UNITED NATIONS - GENEVA

READER
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HENRY S. VILLARD
Representative, European Office of the United Nations
Geneva (1958-1960)

Henry S. Villard was born in New York City in 1900. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Harvard University he did post graduate work at

Magdalen College at Oxford University. His career includes positions in Tehran, Washington D.C., Rio de Janeiro, Venezuela, Norway, Libya, and ambassadorship to Senegal and Mauritania. Ambassador Villard was interviewed by Dmitri Villard in July 1991.

Q: *So in 1958 you were sent abroad again, this time to Geneva, Switzerland. What was your assignment there?*

VILLARD: The title of my position in Geneva was United States Representative at the European Office of the United Nations and other International Organizations. This, as the title implies, involved chiefly representing of the United States *vis a vis* the other countries represented at the UN in Geneva. For the other organizations in Geneva, such as the World Health Organization, I had direct relations with them; they included the Office of Refugees, the International Labor Organization, etc. It is an example of multi-national diplomacy at its best.

Q: *It was also the site of innumerable conferences dealing with trade and tariffs, communications.*

VILLARD: Also, for example, the high-level political conference on surprise attack, the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and so forth.

Q: *How do you feel the effectiveness was of your organization and staff in Geneva?*

VILLARD: I think that we had an excellent organization, mostly specialists in various subjects, all of whom knew their business. We were unfortunately not able to represent the United States as effectively as we might in a social sense because of the action of the chairman of the House of Representative's appropriations committee, Congressman Rooney. He held the purse strings and for personal reasons he resented the fact that the incumbent consul general lost his job when I arrived at the post. He took out his ire at this by depriving me of all representation and housing allowances and we had to move out of a very satisfactory villa where we used to entertain our various diplomatic opposite numbers and move into a small apartment, which created a bad impression in Geneva. It was very embarrassing.

Q: *How do you feel the interest was of the Department in your work at that time?*

VILLARD: I think only a certain section of the Department was really interested. The trade agreements section of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades) in the Economic area of the Department was certainly interested, but not so much interest on the political side was apparent.

Q: *In 1960 you were then appointed ambassador to Senegal and to Mauritania. If I am not mistaken you were originally appointed ambassador to the Mali Federation which included the country of Mali as well. What happened?*

WINSTON LORD
Negotiator, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
Geneva (1965-1967)

Ambassador Lord was born and raised in New York City and earned degrees at Yale University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961.After serving in Washington and Geneva, Mr. Lord was assigned to the Department of Defense before joining the National Security Council, where he was involved in China and Indonesia matters. He subsequently served on State's Policy Planning Staff. In 1985 Mr. Lord was named US Ambassador to China, where he served until 1989. From 1993 to 1997 the Ambassador held the position of Assistant Secretary of State dealing with Far Eastern Affairs. Ambassador Lord was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: *What was the overall thing?*

LORD: This was the negotiations under the GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. There had been every few years a general negotiation. The GATT was one of the post-World War II organizations set up to regulate trade among nations, and to try to free trade among nations. Every now and then instead of plodding along with various bilateral negotiations around the world, the feeling was to have a global negotiation with everyone who is a member of GATT getting together and try to have a global agreement. It had also the virtue of while you engaged in that, which usually took a lot of time, did hold off protectionist pressures in various countries because they were saying, well, we're now going into a negotiation and maybe we can free things up. So it had a way of freezing whatever tariff levels there were at the time, and tariffs were the most important although non-tariff barriers were beginning to get important, and keeping things from getting worse. So President Kennedy proposed that we have another one of these rounds and try to free up trade. There had been at least one before that in the '50s, I forget what it was called. We were in the process of getting ready for that.

Of course, it turned out that - and we'll get into this - it lasted much longer than we expected. When I went to Geneva thinking it was going to be about a year, it turned out to be two and a half years, and the only reason it was ever concluded was because American legislative authority to negotiate, granted by the Congress was going to run out on June 30, 1967. So that turned out to be a deadline which speeded up the negotiations the last six months or year.

Q: *As you were getting ready on your team, were you, I mean you and your team, looking ahead to see what the problems were going to be with the European Economic Community?*

LORD: Yes, it was true that year, but it became even more frustrating when we got to Geneva. It was a very slow pace in negotiations, and the primary reason was because the EEC could not get its act together, primarily because of France. Generally you had the British, the Dutch, etc, traditionally looking for fairly forthcoming liberal trading positions, and the French to a certain extent and I believe the Italians were dragging their feet. I guess the Germans also were for free trade. But they had to get a consensus and so we really spent a good part of certainly that year

waiting, when things were still preparatory, so it wasn't so vivid. But once we got to Geneva it was much more clear that we were just waiting on the Europeans to come forward with decent positions. Since they were so central to the negotiations, they held up the overall Kennedy Round. The fact is that you were juggling several balls at once. The fact that nobody could negotiate with the EEC was holding up the overall negotiation. So we essentially treaded water while they battled within the EEC, and the French were always introducing a protectionist element. Getting ready in Washington consisted, as I say, of compiling statistics, figuring out what our objectives were, what tariffs and other barriers to trade we wanted to try to remove, what we were willing to give up, consulting I'm sure with domestic interests, dealing with Congress, and just generally shaping strategy for the negotiations. Then we went to Geneva and continued that, and began to interact with other countries but basically it was very slow going the first year or two in Geneva. This was terrific for my tennis game which I managed to sharpen. I won one of the major club tournaments there, and my tennis has never been as good ever since. We did a lot of traveling in Europe, it was very frustrating waiting around for the Europeans. So it was a slow period in 1965 and most of '66.

Q: *Let's stick to the U.S. preparations. Were you particularly aware of anything that was almost sacrosanct that you knew politically you couldn't mess around with?*

LORD: It's hard to remember in detail now. Certainly textiles was always going to be tough. We had certain agricultural problems as well I'm sure in terms of U.S. protection. But I don't recall in further detail than that.

Q: *You know you're talking about the problems with the EEC, and particularly France. This was more than 30 years ago. Today if you were to talk about anything, you'd still be saying the problems with the European Union, of getting anything out of it is mainly because of France.*

LORD: That's true. In the first place you have a generic problem, and that is the following, although we were in favor of the EEC then, and we still are in favor of a united Europe now. We think on the balance that having a stronger Europe promotes our national interests. Nevertheless, it presents a negotiating dilemma. While they are constructing their own positions, and negotiating among themselves, they won't talk to you very much because they have to get their act together to present a united front. So you try to have some influence while they're shaping their common position but that's very difficult. They feel this is an internal matter, and they've got to reach some internal consensus. Then when they reach a consensus, and have a common position, it's very hard to get them to change it. Because they sweated and labored to get to their common posture, then you take them on and in effect they say, this is the best we can do having compromised among ourselves. It's very hard to get them to move backwards. So you have trouble negotiating with them before they have a common position, you have trouble moving them after they have a common position.

Then on top of that, of course, it means that since they have to have consensus the most recalcitrant and slow moving and protectionist in the group holds up the others. And this was invariably France, and, although I don't want to be unfair to Italy, it includes Italy as well. But certainly France was the major culprit - generally, and with particular emphasis on their agriculture problems. And that has been a common theme ever since. In fact, the French can be a

difficult for us in diplomacy generally, not just on trade, but on many other matters where with de Gaulle and since they like to show their independence of the U.S. and the greatness of France, and they have continued to be difficult. I was at a meeting a few months ago where Mickey Kantor was having a retrospective on negotiating...

Q: *He was our...*

LORD: He was our special trade representative under President Clinton through his first term. He was asked who was the toughest negotiating partner country that we faced. People expected him to say Japan, or maybe China and he immediately said France. That was certainly true in Geneva as well.

Q: *Do you recall any issues that came...in a way you were part of the internal negotiating procedures in the United States. We had to come up with a fixed position too, and we had our cultural interests, our industrial interests, etc.*

LORD: That's correct. This did not really reach a serious stage until we were in Geneva. Not much went on while we were getting ready in Washington because there wasn't much movement in negotiations. And there was in fighting on an interagency basis I'm sure. I did not take much a part in that. And certainly while we were in Geneva that was done back here with Ambassador Roth when Ambassador Blumenthal headed our delegation in Geneva. And, of course, early on special interests don't want to tip their hand too much or make too many concessions even internally until they see what they're going to get from other countries.

Q: *While you were gathering statistics was everybody sort of looking over the shoulder of these other groups to see what was coming up?*

LORD: You mean other countries?

Q: *I mean you have different groups within the State Department and other agencies dealing with Japan or with Canada or Latin America. Were you all working out your thing and just getting together?*

LORD: That's right. I mean, you would work out your strategy versus your counterpart, in my case the EEC, but you had to relate this and talk to the other teams about how they were going to approach Japan and Canada and the others. If you made this concession to the EEC what would it do to your leverage vis-a-vis Canada and Japan, for example. So you had to meld this. I don't believe we did too much of that in Washington. I think the pace just hadn’t picked up enough, it was more getting a lot of the statistical background and objectives with other countries in mind. I don't recall that we had detailed strategies at that point. It was probably somewhat premature.

Q: *I must say that just thinking about the thing, it seems impossible just to get everybody to come on board. What was the trade-off?*

LORD: Well, the American market is a big target for other countries in terms of our leverage, even more so today, but in those days as well we were a huge market for countries and therefore they wanted to get into our market. That, of course, was the trade-off we had with them.

Q: *The Congressional side of things, was that taken care of at different levels?*

LORD: Yes. I don't recall myself getting involved in that. And again, it wouldn't have been too frantic in the early stages while we were in Washington. Indeed, that would be done at higher levels, and particularly as we went down the home stretch it was done in Washington at high levels.

Q: *Did you get any feel for the operation of the Department as far as the contributions of the various bureaus, all of the geographic bureaus, the Economic Bureau, for what you all were doing?*

LORD: I don't recall right now great precision. Certainly there were no information problems. Whenever we needed information we could get it. But I don't have a clear recollection of exactly what we did day-to-day frankly, except as I say get a sense of all the negotiating areas, the barriers that we faced abroad, what our priorities were, and some sense of what we'd be willing to do and a lot of statistical stuff about trade patterns, and projections, etc. The overall team consisted of people seconded from other agencies. It wasn't just the State Department. So we drew heavily on Commerce and Agriculture, as well as the State Department bureaus.

Q: *Did your team sit down and say how are we going to get the French, how are we going to work with the French?*

LORD: Well, again, this heated up more when we got to Geneva, but yes, a lot of it was how do we work in individual capitals to try to influence them. So we'd go with circular telegrams to the British and the Dutch, and the Italians and the Germans as well as the French tailoring our positions either to encourage liberalization by some, or try to encourage the French to be more forthcoming. But as I said, it's rather difficult because they felt that they had to sort out their own position before they could really talk seriously to us. So my clear recollection, particularly as we got to Geneva, was one of frustration that we couldn't speed up the process in the EEC. Every time we thought there was movement there would be some EEC meeting and the French and perhaps others would once again kill the possible compromise.

Q: *Sometimes, of course, the French may have been almost a stalking horse because the Germans certainly have had a highly subsidized agricultural sector too.*

LORD: It wasn't just agriculture that they were dragging their feet on. It was the industrial area as well, and I'm sure there were certain areas that the Germans or even the more liberal members of the EEC wanted to protect and sometimes they would conveniently hide behind the French. So I don't want to put this all on the French. But I distinctly remember, and I'm sure it's accurate, that the French were the real culprits.

Q: *In '64 you went off to...*

LORD: We went in January of '65, I remember in those days we had the luxury of going by ship, it was wonderful and I love boats. I remember I was crushed the U.S. shipping line, I guess it was the United States had a strike. So I said, oh my God we don't get to go on a boat. Well, it turned out to be a plus because we were then authorized to take a foreign ship. So instead of speeding across in the United States, the United States would cross the Atlantic in five days...

Q: *The United States was our fastest ship.*

LORD: That's right. We had to take an Italian boat, Leonardo da Vinci, which took ten days. So we had twice as much fun, and twice the time, it was wonderful. Wonderful food, and very pleasant. On that ship I met Bill Buckley, the famous Bill Buckley, a conservative commentator, TV, a Yale person. I expected him, by reputation, to be pompous and not to listen and to be didactic, and to be cold. He was just the opposite of all these things. He and his wife were extremely friendly and warm, and we have had a lifelong friendship with them ever since. Anyway, we went over there with our young daughter. My parents went with us, so we had a lot of fun. We had a terrific time.

Q: *You were in Geneva...*

LORD: January 1965 until June 30, 1967. So when I first took the job in Washington I figured at most I would be there six months or maybe a year. Even as we went over we thought it would be about a year or so, and it turned out to be two and a half years with very little happening frankly until about the last year, and only then because of the impending deadline of the U.S. legislative authority running out.

Q: *It does point out this thing in negotiations that at a certain point you really have to say after this no more.*

LORD: That's right, and I don't know if these ever would have been concluded without this deadline. Obviously we were crucial to the whole operation. Everyone knew that we couldn't go back to our Congress and get new authority. That we had to wrap it up by then, particularly after so many years of negotiations. And thus it was this deadline that was used by the two heroes at that negotiation to complete it. One hero was Mike Blumenthal, who did an extraordinary job. The other hero was the Director General of the GATT, a man named Eric Wyndham White. And the two of them really pulled this off down the home stretch. We can get to that in just a minute.

Q: *Can you talk about developments from your perspective of this extremely important set of negotiations, because almost everything from now on was with built on that.*

LORD: That's correct. There have been subsequent rounds, and the Tokyo Round, and then the Uruguay Round patterned after that. They always take time because by definition it's complicated. You've got all the major trading partners, all the interests at work, and we were trying not only get tariffs reduced, but begin to take a crack at non-tariff barriers. But this was the last negotiation where the tariffs were the overwhelmingly important item, and the end result was very successful. At the time we thought it was somewhat less than ideal. It was good, but

we'd hoped to have even more. But looking back on it was a remarkable achievement what was finally pulled off. I was again the secretary, or executive secretary for the EEC negotiating team up until the last year, so the first year and a half. For maybe the last nine months, I don't remember exactly, I switched jobs with Tom Simons, another distinguished Foreign Service officer who had been in my A-100 course, and has since has gone on to be ambassador to Poland and a very high ranking Soviet expert and ambassador to Pakistan right now. So he came over and took my job on the EEC team, and I went over and took his job as special assistant to Mike Blumenthal for the last nine months. But before that from early '65 until toward the end of '66, it was very slow moving. Terrific for my tennis game, and a lot of skiing and traveling. I worked eight hour days but no longer than that, and often we had to make work. We were sitting around running statistics, waiting for the EEC essentially to get its act together. Every now and then I would write a memo to Pappano sort of suggesting, here's a way we might break the deadlock. I once suggested, for example, that rather inching along with gradual trading off with the EEC, why don't we put all our offers on the table at once, conditional on getting a major response from them. It was probably a wrong approach, but I just wanted to try to think of things to try to get things moving, and what might speed up the process. So occasionally I'd write what I thought were some interesting memos like that, but most of the time we were doing statistics, and it was very hard to keep busy throughout the day. Very frustrating.

Q: *Were you in contact with other national groups at this point?*

LORD: The overall delegation was, of course, but our job really was with the EEC and obviously in Geneva. I don't think I ever traveled to Brussels. Our job was to deal with the EEC. There would be long periods of time we didn't even have meetings because they didn't have a position. So socially we would run into Japanese, Canadians, Latin Americans, and others. But the other teams were doing the negotiating with them.

Q: *What about during the last part, and really the active part at the time you had become the assistant to Mike Blumenthal?*

LORD: That's correct.

Q: *Could you talk about his background that you're familiar with, and his method of operation?*

LORD: He was extraordinary. I've been fortunate in working for very dynamic leaders of very different styles, that includes Fred Dutton that I mentioned. Jeff Kitchen and Alexis Johnson were very impressive in their own way. Mike Blumenthal was extraordinary. Then I worked for Henry Kissinger at one point and many others, George Shultz and Warren Christopher. So it has been a real variety. Blumenthal was a Jewish emigree from Nazi Germany through Shanghai, a little ironic since my wife was born in Shanghai. He had taught at Princeton, a Ph.D., and a distinguished education background in economics. He had been head of Bendix Corporation.

Q: *An important American manufacturing firm.*

LORD: I don't remember who would have appointed him - Kennedy being assassinated in '63, I think he must have been appointed by Johnson. I just don't recall exactly. Ambassador Roth was

the other special trade representative, and then became number one, I believe after Christian Herter died. He sat in Washington but occasionally would visit Geneva for negotiations, but of course Blumenthal was head of our delegation sitting in Geneva. He was very young for that kind of senior responsibility. At the time he must have been mid-thirties, late thirties at the most. He brought both a business and an academic background. Very dynamic, very courageous in taking on Washington when he wanted to get some concessions for negotiating purposes, very tough with the other countries as well, very demanding of his staff in a good way but demanding excellence, very hard working, and a very brilliant tactician. He realized that he had to use our negotiating deadline to try to finally bring this thing to a close, and worked very closely with the Director General of GATT, Wyndham White to try to do that.

As his special assistant I was responsible for making sure that various cables and other bits of information got to him. I'd be note taker in some of his meetings. I would do occasional think pieces for him. I would be a channel of communication for other members of the staff. I also had access to very sensitive cables, sensitive in the sense of a commercial negotiating position that we didn't want to leak out, so they'd be sent in special channels with special code words. Even then we used NODIS and LIMDIS, but we had a code word, I think was "potatoes" for some reason. I'd be the first to learn that it had come in and only he and maybe one or two other people would see these cables. It meant, for example, you are authorized if you need it to make this concession on this sector, of this area, which would have been dynamite if it went out to the domestic industry. So this sounded like a nuclear secret but it was almost as sensitive.
I remember a couple of times I would even get woken at home - we were living at that time at Versoix which is about 15 minutes from our Geneva mission. We first lived in Annemasse on the other side of the lake. I remember a couple of times being woken in the middle of the night by the embassy's communications operator, getting an urgent message from Washington. I didn't mind doing it but I'd go in there and it would be some negotiating position which certainly could have waited until the next day. It had the requirement, if it's NIACT immediate, you've got to open it and act on it right away. Sometimes it wouldn't even be needed for a week or so, so I used to get furious with the White House. Francis Baton, who I have great respect for, was Deputy National Security Advisor in charge of economics and trade working for Walt Rostow at that point. Either he or his staff had the bad judgment in sending NIACT immediate occasionally in the middle of the night and make me drive in and it could have waited for a week let alone a day.

In any event, this was heady stuff. Finally we were on the move. Finally there was real negotiation of give and take, and of course sitting in the front office I could see all the negotiations, not just the EEC but with all the other major partners. I could also see the equally dramatic negotiations with Washington where Blumenthal was trying to get more negotiating flexibility. He'd often go back to Washington to press the various agencies and the White House to get more flexibility, and the kind of deals he was suggesting. So it was a tremendous education for me on negotiating in general, on economic negotiating in particular, on dealing with Washington on domestic politics, and the play of various interests, and juggling your interest with various interlocutors in Geneva, on how to play off the EEC, Japan and Canada, and other major negotiating partners, and how to gang up with some against others, to try to get movement. So it was a very heady, exciting period and the last nine months in many ways made up for the general drag of the first almost two years.

Q: *Was the United States the driving force the whole time?*

LORD: I think it's fair to say that, but clearly down the home stretch it was Blumenthal and Wyndham White, the latter, of course, being more neutral but working behind the scenes with Blumenthal. So we clearly were the driving force unquestionably. Blumenthal personally deserves great credit for the deal he brought off. Obviously Ambassador Roth was important sitting in Washington, but anyone would tell you that without Blumenthal on the scene there this never would have happened.

Q: *What brought people together?*

LORD: First the deadline concentrated the minds. We made concessions, they made concessions. People realized, even the French grudgingly, that it was in everyone's interest to have this thing succeed. And that if we didn't the world probably would have slid back into protectionism, and it would have hurt everyone. Obviously there were some areas like European agriculture, and some other areas, where we never could make a dent. They probably didn't make much progress on textiles. I don't recall the details. So as you got down the home stretch, you began to see what things really had to be excluded from the final negotiations, or where you needed gradual tariff reduction on a much slower pace. And there'd be difficult areas domestically which you finally would make concessions on as long as you got something in return that you could use to justify the concessions you were making. So it was a multilateral process. I think it's fair to say that on the whole Canada was certainly reinforcing us. The free trade area countries in Europe, outside the EEC, the European countries outside the EEC, EFTA, was an important part, also for free trade on the whole. Japan, it's hard to think they were free trade, but I don't think they were as recalcitrant as the French- led EEC. Australia and New Zealand were for open trade. The developing countries had their own problems and generally weren't expected to do as much. So you had a lot of multilateral pressure to get this thing done. There was the combination of deadline, people seeing the gains they would make by opening others' markets and the dangers of failure and sliding back into protectionism if we didn't succeed, as well as the possible political overtones and bitterness among friends. I think all this plus the negotiating skill of Blumenthal and the steering skill and leadership of Wyndham White brought this to a head.

