

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

J. MICHAEL SPRINGMANN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is an interview with J. Michael Springmann. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Mike and I are old friends, and he's been doing interviews for us.

Mike, could we start out by getting a background, where you come from, about your family, and your early years, and education.

SPRINGMANN: Well, I'm one of the few people actually born in D.C., as was my father and grandfather. His father moved down to D.C. from Philadelphia, and I guess it 's the great-great grandfather, Johann Martin Springmann, who immigrated from Baden-Wurttemberg, from a little town called Grunthal, just outside of Freudenstadt. And I grew up in D.C., went to local schools, went to Gonzaga High School, went to Georgetown's Foreign Service School.

Q: What was your father doing?

SPRINGMANN: He worked as a masonry mechanic in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Q: Did you have any feel for the foreign affairs establishment of the U.S. Government while you were here in Washington?

SPRINGMANN: Not really, other than to go past the government office buildings. I got interested in foreign affairs in high school by reading a "bad" book denounced by the State Department for exposing awkward truths about a malfunctioning foreign affairs establishment, The Ugly American.

Q: That was an extremely influential book. It made everybody think about...it wasn't a very good book, I agree with you. But that being said, it did sort of cause everybody to

think, and had reverberations within the Foreign Service community. So when you got out of Gonzaga, why did you go to Georgetown?

SPRINGMANN: It had about the only undergraduate major in foreign affairs at that time. I think its one of the few still in the entire country, and I had an interest in going into State Department. In fact, I took the Foreign Service exam my senior year at Georgetown.

Q: This was when?

SPRINGMANN: This was between '63 and '67, the exam being in the Spring of 1967. The oral interview, contrary to what was publicly given out, was like the court-martial of Billy Mitchell, whatever I said was challenged. I think if I had said my name, they wouldn't have accepted it.

Q: I've been on both sides. I've actually given the exam and the waxes and wanes of how they conduct them. So you graduated in 1967?

SPRINGMANN: Right, and found I couldn't get a job, despite being draft exempt due to a foot problem. I was hearing, well we want somebody with either experience or a graduate degree. And I figured if I couldn't get a job, I couldn't get experience, so I went and got a master's degree in international politics at Catholic University.

Q: This was around what?

SPRINGMANN: I started the international affairs program in '68 in the summer, after taking a couple of courses more at Georgetown to convince people that, oh yes, I could be a good student if I wanted to. And I went to Catholic, and finished all my course work. Then I figured I would be smart and do the thesis in the evening. After all, the thesis was just a big term paper and I worked on term papers in stages. So I got a job at the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration in '69 (as the result of Congressman Larry Hogan's influence). I spent a lot of evenings and weekends wrestling with the thesis for a couple more years before I got the damn thing done and got my degree in '72.

Q: Now in the Department of Commerce. You went into the Department of Commerce, what moved you toward the Department of Commerce?

SPRINGMANN: They had an International Affairs Department, then it was the Office of International Regional Economics, that divided the world up much like the State Department did into South Asia, Europe, etc., and then had desks that dealt with the economic and financial aspects of each country. The idea was that you were supposed to be able to brief businessmen on what was happening in the country you were working on, despite never having been there.

Q: Where did you go?

SPRINGMANN: I ended up in the Far East Division. I actually went to my Congressman for help because I'd keep knocking on doors, and nobody wanted to hire me even with a master's degree. So finally he called in a few chips from somewhere apparently, and said, "Why don't you take a look at my constituent?" And they put me on the payroll.

Q: How could you have a Congressman if you were in Washington?

SPRINGMANN: Oh, by this time we'd moved into Maryland, Prince George's County.

Q: So you were in there when? This would be when, '69?

SPRINGMANN: '69, right.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the Department of Commerce. How did you see the Department of Commerce at that time?

SPRINGMANN: It was dreadful.

Q: What was the problem?

SPRINGMANN: Basically bad management. The people would be hired out of school, or perhaps after their first or second job. They were bright, intelligent, energetic, and were never permitted to work to the limit of their abilities. There were other people who had been there a longer time who were really good, and had experience on top of all these other qualities, and who were never permitted to advance. The people who unfortunately made their way up the ladder were, as we all saw it, totally incompetent. They spent all their time ass kissing, and trying to block people from getting something done because it would make them (the managers) look bad. They were totally incompetent for the most part. And most capable people started trying to get out after their first year.

Q: I had the impression that you had both time servers in the Department of Commerce, this is bias, but this is my impression. Time servers sort of as your main cadre, and this was kind of a dumping ground for political appointees at the top more than most other places, or not?

SPRINGMANN: It wasn't heavily politicized when I first started. It was basically a bureaucratic backwater, that believed in the fang and claw school of personnel management. One woman who had been in personnel for years told me that Commerce had not yet been toilet trained. You also had a lot of failed Foreign Service officers, people who had been selected out. And the people I saw there, who had been selected out, looked to me like they were out for a good reason. The guy I worked directly for would never tell me what the hell was going on in the office. I had to ask other people, and read cable traffic, and things like this. (My predecessor I learned had had the same problem.)

Q: Okay, you're in Commerce dealing with Far Eastern Affairs. You're brand new on the block, you hadn't served in the Far East, you're not bringing anything in there. How did you bring yourself up to speed? What were you doing, and how did you operate in that sense?

SPRINGMANN: There was no formal training program, it was sort of on the job training. The first few months I was there they had not given me a security clearance, and I couldn't do anything at all in the office. I couldn't read anything. So I spent the time studying for my comprehensive exams for the master's degree. I kept trying to do more, I kept trying to learn more, and kept getting slapped down for it. And then when I said, "Fine, how about giving me a promotion? I've been here a while." They said, "No, you haven't learned the job yet." At that point I said these people are crazy, I'd better get out and found I couldn't. Nixon at that time had clamped down on the free and easy movement of people amongst various government agencies.

Q: How did this progress? I mean you got your clearance, and I take it then you were able to read.

SPRINGMANN: Basically economic and political reporting, mostly economic. You saw very few political cables. Things like the Economic Trends Report prepared by almost every embassy and consulate around the world. Spot reporting on particular aspects of changes in the interest rate, or whatever. Then I would try to do some outside reading on magazine articles about my part of the world.

Q: Would you read things equivalent to Fortune, Business Week, Economist?

SPRINGMANN: Oh, the Economist, the Far Eastern Economic Review, and occasionally I'd sneak up to the library when I had nothing else to do and read Fortune, and Business, and things like that.

Q: So you're accumulating this knowledge, what was Commerce doing with it? Because this is the time before Commerce had taken over the commercial service.

SPRINGMANN: Not a whole lot was done with it because nobody really had enough to talk knowledgeably to businessmen who would come in from time to time and say, "Tell me about the state of play in Hong Kong, or Taiwan," or whatever. They never sent anybody overseas. Commerce then and now still regards an overseas assignment as some kind of a plum that you get for good behavior and being in good order with higher management. It wasn't seen as they do in other agencies of sending people overseas to educate them about what they are supposed to be doing. Besides, Commerce then and now didn't (and doesn't) make commercial or economic policy. It's more of a holding company, made up of totally disparate organizations such as the Bureau of Standards, the Patent Office, and the Coast and Geodetic Survey.

Q: This must have been a terrible life. I mean, you could read as much as you want but a feel for how business is done in Hong Kong can't be put into written words. You've got to be there. Was there any contact with the Foreign Service? I'm talking about the State Department Foreign Service.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, occasionally you would have guys come over for orientation. Occasionally you would go to meetings at State, and then on occasion they would have people like Nick Heflin, who was a long time economic officer, come for an assignment at the Commerce Department for a year or two.

Q: How long did you stay in this Far Eastern...

SPRINGMANN: I was there for a couple of years until they had a major reorganization in Commerce and abolished the organization.

Q: Was there any movement within there? I mean as you gained experience, did this seem to count for anything?

SPRINGMANN: No.

Q: You get the feeling from this that this sounds almost ___ship.

SPRINGMANN: That was my first impression. I thought, Jesus, I've wandered into a Kafka novel. And then about this time I read Ken Kassey's book, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and decided this was an apt description of the Commerce Department, which I defined as an asylum run by the inmates.

Q: Were there other people who were seeing it this way?

SPRINGMANN: Oh, yes, everybody who came in was absolutely furious. There was a management intern who almost got himself fired because he objected to the penny ante leadership and absurd dictatorial behavior by these long serving characters who were at the head of the division.

Q: I take it there was no particular change?

SPRINGMANN: No, absolutely none.

Q: Were there inspections, or anything like this?

SPRINGMANN: Absolutely none.

Q: Then what happened?

SPRINGMANN: Then there was the evil reign of the wicked Ted Krause. He was a former Foreign Service officer, who ended up in the Commerce Department and apparently was extremely good at bureaucratic in-fighting. I never had any dealings with him. He was absolutely hated and feared by everybody he came in contact with. He had taken a fledgling trade promotion organization, and built it up, and used it in some fashion which nobody ever knew how he managed it, to launch a take-over bid for the rest of what became the International Trade Administration. He created this Office of International Marketing which had under it the old regional economics people plus his trade promotion people. The new office held trade shows at existing exhibition centers which the government leased in Milan, Frankfurt, and other cities and also took space in established trade fairs such as Leipzig or Brno. The mood was basically, we're going to have trade promotions no matter what the justification, no matter that the market research says you can't have a promotion because nobody will go to it. And no matter that business says, look, you've had ten computer shows in six months, we can't afford going to another show, we don't want to go to another show. And they had a terrible time filling shows. They were going to keep the trade centers open in Milan and other places no matter what. This new organization was essentially filled with a bunch of failed salesmen whose job was to persuade companies to enter trade shows that were not good for their firms. It was as bad as the previous organization but perhaps for different reasons.

