Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

WILLIAM VEALE

Interviewed by: Thomas Dunnigan
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INTERVIEW

[This interview was not edited by Mr. Veale]

Q: This is Thomas Dunnigan speaking on June 27, 2000. Today I will be talking with William Veale about his experiences in the Foreign Service during which he had a number of unusual and interesting posts. Bill, suppose we begin by your telling me something about your background, what you did before you went into the service, and what got you interested in the field of foreign affairs.

VEALE: I was born in October 1942 in the District of Columbia. I grew up as an Army brat in a military family living all over the United States, and then in Japan and in France. During my high school senior year, I was living in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where my father was at the Army War College. I met the State Department faculty representative there and became interested in the Foreign Service. That encouraged me to enroll in the Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. I graduated in 1964 with a bachelor's degree. After that experience, I decided I would go into the Foreign Service ultimately but, coming from a military family, I decided to go into the Army first. Right after graduation in 1964 I enlisted in the Army. I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army where I spent the next five years and rose to the rank of Captain. I received language training at the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey, California, and had a two-year assignment in Heidelberg where I met my wife and then went off to Vietnam in 1968-69. When I came back from Vietnam I went into graduate school, again back to Georgetown, and got my masters in 1971. Shortly after that, I took the Foreign Service exam and went into the Foreign Service. So June 1971 was when I came into the Foreign Service, I believe as a member of the 98th Class.

Q: When you got back from Vietnam and on to the campus at Georgetown, did you find any strong feeling against you personally because of your service there?

VEALE: I found that there was a strong feeling generally against individuals who had served in Vietnam and I had had a particularly demanding assignment in Vietnam and I was fairly closed mouth. I didn't like the attitude of the students. I didn't like the attitude of the American press. I thought most Americans were under-informed about the real situation in Vietnam. So, I was pretty disgusted.

Q: Could you tell us in a few words what your demanding assignment in Vietnam was?

VEALE: I was a case officer running agents into Cambodia. This was fairly sensitive stuff and I was undercover and working fairly closely with individual Vietnamese who were caught between a rock and a hard place, between their lousy government and a worse enemy. I thought this was a tragedy. I later heard a reporter talk about the situation and I am amazed to hear the same kind of things coming from her that I was experiencing.

Q: Well, that was a very exciting and dangerous period in your life. Now you mention entering the Foreign Service in 1971. I presume this was after passing the written, the oral, and the other exams. What sort of training did you have when you entered the service and did you find it useful?

VEALE: The A-100 course, at that time, was about four weeks. It was a quick smattering of a lot of things that I thought I would find useful. I did not really understand that much about the Foreign Service although I had talked to senior Foreign Service officers before. I think the most useful thing that I remember out of that course was the political writing that we were assigned. There was a fellow who had been an editor, who was probably civil service at the time. He gave a very good concentrated course on writing. I must say that it took years for me to become what I think is a respectable writer.

Q: Did you have any other training besides the A-100 course?

VEALE: At that time, A-100 was the introduction.

Q: Your first assignment was here in Washington in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). Was that something you had asked for?

VEALE: It was something that all of a sudden fell into my lap. I had wanted to stay in Washington at the time because my wife was going to school and I wanted her to be able to continue that. There was an opening as ACDA Director Gerard Smith's assistant, effectively a bag carrier, but it was a staff assistant position. I believe the executive director of ACDA was anticipating that this was something that needed to be filled but Gerard Smith himself wasn't sure that he needed such an assistant. When that job didn't work out, I went to work for David Linebaugh, the Chief, Plans and Regional Affairs Division, who at that time was doing some general strategic arms control planning under Jim Leonard who was the Assistant Director for ACDA's International Affairs Bureau. That was in November 1971.

I was working on arms control issues, proposals we designed to make China into a non-proliferation area and some other generic arms control issues dealing with free zones and things of that sort. At that time I was one of two Bill's and three Dave's working for David Linebaugh. The other two Dave's were Dave Fischer and David Aaron who later went on to become national security advisor. The other Bill was Bill Shinn, a Foreign Service officer.

After doing that for four or five months, I moved over to the multilateral side under Alan Neidle, Chief Political Affairs Division, working on Geneva-related, very specific arms control negotiation issues having to do with backstopping the Conference of the Committee of Disarmament under UN (United Nations) auspices, which was in session two or three times a year. I went to Geneva as the secretary of the delegation, a junior officer on the delegation.

Q: Who headed that delegation?

VEALE: At that time it was a political appointee by the name of Joe Martin. He was quite an interesting fellow. I got to know him fairly well there. He took a liking to me and I liked him as well. But, he was handling this at a very high level of generality, not having anything more than a lawyer's background. Also during that period, the other secretary of the delegation that I would spell with was another junior Foreign Service officer named Jim Leach, who was subsequently elected to Congress and is Chairman of the Banking Committee in the House now.

Q: From Iowa.

VEALE: You are right. After those couple of assignments in ACDA, I was then given an assignment in France. But you had a question about the relationship with the other agencies – with the White House, with State, and with Defense. At that time, ACDA was charged with very high quality people, I thought, and had a commanding lead in Washington, vis-à-vis other agencies, in taking the initiative on arms control issues. The Bureau of Political/Military Affairs (PM) in State was the major point of contact. In Defense, in the Office of the Secretary, there was this international affairs office as well as the Joint Staff. The position that ACDA generally – and the perspective that I had as a junior officer at that point – tended to be pretty strong compared to what happened in subsequent years.

Q: Was this before or after Nixon's trip to China?

VEALE: This was in the summer of 1971 and Nixon's visit was in 1972. The kinds of things that I was doing were looking for ways to bring China into the non-proliferation treaty, the NPT. We looked at Chinese statements on this issue to try to see what openings there might be to begin to entice them into this arrangement, but nothing really ever came of it.

Q: Did any of that come up during Nixon's or Kissinger's visit to China?

VEALE: Not that I was aware of at my level at that time. Whether ACDA was doing this in response to something from the White House, or whether this was a self-generated internal exercise to be prepared for arms control initiatives we were doing with China, is hard to say.

Q: Did our involvement in Vietnam have any affect on what we were doing in the disarmament field at the time?

VEALE: There were some issues having to do with the damage that modern weapons do to human beings. Of course, there were napalm issues. There were issues about ballistic trajectories of weapons, the M-16, the way the round worked. These were negotiations that the Joint Staff representatives were very much concerned about and my recollection is that they were spun off into a separate set of negotiations that was an attempt to limit the damage that the military was very much concerned about – these initiatives that could limit the effectiveness of weapons.

Q: Did arms control figure in the 1972 election campaign in any way?

VEALE: Well, McGovern was the candidate Nixon was running against at that time. I am hard pressed to recall anything that was particularly controversial at that point. I think the Nixon administration had its flanks fairly well covered on arms control issues with the things it was trying to do with SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) and other initiatives at that point. My recollection was that the government was much more preoccupied by domestic issues.

Q: Like Vietnam.

VEALE: Yes, Vietnam per se.

Q: Did you feel that Henry Kissinger took a strong interest in what ACDA was doing and keeping a close watch on it? He was, at that time, in the White House as national security advisor.

VEALE: At my level at that time, I don't remember any leash jerks. In the fall of 1972, I was loaned back from ACDA to be a staff assistant to Jonathan Dean, who at that point was operating under D, the Deputy Under Secretary's office, to launch what came to be called the Mutual and Balanced Forces Reduction talks (MBFR). This was an effort to try to address the fact that after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia there had been a major change in the power equation to the confrontation of the forces in central Europe. An addition of five or so divisions had been put into this spearhead position in Czechoslovakia and complicated matters along with the growing nuclear issues. So, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) began a pioneering effort to launch a multilateral arms control negotiation, which would engage the Warsaw Pact on the reduction of confrontation forces there. I became very much involved in working with John Payne on those issues. Then he was named the negotiator to exploratory talks. I was again the secretary of the delegation and when the talks opened up, and after having identifying people to serve in the U.S. delegation, there was a lot of back and forth with the Soviets about where the talks should be held. We initially wanted to have them in Geneva and I did a forward deployment to Geneva looking for a place to have these

negotiations. While I was in Geneva it was ultimately worked out with the Soviets that because of their concern about secure communications back to Moscow, they preferred Vienna. Ultimately, Vienna was chosen as the place. So, after two weeks in Geneva, I then moved to Vienna and started all over again. Our Embassy in Vienna compressed itself and vacated a wing so that our delegation could have nice offices in their lovely Embassy.

Then for what were initially expected to be six weeks of preliminary negotiations to set the framework for the participants and to define the area subject to negotiation. These negotiations trailed on for some six months. So, from January to almost July of 1973, I was in Vienna with Jock Dean helping him run the delegation. As well as the reporting officer I was also sort of the general services officer.

Q: Did we have the feeling that the Soviets were eager for an MBFR treaty or we were just dragging it along?

VEALE: Well, this is a game that is played very carefully with something else they want. They wanted political trappings and benefits that would come from advancing their agenda in CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) and while we tried to play that game by defining different aspects in CSCE, one of which was going to be security issues including confidence building measures. We made it clear that it was only if we got what we wanted in the MBFR that would we discuss concessions and steps that they had wanted in the CSCE area.

The problem that MBFR got hung up on, the chief problem was the question of forces in Hungary which were really Soviet forces, as to whether Hungary was going to be in or out of the area. The Soviets tried to link that to Italy and there was considerable asymmetry there although when you introduced nuclear things you began to understand somewhat the Soviet perspective. In northern Italy we had the southern European task force, which was basically a missile force to support the Italian army in the Alps. But, in Hungary, there were several Soviet divisions and the concern was that those would be [inaudible]. Ultimately, we basically decided not to go along with [inaudible] or the reductions, but to set up a separate category of measures that would address these kinds of forces as well as forces in the areas of reduction. These were called associated measures. They were tighter versions of what was coming to be negotiated in the confidence-building measures of CSCE.

In the MBFR negotiations, I thought there was a lot of back and forth with the Warsaw Pact which was very carefully orchestrated by the Soviet side whereas the NATO side was making it quite clear that there were a lot of different views being presented at table. It was a very difficult task that Jock Dean had of keeping all of the allies on board and moving in the same direction. It was a little bit like herding cats.

Q: Were all the NATO members represented in these discussions in Geneva or did they send their views from Brussels?

VEALE: There were heads of delegations in Vienna, but it was primarily the individual NATO delegations in Brussels that sent instructions as well as cabinets. Individual country delegations were augmented with experts from capitals as well.

Q: Did Jock Dean have 15 colleagues there?

VEALE: Effectively yes. My recollection is that France was not participating in MBFR. I may be wrong. This was a very dicey dispute and France wasn't participating in any military aspects of NATO.

Q: Did you do any work on the ABM (antiballistic missiles) treaty that I believe was being negotiated by Gerard Smith at the same time?

VEALE: No, I was not directly involved with SALT issues at that time. I was primarily involved with the European issues. There were some nuclear issues that were in MBFR. There was the so-called option three MBFR which was a nuclear option that was aimed at reducing the size of the nuclear forces on both sides – anything from phantom-capable nuclear jets and nuclear artillery rockets on our side, to counterpart systems on the Warsaw Pact side. In fact, what we were offering to do, and I can hear myself think on this, we were offering a sweetener in the form of taking out nuclear arms in order to get larger conventional force reductions on the Soviet side. This is a subject matter that started a lot of the thinking that led to the INF (intermediate nuclear forces) spin-offs some years later.

Q: You certainly had a fascinating first tour being near the apex of some most intriguing issues that we were dealing with at the time. After your two years plus experience in ACDA, did you have the feeling that we were getting help or interference from Congress in our arms control policy? Or was it a mixture?

VEALE: I recall that that Jock Dean was very assiduous in cultivating people on the Hill to make sure that they were kept informed and kept on board to give as much latitude as possible. Recognize the period I was working with MBFR was the initial six months and it was very amorphous, very vague at that stage and no one really knew exactly were things were going. I do not remember any particular congressional issues at that time. There were strong concerns about any troop reductions whatsoever by some people on the Hill. Indeed Sam Nunn, I believe, was a factor at this point. I am having difficulty sorting out the later association with MBFR in the late 1970s and Nunn was clearly a factor at that point.

One of the things that I think needs to be kept in mind when looking at MBFR was the pressures the superpowers were under from the non-aligned countries to show progress on arms control, there were certain political benefits to be gained from being seen as engaged in a process like MBFR. From the point of the U.S. military, there was no way that they saw any reason to reduce already fairly thin forces that already had been drawn

down significantly for Vietnam and no desire to do anything that constrained us further in that area in terms of force numbers. MBFR was really about offering German reductions to the Warsaw Pact in order to get their massive conventional forces reduced along with some nuclear weapons as well. But, the main focus of it was the effort to offer up German force reductions – put a cap on German forces. This is what the Soviets wanted to do, to get German forces as low as possible, and we wanted to get as much mileage as we could out of capping the Germans.

Q: Was there any UN interest in MBFR talks?

VEALE: Not of any deliberate effort. If you recall the 18-nation disarmament talks began as Warsaw and NATO talks and then got folded into a UN conference that literally got multilaterized with non-aligned countries being added into it. That had grown to 25 when I was there. I believe it has grown to around 35 now, if not more. So that put a completely different political spin on those kinds of negotiations with a lot more show for the non-aligned audience. MBFR was a kind of return to more pure Warsaw Pact/NATO discussions, without the distraction of the non-aligned.

