, but it took 6-9 months and we had to shift some people around. This episode was the low point in my Foreign Service career. After fixing the problems, I requested a second inspection and we passed with flying colors.

Q: You left Burkina Faso in 1990. What was your next assignment?

SHINN: I was assigned to Southern University in Baton Rouge as a diplomat-in-residence. It was another opportunity to decompress. These are wonderful Foreign Service opportunities. It wasn't clear in 1990 what the Department might have in store for me, especially after a tough inspection in Ouagadougou. Having served once as ambassador, there is no guarantee that you will be offered another mission. There is often the view that having served as chief of mission, you should make way for another officer to occupy that very coveted position. I was still quite young, fifty when I left post, and not

ready to retire. I decided to seek an academic position for a year and then see what might be available. I had a very nice year in Louisiana, which was one of the few states that I had not visited. We enjoyed Cajun country and had an opportunity to become acquainted with the Deep South. Southern University is a historically black school and was reasonably strong academically. It was an eye-opening experience.

Q: Was there a different focus from what you had been accustomed to in your other academic sojourns?

SHINN: The focus was not that much different, but obviously it is a different experience when the student body is 95% African-American. The other five percent were mostly other minorities; whites were few. You get a different perspective. I was one of the few white professors and I was there to teach African affairs. That was not an easy situation.

The faculty and administration were exceedingly supportive. A few of the students were not. Several had trouble adjusting to the idea of a white professor teaching African affairs. Several of the students, once they saw a white person teaching the class, dropped out. At least one student had the courage to tell me that he was dropping the course because I was white.

Q: Were you talking to people who didn't want to hear what you had to say?

SHINN: There was some of that. I tried to teach about Africa based on my experience and academic training. A few of the students were very skeptical. Most of them were willing to hear me out and to reach their own conclusions. Only a small minority held preconceived, ideological views. I found no way to get through to them. I am sure in some cases they rejected my views because I was saying things which didn't fit their preconceptions about Africa, although they had never been there. They didn't want to hear anything that did not reinforce their prejudices.

As I said, the faculty was very supportive. I remember one conversation with a particularly articulate and intelligent African-American faculty member. I had told her that two or three students had dropped my class after the first day because I was white. She looked at me and said that she taught Shakespeare. She asked does that mean she can not teach Shakespeare because she is African-American. She laughed, saying she understood my dilemma. She had no sympathy for those students who left the class.

Nevertheless, the year at Southern was a good experience. My wife and I had an opportunity to visit all corners of Louisiana and parts of the Deep South. I also had an opportunity to read a lot more about Africa. Part of the purpose of the diplomat-in-residence program is to recruit for the Foreign Service. My success was fairly limited everything considered. I argued at the end of my stay at Southern, where students had to be accepted by law if they graduated from high school, that the Department might have a better chance of increasing minority applicants by focusing on more elite schools where there is a smaller number of African-Americans, but a group more likely to have an

interest in foreign affairs and a higher likelihood of passing the Foreign Service exam. This is not to say there weren't some fine students at Southern. Some were excellent.

The diplomat-in-residence program is a two-way street. The diplomat is at the university to learn as well as impart knowledge. I can make, therefore, a strong argument that the program is useful to the Foreign Service. In the case of predominantly black universities, I recommend assignments to some of the most prestigious universities such a Morehouse, Spellman and Howard. Southern was good, but not up to the standard of the others.

My year at Southern reminded me of a truism about the Foreign Service: out of sight, out of mind. I learned the hard way that the Department forgot that I was still in the Foreign Service. I returned to Washington and struggled to find anything challenging to do. It was a case of walking the corridors and using contacts to see if any office needed help. I ended up doing a series of short term projects in the Bureau of Personnel. I did one on long-term training that I thought was useful. I spent several months doing those projects, but they didn't lead to a permanent assignment.

Finally, I attracted the attention of the Foreign Service Institute and particularly Director Brandon Grove and Don Leidel. I asked them whether they needed any help. They said they could use me. I had known Don for many years. I worked on a series of projects at FSI including the mentoring of A-100 classes. I did an evaluation of the A-100 course and made a number of suggestions on ways to improve it. I did another project requested by the African bureau on ways that the U.S. could improve its interaction with Africa. What kinds of activities and programs should the U.S. engage in? The Bureau used it for a chiefs-of-mission conference held in Washington. I hoped that this paper might resurrect me in AF and perhaps lead to an assignment. It didn't. I treaded water for many months. Having served in AF virtually my entire career, I was not known in any other geographical bureau.

Q: Let me ask you about the A-100 course. This is the introduction of new members to the Foreign Service and therefore a very important point in an officer's career. How did you feel about the officers who were assigned to lead the course?

SHINN: I have had contact with the A-100 course several times during my career, usually as a speaker or through friends who led the course. The leadership has been a mixed bag over the years. There have been some good people who have run the course, but there have been at least as many who have been mediocre. The "fast risers" in the Foreign Service are reluctant to serve in that position for a couple of years, fearing that it might slow down their promotional opportunities. Their fears are well taken. My guess is that that situation hasn't changed although I have not kept track of the A-100 course in the last couple of years. To some extent, you can mitigate the A-100 leadership problem by identifying top-notch mentors who take the task seriously. Unfortunately, most of the mentors hold full time jobs in the Department, leaving little time for tutoring. I spent an enormous amount of time on mentoring because I had no full time job.

Q: What does a mentor do?

SHINN: I sat in on a lot of the A-100 sessions. I would interject my own views when issues familiar to me arose and I felt that I had a contribution to make. I spent time with the students after hours, during lunch and invited all of them to our house in groups for cocktails and informal talk. They appreciated the attention. Even today when I visit the Department, an FSO from that period will occasionally greet me. I may not have a clue who that person is until he or she reminds me that I mentored their A-100 class. It is nice to know after so many years one is still remembered. I am always surprised how many remember me from that assignment in the early 1990s.

Q: Major changes had taken place in the recruitment philosophy and management of personnel? How did you see the succession of A-100 students you mentored?

SHINN: They are much less homogeneous today than they were when I came into the Foreign Service. That is a net plus. The one negative development is that many persons joining the Foreign Service today see their tours as a way station rather than a career. That is unfortunate; the Foreign Service would be better if most of the newcomers saw the Service as a life-long career, rather than one you jump in and out of. I have the impression that many of the entrants are not sure the Foreign Service is a life-long career. After a couple of tours, they may seek other professions.

The A-100 students today bring with them a broader background than we did when we entered. They have traveled more. They speak more foreign languages. They are more knowledgeable about the world but not necessarily the U.S. They are more mature and have had more work experience. These factors are good for the Foreign Service. The diversity of the classes was obviously overdue. In my A-100 class, there were no minorities and two women in a class of 24. That was just not right.

Q: One of the objectives of these oral histories is to give some indication to present and prospective Foreign Service officer of what they can expect in their careers - the fun, the difficulties, the intellectual challenges. Was there enough in the A-100 course about the history of the Foreign Service and how it actually functions today?

SHINN: That was covered. I feel privileged that I was involved in a number of interesting foreign policy issues even though most of them occurred in countries that were not central to our national security. Those in Sudan and Ethiopia did warrant high level attention and I was part of the policy making and executing mechanisms. I feel I made a contribution. It is important to convey that sense of participation to new Foreign Service officers who may think that Europe or Asia are the only places worth serving in. The more that new FSOs understand that and seek opportunities in the developing world as well as the developed, the more they will enjoy the Foreign Service. They may not make a major contribution on the first, second or third tour, but later on, there will be opportunities to contribute even if it does not occur in the hot spots of the world. One doesn't necessarily have to be an ambassador to make that contribution. It could be as a DCM, an office

director in Washington or in many other positions.

Q: Did you notice different attitudes among the new entrants - for example, one who had just come off a campus and one who had had several years of work experience?

SHINN: There are differences. People who enter in their forties are looking at a career of no more than twenty years. I recently encountered a friend of mine who I knew in Ethiopia with the Save the Children organization. He is in his mid-forties and has just entered the Foreign Service. People like him must see the Foreign Service through different lenses than some one in his or her twenties. Those who enter in mid-life cannot realistically expect to become ambassadors. It is possible, but not likely in a twenty-year career. They just want to do work that they consider challenging and rewarding combined with overseas living. If they retire as a division chief or a DCM, that should be just fine with them. The younger people have different aspirations and hopes.