Q: *Where was the real negotiation taking place? I would think that the big table of everybody sitting around would be...*

LORD: Absolutely not. They usually would ratify things, as you say, and be more be more for propaganda exchanges. So it would take place in small meetings, maybe one-on-one heads of delegations, Blumenthal seeing the head of EEC one-on-one, or maybe with me or somebody else taking notes. Or Wyndham White bringing people together, some key delegate heads, so it would be in small groups and sometimes bilaterally and sometimes small multilateral groups. But you're absolutely right, it wouldn't be a formal thing.

Q: *I assume you were somewhat removed from the actual head-on-head with the other delegations?*

LORD: Well, I was although when I became special assistant I sat in on some of those meetings. But it was more apt to be either Blumenthal alone, or the head of the negotiating team, the head of the EEC team or the Canadian team, etc., that would be sitting in there. So I don't believe I sat in on too many of those but I was in some of them.

Q: *Was it table pounding?*

LORD: Well at times. Blumenthal, like a skilled negotiator knew how to play his cards, when to reveal his own concessions, when to be tough, when to threaten to walk away. But he would liven it with humor and politeness as necessary. But he could be very tough, and there were times, particularly with the EEC, and occasion with the Japanese as well, there would be table pounding. My recollection would be that the EFTA countries and Canada and the developing countries were easier to deal with.

Q: *Were intellectual rights an issue?*

LORD: Not at all. I don't recall it being a major issue. They have become more and more important in American negotiations as we have gotten into the information age, globalization, American competitive edge. Whether its software, pharmaceuticals, or technological and scientific, or literary intellectual property rights, all that has become a major market where we have a comparative advantage in recent years. It has really moved up on our priority list of our negotiations. In fact, in the Kennedy Round it was not, it was more the traditional industrial and agricultural tariff areas that were our main focus then. Machinery, chemicals, grains, these kind of things were the major center-pieces.

Q: *What about on the agricultural side? We had our subsidies, everybody else had their subsidiaries.*

LORD: I don't believe much progress was made. I'd have to go back, I'm sure there are exhaustive records, the EC was not going to move very much in its policy. So I think there were some modest gains in certain areas. Of course, this was very important, not only for us but for Canada, Argentina, and for other countries. So it was hard for some of those countries, in particular. We had very great agricultural interests, but for the Canadians or for Argentina and maybe some of the other free trade area countries (EFTA) agriculture was absolutely crucial. So the EEC was dragging its feet, but agriculture was not only frustrating for us, but it threatened the overall negotiations. So there was some modest gains, but as I recall, the Kennedy Round did not make much progress on agriculture compared to the industrial side.

Q: *Was it a last minute thing, or were you beginning to see light at the end of this particular tunnel as the negotiations progressed?*

LORD: Well, again, this goes back as you say and this is 30 years, but you had ups and downs. It was a roller-coaster for the last nine months where there were days where you felt, well we're going to make it. And other days, how the hell are we going to make it by June 30, 1967. And I recall that it really went down to the wire. Even a week before the deadline we weren't sure we were going to make it, and it got very dramatic and very exciting the last few weeks, and I'm sure

there have been memoirs by Blumenthal and others that will detail this. But I do know it was a roller-coaster for several months. There were times when we were very worried that we were not going to pull this off. Other times when we felt we had momentum. It really went down to the wire.

Q: *I would have thought this would have been a difficult thing career-wise since there are Foreign Service cycles where you get assigned, and to be in something sort of open-ended as this you really couldn't feel you could bail out. I mean, most Foreign Service assignments come up in the spring and people move in the summer.*

LORD: That's a very good point. That was an additional frustration in not having an awful lot to do and waiting for the EEC. There was the feeling that this was supposed to be a two year assignment. In those days in the Foreign Service your first three assignments generally were about two years each, and you rotated even within an embassy, and they tried to expose you in many areas. So I had a feeling that three and a half years on trade negotiations was more than I wanted to invest, and as a general principle early in my career. It was slow moving. Two years of economics and trade would have been perfect, but three and a half years in any job at that point was really slowing me down. After nine months in Congressional Relations, a year and a quarter in Political-Military affairs, I felt like the clock had stopped. Now having said that, I was very fortunate on promotions although I like to think I earned them. But I got three promotions in the first five and a half years. So I was moving as fast as you possibly could.

Q: *But you were beyond the threshold at that point.*

LORD: I forget what the system was then. I started as what they called a FSO-8, I remember my first salary I think was $5200 a year. I went to 7, and then to 6, and then to 5. By the time I left Geneva I was an FSO-5. Which brings me to a career decision at that point, unless you have other questions on the Kennedy Round, this might be a good place to end it up at this point. We knew we would be finished one way or another by June 30, 1967.

JOHN J. HARTER
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Team Member
Geneva (1966-1970)

John J. Harter was born in Texas in 1926. Harter served in the US Air Force during WWII before graduating from the University of Southern California and joining the Foreign Service. Overseas, Harter served in South Africa, Chile, Thailand and Switzerland. He also worked in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, for USIA and after retirement on Oral Histories. Harter was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: You were in Geneva from 1966 until...

HARTER: From July 1966 until May 1970, nearly four years. It was supposed to be a five-year assignment - three years, home leave, and two more years - but let's come back to why that changed later.

Q: What did you do in Geneva?

HARTER: I worked mainly on GATT affairs. For the first two years, I also spent some time on UNCTAD. The Kennedy Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations was nearing its final crunch when I arrived. A strong negotiating team represented the United States in those negotiations, comprising some 30 to 40 experts and support staff headed by Ambassador Mike Blumenthal. I was ***not*** a member of that team. Instead, I was one of the permanent U.S. representatives to GATT responsible for all U.S. interests in GATT except for the Kennedy Round. We were responsible for accession negotiations for new GATT members, regional trade agreements, trade-related balance of payments issues, and administrative matters, for example. Henry Brodie was the official U.S. representative to GATT, Herb Propps was the alternate representative, and I was an assistant or substitute for either or both of them. Henry and Herb were both FSO-1s, and Herb, having been steeped in GATT affairs for many years, frankly felt their roles should have been reversed. I replaced Doris Whitnack, who, for many years, had been a trade policy official in both State and STR [The Office of the Special Trade Representative (redesignated as the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative [USTR] in 1979)]. Doris couldn't stand Herb Propps, and that's why the position suddenly opened: She begged Washington to get her out of there as soon as possible. She was downright miserable! I arrived three months before she left, and the overlap was too long, but it afforded more than ample time for Doris to share with me her considerable knowledge of GATT and her dislike for Herb.

Q: Did you have suitable experience to fill that position?

HARTER: Not really. GATT delegates constituted a special fellowship. They were social intimates and they spoke a common language understood by few outsiders. Although dedicated to their separate national interests, they shared a faith in the power of international trade to shape a better world. The cognoscenti didn't quickly and easily absorb new initiates. But my economic duties in Chile, Thailand, and IO, reenforced by my economic studies at Harvard, gave me a good foundation, and I was well briefed before I left Washington by Jules Katz and several senior members of his staff, including Bob Brungart and Bill Culbert. Jules was appointed Director of the Office of International Trade Policy shortly before that. I had known him slightly when I was in IO. He had been an economic officer in the Office of Eastern European Affairs for some 15 years. I met him through Art Wortzel, who was then the public affairs officer in the Office of European Affairs. Art and I had lunch one day, and he brought Jules along. Jules then seemed to me quite shy, and I was amazed at the transformation in his personality after he became State's key trade policy executive. He was in command, very articulate, and somewhat aggressive - totally different from the individual I met in the early 1960s. Phil Trezise, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, shrewdly chose him to head the trade policy office because he saw Jules' potential and also because complex issues relating to the Eastern European countries were coming before GATT. Subsequent history confirmed it was an exceptionally good choice. Apparently it was Jules' personal approval - and a strong IO endorsement - that sealed my assignment to Geneva despite my lack of prior trade policy experience.

Q: Were you disadvantaged as a newcomer to GATT?

HARTER: Yes, I was! For the first few months, I felt severely underqualified. It took time to gain admission into the world of GATT lore. Doris was very helpful during our overlap, but Henry Brodie and Herb Propps were always busy and disinclined to inculcate a newcomer into that world.

Q: Did the Blumenthal team help you?

HARTER: Yes, some of them tutored me. So did the GATT Secretariat, especially Margaret Potter and Jan Tumlir, who patiently coached me on GATT precedents and mores during my early months there. Also, just by attending negotiating sessions and interacting with other delegations I gradually became familiar with the GATT world. Eventually I was a true believer in GATTology, convinced that continually expanding world trade is the indispensable element of a dynamic world economy.

Q: What were the duties of Henry Brodie and Herb Propps, and how did you assist them?

HARTER: Henry represented the United States at meetings of the GATT Council, the oversight body that authorized actions pursuant to recommendations of subordinate GATT Committees. Herb, as Henry's alternate, usually represented the United States in Henry's absence and at the more technical and legalistic meetings. I was on the U.S. Delegation to virtually all GATT meetings, except for those concerned with the Kennedy Round, and I usually wrote the first draft of delegation reports. At first, Herb heavily edited my drafts, but he gradually came to approve them with little or no change.

Q: What were some of the specific issues Brodie and Propps dealt with?

HARTER: Countless issues were on the GATT agenda, so it's hard to choose. Henry spent many hours on Poland's accession to GATT, for example, after Poland requested accession as a full Contracting Party in the late 1960s, having attended GATT meetings as an observer for several years before that. Jules Katz personally managed that accession, which was quite tangled, technically and politically. I attended those meetings with Henry, and I usually wrote the reporting cables.

One item that Herb fielded was the so-called Tripartite Agreement, through which Yugoslavia, India, and Egypt tried to forge a special intra-LDC scheme through which signatory developing countries would reciprocally extend trade preferences to all parties to the agreement. The idea was to exempt intra-LDC trade from GATT rules, and Herb fought it tooth and nail. Again, I attended the meetings and I wrote most of the reporting cables. This issue ultimately evolved into an UNCTAD program that was identified as "Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries," which was eventually supported by a special division of the UNCTAD Secretariat.

Q: Was Japan active in GATT in those days?

HARTER: Japan acceded to GATT by 1955, when its economy was beginning to recover from wartime devastation. Japan was never prominent in GATT, but it became somewhat more visible while I was in Geneva.

Q: Were the communist countries members of GATT?

HARTER: The Soviet Union wasn't, but some communist countries were. Cuba, an original Contracting Party to GATT, was represented at major GATT meetings over the years. We would have expelled Cuba if that had been possible, but other governments wouldn't support that. Whenever the Cubans attended a GATT meeting, they delivered bitter anti-U.S. tirades that sorely embarrassed and distracted Henry Brodie and Herb Propps. Czechoslovakia was also a Contracting Party from the beginning, but its representative was pretty tame. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was an energetic player in GATT affairs - but not as a communist country. The Yugoslav representative, a voluble man named Papic, was one of the most prominent Third World voices in GATT, along with the Indian and Brazilian spokesmen.

Q: What was the origin of GATT?

HARTER: That went back to the post-World War II period, when the international community created several new specialized agencies to be associated with the United Nations, including the FAO, WHO, UNESCO, and others. The older specialized agencies - the ITU, the UPU [The International Telecommunications Union and the Universal Postal Union dated from the late nineteenth century.], and the ILO - were also recognized as specialized agencies of the UN system.

The economic institutions were a special case. From the beginning, the U.S. Treasury insisted they must in no way be subordinate to the UN The Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 basically envisaged the need for new international organizations to oversee the implementation of global rules aimed at preventing a recurrence of the "Beggar-Thy-Neighbor" policies that disrupted the world economy in the 1930s. The International Monetary Fund was supposed to ensure that national monetary policies and exchange rates were compatible with international order; and the International Trade Organization was to provide a framework through which governments could negotiate reductions in trade barriers. The Bretton Woods Conference assumed the IMF and the ITO would cooperate to grease the wheels of international finance and trade.

The so-called "Havana Charter" was subsequently negotiated as a basis for the ITO, but the Truman Administration did not submit it to the U.S. Senate for ratification, knowing there weren't enough affirmative votes to approve it. Some Senators thought the very concept of the ITO was inconsistent with U.S. sovereignty, erroneously assuming the ITO itself would be empowered to reduce U.S. tariffs. Some Senators also opposed the ITO, which would have included all UN members, because they did not want the communist countries to be parties to a non-discriminatory trading system. These developments unfortunately coincided with the beginning of the Cold War, when U.S. foreign policy coalesced around the concept of "containing" communism. In the eyes of some, that implied a virtual embargo on trade with the Soviet Union.

A common view at that time was that excluding the Soviet Union from economic interaction with "free market" economies would hasten its economic collapse. Expecting that the ITO would eventually come into being, the United States and the Europeans construed GATT as a temporary agency that would implement the more urgent trade-policy provisions of the Havana Charter. GATT was therefore the center of several increasingly ambitious rounds of tariff cuts, beginning in 1947. In its early years, GATT basically comprised the European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and several Latin American countries, but by the time I left Geneva in 1970 nearly one hundred countries were members. As you know, GATT recently morphed into the World Trade Organization, which resembles the original ITO concept.

Meanwhile, in addition to the IMF and the ITO, the Bretton Woods conferees agreed that a third international organization was needed - an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which came to be known as the "World Bank" - to finance and spur the reconstruction of the war-damaged countries of Europe. After 1947, the Marshall Plan basically took care of that, and by the late 1940s the Bank's agenda effectively shifted to development and its mandate was broadened to embrace special emphasis on stimulating the growth of Third World economies.

Q: Did you have primary responsibility for particular areas of the GATT portfolio?

HARTER: Yes, after Doris left, I was the U.S. Representative to all GATT administrative and budget meetings. That's how I became personally acquainted with Sir Eric Wyndham White, the Director General of GATT. He had a major hand in setting up and directing GATT between 1947 and 1967, and he closely monitored its executive and budgetary functions. I had heard at Harvard that he was a cardinal figure in the economic rehabilitation of the European economy and the continuing rise in living standards in the world economy following World War II. Nevertheless, neither Henry Brodie nor Herb Propps paid the slightest heed to the GATT budget. Whenever anyone in Washington tried to discuss it with either of them, the call would be bounced to me.

GATT was a unique target for U.S. budget-cutters because, technically speaking, it was not an "international organization." Our fiction was that GATT was merely an "executive agreement" and a negotiating forum, and its supporting Secretariat was not sanctioned by U.S. Senate ratification. The legal presumption was that U.S. contributions to support its budget weren't part of U.S. contributions to the United Nations and other international organizations. That may sound like a nit-pick, but the practical result was that U.S. funds allocated to GATT, although relatively small, were a conspicuous "administrative" item in the State Department budget. They invariably caught the eye of Washington budgeteers. Accordingly I always received stiff instructions requiring us to cut every penny we could from the GATT budget. Actually, that may have been a good thing: It kept the GATT Secretariat slender, sleek, and efficient.

Also, as time passed, I was increasingly designated to represent the United States at meetings concerned with the trade of developing countries, especially those that focused on trade restrictions that developing countries claimed were necessary to rectify their balance of payments. GATT essentially required countries that maintained such import restrictions to defend them annually in formal on-the-record meetings.

The State Department tended to see those balance of payments sessions as pro forma and inconsequential because Article XV of the General Agreement bestowed on the IMF authority to sanction a government's imposition of import restrictions to safeguard its balance of payments. However, those meetings provided underutilized opportunities: I usually received excellent and detailed instructions that highlighted the adverse economic effects of bad economic policies, and the erring governments usually sent senior trade-policy officials to defend those policies. We could have made good use, in bilateral and other multilateral fora, of the official GATT reports that fully recapitulated the points we made in those meetings and the superficial rebuttals. With this in mind, Roderick Abbott of the U.K. and I floated a joint U.S./U.K. initiative to upgrade those balance of payments meetings, but our proposal wasn't well received either in Washington or London.

Q: Didn't the developing countries complain that GATT was a "rich man's club" that gave insufficient priority to their trade interests?

HARTER: Yes, they did, vehemently and incessantly. It was a mantra! In response, the GATT charter was amended after the first UNCTAD conference in 1964. Governments negotiated and adopted a "Part Four" of the General Agreement - new Articles 36, 37, and 38 - that specified that obstacles to exports of developing countries should receive special consideration under the aegis of a new Committee on Trade and Development, which met at least twice a year to oversee implementation of the new articles. I was sometimes the U.S. Representative to that committee and its sub-groups. Actually, we gave low priority to those meetings, because the total volume of U.S. trade affected was not substantial. After all, U.S. policy toward GATT was largely dictated by our immediate ***trade*** interests.

Q: When did the Kennedy Round end?

HARTER: Technically, at midnight on June 30, 1967, the deadline imposed by the legislation that authorized U.S. participation in the negotiations. Actually, the final exchange of concessions occurred during the frenzied hours after midnight, as Joe Greenwald, Mike Blumenthal, and a few senior members of the U.S. team sparred with their European counterparts to cobble together the final Kennedy Round package. They "stopped the clock" at midnight to make it legal.

A friend of mine who took notes at those final exchanges after midnight told me the ultimate Kennedy Round concessions rested more on the negotiators' subjective sense of probable political support at the time of ratification than on the bulky statistical and technical studies that had been laboriously prepared by the bureaucracy to bolster their positions. He also said Wyndham White magnificently steered the negotiators around pitfalls and dead-ends during those final hours.

Q: You knew Wyndham White personally?

HARTER: Yes. He was charismatic in mediating critical policy debates, and he was down-to-earth in informal settings. I vividly recall a dinner party my wife and I attended at the home of Louis Halle [Note: Louis Halle was a member of the State Department policy planning

body after World War II and a professor of economics in Geneva in the 1960s. (Halle is also well-known for his classic book about birding in the Washington area.)], at which Wyndham White's wife berated him as a "failure" because he never amassed a fortune. That helps to explain why, after the Kennedy Round, he accepted an executive position with a corporate organization that went bust soon thereafter. After that - and after his ensuing divorce - his life was sad.

Q: Were there other reasons?

HARTER: I heard conflicting stories about that. Some say he would have continued at GATT if his salary had been increased, even though he was disheartened when we did not press for continuing trade liberalization immediately after the Kennedy Round. We didn't try to persuade him to remain. We thought a Swiss diplomat named Paul Jolles would replace him, but Jolles declined. At the last minute the Swiss Foreign Office proposed Olivier Long as Wyndham White's successor, and, lacking an alternative, we accepted him without knowing anything about him.

Actually, Long had a distinguished background: He was a former Ambassador, a professor of economics, and a senior officer in the Swiss militia. His principal claim to fame before 1967 was that he secretly oversaw the negotiation of General de Gaulle's settlement with the Algerians. However, his subdued manner contrasted sharply with Wyndham White's extroverted, take-command style.

Q: Did the Mission's GATT-related duties change after the Kennedy Round?

HARTER: Yes, but not precisely as the Mission anticipated. Technically the Kennedy Round was completed by mid-1967, but Henry Brodie, Herb Propps, and I were still picking up the pieces into 1968. Henry and Herb assumed that after the Kennedy Round, they would be unambiguously responsible for the full range of GATT affairs. Joe Greenwald had promised Henry that his duties and his staff would expand after the Blumenthal team departed, but only John Bushnell came in at that time.

Q: Why the change?

HARTER: Well, from 1947 to 1967, Wyndham White resolutely pressed the international community, and especially the United States, to move from one round of trade negotiations to the next. He characteristically invoked the famous bicycle metaphor, which held that trade liberalization could continue only as a relentlessly forward-moving process. Otherwise, he maintained, protectionism would pull it down. The rationale was that as trade barriers are reduced - and as efficient overseas producers penetrate domestic markets - the increased competition will force inefficient producers to become more efficient or to go out of business. Inefficient producers will always lobby the government to protect them from the increased competition, the argument goes. When a major round - or preparation for the next round - is under way, the government can respond that all trade policy complaints are receiving priority in the context of the negotiations or the preparations for negotiations. At other times, it's hard for the government to provide politically acceptable answers. For twenty years Wyndham White invoked this rationale to persuade U.S. trade-policy officials to move from one round to the next,

each more ambitious than the last. Following two decades of precedents, it was widely expected that a new round would follow the conclusion of the Kennedy Round, but Olivier Long at the helm did not try to force the next round as Wyndham White had done before him.

Q: What direction did U.S. trade policy take after the Kennedy Round?