Q: In the middle of 1973 your tour was up and you were assigned to Strasbourg as a vice consul. Was this a tour you requested?

VEALE: Again, I got two weeks notice of this assignment. I guess junior officer assignments weren't perceived in those days with much interest. I had been told that there were no overseas assignments and then a few days later I was told to be in Strasbourg in two weeks. My wife and I bundled ourselves up and we managed to get there in August 1973. It was a two-person post. Ron Woods was the Principle Officer. The post's primary rationale was to be observers at the Council of Europe. At that time the Council of Europe had been promoted by Churchill after World War II as a political alliance to go along with the military alliance that NATO would represent. It would have very strong democratic criteria for membership and it would be aimed at making the legislation permanent and the types of approaches to problem solving of the social problems that existed in the Western European area. It was beginning to be surpassed by the development of the European Parliament and the European Communities at that point. But, there was still a parliamentary assembly which was useful place for gauging the international sentiments of political parties of different countries in Europe. So, the observer function, which had been much larger – with five or seven people in it back in the late '40s and '50s, and maybe into the '60s – had been honed down to just a consul general and a vice consul.

Q: Who was your consul general?

VEALE: Ron Woods. He had been in the Embassy in Paris before. Alan Holmes was the Political Counselor in the Embassy in Paris at that time. Kenneth Rush was the Ambassador, and then there was John Irwin who had been Deputy Secretary.

Q: Did they ever visit Strasbourg?

VEALE: Yes, I believe Rush did and I am trying to remember whether Irwin did. My job was as economic/commercial reporting officer there, although I was assigned as a political cone officer, this post required that I promote business with the U.S. – trade opportunities and things of that sort – so I had dealings with the Chambers of Commerce in the counselor district of eastern France.

Q: Did you have to sample Alsatian wines?

VEALE: Oh, yes. I was forced to drink and eat for my country.

Q: Did we issue visas and passports there?

VEALE: Yes, we did. It had a very normal sort of consular workload there. The Alsatians were not particular problems. There were not really a lot of abusive issues that one had to deal with. I had two American welfare and whereabouts cases that I had to deal with that were very sobering for me. A girl was killed and I had to deal with that and then there was a Picasso art thief that I had to visit in the prison in Metz. To me the most interesting thing was reporting on this process of political amalgamation that was going on at a slow tempo, but fairly deliberate, through the Council of Europe. At this point, the Council of Europe's delegations seemed to have attracted an interesting collection of New World socialists like the Schwartz family from Italy…

Q: Count Schwartz. You don't mean socialist you mean social.

VEALE: I found in my musings through the kinds of thing that are going on there is fascinating efforts of social engineering that were being thought about. One of the more interesting organizations of the Council of Europe was the European Court of Human Rights. I got to know people there fairly well and did an airgram on it.

Q: The good old airgram!

VEALE: That's right.

Q: Were there any domestic troubles in that part France while you were there or were things quiet?

VEALE: Well, the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 weakened the Palestinian-Arab community very much. We had demonstrations. My wife was back in the States at the time. This was shortly after my arrival in the fall of 1973. Our apartment was above the consulate and so, among other duties, I had the job of raising and lowering the American flag from my living room window. I was sitting at my desk writing a letter, looking out this window and noticed this huge crowd that had assembled out there. There were several people chanting about the U.S. being pro-Israeli, etc. It was at this point that Ambassador Irwin

called wanting to know how I was doing – besieged as I was. But it wasn't any particular problem. I don't recall, maybe something was thrown but no windows were broken. Nothing really serious.

One of the other interesting things that happened while I was in Strasbourg, is that our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia at that point, Jim Akins, who had some connection with France, perhaps a French wife, would come back to France periodically. He was in Strasbourg and he had to send a highly classified message to Henry Kissinger about Middle East issues. We had no communications of a secure nature except for the one-time-pad. So he had this relatively long cable that I had to encrypt using the one-time-pad. After coming out of the military, I just could not understand how the State Department could possibly operate, a few years after we put a man on the moon, using one-time-pad technology.

Q: Horses get you there as well as cars. Any other comments about your time in Strasbourg?

VEALE: Not that I can think of right now.

Q: After several years there you were transferred back to Washington and given an assignment on the Soviet desk. Who was your chief on that assignment?

VEALE: The Soviet Desk was part of the European Bureau (EUR/SOV) whose Assistant Secretary was Art Hartman. The EUR/SOV Office Director was Mark Garrison and there were three Deputy Directors. By the fall of 1976 they were Robert Barry, James Wilkinson (Exchanges), and William Edgar (Economic Affairs). But Sol Polansky was my first boss and the second was Wilkinson.. This period I found absolutely fascinating because what Kissinger was trying to do at this point – this was 1975-77 – was build a web of interdependence with various parts of the Soviet system. He constructed a series of intergovernmental agreements that would engage new and untouched parts of the Soviet system. The mother of these agreements was a science and technology agreement, which was basically spurred by the science advisory to the president. It spawned a series of agency types of agreements, with 11 in all, running from space, housing, agriculture, environment, transportation, to energy. The office I was in, on the Soviet desk, was charged with sheparding these. There was also a supplemental aspect of individual exchanges, which was run through the National Academy of Sciences.

I was required to write periodically reports aimed at gauging the progress. The controversial issue at that time was whether or not we were simply opening up our own society to Soviet spying, or were we getting benefits from it.

Q: Tit for tat

Towards the end of that assignment I was asked to do a cost benefits study for the NSC (National Security Council) staff. This was a very laborious project. Under each

agreement there were various projects and there were project leaders for each one, so we were getting input from all these people and trying to decide what were the benefits that were flowing to the U.S. and what were the costs involved in maintaining these benefits. The study, I think, was fairly controversial because although it looked as though we were getting remarkable access into the Soviet system, the nature of the benefits that were flowing our way were very intangible and of a calculus that required more time then we were using to look at. So, this was potentially politically controversial and basically the NSC sat on the study and did not want it to see the light of day where it would become politically controversial.

Q: So, it didn't get to Congress?

VEALE: It didn't get out. The Ford administration basically wound up sitting on it. I have felt to this day that we were sowing, through those agreements, the seeds of the reform movement in the Soviet Union. The recognition that this anal-retentive approach to information in the face of the computer age and the management skills that the west was developing as a result of that were the kinds of things [inaudible] in the past. I think there were people who were aware of this in the state committee on science and technology. There were people who were interested to begin doing something about this. This was a system that had not successfully institutionalized the innovation process the way the west had and they could use espionage to steal but they couldn't seem to incentivize a system of innovation on their own. I found that fascinating.

In light of my prior military experience, one of the more mind-blowing things I remember is that I read the Penkovsky Papers (Editor's Note: Oleg Penkovsky, *The Penkovsky Papers: The Russian Who Spied for the West*, Doubleday, New York, 1966.). Igor Penkovsky had been a Soviet army colonel working at the State Committee on Science and Technology and I found myself in the course of this assignment and once in their negotiations in the offices of the State Committee on Science and Technology. This was back in 1975. I went on a delegation with Gifford Stevers, the president of Science and Technology at the tune. We went to the Soviet Union for some negotiations in the State Committee on Science and Technology's offices and I remember being allowed to wander off to the men's room by myself and I thought, "My gosh, this may have been the place where Igor had visited."

Q: So you did get to Moscow?

VEALE: Yes, in 1975 for some negotiations. That was my first and only trip to the Soviet Union during that period. That was a benchmark for comparisons that I made later with my second trip which was not until December 1992. I saw vast differences.

Q: Did you have a feeling during your time on the Soviet desk that Secretary Kissinger was micro-managing our relations with the Soviet Union or did he leave the people on the desk and in Moscow some leeway?

VEALE: I don't know if micro-managing is the word that I would have chosen. Kissinger was running the Department through a very small group of people and Baker later did the same thing. But, he had a very deliberate set of plans and programs that he wanted to see executed and he wanted to make sure they were executed the way he wanted them to be done. When I was on the desk, a colleague in the bilateral affairs section of the desk interpreted a measure that had to do with either Jewish immigration or some human rights aspect in the Soviet Union and there was some miscommunication within the Department of State about how that issue should be handled. People didn't engage Hartman, and they should have at the time, so this counterpart of mine took some initiative and the roof fell down on him literary because of this. Basically what he was doing was structuring the situation where the U.S. seemed to be taking a much more forthright view on human rights issues with respect to the Soviet Union and I think this issue was not handled the way Kissinger wanted it to be handled so there was a considerable amount of flak that the Department took generally from the White House on that issue. That is my one recollection of an instance where things were being handled in a way that was different from … [tape cuts out]

Q: Did you find your background in ACDA helpful to you while you were on the Soviet desk?

VEALE: Yes, because I understood the strategic weaponry backdrop against which the science and technology gambit with the Soviet Union was being played at that time. And, there was a whole other dimension to that assignment which was on the detective side, if you will. I sat in on interagency deliberations chaired by the Director of Central Intelligence -- this committee structure; there was a committee on exchanges -- that looked at all these exchanges with the Soviet Union: their implementation, intelligence, and so forth. There was a considerable amount of concern about shopping by Soviet spies. The Soviets would put people who were known to be engaged in intelligence activities on delegations and the question was politically whether or not to deny their visas and so forth. So having the background of strategic weaponry helped in that respect.

Q: Were you involved in preparation for the Helsinki conference where we signed the CSCE agreements?

VEALE: Yes, but not in this assignment. Not for the initial CSCE agreements, but later in a subsequent assignment I was involved in working out confidence-building measures in CSCE.

Q: How about the problem of the immigration of Soviet Jews. Did you get involved in that?

VEALE: Only in the incident I mentioned which was handled by the bilateral affairs section so I wasn't directly involved.

Q: It was about this time that President Ford refused to see Solzhenitsyn, did that cause us any heartburn in the Department or any problems?

VEALE: I think there was some surprise at that. I remember that distantly. I can't give you a thumbnail sketch as to what the Department's views were on that, but I remember being disappointed at that. I think the junior officers at the time were somewhat surprised as well.
Q: I guess my question is: had the Soviet desk recommended that he receive Solzhenitsyn or not?

VEALE: I can't remember that.

Q: What about the question of radiation in our Embassy in Moscow. Did that become an issue for you or not?

VEALE: I was asked if I wanted to go to Moscow on assignment. My wife and I had discussed starting a family at that point. I had a good friend who was had been in the Embassy during the period the radiation was taking place and I was not comfortable with the idea of going off to the Embassy based upon what I was hearing from people about the possible unknown impact of the radiation. There was a lot of concern about this, a lot of concern that the Department was not being forthright because of intelligence concerns about the use of this radiation to active micro bombs and things of that sort.

Q: Well, at the end of your tour on the Soviet desk, in the summer of 1978 you moved over to the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs (PM) in the Department. Was this something you welcomed?

VEALE: This was something I welcomed. I was interviewed very deliberately by Les Gelb, the Director of the PM Bureau, for the assignment to PM/DCA (Office of Disarmament and Arms Control) and asked to handle MBFR for him. I looked forward to that because it was a return to an area I had worked on earlier and I knew the players and the issues. That turned out to be just one of the things I did, I got into a lot of arms control issues including CSBMs (comprehensive security building measures) and, at this point, the arms control impact statements were the top political issues with the Congress and it was my job to shepherd those through the Department. There were a number of controversial items. One in particular was the so-called 'neutron bomb' or enhanced radiation weapon. There were a few other things as well, including greater interceptors to push the limits of the ABM and things of that sort.

Q: Did you get involved in the preparatory work for the trips of General Ronny and Secretary Vance to Moscow to discuss the SALT treaty?

VEALE: No, I was not involved in that. At this point in time, MBFR had been going on for five years and it was kind of dead in the water in a sense and jokingly people would refer to it as the perpetual motion machine. It was designed to look as if it was going

some place, but actually it was going nowhere and that made the Joint Chiefs of Staff happy for reasons I mentioned earlier. It gave people the political benefits of being seemed to be involved in this process so there were a number of attempts being made to get things off dead center. I prepared a very extensive briefing book of talking points for Les Gelb to use with the number two in the Soviet Embassy here. This was an attempt to get the MBFR talks going. One of the things that began to come out of this was the lifting out of this option three, nuclear option, and development of that into intermediate force negotiations. At the same time, there were also French efforts to recast MBFR in a different world, in a geographically broader context. I personally found that a much more sensible way to go and after 3 years of working on this, Les Gelb left over a disagreement with [National Security Counsel Advisor] Brzezinski over conventional arms transfers. He got basically stabbed in the back by the White House and he felt this would be intolerable. His deputy took over, so I left my paper on his desk. I argued in favor of co-opting the French idea of recasting MBFR into something larger. Ultimately, this is exactly what happened with the demise of MBFR and the transmutation of MBFR into CFE (Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty). I was pleased to see this broader sort of development.

Q: Few officers get the opportunity to see their plans taken up.

VEALE: I don't know this was directly, but I was on the same wave length with the way the future evolved. At any rate, the other thing that I found absolutely fascinating during this period was that we – I was the PM staff representative on an inter-agency working group with joint staff people and ACDA people and INR was also involved in this – were conceptualizing how to put rules on behavior of forces in and out of garrisons so that there could be predictability of surprise attacks, the movement of forces, and so forth. So we constructed this very elaborate set of thresholds and categories of unit activity. It would begin to become notification thresholds for generating transparency and our real effort was aimed at developing these associate measures with the larger area outside the very tightly defined area. MBFR at this stage was becoming a series of concentric circles with very tight measures aimed at reductions and controls on the forces being reduced and that we could verify that they were being reduced. Then in increasing laxity out from that core were a series of what were called 'associate measures' that varied these rules on the way you could use your forces in those areas, on what you could do with your forces in those areas, so that you generate transparency and predictability and confidence that a sneak attack would not come.