Q: When I came in, most of us had had military experience of one sort or another. I think perhaps those who today are recent college graduates probably have no clue about the military.

SHINN: That is probably true. The military experience factor had already changed when I joined in 1964. Less than half of my class had had military experience. I don't know what the percentage is today, but I suspect it is a very small number. Those with military experience are usually seeking a second career, having completed a military career. Most new entrants today have no idea how the military works and that is unfortunate. I think military experience is very useful; I am sorry I did not have it. Some of my colleagues who did serve had a distinct advantage at least in our early years in the Foreign Service.

Q: We are now in the middle of 1992. What is happening?

SHINN: I am still wandering around looking for a job. I was placed on a few short lists for COM positions in Africa; none materialized. Finally, I am grabbed by a management task force led by Bill Bacchus that has been assigned to do a thorough study on reorganizing the Department. We worked at offices in Columbia Plaza. At the peak, there were about fifteen of us assigned to this task. We ended up with a massive study called *State 2000.* It looked at all aspects of reorganizing the Department. This was done in part in preparation for a new administration, which turned out to be Clinton rather than a second Bush term. In a sense, the timing was good. The new administration used parts of it, but like all State Department reorganization studies, most of it was ignored.
We finished towards the end of 1992. At about this time, U.S. intervention in Somalia entered the picture. I had been the desk officer for Somalia during 1969-71. The Department put together a task force on Somalia headed by FSI Director Brandon Grove. Despite the fact that Bush had been defeated in the election, he decided to send a major military contingent into Somalia to ensure the delivery of famine relief. Brandon agreed to lead the Task Force and asked me to serve as deputy director.

Beginning on Thanksgiving 1992, we established the Somalia Task Force, which was headquartered in the Operations Center. It continued until early April, 1993. I transferred to the Task Force on Somalia while still finishing the management task force report. That made for very long days and nights, six or seven days a week. It was an intense work experience with an enormous amount of pressure and a lot of problems. I had to bring myself up to speed on Somalia as well as learn how the Operations Center worked. It would have been helpful if I had had an opportunity earlier in my career to work in the Op Center. As the deputy, I was responsible for the internal working of the Task Force, which meant considerable liaison with Op Center personnel.

Many different people worked on the Task Force; the turnover was most disruptive. There was considerable high level interest in our work from people like Frank Wisner, Undersecretary for Security Assistance. He met with us almost on a daily basis. We also had daily contact with the NSC and Defense. It was a fascinating experience, but arduous and draining.

Q: When you began your work with Brandon, what was your understanding of what we were trying to accomplish?

SHINN: The stated goal was to insure that the military component and the civilian component, headed by Bob Oakley who set up an office in Somalia, worked smoothly together. We were to make certain that all the pieces fit together so that the military could get in safely, ensure the delivery of food to starving Somalis and leave as quickly as possible. There were to be no casualties. It was a simple goal at the beginning. But of course it wasn't that simple and the operation ended tragically. What some in the Bush Administration envisaged as a short term operation to deliver food turned out to be complicated and long term. Much of the problem was caused by the change in administrations soon after American troops arrived in Somalia. The departing Bush people suffered from wishful thinking. They knew they would be out of office by January 20 and seemed to think the Somalia operation could be finished by then. They did not pay any attention to what would happen a year or two later. When the Clinton administration came in, Somalia was not high on its agenda. It had bigger fish to fry such as getting its people into key jobs in the government. The timing of the change in administrations was catastrophic for the Somalia operation. One of the lessons learned is not to begin such a complex operation when an administration is changing from one party to another.

All of us were over-confident at the beginning. The operation started well and was going smoothly by April. The troops arrived without significant casualties. Over the first couple of months, they established order in Mogadishu; they then extended it outwards to other parts of the country. We were successful in getting a significant number of other countries involved in this humanitarian effort. Foodstuffs were getting to the population and the famine receded. The principal goal was to stop the famine and then turn the management of the country over to the UN. That was easier said than done.

We actually reached a point where we decided to disband the Task Force because we

thought that our goal had been largely reached by the end of March. Things were looking good. The UN was in the process of replacing the U.S. led effort, although the U.S. consented to leave a significant contingent of U.S. troops to help the UN. We disbanded the Task Force. I was once again without an assignment. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George Moose, asked me a few days later to join AF as the point person on Somalia because the amount of work created by Somalia had already overwhelmed the Somali Desk officer. As problems grew in Somalia, the Department upgraded my position to State Department Coordinator for Somalia. We still had an enormous involvement in Somalia, although it was not large enough to warrant a 24/7 Task Force in the Operation Center. Another lesson I learned is that a Task Force is a wonderful mechanism for short-term crises; it is lousy for long-term crises. The constant turnover of staffing is exceedingly inefficient.

It soon became apparent that Somalia was a serious problem. I had a very small staff, initially two people. The situation on the ground began to deteriorate. Under pressure from the Defense Department, the U.S. declared its task completed on April 5 and turned the management of the Somalia operation over to the UN. The situation remained stable during April. By May, however, things began to fall apart. General Mohammed Farah Aideed wanted to be president of Somalia. He realized that the UN presence, which the U.S. fully supported, increasingly marginalized him. Aideed viewed the future as bleak because the UN and the U.S. were trying to reconstitute some kind of national government that might leave him powerless. But Aided had the support of a large militia. He decided to make serious problems for the UN presence. His supporters laid mines that were detonated under U.S. and UN vehicles. There were numerous other acts of violence against UN forces.

A critical juncture took place when Pakistani peace-keeping troops inspected Aideed's radio station in early May 1993. As they left the station, having found no arms, Aideed's forces attacked the Pakistanis, resulting in 24 Pakistani deaths. Some had their stomachs disemboweled and their eyes gouged out. It was a barbarian act. The UN was outraged and with our support decided that the perpetrators had to be punished. Within a few days, UN and U.S. troops were hunting Aideed down to bring him to justice. From that point, the situation on the ground unraveled quickly. UN efforts turned from a humanitarian relief effort, including assisting the Somalis to constitute a new government, to a manhunt to find Aideed and bring him and his followers to justice. Only later would we conclude that task was beyond the capability of the UN and U.S.

On October 3, 1993, U.S. Special Forces raided a house where a meeting was taking place. It was believed that Aided was in that meeting. A fierce firefight lasting almost two days and resulting in the death of about two dozen U.S. troops resulted. After this development, the U.S. concluded that we had had enough of Somalia. We agreed to keep a presence until March, 1994 to help the UN to get through a difficult period. But we announced in October 1993 that we would completely leave Somalia by March; we kept our word and left before the end of March.

I was the Department's Coordinator for Somalia during this period. After the debacle of October, someone more senior was assigned to supervise the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia. The staff grew exponentially. I had already been slated to become the director of East African affairs in AF. I moved to the new position in December 1993. In that job, I still had a role to play on Somali issues because Somalia was one of the countries under my jurisdiction. By the time of the final departure of U.S. troops from Somalia in March 1994 and the closure of the special office handling the departure, I resumed responsibility for Somalia.

Q: After March, 1993, with the deterioration of the situation in Somalia, were there voices questioning our presence in that country?

SHINN: There were concerns in the White House and on the seventh floor of the Department. The situation was very difficult and it was hard to project how the issues would be resolved. By the summer 1993, the Clinton administration had filled most of its positions; that allowed people to focus more on foreign policy issues. At one point, I was asked to head an interdepartmental team to visit Somalia in August, 1993. The team was asked to come up with an analysis of what went wrong and recommendations to get our operation back on track. We spent about ten days traveling throughout Somalia, talking to anybody who would talk to us. We came back with a long list of recommendations. However, as we were going through this analytical process and recommending significant changes in policy, the situation on the ground was becoming more and more chaotic. It became almost impossible to put the genie back in the bottle. Everyone was still committed to capturing Aideed and bringing him to justice. There were a few people who thought that we would never capture him and even if we did, it would not calm the situation because some other renegade would replace him.