Q: Were you involved in this? Or were you watching this on the side?

SPRINGMANN: I was watching it happen, and fortunately they had an opening in something called the Planning and Scheduling Staff. It tried to manage, monitor, and control competing and conflicting trade promotions so that you didn't have six computer shows in two months, that kind of thing. It was a sort of traffic cop. And just about the time they had the reorganization I was asked if I wanted this thing, you can get a promotion out of it. So I said, yes, why not?

Q: I would think by telling people they couldn't do things, this would run counter to every bureaucratic principle.

SPRINGMANN: Oh, yes, they went crazy, they hated us, and went bananas. We kept saying, we're sorry, we have this job to do, we were created by the director of the organization. If you want to complain about it, talk to him, he told us what to do.

Q: How did it work?

SPRINGMANN: It was basically constant battles but they would eventually get their own way because as they said, we have to keep the Milan (or the London or the Frankfurt) trade center open.

Q: What was the justification for wanting to keep these trade centers open?

SPRINGMANN: Because it was good for the program. If you started closing trade centers, you couldn't justify your existence.

Q: I take it then the main problem...the way the system worked was, you have a trade center, but essentially you have to attract American firms to go in there, pay their money to set up exhibits. And that was obviously the major problem, wasn't it?

SPRINGMANN: Yes.

Q: Were you getting, either peripherally, or directly, any feel for how American business...I think you alluded to this before, but how they felt about a lot of these trade centers?

SPRINGMANN: They didn't like it. They liked the idea of getting exposure, but they didn't like paying money because not only did you have fees for the trade center, which increased with each successive year. You had to pay to ship the stuff over, then you had to pull guys off the jobs in the States and send them over, and keep them in the trade center for a couple of months before the show, and after the show, and during the show to get things set up, to follow up on leads generated, that sort of thing. They increasingly balked at this idea.

Q: Were there any trade centers that, again from your view and what you were getting from people, that were particularly useful, and ones that were duds?

SPRINGMANN: It's a toss up because the ones in Europe where people did most of their business were in a region where firms needed the least amount of help. Europe wasn't terra incognita. Milan's center got a special rate from the Italian fair authorities, so in a sense it was cost effective. It was easier a lot of times to get people there. But in the Far East presumably where you would need more help in getting into the market, they had fewer centers, and there were always discussions about how peripheral these things were.

Q: In other words we're talking about the early '70s period more or less?

SPRINGMANN: Yes.

Q: That in the Far East there wasn't really much effort one way or the other.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, I think you can say that. We had a trade center in Tokyo and later they opened one in Singapore.

Q: I don't want to push that.

SPRINGMANN: They had a Tokyo trade center, and they talked about one in Singapore. And also about this time the Office of Management and Budget was looking into the organization and saying, what are you guys doing, how can you justify your budget, and

conducted a really in-depth investigation. I, in fact, had talked to them a couple of times at one point. They picked my brains on what the hell was going on. I went over looking for a job, and they said, we don't have any jobs but tell us about what's going on in OIM. They wanted major changes, which was resisted, in fact OMB was trying to reorganize the Office of International Marketing out of existence. And they eventually were forced to back down, OMB was. But they effected major changes like closing some of the trade centers, and pressing for more participation in existing trade fairs, which kind of cut back Krause's empire substantially. He eventually retired not long after that.

Q: So you were in this traffic cop job. How long did that last?

SPRINGMANN: A couple of years, I think. I moved to positions dealing with actually marketing trade shows to U.S. business. Then I got to go to Germany in the State-Commerce exchange program.

Q: What was the State-Commerce exchange program?

SPRINGMANN: It's a program that I understand still exists. It fed on Commerce's inability to send people overseas. At one time, I was told, they had what they called the three-legged stool where you would work a while in Washington. You would go overseas for a couple of years, you'd come back to the States, and you'd spend some time in one of Commerce's field offices somewhere in the country. So you got to see the whole gamut of dealing with business, promoting and protecting American interests abroad. And how you interpreted your knowledge abroad to people who were from Iowa and didn't know the first thing about government assistance to businessmen.

Q: What was the reaction when they started this program within Commerce?

SPRINGMANN: A lot of people liked it, and of course, you were rewarded with a slot in this if they liked you. It was a provision for Commerce people to go overseas and learn the job abroad. And it was also a chance for State Department people who couldn't find a position in the Department that they wanted, and they had to have, for whatever reason, a Washington assignment. So you'd get economic or commercial officers put up in the Commerce Department. It was basically 30-35 positions from both sides.

Q: Looking at the Foreign Service officers that came to Commerce...here they are caught in...was it still a bureaucratic jungle, or not?

SPRINGMANN: At Commerce?

Q: At Commerce by this time.

SPRINGMANN: It was still a jungle, and from what I hear from my friends, it still is after 10-15 years.

Q: How did the Foreign Service work, I mean the Foreign Service officers coming back?

SPRINGMANN: They were generally plugged into management positions. Like Nick Heflin for a time had been director of one section dealing with Southern Europe because he had spent some time in Italy. Other officers were given managerial slots, either as division directors or section chiefs. But they were generally not in the positions that corresponding to their background.

Q: So they were somewhat protected from getting...did they add anything? I'm talking about experience.

SPRINGMANN: I don't think so. They generally weren't there that long. I was surprised because in a year or so they'd be gone without having any real effect. I never got the statement directly from them but I heard from other people who dealt with them, admittedly second or third hand knowledge, that they hated Commerce, and the people who worked at Commerce. The only FSO I ran into directly when I was working on the Planning and Scheduling Staff, was a young economics officer from State who was about my age, and she was an absolute bitch. If you said anything to her about, particularly what she couldn't do because it's against regulations, she would go through the roof.

Q: Then you went to Stuttgart?

SPRINGMANN: I went to Stuttgart.

Q: And you were there from '77 to '80.

SPRINGMANN: Right. I'd known Betty Neuhart who was in personnel at that time in the Office of International Marketing, and she got me the assignment. It was originally a two year assignment, and I asked for a third year extension because, as it turned out, everybody was leaving, including me, and they would have nobody for continuity in the section.

Q: When you went out there did you have any training?

SPRINGMANN: Absolutely none.

Q: So you arrived in Stuttgart in '77. What was your job?

SPRINGMANN: I was one of three economic/commercial officers in the section.

Q: This is the Consulate General.

SPRINGMANN: Right. They originally had one officer, and then they moved it up to two...I think due to Roy Carlson's activities, and with Frank Schmelzer's help, they got a

third position in there. It was basically commercial and economic work, although the emphasis from the embassy was commercial work at the expense of economic reporting.

Q: Who was Consul General at that time?

SPRINGMANN: Walt Jenkins. He was there about a year or so, and then the next guy through was Bill Miller who had spent a lot of time in France, and Francophone Africa.

Q: You were sort of the new boy on the block, how did you find you were accepted?

SPRINGMANN: Not all that well actually. I was sort of the guy from Commerce, and was kind of left to learn the job on his own, although I got a little bit of help from Frank Schmelzer and some of the locals.

Q: Tell me what you did.

SPRINGMANN: Basically it was putting on mini versions of these trade shows. You would have something called Sprechtag, (business information days which had been running before I got there). And you would invite as many German firms as you could on a given theme to a meeting with people from the commercial section at one of the German Chambers of Commerce in our consular district. And while you were there they would have meetings with one of the local staff, and one of the American commercial officers to talk about what we could do for them. We could find them American business partners, investment partners. We didn't promote reverse exports and reverse investments but if it was a case of getting somebody latched up with an American company in some fashion or other, we kind of looked the other way, and let them talk about it. And maybe give them a couple hints on who to see, and how to do it.

At this time there was a major push by German businesses to invest in the United States, partly for economic reasons. They were beginning to see themselves getting priced out of world markets unless they could produce more cheaply in the United States. There was also the fear of galloping socialism in Germany. Baden Wurttemberg was the stronghold of small family run companies which hated the then-Social Democratic government of Germany with a passion.

Q: They had things such as a union representative on business things.

SPRINGMANN: Mitbestimmung (works council). Which works pretty well and is one of the reasons why German companies are so efficient, I think. The German businessmen hated it when it was jammed down their throats. But when I was back the second time, I was told by Hans-Peter Stihl, of the tool, chain saw, lawn mower company, that he insisted that they have a works representative on the board when they set up their subsidiary in Hampton, Virginia. He told the American manager of the company that, not only will you install the council, you will listen to this them. And he said as a result of this the American plant is as efficient as anything in Germany, or anywhere else in the

Stihl holdings worldwide. And this was despite the differences in national culture and the wide ethnic make up of the U.S. plant.

Q: Were there restraint problems, either bureaucratic or cultural to American business, and goods, and that sort of thing?

SPRINGMANN: The major problem was the American penchant for making junk and selling it at inflated prices. I was told that German banks would lend on a written order for almost any country in the world, except for something from the United States. The Americans would agree to ship top quality merchandise, and the foreign business would end up with garbage, sometimes literally and figuratively. And there was lack of quality control, and service, main drawbacks to American exports. Plus the fact that Americans didn't really want to sell abroad.

Q: Was there a feedback from our people saying...I mean a firm would order something from the United States, and get things that really weren't up to speed. In the first place, how would it be determined that they weren't very good, outside of just the normal bitching of somebody who was receiving it? Were there equivalent appraisers, or something like this?

SPRINGMANN: Yes, occasionally they would have inspection clauses put into the contract. The independent evaluator would see this and say this meets German specs, or the company's requirements, or it doesn't. Then they would get into this wrangling about who shipped what, and why they couldn't meet the quality specified.