HARTER: There was some debate in Geneva and elsewhere about that, but our senior trade policy officials at the State Department basically stayed aloof from that debate. They were preoccupied with the ramifications of GSP, preparations for UNCTAD-II, and the enlargement of the European Community, especially the question of U.K. entry into the Common Market. The Mission was well aware of those distractions, but it did not press Washington to direct GATT toward any particular course.

Q: Do you mean the U.S. position in GATT was passive?

HARTER: Well, the U.S. position wasn't really well-defined. As I understand it, Lyndon Johnson, perceiving no clear initiatives on overall trade policy from his principal advisors, asked Bill Roth, who succeeded Herter as the head of STR, to prepare a report on the world trading system. Roth apparently wanted to indicate possible future directions to the incoming Nixon Administration, and he depended heavily on a young man named Harald Malmgren to help him develop that report. Hal had been one of McNamara's "Whiz Kids" at the Pentagon, and he came to STR to work on agricultural trade matters. In 1968 and 1969 he represented the United States at a series of GATT meetings seeking to project a GATT agenda for the 1970s. Frankly, Henry Brodie and Herb Propps didn't relate well to Hal: They saw him as an unguided missile without an official mandate. As a consequence I was usually designated to serve as the Mission's representative at those meetings. Hal was brilliant and easy to work with, and he exhibited a definite sense of where he thought we should go.

During my last two years in Geneva I basically served as Hal's man on the spot. Of course, that put me in a delicate position, because Henry and Herb - rather than Hal - were officially the principal U.S. representatives to GATT, and they wrote my efficiency reports, as rating and reviewing officers, even though they really had no basis for observing or evaluating the work I did with Hal.

Q: Were other governments represented at those meetings by the local Missions in Geneva?

HARTER: Most were, but the leading participants were senior officials from capitals. Hal usually arrived at those meetings late, and he left early, and I often sat uncomfortably in his place at the beginning and at the end of those meetings. Each meeting would stall for time pending his arrival because the U.S. position was always critical, and no one but Hal knew what it was. He usually left as soon as the key conclusions were nailed down in principle, sometimes before they were formally enunciated. I prepared the reporting cables, which spelled out the recommendations Hal left with me orally. Hal virtually never briefed Henry or Herb about those meetings, but one of them would sign off on the cables after I showed his clearance in substance.

Q: What were the principal GATT topics discussed in those meetings?

HARTER: Hal saw those sessions as a preliminary exploration of issues to be negotiated in a future round, although no formal policy determination had been made that there would be such a round. The most important questions related to so-called non-tariff barriers, or measures that governments presumably imposed for purposes unrelated to foreign trade, although they sometimes gave their own producers competitive advantages in their own markets vis-a-vis foreign suppliers, thus distorting international competition. The trade-distorting effects of those measures were increasingly evident after tariffs were slashed in successive GATT rounds.

We began by compiling a comprehensive inventory: We asked countries to submit lists of measures ***other*** countries maintained that impeded their own exports. After the Secretariat consolidated those submissions into one large, unwieldy list, we broke the measures down into categories, such as government procurement policies, customs formalities, technical standards, and quarantine, health, and sanitary measures. Herb Propps, as an old GATT expert, grumbled every inch of the way that GATT negotiations would never reduce or eliminate non-tariff barriers to trade, but subsequent history proved him wrong. A separate series of meetings pinpointed the economic costs of agricultural subsidies, which Hal expected the next GATT round to deal with. Unfortunately, those measures remained sacrosanct until the Uruguay Round, which took place from 1986 to 1994.

Q: Where did Malmgren get his official guidance?

HARTER: He apparently had a loose oral mandate from Bill Roth. In addition, Hal kept his eyes and ears open for fresh thinking on trade policy, wherever he could find it. For example, he consulted closely with the Trade Policy Research Center, a small think-tank in London that identified non-tariff barriers as an appropriate focus for the next GATT round.

Q: What was the process through which the United States ultimately launched a new round of trade negotiations?

HARTER: It may be worth recapitulating that saga in some detail because it's an important bit of history that's not well known, even among trade-policy scholars. Here's my understanding: The report Bill Roth submitted to Lyndon Johnson late in 1968 urged the incoming Administration to sponsor a new round, and the Nixon transition team gave weight to that report. Prior to his election Nixon was apparently of two minds regarding trade: His instinct was to favor a liberal trade policy, but his 1968 campaign hinted that Nixon would protect textiles producers from foreign competition, because Nixon thought Kennedy's pledge of support for the U.S. textiles industry was crucial to Kennedy's narrow victory in 1960.

Nixon early on named Murray Chotiner, his long-time chief political advisor, as General Counsel at STR, giving him a vantage point for observing GATT. I was Chotiner's control officer when he came to Geneva for meetings of the Cotton Textiles Committee in 1969, and I found him perceptive and congenial. Presumably reflecting Chotiner's recommendation, in May, 1970 Nixon designated a Presidential Commission headed by Albert Williams, the IBM CEO, to take a close look at international trade and investment policies.

Q: Was the Williams Commission useful?

HARTER: Yes, indeed! It illustrated how a Presidential Commission can resolve a critical policy debate when its mandate is well-defined and its members understand and agree on the role they can play. It was an excellent group, and its staff, headed by Isaiah Frank, was superb. Its report in July, 1971 energized the Department of State and STR to press a broad GATT round of trade negotiations.

The OECD [Note: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is an international agency based in Paris through which the major industrial countries seek to coordinate their positions regarding international economic issues, looking toward expanded world trade and investment and the economic development of developing countries.] responded by launching its own study headed by Jean Rey, a former President of the Commission of the European Community, and its analysis essentially echoed and endorsed the Williams proposition that a new round of trade negotiations should be initiated as soon as possible. A GATT preparatory committee adopted that position in 1973.

Q: That was the beginning of the new round?

HARTER: Yes. A GATT Ministerial meeting in Japan in the fall of 1973 formally inaugurated the "Tokyo Round," although serious negotiations could not begin until the U.S. Congress enacted legislation that authorized the Administration to negotiate reductions in trade barriers. That finally occurred in January, 1975.

The Tokyo Round ultimately concluded with some tariff reductions and international "codes of conduct" that set limits to the use of specific categories of non-tariff barriers that distort trade, building on the NTB inventory that we compiled in Geneva in the late 1960s. Those codes were endorsed by the U.S. Congress in 1979 and were thus incorporated into U.S. law. They also became law in the European Community, Japan, and other OECD countries. Developing country members of GATT did not sign them at that time, but they later accepted agreements that elaborated them at the conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations, which were conducted as "a single undertaking" [Note: This edited transcript incorporates factual information suggested by Bill Culbert, a principal participant in the meetings indicated, regarding these and other relevant developments that were not explicitly discussed in the 1997 interviews and are not otherwise well known.].

Q: Did you have other responsibilities in Geneva?

HARTER: Yes, the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Center absorbed a great deal of my time. It was a unique institution, much praised by developing countries, although it received scant notice in Washington.

Q: What was the International Trade Center?

HARTER: Well, shortly before I arrived in Geneva, Wyndham White established the ITC as a small unit within the GATT Secretariat to advise developing countries on technical ways and

means they could employ to expand their exports. At first its functions were not clearly specified - it was frankly a gimmick to preempt the ambiguous but firm declaration of Raul Prebisch at the 1964 Trade and Development Conference that he would establish an international mechanism to help developing countries expand their exports. Wyndham White took preemptive action because he thought such a body based in UNCTAD was likely to encourage export subsidies, which are wholly contrary to the GATT system.

Q: How did the ITC work?

HARTER: Initially it only supplied limited advice to developing countries on GATT-consistent policies and practices that might enhance their export performance. It was just getting organized when I arrived. Three gifted and inspired individuals were already there, each carving out a niche for himself: Herb Jacobson, the energetic and imaginative American Director; Victor Santiapilai of Sri Lanka, a skilled diplomat with prior export promotion experience, the Deputy Director; and Hatt Arnold, a prolific English writer who turned out an incredible volume of correspondence, studies, and manuals on export promotion.

Q: But it evolved into a larger and more vital organization?

HARTER: Yes, the ITC grew into a very proficient institution with a broad mandate. Paul Pauly of the U.S. Department of Commerce, a leading authority on export promotion, attended annual meetings of an expert advisory committee that gently guided the ITC. He helped persuade the Departments of State and Commerce that the ITC was a positive force in the world. I was the U.S. representative to specialized meetings on administrative and technical matters affecting the ITC.

Q: What happened to the ITC?

HARTER: Prebisch was eventually persuaded there was no scope for a separate export promotion agency in UNCTAD, and he encouraged the developing countries to press for the transfer of the ITC from GATT to UNCTAD. We opposed that, but we agreed to set up a negotiating group to work out arrangements for GATT and UNCTAD to oversee the ITC jointly. I was the U.S. member of that group. Those negotiations were prolonged and tortured, and my instructions from Washington kept me on a very tight leash. We eventually hammered out a strange framework that called for the ITC to be largely autonomous, with GATT and UNCTAD equally sharing oversight and costs. The ITC expanded over the years, and when I returned to Geneva in the early 1980s I learned that the ITC employed more than one hundred individuals who fully occupied a four-floor building. By then it was globally influential. It backstopped numerous UNDP-financed and other technical assistance projects.

Q: Did you have responsibilities outside of GATT?

HARTER: Yes, during my first two years in Geneva, I assisted Henry Brodie in his capacity as the U.S. Representative to the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, which met once or twice a year to review the work of UNCTAD Committee meetings between sessions of the Conference. During those two years we were principally absorbed with preparations for

UNCTAD-II, which took place in New Delhi in 1968. John Bushnell joined our staff in January, 1969 as a full-time UNCTAD liaison officer, taking over my UNCTAD-related functions. Frankly, I was relieved to escape those UNCTAD responsibilities.

Q: Why don't we stop here and pick up the discussion next time?

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[Begin September 3, 1997 session]

Q: John, you mainly followed North-South questions in Geneva?

HARTER: Yes. Victor Wolfe, your former partner, told me in 1984 he wanted to interview me on North-South issues as soon as your program was firmly established. He somehow knew that most of my Foreign Service assignments involved interrelationships between international trade and Third World development. Unfortunately, as you know, Vic died in a tragic automobile accident before we could schedule that interview.

Q: What do we mean we speak of "North-South issues?"

HARTER: That phrase may be anachronistic today. In the 1960s and 1970s it seemed an apt blanket term to cover economic tensions that characterized discussions in UNCTAD and several other international organizations. The term "North" in that context was taken to include the more industrialized countries associated with the OECD, mainly the United States, Europe, and Japan, and the term "South" referred to developing countries that generally lacked advanced industrialization, infrastructure, and capital investment.

These matters should be seen as the aftermath of the sweeping decolonization that transformed international affairs after World War II, as the old British, French, Dutch, and Belgian empires were liquidated in the 1950s and 1960s. Formerly dependent colonies, protectorates, and territories suddenly became sovereign nations, even though their economic resources, Civil Service, and political underpinnings were too weak to cope with the rising expectations of their people. Some of these governments could scarcely deal effectively with their own domestic problems, let alone their economic relations with other countries. As colonies, they had been closely tied to their European sponsors, politically, economically, and administratively. Unfortunately, the developed countries really didn't focus on the economic problems of developing countries before the first UNCTAD Conference in 1964, mainly because they were fixated on and distracted by the Cold War.

Q: What were the major UNCTAD issues you worked on?

HARTER: The overriding UNCTAD issue in the late 1960s was the Generalized System of Preferences, or GSP, as we called it.

Q: Just what was the GSP?

HARTER: It was a controversial approach to trade policy that was supposed to compensate developing countries for their presumed economic disadvantages, in a sense comparable to affirmative action in the United States. It was a drastic breach of the most-favored-nation principle that had been the cornerstone of U.S. trade policy since the early 1920s. MFN essentially required us to levy "non-discriminatory" tariffs on imports from all countries with which we have trade agreements, and this principle was the core of the GATT system. In practice this meant any contracting party to GATT - that is, any member country - should import products from all other contracting parties at the lowest "bound" tariff rates that resulted from all preceding GATT negotiations. In the 1960s Raul Prebisch argued that this principle was unfair to developing countries on the ground that, for historic reasons, they lacked the economic infrastructure to compete fairly in international trade with producers in the developed countries.

Q: What did he mean?

HARTER: Prebisch maintained that exports of developing countries should receive ***preferential*** treatment in the markets of industrialized countries to offset economic disadvantages associated with their "underdevelopment". The industrialized countries, in other words, should impose ***lower*** tariff rates on manufactured products they imported from developing countries than on comparable products from other industrialized countries. Prebisch wanted ***all*** industrial countries to apply a ***general*** system of preferences to their manufactured imports from ***all*** developing countries. His theory was that those preferences would expand markets for such goods in developed countries and thus encourage their greater production in developing countries.

Q: Why did the United States accept the GSP concept despite its traditional adherence to MFN?

HARTER: After the Kennedy Round, it appeared that domestic resistance in all of the industrial countries would make it difficult to negotiate further tariff reductions, at least until domestic structural adjustments took place in response to the lower tariffs. Some trade policy officials, believing momentum in reducing obstacles to trade must be maintained, searched for alternatives to traditional tariff-cutting negotiations. In addition to focusing attention on NTBs, they envisaged an alliance with those who wished to support Third World development by reducing barriers to developing country exports, and this led them to consider GSP. The turning point came when Australia requested a GATT waiver to permit it to grant its own special preferences to its imports from developing countries. Only the United States opposed the Australians, and that sent shock waves through our trade policy professionals in Washington and Geneva. They were already concerned that France, Belgium, and other members of the European Community granted special preferences to their former colonies in Africa under the Yaounde Convention, while the British did the same for Commonwealth members pursuant to the 1931 Statute of Westminister. We contended that all of those special preferences effectively discriminated against U.S. exporters. Meanwhile political pressures on the U.S. government to extend comparable preferences to the Latin American countries were increasing. Joe Greenwald, in particular, feared that the proliferation of many different preferential systems could cause the whole GATT system of non-discrimination to unravel.

Q: How did the United States approach the problem?

HARTER: Greenwald and Bill Culbert, his principal lieutenant on GSP, attended several meetings in London, New York, Geneva, and Washington as members of an OECD "Wise Men's" group to negotiate the modalities. Once they hammered out a GSP scheme acceptable to that group, they sold it to other industrial countries in the OECD. Parallel negotiations within the U.S. Government were no easier, but Greenwald and Culbert eventually persuaded the relevant agencies that President Johnson should announce in his speech at Punta del Este in the fall of 1967 that the United States would support the GSP concept at UNCTAD-II in 1968. Greenwald and Culbert correctly anticipated GSP would dominate that conference.

The initial proposition was that all developed countries should extend preferences to all developing countries for a common list of products, on the presumption that a unified global approach would overcome domestic pressures in all developed countries. However, the theory insufficiently recognized the political strength in the developed world of such labor-intensive industries as textiles, footwear, and chemicals. Small plants in New England and the southern U.S. would face bankruptcy if they had to compete with cheaper imports from developing countries, and their communities would be devastated if those plants should be liquidated. There was therefore irresistible political opposition in North America, Europe, and Japan to a common list unless it was very short. Frankly, the original concept was never seriously considered by OECD governments. They knew their parliamentary bodies, sensitive to the vulnerable industries that would be affected, would veto a wide-open preference scheme. They therefore concentrated on developing politically acceptable schemes [Note: Paul Jolles, a prominent Swiss diplomat, famously proposed at UNCTAD-II that the developed countries should pursue "parallel but convergent" approaches to GSP - a mathematical impossibility!]. Nevertheless, once the GSP idea was absorbed in the international agenda, it developed a momentum of its own. Throughout the process we in Geneva were often asked by other delegations and the GATT and UNCTAD Secretariats to explain widely quoted public statements of our lords and masters and the intentions behind them. This was a central and emotional issue for many delegations, and we spent many hours, days, and weeks, trying to rationalize the latest developments, even though we were always on the periphery of the actual negotiations and we were rarely apprized of relevant details.

Q: Are you saying the GSP, as ultimately implemented, did not conform with the original idea?

HARTER: That's correct. Each country developed its own GSP scheme. The U.S. Congress, for one, put its own stamp on preferences: The legislation that authorized us to participate in a GSP scheme explicitly excluded textiles, footwear, and ceramics, and other so-called "sensitive" products. Those were, of course, precisely the products for which the developing countries wanted preferences, because they were the products in which they had a strong comparative advantage. They were also the products of small, inefficient factories in some U.S. communities heavily dependent on their production, communities effectively represented in Congress.

Q: Were there other shortcomings of the GSP scheme?

HARTER: Well, the GSP did not cover agriculture, which happened to be the sector in which developing countries overall had a very large comparative advantage. Moreover, as ultimately implemented, the preferences were ***unilateral*** concessions that could be withdrawn unilaterally,

as contrasted with multilateral concessions that were effectively sanctioned by international law. And since they were subject to ceilings and safeguards, they did not serve as strong incentives for new investors in developing countries to embark on new ventures, thus denying a major tenet of the original rationale set forth by Raul Prebisch.

Q: Was the U.S. Mission in Geneva represented on the U.S. Delegation to UNCTAD-II?

HARTER: Yes, Henry Brodie was Greenwald's principal deputy on that delegation for dealing with commodities. Bill Culbert was on the GSP firing line.

Q: What was the G-77?

HARTER: The so-called "Group of 77" comprised delegations from the 77 developing countries represented in UNCTAD in 1964, where they functioned as a super caucus/lobbying group that tried to hammer out consensus positions that all developing countries could subscribe to. After UNCTAD-I the developing countries held their own mini-conferences to caucus as a group under the G-77 label before major UNCTAD and other UN meetings in New York and elsewhere. They still call themselves the Group of 77, although more than 150 developing countries are now associated with it. The developing country rhetoric that was forged at UNCTAD-I has echoed over and over since that time.

Q: Was the G-77 a monolithic group? Weren't there differences among them?

HARTER: Certainly, there were disparities in size, level of development, and economic interests, but in the 1960s, the developing countries were incorrectly perceived in UNCTAD as a more or less homogeneous group. By the late 1970s four distinct groups of developing countries could be discerned, each defined by different economic circumstances: The so-called Newly Industrialized Countries - the "NICs" - included countries like Brazil and Singapore that were developing competitive domestic manufacturing industries; a second group comprised countries that relied heavily on commodity exports, such as Malaysia and Nigeria; a third group included the oil exporting countries, which were generally very quiet at UNCTAD meetings; and the fourth group constituted the least developed countries, or the poorer countries of Africa plus Haiti, Laos, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Afghanistan. Countries in the fourth group, of course, urgently needed grant aid, but they were largely ignored by the industrialized countries. The G-77 claimed to be an umbrella covering all four groups - and hence their demands swept over a wide spectrum. By the 1990s the OECD decided that such countries as the Bahamas, Brunei, Kuwait, and Singapore should no longer by identified as "developing countries."

Q: Who were the G-77 leaders?

HARTER: Different individuals were prominent at different meetings, depending on the interests of countries and individuals. From the beginning, India and Brazil often provided the most visible G-77 spokesmen. Both countries had highly professional diplomatic services, and they usually sent their most articulate diplomats to UN meetings.

Q: What was the U.S. attitude toward the G-77?

HARTER: We were the hard-liners! Most Americans who attended UNCTAD meetings were hostile toward UNCTAD. They correctly lamented that UNCTAD was institutionally biased against the United States. By reflex they opposed most G-77 initiatives, which, of course, were generally not economically sound or politically realistic. The Europeans often hid behind our skirts, grateful that we effectively rationalized why Group B couldn't do more.

Q: Were there other "groups?"

HARTER: The Group of 77 comprised Group A, the Asian and African delegations, and Group C, the Latin American delegations. Those two groups effectively merged at UNCTAD-I. Group B was the counter group that represented the industrialized countries. The communist countries of Eastern Europe participating in UNCTAD functioned as Group D, but they played a minor role in UNCTAD, individually and collectively. Yugoslavia and Romania considered themselves members of the Group of 77.

Q: What about the Soviets?

HARTER: They were the most prominent member of Group D, but they were not active participants in UNCTAD. There was a separate UNCTAD committee ostensibly charged with fostering trade between the communist countries and the developing countries, and a small unit within the Secretariat compiled statistics and published occasional studies related to that trade. In addition, the Secretariat facilitated occasional government-to-government negotiations, as by supplying translators and meeting rooms. Large Soviet delegations sometimes came to Geneva for those meetings. Developing country delegations complained to us that those negotiations were difficult and yielded little benefit to them. Incidentally, that experience illuminated the advantages of dealing with trade multilaterally.

Q: I assume each industrial nation was especially generous toward countries with which it had historic ties. Did UNCTAD provide a forum for working out fairness and largesse across the board?