From a policy point of view, it seemed like some of us were trying to turn two battleships around - two battleships that were under full power and plowing straight ahead. One of the battleships was the U.S. bureaucracy and the other was the UN bureaucracy. Both had to be convinced to change directions. Ultimately, we convinced Secretary Christopher to meet with Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary General, and urge him to take a different approach in Somalia. We wanted to go beyond just capturing Aideed; we wanted to involve countries like Eritrea and Ethiopia to put pressure on him to consider exile. We were working on this policy change even before October 3, but we were too late. After October 3, the Congress and the American public began to focus entirely on getting out of Somalia, leaving the administration no choice except to get out. Clinton made the decision, but he had very little leeway. There was absolutely no support in the country for remaining in Somalia. There was an understanding that our policy had to change, but trying to convince two huge bureaucracies to make a major change in policy just didn't happen soon enough.

Q: Did we find ourselves dealing with a culture - Somali - that we didn't understand and therefore could not communicate with? Or was it essentially a problem of one warlord?

SHINN: A lot of the problem was a cultural one. A number of our people learned to deal with this culture. People like Bob Oakley had a good appreciation of the cultural challenge; he had served in Somalia previously as U.S. ambassador. General Tony Zinni had had an earlier experience dealing with Somalia; he was one of the first to go to Mogadishu with Oakley. He had a good appreciation of the situation.

There were others, both Americans and UN representatives, who were still in a learning mode and had a difficult time understanding what was going on. Some 25 different countries had troops in Somalia. It was virtually impossible to coordinate the activities of all of them. Sometimes the Italians would work against what we were doing. Nigerians, when fired upon, would return fire with every piece of ammunition they could get their hands on. The Saudis said that they were not there to fight; they were there just to guard food warehouses. Every country had its own agenda; it was an impossible command and control arrangement.

Q: Did the October 3 incident ("Black Helicopter Down") force a change in our goals?

SHINN: Absolutely. It ended U.S. involvement. It was the point at which the President personally took charge of Somali policy. Policy making went from the level of people like Dick Clarke, Jim Woods and me to the President. I became one of many tangentially involved in Somalia until U.S. troops left in March 1994.

Q: Was there any discussion of landing a more robust American force?

SHINN: There was a request for more tanks and helicopters at one point; we had some there but the request was for considerably more. On advice from the Joint Chiefs, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin turned down the requests. I attended the "infamous" briefing that Secretaries Christopher and Aspin gave to Congress on October 7, I believe. I was supposed to brief Christopher; he was generally knowledgeable, but I was to provide him with a current update. My briefing that day was canceled; I was told that I could have a few minutes with him on Capitol Hill. I was to brief him in the hallway as he entered the briefing room. When I met him in the hallway, he waved me off saying that he would not address Somalia. Rather, he was there to talk about Russia. He said that Aspin would discuss Somalia. The briefing of Aspin was someone else's responsibility. But I went into the meeting which was held in a relatively small room that was jam-packed with Senators and Representatives. Perhaps one-half of the Senate and one-third of the House attended. It was so packed that people were sitting immediately in front of the table reserved for the two secretaries. It was apparent from the outset that this was going to be a disaster. Attendees appeared angry as they arrived and their questions underscored that point.

The meeting was called to order and it quickly became clear that no one was interested in Russia. There may have been one question to Secretary Christopher on Russia during the hour-long hearing. Somalia was **the** topic. Aspin responded to all of the questions. Christopher sat there like a Cheshire cat, able to avoid the anger of the questioners.

Subsequently, a long time staff member said to me that this was the worst briefing that he had ever heard on Capitol Hill. I can not vouch for the accuracy of the observation, but it gives you some idea of the impact that Secretary Aspin had that day. It is true that there was no encouraging news to impart. But neither Aspin nor Christopher was prepared to counter the hostile questions. That made the situation even worse.

Q: How many American died on October 3?

SHINN: 18 died and dozens more were badly injured in the October 3-4 firefight.

Q: I think it became a world wide standard. When we went into Bosnia, people were threatening to kill more on the assumption that the U.S. would retreat if the body count exceeded that. The Bosnians were proven wrong.

SHINN: Even before that, there was the Rwanda crisis. We didn't send any troops despite the genocide. Many people, including me, believe we failed to take action because of the Somalia experience. Later on, we did help with humanitarian aid, but our experience in Mogadishu hung heavily over policy makers. The Congress and general public also opposed any military intervention in Rwanda.

Q: It is another illustration of well known phenomenon - people draw incorrect conclusions from history. As you closed the book on Somalia, how did you feel?

SHINN: I was devastated that our policy had gone so sour, particularly since I played a role in it. There were many others involved in making that policy, many of whom were senior to me. The blame can be spread widely. I was generally satisfied with my own efforts, particularly in leading the team to Somalia in August 1993. We did recommend a number of substantial policy changes. I didn't feel that I had not been up to the task, but the fact is that I did play a role in a largely failed policy. On the other hand, we did end the famine, which everyone seems to have forgotten. Unfortunately, that success was quickly overwhelmed by the ensuing catastrophe of October 3. It is easy with the benefit of hindsight to explain why that happened, but it is still difficult to postulate an alternative policy that might have prevented what happened.

As director of East African affairs, I followed Somalia closely. Together with the Desk Officer, I was probably the only one who did. After we left Somalia, no one cared much what happened there. I again became the point person on Somalia in Washington. I can remember being in a staff meeting well after October 3 with Assistant Secretary George Moose, for whom I have the greatest respect. I remarked in somewhat flippant fashion that I had been hung out to dry on this issue. George took it personally and seriously. He seemed startled and asked me whether I really felt that way. I explained that I was being flippant. He understood that I was speaking figuratively. But I did wonder if I had any future in the Department. Some careers of those who participated in the Somalia effort effectively ended. On the other hand, people like General Zinni used their experience in Somalia as a stepping stone to higher levels. In my case, the future also turned out fine,

but it was a difficult period for others.

Q: Were you able to talk to the various factions in Somalia? Or were the fighters just that - not interested in a larger picture?

SHINN: There was a combination of both. There were some warlords with whom you could not talk. You might be able to talk with the leaders, but not their militia members. They usually did not speak English. Many were usually high on qat, the narcotic that most Somalis chew. The warriors had no authority and did what they were paid to do. Their leadership was not very reliable. Aideed was completely unapproachable during the manhunt phase. Some Somalis were responsible and reasonable, but they generally were not in a position to control the militias. It was a difficult situation and there was a dearth of ideas for dealing with the situation. One idea was to change tactics in dealing with Aideed. The U.S. complicated the problem by first handling the famine relief largely by itself and then turning the hardest part of the operation over to the UN. At the same time, we wanted to remain the principal decision maker.

Q: Talk to us a little a bit about your other responsibilities as director for East Africa.

SHINN: The directorate was responsible for our relations with twelve countries. During my tenure, 1993-1996, the focus continued to be on Somalia because the rest of the U.S. government washed its hands of that morass as quickly as they could after we left the country. Within the State Department, AF/E became the highest echelon dealing with Somalia's aftermath, although we were at a fairly low level in the bureaucracy. I think the administration was wrong in divorcing itself so completely from Somalia. I understand the reasons for it. Somalia was mostly a failure. Although there was not much happening on the ground, I thought Somalia deserved a more attention at higher levels in the Department and other agencies.

The other major issue I dealt with during this period was Sudan. There were important security issues in Sudan that required a great deal of my time. Our ambassador, Tim Carney, and I worked closely on Sudan issues. We were often overruled by Washington-based Clinton Administration officials who had a hostile view of Sudan. Everything else paled by comparison. Ethiopia and Kenya, important in the Horn of Africa and East Africa, did not get much of my attention. My focus was Somalia and Sudan.

The major goal after October 3 was to get out of Somalia. The Clinton administration said it would do so only if the UN had a chance to carry out its program of nation building. We didn't leave abruptly. We gave the UN almost six months to strengthen its program. We announced we would leave by the end of March, 1994 and we did exactly that. Before that date, we actually increased the military presence in Somalia to provide protection to the American forces that were still there. By the beginning of 1994, the entire effort was on getting out. We did leave behind a State Department liaison office headed by Dan Simpson that stayed for a few more months. It included a small contingent of Marines to protect the office. After the liaison office moved to Nairobi, Somalia virtually became

forbidden territory for American officials. There was no desire to have visitors go there although a few did make brief visits. The AID program continued at a much reduced level, although there was no USAID presence in Somalia. There were people in Washington who wanted to terminate the program, but their views did not prevail. The program continued on a declining scale, but it never ceased.

Q: Was the program mainly food provision?