Q: Did this seem to have any affect on American firms?

SPRINGMANN: Not that I could tell. When we would deal with companies that came to us directly, we would make a big point of saying the German market demands high quality and delivery. For the most part we would deal with generally good-sized companies, and only rarely did we get a small firm new to export.

Q: But the good-sized companies were also guilty of the poor quality?

SPRINGMANN: On occasion, but I can't give you specific examples. The smaller the firm in general, the bigger the problem.

Q: How about the German firms who were selling the same goods? Were they causing difficulty, trying to put obstacles in the way of having American firms do it, using political, or social, or economic means to block American goods.

SPRINGMANN: Not at that time, but my second time around I was told by one of the locals who dealt with automotive products that in his opinion the German auto manufacturers, principally Daimler Benz, had great influence with the south German economy, and the south German government, particularly in Baden Wurttemberg,

Daimler's headquarters. He claimed that they would put up more restrictions there to American automobiles being sold, than any other part of the country. Certainly, you seldom saw an American car (unless it belonged to a GI), although there were any number of French or Italian vehicles on the street. I could never get the Consul General to let me look into this. He was more opposed to stirring up the waters and possibly offending the Germans than in doing his job.

Q: What goods were probably the most welcome that you found at that time?

SPRINGMANN: Basically what it is now, and what the Germans export to the U.S.-- transportation goods, cars, airplanes, things like that, high tech electronics, sophisticated machine tools, and very little consumer goods, except for novelty items like bumper stickers, and stuff like that.

Q: What would you do in a typical day?

SPRINGMANN: Fight my way through the cable traffic that came through, and the letters that came through. Occasionally I would go out and interview people for reports, and work with the local staff in setting up the next Sprechtag.

Q: How about trade complaints? As a junior officer I remember wandering the streets of Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, and going into little shops and trying to settle trade complaints. Did you get into that, or not?

SPRINGMANN: Not too many directly. They split the trade complaints between the tourist that gets screwed, and the actual business complaint. The tourist goes to the consular section, and the business goes to the economic-commercial section. We didn't really have that many. There were generally just a handful, I don't think there were half a dozen in my five years in Germany that I knew of.

Q: I suppose most of these too, it was a fairly solid system to deal with this so that you really didn't need the intercession of the government.

SPRINGMANN: You had the German companies themselves, you had the local Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Q: How did you find the equivalent to Chambers of Commerce, and other organizations for industry? How effective did you find these?

SPRINGMANN: They were very good. They were very effective, very knowledgeable, and very hard working and outgoing, and very much interested in international cooperation.

Q: I'm making an assumption. I assume that you probably found that the Foreign Service nationals were really the heart and soul of the whole operation.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, indeed. That is a story in itself. When I was there you had pretty much the old guard still in control in the consulate. These were people who were hired right at the end of the war, and gradually died or retired in the 70s and 80s. In the section were Carl Tietz, who retired when I was there in the late 70s, and Waltraut Enzmann, who left the day I joined the Foreign Service (September 1986). I had just missed another long serving woman who had retired right before I got there. Well Frank Schmelzer told the story of Carl Tietz. He'd asked for something on Monday which he thought would take Tietz most of the week to do, and the project was on his desk either that afternoon or first thing the next morning. It took Frank a while to grasp what had been done because he couldn't relate it to the speed with which it had been accomplished. He had thought Tietz had given him something else, rather than completing the project lightning-fast and in perfect order. Enzmann was the same way although the junior secretaries, who had been there a couple of years, said that Enzmann wasn't as good as her predecessor. And as I went through, some of them would die, and retire, and it bothered a lot of the Americans, at least the ones who were concerned about doing their job properly. (Others couldn't handle efficient, confident, self-assured staff and exulted in each departure because they had an opportunity to hire a compliant, complaisant Third-Country National instead.) It was beginning to bother me, and I was talking about what's going to happen in five years when these people would all eventually die or retire. I came back in time to see what had happened. And was not pleased.

Q: You came back when?

SPRINGMANN: Between '89 and '91. In some ways, the change in local staff and the attitude of the Foreign Service was foreshadowed during my last two years in Stuttgart (1978-79) on the first tour. They had hired a Pakistani, who along with his brother was married to a German national. Supposedly, he had been put on at the consulate to work in the mail room and tote heavy pouches. The communicator was a woman with emphysema, and could not exert herself. But, he kept pushing to move onward and upward because he had studied commercial and business subjects in all these trade schools in Pakistan and in Germany. Somehow, despite Frank Schmelzer's claimed intense opposition, the Pakistani was eventually put into the commercial section--on a "trial basis". Frank didn't talk about it then, but now he says that the deal was forced down his throat by Walt Jenkins, the Consul General. As I learned from later experience in India, the Pakistani was a good example of a fairly capable local from the subcontinent, but in comparison to the German FSNs, it was not unlike like hiring somebody off the street with a grade school education to do brain surgery. He couldn't do the job, was continually complaining about how he was being discriminated against by the Germans because his skin was dark. The Germans for their part were furious at having this guy forced on them by the Americans, and disrupting the work of what had been a smoothly functioning section which had been producing fantastic amounts of truly excellent work. Although there on a trial basis, the Pakistani stayed on after Frank left and the new section chief, Jack Carle came in, and kept the Pakistani. One commercial officer who departed Post when I was there, apparently had briefed his successor, a guy named

Fernandez, a Latin Americans lawyer. Upon his arrival, Fernandez immediately sided with the Pakistani and worked to keep him and advance him. Eventually two crackerjack female German secretaries left because of this. They said they couldn't put up with blatant discrimination, sexual harassment, and constant interference with their work. I saw this coming, and tried to get something done, and failed, despite talking to the new Consul General repeatedly. The Pakistani was eventually fired for not coming to work for three months. In the meantime it cost us a great deal of harmony, a great deal of goodwill, and two good people.

On my second assignment, I found that the FSNs worked for only a few years before moving on. They were no longer interested in the prestige of working for diplomats, did not take pride in their work, and seemed to have little regard for each other, their clients, or the American staff. In some instances, I saw what appeared to be blatant anti-American attitudes and behavior. Certainly, I was told by some FSNs who were still there on my second tour that a number of the local staff, particularly in the Administrative Section, were anti-American.

This situation was compounded by the blunders of the FSOs. Seriously incompetent local staff was kept on (and even promoted) at the expense of hard-working Germans who dealt with Americans as equals. A Turkish girl whose attitude was "I won't work and you can't make me" was placed in charge of the Consulate's computers and a German girl who repeatedly violated travel regulations was kept while a pro-American German woman was fired (after nearly 20 years with the Consulate). Ostensibly, she had a substance abuse problem but, in reality, she questioned her supervisor's decisions. (At that time, one of the Administrative Officers in Stuttgart was such an alcoholic that he once had himself medically-evacuated, so I was told by a CIA case officer, for cirrhosis of the liver. He got several more assignments and was permitted to retire.)

Q: Does Stuttgart have a trade fair?

SPRINGMANN: They had regional fairs that we would go to and either try to take space, or just walk about talking to local companies. There was nothing on the order of Frankfurt, or some of the big electronic shows in Munich. There were things like heating, ventilating, and air conditioning events, and they'd have a wine show. They would have a camping and leisure-time activities show. Occasionally the consulate would take a booth and do things like issuing visas on the spot to people.

Q: You mentioned about the reluctance of a lot of American firms to deal abroad. Were we out there saying, come on, there's a market here, come on in, the water's fine. And what was happening?

SPRINGMANN: Nobody was coming.

Q: Why not? We're talking about how we felt at the time, why we felt they weren't doing that.

SPRINGMANN: The best explanation was the one Waltraut Enzmann came up with, and I really think it's valid. She talked about her travels in the U.S., meeting with local companies, going to Commerce field offices. She found that if a company was selling to five states now and figured in the next couple of years they could sell to eight states, they figured they'd be doing great. They had absolutely no interest in selling to Germany where you've got to deal in another language, metric specifications, letters of credit, and that kind of stuff.

Q: Many people pointed out that basically the United States is a huge common market, and in a way it makes sense to try to go beyond that, except at a certain point in the make-up picture, it makes a hell of a lot of sense.

SPRINGMANN: I think the figures still are what they were then. Twenty or so American companies do two-thirds or more of American exports.

Q: Then you left Stuttgart in 1980. Where did you go then?

SPRINGMANN: I became the first guy sent to India with the Foreign Commercial Service. I was trying for a lateral entry into State at that point and was told that it could not be done unless you can walk on water and not get your shoelaces wet. So about this time they created the Foreign Commercial Service. And I said, what the hell, why not? After three years in Stuttgart, I had learned the job and what was expected, and how to go about making contacts.

Q: You were saying the Foreign Commercial Service. What was the genesis of that?

SPRINGMANN: The idea behind it was that State wasn't doing very well, or doing very much, with the commercial function. There was the sentiment that a number of Foreign Service officers had also expressed that the commercial officer was the guy always sucking hind tit. At the State Department, so the story goes, when you walk into the door, the embassy has a list of activities on the wall, and who is allowed to do them. And at the top of the list is consorting with kings and princes, and this is the province of the political and economic officer, and at the bottom is fixing broken toilets, which is what the admin officer does. And ranged in the middle are consular and commercial officers. As I heard this from a number of people in the Foreign Service, they said, yes, we do commercial work, but this isn't as prestigious, or given to good advancement, as economic work. The feeling apparently was that not only were they discriminated against, they were seen as people who couldn't hack it elsewhere. (They admitted that the commercial cone was occasionally a dumping ground for FSOs who weren't bad enough to select out but not good enough to consort with princes and kings.) I don't know exactly how this was pushed through Congress. Nobody could ever explain it to me. I asked, in fact, people on Congressional committees when I was back doing orientation. Nobody could give me a convincing explanation of how State, which supposedly has all this good managerial skill in being able to deal with foreign cultures, let themselves get blind sided on Capitol Hill

by Commerce which was a dumping ground of government anyway. People suggested it was a partnership between OMB and a couple of committee members on Capitol Hill. But I don't have any real proof of that. Even though I read a number of articles on how this thing was created, these accounts didn't answer my question either.