HARTER: Well, the former colonial countries weren't really as generous toward their former dependent territories as they claimed. In many cases, the net flow of resources continued to be from the newly independent areas to the European countries, even after decolonization. The Scandinavian countries and the Canadians - and sometimes the Australians and New Zealanders - were usually ahead of France, England, and the United States in providing real resources to developing countries in UNCTAD. Whatever the circumstances, the U.S. role in UNCTAD was always conspicuous because our economy was so dominant.

Q: Was there any overall formula for measuring the desirable level of aid?

HARTER: UNCTAD promoted the concept that each Group B country should extend assistance to developing countries amounting to one percent of its GNP. We objected to those targets, pointing out that the total amount of our aid far exceeded that of other countries, even though the total of our government-to-government financial assistance to developing countries represented

only a fraction of one percent of our GNP. We also stressed that the absorptive capacity of recipient countries - their ability to utilize external assistance effectively - should always be weighed. The ***quality*** of aid, we stressed, was more crucial than its quantity.

Q: You're saying the monetary value of the aid we provide developing countries is not necessarily an indication of its impact on economic development?

HARTER: Correct. The ***military*** assistance we provided developing countries over the years exceeded the ***economic*** assistance we earmarked for education, health, agriculture, and transportation to raise living standards. The "aid" we granted clearly affected decisions of recipient governments directing the deployment of their own scarce resources. Beyond that, there has often been subterfuge in that much of the economic activity described as "foreign aid" was really designed to promote donor country exports. Also, we should keep in mind that a large share of total U.S. aid during the Cold War, whether military or economic, was ***politically*** inspired. Take our very large programs in Israel and Egypt, for example.

Q: Did you have other responsibilities in Geneva?

HARTER: Well, I was designated the Mission's liaison officer for CERN [Note: CERN, located on the outskirts of Geneva, is the world's largest research center for the study of subatomic particles. It is sponsored by an association of 14 European countries sometimes known as the European Organization for Nuclear Research. (The name "CERN" is an acronym based on an earlier French name of the association.)], but that merely entailed occasional transmissions of scientific communications between technical agencies in the United States and CERN.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

HARTER: Roger Tubby was our Ambassador the first three years I was there. He had been Harry Truman's Press Secretary. He was a warm person who knew everyone who counted in Geneva and Washington, and he had a good sense of what the Mission could accomplish. Incidentally, he asked me to serve as control officer for Senator Fulbright when the Senator participated in the 1967 *Pacem en Terris* conference in Geneva. I had met the Senator earlier and my wife and I welcomed the opportunity to escort him and Mrs. Fulbright during their visit. Tubby's DCM was Charlie Mace, an executive officer whose talents and interests effectively complemented those of Ambassador Tubby. Charlie was the twin brother of Howard Mace, by the way. They looked very much alike, but they were very different kinds of persons. I knew Charlie as a friendly, outgoing person, whereas my later encounters with his brother revealed the stern manner for which Howard was famous. Perhaps we can discuss Howard Mace later. Tubby left Geneva in 1969, after some six years.

Q: Who replaced Tubby?

HARTER: That was Idar Rimstad. I recently read the transcript of your interview with him, in which Rimstad said there was no real substantive job for a U.S. Ambassador in Geneva. He said the Geneva operation was really a management job, and since there was nothing for him to do he let the Mission's administrative staff take care of it. That showed how little he understood what

was going on in Geneva. Rimstad said in your interview he never wrote a speech he gave, but he gave a lot of speeches. That was true. Unfortunately, when he read the speeches, it was obvious he didn't have the foggiest notion of their substance. Before he came to Geneva, he held the top management job at the State Department once filled by Loy Henderson.

Q: What was Rimstad's approach to that job in the Department?

HARTER: Basically, Rimstad radically altered the personnel practices of Loy Henderson, who steadfastly refused to practice large-scale selection-out. In 1968 Rimstad, as Under Secretary, approved a major change in the precepts that governed promotions, and after that he forced many first-rate Foreign Service Officers into premature retirement. Nothing like that had ever been seen in the history of the Foreign Service. Whereas Henderson valued seniority, Rimstad lowered the priority accorded experience, at the behest of the Young Turks who seized control of AFSA in 1968.

Q: Who were the Young Turks?

HARTER: They were a group of young Foreign Service Officers, including Lannon Walker, Bill Harrop, Charlie Bray, Frank Weise, and Dan Newberry. They groused that their State Department careers were progressing too slowly ***because***, in their view, the upper reaches of the Foreign Service promotion ladder were clogged by too much "deadwood." That was the term they used to refer to "the grey heads and the bald heads," as they called them, many of whom were Wristonees.

Q: What policies did the Young Turks advocate?

HARTER: Their simplistic panacea for reforming the Department's personnel system was to purge the Department's senior ranks by accelerating selection-out, thus opening opportunities for their own rapid promotion. They did not understand the trauma already inflicted on the Foreign Service during the preceding years by McCarthyism and Wristonization. They came on the scene just as the Department was beginning to recover from those ordeals. Anyway, while Rimstad was the Department's top management officer, the career of any officer who had not been promoted during the preceding ***two*** years was at risk.

Q: There was a general push in society at that time, not just in the Foreign Service, to make way for promising young people.

HARTER: That's true. Kennedy's election as a youthful President portended a general rise of a younger generation to prominence. Unluckily, the change in the Foreign Service was abrupt, disruptive, and cruel to many individuals. Heavy selection-out of mid-level officers during the four years between 1968 and 1972 was unprecedented. Officers affected had no retirement benefits, and there was widespread fear of joining their exodus from the Foreign Service. By and large the establishment press ignored - or even disbelieved - what was happening, but a few reporters picked up bits and pieces of the story. Clark Mollenhoff, a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist, for example, was among those who dwelt on the suicide of Charles Thomas at that time.

I first learned of all that in Geneva in 1968, when I received an unexpected telephone call from Dick Adams, who had been in the Political Section of our Embassy in Pretoria when I was in South Africa. Dick asked me to join him for lunch. I inquired as to his next assignment, and he said he was a victim of the new selection-out policy. He was in Geneva in search of a job. I was surprised because Dick had a reputation in Pretoria as a capable officer. Until then I was totally unaware of the new time-in-class policy. Dick asked when I received my last promotion, and I said that was in 1964. Without knowing more, he said immediately, "You're in trouble!" He said the Department's new precepts for governing promotion had been drastically altered to favor the rapid advance of recently promoted officers over those who had been in class more than three years.

Q: Any final comment on your assignment to Geneva?

HARTER: Well, my most jarring experience in Geneva was an encounter with John Fishburn, the Mission's liaison officer to the ILO. One day, after I told him I admired Senator Fulbright, he asked me to stop by his office. For half an hour he grilled me on my attitudes toward communism, Vietnam, and the Cold War, while taking copious notes. Finally, he stood up and exploded in vehemence! In a nutshell he said no one with my views should be allowed to represent the United States overseas. Two days later Henry Brodie called me into his office and closed his door, which was usually open. In a stern tone he admonished me for having made indiscreet comments within the Mission. He didn't refer to Fishburn. Henry said I could not doubt that he agreed with me about the "folly and the horror" of the war in Vietnam. However, he advised me ***not*** to share my opinion on those matters with colleagues who held contrary views.

WALTER ROBERTS
Public Affairs Adviser to USUN Ambassador
Geneva (1967)

A naturalized American citizen of Austrian birth, Mr. Roberts in 1942 joined the US Coordinator of Information engaged in analyzing Nazi Germany's internal propaganda. His subsequent career concerned primarily US Government information activities with the Voice of America, the United States Information Service (USIS) and the Department of State. His service abroad centered primarily on European Affairs, and particularly Yugoslavia. Mr. Roberts was interviewed by Cliff Groce in 1990.

ROBERTS: I was assigned to Geneva in '67 for two years as public affairs adviser to the American ambassador at the European headquarters of the UN.

Q: What were some of the interesting developments there?

ROBERTS: I learned at that time something very basic: that one cannot be a good spokesman unless one is an integral part of the policy making process. And since we in USIA are not an

integral part of the policy making process, we are only very rarely in a position to be good spokesmen.

For instance, I'm told, our present director of information in New York at the United Nations, Phil Arnold, is included in every meeting Ambassador Pickering has. Even in the morning staff meeting, where only three or four people meet, he is included. In such a situation, the USIA officer can do a good job.

I found the job in Geneva very frustrating. There were, in my time, many important bilateral and multilateral conferences, ranging from disarmament to GATT. Most of the U.S. delegations came from Washington with their own public affairs officers, which was the right thing to do because they were in a far better position to explain policy than we who were not in at the policy formulation process. On the other hand, what was then our role? Some delegations relied on us for press relations, but they worked only when the delegation heads included USIS in their staff deliberations, which was not always the case. In these circumstances I did not enjoy the assignment, and after a while made it known that I would like to be transferred as soon as my tour was completed.

JAMES F. LEONARD
Assistant Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Geneva (1969-1972)

James F. Leonard was born in Pennsylvania in 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and served in the U.S. Army from 1942-1946. Mr. Leonard entered the Foreign Service in 1948. His career included positions in China (Taiwan), France, Russia, and Syria. This interview was conducted by Warren Unna on March 10, 1993.

Q: *So you commuted, or were you based in Geneva?*

LEONARD: Commuted basically.

Q: *And your specialty was chemical and biological?*

LEONARD: Well, not a the beginning. The NPT had just been completed in that conference the previous year and it was going through the ratification process. So there was a question what the conference would do. It had a whole list of things on its agenda like the comprehensive test ban, etc. The Nixon administration was new to this. It didn't want to have its hand forced and yet it didn't want the conference to sit there completely idle. Somebody came up with the idea of a treaty which would prohibit nuclear weapons on the seabed. This idea had been around for a while. So, we tried it out on the Russians and they said sure. It was basically a nothing treaty.

Q: *There's never been any?*

LEONARD: Never been any, never were going to be any, although other people would contest that. It was my belief then and still is now, but it served as a political gesture. It was clear that the big league, the center ring of arms control negotiations was going to be a US/Soviet bilateral over strategic weapons. An attempt had been made to get that started the previous summer. Dobrynin came in to see Gene Rostow who was Under Secretary, one morning, to arrange to set up that negotiation. As Rostow likes to tell it, that was the morning after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, so the Johnson strategic arms negotiations never got started. It became politically impossible. But it was picked up and it was pretty clear that Nixon, Kissinger, and Rogers wanted to do it, but they wanted to take their time about it. So they fixed on this seabed treaty as something that would fill in a dull period and show that the US and the Soviet Union could deal with each other, could negotiate without engaging any really important interests on either side. The military had no intention of putting stuff there so you didn't have to override the Pentagon on the treaty. They were very cooperative, and probably the same was true on the Soviet side. We went ahead and did the treaty the first summer that I was in Geneva. But chemicals and biologicals came later. Those were on the agenda of the Geneva conference but nobody was doing anything serious about it.

Q: *Let's just get back to the seabed. You had been in Moscow. You'd had some contact with the Russians. Did this serve you in dealing with these people actually in a negotiation or what?*

LEONARD: Well, I suppose it did.

Q: *Did you use your Russian for instance?*

LEONARD: You could use it socially, but they spoke such beautiful English that it was useless.

Q: *I see.*

LEONARD: What I think was more important was they knew that I knew something about their background. They knew that I understood the constraints under which they were operating. Therefore I would not be unreasonable and hostile and embarrass them uselessly. I wouldn't take a sort of "let's score one on these S.O.B.s," you know. My opposite number was a good ten or twelve years older than I, a very experienced Soviet diplomat, but a very nice, solid person, and a decent human being. We developed a decent relationship, and this was even more true with his number two and number three who remain very close friends of mine right to this day.

Q: *You said they understood you wouldn't needlessly humiliate them and understood their ... You built it up through your open expressions: "I remember ..."? How does this confidence develop?*

LEONARD: It's just that they would see that we were not when we would make statements in the committee, or when we were talking with them in informal contacts standing around at receptions, we wouldn't try to score off them. You know ... "You dummies, how can you maintain that such and such ..." They were under very strong compulsions to defend absolutely ridiculous positions. They knew they were ridiculous, and we knew they knew it, and we knew they knew we knew it, etc. But why make a point of it, whereas you've had a lot of American diplomats who would take the other line with them and try to make them feel humiliated and

embarrassed, and simply make them look bad, make the US supposedly look good in that kind of a situation. But these people, were confident that this was not going to happen because they were the ones who had gone through the NPT negotiation. That was one where the closest and most serious purposeful collaboration between the US and Soviet delegations was really essential to get a pretty ridiculous treaty through. You know to get the rest of the world to give up weapons and say: "It's fine if you keep them but we're not going to have any." That was rather a tour de force.

Q: *You were not a part of that?*

LEONARD: I was not a part of that at all.

Q: *At least, these people were all veterans of that?*

LEONARD: Yes, they all were.

Q: *So now you have gone into the seabed one, and then to move on?*

LEONARD: Yes, the seabed one took us ... well we had the treaty basically done after a year, but then it encountered technical legal problems because it dealt with matters of legal rights on the high seas. It ran into difficulties with a number of countries, particularly Argentina and Brazil who by that time were proclaiming two hundred mile territorial seas. The US wasn't having any of that, so we had to write a treaty that applied basically outside of the territorial waters of a state, and yet you couldn't accept that the territorial waters of some parties went two hundred miles off their coasts. It took us actually two years to completely finish the seabed treaty, but by the time we were in the course of the second year, it became clear what the next thing ought to be and that was that we ought to move from that into the chemical/biological field. What was not clear to us was how to move.

Q: *Why was that the next logical step?*

LEONARD: Well, in part because the US had prepared the way for it by its unilateral renunciation of biological weapons in 1969. This was basically a Laird initiative although I'm sure he didn't think it up on his own.

Q: *(Mel Laird?)*

LEONARD: Yes, but he pushed it through. The US in the fall of 1969 did in fact decide that it would ratify the Geneva Protocol which was almost fifty years unratified. It took quite a while longer before we finally did it, but in principle the decision to ratify was taken, and a decision that we would give up biological weapons, but that we would not at that point give up chemical weapons. The name of the game became to get chemical and biological weapons separated. All the rest of the world was against this separation except for our British colleagues who had proposed it in the first place. So our first year or so of work on this issue involved trying to develop a framework in which we would get biological weapons separated out and get a separate

treaty on them while giving some sort of convincing hostages to the idea of an eventual chemical weapons treaty. It was what the rest of the world really was demanding.

Q: *We're in Vietnam now. Tear gas, herbicides, all this sort of thing. The world is really getting very stirred up about US use of chemical weapons. All right, how do you ... you're now an experienced diplomat but you're not a scientist. How do you prime yourself for these things?*

LEONARD: Well, it turns out that in these issues, the level of scientific knowledge that a negotiator has to have is not very deep. You have always got at your side, just as you have lawyers who have all sorts of background knowledge on international law, you have experts with Ph.D.s in chemistry or biology or whatever, and you've got military people who know a lot about the actual weapons themselves. Anything that you do, any proposals that you put forward are framed in the light of that expert advice that you're getting from the people concerned. Well I happened to have been an engineer in college, but you could be a history major or an English major perfectly well and do the job without any problem.

Q: *And there are no fast questions thrown at you across the table. You can always say: "I want to think about that, I suppose."?*

LEONARD: Yes, or you can turn to somebody on one side or the other.

Q: *So, these went on for how many years, getting these treaties?*

LEONARD: I was in Geneva for three years. The first two years was doing the seabed treaty, and preparing the way for the BW treaty, and the third year we actually came out with a draft treaty on biological weapons, we and the British. The Soviet looked at it, and criticized it, etc., but by July they had agreed that they were going to do it, for whatever reasons, and I think now in retrospect, we can understand that some of the reasons were not very good, because they proceeded to violate the treaty as soon as they'd signed it. Their military did. I don't think their negotiators knew that at all. But the negotiators saw that here was something that probably was not of serious interest to their military establishment and therefore was a proper subject for arms control negotiations. And eventually, in the summer of '71, they got approval from Moscow to go ahead and we reached agreement on a text in the matter of four, five weeks.

Q: *You were then head of the arms control disarmament delegation?*

LEONARD: No, no. Gerard Smith was the head, and during all of this period, SALT I was going on. He was negotiating in Helsinki and Vienna, etc. Frankly we were a sideshow to that.

Q: *Your ACDA work came to an end with the change of administration?*

LEONARD: Yes. I was replaced in Geneva in the spring of 1972. Gerry Smith told me that he wanted me to do something else but it never became clear to me what it was. I think probably what he had in mind was having me go to the MBFR negotiations which were just beginning to get started in Vienna in the fall of '72. The ones that Jock Dean eventually did. Whatever it was, it didn't happen, and in the fall of '72, Smith decided to resign. You know, he had very bad

conflicts with Kissinger during the whole START business, they came almost to blows during the summer of '72. Then in the winter of '72, '73, with the end of Nixon I and the beginning of Nixon II, we had what we later called the ACDA purge of ACDA. Gerry left of his own accord. I don't think he was fired, but everybody else was fired. In fact, I then decided to retire. I couldn't be fired because I was a career Foreign Service officer.

Q: *Smith was a political appointee?*

LEONARD: Yes, the other assistant directors along with me and there were a whole bunch of us who were told that our services were no longer needed. I was basically sent back to the State Department and it was up to them to offer me a job. But I decided I didn't want it. I really was very indignant at this whole procedure. It was partly the specifics of what happened in ACDA and partly the more general business of Watergate which was by that time becoming more and more evident. So I simply retired in the summer of '73 and took a job with the UN Association up in New York.

IDAR D. RIMESTAD
Representative, European Office of the United Nations
Geneva (1969-1973)

Ambassador Idar Rimestad was born and raised in North Dakota. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957. His career included assignments in Moscow and Paris, and an ambassadorship to Switzerland. Ambassador Rimestad was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1990.

Q: *Lets' move on to your Geneva assignment. You arrived in Geneva in December, 1969. What were the main responsibilities of the U.S. Representative (Ambassador) to International Organization?*

RIMESTAD: Management. The title had little meaning. You got the benefit of going to all the National Day observances of each country represented in the UN bodies. We had a small political and a small economic staff. The job was basically to manage the logistics for all the conferences convened by the UN specialized agencies headquartered in Geneva. I had very little to do with that; I had a good staff that handled these matters. Some of the UN agencies, like WHO (World Health Organization) did their own logistic work. All we needed to do was to tell them the size of our delegation, they would take it from there. I never gave a speech that I had written; all my speeches were written in Washington and one better not have changed a word. I gave these speeches once in a while to one or another of the UN specialized agencies when the Washington agency didn't send a high level representative to Geneva. There is a lot of political mileage to be obtained by taking an expert from Chicago and sending him to Geneva to give a speech. He was very honored. Maybe that speech should have been delivered by the US Ambassador, but no domestic political credit would have accrued. The US Representative was an Ambassador in title only. You are useful in helping Congressmen or other high-ranking officials. We had a very heavy visitors workload. We did everything possible to make these VIPs

comfortable during their visits to Geneva. We would have dinner party for them. We had good relationships with the other European representatives who had the same problems. I would probably give a dozen large dinner parties every year.

As with other US overseas representation, if we were still in the sailing ship era, permanent personnel stationed in Geneva would have been useful. But today, with modern transportation, it is much more effective to send people from Washington to give the speeches and attend the conferences. Only rarely--if someone would get sick for example--would the US representative have to stand in.

Q: *What did your political and economic staffs do?*

RIMESTAD: The economic officers would work primarily on GATT (The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs organization) which is headquartered in Geneva. I would not have anything to do with GATT--I wouldn't touch that thing. That had many people already involved. Washington watched those deliberations very carefully. The economic officers worked for me, but it was understood that the prudent approach was to leave them alone. I did a lot of work on the immigration and disaster relief programs that Sadruddin Aga Khan ran for a long time. I gave them a lot of checks and gave a lot of impromptu speeches.

But the Ambassadorial job in Geneva was essentially a managerial one. You also had to have a sense of when to step in and when to step out. You were dealing with a lot of egos. At one time, there was a fellow by the name of Walsh who was working with WHO. He was a friend of President Nixon; he ran Project "HOPE". When I met him, I told him that if he ever ran into a political problem that might become testy, to let me know and I would see what I could do. In reply he said: "What do I need some pipsqueak from State Department to tell me how to do my job" and he walked out.

Despite this episode and my other comments, I do believe that some resident US representation in Geneva is required because there are a lot of formal government notes to be delivered to the various international organizations and that needs to be done by a senior official. I had to go to the ILO (International Labor Organization) on many occasions; we had trouble with them. I would carry the formal note over and explain it. That's when I became familiar with that famous State Department record called the "Memorandum of Conversation". You would write it up before the meeting and then hand it to the person with whom you would have the meeting. They appreciated it; everybody appreciated that the staff work had been done ahead of time. This would preclude any surprises. Sometime the other person would have done the same thing; we would then sit down and make what modifications were necessary and come up with an agreed document.