SHINN: Right. It was humanitarian relief, including some medical assistance. The operations were largely run by NGOs and international organizations such as UNICEF, the World Food Program and WHO. The program concentrated on former Italian Somalia, not Somaliland which had declared its independence in 1991. As conflict continued in Somalia while Somaliland became more peaceful, U.S. assistance tended to move to the latter. From March, 1994, when our troops left, through the completion of my tour as ambassador to Ethiopia in 1999, there was a steady decrease of interest in Somalia. This all changed after September 11, 2001, when the U.S. began looking for terrorists under every bed and allegations began to surface about terrorists in Somalia. Then the U.S. decided it was time to find out what was going on in Somalia.

Q: Was there anyone to talk to in the Mogadishu area?

SHINN: There were people to talk to. Most of them were political faction leaders, sometimes called "warlords." These leaders were constantly aligning and realigning themselves. Some of these groups would gain power for a time, only to lose it to a newly aligned group. This situation was fluid throughout Somalia: in Kismayu, Bosasso, and Baidoa as well as Mogadishu. It was a very difficult environment to work in. From a security point of view, it was highly dangerous. There were kidnapings of foreigners, mainly for ransom. Kidnaping was a profitable business and the perpetrators didn't care why the foreigner was in Somalia. Those working on an aid project or trying to help Somalis were also fair game for ransom. One could not justify a physical presence by government officials inside the country. On the other hand, we went to extremes to ignore the country.

Q: During the 1993-96 period, were there adequate food stuffs in country?

SHINN: Yes. The U.S. intervention followed by the UN effort ended the famine. There continued to be a shortage of food and a need for the World Food Program to import food stuffs into Somalia and to distribute it throughout the country as equitably as possible. That remains the case today. There has been a widely varying need for food needs depending on the weather, crop production and civil strife. Fortunately, a famine has never returned. Somalia is a food deficit country and has been so for many decades. It may never become food self-sufficient. The situation demands that a modest international food relief effort continue. One of the goals of the international intervention was to insure that famine not return. The international community largely fulfilled that promise. It was not successful, however, in recreating a nation-state in Somalia. The Transitional

National Government (TNG) established in 2001 also failed in that effort.

Q: Was there much pressure from the UN or other countries involved to get something done?

SHINN: The UN stayed engaged to its credit. It was reluctant to take the leadership role; it knew that the U.S. had put so much into the effort to feed starving people and then to bring some order and stability to the country. The UN understood how strongly the U.S. felt about severing its ties with Somalia. Therefore, the UN did not apply any pressure on us. It did come to us first whenever it passed the hat to fund Somalia programs.

The only country that maintained a continuing interest in Somalia was Italy, probably for historical reasons. It would occasionally encourage us to get more engaged, but even that did not constitute heavy pressure. Italian interests in Somalia were far greater than ours, but not to the point of taking a leadership role resulting in major change in Somalia.

Q: Did the Somali community in the U.S. play any role?

SHINN: It played a role, but that community was and remains as divided as their kin in Somalia. They tended to neutralize each other in the U.S. One group would say one thing on one day only to be contradicted by another group the next day. Their impact on policy was minimal. Furthermore, the Somalis were not particularly well organized in the U.S. This marginalized them even more.

Q: What was the situation in Kenya in this period?

SHINN: The major issue with Kenya concerned their pace of democratization - whether it was fast enough and whether it was for real. There was also deep concern about corruption in Kenya. It was period when the attitude towards Kenya was fairly negative. There wasn't much interest in Washington in getting closer to President Daniel Arap Moi. He was never invited to the U.S. in this period. We sent no high level delegations to Nairobi. That changed dramatically after the bombing of our Nairobi embassy in 1998. The U.S. began tripping over itself to improve relations with Kenya and Moi eventually did visit the U.S.

Q: There was a substantial mission in Nairobi because U.S. agencies found Kenya a good place to put their regional representatives. Was there any phasing down of this presence in the period we are discussing?

SHINN: Not during my tour as director of AF/E. If anything, our mission was growing. The U.S. used Nairobi as a central location for assigning regional personnel. International agencies did the same thing. Even today, Nairobi is a center for regional activities.

Q: Was crime a problem in Nairobi?

SHINN: Crime was a problem then; it has been so for many years before and continues to be one today.

Q: What was going on in Tanzania?

SHINN: Tanzania was quiet during this period. It was beginning to make some progress in the economic arena as well as on the road to democracy. That path was rocky and progress was limited, but there was evidence of going in the right direction. To the best of my recollection, we had virtually no issues with Tanzania during this period.

Q: President Nyerere was the darling of the European "left". Were efforts being made to bring him back to economic reality?

SHINN: That process was well underway when I became director of AF/E. It accelerated during my tour. That was one of the positive developments in the African area with which I was dealing. When you have positive developments, office directors tend to spend less time on the issues and focus on the problems.

Q: What about Uganda?

SHINN: Uganda was another country that was doing quite well. The major issue was President Yoweri Museveni and where he was taking his country politically. He defined the political structure of Uganda as a "no-party democracy." He suggested that different points of view should be represented within his movement, not individual political parties. There were disagreements within the U.S. government concerning the implications of Museveni's vision and how democratic he really was. Some argued that it was reasonably democratic while others, including Ambassador Michael Southwick, disagreed. That was about the only significant issue that I recall.
There were some terrorist incidents in Uganda during this period or soon thereafter. They were of concern to us. Uganda was making progress on the economic front and was dealing effectively with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Museveni received a lot of credit for this. Since progress was being made, I did not spend a lot of time on those issues.

Q: What about Ethiopia?

SHINN: Ethiopia was a bigger challenge. The issue was whether the government, which had come into power in 1991, still had strong links to Marxist-Leninist philosophy or whether it had cast those theories aside and was beginning to be more free-market oriented and more democratically inclined. There were hints of both possibilities. A lot of reporting from the embassy focused on the governmental. It was up to Washington to decide whether the new regime was on the right path. The consensus in Washington was that Ethiopia was moving in the right direction. We welcomed the fact that the Ethiopian government had allowed Eritrea to declare independence. Eritrea ratified in 1993 a de facto situation dating back to 1991. That ended a long and nasty conflict for independence that had started in the mid-1960s. We were pleased with resolution of the Eritrean issue

and gave credit to Ethiopia for bringing it to a close.

On the democracy side, one of our main concerns was to find ways to allow the opposition to participate more effectively in the government. The opposition had become highly critical of the government, particularly the Oromos who constitute about 40% of the Ethiopian population. They are Cushitic peoples, ethnically different from the Semitic Amhara and Tigrayans. The Oromos were the major concern because their opposition party, the Oromo Liberation Front, broke ranks with the government in 1992 and went into exile. There was also an Amhara group that was in opposition. Many southerners also opposed the EPRDF government.

On one occasion, Congressman Harry Johnston, who was then chairman of the African sub-committee of the International Relations Committee in the House of Representatives, called a meeting of the opposition groups and the EPRDF government in Washington. I was asked to serve as the Department's representative. Johnston's goal was to try to determine whether it was possible to bring the government and the opposition together so that a coalition government could be formed. After almost a week of meetings, it became apparent that there was no agreement for pursuing this goal. The parties continued to operate in opposition, some inside Ethiopia and a few in exile. There were subsequent unsuccessful efforts to bring the Oromo Liberation Front into the government.

Q: Did the fall of the Soviet Union have any impact on our interest in Ethiopia?

SHINN: Marxist-Leninist thinking continued to exist after the EPRDF took power in 1991. Old ideas, discredited as they may be, are hard to discard. To this day, there are still some remnants of Marxist thinking in Ethiopian economic policies. Ethiopia has discarded most of its Marxist thinking, but every so often you notice something that harks back to this thinking. The Soviet Union had been the preeminent power in Ethiopia from the mid-1970s until the late 1980s. This came to a crashing halt with the breakup of the Soviet Union. The U.S. and the EU replaced the Soviet Union after 1991.

Q: During the period we are discussing, Ethiopia and Eritrea were getting along well?

SHINN: Yes, they were. There were no indications of any future frictions.

Q: Did we have any concerns about Eritrea?