The first spinoff benefits for these was providing concepts and proposals for MBFR, but the spin off was sort of a larger set of measures to apply to CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the security basket there. We developed a number of measures and I was coordinating them with John Kornblum and Leon Fuerth, who was in EUR/RPM (Office of Security and Political Affairs in the European Bureau) at that time working on these measures to develop them. We came up with a very good set of associate measures for MBFR and CSCE confidence-building measures.

Q: Which were acceptable with our Defense Department?

VEALE: Well, yes, they were co-opted into the process. They were involved in the process of developing ideas from the beginning. We basically came up with a whole series of these measures. The intellectual sweat we expended at that time became a sort of reservoir of measures that are being applied even today. I believe that those measures were applied in the Sinai Peace Accord in the way you regulate the engagement of forces. It created a kind of intellectual library, if you will, of concepts that could be deployed in other confrontational areas around the world. I felt very good about that experience myself and I think the people working on that deserve a lot of credit for having built that inventory of ideas. We met regularly over a period of a year or year and a half.

Q: Tell us a little bit about the effect on the western Europeans, as you saw it, of the neutron bomb problem.

VEALE: Actually, I remember a larger impact on the American liberal public and the Congress. There seemed to be more people opposed to this, but it was certainly true that Europe was concerned that this was the bomb that would protect the property landlords, it would leave the goods standing but getting rid of the people you didn't like.

Q: I was in the Netherlands at the time and I well remember some of the strong views there about this.

VEALE: This issue, probably along with the decoupling issue, was probably one of the things that Europeans were most neuralgic about. I was dealing with this in the context of an arms control impact statement and the immediate political controversy with people in the Congress about this issue, so there was this European background noise. The loudest noises that we were hearing came from these people who were making hay out of it in Congress and there was a lot of flak as you remember. Ultimately, Carter decided that there would be a component that we would keep out of the weapon. It was an optical fix, but it was designed to take the heat off this issue.

Q: He was dithering on this whole issue for quite a while and as a result it was making it all the more difficult to take overseas. Did you attend the Geneva disarmament conference in 1979?

VEALE: No, and now that you mention that, I believe that is where the International Red Cross, the humanitarian stuff.... You were asking about Vietnam and the impact on the negotiations in Geneva earlier and I believe this stuff was becoming big-time in this period, in the late '70s. I am trying to remember the term used to describe these types of things, they are weapons that cause mutilation and so forth. I believe the humanitarian aspect of the war weapons was being addressed in this context as well. I don't recall being involved in the conference. I was very much involved in European [inaudible].

Q: It was a prelude in a sense to the signing of the SALT II agreement in June that year

between the president and Brezhnev. Do you think that SALT II agreement was welcomed in Europe?

VEALE: I'm speaking from (a) from the distance of memory and (b) from the fact that I wasn't directly involved in SALT at this time. During this period, when SALT II was passed, I did go through the course that they had for speakers to go out and sell SALT and I think I had at least one speaking engagement in this area where I did that. But, again, my recollection is that the Europeans were, as was the non-aligned, reasonably in favor of this step by the superpowers to begin dealing with the nuclear issues. But, under the surface, there was this concern about decoupling, that as you reduced the weapons the remaining weapons became more important and we need to use them more urgently and if you in any way affected the instantaneous use or put the American homeland in the same degree of vulnerability as Europe, or if there was any change to that equation, it would make the Europeans very sensitive that we would sacrifice European territory.

Q: Talk let's talk about the intermediate and cruise missiles that we wanted to put into Europe to counter the Soviet SS 20s. Were you deeply involved in that issue?

VEALE: During this period in PM, I was not directly involved. There were people in PM who were working that issue once they had been lifted out of MBFR and made into its own thing. There was the basic effort to develop packages and proceed with theater nuclear force modernization. What was important was to proceed with that almost irrespective of the negotiating track. There were these modernizationists who wanted that program to go ahead on its own merits, we needed to do it. If we can get something for it out of the negotiations, fine. PM Deputy Director Dave Gompers was the guy Les Gelb had spearheading the modernization effort. Jerry Kahan was the deputy in charge of the arms control side of the issue.

Q: I was on the other end in Europe at the time and it was a great triumph when we got the Dutch to accept the missiles on their territory. Well, Bill, any more comments on your time in Bureau of Political-Military Affairs?

VEALE: Those are the highlights that I can think of right now. Maybe later I will think of some more input.

Q: Then in 1980 you moved in the Department to the 7th floor in the Office of the Undersecretary for Management. Who was that at the time?

VEALE: The Undersecretary for Management was Ben Read who had been a Carter appointee. The office that I was in was Management Operations (M/MO), which was headed by Bob Miller. [Editor's Note: According to the Spring 1981 State Department Telephone book, Mr. Veale was assigned as a Management Analysis Officer responsible for oversight of AF (Africa Bureau), S (the Secretary's Office), S/P (the Office of Policy Planning), PPG (Priorities Policy Group), and GORM.] I liked Bob very much, but he was very cautious in his job. This was an office that had been conceptualized by

Kissinger when he was Secretary of State. Kissinger saw a dichotomy in the Department between the way resources to were applied and the way policy was developed. There was a disconnect he felt and there needed to be some mechanism to bring these two ideas together so that the policy was consistent with resources and could be carried out with resources that you have or that you make sure you mustered the resources necessary to carry out the kinds of polices you wanted. So he created this office. I think Larry Eagleburger, as Kissinger's deputy at the time, had been charged with getting it launched, so it was reasonably well institutionalized. As a political cone officer coming into this position, I found the office had been co-opted by the administrative tail of the Department and that although good substantive policy reasons might be developed for doing something, the administrative side would put on the brakes and nibble away at something. It became quite clear to me that there was an ability to frustrate the carrying out of policy by the administrative side, people who were very skillful in doing this, people who had percolated up through the administrative cone and seeing how inept political and economic cone officers had been in dealing with these issues that they themselves were now very skillful at.

Q: Did the transition from Secretary Vance to Secretary Muskie have any affect on what you were doing in M/MO? [Editor's Note Secretary Vance resigned 28 April 1980 in the wake of the failed Desert One hostage rescue attempt in Iran.]

VEALE: No I want to come back to something quickly. During this assignment I came to realize how much political and economic cone officers, especially if they rose to senior positions, seemed to - by default - turn key resource issues over to this administrative apparatus on the side. I was struck with how much this contrasted with my military experience where the commanding officer took responsibility for all of this. It was as though you handle these details and don't bother me with those issues. So, the argumentation, the presentations, that could have been presented, both within the Department and then down on the Hill, to make the really strong cases – people who had been working with these kinds of issues long enough across their careers should be able to make persuasive arguments but they didn't know how to do this. I saw this as a major shortcoming and as an explanation in my mind why State was always coming up short with resources.

Now to go to your question on the difference between Muskie and Vance. Not anything particularly perceptive in this area at all. I was executive secretary of something that was called the priorities policy group which was a real operating line that Kissinger had set up and was chaired by the Under Secretary for Management, Ben Read, and on the substantive side of the Department, assistant secretaries of some of the regional bureaus, the Counselor of the Department, and the Director General of the Foreign Service. There were probably seven or eight people probably on it from the 7th and 6th floors. This was the body that would look at the budget and proposals and make the tradeoffs. I remember we worked on a reporting officer package, trying to identify, over a couple of years, positions around the world that need to be created to better focus on reporting needs. This was sold as a package and there were a variety of different cross cutting issues that we put

together. I worked on redoing the ambassador's authorities and so forth. I learned quite a lot about how the Department operated in this assignment.

I had worked fairly early on for the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) while I was in PM. I had led a pay reform effort that was subsequently folded into the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Basically we linked, or adjusted the linkages, of the Foreign Service pay scale with the Civil Service. This generally in the middle grades resulted in pay increases as much as 20-25 percent. Senior officers at that time had felt that the middle grade officers had shafted them because this was packaged into the over all reforms that were analogous to what Carter was doing in the Civil Service including the senior executive service and the senior foreign service was set up. The senior Foreign Service officers did not like the senior Foreign Service Act. As a result of my AFSA work, I became personally interested in resource issues, which is one of the reasons why I sought this job in PM at this point. While I was there, I worked on a reorganization of the State Department and published an article in the *Foreign Service Journal* about this, it was basically a distillation of a paper that I had written internally. I tried to get Bob Miller to buy into it, but he didn't want to get into it. I wound up giving it as a transition paper to the guy who headed the transition team for the Reagan administration because his son was in the Foreign Service and had recently become an ambassador. This later got to Al Haig. My ideas were probably more along the kinds lines of what Haig would have liked if he had stuck around. I believed in a much more powerful Secretary of State. These articles were in the 200th anniversary issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* back in 1980.

Q: You were there for the change over from Carter(1977-81) to Reagan (1981—89) and also Secretary Haig taking over. I presume there were a number of changes within the Department.

VEALE: It was brutal. It was brutal with senior people being told to vacate their offices within 48 hours. There was a really a housecleaning. My own personal reaction at the time was that this was the end of arms control, as I had known it at any rate. The posturing that was done during that administration probably was the right thing at the right time and it produced fissures in the Soviet system that, combined with the seeding that we might have done earlier that I was alluding to, helped encourage the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Q: Were you there at the time of the Haig resignation?

VEALE: One of the things I did in this period was agitate for better mid-level officer training, and so I had pushed for a reintroduction of a mid-level course and I found myself curtailed from this assignment and assigned to the mid-level course. At which point, I was also assigned to go to Berlin to be the political-military officer in the U.S. mission there. So I left in February of 1982, before Haig resigned. [Editor's Note: Secretary Haig departed in early July 1982; *State Magazine* records Mr. Veale's transfer as in September]

Q: Did you find the mid- level course valuable to you?

VEALE: I thought it was excellent, although I felt I knew most of the material. But there were a lot of people who had a negative feeling. I think the biggest problem was that there was an attempt to put all cones into the same course. The way the work in the Foreign Service is done, I don't think it was necessary to do that. The nine month economic course for mid career was excellent, but there needs to be a political prologue to that and call it a mid-level political officer's course or something like that.

Q: Or it would become the elite officer's course.

VEALE: Well, this is the problem. The Foreign Service has never come to grips with this issue. The British had an A&D system and I came in shortly after the cone system was set up and the system was described to me as giving protection to the people in the other cones rather than doing anything particular for the political officer. The problem with the political officers is that there were too many of them, they were too comfortable in doing what they were doing, and they had the lousiest promotion rates. I was a victim of that along with many other people and I think there were a lot of other people who were. Political officers had to learn to be broader than they have been in the past.

Q: At the end of your mid-level officer's course you went off to Berlin, a fascinating post. Who was the head of mission there?

VEALE: The head of mission was the ambassador in Bonn who was Arthur Burns. The deputy head of mission for Berlin was Nelson Ledsky. [Editor's Note: Ronald Casagrande was Economic Section Chief and Brunson McKinley was the Political Section Chief when Mr. Veale arrived at post.] I was political-military officer in Berlin, but I also had to deal with commercial air issues which had to do with use of the corridors by commercial air and the whole issue of access to Berlin. I also dealt with the military activities in Berlin, keeping the military smart on the theology of our status program. There was a legal attaché, Don _____ who is now in the civil aviation office. He was very, very good.

Q: What was the atmosphere in Berlin? Were the Berliners still happy to have us there or were they getting tired of us?

VEALE: I think yes and no. There were different Berliners. Berlin was and may still be a kind of California of Germany. One whole part, the Spartsburg part of Berlin, was inhabited by people who were house squatters with radical fringes. You could escape the draft by going to Berlin where you weren't subject to the German draft. This created a kind of bizarre political reflection there. The symbolic role of the Americans in Berlin was greatly appreciated by the Berliners, but the day-to-day putting up with the things that keep a military proficient were constant annoyances to the Berliners. Issues like aircraft noise, military maneuvers, tanks were a constant thorn and the political left used those to their own purposes.

The real issue that I became aware of at this time was the ordinary bumpf of what was

going on in Berlin at this time. There were a number of access incidents, some of which were the result of our own inaptitude, people not following the rules. But, if you recall the Soviet Union at this point was having a change in leadership. This was from 1982-85 when I was there. The Soviet Union was in turmoil at the top. It is my belief that the Soviet military in Western military districts were behaving with less political direction during this period than they had been before. They were looking for ways to stymie other foreign forces and it was fairly widely felt at that point that pin pricks in Berlin were a way of reminding the West how vulnerable it was on those issues. So, some of these access issues began to look like calculated efforts. There was interference with our aircraft. They reduced the corridors.

Q: By military or civilian flights?

VEALE: Both in the sense that some civilian use of the corridors was questioned. There were some questions about whether that type of aircraft (small, not commercial aircraft but executive-type jets) that should be used. There were some threats made about shooting them down and I was involved in one of those crises. Then there were more complex problems having to do with the Soviet closure of the air corridors to move military aircraft across them. This became a recurring problem that would have the political effect of eroding our access ways. It looked to me like unsupervised military people were taking the low cost ways to move their aircraft from base A to base B. At the same time, this was something that could be used, from the political point of view, to remind the West how vulnerable it was there. This was an arousing issue over the course of the year or year and a half. We started out with some near collisions with civilian aircraft because we were moving squadrons and rigs through the air corridors. So this was a major issue that kept brewing for at least a year, but ultimately it died down.