Q: How was this viewed in the Department of Commerce?

SPRINGMANN: They didn't really say one way or the other. I was surprised. I remember seeing signs tacked to the wall at FSI before going out to India which made fun of Commerce and the Foreign Commercial Service, but nobody in Commerce really exulted or rejoiced. I thought it was kind of strange, here Commerce had had a Foreign Commercial Service up until the 1930s, but once it had gotten it back, there was no exulting that I saw.

Q: How did people look upon these assignments? Were these the more adventurous types, or looked upon as a way to get ahead? One of the problems always has been, and it always surprises me as an ex-Foreign Service officer, how many people really don't want to leave the United States. Perfectly sound, solid people, and now I can understand, but I always thought the highest calling was to get the hell out, and travel around, and have adventures.

SPRINGMANN: It was a typical Commerce cockup. When this thing was created Commerce had no cadre of experienced people to run the new organization. What they brought in as temporary management were people who had worked at Commerce dealing with local staff training programs.

Applicants for the new service were failed businessmen (some of whom had falsified their backgrounds), FSOs being selected out or not being given tenure, and Commerce bureaucrats looking for a promotion.

---end tape 1, side A

---Tape 1, Side B (several min. lost at the beginning of tape)

Q: Let's repeat how Commerce responded to the creation of this Foreign Commercial Service.

SPRINGMANN: There wasn't any real response that I could tell. Commerce had had its own Foreign Commercial Service up until the 1930s, and was absorbed into State as part of a reorganization. But with the new Foreign Commercial Service nobody was doing handstands in the halls. I saw a number of sarcastic comments nailed to the wall of FSI when I went over for training for area studies making fun of the Foreign Commercial Service, and the Commerce Department, as not being able to hack it.

Q: I'm surprised. I mean these are diplomats. When you say sarcastic because there were commercial officers there, and denigrating them just doesn't sound like a very good idea.

SPRINGMANN: It was basically this highly contemptuous attitude on the part of State, and they expected it to fail. And as near as I could tell it was going to fail because I had seen the people that they were putting into these positions at Commerce and it was quite clear that they couldn't handle it.

Q: Will you talk a little about the people who came in.

SPRINGMANN: Sure, all right. They brought in John Golden who had been in a number of various jobs in Commerce, including head of personnel, and he was an abrasive, obnoxious individual who was highly disliked, probably for his management style which was whip and chair style, as well as for his outrageous sexual behavior. (He would find and win his current paramour, pluck her from her job and then promote her repeatedly. And he did this at the Foreign Commercial Service, eventually putting the woman in charge of personnel.)

Q: How about the others who were coming in?

SPRINGMANN: Okay. They brought in a couple of people from State, David Ross and Donn Heaney, because they were short of experienced managers. Ross indulged in nepotism in bringing his wife into the Foreign Commercial Service during a short stint as head of personnel. He eventually was forced out of the government because he was accused by people who had worked with him at the Milan trade center of commingling government funds with his own. He was supposed to have spent \$50,000 defending himself, and lost. Justice wanted him in jail, and Commerce wanted him to walk to avoid problems, as near as I could tell. Heaney got himself in much the same hot water when he was director of the Singapore trade center. He allegedly paid for trips for himself and his girlfriend in addition to dipping into the local till. And he escaped jail by resigning overseas. But the two of them kept highly qualified people out, people like Monroe Aderhold, who had worked for State, who had worked for AID, and had worked for Commerce. He was an excellent manager, could get on extremely well with people, and got everything done in apple pie order. And he had fantastic amounts of experience in South Asia and the Far East. Ross wouldn't let him in. He hated Aderhold for no reason that I could tell.

The other guy, Oleg Jerschowsky, who was born in Kiev, in the Ukraine, ended up in Germany after the war, and came to the United States as a teenager. He was bilingual, or trilingual, in English, German, and Ukrainian, read Russian novels for fun and knew enough Czech and Hungarian to put on trade shows in those countries. Yet he couldn't get in either, and he was another excellent manager who got the very best out of the people who worked for him.

Q: Well, coming from this rather unpromising thing, when you went out to India you were one of the first commercial...

SPRINGMANN: I was the first commercial officer.

Q: How were you received there? And what was the setup at the embassy?

SPRINGMANN: Well, it was kind of a mess actually. Ambassador Goheen left shortly after I arrived, and the new guy, Harry Barnes, came in with the idea there was nothing bad in India, we're going accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. The way he ran the embassy was to have an inner-circle staff meeting which was basically the political counselor and economic counselor, and the guy from USIA, and I guess Priscilla Bouton from AID too. And then following this meeting they would have a major meeting of all the section heads at the embassy (which was quite a lot). And I think this is more for show than anything else because I got the impression the real meeting was prior to this big staff meeting.

Q: Well, this is normal management. I mean, you want to get the information out, but you really have to have the operating council.

SPRINGMANN: There was a certain amount of resentment that the commercial counselor wasn't in the inner-circle. Commerce always felt, and I to some extent felt, that you were not really entirely accepted by State. In practice, I think one of the reasons why they excluded the commercial counselor was the guy had serious problems.

Q: Who was this?

SPRINGMANN: Edward W.M. Bryant. I had been warned about him by the commercial attaché in Bonn before I left Washington to go out there. He said he had worked with him before, and it was the only place where he had ever broken a tour because of personality conflicts with this guy. When I got there he was all smiles at first, and then I found out that he was leaving classified material on the secretary's desk after she went home at night so she would get a security violation because he didn't like her. People started asking me, have you gone down to the communications section to get the cable traffic so you could find out what was going on in your own section. I said, I hadn't gotten to that yet but I do feel excluded. He worked directly with the local staff, by-passed me entirely. Then I started hearing from the defense attaché's office, and the CIA Station, and from a couple of embassies around town, that this guy was altogether too tight with certain corrupt Indian businessmen. And I started keeping my eyes open and found out that he was giving these grossly inflated evaluations--something called World Traders Data Report, which is a government Dun & Bradstreet report for businesses doing business in other parts of the world. It's a service of the U.S. government. And one of these corrupt local businessmen was a known Russian agent and a conduit for Soviet black money in India. I started to rewrite these things because this was my job at the time and he went through the ceiling, and screamed and yelled and carried on. And eventually had a summit, in which I was not a participant, between him, the econ counselor, and the head of the CIA station. Afterwards, we were toning these reports down considerably, and weaving in enough of the truth so that a savvy American business man could read between the lines, that Mr. X

had major business dealings with state owned concerns in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and if they were smart enough they would stay away from these guys.

Q: In this unpromising atmosphere, what were you doing?

SPRINGMANN: Not a whole hell of a lot. I wanted to go out and travel, and they really didn't want me to do that. I did get a couple of trips out and talked to local businessmen. I tried to do some reporting on my own. And, again, much like I was in Commerce, I was sort of sitting in the corner marking time, and tried to break out of it as best I could.

Q: What was the Indian market for American goods?

SPRINGMANN: Not all that good. The Indians at the time had major restrictions on imports. For example, heart pacemakers required permission of some government agency before they could be imported. Their idea was to save foreign exchange, and to promote production of similar products among Indian businesses to try to lift them up by their boot straps. You could get stuff into the country if you, for example, wanted to set up a hotel downtown, and you wanted to import milkshake mixers, bake ovens, and whatever, because this was a service that foreign tourists expected and were used to in their own countries and wanted to see this in India. And this was a major foreign exchange earner for the country once the hotel was up and running, so they could get permission to bring the stuff in. But by and large it had to be something that the Indians didn't make themselves. At the time the Indians were promoting a lot of investment, hey, we have the largest pool of trained manpower in the world; we're the second largest democracy in the world, and on and on.

And Harry Barnes got into this, and started pushing with the second commercial counselor, Hal Lucius, to promote American investment in India, and to promote Indian investment in the United States, and do everything possible to say India is the greatest country in the world, bar none, which flew in the face of reality. It got to the point where they weren't reporting the truth about India to Washington, and as I heard a couple years later, the Defense Attaché opened up his own back channel to Washington to let the Defense Department know exactly what the hell was going on in the country.

Q: Were there trade fairs, and things like that?

SPRINGMANN: Not really. The Indian market wasn't big enough, or sophisticated enough for that. They occasionally would have a catalogue show where American companies would send literature about their products to the embassy, and we would find space in a hotel, or in USIA's America House downtown. And they would occasionally send over an American industry trade expert to answer questions. But by and large it was mostly personal contact with Indian firms who were interested in the few American products they could import. Or it was handholding for American companies who were coming over trying to find an honest, capable agent. Or it was doing these World Trader's Data Reports trying to find a company as a suitable contact for an American firm.

Q: Would you find that the Indian bureaucracy was difficult to deal with, or not?

SPRINGMANN: We didn't deal all that much with the Indian bureaucracy except once there was a major trade complaint where an American firm claimed it was being screwed out of a major contract with the Indian government. Somebody was bribing government employees, and that came to naught, but we did have a couple meetings with government officials. We also had a lot of complaints about tourists that the consular section couldn't resolve, essentially, that they had paid for something downtown and it hadn't been shipped a year later. And the local who dealt with this didn't really want to make waves with her countrymen. I finally pushed and pushed her and got her mad as hell, and I said, look, tell these guys that they're going to resolve this thing to everybody's satisfaction, or we're going to do a WTDR--World Trader's Data Report--on the company, and as one section of it on whether to recommend it to American businesses, we're going to line out this complete problem that they're having with Mr. X in Iowa., and to tell the firm that it's business with American firms or tourists would likely dry up. And she hated it, and I sent the threats out and it proved marvelous, it resolved the issues in short order.