SHINN: Not particularly. Perhaps we should have. I am not sure that we were paying enough attention to Eritrea's even greater reluctance to democratize. We gave Eritrea something of a pass because it was newly independent and everyone in Washington liked the Eritreans, who are personable and attractive people. They were immensely liked in Washington. The government developed a good relationship with our embassy in Asmara. They are hard working people. They seemed to be corruption free. President Isaias Afwerki lived a modest lifestyle. He used to drive his own car around Asmara and occasionally visit a coffee house or bar and chat with the customers. He had a style that

appealed to Americans. This style caused the U.S. to overlook the centralization of power around Isaias and a tiny group of close advisors. There was very little freedom for NGOs, civil society or any opposition. There was no private media and other attributes of a democracy were lacking. The U.S. chose to ignore that.

Q: Did Djibouti raise any problems in this time frame?

SHINN: There were no problems. It didn't draw much of our attention. Our embassy was minuscule. That all changed after September 11.

Q: And finally, the Sudan?

SHINN: Sudan was becoming a major issue. Increasingly, I found my time devoted to Sudan rather than Somalia. By 1996, I was spending more time on Sudan than on Somalia. There was an increasing desire in some parts of the administration to single Sudan out for criticism. There were plenty of reasons to do so, but those who advocated stronger measures against Sudan seem to do it as part of a personal vendetta rather than out of consideration of U.S. interests. With each passing month, there was a growing desire, urged on by a few members of Congress, certain American NGOs and a few American evangelical groups, to take action against Sudan. The pressure did not necessarily originate in the administration, but was foisted on it by various groups that had political clout. They asked the administration to pressure Sudan to bring the war in the south to a conclusion, to stop support for terrorists, to improve its human rights record and to take action against alleged state supported slavery. The list of grievances was long and there was an element to truth to all of them.

There were lots of reasons to be unhappy with Sudan, but in some quarters in Washington it became an obsession. As director of AF/E and having served in Khartoum, I was knowledgeable about Sudan. That allowed me, even as a relatively junior person in these councils on Sudan, to exert a little more influence than might have been the case. My goal was to try to keep a certain balance in our policy; I did not dispute that the Sudan was subject to severe criticism on many counts. But I saw no point in turning Sudan into an obsession that was not going to achieve any positive results. We did reach a number of decisions. For example, just before I became AF/E director, Sudan was put on the list of state sponsors of terrorism. I don't think one could really argue with that decision at the time it was made because Sudan was engaged in sponsoring terrorist groups. But once that step was taken, it removed any restraint on the anti-Sudan forces to all sorts of things. Some of the proposed steps were not intelligent. Some constituted what would be considered "regime change." There were also groups that wanted to divide Sudan into two independent countries.

Q: Who were some of the players in this debate?

SHINN: There weren't many. The principal ones were the African Bureau in the Department, the National Security Council, the Department of Defense to some extent,

the CIA and USAID to a lesser extent. Then there were several members of Congress who played a key role. Eventually the Black Caucus jumped on the slavery issue without fully understanding what was going on in Sudan. Some of the evangelical Christian groups were active behind the scenes. A number of NGOs tended to be pro-southern Sudan and anti-Khartoum. The pressures were coming especially from the NSC and a half a dozen Congressmen who had an interest in Sudan. Those Representatives usually sang from the same page: get tough with Khartoum. Since there were no significant off-setting views coming from Congress, the half dozen Representatives were able to apply considerable pressure.

The squeaky wheel was all pro-south and anti-Khartoum. There were no voices urging more balance in the U.S. position. It was left to a few people in the bureaucracy to support a more balanced policy, which included a continuing dialogue with the Sudanese government. This was the situation during my tour in AF/E although I could see the anti-Khartoum line becoming stronger and stronger. All you had to do is read Congressional testimony over this period and you can see the anti-Khartoum rhetoric getting stronger.

Q: Were there particular individuals who took the lead in these debates?

SHINN: I think everyone on the NSC staff who had anything to do with Africa was anti-Khartoum. That included Susan Rice, Tony Lake and other staff. I saw no interest on the NSC in any policy except "get tough on Khartoum." On the Hill, Congressman Wolfe was in the forefront of the anti-Sudan cabal. Congressman Richardson took a fairly negative view of Khartoum, although he eventually became a little more balanced. At one time, he was helpful in solving a problem we were having in the Sudan. There were Congressional staffers who played key roles. Ted Dagne, who is now with the Congressional Research Service, held a strong anti-Khartoum position and supported the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. In more recent years, Senator Brownback joined the hard-liners. There were enough to make the anti-Sudan lobby an influential one.

Q: You alluded to Congressman Richardson being helpful? What was that story?

SHINN: After I left AF/E, there was a hostage situation involving an American. He helped in the release of the individual. Because he had knowledge of the Sudan and had not been overly critical of the regime, he was able to be helpful.

During 1995-1996, Occidental Petroleum had a deep interest in Sudan. It was interested in picking up the oil exploitation rights that Chevron held years earlier. It was well known that Sudan had considerable crude oil reserves. Occidental bought Chevron's data; that became the basis for its interest in gaining exploration and exploitation rights. But the administration applied great pressure to Occidental to cease and desist after the U.S. put Sudan on the list of "state sponsors" of terrorism. Ultimately, Occidental, despite all of its influence, gave in and left the Sudan, leaving the oil fields to a small Canadian oil company that, together with the Chinese and Malaysian state oil companies, developed the original Chevron fields. There is no American involvement in the exploitation of the

Sudanese oil fields.

Q: You mentioned Susan Rice. Do you know what her background was?

SHINN: She had been at the NSC for several years. She had worked on terrorism and security issues and then moved to Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs. Prior to coming to the government, she worked for a large Canadian consulting firm for several years. She has a Ph.D. from Oxford. She is very bright and interested in African issues. When she became involved in Sudanese issues, she had a lot of catching up to do. To this day, I don't know why she formed such negative opinions about Sudan.

Q: Are there any other issues we should discuss that arose during your tour as office director for AF/E?

SHINN: We have covered the important ones.

Q: Did you feel that you had been away from the major African issues - e.g. Rwanda and Burundi, etc?

SHINN: Yes, except that Sudan did have a high priority on AF's agenda. George Moose had a policy of trying to select office directors who would take major responsibility for affairs in their areas. He delegated extensively, a technique that had not been used in the Bureau for a long time. He made every effort to select former ambassadors as office directors and treated them as such. I have never seen so much authority delegated to office directors. I thought the policy worked well, perhaps because I was one of the beneficiaries. But it was a different approach from anything the Department had done for a long time. Perhaps if you went back thirty or forty years, you might find a similar practice. Except for George's management style, I never experienced anything like it during my years in Washington. It was a refreshing change from the excessive layering that one normally finds in the Department.

Q: You finished your tour as AF/E director in 1996. What was your next assignment?

SHINN: I spent the spring of that year transitioning from East Africa to Ethiopia. I had initially been proposed for the position of ambassador to Zaire. But that was torpedoed by a senior official in the Department with whom I had a policy conflict. I mentioned that as office director under George Moose, I had more authority than other office directors outside AF and more than office directors had had under Moose's predecessors. During the internal battles concerning our policy towards Somalia and to a lesser extent Sudan, I managed to make some enemies. I am not known for being a wall-flower. In meetings with high officials, I would express my views, sometimes forcefully. My views were not necessarily held by some senior officials. Their memories are long; this posed a problem when George proposed me for Zaire. I was led to believe that there were not other serious candidates, but my nomination was vetoed by someone on the Seventh Floor.

As luck would have it, our ambassador in Ethiopia decided to leave a year before he was scheduled. That position came open unexpectedly. AF proposed me for Ethiopia. The person who opposed my assignment to Zaire apparently decided he had made his point and did not object to the Addis Ababa assignment. As a result, I came out ahead of the game. The Ethiopian assignment was a blessing in disguise, but at the time I had no way of knowing that. I was disappointed when Zaire fell through.

Q: What years were you in Ethiopia?

SHINN: From the end of June, 1996 to August, 1999.

Q: When you went to Addis Ababa in 1996, what did you see as the main issues that you would have to deal with?

SHINN: The major issue was the democratization of the Ethiopian political system and where the government was taking the country on this question. The future of the political opposition loomed large. Up to 1996, the opposition was muted. It was apparent that the government had to, and still has to, deal with the role of the opposition because there was a significant portion of the population that objects to some of the government's key policies. Our goal was to find ways to allow us to have better access to the opposition groups, on the one hand, and then to develop activities that could bridge the gap between the government and the opposition. That meant we had to convince the government to be more even handed during elections so that the opposition had a chance to contest in a fair election. We also were interested in promoting various democratic institutions, like a free press, that would allow the opposition to discuss its ideas and programs among the electorate. We hoped this would stimulate a real dialogue and discussion in the body politic. A free exchange of views did not exist in 1996. That was our initial focus.