Q: I think you are right though that the Soviets were in an in between period there and their lines of communication were probably not the best.

VEALE: Well people could pursue their own agendas without being collared for doing it; I think that is more the way that I look at it. We saw the Defense Ministry saying one thing and the Foreign Ministry saying another but of course that could have been orchestrated. It looked like gamesmanship.

Q: Berlin is a place that always attracts visitors. You were there for Vice President Bush's visit when he came?

VEALE: Newt Gingrich was going to come. I was going to be his escort officer and was delighted that he didn't come. As a matter of fact, I was in charge of arrivals and departures for the Bush visit. I must tell you they pulled some guy out of some law consulting firm to be head of the advanced team there and I have never worked with a nicer person. This was the great thing about the whole Bush visit. It was nice guys doing nice things for one another. This was a good visit and it went very well - (end of tape)

Q: This is Tom Dunnigan speaking on July 17, 2000. I am about to have my second interview with Bill Veale. When we spoke the last time you were telling me about your tour in Berlin in the early '80s. As you left there, what were your thoughts? Could you foresee a time when the Wall would come down, when Berlin, or even Germany itself, would be reunited?

VEALE: I had been an optimistic observer of Germany for many years. When I was in graduate school in the late '60s, early '70s, I was asked by a professor whether I ever thought Germany would be reunited and, at that time, I felt that yes it would be – probably within thirty to fifty years or so. I didn't see it lasting as a permanent state of affairs. When I was in Berlin, one of the main things that struck me was the artificiality of our presence there and the whole structure of subsidies that maintained the presence there as the Berliners would say, the absence of a natural hinterland for the city itself. Those were some of the more concrete observations. I think on a deeper level, the kind of thing that we later saw in unification had its seeds in this period with a very self-centered German population which was concerned about being able to get out of Berlin periodically, that the psychological, in a sense 'imprisonment' behind the Iron Curtain was something that psychologically weighed on people. So there was a booming industry of chartered tours to places that other Germans from the Federal Republic would go to as well. There was a continuing effort by Berliners to do the things that other Germans were doing, to try to be as integrated as possible into the society and there certainly was an encouragement from the point of view of the Federal Republic on that.

The American military presence was clearly symbolic. I do not believe that we really had in place any military capability to defend Berlin and that our ability to keep anything of a military nature from happening in Berlin rested almost completely on deterrents and escalation of the types of things that would be done in Berlin, should it be subject to a military squeeze, would have bought only some opening move time for political decision to obtain unity in the West, to escalate and make the cost of any move on Berlin apparent. But, there were some really wild ideas that were circulating in military circles that might be used as ways to try to address that early stage of an opening Berlin conflict that, in my view, lacked a lot of political realities behind them. So, the tenuousness of our presence there I think was the thing that struck me.

I was also very much struck by the legacy of Berlin as a colossal example of the failure to have paid attention to details back in World War II and making assumptions about access rights, for example, and I would hope that this continued to be an instructive lesson for diplomats negotiating postwar type arrangements, or any type of arrangements for that matter, that requires detailed knowledge of the circumstances and a thorough thinking out of what needs to be done to make sure that things work on the ground as well as just words on a piece of paper. I think this is an area where we really have to make sure that we learn this lesson. I am not so sure that we have learned this lesson as well as we should have.

Q: Bill, after those interesting years in Berlin you had a complete change. You applied

for, accepted, and were put into Burmese language training in late 1985. How did that come about?

VEALE: Well, after a succession of assignments that were either in Washington or in Europe dealing with Europe, I was well overdue for a hardship assignment. Having worked in management operations, and understanding how the system had to work, I felt I had no choice but to actively seek a hardship assignment. In looking at the various possibilities, Burma had always interested me. I had, in fact, bid on assignments to Burma earlier in my career. After talking to people who had been assigned there, there was a kind of "Terry and the Pirates" [Editor's Note: This reference is to an American cartoon strip drawn by Milton Caniff starting in 1934] mystique about the place. It had always intrigued me and my imagination but, at the same time, I thought it would be an extremely interesting place to go that only the Foreign Service could offer. There was very little commercial presence in Burma. There were some international organization presence, but it was not the kind of place that you could certainly go and live in easily in any other pursuit except in the diplomatic context.

So, from that point of view it seemed like it would be interesting. The fact that there were these ethnic insurgencies going on and it's still, at that point, efforts to maintain neutrality between China, Russia, and the United States made for an interesting dynamic. The narcotics aspects of it I thought would be interesting and the fact that it was being run by a military regime (Ne Win) made the whole picture quite intriguing. So, after studying Burmese for about ten months, our family launched off for Burma. I must say that when we arrived in Rangoon, it was absolutely mind-blowing. I had served in southeast Asia in Vietnam during the Vietnam war when I was in the Army so I was not unprepared for southeast Asia. But, instead of a bustling city, when we arrived in Rangoon, it was the middle of the rainy season and Rangoon gets about 212 inches of rain in three months during this period. So there were literally buckets of water coming straight down 24 hours a day. The buildings were whitewashed but the whitewash was washing off and green algae was growing all over everything and any cracks, of which there were many in the buildings, was a place for vegetation to be growing. The city gave the impression that only recently it had been reclaimed from the jungle.

Q: But, it was good for the rice crop, no doubt.

VEALE: Burma had been a fantastic rice growing and exporting country but, as I later came to see, this military regime had literally driven it into the ground and lived off the infrastructure that had been built up by the British during the colonial period. There was no reinvestment in that and everything was running down.

Q: Was your wife given Burmese language training too or were you the only one that was allowed to take it?

VEALE: My wife could have taken Burmese language training, but did not at this time due to a complicated 4th pregnancy.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived in 1986?

VEALE: When I arrived it was Dan O'Donohue who had been in Burma two years, this was his last year and I believe had served in Bangkok previously as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. [Editor's Note: Ambassador O'Donohue served from Nov 1983 to December 1986.]

Q: You went into the political section when you got there?

VEALE: Yes, I was responsible for internal political reporting and coverage of the insurgencies and some political reporting on the narcotics front. The Bureau of International Narcotic Affairs had succeeded getting one of their own officers in to run actual programmatic aspects of the narcotics program which had been done by earlier predecessors of mine in that position from the political section. But this was now a separate officer's function. So, I was able to focus more on the insurgencies and internal political unrest, which as it turned out during my two years there was very recent.

Q: How large was the political section?

VEALE: It was fairly large, about 16 or so officers, not all of whom were State.

Q: What was the atmosphere in Burma when you arrived? They were living under military authoritarianism. How did they accept that? Was it resignation or were there rumblings underneath?

VEALE: The Burmese have put up with a lot of things that other peoples around the world would not have put up with. This may be because life has changed very little in Burma. You go outside of Rangoon and very quickly you are back several hundred years to a bullock cart society. There is very little extension of electricity in villages and bamboo structures were everywhere. In many ways you could say that Burma was the ultimate biodegradable society. We were constantly struck by the ingenuity of recycling and the way in which people took advantage of even the slightest things. You would find World War II vintage trucks on which the load-carrier structure had been completely replaced with teak, the metal having long ago rusted away. So, it was constantly a study in surprising contrasts.

But, resignation, I think is the best word now. When I arrived there, Burma had, for some years, been functioning with all the trappings of a civilianized government with the military calling the shots from the sidelines. Ne Win was in charge and the military certainly enjoyed first position at the feeding trough. There was a civilian government structure drawn largely from former military people and there was a political party, the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP), which had a very unusual role. It appeared to me that it was a kind of country club elite that functioned as the personnel decision-making body in the system and which seemed to have a double check role against some of the

military functions. But it became very top heavy and was feeding upon itself, very much like the communist party in the late period of the communist systems around the world. It was never really clear to me whether it had a long term role or not. It seemed to be wired in as a central player, but whether it had any long-term staying power beyond the toleration of Ne Win or Ne Win seeing it as having this double check utility, was not really clear. I don't think that really became evident until later.

In 1988, right after I left, Ne Win suggested that the party be disbanded and it basically collapsed on fairly short order in the turmoil that occurred in the summer of 1988.

Q: Including his resignation.

VEALE: Yes, including his resignation. And the hand of the military came out of the closet in that period after the attempted civilian rule and the democratic elections were not allowed to come to fruition.

Q: What was the attitude towards the United States when you were there?

VEALE: The attitude towards the United States was fairly good. In fact, the Burmese government looked at the United States as a useful balancer against pressure from China and Russia. Ne Win came to the United States for medical reasons and for a number of other personal reasons. He had some friends in Oklahoma and so forth. The desk officer at the time in the State Department really was able to ingratiate himself with Ne Win by helping to arrange things that had initially looked fairly complicated from the Burmese perspective. By making it possible for these things to happen, he literally got a red carpet treatment every time he came to Burma, far out of proportion to his rank and position in our own hierarchy. But, we at the Embassy took advantage of this and traveled on his coattails. We would give him the itinerary as to where he should ask to go and sometimes this meant that the Burmese would have to bend over backward. We met with the then Lt. Colonel who was number two in the intelligence service and is now number two in the government. He has promoted himself to I think a 3-star general.

Q: All on merit no doubt.

VEALE: Oh, yes, all on the merit of having survived. But, we were able to go up to the border with China and up to Lashio and to Myitkyina in the north in the Chin area, all of which had seen active insurgencies. When we went we had sizeable military escorts and when we traveled by train, for example, the train would travel very slowly and there would be several box cars full of troops and every 50 meters or so along the train track there would be an armed soldier. I guess they would roll these units forward as the train moved. The train moved so slowly that there was time for the soldiers to either be driven or whatever up ahead so that they could continue to provide this escort along the side of the road. But, nonetheless, it was fascinating. I saw quite a lot of Burma while I was there.

During the Japanese occupation, the Burmese had suffered all kinds of deprivations and a number of Burmese told me that, in spite of various difficult things that occurred during the time that I was there, nothing was as bad as the situation in World War II when they had had to put up with the Japanese and the deprivations during the war. This was all many notches below a Westerner's comfort and discomfort levels so it was very difficult to really understand how bad it had been.

Q: It must have been very bad during the occupation for them.

VEALE: Yes, it was.

Q: Were there ever any threats to the Embassy while you were there? Were you personally aware of being in danger from terrorists?

VEALE: There were a few terrorist alerts that were very general and not specific. I don't recall any specific terrorist threats. You may recall that North Korea had set off a bomb and killed a number of visiting South Korean cabinet officials.

Q: In the airport was it?

VEALE: No, it was at some outdoor gathering on a pavilion of sorts. That had happened five or six years before I got there. The Burmese intelligence service was everywhere and it was a low technology Orwellian police state in its pervasiveness.

Q: Speaking of police states, what was the Soviet influence there and the Chinese Communist influence?

VEALE: The Soviets had a large Embassy there and I suspect that they were using it as a China listening post as much as anything. There was not a lot of interaction with the Soviets there. The Chinese, on the other hand, also had a large Embassy and Ne Win looked at himself more with a Sino affiliation rather than the Sino-Tibetan background that most Burmese identify with. But, Ne Win was critical of the liberalization that China was undergoing at that time. He thought that the Chinese were doing too much too fast and I think he tended to take a kind of senior player role with the Chinese and trying to pontificate that what they were doing was not the way he would do it. I don't have the impression that the Chinese were all that influential in Burma during this period.

I think that the U.S., through its assistance in narcotics programs and communications support that we were giving the Burmese army, was very important. Germany, surprisingly enough, was a major supplier of weapons. Germany, Singapore, and South Korea were major suppliers of weaponry to the Burmese army. The Burmese army was going after drug running private armies and there was a communist insurgency as well. One of the things that I saw while I was there was what a shadow that this insurgency had become, that the Chinese support for it had withered considerably and it really was a bunch of people who were trying to maintain the appearances of a communist

organization but the Burmese were very much anti-communist during this period. They were openly anti-communist in their efforts to deal with the Burmese communist party.

Q: Did we have a military mission there?

VEALE: We had a defense attaché's office there but no military mission per se. The defense attaché's office was engaged in obtaining the usual IMET (international military education and training) program. But Burma's involvement in that was pretty small. One of the things I tried to do was to move our military assistance more into the humanitarian assistance, medical supplies and things like that, and away from hardware.

Q: Was there any Peace Corps in Burma at that time?

VEALE: There was no Peace Corps presence in Burma. Often the Burmese would not participate in things like that because they did not want to be subject to pressure for similar things from the Soviets.

Q: Given the fact that there was this Ne Win dictatorship in a sense, at the Embassy did we have access to him and to other important Burmese officials? That is, could you go and see them or were they standoffish?

VEALE: Ne Win was increasingly withdrawing from public life. He would make trips occasionally around the country, but these were very carefully orchestrated types of things and the press coverage of them was very much about how he would go and give guidance and that was all you would know about. I guess the second ambassador we had there, Bert Levin, must have had a credentials audience with Ne Win, although I'm not actually sure that he did because Ne Win, at that point, was not performing either as president or in any governmental role. He was above all of that. I don't recall anybody meeting directly with Ne Win during my stay there. We had fairly easy access to the foreign ministry and to other ministries. It required some pushing and because of the intelligence watchfulness and concern that somebody might be divulging state secrets, or be creating an opportunity for pressure from Russia or China to get comparable treatment, there was a general disinclination of officials to meet with American officials. If we had a demarche to make or instructions came in to go and see somebody, we generally could get appointments, say on UN votes and things of this sort. Read outs on visits by other foreigners, for examples, we could generally go into the Americas side of the foreign ministry at various levels and I remember meeting with the deputy foreign minister while I was there. Also, you could go into the parliament and observe events there. But, it was a rubber stamp parliament and wasn't worth the time really to spend on that.