It is important that we have some senior representation in Geneva. It is an all-year job with little time for vacation because one or another of the international organizations would be involved in a conference or some activity that needed monitoring. December and January were the slow months; otherwise there was always something going on.

Q: *Were you satisfied with the role that the U.S. played in these international organizations while you were in Geneva?*

RIMESTAD: We had the big fight with the ILO, which they brought on themselves. I knew the chairman--he was a Britisher. He had to make a choice of whether he would offend us or the Soviets. He appointed a Russian to be his deputy. I told him that we could never accept that. He said that he had to make a choice between two unpalatable options. Finally Rooney, at George Meany's request, cut off US financial support to ILO. And we pulled out.

We were sufficiently involved in WHO; we were very forthcoming with WHO in terms of financial support which is what they needed. We were very active in trying to eradicate small pox, yellow fever, malaria and other major diseases. So I was satisfied with US involvement with the international organizations headquartered in Geneva.

Q: *You left Geneva in May or June of 1973 after almost four years. Did you enjoy the assignment?*

RIMESTAD: It was very pleasant, but at times not challenging.

MAX W. KRAUS
Public Affairs Advisor, European Office of the United Nations, USIS Geneva (1972-1975)

Max W. Kraus was born in Germany in 1920. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956 and served in Italy, Cambodia, Zaire, France, and Switzerland. He was interviewed by Cliff Groce in 1988.

Q: Shall we talk about Geneva for a while?

KRAUS: Okay. Let us talk about Geneva for a while.

Q: Did you go directly from Paris there or did you come back to the states?

KRAUS: No, I went on a direct transfer again. I seemed to specialize in direct transfers.

Q: You certainly did.

KRAUS: Geneva, of course, is different from all the conventional USIS posts in the sense that you do not have a country program.

You are accredited to the European office of the United Nations and the other international organizations. Your audience, really, is the media that is accredited in Geneva and the other correspondents who come to Geneva to cover special stories.

My job as public affairs advisor was to act as spokesman for the important delegations that did business in Geneva including, for instance, the SALT II delegation when Alex Johnson headed it and the CSCE delegation during the Geneva phase and the whole number of other things.

Let me tell you an anecdote about Geneva. I arrived in Geneva in September of 1972 and succeeded George Wynne. Shortly after I arrived in Geneva, I had to do a new country plan. I looked at George Wynne's country plan and made a few changes and sent it back to Washington.

The year after that, I looked at this country plan again and found that all the things that I thought were going to keep us busy and occupied had not happened and a lot of unexpected things had happened -- mainly --in connection with the Kissinger visits to Geneva when he was wheeling and dealing about the Mid-East on his shuttle trips.

Q: Because it is a news connected job?

KRAUS: Yes. So, I decided that writing a country plan for Geneva was really useless and I did not send in a country plan. I never got any queries from Washington about the country plan until I was already officially off the payroll in 1975, when I retired.

Q: When you retired?

KRAUS: Yes, but they had extended me until my successor, Dan Hafrey could arrive. One day I got a telephone call from our desk officer in Washington who said, Max, there must be something wrong with our files, we cannot find an up-to-date country plan for Geneva in our files.

I said I have a very simple explanation for that. I have not submitted a country plan for the last two years. He said, oh?

Q: I hope you explained why.

KRAUS: I did. The following year the agency decided that Geneva should not do a country plan, because you just cannot predict what is going to happen.

Q: That is a very good story.

KRAUS: After five-and-a-half years in Paris, and three years in Geneva, I still had a year to go on my tour, but I decided that the next assignment would be too horrible even to think about.

Since, including my military service, I had 34 years of government service, and, at that time there was a ceiling on the executive branch salaries, I decided to turn in my suit and see what I could do other than flacking for the U.S. government and retired.

Q: Are there any other Geneva stories that you --

KRAUS: Lots of Geneva stories. Again, they are in the book and you are welcome to look at the manuscript.

WALTER B. SMITH, II
Delegate, Middle East Peace Conference
Geneva (1973-1974)

Walter B. Smith, II was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1929. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University in modern European history in 1951. Shortly after graduating from Princeton, he entered the U.S. Army, where he was stationed in Germany. Mr. Smith's career in the Foreign Service included positions in Poland, the Soviet Union, Israel, and Washington, DC. Mr. Smith was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 17, 1993.

SMITH: I was summoned back to Washington by [Under Secretary of State] Joe Sisco on December 30, 1973, as was Bob Oakley, who was my counterpart as chief of the Political Section in Beirut. That was done because [Secretary of State] Kissinger, as you may recall, at the peace or non-peace conference in December 1973 (which the Syrians, at the last moment, refused to attend), created the illusion of an ongoing peace conference after he and the other principal [figures] left. I do not know whether he appreciated its value at the time, though he did very quickly after that, but this was a device to keep the Soviets somewhat distracted by implying an important [degree of] collaboration with the United States. It gave [the Soviets] a place of seeming prominence, namely, in Geneva. It was a way of keeping them out of his hair as he dealt with the parties concerned. To do this, he had to have somebody, some ostensible interim or acting chief of the U.S. Delegation in Geneva. That was why Oakley and I were summoned back to Washington on December 31, 1973, given our marching orders, and sent initially, with Mike Sterner, to Geneva to be a "pretend" U.S. Delegation to the non-existent Middle East Peace Conference, at which the Soviets had their former ambassador to Egypt and Iran as our counterpart.

Sterner was by now a Deputy Assistant Secretary. So there was at least a smidgen of Soviet face-saving in having Sterner there. But Sterner only stayed for a week. I had a wonderful time with Sterner in Geneva. Sterner and I went to school together. Oakley had gone back to Beirut, and from that point, until the end of April 1974, Oakley and I took turns, leaving our posts in the Middle East to go and sit for two weeks [at a time in Geneva].

Q: *Were you told that this is what you were doing or were you given something to do but not much?*

SMITH: It was self-evident why we were doing what we were doing. And we were given absolutely nothing to do. We were told not to leave Geneva either. One weekend I did go down to Monaco to see an old friend who lives there. I did this with some apprehension, I might add, because even on the weekends we were supposed to be there, in Geneva, and visible to the Soviets and on call, for the Soviets or for Washington, whoever wanted to be in touch with us.

The Israelis, at Kissinger's insistence, kept a delegation there, too. I happened to know the Israeli delegates. They were Foreign Ministry people who were as frustrated as I was at this fiction. That is what I was doing [during the period] from January to April 1974. In fact, my two sons were scheduled to be confirmed at St. George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem in April 1974. Because, as often happened, I had no travel orders, I finally telephoned Roy Atherton from Geneva and said, "Please see if I can't go back to Israel for this coming weekend, to be present at my sons' confirmation." And Roy arranged it.

Q: *How about the Soviet delegation that was there [in Geneva]? What were you doing [with them]?*

SMITH: The Soviets were sore with their delegation head Vinogradov, who had botched things recently as Ambassador to Egypt. They were using [this occasion to "punish" him]. They were not stupid. They figured out what Kissinger was up to and were very frustrated. I think that Kissinger met with his Soviet counterpart at some point, somewhere in Western Europe, to "stroke him" and pick his brains, so that the Soviets could continue the masquerade of major power collaboration for their own people. I do not know how we figured out that the Soviets wanted to "punish" their ambassador, but there was no question that this was the case.

Q: *Well, if you have to be "punished," Geneva was not the worst place in the world to go. It could have been Khartoum [Sudan] or some place like that.*

SMITH: That is true. We would go and call on this Soviet ambassador every third day or so, just so that he would know [that we were there]. We had nothing to say. We had to "invent" things to say to him. In fact, he was a likable man.

That takes us up to the spring of 1974, and then, of course, Kissinger began his Syrian shuttle--about the time we wound down this silly exercise. Actually, after I left Geneva, Bob Oakley had to continue to hang around there for several more weeks. As I remember it, this began in April or May, 1974.

HOWARD MEYERS
US Representative, Conference of the Committee on Disarmament
Geneva (1977-1978)

Howard Meyers was born and raised in New York City. He attended the University of Michigan and then Harvard Law School, before joining the U.S. Army in 1942. He entered the Foreign Service in 1955, working mainly in the Arms Control area. He served in several posts in England, Japan, and Belgium, as well as in the U.S. Mr. Meyers was interviewed by Peter Moffat in 2000.

Q: *Well, forgive me, you were being offered Geneva?*

MEYERS: Well, this was a great surprise, and I didn't think much about it in any way. Some time went by and then at 5:15 on a Thursday evening, I was called up to the office of the expectant head of ACDA, Paul Warnke, and his appointment had been held up in the Senate by the distinguished Republican Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms, who claimed he had all kinds of questions he wanted to ask. Warnke asked if I would be ready to go to Geneva, leaving at noon on the following Saturday, to be present for the entire session, which would last for three or four months, it was four months, and I said, "Of course."

Q: *This session of the Conference of the...*

MEYERS: Committee on Disarmament. Now called the Conference on Disarmament and it has changed in to important respects. The first is that in the Conference on the Committee on Disarmament, the Soviet and American representatives were co-chairs, expected to develop the Committee's plan of work, which was very important because the Committee operated then, and always has, and still does, on the basis of consensus. No, it has moved up from, I think it was 32 in my day, to something like 72 now, and the Chinese have come in and the French have come in so it is much more complicated, but at least, thank goodness, they do not have this system of American and Soviet co-chairs. That was I think by all odds the most difficult job I ever had. It was a great strain.

I was doing two things. I led a delegation first to the Conference to prepare for the treaty review of the Seabed Arms Control Treaty, which is a very important one that you don't hear much about, in which the various powers agree that they will not site nuclear weapons on the seabeds beyond their territorial sea. That was quite an experience. That job was done first. That resulted in a minor first-time event. The chair of that Conference was the Polish Ambassador. He was very objective. This was a very large conference, I think we had well over a hundred states represented and the need both to try to move the proceedings along and to get agreements, when we were disagreeing on such important points as the amount of money that we were going to contribute, I had a somewhat acid exchange with the Indian representative on that particular point till with help from my colleagues at my back, I drew out what a difference it would be in the amount of money; it was very minor. I no longer remember the sums, but what the Indian was proposing and what we were proposing amounted to a relatively small amount of money as to what our support costs would be. This was just an objection just to be objectionable on the part of the Indian government, really.

The Polish representative did a superlative job in moving the Conference along, helping resolve disagreements, and being absolutely fair and objective. My Soviet colleague, to my surprise, approached me at a reception one time and asked whether the United States might possibly agree to support the Soviets, if they proposed, or we jointly proposed, that the Polish representative be the chair of the review conference. I said that I would certainly support that, but that I would have to find out what Washington thought. To my enormous surprise, they agreed! It was the first time that the Soviet Union and the United States had jointly proposed something of this order. I think it was a triumph of common sense in Washington and nothing that I argued in my cable of proposal. That was one nice aspect of what was otherwise a rather dull conference.

When we moved on to the disarmament conference, that was a different matter. In the first place, I started the bilateral discussions with the Soviets on chemical warfare. They brought in experts, we had one expert, who continued on with this subject for years. It was the beginning of what, I think about 14 years later, was a treaty, very much in our interest, because of the inspection problems, broadly supported by the chemical industry in the United States and held up for purely ideological point, or grounds in the Senate, as you know. That was one advance. The other was trying to move forward discussions on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I cannot say that we made any progress in any discernable way on that subject. It took many years. I picked up, in other words, where I had been unsuccessful with Harold Brown and tried to move it forward, with support and directions from Washington, now, not just my own views, but I very thoroughly approved of this effort which got nowhere. That's really about it. We did work out, in the committee, a forward-looking work plan, but that was about it.

There were a couple of funny occasions during the meetings. One I remember vividly was a luncheon at the Finnish Ambassador's, which he was using trying to push forward his candidacy for chair of a committee, as being in the European interest. The Soviet representative, a career officer who was a Chinese specialist, named Likhachef, first name was Victor, and who was as tough as nails, but a first class professional. The two of us were explaining how our countries were regarded as both Asian powers, as well as European powers, in almost exactly the same language. It was genuinely funny. I was trying not to laugh while this was going on, because we would pick up each other's comments at the end of the comment, and very smoothly carry on and it did not matter we were both saying the same thing. That was very amusing. I enjoyed that. Anyhow, the conference came to an end after almost four months. I returned to Washington, I cleared out my desk and I wrote a whole series of notes and comments that I thought would be useful for my successor representative, and who was interestingly enough, an old friend and colleague, the former legal advisor at State.

Q: *...elder...*

MEYERS: He was a fellow elder at the same church in Georgetown. This was of course the end of my Foreign Service career, because I turned 60 years while I was away on this assignment and the Foreign Service act provided in those days (I retired under the Act of 1946), that if you did not have a Presidential assignment task, which is what the job held then was, you would have to retire at age 60. My successor, Adrian Fisher, was to be the chosen U.S. representative to this committee, so I wrote a whole series of notes I thought would be useful, I packed up my books and I went off to write a study for a group of papers that were being put together by the U.S. Information Agency on various policies of the new administration. I wrote one on the nuclear foreign policy of the new administration. Then formally retired. But I found myself back in the State Department as senior reviewer for classified document declassification. In fact, another man, Clay McManaway, and I put together the Department's centralized declassification system. That was the end of that part of my formal career, although I did carry on in two other part-time jobs for the State Department.

Q: *...Freedom of Information work you did, which has certainly become a major user of Department resources.*

MEYERS: Indeed it has and will continue to do so. It is one of these usual experiences, I was standing in a coffee line in the Department in this period after I had retired and while I was preoccupied with writing this very complicated paper, trying to make sense out of the Carter administration's nuclear policy, and I ran into a personnel officer from EUR who had been with me in London who said "Would you be interested?" And as I've indicated, I always said yes to questions like these and the next thing I knew I found myself going over declassification requests for documents still classified that were in the purview of the Bureau of European Affairs, which had the widest purview. 80 some odd percent of requests under the Freedom of Information Act in those days were for documents in EUR. They were hopelessly swamped. I helped alleviate this issue.

One day, we had a meeting of all the Deputy Assistants on this subject and the questions which was posed by the senior to the others was "Well what do you think of this operation that Howard and the others are involved in?" and they all said, "Oh, thank God, it enables us to do our work and we have a chance to see what is being proposed and disagree with it if necessary; we rarely do. It is just great." Then I was asked the question, and I said, "It is all very interesting. I think things are going along very well, but I have never been anywhere where you can get so many divergent views on exactly the same problem as is in this Bureau." Next thing I knew I was tasked with writing guidelines, so I did and we cleared them. Other people remember Warren Zimmerman in different ways, an absolutely superb officer, an Ambassador, but I remember him as a tough nut when it came to protecting the interests of his parish, jurisdictionally. We argued like mad over fine points of language, in working out what was a very useful statement of policy and how to deal with issues. We were so happy with our very obviously, very widespread appreciation in the Bureau that we tried to sell it to other bureaus. At least one other did adopt it. As usual, NEA was way ahead of the rest of the Department, less constricted for some reason - very forward thinking.

Then the decision was made, when Clay McManaway was brought in by Larry Eagleburger, that we needed to have this on a Department-wide basis, with a couple of exceptions, one of them naturally being Diplomatic Security. Then we struggled for a year, trying to put together procedures and, in my case, writing the policy proposals for each functional and geographical area, clearing it carefully with the bureaus concerned in order to have a comprehensive system. There were some strange aspects to this. I remember going up to the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Inter-American Affairs Bureau and saying to him, "Look we can't go forward like this - in fact we can't go on like this. Why should I have to consider that anything having to do with tourism in this bureau must be cleared with the desk? This is absurd!" That's the sort of attitude we had to overcome, and did, successfully. This particular man has remained a friend of mine ever since, a very sensible and hard driving officer. This, however, then faced us with the problem of incorporating, the Department's civil service bureaucracy in the A bureau, the Bureau of Administration. That proved and is still a much more difficult issue: How to move paper rapidly enough to satisfy exigencies? The Department does poorly in this respect. It has tried, but it has done poorly in my judgment. I do place the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the paper movers. That's about all that I really ought to say about this subject, because I would then become more indiscreet than I have already been. I would like to go back...

JOHN A. BUCHE
Refugee Affairs Officer
Geneva (1978-1982)

Born and raised in Indiana, Mr. Burch studied at St. Meinrad Seminary, Purdue University and the University of Tubingen, Germany. After service in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service, where he served primarily in African countries, including Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger and Zambia. Other assignments took Mr. Buche to Canada, Germany, Austria and Switzerland as well as to the State Department in Washington. He was an Amharic language specialist. Mr. Buche was interviewed in 1993 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: This is the 15th of December, 1999, the Ides of December. John, you were in Geneva from 1978 to -

BUCHE: From 1978 to 1982.

Q: *When you went to Washington before starting off in Geneva, what were you hearing about refugee affairs and what you were going to be dealing with?*

BUCHE: When I went to Washington, I was told that refugees were becoming a more important aspect of U.S. foreign policy and that there were discussions underway with Congress to set up a new bureau in the Department for refugee affairs. In the meantime, refugee affairs were being handled in the Human Rights Bureau, which had been set up by President Carter. The Bureau was under Patt Darian, the Assistant Secretary. I also learned about the budgeting for refugee affairs within the Department. I did not realize that as a Cold War holdover, the budget for refugee affairs was separate from the State Department's regular budget. I did not know all of the ins and outs of why that distinction was made back in the 1950's, but the exception was still valid. There was the State Department budget, and there was the budget for the Office of Refugee Affairs. I think the intention was to isolate the refugee budget from the partisan battles over the State Department's budget. Refugee issues had become a non-partisan Cold War requirement, and Congress decided to handle it in that fashion. I learned what was going to be required of us in Geneva, as far as projections concerning refugee numbers and the funds needed to process and care for them. I learned about the international humanitarian organizations we would be dealing with in Geneva: the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR); the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC); and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). (At the time, IOM was named the InterGovernmental Committee for European Migration and subsequently, the InterGovernmental Committee for Migration.)

I went to Geneva, and within a few days after arriving, I was told I would be the acting chief of the section since the Counselor for Refugee Affairs, Ed Brennan, had just been diagnosed with cancer, and he left to return to Washington for medical treatment. Doug Hunter, whom I knew from my time in Bonn (he was the Consul in Bremen) arrived in Geneva at the same time. So we two newly-arrived officers were to take over responsibilities for an expanding program for refugees from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and liaison responsibilities with the

international organizations for the program for refugees from Southeast Asia. The SEA program was growing at a fast pace as more and more people began to leave Vietnam in boats. This was 1978, and the fall of Saigon and the collapse of South Vietnam occurred in 1975.

Q: *There was a continuing flow?*

BUCHE: Yes, a continuing flow. They were coming out in ever-larger numbers. The outflow seemed to become larger in the spring and summer of 1978 than it was right after the fall. The Vietnamese Government allowed this to happen. All sorts of Vietnamese were getting involved in renting, selling, or stealing boats, and selling places on the boats to people who wanted out of the country. The numbers were really quite large. This was quite a concern to the United States, as well as to some of our allies in Southeast Asia - the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Hong Kong. The boat people were landing in these countries, but none of the first-asylum countries wanted to keep them permanently. They were obliged to offer asylum because of the Refugee Conventions they had signed, but they decided that it was not in their national interests to offer permanent resettlement to the refugees. When the numbers were relatively small, they took them in and requested the U.S., Canada, and Australia (traditional countries of immigration) to resettle them. That arrangement worked for a while, but as the numbers increased, we and the other resettlement countries did not keep up with in influx. The refugee camps became overcrowded. The first asylum countries began to refuse to allow the refugees to land. They gave them additional fuel, food, and fresh water and pushed their boats back into the sea. The U.S. Government stepped up its rate of acceptance and began to ask non-traditional immigration countries to take in Southeast Asian refugees. Some non-traditional immigration countries had been resettling SEA refugees since 1975.

Q: I imagine France would be in that category.

BUCHE: Yes, it was.

Q: Proportionately they have more Vietnamese than any other country.

BUCHE: I think that is correct. As the former colonial power in that part of the world, France had a long tradition of accepting Laotians, Cambodians, and Vietnamese. The French were, of course, taking in refugees who had some connections with the old "patrie," i.e. those who had served in the French colonial administration or military, had attended French schools, or had close relatives in France. The non-traditional resettlement countries, such as the UK, Germany, Austria, Italy, and the Nordics were quite reluctant to take in Vietnamese because they were already seeing increased influxes of Eastern Europeans. The U.S. Mission in Geneva was heavily engaged in working with the international organizations in that city, as well as with the other diplomatic missions to coordinate the myriad problems involved in caring for, processing, and resettling Eastern European and Southeast Asian refugees.