Q: Indian-American relations are always touchy. Did we find that decisions about allowing commerce into India, was this purely economic, or was the feeling sometimes there were political calculations?

SPRINGMANN: Oh, it was political. This is what Barnes was trying to do. He was trying to show the Indians we really want to be your buddies, and to do this we're going to eliminate negative reports about your country, and we're going to be circumspect about what we tell businessmen about your country. And they were organizing reverse trade missions of Indians to tour the United States to promote what a great place the Subcontinent was to do business. And, of course, Indians who had seen India and had gotten the hell out, were the most vicious, and the most vocal, of critics of this policy, aside from me, and the science counselor, or the econ counselor.

Q: It's always one of the big problems that there's always the commercial and the political side. The political side wants to show, it's always handy if you can show your country is a good market for goods. Whereas, the commercial side, we want to sell. In a way, I suppose, at least from a Congressional point of view, the genesis of the reinstitution of the Foreign Commercial Service to give some teeth to the idea that we really want to sell abroad as opposed to we want to show that we're a big warm friendly type from the ambassador on down. But this wasn't working then.

SPRINGMANN: On the surface it was working. I mean, the Indians thought it was great, and the Americans who were getting a trip to India thought it was great, I guess up to a point. But I don't know that anything concrete ever came out of it, and when it came down to specifics...there was one case where the ambassador would not weigh in, neither he nor Marion Creekmore, who became Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia. There was an American company involved with a local Indian firm, and they

made solar products, and they had worked up a number of things that would be good for the Indian market--for example, a solar powered water pump for villages that were no where near an electric line, which was a lot of villages in India. And they wanted help from the American embassy in dealing with the Indian government. Apparently there was a provision where you could get a subsidy if you brought in foreign technology, and adapted to Indian conditions, and got an Indian firm to manufacture the stuff, all of which the American company had done. And they wanted help from the embassy in getting the stuff up and running, and out to the villages in India. And Creekmore and Barnes would not get involved with this. I'd even set up a demonstration in front of the embassy where their pump was connected to a hose in this lily pond in front of the building. And with the subsidy which the Indian government could give if it wanted to, it would have been a commercially viable proposition, and but for unexplained reasons, the Ambassador and DCM didn't want to get involved in a concrete example of commercial cooperation between India and the U.S.

Q: Why not?

SPRINGMANN: I've never gotten an explanation. Creekmore just wouldn't talk about it.

Q: How about Bryant?

SPRINGMANN: Bryant was gone by that time, and his successor, Hal Lucius, didn't want to get involved because he might have antagonized the Ambassador. (Hal wanted another promotion so he wouldn't be selected out.) And I just threw up my hands and said, look, we're here to do stuff for American businesses. This is a concrete example of what we can do, it's not splashy, it doesn't make the front page of the newspaper but it gets stuff done, and improves everybody's lot. Still, nothing was ever done.

Q: Were the Japanese doing much better than we were, or not?

SPRINGMANN: I didn't see all that many Japanese there at all. The competition apparently was French, and there was all this grumbling about, oh, these French are bribing the Indians, they're doing this, or they're doing that. And basically the French were getting in and finding who the hell they could contact, and greasing his palm, and getting the stuff done.

Q: By this time Congress had passed laws making a criminal activity for American firms to bribe foreign officials. What was your impression of what this was doing to American business practices.

SPRINGMANN: People who followed them literally got no where, people who were smart and who let their Indian agent deal with this, and kept themselves at arm's length, got things done. Monroe Aderhold apparently wrote an analysis of this that he said pissed off Senator William Proxmire. As an example of how things worked, there was this one German businessman who was very clever. He told me there are three kinds of bribes: the

bribe that just reminds the official you're dealing with that you exist; there's the bribe for moving your papers from the bottom of the pile to the top of the pile; and there's the absolutely corrupt bribe where you pay somebody off to get a contract that by rights should have gone to somebody else. The German guy from MAN, Maschinenfabrik-Augsburg-Nuremberg, a major truck maker, was very clever. He had Indians on the payroll for various things, paying them for information from the inside, and he learned about a contract to bid on, one that his competitor would like as well. The German said, I can't forbid him not to sell this information to somebody else, it would just make him run all the faster to my competition. So he paid him to delay disseminating the information that he had just sold for a couple of weeks until MAN had prepared the necessary paperwork for its bid. I think this was incredibly clever and sophisticated.

Q: What would you tell American businessmen?

SPRINGMANN: Just that. That officially you're not supposed to do this. If your Indian agent does it without your knowledge, you're squeaky clean. And by and large this is a corrupt part of the world, and there are ways of getting things done that are not quite as legal as they might seem, but then they're not absolutely unlawful and immoral, as some people would allege.

Q: Then you left there in about 1982.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, they jerked me out a year early because I had pissed off Bryant about his alleged corrupt activities and he apparently talked to Lucius and FCS management which pulled me out a year early. Eventually, I grieved this and won but I was back in D.C.

Q: And where did you go then?

SPRINGMANN: I went back to Washington.

Q: And what were you doing there?

SPRINGMANN: A series of nonentity jobs, because they didn't know what to do with me.

Q: What sort of things were you doing?

SPRINGMANN: Reviewing grant proposals for some kind of economic development administration program. Helping out on trade promotion events when people went on vacation. I had a whole series of jobs, and ended up working with Oleg Jerschowsky on automotive exports after a while.

Q: Dealing with automotive exports, this would be in about the mid-'80s.

SPRINGMANN: This would have been about '83-'84. I went over as director of a trade mission to Brussels and London for something that the Automotive Parts and Accessories Association wanted, even though we kept trying to tell them there's no support for this overseas.

Q: What was the problem with automotive parts?

SPRINGMANN: By and large you had indigenous production in Europe, either by American competition, or by American firms themselves.

Q: Like Ford, Thomas(?), and things like that.

SPRINGMANN: Yes. And if you could try to bring the competition over, they were faced with justifying the cost of sending somebody to Europe just to promote their product, knowing full well that the same product, either from an American company, or from an European company, was available right then and there. You didn't have shipping problems, you didn't have shipping costs, and the American stuff was just flat out not competitive if you shipped it from the U.S. But in the end the Association wanted it, and we went over there, and we looked like complete fools. And the firms that did go, didn't like it because they didn't get the quality contacts that Commerce was promising them.

Q: What happened? I mean, there were no particular follow through?

SPRINGMANN: Not really. I got a trip, I got to meet some old friends in Brussels, and stayed over another week and visited friends in Germany. It was great for me. But the Embassy, which was opposed to the trade mission from the first, couldn't round up more than a handful of interested businessmen for the reasons cited earlier. No one ever went back and tried to rustle up interest, not even the American trade association although during my stopover with friends, one of whom was a former Belgian commercial officer, I asked for and received his help in making additional contacts which I later passed on to the U.S. firms on the mission.

Q: To follow this through, you were doing these jobs until '87?

SPRINGMANN: Well, I passed the oral exam in '84 again, and they refused to give me a medical clearance, and I would up filing a lawsuit against the State Department. They claimed I walked funny, and could never run away from terrorists' bullets. And according to my lawyers, that made me a protected minority and I could file a civil rights action. The lawsuit went on for two years, and State delayed and delayed, and eventually when it came time to tell it to the judge, State said, do you want to be a political officer, an economic officer, or a consular officer? This was in the fall of '86.

Q: So you came in in '86?

SPRINGMANN: Yes, I guess in September.

Q: You went through the A-100 course, and you finished the course, and what was your assignment?

SPRINGMANN: Well, that was bizarre. During all of this training I was pulled aside by my career adviser who told me, don't go out and sell your house, but we've got you paneled for a position in East Berlin, and the European Bureau wants you, she said. And I knew from experience that what the European Bureau wanted, the European Bureau got. So I'm sitting in A-100 and they're passing out assignments, and I'm called up to the front of the room and, here's your orders, and here is the flag of the country of your choice. And it was the flag of Saudi Arabia. And, of course, I carried it off. They thought I'd expected this thing, and I was pulled aside later on by John Teacik, the director of training, and he said, I just found out you were supposed to go to Berlin, and now you're going to Saudi Arabia, what do you think of that? And I said, I was shocked because I had researched my assignments, and Saudi was one I had not researched, and two, I had not bid on it. I don't know what the hell is going on but as near as I can tell I get some language training out of it, and I get a hardship differential, and I get to see the Middle East which I had never been to before, so fine.

Q: So you served in Saudi Arabia from '87 to '89.

SPRINGMANN: Yes.

Q: What did you go out as?

SPRINGMANN: I was chief of the visa section. They had three people in the consular section, the chief of the section, a woman in charge of American citizen services, passports, notarials, and dead bodies; and then I did visas.

Q: What was the situation in Saudi Arabia at that time?

SPRINGMANN: They were our very best buddies, and they saw us as their very best buddies. I remember going on a road trip to Jordan, and I was coming back and I was pulled over by this Saudi cop. And I couldn't figure out why he was doing this because I had consular corps plates on my car that identified who I worked for. He said, who are you? And I said, American. Oh, America, qwayyis. Fantastic, good, wonderful, and then let me go on.

Q: Was the House of Saud running things?