Q: How were the British treated as the former colonial power? Did they have a leg up or not?

VEALE: This was a society which in its old forms had emulated the British and I was always struck by people who if you closed your eyes you would think you were dealing

with an Englishman. And, if you opened your eyes and discounted the fact that they were standing there in native attire, their mannerism and social antics, and what not were just exactly as you would expect to find in a fine club in London. But a lot of those people had been shunted aside by the military regime and there was a certain distance to the British. I don't think the British were particularly well wired in there. They had a fairly active commercial program, probably more active than ours, but I don't have the impression that politically they were well wired in with the government. If they were wired in, it was with the former players and to the extent that those people had good contacts, the British were well informed.

The Australians took a kind of leading role. They were always out front on human rights issues. There was an ambassador there who was very active on these issues and would not tolerate many of the things that the Burmese were trying to get away with. So, of the commonwealth countries, I would say Australia was in the lead of pushing the envelope.

Q: How were American businessmen treated? Were there many of them there?

VEALE: No. The oil companies had tried to get things going earlier, but most of them had fallen out. As I recall, the only significant U.S. investment there was in the agricultural sector and this was with breeding fish in ponds and some shrimp cultivating and getting frozen shrimp out of the country. That was about the extent of American investment in the country. Gems were a big item in terms of providing revenue for the government at that point. But, we are talking about a society where the per capita income was probably well under $200 during the time that I was there. This was a very primitive society, although generally speaking there was always food. Some of the crises that developed while I was there were related to the fact that the system wasn't performing in the food area -- the poor distribution of rice and the harvest were not good. That was a fundamental plank in the existence of many people and when problems developed there people began to become increasingly disparaging of the government and its abilities to do things.

Q: Was English widely spoken? Could you get by with English?

VEALE: English was widely spoken among the older Burmese. It did not appear that enough attention had been given to English by the younger people. Although there were attempts to gradually phase in English training in the school system, it wasn't working very well. The government press appeared in a Burmese language edition and an English language edition, for example. There were three or four government-owned papers that produced English language versions as well as the Burmese editions. But, there was not much detailed news in the press, but if there was a foreign visit you could get the gist of that for example.

Q: Did we know at the time about this remarkable woman Aung San?

VEALE: Aung San Suu Kyi, who was the daughter Aung San. She has a very unusual

name by Burmese standards because usually you don't pick up your father's name. She had married a scholar at Oxford University and had lived out of the country most of the time. By the way, the Burmese were very disparaging of Burmese who had left the country and if you left the country you could not come back. I believe a special exception was made in her case because of who she was. She came back during the last few months that I was in the country because her mother was dying and she wanted to be with her.

I mentioned some crises that were going on and I should probably go back and catch up on some of those because these were some of the pressure-cooker events that were going on in Burma during the time that I was there. In September 1987, Ne Win, out of the blue, demonetized some 70 percent of the currency. He later said that the reason he did this was because of counterfeiting. There were some other reports that it was for astrological reasons as well. This caught everyone off guard. There was a very unclear and ultimately very ineffective and unfair system for letting people cash in their money. Basically, the Burmese way to socialism, which was the ideology that was crafted to be the explanation of why the things were the way they were in Burma, was used as a political vehicle to prevent the accumulation of wealth. Ne Win did not understand economics and what he did know was that in other systems the accumulation of wealth had resulted in political power which challenged the status quo and he wasn't going to have any of that.

So, he went after any group which began to amass money. Initially when he came into power that was Indians and Chinese so there was a period in the early consolidation of his power where he went after those two groups and basically drove them out or drove them under. The Chinese continued to be important. The Indians, chiefly the Bengalis, who had come in during the British colonial period and were the money changers and lenders, had a very important role. They were despised by the ethnic Burmese because the ethnic Burmese didn't understand contract law and they were being held to that by the Indians with their British overlords. There was a great deal of residual social bitterness towards the Indians for that. During this period of demonetization, Ne Win, I think, was using it as a way of reminding people that he could still call the shots and was not going to let anybody who was beginning to accumulate wealth to rise up and challenge him.

Well, one of the things that wasn't well thought through was that this move came just as students were going back to school at the universities and all of their accumulated money to make it through the semesters and the year was worthless. So, the students went into the streets about this and demonstrated and this lead to severe crackdowns by the military. There was a great deal of unrest. I was sent up to what had been a consulate in earlier days but which was closed (and had been reverted to simply being a guest house) because of concern by the Burmese that Russia and China would want to have consulates in Mandalay also. I went up there and used that as a base to interview people about what had been going on that led to the very severe suppression of students. I made that trip in kind of an unauthorized way because there was a curfew and diplomats were not supposed to move. I went with a driver late at night, by myself effectively. We got up there and I was able to report for 3 days or so before returning to Rangoon.

Q: They allowed you to exchange old money for new currency?

VEALE: Yes, months later. It was not right away, but two or three months later that there was a process put in place for allowing people to get new currency. The new currency was denominated in nines because this was an astrologically significant number. They got this money printed by some German firm that stepped forward to pocket the profits, I guess. We thought it was kind of despicable. At any rate, that was one event.

In March 1988, you have to understand that the society was fairly fragile at this point because these monetary issues hadn't been resolved and there was a lot of friction in the society at large. A lot of people were getting concerned because the rice harvest wasn't good and a spark could ignite things. In a tea house, in a suburb of Rangoon, a group of students wanted to have some modern rock music replace what was being played by the townies. It ultimately became a town versus gown type dispute. When this occurred, it was the spark that united all this pent up student problems again. So, the students went into the streets and the government very shortly became the focus of opposition and it was no longer a town issue or anything like that. Rangoon, over probably a good week, was disrupted by student bands that were going through the streets, soldiers were called in, and people were shot. The students were using rubber slings and shooting bicycle spokes. We watched from the roof of the Embassy as fires were set and things like this. There was a lot of unrest in Rangoon during this period. People were wrapped up and put in prison. Some 600 kids were kept in 120 degree temperature in vans and many of them asphyxiated and died. This was a very unpleasant period. But, ultimately, the government regained control.

Q: Did Aung San Suu Kyi play any role in this?

VEALE: No role whatsoever. She was very reluctant to come forward because she wanted to get through this period with her mother and it really wasn't until after I left in the summer that she finally relented. There were a number of people who were reformers there. There was a brigadier, Tin Ou, and several other people who were on the frontlines of efforts to try to persuade Ne Win. They would write treatises and give them to Ne Win to try to get him to understand what was going on. They felt Ne Win was insulated and the military wasn't telling him the facts and if they could appeal to him they could at least structure the situation so that he could walk away from the others. It may very well have been that he came to see the Burmese Socialist Program Party as part of the problem and that's one of the reasons, as part of his resignation later, that he called for the disbandment of the party as no longer serving any useful function.

Q: Was he the head of that party?

VEALE: Yes. Aung San Suu Kyi did not play a role in this, it was these reformers who were trying to take the lead, but they, I think, increasingly saw the political power that her name would represent and were subjecting her to increasing pressure to get involved in this and step forward. It wasn't until later that summer that she began to take the pivotal

role through the NLD (National League for Democracy).

Q: Your tour in Burma seems to have been rather exciting one in some ways.

VEALE: It was in many ways. It was a very insular kind of existence, but as things began to heat up, particularly in the second year, I found it absolutely fascinating. And, of course, what happened just after we left the world knows about that now. There was this terrible upheaval with five or six thousand casualties and it was not a pretty picture and things have not changed very much.

Q: For a people who are always thought to be rather peaceful and quiet. Well, when that tour ended, you then took on a totally different assignment. You came back to this country and became a teacher at the Air Force Academy for the 1990-91 academic year.

VEALE: That's right.

Q: How did this happen?

VEALE: I had wanted to go to one of the academies and teach. Many, many years ago I had actually wanted to go off and be a cadet at the Air Force Academy. At first, I had actually been thinking about doing this State Department faculty advisor function at the Naval Academy here so that I would be more or less in the Washington area. But, that job got off cycle and the Air Force Academy opened up and I thought that would be very interesting. I had met an Air Force officer in my Berlin days so I closed the loop …

Q: After your years in Burma, what sort of impression did you come away with?

VEALE: I had a deep respect for the Burmese people and their perseverance in spite of this awful government in which many of the ministers barely had an eighth grade education. It was absolutely appalling the types of decisions that we would see them make about things and their persistent readiness to hold Burma down and keep it from developing because of their own limited understanding and their own personal political and economic objectives.

I remember one of the things that will stay with me the rest of my life was during the March 1988 crisis that was going on all around the Embassy. A group of students in the heat of the unrest and the crushing action by military troops sweeping through the streets came to the Embassy and were appealing to the Embassy for protection. They wanted to have the Embassy make some kind of gesture to show that the United States was on their side so that the government forces would lay off and not treat them so severely. The ambassador appointed me to go out and talk to the students. I found myself in the portico of the Embassy confronted with half a dozen students who were very upset and agitated and wanted me to go in an Embassy car to a location where a number of female students were surrounded by soldiers and there was an expectation that they would be raped or

killed or, at the very least, incarcerated. They wanted the Embassy to show some sign that it was interested and signal the government to cease and desist. My instructions were only to say that we were concerned, we would be reporting on this, and that we certainly understood what they were trying to do, but that we could not do anything to help in these circumstances. Delivering that message was one of the most painful things I think I have had to do. That will stick with me for some time.

Q: To have done anything else would have been foolhardy?

VEALE: Of course it would have been foolhardy and it is this crunch between matters of state and individual moral feelings of responsibility and readiness to do things.

When I look back on Burma and my two years there, and follow from time to time about what has been going on in Burma, I just see a tremendous tragedy. Many people don't realize that Burma was once the rice basket of Southeast Asia, that it was in many ways more desirable to go to Rangoon than to Bangkok. Bangkok later replaced Rangoon after years of being driven down by the Ne Win crowd. The Burmese way to socialism was a disaster. The whole way in which an ignorant, poorly educated, insular military has taken over this country and followed ethnic policies which were aimed at trying to strengthen the hands of the Burmese, who were the majority to begin with, is just deplorable. There are many Burmese around the world in various exile communities who are patiently waiting for something to happen. But, what I saw here was a reluctance of people to shed blood to change things. The students tried, but they couldn't mobilize sentiment in the population at large. They were driven into the jungles or often into Thailand. Many people don't realize that the Burmese/Thai relationship is very much akin to Germany and France. The countries have had wars over the centuries and they eye each other with a great deal of suspicion. There hasn't been a de Gaulle/Adenauer type of reconciliation between the two countries, but things have gone fairly well since the end of World War II. But there is still a long tradition of unease across each border so it has been very easy for the Thais to allow the pillaging of the teak forests and things of that sort. It has been very easy for them to push people back into the border to certain death at the hands of the Burmese army because they really don't care that much about the Burmese. They are concerned about the ethnic groups along the border because they have been crowding into Thailand as well. So, the long term picture is not a pretty one for Burma.

Q: Is there any cooperation between the Thais and the Burmese in handling the drug problem, particularly in the north?

VEALE: Officially, yes, but the Thais are so complicit in this drug trafficking that it can't possibly be effective. The King of Thailand gave special sanction to Chinese Nationalist forces that came out of China when the communists took over and occupied areas in northwestern Thailand. These groups have been among the key groups channeling narcotics brought to them by caravans and getting it down to Bangkok and out onto the world markets. So, I don't really see any particular accommodation there and now since 1988 the U.S. has ceased to be an effective player in curbing narcotics there. The

production, when I was there, was 800 metric tons of opium and now it is over 2000. This has tremendous implications in the world markets and it has flooded the markets with heroin recently, but heroin has not been so much of a drug of demand in the United States versus drugs coming out of South America. So Burma has not had that much concern. These narcotics are going to Asia, Europe, Russia.

Q: When I was in the Netherlands, heroin was a big problem.

VEALE: Yes. So, the thing that strikes me as a tremendous potential of Burma if they were to get a moderate reformist government and figure out a way to deal with the military – the military is so afraid that it is going to be punished for the travesties that it has inflicted on society that it can't afford to let go. The idea of an amnesty is one way that might very well be, in keeping with the Burmese psyche, to grant such an amnesty. Whether Western-backed human rights movements would permit that to actually take place without retribution is an open question. But the economic potential of the country is fabulous and the people are tremendous having survived under this system for so long and the niches and crannies in which entrepreneurial skills have been developed there is waiting to burst forth on a level playing field, so to speak. I think this would be a wonderful thing to happen to Burma.

Q: What is the religious breakdown in Burma? Is it entirely Buddhist?