After I had been in Ethiopia for a while, the HIV/AIDS issue became a major focus of my attention. I will discuss that in a moment. To continue on democratization issues, I decided from the day I arrived to visit every nook and cranny of Ethiopia, at least all those areas that one could reach. That was no mean feat in a country the size of Texas and California combined and with a difficult topography of mountains and desert. The transportation infrastructure of Ethiopia was rudimentary at best. Many of the roads are unpaved and constitute little more than tracks. Some travel was by air, but we did most of it on the ground. That provided the opportunity to stop in villages and hamlets en route. Air travel limits one to regional centers, missing very important aspects of Ethiopian life.

My program kept me on the road about one week out of each month during my three years in Ethiopia. I had a very good DCM, Martin Brennan, who subsequently became ambassador to Uganda and then to Zambia. (My philosophy on choosing DCMs is the same as that of Hume Horan. Every deputy I chose in AF/E, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia reached the rank of ambassador.) Martin's presence allowed me to be absent from the embassy, and I do mean absent, because once you left Addis Ababa you were essentially out of contact. We checked in periodically by radio but I might as well have been on

Mars. There wasn't much I could do about events in Addis once I left the city.

I considered the travel so important that I maintained this routine throughout my tour. I must admit that the rest of the diplomatic community began to shake its head. They didn't understand how one could spend so much time traveling, particularly in light of some of the arduous trips that I undertook by four wheel drive vehicle. After about eight months in country, I developed a pattern for these trips that became enormously successful because I reached Ethiopians from all walks of life who had never met an ambassador before. I usually took an Ethiopian employee with me who spoke both Tigrinya and Amharic to serve as translator when needed. My staff developed a program in advance for each town we visited for a half day or longer. The overnight stops involved a more complete program. Sometimes I would stay for two nights. That would allow me to spend a whole day meeting with government officials, NGO representatives, tribal elders (a very critical part of society), business persons, media representatives, etc. At the end of the day, I invited the different groups to dinner. That was fascinating because even in small towns there were people who had never met each other before because they came from positions where they did not interact with each other. Following lunch and dinner, I would invite the guests to ask any questions on their minds about the U.S., American policy in Ethiopia and the role of the embassy. My goal was to get our message out to people who normally never heard from us. I should amplify on the term "elders." They were the tribal leaders of the predominant ethnic group in the town; some were not that old. We found after a while that the media became a strong proponent of my travel program. Media representatives filed stories about my visit that were printed in Addis Ababa, noting especially the free flowing discussions in which I would engage. By the time I returned to the capital, virtually everyone in Addis knew where I had been. It was a hugely successful way to engage in dialogue with elements of Ethiopian society that had never had contact before with the American embassy. At the same time, it emphasized how the democratic process can function. This was a new concept for Ethiopians.

Q: You referred to our interest in pushing democracy in a foreign country. What business was it of ours to do that?

SHINN: I was not pushing democracy per se either in Addis or during my travels. I talked about any AID projects that we had undertaken in the area I was visiting in the last ten years. If Peace Corps volunteers were assigned near by, we invited them to the meetings and we discussed their programs. I brought boxes of books for distribution to local schools, both secondary and universities if they had them. I answered scores of questions. For example, I received questions from the business community about land policy. I couldn't speak for the Ethiopian government, but I expressed U.S. views on the issue. I emphasized that the U.S. government was always interested in encouraging more liberal policies on some of these matters. We did not always agree; sometimes there would be strong disagreements. That was of secondary importance; what was important to my audiences was that I had shown up and had been willing to discuss issues with them. No one from the diplomatic community had done this before. It was important for the elders to be invited to sit down with the American Ambassador in their village. These sessions

sometimes became memorable events, particularly in the smaller towns and villages that rarely received visits by anyone from the government. That left an indelible and positive impression.

One of the other issues I was pursuing in Addis was encouragement of the private press. I was rather outspoken about it. One of the challenges was that some of the private press in Addis was outrageous. We tried to stay away from what might be called the "yellow press," but there was a category in the middle that had elements of "yellow press" syndrome that we could not avoid because it was so important. To exclude it, would leave us with precious little to work with. I learned the hard way that being so vocal on the issue of freedom of the press created enemies in the government. The government saw the private press as essentially a band of brigands who were undermining the regime. We had a completely different view of the role of the press in society. (The government subsequently became more tolerant of the private press.)

My interaction with the private press led to a difficult relationship with the government. The combination of my travels, which the central government initially viewed as "spying," and the visit of Secretary Warren Christopher at the end of 1996 got my tour off to a poor start. The Secretary's visit did not go well. It began on a sour note. As Christopher left Washington for his first stop in Ethiopia, a professional organization of journalists issued in Washington a scathing attack on the Ethiopian government's handling of the free press. It was excessively critical, but some of the points were well taken. One member of Christopher's party, James Steinberg, picked up on this criticism and encouraged the Secretary to make a major issue of it. The Secretary's party seems to have decided to focus on this issue before arriving in Addis Ababa. Steinberg was disinterested in my views. The visit, as a result, moved away from what I thought was the goal of the visit - strengthening U.S.-Ethiopian relations and became instead a harangue of the government's handling of the free press. Since I was already under suspicion for having raised the free press issue before the Secretary's visit, the government concluded that Christopher's criticism had been instigated by me. After Christopher left, the Foreign Minister called me in for a good dressing down. The Prime Minister subsequently pointed out that the visit had gone so badly that the government seriously considered canceling Christopher's meeting with the Prime Minister. At the last minute, the Prime Minister decided that cancellation of the meeting was a mistake. The meeting was okay, but not particularly friendly. As a result of this combination of events, the U.S.-Ethiopian relationship reached the low point of my three years in the country.
When Prime Minister Meles complained about my frequent trips around Ethiopia and extensive meetings with Ethiopians I tried to explain that he totally misunderstood the purpose of my visits. They were designed to try to understand Ethiopia and to make contacts with all elements of society. That conversation was the low point of my relationship with Meles. I continued and even expanded my travels around the country, but I was more careful in my contact with certain elements of the private press. I stopped seeing that part of the press that was especially scurrilous. Some of these journalists turned on me even though I had been open with them. My efforts with the press not only lost me some trust with the government, but backfired in terms of my relations with

certain elements of the press. (During my farewell call in August 1999, Meles praised my willingness to travel around Ethiopia and learn about the country!)

Q: What were you seeing out in the country?

SHINN: I saw a lot of poverty and of hard working people, mainly peasant farmers, who were trying to make the best of a difficult situation. I could not help but notice the absence of significant economic development efforts. Women did much of the work while the men tended to be more passive.

I did see progress in certain areas, such as terracing of land that was accomplished in a rudimentary but effective fashion. The farmers built small stone ridges that followed the contour of the land. This backed up small amounts of water as it rolled off the hills. I saw significant airport development; in fact, Ethiopian made enormous strides in improving airports and airfields around the country. I saw a fair amount of road improvement. But the overwhelming sense one gets is one of poverty. Ethiopia is an agricultural society; its population is just fighting to survive. Under those circumstances, it is not surprising that there was little interest in politics or the issues that were being debated in the capital.

Q: Were the ethnic divides beginning to change with the advent of communications?

SHINN: Interestingly, the ethnic divisions were more noticeable in Addis Ababa because all the groups were represented in the capital and vying for political and economic power. Representatives would come to the embassy to vent their concerns. There were some indications of these splits in the countryside. The Oromo people were especially outspoken about the mistreatment they believed the government inflicted upon them. There were similar complaints in southern Ethiopia. Marginal areas like Gambella and Benishangul along the Sudan border and regions in the southeast inhabited by Afar and Somalis were also the source of frequent complaints. The complaining concerned lack of resources more than ethnic differences. These groups believed they were not receiving their fair share of the financial pie. These perceptions were frequently inaccurate because the government divided the national budget more or less based on population numbers. Nevertheless, in light of the huge needs, whatever development funds were sent didn't make much of a dent. The marginal regions were just too far behind from the beginning. When these people traveled to Addis, they saw a living standard far above their own and undoubtedly felt short-changed. I heard a lot of complaints as I traveled around, including negative comments about the way opposition groups were treated, e.g. arrests of Oromos and southerners. There was no shortage of concerns in the countryside and I heard most of them.