SPRINGMANN: Yes. And the Americans maintained that Saudi Arabia was as stable as the Rock of Gibraltar used to be, but when I was there I sort of wondered about this. You had 4,000 princes. One of my locals described them as real princes, and chicken princes. Guys who had ability, talent, and connections, and then guys who by accident of birth could be called a Saudi prince. They were all throughout business, and throughout the

government, holding meetings around the country and claiming this gave the ordinary Joe access to somebody at the top. But there was an awful lot of grumbling about how Saudis laid back and did no work, and raked in the dollars, and that they were a minority in their own country. They brought in Filipinos, Indians, and Pakistanis, and everybody else to do the work, from pumping gas, to running the banks. I wondered how long this was really going to last because the Saudis produced nothing at all. You couldn't even buy handicrafts in Saudi Arabia. They pumped oil and they made some office furniture, and some processed foods. And that was about it.

Q: I must say, I was in Saudi Arabia in '58 to '60 and we kept wondering how long this situation, I mean the real oil money hadn't hit at that point, but more or less the same thing was going on, and we thought, "this isn't going to last either." What sort of visas was one issuing?

SPRINGMANN: Mostly tourist visas, and business visas. Immigrant visas were handled by the embassy in Riyadh, but we did the processing and the paperwork for most of them.

Q: We were having the problem that they tended to ask for official visas for students. Students were getting regular student visas at that point.

SPRINGMANN: In the past I was told they were getting diplomatic visas. But you had the odd guy who demanded a diplomatic visa because he worked for the government. We'd say, fine, are you going on a diplomat assignment to the United States? No. Well, you can't have it. And they would get very huffy, and yell and scream at the embassy.

Q: I take it there wasn't really a problem of people getting visas, if they had the money to go.

SPRINGMANN: For the most part, no. Saudis were seen as good visa prospects, and the people I refused were people who tried to smart off with me for the most part. They woke up one morning and said, I want to be a student in the United States. And they'd come down and ask for a student visa. And I'd say, do you have the form, do you have the paperwork chopped off by the right people in the States? No. Well, you're going to need that to get a student visa. Okay, how about a tourist visa? Their intention was to go as a tourist, get the student paperwork done in the U.S. and then adjust visa status in California or wherever. I said, no, you can't do that.

Q: Were there any great incidents, or any problems? I mean either for you at the time?

SPRINGMANN: Yes, the major issue was visas. I started hearing about this visa business, and how something funny was going on in Saudi Arabia back in Washington before I came out. I had a meeting with Walter Cutler, set up by the desk officers in State. He was then still the ambassador, before being succeeded by Hume Horan. He started talking to me about the problems that were created for him in Jeddah about visas. It seemed to revolve around people having trouble bringing their favorite servants over.

This story didn't seem to track, and I had no idea of what he was talking about, except he was obviously giving me some sort of oblique warning.

---tape stopped

Q: But you were saying you were getting...

SPRINGMANN: Visa problems were surfacing in Jeddah according to the ambassador, but he never really talked about what it was. He only discussed it indirectly, which I thought was really bizarre. And I woke up thinking, what the hell is going on over there? Once I hit Jeddah, I started hearing from my staff about my predecessor and her problems with the Consul General, Jay Freres, about visas, and how he was ordering her to issue visas to people who were unqualified applicants. I was told repeatedly, whatever you do, don't get Freres mad. Then I heard from a woman who was doing citizen services about the fight that she and Greta Holtz, and the previous head of the section had had over illegal visas. And I settled in, and all I ever heard was how abrasive and obnoxious Greta Holtz, my predecessor, had been to applicants. Then I heard, Oh, you're doing so much better than Greta, you're doing a great job--the Consul General told me this, and the CIA base chief mentioned this, and a political officer told me...So I went chugging along. Then after a while the Consul General came to me and said, would you come over here, I want to talk to you about some visa cases. And I said, what? Well, this guy has applied, but I want you to look at his application. "He's a good contact", and from what I could see on the visa application, he seemed like an okay guy, and I said, fine. Then after a while Freres didn't ask my opinion, he demanded that I issue visas to people, and they were generally people I had refused on my own advice and the advice of my staff. And these were flat out 214Bs, "intending immigrants". They were guys that hadn't been in the kingdom very long, and they didn't have much of a job, and could give no clear and coherent reason why they wanted to go to the United States.

Q: These were basically people who weren't Saudis.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, they were Lebanese, Pakistanis, Indians. My assistant said, do this for Freres. And one of the other staff said, Greta had started a folder on all these people that Freres wanted visas for, do you want us to continue it? And I said, yes, why not? We'll have a record of all the people we opposed, marked as "issued under orders of Jay P. Freres, American Consul General". (And according to regulations, this is exactly what we were required to do.) Some of these didn't appear to be outright visa fraud such as a woman who didn't want to come for personal visa interview, and who asked for Freres' assistance. But there was a case of Libyan students. One of them had an American wife living in the U.S., and they wanted tourist visas. Their father was a rich businessman, and Freres kept pressuring us to issue visas in rather strange circumstances. The CIA case officer assigned to the consular section objected to this, and it was bucked it up to the counselor for consular affairs, Stephanie Smith, and she gave a visa to one of them, and denied the visa to the other one. It just went on and on and on.

And not long before I left, one contact who I thought had ties with the agency, said the price for visas at the consulate was \$2500, or 10,000 riyals. There was the suggestion that the Consul General did it because he needed the money. I reported this, there was a meeting with the regional security guy from Riyadh, and nothing was done once we decided our internal security was tight enough.

And then an inspection team came out. I was told by the same contact, that if you mention the visa problems at the consulate, or the problems with the liquor at the consulate, you're going to cut your own throat. And I started to write this down, and I said, no, I'll be smart, I won't say a word. I refused to talk to the inspectors. Finally, Joe O'Neill, an inspector, came over, and lined out to me all the problems that were at issue at the consulate: spying on American citizens, visa sales, this incredible emphasis on selling liquor at extreme markups to hundreds of people and never accounting for where the money went, attacks on the Arabic teacher, an American citizen, etc. He urged me to confirm the foregoing to improve management at State.

I did so and in the course of the conversation learned that the consulate liquor sales supported "off the books" intelligence operations. (The majority of Washington-based staff were employees of the CIA or the NSA which ran a large signals intelligence facility at the consulate.)

Following my return to Washington, I was told by a journalist with experience in the area that most of the visas to which I objected went to CIA operatives, many with terrorist ties such as Sheikh Abdul Ramman. He said he had stumbled on this while researching another story about a company called E-Systems and its links to the Agency. According to his sources, the CIA was sending people specifically to Jeddah for visas and had an arrangement with the State Department not to assign an experienced consular officer there. He said that such a person would strenuously object and would complain to the right quarters, jeopardizing the operation. Moreover, a seasoned officer with tenure couldn't be got rid of as was the case with me. (Subsequently, one FSO told me he retired rather than fulfill the constant demands for illegal visas at Jeddah.).

Q: Liquor was forbidden in Saudi Arabia?.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, that's right.

Q: Then who was selling it?

SPRINGMANN: The American consulate.

Q: How could we do that?

SPRINGMANN: They would hold parties on the consulate grounds, which were safe from the Saudis. The Marine house would have 200-300 people on a Thursday night, which is the beginning of the weekend, for drinking and dancing. Guys told me how they

would come for the first time, and order half a dozen beers and line them up in the crook of their arm and go gulp-gulp.

Q: You mean they were selling liquor?

SPRINGMANN: Yes. They would have pool parties at the consulate and invite 200-300 people. They would just put out a flyer, party at the American consulate on Thursday night, or whenever. They'd have dinner dances, and there were hundreds of people buying tickets at Washington prices for the equivalent of \$10.00, or so, you got about four or five drinks. They'd sell cards, you'd have this punched every time you bought a beer. And people would buy two and three, or four of them...

Q: Was this officially sanctioned?

SPRINGMANN: Yes.

Q: I find it just incredible because having served there, we used to play hanky-panky with liquor, but the liquor we would get we would pay for ourselves, and then parcel it out to guests. I mean, you certainly wouldn't charge for it.

SPRINGMANN: The consulate had its own bar in addition to the pool parties. They initially didn't want me and the communicator bringing in people to the bar, saying it was bad. They would never specify why and create a problem for us. And eventually the word got out that, hey, we can make a lot of money and get a lot of information from well lubricated tongues. So all of a sudden the American bar, the Brass Eagle, became the place to go.

Q: Selling liquor, under what auspices was this being done?

SPRINGMANN: Under the American Employees and Family Support Association. And in the middle of all of this, you had American businessmen wanting to come to some of these functions. They were willing to work with the consulate, if we had free admission to the bar, we can supply the bar with pool tables and equipment, or we can make you all members of the American Businessmen in Jeddah for free, which was the local Chamber of Commerce. And at the same time the American Businessmen of Jeddah from time immemorial had had permission to hold a couple of dinner dances on the consulate grounds, at the pool and have dinner, and have drinks supplied by the consulate for which they paid. This was sort of sub rosa, but as long as it was under the table, and in the quiet, and just a couple times a year, it was permitted to be done.