VEALE: It is overwhelmingly Buddhist. There is animism in the hill tribes. There always has been present and indeed some of the animism affects some of the Buddhism. This is the lesser kind of Buddhism, not what you have in northeastern Asia. The Buddhist tradition that came out of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) years ago, I think is the one that is subscribed to in Burma now. It is seen as the more democratic kind of Buddhism and is more accessible to everybody. It is a very devoutly Buddhist society on the whole and people give a great deal of respect to the monks. The Burmese government has tried to politicize the monks, by wiring them into a government ministry of religion, because the monks were instrumental in the unrest in 1987-88. But, you have to understand that becoming a monk is something that many young men do. It is sort of like a tour in the military, in a sense, or maybe like what the Mormons do in terms of sending their young people off to be missionaries. So, you get a lot of short-term monks who are still politically conscious and aware of the injustices in the society and are concerned and motivated to do something about it. There are monks who stay in for life, but you have to understand that there is this period in a young man's life where he goes and becomes a monk for a period of time. That is a potentially dangerous political period unless things are stabilized. That may continue to be a factor. Burma will have to come up with its own formula for bringing about political change. It may be a new kind of departure, it may be in the Gandhian tradition or some variant of that, I just don't know. I think the society is not a revolutionary society and change will have to come about in a different way. In Burmese history the notion that there is a kind of sudden collapse of the karma of a ruler who goes bad in a sense and there is a political earthquake which leads to the rise of a new Buddha. The sovereign has chosen to closely identify himself with Buddhism and Ne

Win has done gestures in this regard as well to cater to that idea. But, historically, there is the pattern of this sudden souring of the karma of the leader, a collapse and then a new leader arises, claiming to have the new Buddha karma with him and so therefore the people rally to that individual. Now, whether that is the type of thing that will work in Burma today in the 21st century is another matter. I would be surprised if it does not have some of those political trappings.

Q: You mentioned the Gandhian factor. I wanted to ask you what role does the superpower India play there in Burma, because it is a next door neighbor.

VEALE: Well, I mentioned earlier how the Indians were seen as sort of agents of British imperialists. To this day, Burma and most of southeast Asia is an Indianized culture. There is a tremendous impact of ancient Indian culture in this area. But, the overt hand of India cannot be played in this area because other societies are turned off by it. There may be a respect and recognition of the culture of India, but as a Hindu culture it doesn't resonate against the Buddhist culture. I think there is some feeling that India, by sticking to Hinduism and not embracing Buddhism, made a wrong decision. I may be speculating when saying that but my impression is that India does not have much influence. Bengalis as a group of people are still quite evident in the western parts of Burma.

Q: And they are Muslim?

VEALE: Yes, they are Muslim and the Muslim religion is probably the next largest religious grouping, although animism is probably in there too. But that group has been politically neutered by the policies of the military over the 30 some years that they have been in power.

Q: Well, Bill, any final thoughts on your tour in Burma?

VEALE: I think those would capsulate it right now.

Q: Well, you went from there back to this country and had a real change. You became a teacher in the Air Force Academy in Colorado in the 1990-91 academic year. How did this come about?

VEALE: I had been interested in a tour at one of the academies in teaching. Originally I had had my eye on the Naval Academy in Annapolis because it was in the Washington area, but that position did not open up as I had anticipated it would (it got off cycle) and the Air Force Academy position did. I knew the deputy head of the department of political science, which is where I would be teaching from my Berlin days, so I got into contact with that person and that helped the man pull from that side to get the assignment. Earlier in my life, I had wanted to become an aeronautical engineer and had toyed with the idea of going (my father had an aeronautical engineering degree) to either the Air Force Academy or MIT. So, this was sort of a back door route 20 years later into the Air Force Academy, I guess. This was the position of a State Department faculty

representative in the political science department and where I would be for the next three years as it turned out. It was originally a two-year assignment, but I liked it so much that I stayed on for a third year, teaching cadets courses like American government and international relations. I designed and directed a course on American foreign policy and a course on international organization and global issues. I got quite a reputation for being very much a radical in my terms in terms of bringing in all sorts of unusual speakers to address some of the global issues, to begin to crowbar the cadets out of their comfort world and the very mechanistic visions that the Air Force Academy, through its military focus, was giving people.

The first year I was one of ten civilian instructors there. We were also known as visiting professors. The rest of the faculty was military. So the Air Force Academy was far behind the other service academies in civilianizing. Ultimately later, the Government Accounting Office did a study and they were directed to civilianize which is something that they moved toward, but each year that I was there the number of visiting professors grew. Initially, at any rate, the quality of those professors was very high. Leading scholars in diplomatic history, for example, a guy by the name of Gerhart Weinberg, who has written a lot of books about the diplomatic history of World War II was there. There were other leading people in mathematics, aeronautics, and things like that. So, it was a nice mixture and the visiting professors did things together so that was good.

The other thing that was particularly good about it was the large number of policy makers that are drawn to the academies, who come out to speak to the cadets. Then you have faculty roundtables, breakfasts and what not, and I met a tremendous number of people. I had been vice chairman of the Open Forum in an earlier incarnation in the Department and I really liked the stimulation that you got from that [Editor's Note: Mr. Veale was elected Vice Chairman of Open Forum for the 1976-77 season in Spring 1976 elections. Open Forum was an FSO run program to invite outside speakers at the lunch hour. Its officers, a Chairman and a Vice Chairman served a term from July to July. The Chairmanship at that time was a full-time job, which was located for administrative purposes in the Policy Planning Staff (S/P). The Vice Chairman served on a volunteer basis as his regular job permitted.]. So, being at 7,000 feet at the foothills of the Rockies was no political disadvantage to me at all in terms of keeping the juices alive. I enjoyed the teaching. I found that in order to teach you have to learn the material cold. So, in many respects, although I did spent 3 years there I think I got as much out of that experience as I might have had I gone to the War College or somewhere else instead.

The thing that impressed me most was the quality of the cadets out there.

Q: I wanted to ask you if they were academically minded and willing to learn or were they all fly boy oriented?

VEALE: The cadets are under two main pressures while they are at the academy. They are all members of the cadet wing, which is the military structure which requires them to polish their shoes, make their beds, appear in formation at 6 in the morning. This is the

military discipline. I mentioned those specifics because these are the cadets have to adjust to and which kids at universities don't have to put up with at all. So, they are managing that aspect of their lives and interfacing with the military aspect at the academy. At the same time, they are in an academic environment which the Air Force Academy refers to itself as one of the last true liberal arts education systems in the U.S. because of the very demanding and diverse curriculum. They have to take all sorts of subjects across all kinds of disciplines. So, when you come out of the Air Force Academy, even though you have a major in a particular area, and there are 22-some areas where you can have majors in, the kids have a good foundation across the board in a number of disciplines.

You asked about the students and what are their attitudes and so forth. Many of the students react to the academic system and they really want to go deeper into things, but the military existence doesn't allow them to go deeper because they have to polish their shoes and they have to do the military things. So, they are frustrated in that respect. Some of them become very operationally oriented in terms of "tell me what the formula is so that I can check that box and go on to the next box and go on with that." That is the kind of cultivation which is registered in the behavioral science department surveys showing that cognitive abilities diminish over the four years that a student is at the Air Force Academy. Now, I would say that 25 percent of the students are absolutely fabulous. They are in to everything – football or some other sport, plays, debating, everything -- and have this other dimension to their existence there and they are really soaking it all up and really good in what they go into. We saw some terrific cadet plays while we were there. This is the last thing that you would associate with someone there. They were all taking flying, but flying I understand that is being stopped now because of accidents. A student took me up in a glider while I was there. It is a very demanding atmosphere, but those top 25 percent are very remarkable and those probably will be the pool that they are going to get the generals out of.

The middle 50 percent are accommodationists. They are balancing the pressures and sort of doing the minimal necessary. Their main effort is at balancing. They want to get out of the academy and many don't want to come back and be in that situation again. Even those cadets that had been away for five or six years and were now captains and brought back as junior instructors had misgivings about coming back to the academy.

Then there is the bottom quarter which is having trouble. Some of those will probably quit. It is a fairly expensive operation to try to get generals. The rationale is to get the future generals of the Air Force out of the academy. Also, they look at the cadets as standard bearers for the rest of the Air Force. Even those who may rise to colonel or so will still have inculcated in them the standard which will radiate out to others.

The interesting thing is the more balanced, and often some of the more successful initially at any rate, officers in the air force are coming out of the ROTC programs and not out of the academy. So, there is still a formula that they haven't found and need to work on. I was involved with the visiting professors, I lead a few task forces while I was there in suggesting reforms in the academic program. I was making the point, to reference your fly

boy issue, that sooner or later there is going to be a ground controlled or remotely pilot vehicle that is up there because a human being is not going to be able to withstand the G-forces that you will want a flying object to withstand and exist in the hostile environment. So, that is on the horizon and they are coming to realize it. This is kind of the horse cavalry problem, if you will. But, it is an interesting institution, an institution where the enlisted men send the officers out to fight. The ground crews are enlisted and the pilots are officers.

Q: Referring to your reference about the liberal arts curriculum, I have known a number of Air Force officers in my life, including some at the National War College, and "liberal" is not a word I would associate with most of them. They were more often at the other end of the spectrum generally.

VEALE: Political conservatism is certainly there, but liberal arts in the academic sense of the word.

Q: Did you find that the faculty, while you were there, were intensely conservative?

VEALE: I would say conservative, but in the political science department there were some very liberal people. In fact, I would say many of the middle-level faculty were recent graduates of Ph.D. programs in big universities and brought back to capitalize on that investment. I found myself surrounded by people who could have been in the political section in an Embassy. They had that kind of political sensitivity. These were rare birds, but in that particular environment these guys had good political sense.

Q: Was there any problem with the women cadets there or did they blend in?

VEALE: Oh, there were problems. The men resented them being there and the women cadets were subject to a lot of pressures. I won't say harassment per se, but they were subject to a lot of pressures while they were there. The women were outstanding academically. They were several cuts ahead of the average male. As a general rule they were good, but this is not unusual in today's world that the women are good students and I think that is being reflected in the population that is going to the Air Force Academy . I am talking about the period of 1988-91 and it is my impression that things have gotten a lot better in that area. There was still a lot of discussion as to whether women should be fighter pilots and things like that. Women were going increasingly into more and more areas where they had not been before. The cadet women would graduate as 2nd lieutenants and go off to assignments that were plowing new ground for them.

Q: Looking back at that assignment, would you recommend that FSOs (Foreign Service officers) consider these faculty assignments at the academies?

VEALE: Oh, yes, very definitely. I think it is important for the officer individually to make a lot of good contacts in the military, the same as you do in a war college. I think it is something to do at an earlier stage than one would do at the War College level. It is a

good mid-career type of assignment rather than towards the end of the mid-career and beginning of the senior career.

Q: But you know the downside to that, the argument that it takes you out of the flow for three years.

VEALE: Well, absolutely to my utter surprise and astonishment, I was promoted after this assignment. Of course, I felt I should have been promoted after Burma and it was withheld for three years. When I indicated and it was clear to the promotion board that I was coming back to the Department rather than escaping to academia, I guess I got promoted. I had a lot of fun there and I did a lot of things that hadn't been done. I took the first trip to the United Nations – I organized that – and got grant money for the cadet trip there. I ran conferences for them on the Soviet Union, participated in roundtables with students brought in from all over the world.

I found that the intellectual stimulation there was absolutely incredible, so I would recommend that. It is an individual decision whether someone stays three years or not; I think a two-year assignment is very good. I suppose we could do it on a one-year basis but I don't think that is fair to the institution or to the officer. What we need is a personnel system which better understands and gives people credit for doing these types of things and doesn't hold it against them in the promotion process. That is what the problem really is.

Q: I know and that is terribly difficult to enforce.

VEALE: In my case, I suspect that one factor may have been that I had a presidential kind of cache in something because the last year I was there, President Bush was coming to give the commencement address. There was a very interesting story. There were two Vietnamese-American cadets there and their father was in Vietnam still and was an applicant under the order of the departure program. I called contacts in the State Department and elsewhere, and through this program, was able to make clear what was happening and how important it was that this fellow to be there for this graduation. I got the White House involved and they became interested in the cache of having this guy out of Vietnam to see his son graduate; he also had a younger son who was a lower classman at the time. I put this all together and it actually happened and the father got there. It was a nice thing to write up and a two-star general signed my ER (evaluation report) so it was a nice cache. That may have been the reason why I was promoted but I will never know, of course. The point is that there are things that can happen, that can fall into your lap like that, at these academies. People that I have known that have taught at the academies have generally enjoyed it very much. Some people have exited the Foreign Service afterwards. But, on the whole, I think when people come back to the Foreign Service with that experience it is good.

Q: Did President Bush come out and give the address while you were there?

VEALE: Yes.

Q: Did he remember you from Berlin?

VEALE: No, I didn't have a chance to get close to him.

Q: Any further thoughts on your time in Colorado Springs?

VEALE: It was wonderful for my family and I strongly recommend anyone to consider the assignment there.

Q: After summer 1991 you came back to Washington and to a different kind of assignment.

VEALE: Totally different.

Q: To West African affairs. Had you asked for this?

VEALE: No. A number of people had told me that African affairs would be a very interesting area to work in because the opportunities often exceeded that of one's rank. I spoke French so found myself as desk officer to three Francophone countries – Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin – and immediately plunged into all sorts of issues and really found it fascinating. What had happened was I was trying to go overseas on assignment and my wife's father developed cancer and so we switched gears and wanted to have an assignment in the States, and was late in the cycle, which meant that the number of positions open at that late time were very limited. This was one of the few good jobs that came up so I took it.

A few months afterwards I got promoted out of the grade and for a number of reasons, personality related, I decided to curtail from that job and in July 1992 found a very interesting job in OES (Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs) that dealt with space issues and I had always been very interested in space issues.

Q: Explain OES.