Q: Did you notice any hope for the future?

SHINN: There were reasons for hope, but the obstacles are enormous. The population was growing at about 3% annually. It reached 70 million in 2004 and is the third highest in Africa after Nigeria and Egypt. With such a high growth rate, limited natural resources,

outdated agricultural techniques that in some cases have not progressed since the stone age, Ethiopia confronts a huge challenge. They have made progress in the use of fertilizer although that may come back to haunt them in the future. At the moment, agricultural production is increasing. They are also making good use of hybrid seed, which appears to have had positive impacts. But farming techniques in many places remain rudimentary, poking the ground with a sharp stick and then spreading some seeds. It is hard to imagine that Ethiopia will become agriculturally self-sufficient in the foreseeable future. That is a serious problem because as long as Ethiopia depends on outside resources to feed its people it is hard for it to progress, especially with such a high population growth.

There has been some progress in mining, especially gold. The overall impact on the economy is minor. There are other developments that will have a negative impact on the country. For example, the exportation of qat, a narcotic, has become the second largest foreign exchange earner for the country. It is legal in Africa, but not in the U.S. It is a product that doesn't use much land and offers the farmer a good profit. That may be good for Ethiopia's economy, but not for consumers in Yemen, Somalia and Djibouti. It is now being used increasingly by Ethiopians. Consumption in Ethiopia will have a negative impact on society as well as that of its neighbors.

Q: Let's go on to the HIV issue. You wanted to speak about it.

SHINN: It is an interesting story and one in which I continue to be involved by working with an NGO in Ethiopia. This also gets me back from time to time. HIV is an issue that I tried to convince the Ethiopian government to pursue soon after my arrival in Addis. My interest stemmed from some outstanding briefings I had received in Washington from USAID personnel. They made a very effective case for getting a handle on the epidemic in Ethiopia and other African countries. It was an issue that the U.S. needed to focus on and one in which ambassadors might play a role by urging change in local altitudes towards the disease. I made a number of efforts during my first year as ambassador to engage the government, which was barely interested in the issue and may have been hoping that it would just go away. A few NGOs were working on the problem, but not the government. We brought several experts from Washington who put on a "dog and pony" show at the residence for an audience of ministerial level government officials in the health field. We made our case to the government and then I beat the bushes around town trying to drum up interest. But I got nowhere.

At one point, I was told by a senior official that malaria was the number one health problem in Ethiopia. They had so many medical problems. They feared that dealing with HIV would distract the government from other serious health issues. At that stage, I let up for a while because it was clear my pleas were falling on deaf ears. Behind the scenes, I did urge the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Abuna Paulos, and President Negasso Gidada to take a personal interest in HIV/AIDS. The President is not the most important political figure in the country; he is more alike a German president. An Ethiopian President has more available time; it struck me that serving as the HIV/AIDS czar might be a constructive role for him to play. Initially, these efforts didn't go very far.

I planted a seed, however, which took root later, to my surprise. By the time I left in 1999, both the Patriarch and the President had taken on the issue and become outspoken leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Both remain fully engaged today, although there has been a change of presidents.

By the time my tour was winding down in Ethiopia, I had become discouraged by the lack of progress on the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. It had transformed what we were trying to do in Ethiopia. Consequently, I returned to the HIV issue in a major way. USAID fully supported this effort. It provided grants for HIV/AIDS projects to a number of organizations, including the major church groups, e.g. the Supreme Islamic Council, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and Protestant churches. These religious organizations mounted information programs focused on explaining the nature of the HIV epidemic. We were also in contact with the labor unions on HIV/AIDS funding. By the middle of 1996, our HIV/AIDS assistance programs were becoming a major part of the U.S. assistance effort in Ethiopia.

Q: We have heard of course of the major epidemics in such places as South Africa. How was the disease affecting Ethiopia?

SHINN: It was beginning to have an extremely detrimental impact on the economy and on the social fabric of the country. No one knows for sure the HIV prevalence rate. The government's estimate is about seven percent of all adults. Others place the rate somewhat higher. In terms of total numbers, Ethiopia is the third most impacted country in the world after India and South Africa. It has already reached the pandemic stage. It is effectively out of control. Only a Herculean effort will get HIV under control at this stage. Anything less than that, will allow the disease to continue to spread, infecting an ever increasing population. Everyone in Ethiopia has a relative or friend who has already died from AIDS or is suspected to have died from the disease. Certain industries are severely impacted; they have to hire new employees to replace those who died.

The disease spreads in Ethiopia in the traditional way. The most impacted areas are the urban centers and along the major transportation routes, especially the truck routes. The peasants come to town for a week-end and following sexual encounters become infected. Then they take the disease back to the rural areas where they infect the spouse. It is clearly out of control.

Q: You mentioned the Ethiopian-Eritrean relationship. Would you expand a little on this?

SHINN: For most of my tour, relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea were excellent. In 1996, the Eritrean ambassador to Ethiopia, Haile Menkerios, who defected from his government after serving as Eritrea's permanent representative at the UN, had the best access to the government of any ambassador in Addis. He had strong personal ties with senior members of the Ethiopian government. I only overlapped with him for about a year. Upon his departure, he was the most feted diplomat to leave Ethiopia. This close relationship masked a festering problem which was unbeknown to us. There were a few

indications of building tension, but it broke out publicly in May 1998 when Eritrean troops occupied a small piece of border territory known as Badme in Tigray Region that was administered by Ethiopia.

One indication of potential trouble was the issuance of the nakfa currency by Eritrea. It replaced the Ethiopian birr, which had been in use in Eritrea since independence. That decision led to some tension between the two countries. I think the Eritreans had some misconceptions about the consequences of this action. They thought they could just trade the Ethiopian birr they were holding for hard currency once their new nakfa had been issued. That was never going to happen. Ethiopia issued a new version of the birr to ensure that the old birr would no longer be valid in the country.

There was a highly inefficient oil refinery in Assab that provided much of the petroleum used in Ethiopia. In the period prior to May 1998, Ethiopia realized that it was paying more for petroleum from Assab than it would have to pay on the spot market. Ethiopia canceled the contract; the Eritrean refinery went bust.

Other new problems concerning trade relations developed between the two countries. They added to the tension. There was a border problem in 1997 that appeared at the time to be of minor consequence. With the benefit of hindsight, this incident was considered much more significant in Eritrea. Even though minor, neither side handled this problem brilliantly. All of these relatively minor issues added to the anger that surfaced in May 1998. There were also some personal differences between the leaders of the two countries that we did not fully appreciate. They harbored some bad feelings that dated back to the rebellion against the Derg regime. Meles and Isaias also had different visions for the future of their respective countries. Meles envisioned a decentralized state while Isaias was creating a highly centralized state. There was a sense among Tigrayans in Ethiopia that the Eritreans saw them as under-educated peasant farmers who might be useful as maids and common laborers in Eritrea, but not much more. The Tigrayans felt that the Eritreans considered themselves as superior and better educated. This view apparently was widely held, although we didn't really appreciate its impact at the time.

When you add these issues to other perceived slights, it turned a bed of smoldering embers into a wild fire. There was on May 6, 1998, a very minor border altercation, an incident that may well have been the fault of Ethiopia although we are not certain what happened. It involved a small number of Ethiopians and Eritreans near Badme. A team from Eritrea was in Addis Ababa trying to resolve the problem between May 6 and May 12. The Eritrean members without notice left Addis Ababa and returned to Asmara before May 12. On that day, a large Eritrean military unit entered the Badme area, which Ethiopia had administered for decades. It was not certain which country owned the territory based on colonial treaties and maps. The rest is history; from that date on, there was a major conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. From the beginning, Ethiopia declared the conflict would not end until Eritrea retreated back across the border. If the Eritreans were willing to do that, then the Ethiopians were willing to discuss border demarcation or any other issue that the Eritreans might wish to put on the table. That did not happen; in

fact, Eritrea subsequently occupied additional border areas that had been administered by Ethiopia. This resulted in severe fighting.

There was an effort by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Susan Rice, and her team to resolve the issue soon after the May 12 incident. It was a sincere and serious effort, but it failed. The team, in cooperation with senior Rwandan officials, made a series of recommendations that were accepted by Ethiopia, but rejected by Eritrea. The U.S. effort came to a halt. The issue then went to the Organization for African Unity. Ethiopia achieved a military victory in June, 2000 and the two sides signed a peace agreement.