And then the consulate started charging Washington prices, plus a big mark up. And the ABJ said, look, we're catering this thing, we're selling tickets, it's becoming fairly expensive to our membership to pay \$50 or \$100 a ticket, plus whatever it costs for drinks. Can we work out a deal somehow? And the consulate refused to do it, raised hell with the guy who came pushing it, and eventually got him expelled from the country. So

it was a really strange situation. And the inspector went through all of this, and they said, well now, do you feel that you can talk about this? And I said, I was told that if I mentioned any of this, confirmed any of this, I would get my throat cut. I shouldn't do it. Well, we need to help you, we need to have this confirmed, we've heard this from other sources. We want to know somebody who has been directly involved. And eventually he talked me around to saying, yes, everything you've just told me is true. And I said, is this liquor business part of a way of making money for the agency, which comprised more than half of the American people at the consulate, and two-thirds of the people who said they worked for State, didn't. He smiles, and nods his head. I said, Jesus Christ. Then I said, what's the story on the visas? Is it fraud, is the Consul General on the take? He wanted a copy of all the files we had on the visas we were protesting, and then nothing was ever done. Then, immediately afterwards, I get an efficiency report guaranteed to end my career in the Foreign Service. And I raised this with the counselor for consular affairs, and she said, this is bad, I'm going to talk to the inspector. And the inspector, according to her, agreed to recommend me for tenure, and wanted to look into this matter further. But, *mirabile dictu*, he had a couple of meetings with Freres and Chuck Angulo, the admin officer, and all of a sudden the inspectors had no interest in helping me. So it was definitely bizarre.

Q: What happened then?

SPRINGMANN: Well, I had gotten a name for myself by writing a cable reporting that one of my contacts had seen Saudis importing Chinese made Silkworm missiles, which got to the President as part of his daily intelligence briefing. The embassy was overjoyed at my doing this. I had a lot of reporting on Saudi women which the female political officer couldn't apparently manage, and I still had this report hanging over my head. I went to Washington, I talked to the executive offices in the Near East and South Asian Bureau which went through the ceiling when they heard about the liquor. I talked to the Bureau of Consular Affairs about this visa business, telling them I thought somebody was selling visas, but they just didn't want to get involved with it. Is Freres leaving, I was asked? I said, yes. Well, then the problem takes care of itself, doesn't it, I was told.

Q: So then what happened?

SPRINGMANN: So then I went to Stuttgart, and found out that I couldn't get my car licensed on the road, I couldn't get housing. They kept me in a hotel for three weeks when an apartment was already available for me. I eventually was shunted off into a corner and excluded from operations at the consulate.

Q: This was '90? '91?

SPRINGMANN: '91. Then I get a notice that I will get a third and extraordinary tenure review, but they're not going to give me another overseas assignment, I should come back to Washington. Once back in DC, I was assigned to INR (the Bureau of Intelligence and Research), and then I learned I wasn't getting tenure.

Q: So, how did you feel about this whole thing?

SPRINGMANN: In some ways I was glad to get out of State because it was no fun anymore. I saw that the agency had persuaded State to give them their own consulate in Jeddah. When I was in Stuttgart, I began to wonder about the last two Consuls General. They did not have the track pattern of Foreign Service officers. It was more like somebody from the agency, or from NSA. In fact, one of them had worked for NSA at one point. The communicator was married to an agency employee and he wanted to retire from State and work for the CIA. And the one liaison officer who had been civilian Army intelligence the first time I had been to Stuttgart had expanded to three plus a secretary by the time I had come back for my second tour. And the agency, which had been invisible the first time round, was meeting regularly behind closed doors with the Consul General during the second. So initially I thought when I was bounced out of State I had pissed off State Department officials, making allegations of corruptions and things like this, because I won my lawsuit against State for not giving me a medical clearance, I figured it was a way of just pushing him out the door. We're forced to give him a job, but we'll get rid of him. But after reflection, I realized that the explanation I had gotten from the journalist I mentioned earlier was correct: I was out because I had vociferously questioned an intelligence operation.

Q: So, it was not the greatest experience.

SPRINGMANN: Not at all.

Q: Well, I guess we'll stop at that point.

SPRINGMANN: Yes, I've got to go down and get my car or else I'll get a ticket.

Q: Today is March 8, 1994 and this is continuing with Mike Springmann. Mike, I think we're up to the last part.

SPRINGMANN: Just about, although I remembered after I got home that there are a number of points I wanted to raise on Jeddah that I wanted to go through. There was one major thing there that I found totally incomprehensible and which nobody could explain easily. The CIA base at one point wanted to review every visa we were going to issue for certain classes of nationals. And when I asked why the CIA was getting involved in something the State Department is doing, I was told that they had better resources for finding terrorists than we did, even though all known terrorists were routed into the data base that the State Department used for checking for visa issuances.

Q: You can't tell what was behind that.

SPRINGMANN: And there was this bizarre emphasis on security at the consulate. They would search the local staff coming to work every morning, go through the women's

handbags, run the men through a metal detector. But in cases of locally hired American employees at the consulate, these were never searched at all. And it was kind of a haphazard thing. They would search my car, for example, but would never look under the tonneau cover in the back when the convertible top on my car was down. But some poor soul who came to my party one night, and was going on to another function, he had to unwrap a gift package he'd carried with him to show there wasn't a bomb inside.

Q: My general feeling is when you've got people doing it, one is haphazard and it doesn't make sense, but we're talking about a time when people were getting bombed. And in the Arab world there are a lot of undercurrents there. It's not the greatest, it's not done with great finesse, but there it is.

SPRINGMANN: But it antagonized an awful lot of people.

Q: Of course it did.

SPRINGMANN: At a time when they had an x-ray device at the consulate for just such a purpose.

Q: It's a haphazard thing. Well, you went to Stuttgart when?

SPRINGMANN: I went there in 1989.

Q: And you were there from when to when?

SPRINGMANN: From about May of '89 to June of '91. I was the political-economic officer there.

Q: We had a Consulate General there at that time. Who was the Consul General?

SPRINGMANN: When I got there it was Phil Griffin, who had spent a lot of time in the Middle East and who went from Consul General in Stuttgart to Consul General in Jeddah a couple of months after I was there.

Q: And then who took over?

SPRINGMANN: The next guy was Doug Jones, and he was there for less than a year. The story given out was that they had asked him to move to Bonn as political counselor, which didn't seem to hold water. Everybody wondered about the whole story there. He was one of these people who spent most of his career in Washington. As was Day Mount, his successor, who had worked for NSA at Bad Aibling, and who also spent most of his career in Washington.

Q: What type of work were you doing there. What were your main concerns while you were there?

SPRINGMANN: Reporting on political developments, elections, what the farther right wing party, the Republikaner, were doing. They were seriously embarrassing the right of center CDU/FDP coalition government. Looking into the Green Party which was a farther left party that was seriously embarrassing the SDP, which was the left of center party. Plus economic reporting about what the local business community was doing, taxation policies, plans to tax cars using the autobahn, and that kind of thing. Went into such details even of looking into the locally expanding transportation network, and the local airport.

Q: What was your impression of the German economy?

SPRINGMANN: When I got there it was the same impression I had when I had been there some 10-15 years previously, that the economy existed without any real means of support. You sort of had this pass through system where the labor unions wanted raises, so they got raises, and the manufacturers pass these along to the consumers, who then demanded another raise from their boss to pay for what they were buying. And you wondered how long this spiral could keep going, and yet it seemed to work. Everybody had their huge fat markup, you had waiting lists for years for certain models of Mercedes Benz cars. And I thought with unification in some ways it would be a shot in the arm for the German economy because you'd have to rebuild all this decayed infrastructure in Eastern Germany.

Q: It's hard to say, but right now in '94 it's sort of coming apart.

SPRINGMANN: In some ways it's coming apart because you've got this idiot Kohl and his hidebound rigid government that couldn't decide what they wanted to do with Eastern Germany. They made the snap decision to keep the East Germans sitting at home by giving them a parity of one East German mark to one West German mark, with limitations on many marks you could exchange at what rate. They apparently had not had a clue in the world as to what this would do to business accounting where you had this monumental debt in play money which suddenly turned into real red ink. This caused immense shakeups in business and causing a lot to go under, causing a huge rise in unemployment.

Q: As an economic-political officer how would you spend your day? I mean, how would you get around, what would you do?

SPRINGMANN: I would either be making appointments for people to contact, or going out to meetings with contacts, would be reading the papers, reading the press, writing articles on things that were developing, calling people to check facts. I did a fair amount of reporting on what they called the Uebersiedler, people who were moving from Eastern Germany to Western Germany. And then I did some reporting on the ethnic Germans from what used to be Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union moving into Germany. I interviewed a bunch of them, and interviewed a several organizations dealing with them.

Q: Were you there when the Berlin wall came down?

SPRINGMANN: Yes, I was.

Q: What was the reaction in your lot?

SPRINGMANN: Kind of skeptical, actually. People who were personal contacts whom I'd known for years, as well as people I had just met were not sure if they liked it, it was a major change. And a lot of people were downright hostile to the East Germans.

Q: Why the hostility?

SPRINGMANN: Well, they were seen as foreigners, they weren't really Germans because they'd lived in this compartmentalized hermetically sealed environment for nearly 50 years.

Q: How were the people who were moving in? You must have been getting people coming from Czechoslovakia, from East Germany through Czechoslovakia, how were the Germans who were coming in from the East being settled? How was that being taken care of?

SPRINGMANN: They had a number of regional resettlement centers that would process them. They were trying to parcel them out amongst the various German states. And they were given housing subsidies, and they were given employment subsidies, they were helped to find work. And the ethnic West Germans, the Einheimischen they called them, very much resented a lot of this stuff. They said, geez, nobody helped me get a job after the war when Germany was in ruins. They very much resented paying taxes to support these people.

Q: What was the predominant party?

SPRINGMANN: Stuttgart was the capital of Baden Wurttemberg, pulled together from the Archduchy Baden and the Kingdom of Wurttemberg. It was basically a very conservative CDU oriented state. For 20 years the CDU had a lock on the parliament and the minister president, the governor. And you had Manfred Rommel, the general's son as mayor of Stuttgart for a number of years. He was regarded as being left of center, but palatable to most of the people because of his family ties. While I was there the Republikaner were campaigning actively but they were not permitted to hold meetings in public places.