VEALE: It was a functional bureau that was set up some 20 years ago to deal with...

Q: Who was the head of it at the time?

VEALE: A very interesting man, E. U. Curtis Bohlen, who came from one of the environmental organizations and then went back. What you have to understand is that OES has been headed for many years by environmentalists and these people have very limited knowledge and understanding of scientific, and certainly space issues, so there was a great deal of autonomy and the deputy assistant secretary charged with that area was the main pusher for space issues at that time.

Q: What your exact duties there?

VEALE: When it started out, I was concerned with commercial space launch issues. I went on negotiations to Russia to carve out the quota, if you will, for the number of launches that the Russians could make and get Western satellites put on their launch vehicles. This was an interagency team that was chaired by USTR, the United States Trade Representative.

Q: It is interesting that trade gets into space too.

VEALE: That's right and this was a commercial agreement that was aimed at giving the Russian launch market a share of the space launch effort. One of the reasons for doing this was so that their excess ballistic missiles launch capability wasn't made available for marketing to unpleasant places around the world. It was a way of giving them a share and being a respectable citizen.

We were also engaged in negotiations with the EU and their launch capabilities, particularly the French launch system from South America. The American space launch industry had fallen on bad times and it was important to ensure that there were adequate opportunities for our launch vehicles to be used.

Q: This was Comsat?

VEALE: Comsat was an end user of this. They would buy and operate the satellites. MRSAT, the maritime tracking satellite, was another. The thing that was fascinating at this time was that there were geosynchronous orbits for high altitude items that you needed big launchers for. Then there were low earth orbits that you needed less sophisticated launchers for. Much of the attention was on this ability to put stationary satellites out that could be continuous relay points for your communications. The estimates that the Commerce Department and the Transportation Department were making were fairly low in terms of the number of launch opportunities that existed overall. So this seemed to be a fairly small market. What absolutely fascinated me was my own gut feeling that these guys were drastically underestimating the potential in this area. We negotiated these agreements, there had earlier been an agreement with the Chinese as well, and the problem was how to apportion the limited numbers among the countries and organizations, the EU for example, that wanted to get a share of it. The low earth orbit market seemed to be able – with outfits like [inaudible] that wanted to put up large numbers of satellite – it seemed to be able to take care of itself, but it was this heavy launch area that was a concern. The way the story ultimately panned out over the subsequent years, I have been amused to see, is that there has been a tremendous market for the large launch vehicles.

The other thing that I got involved in during my second and third years in OES (the commercial launch stuff was in my first year) was the space station. With Clinton's

election and new look, the old space station program had become terribly expensive and there was an immediate need to reign in costs and take a completely new look at this. So Dan Goldin was charged with coming up with three different options.

Q: He was the head of NASA then?

VEALE: Yes, and he still is. He was a brilliant man brought in from Rockwell, if I recall correctly, who I think is one of the most outstanding public servants today. He is despised in some quarters, but I have a great deal of respect for him. He was a consummate diplomat as well as a tremendous administrator and was able to turn NASA around in a relatively short period of time. He stepped on a lot of toes in the process, but you would have to in order to do what he did. At any rate, there were these three different options for how to reconfigure the space station to a more acceptable budgetary and technical sense. Concurrent to this, another theme was let's explore and see what we can do to bring Russia into the space station. This was a way of harvesting the crown jewel of the former Soviet system, in their space program, and again providing meaningful employment for years and to avoid proliferation concerns.

The interest in getting the Russians aboard was also to cut the cost of the space station because it was felt that they could produce components and provide launch services that would be much cheaper than if NASA were to pay for doing it itself. As we moved down this road, I also felt that not only should Russia be given, as we had in the commercial launch context launch opportunities to put satellites up, but the resupply of the space station would be another way to absorb launch capacity of the Russians and give them a meaningful role.

The Europeans had had an eye on doing that themselves as well as our own shuttle would be doing that sort of thing. But, it seemed to me that we should broaden the pie and let the Russians do that and ultimately that has become to be part of the package as well. But, the main focus of those last two years was (1) getting the original space station partnership to accept the idea of bringing Russia in and (2) negotiating with Russia on what kind of a role it would play in this effort.

Q: Now, this was the new Russia after the Soviet Union split up?

VEALE: Yes, this is Russia and the Russian space agency as it was called.

Q: Had it changed a great deal from the Soviet days?

VEALE: No, I think organizationally it was different because they had created these state entities, and some of them were beginning to be privatized, and there were financial arrangements there that were part of the reason for the delay in the space station, the making of previously government agencies responsible for their own funding in certain areas and getting the money flowing and the contract relationships going and so forth. The space agency was continued to be diced with people who had KGB [Editor's Note:

The KGB was the national security agency of the USSR from 1954 until 1991] backgrounds and it carried all that Cold War flavor along with it. Through constantly pushing ahead, treating them like big boys and making clear what our expectations were and openness. We put a team in Houston, and we had our own team with them (a Russian team in Houston). To work out the engineering aspects, NASA and the Russian space agency conducted technical bilateral discussions (end of tape).

These bilateral discussions of a technical nature were going on between NASA and the Russian space agency and also concurrently between NASA and the European space agency and the other space station partners to move the whole process ahead.

Our role in the State Department was to simply be aware of these and this is an example where the technical-level discussions were the building block out of which the diplomacy came. It created the parameters for the political possibilities in the situation. There is a lot to be said for that kind of inductive approach to this new kind of diplomacy. In the space station's move from the original partnership to a broader partnership including Russia, I was responsible for drafting, proposing, and clearing around Washington, the cable that we were going to send to our other partners – Japan, Canada, and the European space agency – stating the arguments as to why we should bring Russia into this. It was one of the more fun things that I have had to do, but I remember that after I had it all cleared in Washington I took it up to Deputy Secretary Talbot's office for him to release. It stayed there a couple of days and I got called back later and his special assistant grilled me on the cable and wanted to make absolutely sure that this was the right thing to do and that there weren't any political dangers in this. I assured him that it was the right thing to do and we needed to move ahead with bringing them into this. There were some negatives but on the whole this was the right step to go ahead with.

I feel now in July 2000 that with the Russian component having just been launched at last, even though it was delayed, we are still on the right track. There has been a lot of potshots and criticism about the Russians being there and they should not ever be and were never really in the critical path as it was described to me. NASA has had a contingency plan that would have allowed us to proceed had the Russians been unable to do this. But I really think the political benefits of having been included in this were the right step to go forward.
Q: In your work did you have to deal with the Bureau of European Affairs because you were dealing with Russia? Did you have any dealings with the White House at all?

VEALE: I was working very closely with the Office of Science and Technology in the White House during this period and, to a lesser extent, with the NSC staff. At that point, the main office for dealing with Russia it was not so much the EUR Bureau, except for its regional economics office which was following the European space agency, but S/NIS (The Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary for the New Independent States).. There was a lot of conflict there. There were people in that office who did not seem to really understand the political potential for this program. They were more of the meat and potatoes political officer mentality and it took a lot of salesmanship to bring them on

board to thinking that this had the potential to bring in a whole sector of the former Soviet system in a positive way.

Q: I'm sure Embassy Moscow was wired into all of this?

VEALE: Our Embassy in Moscow was wired into this and the science counselor there was the key point for dealing with this. NASA also had a representative there as well as in our Embassy in Paris. That aspect of the negotiations was not troublesome at all.

Q: Any other thoughts on your tour in OES?

VEALE: I found that whole period to be very instructive as to how technical issues like this are becoming one of the many ranges of channels that countries establish between themselves for doing business and how it is far outstripping the ability of foreign ministries around the world to try and make political hay out of these kinds of relationships. They carry their own weight and many times the technical people on both sides of the international border become closer to each other than they do to their own political authorities. They often see the political authorities as obstacles to the kind of cooperation that they are trying to work on. So, there is a loop that needs to be closed here. I think we are still working on the right formula to do it, but I think it is encouraging to see that we have so many new sinews in the relationship and that foreign ministries no longer can be so anal about trying to control everything. They have to stick with the broad outlines of issues.

Q: When that tour came to an end in 1995, you stayed in Washington but moved across the river to the Defense Department as a foreign policy advisor. Had you requested that assignment?

VEALE: Actually, I did request the assignment because that was the only way I would have gotten it. I wanted to stay in Washington and I wanted to do something different. As I mentioned to you earlier in the interviews, I had worked for Leslie Gelb in the late 1970s when he was Director of the PM Bureau. Leslie Gelb came to an Open Forum presentation in the spring of 1995 and had remarked how the only innovative program in foreign affairs that this administration had been pursuing was the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program that was being orchestrated at that time largely by the Pentagon. That sort of stuck in the back of my mind. A few months later I was asked if I wanted to go across the river to work in the Secretary of Defense's office, the Under Secretary for Policy office, on this very issue. I looked into it, and it turned out to be a pairing where someone from that office was going to come over to work in Morningstar's office, on assistance to the NIS countries, and I would be the State person going over on a reciprocal exchange. A one-for-one unique, freestanding program. That is how it was worked out and I had to request this assignment an by August 1995 I was detailed to Defense's Bureau of International Security Policy/Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction (ISP/CTR).

Coming after the long period of looking at the Soviet Union as a hostile power, this proved to be one of the most fascinating things I have ever done. , I suddenly found myself involved in a program that was actively engaging Russia and other successor states of the Soviet Union in the dismantlement, destruction and completely transparent revelations of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, delivery systems. It was absolutely mind-blowing to see these curtains of secrecy, which had shielded our eyes and which we targeted with highly classified intelligence systems, openly and frontally exposed to us. It was sort of mind blowing. I was responsible for, in addition to certain programs which I will describe in a minute, chemical weapons having to do with Russia and chemical weapons throughout NIS as a matter of fact. All kinds of systems in Kazakhstan. I had certain overall responsibility for all the reporting to Congress and some classified reports dealing with arms control and these dismantlement efforts and then the general, legal writing of agreements and renewal agreements and all of this stuff I worked very closely with the General Counsel's office at the Secretary of Defense level and the treaty office in the State Department as well, because we were constantly crafting new agreements as this area of cooperation expanded.

I wrote the agreement for the destruction of test tunnels in Kazakhstan that the Soviets had used for years to do all their testing. We had a ceremony with the Minister for Science of Kazakhstan signing this agreement and we began a program of sealing up all of these test tunnels and destroying bombers left from the Soviet period there, nuclear bombers there, and dismantling ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles) that were left in Kazakhstan. This program was dealing with the same type of thing in Russia -- submarine dismantlement, just absolutely incredible scope, nuclear warhead dismantlement. The Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus had nuclear weapons which were redeployed back to Russia where they were dismantled and the Ukrainian components were moved into storage facilities.

Ultimately, our program was getting into building storage facilities for these things, helping the Russians develop better security measures for their operational weapons sites, and beginning the process of the dismantlement of their huge stock of chemical weapons. I went to what had been a secret facility in Uzbekistan for the research and development, and small scale production of chemical weapons. I had to go through this suited up with a gasmask. It was kind of exciting to do this. Of course it was 120 degrees outside with this equipment on.

I made several trips to Kazakhstan, Russia, and the Ukraine all as a result of this assignment. We negotiated agreements with the foreign ministries and defense ministries of these countries to broaden the cooperation in this area and give new access to American contractors and Defense Department personnel who would be assisting in all of this process. We provided the funding for the dismantlement of these things because their systems just didn't have the money to do that. Even though we suspected that they could have come up with the money, we wanted to be sure that the stuff was dismantled and taken care of in order to reduce the proliferation risk.

Q: Are we sure that they carried through? Did we have checks to make certain that these things were dismantled as they said they were?

VEALE: Yes. In fact, anything that is controlled by the arms control agreements is inspected afterwards. For example, if we were dismantling a nuclear bomber, the wings would be cut off and would have to lie out for 90 days to be viewed by overhead systems, which was part of the confirmation that it was inoperative and there were similarly types of controls on all the arms control systems and other things. We were so completely woven into the fabric of their process for doing this. There were agreements at all levels with their ministries.

I was involved in two particular things I would like to mention. One is creating a regime for the auditing and examination of this process. It wasn't an arms control verification kind of thing. We were trying to distinguish between the verification process of the arms control agreement with the normal auditing function of insuring that the money we spend and give to a contractor to do something is being done. There would be Russian, Kazakhstani or Ukrainian contractors who would be given the money to do certain things. Habituating them to this process was part of the educational aspect of this thing. I was the Defense Department representative on a team that went out and negotiated these agreements with Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan to ensure that we could send these unannounced, basically short notice announcements so they couldn't change things around. For instance, if we gave them a computer, we didn't want them using it for something else, we wanted it to be used for what we had sent it for. There were some irregularities. I had to do a report to Congress which first went to the GAO (General Accounting Office) and then on to Congress, on this program. I was particularly vigilant to make sure that the process was working properly. I would go to the briefing and debriefing meetings of these audit examination teams that would go out.

The second major thing that I found particularly fascinating was our effort to try and enhance the security of their nuclear weapons storage sites. This was their operational stuff, not the stuff that they were dismantling. They were engaged in the process of reducing the overall number of nuclear warheads to begin with, and then reducing the number of places where they were storing the warheads.

Q: All of which we would favor.

VEALE: All of which we would favor. They didn't want to tell us where these sites were, yet they wanted us to supply fencing, the electronic surveillance systems that would be used to prevent Air Force One movie type scenarios.

Q: You sold that to Congress?