Q: *I'd like to know, where did you fit in? What actually were you doing in Geneva?*

BUCHE: I will try to describe the work of the Mission and my own role. The Mission was a hybrid creation.

Q: *Was it United Nations?*

BUCHE: No, it was an American diplomatic post accredited to the United Nations and other international organizations, instead of to a country. The internal structure was similar to any large American Embassy. There was an Ambassador, DCM, and various sections headed by Counselors. I was the Acting Counselor of the Refugee and Migration Section. We had nine Foreign Service Nationals in the Section. They were responsible for formulating budgets, auditing the Non-Governmental Organizations which we funded, keeping a central registry of refugees whom we were assisting under the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program, and liaising with the international humanitarian organizations on funding and budget issues.

Q: *You were under an ambassador and had overall responsibility for doing what?*

BUCHE: Yes, I was under an ambassador. The Mission was set up with an economic section, a political section, an economic section, a small consular section, and as mentioned above, a refugee and migration section. There was also a legal section in the Mission because of the legal and treaty aspects of our membership in the various international organizations. There was also a CIA station attached to the Mission.

Q: *Who were your ambassadors?*

BUCHE: William Van den Heuvel was our first ambassador. He was a political appointee from New York and had come from the humanitarian world. After he made his career and fortune as a lawyer, he went into humanitarian work. He had been associated with the International Rescue Committee, Amnesty International, and the UN Association. He was quite knowledgeable about refugee affairs and the international organizations we were dealing with. Ambassador Van den Heuvel was like a gift of God to me because I was just learning the nuts and bolts of the job. He and the DCM, Roger Sorenson, were deeply involved in refugee issues before Doug Hunter and I arrived, so we had excellent guidance on what needed to be done. After about a year, Van den Heuvel resigned and was replaced by a career diplomat, Gerald Helman. He brought Don Eller with him to Geneva as his DCM. (Roger went to Rome as head of our Mission to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization.) When Reagan became President, he replaced Ambassador Helman with a political crony, Geoffrey Schwaeb. Schwaeb was the Chairman of May Department Stores and a big financial contributor to Reagan. In the spring of 1979, the Refugee Counselor position at the Mission was filled by Steve Palmer. After a year of running the Refugee Section, Steve was called back to Washington by the Deputy Secretary for a special task and was replaced by Frank Sieverts. Frank was in charge of the Section for a year, before he was recalled to Washington to open up the position for Karl Beck. After several years in Geneva, Doug Hunter resigned from the Foreign Service to work for IOM. He was replaced by Robert Paiva, who also resigned after two years to work for IOM!

Because there was so much U.S. domestic interest in refugees, the Mission was actively engaged in working with the UN, the ICRC, IOM, and the NGOs. There were frequent international conferences held on refugee issues. The first one was three months after I arrived. The U.S. delegation was headed by Vice-President Mondale. You can imagine the complexities when a

Vice-President gets involved in an international conference. He was there for several days. But before Mondale and the official party arrived, we had teams of security people, several Assistant Secretaries to conduct preliminary negotiations, dozens of journalists, and additional secretaries, public affairs specialists, and working-level officers from the State Department. The way these conferences normally play out, much of the groundwork is done beforehand. Then the big names come in from the capitals, make speeches, do some bilateral work, put the finishing touches on the declarations, give press conferences or interviews on the "success" of the high-level gathering, and depart.

There were constant conferences, but fortunately only two in Geneva at the Vice-Presidential level, but the idea was to push the concept of burdensharing among the potential refugee-resettlement countries and to come to some sort of an agreement on how to assist and to reassure the countries of first asylum, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Hong Kong that they would not be stuck with tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of refugees. An understanding was reached that if the first-asylum countries would take in the refugees, the UN would pay for their upkeep, and then they would be resettled. That meant that Congress had to be brought on board (for funding and to allow the U.S. to take in tens of thousands of refugees each year). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees had the responsibility to protect and care for the refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention (signed by most governments). That UN agency also had the task of coordinating the understandings and speaking out when parties did not adhere to what had been agreed. Of course, the UNHCR needed large sums of money to carry out its mandate. This was something the UNHCR had always done very well on a limited basis. With the outflow of thousands of refugees daily from Vietnam, the UNHCR was not prepared to meet the burgeoning crisis. They were basically Europe-oriented and were beginning to handle large-scale refugee crises in Africa, but they were not staffed to handle simultaneously another major crisis in Southeast Asia.

They were particularly weak in the resettlement aspects, since in Europe, we, the Canadians, and Australians processed our own refugees. (Israel was beginning to receive large numbers of Soviet Jews, so the Jewish Resettlement Agency was also involved in the processing in Europe.) The High Commissioner at the time was Paul Hartling, a former Prime Minister of Denmark. He responded to the pressures (and increased funding) from the U.S. and our European Allies and augmented his staff to meet the worldwide crises. My office was called upon to work with the UN and other humanitarian organizations to meet the crisis in Southeast Asia and still manage the ever-increasing outflows of refugees from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. While there was not the problem of the first-asylum states of Europe, particularly Germany, Austria, Greece, and Italy, turning back the refugees, they were also concerned that they not be stuck with large numbers. They counted on us and the other resettlement countries to take most of the refugees. Fortunately for the program, there was fairly wide support in the U.S. for offering haven to the Eastern European refugees. This was part of the Cold War mentality.

Q: *We're still talking about the Cold War era. The Cold War was in full fledge, particularly after 1979.*

BUCHE: It was August 1978, when I arrived in Geneva. The number of people coming out of Eastern Europe, and asking for asylum in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Greece had

been growing by twenty to thirty percent annually since 1975. The U.S., the Canadians, and Australians years ago had worked out an agreement to help these first asylum states by taking for resettlement most of the refugees who entered Western Europe. The exceptions were the East Germans (who were offered West German citizenship immediately upon reaching the country) and those refugees who had close family members in Western Europe. The Canadians and the Australians were looking for migrants, and we were doing it for political and/or humanitarian reasons.

In 1977, the USSR began to drop many restrictions to legal emigration for Jews. They were coming out of the Soviet Union by train to Vienna. The Jews would be met by representatives of an American NGO, HIAS, as well as by the Jewish Resettlement Agency. They would indicate their preference to go to Israel or to the U.S. (or elsewhere, other than Israel). They would then either be flown to Israel within a few days, or processed in Vienna for resettlement elsewhere. In 1978, the overall numbers of Jews coming out of the U.S.S.R. was growing dramatically, but the ratio of those choosing not to go to Israel was increasing. (These were the so-called "split-offs".) The U.S. Government believed they should have a choice. This is where the Israeli Government and the US Government had sharp differences. The Israeli Government maintained since the Jews were coming out of Russia with visas for Israel, they should go first to Israel. If they did not like living there, then they could go elsewhere. We said our laws on asylum did not permit that, since once a refugee has been resettled, he or she had no claim as a refugee for a second country of resettlement. This issue was a bone of contention between our two Governments, especially since the numbers were going up of those who decided to split off and settle in the West.

Q: *What was your office's role in this Jewish migration?*

BUCHE: We funded from our office the operations in Vienna of the organizations involved in the initial questioning and processing. Once a Jew decided not to go to Israel, we picked up the costs of care and maintenance of the refugee in Austria, until we could resettle the person elsewhere. This was an arrangement that we worked out with the Austrian Government. The Austrians agreed to be a conduit, but they were not going to pay for care and maintenance or allow them to stay in the country, unless they had ties with Austria. The reasoning of the Austrians was completely in conformity with the Refugee Convention of 1951, since the Jews had the right and a means to go to Israel. Some of them eventually did stay in Austria, but not very many. My office's responsibility for a refugee ceased as soon as the person was resettled either in Israel, Europe, or a traditional country of immigration. Until that happened, however, our office paid for care and maintenance, including clothes, pocket money, health costs, school supplies for children, and burial costs in a few cases. When I arrived, the Jews on our care and maintenance rolls in Austria numbered about 10,000. Shortly before I departed, the numbers had risen to 30,000. We worked primarily with two Jewish and two non-Jewish NGOs who were in daily contact with the Jews. These former were HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Assistance Society), AJDC (American Joint Distribution Committee), and the latter were IRC (International Rescue Committee), and Austria Caritas.

Q: *I would think that these latter organizations would shy away because, after all we're talking about people who have a place to go. I would think that there would have been the idea of putting their resources elsewhere.*

BUCHE: They wanted to help on an ecumenical or humanitarian basis. The IRC was founded in the mid-1930s in New York to rescue Jews from Hitler's Germany. Most of the Jews who broke off in Vienna and wanted to go elsewhere were helped to do so by HIAS and AJDC in a partnership arrangement. But there were other NGOs which were already working with the non-Jewish refugees and decided they would help because, for one thing, it smoothed out the peaks and valleys of workloads. The Jews were very regular in coming out of the U.S.S.R. They needed exit visas and were allowed time to pack up and say good bye. While their numbers were growing, we could plan in advance. Whereas the number of refugees from Eastern Europe was up and down, depending on so many aspects. Very few of them actually "climbed under or over the Iron Curtain". They came out as tourists or part of teams or delegations or they had permission to join family members. There were some very dramatic escapes, but most of them came out in tour buses or trains with permission. The non-Jewish NGOs did take some of the Jews, and we encouraged them to do so. By the same token, HIAS processed some Pentecostals and Evangelicals from the Soviet Union because it had a large staff of Russian-speakers.
Our office reviewed and approved the NGO budgets, incorporated them for submission to Washington, and after the funds became available to us, we apportioned the money and audited the expenditures. Because of the long lead-time required by Washington for the budgets and because the budgets were based on future estimations of the number of refugees each NGO would handle and for how long, until they were resettled, there was a real need for intelligent estimations and informed guesses. We could adjust budgets for the NGOs within our overall ceiling without reference to Washington, but if we grossly underestimated the overall levels of incoming refugees, we would have to go back to Washington for a supplemental. Since a supplemental request to Congress was acceptable only for large-scale emergencies, we were encouraged to over estimate and be prepared to return the money at the end of the fiscal year to the Treasury. By a combination of good estimations and favorable luck, we came very close to the real numbers each year.

In addition to the work in Geneva, several of our local employees in Geneva would travel to the NGO field offices to audit the accounts and serve as advisers in the day-to-day operations. We also used American accounting firms to audit the NGOs. Once a quarter, Doug or I would visit the NGO field offices in Vienna, Rome, Paris, Munich, Istanbul, Athens, or Bucharest for discussions with the NGOs that we were funding. Our visits gave us a good comprehension of the "big picture" of the U.S. Refugee Program in Europe, as well as acquaint us with the numerous fine points and the many local variations.

During our visits, or sometimes between visits, we would receive requests from the NGOs for additional money. Sometimes it would be a request for an extra $50,000 because of an unexpected influx or the funds to hire an extra driver. Sometimes it was a minor sum for a new electric typewriter. We tried to be very reasonable and accommodating. We knew the NGOs were operating on a shoestring in many cases. We knew what their salaries were, and they were not getting rich. Some of the more difficult decisions concerned medical cases. The NGOs had authority to cover emergency or life-threatening situations if the host government would not pay,

but there were also cases where a person needed a major procedure, but not on an emergency basis. Seldom would the host government pay since the immediate need was not acute. We would usually consult the USG-approved "panel physicians" and follow their recommendations. If the refugee was being processed for Australia or Canada, we would ask the panel physicians whether the operation or procedure could be safely postponed until the refugee arrived in the country of resettlement. We sometimes even followed that route for U.S.-bound refugees, if there was no significant danger in postponing the operation, because refugees in the U.S. came under Medicaid, for the first two years. If there were any doubt, however, about the safety of putting off the operation until after resettlement, we would authorize the procedure in Europe.

So that was what we were doing in Geneva. We were running our own Eastern European refugee program and doing the political and liaison work, and the information gathering from the international organizations in Geneva for the USG's Southeast Asian program. Since there were also larger numbers of Africans refugees and displaced persons coming under the UNHCR care and protection, we reported on that area. We would get the information, send it to Washington, and Washington would make the decisions about how much money should be given to the UNHCR, to IOM, or the Red Cross and for which purposes. Our office at the time processed the USG payment checks for those organizations.

Q: *Would your office be talking to refugees, or you were one step removed, making decisions?*

BUCHE: We did not speak with many refugees in Europe. We visited Traiskirchen, a refugee camp outside Vienna, and a camp in the Munich area. Yes, we observed them, but we seldom talked to them about substantive issues. Doug and I sat in on a few interviews and asked questions, but our job did not involve the processing of individual refugees. We had the experience of refugee camp visits, but our job was to concentrate on the big picture by talking with the heads of the NGO units in Europe, UNHCR, IOM, and Red Cross officials, as well as State Department officers in the countries of first asylum. We were on the phone almost daily with Washington and followed up by sending cables.

During my time in Geneva, refugees were a major preoccupation with Washington. It was a significant domestic issue - not necessarily partisan, but an issue. Many Americans were concerned, on both sides of the equation. Some people wanted to limit the number of Southeast Asian refugees; others advocated a generous admissions policy. State governors, as well as Congress and the White House were united in their desire to bring more order into the process. The fall of Vietnam and the easing of restrictions on travel in Eastern Europe meant that unprecedented numbers of refugees were being admitted to the United States, usually on an *ad hoc* basis (the parole authority of the Attorney General). The process was disruptive. It was clear to many that Washington needed a new way to handle the USG response to the worldwide refugee problem. The State Department's Human Rights Bureau was proving not to be the place for the responsibility of managing and funding the processing of refugees.

There are some basic differences between human rights and refugees regarding international organizations, NGOs, treaties and conventions, fora, and funding, as well as domestic constituencies. Perhaps with different leadership at the time in the Bureau of Human Rights, both aspects could have been accommodated. The reality, however, was that refugee problems were

given second priority by Assistant Secretary Derian in favor of human rights issues. The dedicated officials on the refugee side of that small Bureau overcame or worked around her reluctance and performed magnificently in meeting the demands of the ongoing crisis. Nevertheless, the Carter Administration and Congress decided that a new bureaucratic structure was required to handle refugee issues.

In 1980, Congress passed the Refugee Act. This Act did many things. It codified which Department was responsible for what. Roles were defined for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the Department of Justice, and the Department of State. It created the equivalent of a new Bureau in the Department of State, the Bureau of Refugee Programs, headed by a Director. The first Director was John Baker, who lasted for a short time before he went to another bureau. Congress decided not just to create a new Bureau-like entity in the Department of State, it also created a structure above the Bureau involving a Coordinator and a Deputy Coordinator with a dozen staff positions. This structure soon proved to be unwieldy and almost unworkable. The first Coordinator was Senator Dick Clark. His job description called for him to coordinate with all the players, HHS, INS, State, Congress, the Governors, et al. The Coordinator in theory was to be responsible directly to the President and to take his orders from the White House. It possibly could have worked, but in reality did not. Dick Clark soon after taking the job, resigned to become involved in Senator Kennedy's bid for the Democratic nomination for President.

The next Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator were the two men, Victor Palmieri and Frank Loy, who had worked on the reconstruction of the bankrupt New York Central Railroad into Conrail. The idea was to bring a successful team from outside of government and let them put a management structure into place to deal with refugee problems. They made a good beginning. Then came the Mariel Cuban refugee crisis. The President decided to run things out of the White House, and marginalized Palmieri and Loy. President Carter became, in effect, the refugee coordinator. With the election of Reagan as President, Palmieri and Loy resigned. With the frequent changes at the top of the new refugee bureaucracy, it should be no surprise that there was much confusion in the ranks regarding priorities, assignments, and follow-through. We were trying to compensate for Washington's disarray by including more specific recommendations in our reporting. We thought that would make things simpler in the Refugee Program in Washington. They would have the information we obtained, as well as a recommendation on what to do as a result. We were also operating under a cloud because the new team was not sure what they wanted Geneva to do or how it should be structured. How much financial authority should we have? Should we continue to run the Eastern European Program as before, or should it be revamped to place it under Washington's control? In the near term, there was no alternative to maintaining the status quo in Geneva since the new bureau was in no position to take on any new tasks. We assumed from what we were hearing from Washington that eventually Geneva would lose much of our current autonomy. There would likely be a restructuring of the Eastern European Program. Instead of a centralized control of the NGO operations in Geneva, the future shape of the Program was toward working with fewer NGOs and allowing them autonomy within per-capita limits to make their own decisions regarding expenditures.

Q: *I would think that in our dealings over the Vietnamese refugees, there had to be an awful lot of sitting around the table, saying: "I'll take so many; how many will you take?" and an awful lot of pushing and shoving.*

BUCHE: There certainly was. Once the refugees were approved for resettlement in the U.S., there was a constant process of allocations and re-allocations with all the players having a say. The Department had only a minor role in the domestic allocation process. The big players were HHS, the NGOs, especially the larger organizations (Church World Services, the U.S. Catholic Conference, HIAS, and IRC), and representatives of the State governors. There was considerable give and take over the numbers of refugees to be admitted. Before the Refugee Act of 1980, this was an on-going, piecemeal exercise. With the passage of the Act, there was a formal procedure put into place which involved the Congress and the Executive Branch.

Q: *Were you involved personally in any of the refugee crises? I'm thinking particularly of the Sudan, maybe Burundi and Rwanda, or any of those areas?*

BUCHE: We were trying to do as much as we could through the UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross and through NGOs and not have to become involved on the ground. There was one exception. After the passage of the Refugee Act, there was a decision in Washington to begin processing of Ethiopian refugees who were in the Sudan and Djibouti. In June 1980, I was sent to Djibouti to set up a processing office. My orders were to select and process several hundred refugees for interviews by officers from the Immigration and Naturalization Service in early September so that they could arrive in the U.S. before the end of our fiscal year on September 30.

I certainly counted on the American Embassy and the UNHCR to assist me in this undertaking. At first, they were really helpful in finding office space and locally available persons to work with me. The UNHCR sent over its files on refugees who had petitioned for overseas resettlement. Then as numerous minor problems and bottlenecks arose, they became less willing to assist. The Charge was unhappy with the crowds of refugees who gathered outside the processing office. It was in the Motor Pool, but on the Embassy compound, so I was forced to re-locate my office.

When several Djibouti Government officials asked me for refugee status and resettlement in the United States for their Djibouti-citizen relatives and I turned them down immediately, they complained to the Charge. I explained that I was managing a refugee program, not a migration or educational program. Only refugees were eligible. By definition, a Djibouti citizen in his or her own country could not be considered a refugee. The Djibouti Government was already taking a "cut" of some 10-15% on food delivered to refugees by the UNHCR/WFP. (The number of refugees in the two camps was pegged at a higher number than were actually there. The "undistributed" food was taken by the Government and used for its own purposes.) The Djibouti Government began to complain of the "burden" of the refugees and how our program of resettlement would attract even larger numbers of Ethiopians.

Although Djibouti and Ethiopia adjoined, there was a desert of some 80-100 miles to cross from the populated areas of Ethiopia before reaching the border. Crossing the desert was extremely

dangerous for the Ethiopian refugees. There were Ethiopian military patrols as well as hostile natives looking for asylum seekers on the way to Djibouti. Some refugees lost their lives from attacks; some perished from exhaustion. Of those who reached Djibouti, almost all had been robbed. Most of the women also suffered rapes. Life as a refugee in Djibouti was extremely difficult. The weather was horrid, and there were constant shake-downs and harassment by the police. The refugees were generally aware of the dangers awaiting them in the desert and the daily tribulations of life in Djibouti, but they fled to that country because they feared for their very lives in Ethiopia. To say that Ethiopians would flee to Djibouti because a few of them might have the chance to resettle in the U.S. was irrational. Instead of trying to dissuade the Djibouti Government officials from this point of view, the Charge seemed to agree. He became quite uncomfortable with the program and did the minimum to help.

There were three UNHCR officials posted to Djibouti when I arrived. Two of them departed for annual leave in Europe shortly thereafter. The Chief of Mission, a Kenyan, remained behind. He was unwilling to do much of anything to help. The files turned over to me by the UNHCR were mostly out of date. In addition, there had been few new files created in the year or so before my arrival for potential resettlement cases. That meant I had to interview many refugees with nothing more to go on than name, date of birth, and date of arrival in Djibouti.