Q: This was considered to be a right wing organization?

SPRINGMANN: It's farther right, they call it a right extremist, but I have yet to have anybody explain this to me. I have repeatedly challenged people to justify their remarks

that these are neo-Nazis. In fact, I challenged the Army intelligence officer assigned to the consulate, he called this a neo-Nazi movement. I said, fine, give me some specifics. What is it that they've done? Because they were repeatedly investigated by the German internal security service, and the CDU and its government came up empty every time.

Q: How come they could refuse to have party rallies?

SPRINGMANN: They never explained it to me. I kept asking people, why can't these people meet? Why are you closing it off? Their argument, which I challenged Otto Graf von Lamsdorf, the former economics minister once in Washington, on this. He said, because it would be violent. And I said, who is going to be violent? Because when I've been to these rallies, the only violent people were the leftists who were throwing horse shit and rocks and bottles, and everything else at these people. I went to one of their rallies, and I was never so glad as to get inside with all these bad right wing Republikaner in my life. Because they had a very quiet orderly meeting.

Bull Connor down south was just not clever enough. He should have told Martin Luther King and all the Freedom Riders that they couldn't have parade permits because there might be a possibility of violence by people who didn't support integration.

Q: How were we reporting it?

SPRINGMANN: They kept slanting the reporting. They didn't want me to report the facts. In fact, I wrote a cable about a political meeting that, between the lines, was very critical of Rommel. It never got sent until I changed it, at the Consul General's insistence, so that the facts were altered. At that time there were at least a dozen people running for Lord Mayor of Stuttgart. All sorts of lunatic fringe people, such as the Remstal Rebel, a loud mouth from out in the country. Plus some genuine neo-Nazi people, plus the Greens, and the Republikaner, and a bunch of other people. And they let the crackpots speak, the Remstal Rebel, and the Greens and the standard parties, the CDU and the FDP. But when it came time for the Republikaner to speak, and present their platform, left wing rowdies in the audience yelled and screamed and wouldn't let them be heard. Rommel and the police permitted this to go on for nearly half an hour without trying to shut these characters up. Eventually they were escorted out of the room, and people in the audience said, fine, bring back Rolf Schlierer, the Republikaner leader, he's running for mayor, we want to hear him talk. And Rommel said, no, we're not going to do this, we're going to close the meeting right now. The entire audience was furious. And I reported this. And State (or at least the Consul General) didn't want this. I was criticizing Rommel, I was criticizing a friend of the United States. And I said, I'm sorry. This is the way it is. If you want to talk about neo-Nazis, you're going to have to talk about the people who won't permit an alternative political view be heard. That is not parliamentary democracy. Mount didn't want to hear any part of it.

Q: Were there any problems at that point with skinheads? These were young kids who went around and beat up mainly foreigners.

SPRINGMANN: You had a couple incidents of that, they'd beat up somebody on a railway platform.

Q: What was your impression of particularly the Turks, and other people who had been working in Germany for 30-40 years. While you were observing it, was there any integration there, or movement in?

SPRINGMANN: Not really. Let me finish the one thought on the Republikaner, and then I'll go on to the Turks because I was in with a bunch of their people as well. I was roundly criticized in the consulate for meeting with the Republikaner. I figured it was my job to meet with every political party as long as they were not on the proscribed list. I was told not to invite them to any of my functions for fear of offending the established parties. They didn't want me to meet with them at the consulate, and so on. And after I left, these people they wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole upset the apple cart in the state elections. They became the third strongest party in the state. I don't know what the Consulate's doing now since they wouldn't meet with these people. Now they're going to have to deal with them.

But with the Turks and things, I had an interesting conversation with some Turks in Saudi Arabia before I left. They said they understood exactly what the problem was in Germany. They didn't like the way the Germans treated the Turks, but they said the basis for it was that they had taken a whole boat load of Turks when they had this economic miracle going and needed workers, and they imported them. But they said they got these people from Anatolia, and from the hinterlands in Turkey. They had never been to a Turkish city in their lives, and suddenly were dumped into Germany which practically invented the 20th century all by itself. And they could see why they had problems. And when I was there the first time there were always articles in the paper about not being able to digest the Turks, and what they wanted to do with the Gastarbeiter. When I came back, they still hadn't figured out what to do with them. Only there were more and more of them now, and they were pushing for separate German passports. They wanted dual citizenship in effect. Whereas Turkey and Germany and just about every country in the world, except the United States, insists you belong to one country or the other, you can't do both. And they were very hot about that.

There were more and more Turks visible I noticed. I dealt with the FDP on occasion, and there was a Turk who was sort of a minor functionary in the youth movement of that party. They'd had a Turk at the consulate when I left the first time and she was very nice, when I came back she was quite obnoxious. She'd learned a lot of bad things from the Americans. She was married to a German and was extremely critical of Germans and Germany, which I had not heard from her before. Then I talked to her uncle who was a leader amongst the local Turkish movement, and he had mentioned that numbers were on their side. That more and more Turks and other Gastarbeiter multiplied, essentially taking over the cities. And he gave me a set of figures from the German economic statistics book, that showed, for example, in Stuttgart under the age of 45 if you counted all of the

foreigners excluding the Americans in the Armed Forces, and the French in the Armed Forces, non-Germans made up almost a fifth of the people in and around Stuttgart. And the guy told me in some cities like Mainz, it was a 50% of the population.

Q: Did we get involved, just watching and reporting on this?

SPRINGMANN: Yes, because it affected German domestic politics, and German economics. I remember going through factories in Baden Wurttemberg, seeing signs on the shop floor in English, French, and Turkish, and Greek, and I guess Serbo Croatian.

Q: Were there any other major things that you were dealing with, or happening, during that time there?

SPRINGMANN: The big thing was basically the indigestible minorities, and the flood of ethnic Germans from Eastern Germany and lands to the east, and the business of the Berlin wall.

Q: Obviously there was within the American official community of which you were a part, with the fall of the Berlin wall, and change, there had to be quite a bit of euphoria to begin with.

SPRINGMANN: Yes and no. It was euphoria maybe in other parts of the country, maybe euphoria that was stage-managed for television. I remember well going down to the Volks Fest in Stuttgart and talking to a bunch of people at the various tables, and saying, what do you think of this Germany unification? And they didn't think much of it. They were not Germans, I think they were Yugoslavs, they didn't think much of it at all. Then I watched the television proceedings in Berlin and they had all the flags, and people cheering, and I said, this is pretty good. And then I happened to be sitting up on the porch while this was going on, and I opened up the window to see what the rest of the city was doing, and you heard the odd firecracker going off, you'd see the odd rocket, but by and large it was fairly quiet, and nowhere near the euphoria you heard in Stuttgart when Germany won the World Football Cup.

Q: Well, first things first.

SPRINGMANN: The other thing I noticed was at the consulate it was very withdrawn inward looking consulate. Nobody entertained. I had to fight to get any kind of representational funds. And they wouldn't give me enough space to perform my function. I had previously written and said, this is what I want to do. And they said, we'll give you your predecessors two-bedroom apartment. And once I arrived I found there was an empty three-bedroom apartment in the same building. They were giving single women, with no representational responsibilities in the consular section entire houses. And I fought to meet people, and I fought to meet successor generation, the younger people in Germany. And I kept seeing when the few people did entertain, they were simply having

over the people that had been hanging around the edge of the Americans for 50 years. And they were totally out of touch with reality.

Q: Yes, that's one of the problems. Well, you left there when?

SPRINGMANN: In June of '91.

Q: Then you came back here?

SPRINGMANN: I came back to D.C. and worked in INR.

Q: What were you doing in INR?

SPRINGMANN: I was the economic analyst for Latin America, and that was everything south of the Rio Grande, including the islands in the Caribbean.

Q: What were our economic concerns?

SPRINGMANN: The official concerns were primarily whether or not privatization was catching on, although I couldn't tell whether it was Republican propaganda, or whether it was really taking place. But they were saying in all the reporting that I was seeing that in places like Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and one or two other places, people had finally gotten the message; that they were throwing off these centrally planned state controlled economies, permitting foreign investment, permitting investment period. Taking the dead hand of government off the neck of the businessman, and beginning to sell off state run enterprises like railroads, airlines, and things like this. It seemed to be working in some places, in other places where it wasn't working, they were sort of getting the idea that, oh yes, there is another way to do things, and maybe it is better.

Q: As you looked from the tower of the State Department on economic things, was there one of some optimism. Did things seem to be moving in a relatively good direction.

SPRINGMANN: You mean as far as the State Department went?

Q: Well, no, what you were getting from reporting from Latin America.

SPRINGMANN: The reporting seemed to be optimistic. But at the same time as I was reading this, I was saying, well, fine, where is the American help because we'd promised them for 50 years, or 60 or 70 in Mexico's case. Do what we want you to do, and we'll reward you. And, by God, there wasn't a nickel coming in to help support these changes.

Q: Did you continue with that? How long were you doing that?

SPRINGMANN: I was there for just a few months. I came back in June and had home leave. I tried to get my house to rights, and then I worked at INR until about September or October.

Q: Then you retired, is that right.

SPRINGMANN: No, State canceled my appointment. I was placed in a job search program for a few months.

Q: How did you find that program?

SPRINGMANN: Totally useless. I resented it. I liked the idea of being paid, but I resented the fact that I was required to spend 8 hours a day there listening to people talk about nothing in particular, when I could have been taking the time to look for a job.

Q: I thought they gave you time to sit down and make your connections.

SPRINGMANN: Oh, after about two or three months they did, but for the first couple of months you're supposed to go there and listen to their dog and pony show.

Q: Is there anything else we might cover? We can always add it. You'll get a transcript and you can play with that.

End of interview