VEALE: Yes, we actually did. We got this going and we developed techniques that would give us enough confidence that we could tell whether or not the money we were spending was being used the way we intended it to be.

Q: For the right purposes.

VEALE: Yes, for the right purposes. That was a fascinating intellectual exercise, trying to design our way through that morass and create viable systems for verification.

I also found the chemical weapons area to be another fascinating thing too because this whole part of the Russian defense establishment dealing with chemical weapons was really back in the dark ages in terms of its susceptibility to arms control concepts. The nuclear side had been working with us in SALT, START (strategic arms reduction treaty) and their minds were comfortable with the concepts. But, we had to sell a whole new segment of their bureaucracy on ideas having to do with how you cooperate. We were building a prototypical facility for breaking down chemical weapons into what ultimately is an asphalt-like material. Seven to eight hundred million dollars was going to be involved in this program. Our own program to do this is big bucks and it was going to also be big bucks in Russia. The Germans were sponsoring a similar program to do this, but the negotiation with the Russian generals and defense officials responsible for this area was really very difficult and very slow going but ultimately I think the process was set in motion. It was fascinating because we would get Russian local government people coming to the Defense Department saying, "We have got this awful, monstrous chemical facility in our backyard and we want to get rid of it. They were coming to the Defense Department lobbying. We would meet with them and try to bring DuPont and other companies in to look to see the possibilities of producing agricultural fertilizers and things like that at some of these facilities.

Q: Was there much hard-line resistance in the Russian hierarchy, particularly among the senior military, to this idea of breaking down their weapons systems?

VEALE: Actually, the amazing thing is if there was, it wasn't impeding progress. They were coming up with proposals and for things for us to do and they were very enlightened people in their defense department, a new breed of civilian defense experts, and the military was cooperating. There were two officers that I worked very closely with. One was an air force colonel and the other was a navy commander, who had been working on this program from the beginning. They had absolutely incredible access to all levels of the Russian military. They were on a first name, hugging basis with generals and what not. These guys were the Lewis and Clark of this new era. It was absolutely amazing the rapport and the access which they had. Someone ought to write a book, if they don't write it themselves, about the absolutely incredible things that they were able to accomplish in this program.

Q: This must have had the backing of President Yeltsin?

VEALE: Oh, yes. There was a whole intricate framework of intergovernmental agreements that went down to these levels. In fact, there were so many of them that state basically gave Defense authority to go ahead and have all of these implementing

agreements. We would just sort of clear with State. In fact, there was considerable attitude of a mini sort of foreign policy program to do this.

Q: To whom did you report in the Defense Department?

VEALE: I was in a small office, the Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction. The office was headed by a political appointee, a lady named Laura Holgate. The Office of CTR was under the Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy (ISP), and Ashton Carter, a Harvard professor, was the Assistant Secretary when I arrived. ISP was under the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP) which was Walter Slocombe when I arrived in 1995. Lugar conceptualized this program as a whole series of programs under the rubric of threat reduction. The Cooperative Threat Reduction program was the official name for this program. It also had the informal name of the Nunn/Luger program because those were the two senators who had sponsored the legislation and got it through the Congress.

Q: How about in State, did you report to anyone there?

VEALE: Not directly. We coordinated with PM (Political-Military Bureau) very closely. Jim Goodby had made an early effort, kind of a power grab I think, to have this program run by State, but State just didn't have the resources. Once again, it was a programmatic type of thing and State didn't have the ability to do it, so Defense was the right place to have it.

Q: How about ACDA?

VEALE: We worked somewhat with ACDA, but ACDA, compared to the ACDA that I knew, is almost a non-entity in Washington. It was absorbed by other offices and I guess was on its last legs at that time. They were an informational consumer office and constantly wanted to know what we were doing, but they had no real role in it. There was expertise in ACDA. For example, on the chemical side, and they did help because that part hadn't been folded into State and there was better expertise in ACDA on some of things in ACDA and it was useful. I remember in many areas, I wound up writing cables that, in years gone by, I would have seen State write in terms of taking the initiative on things, so it was a new ball game in that sense and Defense was taking the lead in this area.

Q: You mentioned nuclear and chemical weapons, what about these scary biological weapons?

VEALE: We also got into that. One of the things that we were starting to move into the Russians opened up some of their BW (biological weapons) research labs to us and we had a number of experts go in and access the nature of the problem there. They still have some things going on which they have not come entirely clean on. There is a continuing pressure to try to open up these areas. There is a start being made in this area and there are active efforts going on now. There was a huge BW facility in Kazakhstan which,

under this program, we were dismantling. It was one of the things that I was involved in. There are also efforts to try and civilianize facilities, when you have facilities and expertise like this, there to access the possibility of shifting to pharmaceutical production or something of that sort to use that type of facility. Some of the areas are contaminated and cannot be used for that type of thing, but there may be some potential down the road for that sort of thing. One of the concerns that we have is enhancing the security of these facilities as we decide what to do with them, so that Iranian operatives or others don't get their hands the products. There have been some anxious moments and nerve-racking things that have happened and caused a lot of concern in Washington

Q: What were your relations at DOD with the uniformed services?

VEALE: The Joint Staff was an avid supporter of these programs because the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program crossed I think the $2 billion mark while I was there and the Joint Chiefs knew that was the cheapest way to destroy the weapons of concern to them. They were avid supporters of it. I worked very closely with the joint staff, and representatives of the J-5, on the negotiation side dealing with the NIS.

Q: I'm sure some of the contacts you made at the Air Force Academy didn't hurt while you were at the pentagon at all?

VEALE: No, not at all.

Q: Did you get at all into the question of Bosnia which was looming large in those days?

VEALE: No.

Q: So you focused mainly on relations with Russia and the reduction of some of their capabilities?

VEALE: This was a relatively compartmentalized area of cooperation and was reasonably well insulated from these things. There were some ripples that were coming out from the foreign ministry folks that we had to deal with. Kazakhstan objected to our bombing Bosnia.

Q: Any more comments about your tour in the Pentagon?

VEALE: As I was saying, I think that there is a story here. I certainly agree with Leslie Gelb that this has been the most remarkable thing done in foreign policy by this administration. We can't really judge its success other than we haven't had a disaster up to this point. To me, the access that was gained, and the transparency that was created, by this habitual access and the habituation of former Soviets now in Russian garb and others to this process, I think had a tremendously healthy effect. Chechnya aside, I think it was bound to have a kind of positive effect on the development of the new Russian military ethos. Many of these people had never had exposure to Western military people before.

On a personal level, I think it had a tremendous effect. Although it is coming late, it is not unlike those exchanges that I had described to you in the '70s when I was on the Soviet desk and we were opening up sectors of the Soviet system to these cooperative agreements. I am convinced that we did see a reform movement during that period.

Q: Are you optimistic as to the future of Russia under Mr. Putin?

VEALE: My optimism has been sobered in the past year or so. Actually, the last months of the Yeltsin period, and certainly the financial collapse in August 1998, led me to feel that I should not have been so optimistic as I was. During the period from 1992 to May 1998, I was visiting Russia several times a year and I was always impressed each time that I went with how much more progress seemed to be made. Although, on the few times when I got out of Moscow, you could still see the old Russia and it was reasonable to say that there is a lot to be done in this country.

I don't know how to read Putin. On the one hand the fact that he has the intelligence background, I view as a positive because I think the intelligence side of the Soviet system had the real facts and had the real picture of how bad things were. So I think he had an informal base of being motivated to fix things. The question is: what will the thing that he fixes look like? Will this be a kind of Bonapartist state? Is this a kind of new Fascism? Is the effort to bring the oligarchs under control a healthy sign? I think it is to the extent if it doesn't traverse into the human rights violations and make Russia less democratic. So, there are a bunch of question marks in my mind. I have been looking at Russia since I studied it in school and I'm still on balance confident. I think that things will work out. I think it is absolutely amazing that the changes have taken place the way that they have without more bloodshed. Reigning in the private economic power, represented by the Mafia and the oligarchs, is an effort that we went through in this country and I think we are too fast to be too critical because we have this magnifying lens of the modern media that is keeping our attentions focused on the negatives. I think there is a lot of currents to their operations.

I was just in Chicago and I called for a cab and had a Russian electronics engineer as a cab driver who had been here three years with a green card and was trying to get a job and what not. We were talking about this very thing. He didn't know what to make of Putin either. I think there is a big question mark over the guy.

I think Russians are learning new habits. There is a gender problem. I think the women are making a better adjustment than the men are. The men tend to have this residual loyalty notion to things, they haven't learned how to behave. The drinking problem among many men, I think, is a reflection of their lack of ability to adjust to this new situation. There are serious health problems and serious economic problems that are going to have to be addressed. I think it will take time. We are not sympathetic enough to the changes that have occurred in a compressed period of time here and we need to take a deep breath and look at what is really doable in an evolutionary manner without the bloodshed. It is absolutely incredible what has happened.

Q: Your tour in OSD came to an end in 1998 and I gather you went into retirement then?

VEALE: Yes, I went through the job search program in the summer of 1998 and retired formally on the 29th of September.

Q: Now, reflect back on your Foreign Service career. Would you recommend it to a young person today based on what you know about it and your own experiences?

VEALE: Well, when I base it on my own experiences I think of the fun and all the excitement that I had in all this, I say yes to your question. I am concerned, and have written articles about reforming the State Department and the Foreign Service back in 1981, and I carried that luggage around with me a bit. I am constantly testing the latest personnel changes against my ideas. I am not comfortable with what the Foreign Service has become today, but it may be a reflection of the times. I definitely don't think that the resources are being put into it for us to have a first-rate Foreign Service. I hear from a lot of senior people, such as former Foreign Service officers who had been on a task force looking at the Foreign Service and they find it coming up wanting. We are just not recruiting people of the caliber and depth. I'm afraid that what we have done is create a system that rewards superficial performance. That we have had so much flux in the system that people haven't really come to appreciate the depth that is really required, the nuances that are required, to really understand and to nudge events in directions that are supportive of U.S. policies. Whereas, someone can make a big splash with the superficial aspects of something and get a good rating, move on and get rewarded, get promoted, and that becomes the example for others to follow. So, you get this disease infecting the whole system.

Q: But, Bill, when you are talking about depth in the Foreign Service are you not talking principally about the political and economic officers because I see less need for depth among the administrative and consular officers who form nearly half the service?

VEALE: That's true. I believe that the cone system was imposed with a notion of egalitarianism that was inappropriate. These are very different kinds of jobs and there are many different motivations for people to go into those different types of jobs and we ought to really recognize that. So my proposal was, in effect, to do away with the cone system and set up different services. You could have excursion tours into the other services, as people may wish for broadening purposes or what not, but it seems to me that there are a lot of other excursion opportunities such as details to other agencies or detail to the corporate world, which I think ought to be extremely important now. People need to go out and understand how global corporations are operating in the world today and the mentality and calculus that they use needs to be better understood. The naiveté of the Foreign Service, particularly the political officer, when it comes to understanding the dynamics of the global economy, needs to be addressed. I think there needs to be much more fusion between the economic and political field then there has been.

I think the way that we cultivate our senior officers is wanting. I think we have too many senior officers who become somewhat vengeful towards the system. There isn't enough mentoring or shepherding of junior officers. There is a kind of chip-on-the-shoulder attitude that people carry with them into that senior level and you get a lot of unpleasant old men and old women at that stage. I contrast that with the way the military produces generals, for example. We need to look at that. I don't say we need to model the military system but we need to look at it as well as the corporate model, which spends much more time cultivating personnel then the Foreign Service does. At least it used to. Maybe the corporate world changed now to hire a skill, but I think they realized that is not working either.

Q: It comes back to what you said before though, the resources are needed.

VEALE: The Foreign Service is resource poor because the substantive officers of the service have felt it beneath themselves to get into the trenches and dig and fight for that. I saw this in my position at M/MO. Part of it has to do with the incredible substantive demands of the job, there isn't time to do that, but you have got to structure the system so there is somebody who is blending the substantive issues with the resource issues and it can't be done with just a turn of the hand by creating an M/MO. It has to be pushed down into all the operating sides of the Department. So, I am hopeful that we will come to do that. I see that the areas of pure foreign ministry/State Department type of activity is narrowed tremendously in today's world because the world is quite a different place than it was before and during the Cold War. There is a need now to have people who are much more broadly based and, at the same time, the challenges that we have and the demands for good diplomacy are greater than ever. It was almost too easy during the Cold War when we had this paradigm of two poles and you could neatly test something as to whether it fit into one box or the other. Now it is much more gray and this calls for, I think, much keener intellect than we have mustered so far. Think about what was done in the late '40s in terms of shaping the postwar world and the decisions that were made then and our ability to try to do that now. Just the idea of the kinds of inadequate responses we have made to Kosovo and Bosnia compared to the occupation of Japan and Germany. We don't have the Lucius Clay's. We don't have other people in the State Department who seem to understand what it was that we needed to do at that stage. It is a kind of stasis and people testing it against political toleration as opposed to what is the right thing to do.

Q: Any other comments before we end our session?

VEALE: Well, I'm a strong supporter of the oral history program and I hope this proves useful. I'm looking forward to reviewing and editing all my remarks.

Q: Thank you very much. This is Tom Dunnigan signing off on July 17, 2000 of my interview with Bill Veale, former Foreign Service officer.

[Editor's Note: In retirement Mr. Veale became the Executive Director of the U.S.-Kazakhstan Business Association, 120 G Street NW, Suite 827, Washington, DC 20005.]

End of interview