Since I was getting little cooperation from the American Charge, I asked him repeatedly to speak to the Djibouti Government (and the French Embassy, since the French controlled many aspects of the Government) for help in obtaining some necessary papers for the refugees (birth and marriage certificates if those events happened in Djibouti, plus exit permits from the country) as well as medical exams. I could not understand why he was so unwilling to act, until I went to the French DCM directly for help. I learned from the French DCM that the UNHCR head and the Ethiopian Ambassador were “very close”. The DCM said he suspected that the UNHCR head was passing on information about the refugees in Djibouti to the Ethiopian Embassy. The French DCM turned out to be supportive, and I was able to make some progress in obtaining papers from the Djibouti Government offices. As far as the medical exams were concerned, all the French physicians left the country in August for vacations in France, so I had to appeal to Geneva. The Mission asked the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for help. IOM sent down two doctors and a nurse, so the medical exams were completed.

The two locally-hired assistants proved to be gems. Both were wives of officials; one from the American AID Mission and the other from the French Military Assistance Group. I was reluctant for obvious reasons to use refugees to perform any processing work. The temptations and pressures on refugees to “assist” their friends and family would be too great to assure objectivity. I interviewed without interpreters to prevent shading and coaching. By the time the Immigration and Naturalization Service officer arrived in the first week of September, we had 228 persons ready for interview. We had their medical clearances, their security checks, and if applicable, the verification from the American Red Cross of their stated relationships with persons/companies/institutions in the USA. The latter step was not a pre-requisite for being included in the U.S. resettlement program at the time, but we were encouraged to obtain the data in order to facilitate integration in the USA. All but one person was approved by the INS officer. The one exception seemed to have very close ties in Djibouti and France, and could likely find resettlement opportunities in either. I returned to Geneva after welcoming my replacement and

handing over the responsibility for starting the processing for the next group. Eventually about a thousand Ethiopian refugees were resettled out of Djibouti to the USA before the Djibouti Government closed the program in 1983. Sometimes we would become involved in individual cases, but through letters, telegrams, or rarely, a phone call. It was the exception. I was probably guilty more than anyone else because I knew many Ethiopians from my tour in that country and they remembered, if not personally, at least my name through some other people. You will recall that a revolution began in Ethiopia in 1973 and that Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed and murdered a year later. There were tens of thousands of Ethiopian refugees in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Once in a while I would receive a letter from Djibouti, the Sudan, or Somalia asking for assistance since their file seemed to be lost in the bureaucracy. My normal reaction was to alert someone at the UNHCR headquarters to the problem and then follow-up later to make sure the case was back on track. Even before the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the USG could process and admit Ethiopian refugees to the U.S. They were potential beneficiaries of the old Refugee Act of 1952, which included a section designed to offer the Jews in North Africa and the Middle East resettlement opportunities in the U.S. The geographic limits for such assistance included Ethiopia, although the main purpose at the time was for North African Jews.

Q: *Morocco?*

BUCHE: Particularly, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.

Q: *And Egypt, yes?*

BUCHE: Yes, Egypt had the largest Jewish community in the area. Including Ethiopia in the 1952 Act was one of those quirks of drafting, where the intent was to help one particular ethnic or religious group under extreme pressure and persecution, and for some reason, another group was also included. The Refugee Act of 1980 did not include any geographic limitations, but defined a refugee in accordance with the Refugee Convention of 1951.

Q: *In 1982 you went where?*

BUCHE: I came to an end of my tour in Geneva in July 1982. I had received an assignment several months earlier to be the DCM in Mogadishu. As Anike and I were beginning to focus on Mogadishu, I got a call from a friend of mine, Nick Platt, who said that he had been nominated as Ambassador to Zambia and would like me to be his DCM. He was a Chinese specialist and had not served in Africa before. I said I would be delighted to go to Lusaka as his DCM, but I had already been assigned to Mogadishu. Nick knew about that and said he would work it out with Ambassador Oakley for me to come to Lusaka and for Ambassador Oakley to choose another DCM. Nick later reported that Bob Oakley had wanted another officer for his DCM, but at the strong recommendation of the Executive Director of the African Bureau, Len Shurtleff, he accepted me after checking out my background and references. When Nick offered Oakley a chance to obtain his preferred choice for DCM, he was delighted. So were Nick, Anike, and I. Looking back, I am so pleased that I did not go to Mogadishu. From a professional point of view, it probably would have been great assignment, but daily living was awful.

GERALD B. HELMAN
Representative, European Office of the United Nations
Geneva (1979-1981)

Ambassador Gerald B. Helman was born in Michigan in 1932. He received a B.A. and an L.L.B from the University of Michigan and was a member of the Michigan Bar. After entering the Foreign Service in 1956, he was posted in Milan, Vienna, Barbados, Brussels and Geneva. Ambassador Helman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 8, 2001.

Q: We'll pick this up the next time in 1979, which was a rather exciting year as far as Afghanistan and Iran and all that, blew up. You were out of IO by that time, weren't you?

HELMAN: By mid-year I was designated for Geneva.

Q: As what?

HELMAN: As ambassador.

Q: To do what?

HELMAN: Permanent representative to United Nations offices in Europe, which is headquartered in Geneva and carried the rank of ambassador.

Q: So we'll pick this up '79 to when?

HELMAN: '79 to late '81.

Q: Gerry, how did you get your job going to Geneva?

HELMAN: With great difficulty. *(laughs)* In fact I was really quite surprised and pleased I had been offered the job because up until then I think without exception Geneva went only to political appointees. My predecessor, Bill Vanden Heuval was really quite qualified and had a lot of domestic political experience through the Kennedy family. I attribute the fact that I got the job to three people - one is Cyrus Vance and the others Don McHenry and Bill Maynes. Don McHenry at that time had succeeded Andy Young as our perm. rep. in New York and Don and I for years had been very close and dear friends and professional colleagues. He and Bill pushed for my designation as permanent representative in Geneva because they felt that the U.S. could gain a great deal through professional management of that post. They supported it; it was not uncontested because the political types in the White House, of course, asked why should this guy, Helman, get this kind of job which has always been considered a plum? What did he do to be that deserving? But fortunately I had sufficient backing and the president agreed and I was designated. Passed my confirmation hearings and so on and went on to Geneva.

Q: At that time, because these things always change, how was the job described and how did you see your job and what you were going to be doing when you went out there?

HELMAN: Well, I must confess I was a bit surprised that I was asked to take the job because while I was quite experienced in United Nations affairs, that experience had been almost exclusively in the area of political Affairs, the activities that went on in New York principally, rather than in Geneva. Geneva was the home of the economic and social and humanitarian activities of the United Nations and I had precious little experience with organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), and so on and so on. These and others turned out to be fascinating organizations, including the office of the High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Human Rights Commission. Because of these various specialized agencies. The UN has a significantly larger staff in Geneva than New York. But I knew very little about those organizations so I was a bit surprised and I honestly did not know quite what to expect.

My strengths lay at that time in a knowledge of political affairs, which as it turned out did intrude on those organizations; a good sense of how the State Department worked, a good feel for multilateral and conference diplomacy and how the U.S. could best obtain its objectives in a multilateral forum. But that being said, and puzzled as I was, I was also quite happy because it turned out to be a great experience.

Q: Did you go out with any sort of preconceived agenda in your briefcase?

HELMAN: Yes I did. And it was a strategic one or a conceptual one rather than an issue-specific one. Up until I think I went there, the Geneva Mission was generally considered to be a facilitator, a hotel management entity for various U.S. delegations coming to Geneva. It was heavy on the administrative side and it was not expected to participate much at all in the actual substantive work of these organizations. I was supported by Bill Maynes and Don McHenry in particular, and I figured it's time to change this, that there are too many important things that go on in Geneva, including - while this wasn't part of my direct responsibility - trade negotiations in the context of the GATT. Various arms control activities were also conducted in Geneva.

Different parts of our government were responsible for our participation in various of the Geneva-based organizations and activities, for example the Trade Rep for GATT, the Department of Labor for the ILO, Department of Health for the WHO, the FCC and Commerce for the ITU, ACDA for arms control, and so it went. The Geneva Mission could never provide the necessary technical expertise. What it could do was to monitor these organizations between major conferences, establish close ties with their leadership, who often controlled large budgets, and provide the political and multilateral expertise needed to achieve our objectives in conferences and meetings. In addition, I decided that I was going to train myself in the programs and activities of these various specialized agencies, as they were called, and try and figure out how the U.S. could best reach its goals. By the way, each of those organizations had its own culture, structure, method of operation and decision-making. Most were established by treaties separate from the UN Charter. I also had the opportunity of selecting my DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and I chose Don Eller, whom I had gotten to know in IO and who I considered the best

admin fficer I had ever run across. He certainly validated my opinion of him through his performance in Geneva. Don unfortunately is since deceased, but we went together to Geneva. His job was to take care of the complex administration, not only of the mission, which was fairly sizeable and moving into a brand new building of its own.

Q: I don't mean this to be facetious at all, quite seriously, part of that hotel management thing you were talking about which can get extremely complex having delegation after delegation coming in, needing to be housed, fed, and served for whatever their purpose is.

HELMAN: That's right. Don knows that I would make the decisions that had to be made but I relied on him heavily to just manage all of that so that I could free myself to work with the various delegations, with the heads of all these agencies and so on. And I thought it turned out to be - well certainly my relationship with Don was very close and I hope it achieved what I sought to achieve.

Q: When you got out there did you find there was a distinct culture, either for the whole mission, or did each separate entity, which are quite different from each other, have its own culture and sort difficult to understand it, to break into it and all that?

HELMAN: Not in quite that way. There was a cultural issue there. I worked hard in my first couple of months at the mission, which was complicated by the fact that we moved from the old mission which was a couple of floors in an office building in Geneva to a spectacular building - one of the nicest structures I've seen the U.S. government put up - on the outskirts of Geneva near the UN complex. So that move was really time consuming and distracting. But I tried very hard to develop a core team with which I worked from the mission. I wanted them to buy into my concept of how we should function, which was that for each delegation - and the delegations were numerous and large - we would, I would, serve not only on that delegation together with some of the people in the mission who were expert in the work of that particular specialized agency, but that we would let the people coming from Washington know that we could deal with the complicated political and multilateral problems that came up. We didn't put ourselves out as experts on technical telecommunications issues, or the details of labor law, or the details of health problems and so on, but when it came to our working with these specialized agencies directly or working as part of the U.S. delegation in the annual conferences that these agencies sponsored, we knew how to get things done.

Q: How did you find this concept dealt with the delegations that came?

HELMAN: Really quite good. Not to make invidious comparisons but they were habitually looking at the U.S. mission as basically a hotel management operation and I think they were willing to acknowledge that my background, and with the expertise that I had worked to develop within the mission, we could contribute significantly to the work of a particular delegation and we could tend their special interests in these agencies in between the various conferences. It worked out well. I and my people had the experience and contacts in the UN bureaucracy and with other Missions necessary to devise and implement the tactics to achieve our substantive objectives.

The other element of it that reinforced what I was trying to do is the deference that a Presidential ambassadorial appointee commands. Even though some of the people who came with our delegations were quite senior and often Cabinet members, they were respectful, they saw what I could do for them. The Residence was a great help here - we had a marvelous residence - and we would hold cocktail parties, dinners, and whatnot, in order to further the work of each particular delegation. My wife had put together an outstanding staff and figured out how to do marvelous entertainments at short notice and on budget. She should have gotten paid.

There were structural and even cultural differences between various of the specialized agencies. For example, the International Labor Organization, created at the close of World War 1 by the Treaty of Versailles, had an elaborate constitutional structure and, uniquely, tripartite participation, representing labor, business and government - and they voted independently. I used to get Lane Kirkland and Irving Brown and other senior members of our labor movement over plus senior corporate executives representing business voting business interests. Delightful. I mean it was a great deal of fun working with these people. By the way, these labor relationships persisted even after I left Geneva, when I worked for the Under Secretary. For annual meetings of the World Health Organization, I'd get the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare coming over to head the delegation. Most of the issues, of course were a lot different than those in the ILO. Procedures, conference structure and overall ambiance varied considerably by organization. But the usual Arab-Israeli questions bedeviled everybody and our delegates from Washington were really quite happy to have me take it off their shoulders. They were content to have me speak as ambassador and who seemed to know what he was doing in dealing with extraneous political issues such the Arab-Israel dispute.

One time I stepped in to take responsibility for implementing the U.S. position on a controversial technical issue. The U.S. position was controversial and embarrassing to our health professionals. It involved the use of infant formula instead of breast milk in poor countries. The U.S. position under Carter was to favor breast feeding. It switched under Reagan. I announced and justified the U.S. position, which happily was very much in the minority. I guess that's what professionals are for. I several times took the pain and strain off the hands of our experts, delivered the harsh message on behalf of the U.S. government and let the experts take it from there.

There were more political questions involved in my work in Geneva than I had anticipated before coming out there. The Human Rights Commission, for example, met there annually and it still meets there and it's still highly contentious, highly political. The U.S. government would send very capable delegations but they suffered from the fact that each time it was generally a new bunch of people, so all needed orientation and education and help and so on. An amusing sideline: the head of my household staff told me that the human rights types ate and drank more, and stayed longer at my cocktail parties than any other group.

I should add that another surprise to me was the range, commitment and energy of the various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) that followed the work of various of the specialized agencies. They mainly were active in the field of human rights and humanitarian affairs, but also had a point of view on what was going on in other of the Agencies, such as the WHO. And they let me know their views. They are, by and large, remarkable outfits and a powerful lobbying

force in many countries. They are more widely appreciated and reported on today; I learned about them and their quite significant role when I was in Geneva.

Q: Within your core mission, if you want to keep up with political things you must've had some people who were reading the cables and were…

HELMAN: Oh, yes. Including me. *(laughs)* I read the cables.

Q: But you must've had the equivalent of a political advisory section to understand what the issues were. Did you have that type of thing?

HELMAN: Yes, I had a small political section, a somewhat larger economic section because it had the several economic entities, specialized agencies including the UN Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was sometimes a bloody pain in the neck.

Q: This was doing what?

HELMAN: UNCTAD was set up by the United Nations back I think in the early '50s. Its principal purpose was to try and promote economic development, particularly of developing countries, and they used to develop lengthy studies and resolutions and to describe and recommend various measures and methodologies to assist developing countries. It was a fairly sizeable specialized agency by the time I got there that produced a lot of paper, sponsored endless meetings but never seemed to do anything useful. There probably were more than a dozen specialized agencies; each one required separate handling because each one was unique and operated on unique charters. Some of them were remarkably effective and often were not well known. As I mentioned earlier, I was much taken by the ILO, which I found a fascinating organization in its structure and performance. For example, a wide variety of human rights conventions were developed under its auspices. They dealt with a variety of labor issues, including child and slave labor. It sought thereby to establish global, uniform standards. Back in the '30s, the ILO helped the US to develop it Social Security System. More recently, the ILO helped Poland write new labor legislation in the aftermath of Solidarity's success. By the way, most UN specialized agencies, with some exceptions, were set up post World War II. But the International Labor Organization goes back to the Treaty of Versailles; the International Telecommunication Union goes back to Alexander Graham Bell. Along time ago. So these have their own particular histories.

I found the Human Rights Commission quite challenging and quite difficult, quite discouraging sometimes. Then, as now, the countries with serious human rights problems lobbied to be elected to the Commission so that they could prevent any action against them. I found the UN High Commission for Refugees a fascinating organization - had a great deal to do with them. During my stay there the work multiplied immensely, in part because global developments beyond anybody's expectation resulted in a huge growth in refugee populations. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) I also found a remarkable organization. Of course, the ICRC was a private Swiss foundation, not a multinational organization, but the U.S. was a major contributor and welcomed its participation in dealing with man-made disasters worldwide. The ICRC's leadership was always available to me to discuss issues and operations. Quite an

extraordinary organization. I should here distinguish between the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, also with its headquarters in Geneva. The American Red Cross is an affiliate of the League, not the ICRC, and is concerned largely with providing aid in natural disasters.

Q: What about the other major powers - the Soviets, the British, the French, Japan? Did they have comparable organizations such as yours?

HELMAN: Yes, they were really quite well represented. The French had a smaller mission but then again they always have a small embassy and small missions. But they sent really top-notch people, the British, as well. And their ambassadors were guys with whom I closely cooperated. Japan was a bit more remote but still an important participant. The Japanese normally are reticent. When I was there the Chinese first came on in a significant fashion; they had by then joined the Security Council and they were gradually learning how to participate and learning - I use the term advisedly - to participate in international organizations more broadly, because they were terribly inexperienced, terribly fumbling.

Q: You were saying you got to know the…

HELMAN: I had a good working relationship with the Chinese ambassador because he sought, obviously for his own reasons, some help in how to participate. He literally sought my guidance. My instructions were to go ahead and help him as long as I was not giving away the store. That proved to be a valuable way of getting Chinese support when I needed it.

Another relationship which developed quite encouragingly as a consequence of outside events was with the Egyptian ambassador; Rauf el Reedy, who subsequently became Egypt's ambassador to the United States. This was in the wake of the Camp David accords and so our relationship with Egypt was certainly on a new level. Having recognized and established diplomatic relations with Israel, they couldn't contribute to the kind of political harassment of Israel that had become standard fare for Arab countries in the UN system. I was able to work with el Reedy closely to discourage and circumvent or defeat such harassment.

Basically my purpose was to save the UN institutions from the distractions of having to deal with political issues that really didn't belong there, and certainly my ability to work closely with a very talented Egyptian ambassador and his staff made my job in that respect quite a bit easier. I also established what continues to be a good friendship with el Reedy. I should add, while giving a general account of Geneva, that it was the scene of many ad hoc diplomatic activities.

Q: A neutral, nice environment.

HELMAN: An absolutely nice environment. Geneva always offers a very desirable alternative. And the Genevois certainly encouraged that. So there were a variety of off-the-record diplomatic activities that went on there. To illustrate that about all I can say is that there is a plaque in the lobby of a mission, which I think was awarded to two or three embassies around the world, commending us for our assistance in the Iran hostage crisis. And that was of course extremely gratifying to our entire Mission staff.

Q: How did that play? We had two things going on at the same time, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran hostage crisis. I imagine the hostage crisis particularly engaged us, didn't it?

HELMAN: Yes, the hostage crisis was preeminent; there were some off-the-record activities that involved Afghanistan, but diplomacy with respect to Afghanistan had not really taken hold. This was something that developed several years afterwards. But the activities on a variety of other issues were certainly parts of my portfolio.

Q: On the Iran hostage thing I imagine there were all sorts of…I mean this was sort of a meeting informal sub rosa a meeting place for various negotiations or discussions.

HELMAN: I'll pass on that, but needless to say we were pleased to receive a commendation.

Q: Were some of the age-old diplomatic games played out on these delegations? I think of the perpetual one between the French and the Americans, particularly from our perspective of the French trying to stick their thumb in our eyes and all.

HELMAN: Sometimes on the economic side, but the French had quite a remarkable Ambassador, Stefan Hessel, who had no patience for that kind of activity. He was quite senior in the French diplomatic service and thus not easily challengeable from home. You always expected the French to give you a hard time of it, but it didn't happen very much in Geneva. The French, certainly on refugee matters and human rights matters were team players; we were pretty much working off the same page. My French counterpart could call me and I would give him a hand if I could possibly do that and I was pretty confident that if I gave him a ring he would similarly respond. My British counterpart certainly was of the same mind. It was a really pleasant experience. We all cooperated on substantive but also budgetary issues. When we called as a team on Agency heads to discuss money, for example, we were quite formidable. How much was a product of my skills, or lack of them, is not very relevant. But I know that they were very pleased to have, for the first time, an American colleague who was a pro, who knew the policy, who knew the business, and with whom they could work and who would understand what they were driving at. By the way, and also whom they couldn't take for a ride. *(laughs)* And they knew that.

Q: How did you find being separated from the UN headquarters? Sometimes this is quite a joy to be away. You know, it's a large bureaucracy.

HELMAN: Geneva, by the way, has more UN employees than New York. Our contributions to the Geneva based agencies, was larger than our contributions to the New York agencies, so I had plenty of bureaucracy. And one of the things that I undertook was to try my damnedest to place U.S. nationals on the staffs of the various UN agencies. Other countries generally do a much better job, I think even today, than the U.S. has done in making sure that we get our fair share of jobs. Not that the U.S. nationals who were employed there, in the bureaucracies there, were at my beck and call, but there was a matter of fairness, of confidence in the competence of the U.S. nationals, and insistence on my part that we get our fair share.

I also tried to pay closer attention to them - there were hundreds of U.S. employees in the UN agencies in Geneva. None of them had ever seen the inside of the mission, certainly few had seen the inside of the Residence; only a few had ever met the U.S. ambassador there, or staff and stuff like that, and I thought that that was wrong so I tried hard to at least make them feel a part of the larger community so that they would know that we're there, we're on their side, we want to meet them, talk to them, work with them, and even deal with their grievances. I thought that worked out well.

Q: How did you find the Swiss as hosts?