Q: What did you observe as being the effect of this war on Ethiopia?

SHINN: It was the largest conventional war in the history of sub-Sahara Africa. The two countries fought over principles and tiny pieces of territory. In the early weeks of the conflict, I felt that Eritrea had perpetrated the problem. Washington decided, however, to take a balanced view and treated Eritrea and Ethiopia in an even handed manner. Washington liked both countries and thought that Meles and Isaias represented the best of Africa. Washington decided that taking sides was not useful in the long run. Susan Rice's efforts arguably favored Ethiopia; in any event, Isaias came to the conclusion that the U.S. initially had taken the Ethiopian side. I don't think that was an accurate analysis, but it seems to be the conclusion that Eritrea reached. That was the situation in the first few weeks. The U.S. commitment to an even-handed policy, irrespective of who started the conflict, guided American policy throughout the conflict. That was not in my view a useful approach. We were too reluctant to criticize either side whenever one or the other was responsible for exacerbating the problem. Both sides made serious mistakes. For example, the Ethiopians bombed the airport in Asmara, followed by the Eritrean bombing of a school in Makele, the capital in Tigray region. Ethiopia expelled Eritreans from Ethiopia in a harsh way. Eritrea forced Ethiopians working in Assab to return to Ethiopia. It was not orchestrated like the Ethiopian expulsion program, but the net effect was the same. The U.S. criticized Ethiopia's expulsion of Eritreans, but it never held anybody accountable.

Q: Who was our ambassador in Asmara?

SHINN: Bill Clarke.

Q: Prior to May 6, were you in close contact with him?

SHINN: We didn't have much personal contact. I had not visited Asmara and he had not visited Addis Ababa. He had not been in Eritrea too long. Bob Houdek had preceded him and there was a *charge d'affaires* for a while. Bill was relatively new when the conflict broke out. There was not much opportunity for consultation prior to the problem. On the other hand, we had in Addis people who had regional responsibilities; they visited Eritrea regularly. They knew what was going on there and would periodically brief me upon their return to Ethiopia.

Q: What did you think of Susan Rice's regime?

SHINN: Susan took an interest in the Horn of Africa, primarily because she had such an interest in Sudan. As I suggested earlier, she and I did not see eye to eye on Sudan. But as for the rest of the Horn, I thought her views were constructive. Her leadership of the team that dealt with the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict was strong and positive. The fact that the effort failed was not her fault. It was the responsibility of the leadership in both countries. They were not willing to make sufficient compromises to resolve the outstanding issues. Both leaders were so stuck on their "principles" and so hard headed that I don't think anyone could have found a peaceful solution. Had the U.S. sided at the beginning with Ethiopia on the grounds that Eritrea initiated the conflict, it might have ended the problem. But I am not certain this would have worked; Isaias Afwerki might have refused to budge regardless of the consequences.

Q: What was the popular sentiment in Ethiopia about the war?

SHINN: They didn't like the idea of a war. They didn't like sending their sons off to fight. The war was not particularly popular. On the other hand, they were angry at Eritrea. There were no tears in Ethiopia when Eritrea lost the war. My guess is that the Eritreans were assuming serious tensions would arise among the ethnic groups in Ethiopia, leading to divisions and internal conflict. That did not happen; the other ethnic groups, although not enthusiastic, did send their sons to fight against Eritrea. Many died. In fact, the Eritrean invasion strengthened the sense of nationalism in Ethiopia and temporarily diminished divisions among the various ethnic groups. This also blunted opposition criticism of the government for a period of time; in fact, the opposition supported the government on the war against Eritrea.

Q: Rice's team, I gather, shuffled back and forth between Asmara and Addis Ababa? How were its contacts with the Ethiopians?

SHINN: It got along very well with the leadership; that was not an issue. The team was fairly over-bearing; I had to be assertive in dealing with it. I think Susan had enough respect for our mission that she welcomed our views and she did solicit our advice. I assume she did the same thing in Asmara. She was very intense.

Q: Who was on her team?

SHINN: I think it consisted of six officials. Gayle Smith was one; she is an expert on the Horn of Africa. She was at the USAID mission in Addis Ababa prior to going to the NSC, where she replaced Susan. Bob Houdek, another expert on the region who had served in both Addis Ababa and Asmara, was a member. He is now the National Intelligence Officer for Africa at the CIA. There were several officers from DoD on the team. They were experts on specialized military issues. It was a team of area and functional experts. It was a good team.

Q: Were there any efforts made by outside parties to resolve the Eritrean-Ethiopian dispute?

SHINN: There was a Rwandan member of Rice's team. In fact, it was a joint U.S.-Rwanda effort. Initially, there were no other foreign efforts because everyone was happy to let the United States try first. When our effort failed after several weeks, all kinds of actors seemed eager to get involved. There were various African leaders who took an interest. The Italians got involved. The OAU officially assumed responsibility. It got involved, although at a snail's pace. Later, we re-engaged when Tony Lake began to make periodic visits to the area. By the end of 1998, when no one seemed to be making much progress, Tony Lake became the President's special envoy for the Horn. In a sense, he picked up where Susan and her team left off. By this time, there were a multitude of actors, including the UN.

Q: How were things when you left in 1999?

SHINN: As far as the war was concerned, the situation was pretty dismal. There was nothing on the horizon which suggested there would be a solution. There had been a number of false starts; once or twice we thought real progress had been achieved. But it never happened. I must say that I would have preferred to leave Ethiopia in a more optimistic atmosphere. My personal relationship with the government was fine; that was not an issue. But to leave a country in an atmosphere that was so negative is not the way an ambassador wants to depart. There was a lot of unhappiness in the government and among Ethiopians with U.S. policy. By this time, we had supported some UN resolutions that were critical of Ethiopia and sometimes Eritrea. The UN had taken some harsh steps that the Ethiopians believed we had engineered, although we had little to do with initiating most of them. By the time I left, Ethiopia was quite critical of the U.S.

Q: What did we criticize?

SHINN: We were very critical of the Eritrean expulsion and said so publicly. We also condemned the Ethiopian bombing of Asmara. Eventually we also criticized the Eritrean bombing of Makele. The critical UN resolutions that we backed were more general, e.g. calling for a cessation of all arms shipments to the warring countries. That sounded like a reasonable approach, but the Ethiopians were super-sensitive. They argued that Eritrea had a sea coast which made it easy to import arms secretly while Ethiopia could only receive shipments by air. Ethiopia viewed the embargo as more damaging to it.

Each side found the slightest excuse to be critical of us. In part, this was a tactic; it was their *modus operandi*. They figured that the more they criticized, the more responsive we would be to their demands. Both sides also criticized other countries; we were not the sole target, but we probably took more blame than our share.

Q: How was the diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa?

SHINN: It was a congenial group. We saw our diplomatic colleagues frequently. There was a very large African diplomatic corps because the Organization of African Unity is headquartered in Addis. Nearly every African country had an embassy. There was a fairly large European diplomatic presence. The representatives of the major donor countries held regular meetings. It was a nice diplomatic corps; I enjoyed their company.

Q: When you left Addis in 1999, where did you go?

SHINN: I went to UCLA as a "Diplomat in Residence." That lasted nine months. I knew this was going to be my last Foreign Service assignment because I was reaching the minister-counselor tick. The chances of being promoted to career minister were not high. I was hoping that I could use this year at UCLA as a transition into the academic world as a second career. I had no intention of staying in the Los Angeles area, but hoped to find employment somewhere else in the U.S. It was a very nice nine months. I did a fair amount of teaching as well as recruiting for the Foreign Service which was the objective of the "Diplomat in Residence" program.

I worked in that part of the UCLA graduate school that deals with social and international policy issues. I was treated as a regular member of the faculty. I attended faculty meetings and had a lot of interaction with students. My wife and I also became well acquainted with Southern California.

Q: How were the students?

SHINN: The students were good; UCLA is a very competitive university. There were some super bright students but also a few who had no business being there. They were interested in the material and, for the most part, worked hard. I left UCLA in June 2000 and returned to Washington for the retirement course. My career ended in September. We then traveled in October to New Zealand and Australia to visit our younger son. We decided to settle in the Washington, DC area. I started teaching at GWU in January 2001.

Q: Thank you very much for having given us all this time. You had an interesting story to tell.

End of interview