HELMAN: Oh, pretty good. *(laughs)* The Swiss are remarkable. Better, the "Genevois" because the Swiss canton system is real and they have every bit as much pride in their identity as "Genevois," or coming from one of the other cantons, as a Texan has of being from Texas and so on. Genevois recall that Geneva was once an independent entity that predated the Swiss Confederation and had very much a history all of its own. And indeed Geneva has a fascinating history. So when you dealt with the Swiss, you were really dealing with the Genevois, and they attach a great deal of importance, both politically and economically, to the presence of the UN entities in Geneva and in Switzerland despite the fact that up until recently Switzerland was not a member of the United Nations, or at least of its political organs. It was a member of many of the specialized agencies and contributed a good bit of money to their operations.

I learned about at least one attraction that the Genevois and the Swiss employed to maintain their attraction to UN agencies; if, let's say, the International Labor Organization decides it's outgrown its old building, doesn't have enough land, wants to build something and is sort of looking around generally, even outside of Switzerland, the Swiss will make them an offer they can't refuse. *(laughs)* It might involve loaning them money to build a new building, charging almost 0% interest. And so the ILO stays there and others stay there as well.

Q: While you were there were there any issues that you can talk about that you found particularly difficult, engaging, and contentious?

HELMAN: Yes, I think the area that engaged me more than any other single one was refugee affairs - humanitarian affairs generally, but specifically refugee affairs. At the time I was there, Saddrudin Aga Khan, who did an outstanding job as High Commissioner for Refugees, had left post. He was a Prince of the Islamic Ismaeli sect and lived in a gorgeous villa right on the shore of Lake Geneva. Paol Hartling, who at various times had been foreign minister and premier of Denmark, was elected as his replacement. Saddrudin's job when he was High Commissioner involved a world-wide effort to help with scattered refugee populations. It involved persons who had been involuntarily and forcefully displaced from their country - essentially "true" refugees, instead of persons internally displaced because of drought, famine and civil war. While the organization had a large budget, its operations were generally predictable and manageable.

That changed rapidly when Hartling came on board, not because he invited the change but because of events around the world. Civil conflict, drought and famine created huge populations of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa. And then you had the whole Cambodia refugee problem - that was when Pol Pot came on the scene and a real holocaust began there -

and the Vietnamese invasion and the terrible, terrible suffering and decimation of the Cambodian populations and the wandering, almost uncountable number of Cambodians and the desperate efforts to provide somehow for these refugee populations in a very dangerous environment. All told we were talking about many millions of helpless people. And the difficulty of it was intensified by the terrain, the politics, and the sheer physical danger - the Pol Pot people did not welcome visitors *(laughs)* and the Vietnamese could also be difficult. It's strange to think that the Vietnamese could be at that time viewed as almost rescuers.

Q: This was really not that long after the war. Were we making contacts with the Vietnamese? They were really coming in to stop this. The fact that they were coming in was…

HELMAN: Since I was not involved directly in the bilateral aspect of it, I think the answer was, not really. In part because it was not really clear what the Vietnamese objectives were, although certainly anybody that took on Pol Pot was more than welcome in my mind. And you had the boat people issue and so on. It was just a horrible, horrible situation. Between Cambodia and Africa, the UNHCR's resources were almost overwhelmed. The UNHCR was trying to develop some sort of plan with a Thailand that wasn't always terribly cooperative and with Washington which was intent on assuring in that the proper procedures were maintained in delivering refugee assistance - financial assistance, food, anything.

In working with Harting and a number of other quite remarkable people, and I think in many respects the most remarkable of all was Mort Abramowitz - who I knew before this as a colleague. He was, fortunately, our ambassador in Thailand and was quite willing to go to the mat on the refugee issue with Washington. Mort came up with the, at that time, radical and extraordinary idea, saying, "So what if the food gets in the hands of black marketeers? Dump the food at the frontier if necessary and even if it gets in the black market, all the black marketeers can do is sell to people who are willing to pay for it and so you feed people." He bullied State and the Thais, until they did the right thing. *(laughs)* Certainly I bought into it and Mort came over once or twice to Geneva. We helped put together an international emergency conference to raise money, consolidate political support, and help organize the UNHCR, the ICRC and other humanitarian agencies to tackle the crisis in a coherent, organized fashion. We also worked together to organize the UNHCR operation in Thailand. Mort was the inspiration and the engine that drove the process. Help was given and gotten. Another remarkable person who played a key role was Sir Robert Jackson, "Jacko" was Australian, with a military background and served as Hartling's Coordinator for Cambodia. Jacko was experienced in UN and military operations. He was unorthodox, profane and totally dedicated. His wife, by the way, was Barbara Ward Jackson, the very formidable author, journalist and, as I recall, editor of the "Economist."

The other principal effort in the refugee field involved Africa, which was being overwhelmed by war and draught induced-famine. Organizing a special contributors' conference to wheedle large amounts of money out of donating governments for the High Commissioner to use in providing assistance to the African refugees, was a major effort. It was major in terms of timing because there was present disaster that one was trying to confront. The bureaucracies in Geneva and Washington had great difficulty in addressing the really quite extraordinary events and numbers of people involved. I did a lot of pushing on that and so did the State Department. For the

conference, Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher came over and Dick Holbrook came over as well.

Q: He was secretary for Far Eastern Affairs which is where a significant number of refugees…

HELMAN: You are right, but I'm sure Dick was on that trip. He probably took on some Cambodian and Asian issues on the side. The event was successful in raising money but, as importantly, in helping the UNHCR to organize itself to cope with its quite huge problem. Subsequent to that I was at lunch at the Thai ambassador's residence and Paol Hartling was there, the High Commissioner for Refugees, and a bunch of other ambassadors, and it was then that Paol was called to the phone. It was the Nobel Committee calling to inform him that the UNHCR had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. That was terrific.

Q: Oh, yes. Did you find that the Scandinavians were playing a particular role in this, because although they were both in and out of NATO - Sweden being out of NATO and all - but they took a particular interest in places like Africa and humanitarian affairs. Did you find that they had a positive thrust?

HELMAN: Oh, yes. UN affairs, in particular. When I was in Geneva, three heads of agencies were Danish nationals. One was Paol Hartling, High Commissioner for Refugees, another was Hafdan Mahler, who was head of the World Health Organization. He was superb. He was a tough bureaucrat; he managed that place far better than some of the people who succeeded him. And then the head of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which is a very large organization, was also Danish. I don't recall his name. But one thing I learned, though I didn't deal much with the WMO, they are the largest consumer of computer capacity in the world. Apparently, following and predicting the weather requires huge, huge time on very heavy duty systems.

Q: They still haven't found the philosopher's stone. I mean at least they keep saying when there's going to be rain in Annandale and they've been off almost every time.

HELMAN: Well, they haven't gotten it down to that fine a grain. *(laughs)* I'll tell you though, the WMO provides immense amounts of data to its U.S. counterparts, and around the world. Farmers can be very happy with what these guys do.

Q: Satellites, by the time you were there in 1980 or so, were beginning to kick in with all of their data that they could have - crops and...

HELMAN: That's taking pictures and observation satellites. Yes, that's true. That provided a great deal of assistance in predicting weather. But the heavy duty computer demand was based upon just raw data, not pictures, temperatures, events, amount of rain and cloud patterns, and sea patterns, and wind patterns. It was huge.

Q: What about the role of the Soviets at this time? The Soviets were quite a bit in the international doghouse after their invasion of Afghanistan. Did that have any impact on operations in Geneva?

HELMAN: Only in particular areas. The Soviets certainly had a large staff there, probably for a number of reasons most spelled KGB. And they were most troublesome because they used their Geneva mission as a recruiting headquarters; they tried very hard both to place their own nationals and suborn other nationals who were on the staffs of the various UN agencies. I think just as in New York these multilateral institutions represented for the Soviets sort of a happy hunting ground for informants and more - both from the staffs of the UN entities there and from the various delegations to the United Nations, because Geneva and New York were two of the very few places where basically the whole world was represented and so you've got a large smorgasbord from which to dine. So that was troublesome and part of my work was to try and assist these specialized agencies in coming up with more efficient structures and to try and resist the politicization of their activities and the suborning of their staffs. Certainly I had good support from the heads of the various agencies, who knew what was going on, but that was always a significant part of my portfolio. Others at my mission who were more expert at these matters than I dealt with them daily.

The Russians were active in arms control obviously. I didn't get into that very much. They were hardly active at all on the economic side of the picture. They were active in a variety of specialized agencies. Sometimes they were cooperative, sometimes they weren't. This was on the overt side. By and large, even though they had a large delegation, I don't think that they were very effective in pursuing their interests on the overt issues that arose in the various agencies. Since they contributed little money, few were inclined to pay attention to the Soviet view on questions of programs and agendas of the Agencies. They were increasingly on the defensive - not only because of Afghanistan, and that really wasn't terribly significant while I was there, except some of the Soviet nationals found it a little embarrassing, but because of events in Eastern Europe. That was the time of very significant political developments in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. These countries were looking for a freer hand. These countries used the United Nations, both in New York and Geneva, as fora in which they could seek wider scope for pursuing what they considered to be their national interests. And certainly it's something that I saw, perhaps not in terribly dramatic fashion, but sufficiently clearly so that I looked for ways to give them a hand to weaken the Soviet position if possible, and to seek support on particular issues of interest to us. But I never expected it to go terribly far.

There were, however, some very dramatic events. Geneva was almost a wonderland in some of the things that happened there, for example, at the 1981 International Labor Conference, which was the ILO's annual global conference. President Reagan had by then taken office and I forget the name of the secretary of labor who came. Anyway Lane Kirkland came over with a strong union team. Senator Hatch was there as ranking member of the Senate's Labor Committee.

But the big attraction at the Conference was the presence of Lech Walesa as the Polish worker representative. I believe it was the first time he had ever departed Poland. The Polish government allowed him to leave to represent Polish workers at the ILO. I can't begin to describe the electricity in that huge conference hall when Walesa rose to speak. It was great. *(laughs)* I recall standing at the side of the conference hall so that I could watch the reactions of the Eastern Europeans. Almost all, including some Cubans, applauded Walesa.

Q: When you were there were you seeing a growing importance where both - I'm not sure if it was the European Union or European community, probably at that point?

HELMAN: It was a little more complex than that because you still had EFTA.

Q: And that was when the OSCE was getting…Were you seeing sort of a coalescence within Europe of being a power unto itself or not?

HELMAN: I think there was still a lot of stumbling and feeling for direction. As I said, the Europeans, unlike today, were split between two trading groups. One was the Common Market, then called, and the European Free Trade Association with Switzerland and the Scans generally and the Brits. I think the Irish and a bunch of others were members. It was a complicating factor because on anything of real significance, each entity went off by themselves and they tried to bargain amongst themselves on a position and finally they'd come around to tell you what their position was. This introduced a lot of rigidity in the negotiating process because none of them wanted to go back into their own groups for approval of changes. It was a complicating matter but not overwhelmingly so because on anything with any significance, you know the Germans or the British or the French or some of the others were quite willing to get together.

Q: How was the advent of the Reagan administration seen from Geneva at the time?

HELMAN: Great trepidation. Reagan came with a highly critical foreign and even US press. Whatever the press printed was mistaken as gospel, as true; and what the American press printed about Reagan and some of the people who came in with him - General Haig and Jeane Kirkpatrick was accepted and even devoured. It was seen most immediately in Geneva in the Human Rights Commission because the Human Rights Commission took took up its usual array of high voltage issues in March, 1981. The Commission meeting goes on for six to eight bloody weeks and the U.S. government then would send over a couple of guys that I got to know - Dick Schifter and - who was the co-head of delegation? I forget. He's over at the American Enterprise Institute now.

But they came with rather a hard nose and idealistic approach to human rights. They both were neo-conservatives; they were part of the neo-con crowd in the Reagan administration. They were a lot tougher and a lot less willing to compromise and this made the task of getting general agreement very difficult on almost anything. I thought that in some cases they were unnecessarily rigid. So the first direct taste of the Reagan administration that the people in Geneva noticed was in the Human Rights Commission; it was a rather harder edged, less compromising approach, quite willing to take on issues that others felt uncomfortable with and so on. Not bad, but it was a change of pace into which people read all kinds of implications. Where it went badly awry was in the justification for supporting some pretty dreadful regimes, such as those in Argentina and Chile. You may recall Jeane Kirkpatrick's article in, as I recall, Foreign Affairs - the one that supposedly brought her to the attention of the Reagan people. Her argument was roughly that in the battle against communism, it is better to put up with somewhat less than perfect regimes in Chile and Argentina. What a dreadful, morally perverse doctrine.

The event that I think was most difficult, and most embarrassing at the annual conference of the World Health Organization. And that is because one of the prominent issues at the World Health Assembly that year - the one that stuck out in my mind very much - was the question of breastfeeding. At that time a real controversy had arisen as to whether some of the large pharmaceutical companies, both Swiss and American, were being unethical in how they pushed artificial milk products, in Africa in particular, but also in South America, on populations that simply were incapable of employing them as directed or too poor really to afford them. It was felt by many that the pharmaceutical companies were trying to displace a far better and safer means of feeding infants, which is mother's milk, breastfeeding.

And what was happening, and quite purposefully on the part of the pharmaceutical companies, was that the pharmaceutical companies would go into the maternity wards in hospitals and hand out free samples of the stuff as the modern and easy alternative. You're not saddled with a child constantly at your breast and so on. It was attractive and it was free, at least initially and so it became the practice and was increasingly popular. What would happen is that when the free samples stopped and they had to go out to the store, they found they had to pay and so they started diluting the product with water out of the tap or out of the stream - and so they're feeding their infants a polluted product. Had that also in South America.

So there was a drive in the World Health Organization to admonish the pharmaceutical companies, and some of them took the point and behaved themselves, but unfortunately not the American pharmaceutical companies - at that time anyway - and to start a drive to encourage breastfeeding rather than substituting artificial products. Under the Carter administration the U.S. was supportive of this. The Reagan folks came in and they said no, this isn't the business of the World Health Organization and there's nothing wrong with artificial products; it's modern, it's healthy, and so on. And we don't want to get in the way of pharmaceutical companies pursuing quite legitimate business. So the U.S. official position changed and we went on aggressively to discourage mothers from feeding their infants. *(laughs)* You know, I recount that now and it was so ludicrous.

Q: They've come up with studies that show women really should breastfeed their children for at least a year. There are all sorts of benefits, not just…

HELMAN: There are all sorts of benefits. It's a cultural thing, it's an economic thing, and it's a health thing because in these countries diluting the product introduces a terrible danger.

Q: And also there are so many other things that are much more nutritious anyway.

How about the Swiss, did they get involved? Because I think of Nestle.

HELMAN: Nestle I think eventually backed off and behaved themselves. Nestle is very big and they're an industry leader.

Q: They had been involved then in this, too, weren't they?

HELMAN: Oh, yes, they were. They were certainly selling the substitute formula and pushing it but they began backing off and looking for a compromise. I assumed that they didn't want the political fallout that was resulting from their marketing practices. This was one of the times when I decided to take the burden off of our professionals who came from HEW and the National Science Foundation and who were deeply chagrined by the change in the U.S. position. These guys knew better and couldn't bring themselves to speak the U.S. position, so I said, "Okay, that's fine. I'll do the dirty work." *(laughs)* That's what ambassadors I guess are for. But it was these kinds of things that confirmed the worst expectations of some of the people in Geneva. Otherwise it was way overdrawn. I mean some of the fear of the Reagan people.

Q: Did tobacco or the use of tobacco come up at all while you were there?

HELMAN: Not while I was there. The other health issue that came up that was quite inspiring is that at that time the World Health Organization determined that smallpox had been eradicated worldwide - unfortunately it turned out that it really hadn't. But the WHO at that time had taken on an immense global program of vaccination to get rid of smallpox, and largely succeeded. They now have almost reached the point of polio eradication. WHO has had long-standing global programs on malaria and tuberculosis and is now the global coordinator in the battle against AIDS.

The WHO is a remarkable organization and, together with other of the Geneva-based agencies provide an unanswerable rebuttal to critics of the UN and multilateralism in general.

Q: Did abortion come up while you were there?

HELMAN: Not while I was there, no.

Q: Thank God. (laughs)

HELMAN: I had enough on my platter. But it was an extraordinary experience. I worked with some remarkable people, as well.

Q: You didn't have the feeling that the UN staff was overstaffed with remittance men from various countries - time servers and that sort of thing?

HELMAN: There was some of that but generally in specialized agencies you had to be technically qualified in some way. They may have had too many technicians but I wasn't really competent to make that judgment or evaluate the quality of their contributions. A lot of doctors, medical researchers, a lot of engineers, radio engineers, computer specialists and meteorologists and so on. Scrolling forward, in 1988, while I was with the Under Secretary, I was asked to be the U.S. "expert" on a so-called "High Level Committee" of twenty experts to examine the structure and function of the International Telecommunication Union - an organization of genuine importance to the commercial and national security uses of the radio spectrum. The Committee was supplied with a generous budget for outside consultants. The eventual report several years later was extensive, with over a hundred recommendations, all of them adopted by the ITU. While many of the recommendations dealt with management of personnel of the budget,

the Committee found little evidence of overstaffing. To the contrary, the increasing demands being placed on the ITU, particularly by the US and its private sector could well justify staff increases.

I must confess I've always been very skeptical about the screaming and yelling about the size of UN bureaucracies and their sloth and duplication. There is that but in my experience in Geneva I didn't think that they were much worse than a lot of public bureaucracies I had seen, including that of the United States. My subsequent experience in the private sector tells me that the UN is no better or worse than some of the private bureaucracies you see in dealing with some large U.S. corporations. It's always difficult to say no, you shouldn't be more efficient. My view, and it certainly is the minority view, is that there are more important things for the U.S. to focus on and more that these organizations can do of interest to us if we showed more leadership and more confidence in them. We'd probably serve our own interests better if we concentrated more on that rather than whether nine people can do the job of ten.

Q: It's a good political ploy, but it's not…

HELMAN: It doesn't deserve the hullabaloo it has caused and the fallout in these organizations. Well, my comments a week or ten days ago gave you my view of what I thought of the UN budget as a domestic political football.

Q: Did Jeane Kirkpatrick come out at all?

HELMAN: Yes, Jeane came out two or three times. We got along really quite well and I think she was certainly interested in what I had to say and took - to say it bluntly - took guidance pretty well, or instruction pretty well, because I knew a hell of a lot more about what was going on than she did. She was good and smart.

Q: So she wasn't coming out like Jesus claiming at the temple or something like that?

HELMAN: *(laughs)* It wouldn't work on me anyway. It was a good relationship and she came out there for the Fourth of July once. We had a big Fourth of July reception with some Congressmen there. She was a dynamo. It's just that she was sometimes wrong.

Q: (laughs) Did you feel that with a new administration that your days were numbered?

HELMAN: Oh, I knew my days were numbered. I was originally supposed to be replaced by Senator Javits, who unfortunately at that time was very ill - he had to retire from the Senate. He was suffering from a debilitating muscular disease. I'm not sure if it was Lou Gehrig's Disease or something similar to it. I came back for consultation - I think it was in the spring of '81 – called on the Senator in New York and said, "Let me know what I can do for you. Any help I can give you, advice I can give you." It was a very cordial meeting. But I could see from meeting with him that there was no way he was going to get to Geneva to handle that job.

I could tell from my visit then that his illness had progressed. Intellectually he was all there, he was terrific. It would've been a huge honor to be replaced by a person of such distinction, but it

was something, I concluded having met him, that wasn't going to happen even though it was a month or two more before the information was made available that in fact he wouldn't be going. It was a while after that, towards the end of the summer, that the decision was made to send Geoff Swaebe. Geoff was a reputed member of President Reagan's old kitchen cabinet from California, along with Judge Clark, Charlie Wick and others. He subsequently was our ambassador to Belgium. He replaced me, I think it was sometime in October or November of '81. His background was as a department store executive, and he was successful at that and quite wealthy. Certainly an interesting, likeable and well-meaning fellow, but I don't think he brought anything special to the job. But, as I understand it, if he ever wanted to call Ronald Reagan, for whatever reason, Ronald Reagan would answer. But Geneva wasn't that kind of a job. It didn't require that kind of clout. But Geoff was a most responsible person. Years later I visited with him in Brussels and we got along very well.

Q: When you went back - you know you'd go back from time to time to New York - did you find that our mission to the United Nations with the advent of Jeane Kirkpatrick and all and there was talk about if the United Nations wants to leave New York, I'll be on the dock and waving goodbye?

HELMAN: Well, that was one of Jeane's people. That was just childish.

STEPHEN E. PALMER, JR.
Chief of Humanitarian Affairs
Geneva (1979-1981)

Stephen E. Palmer, Jr. was born in Superior, Wisconsin on July 31, 1923. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and served in the U.S. Marine Corps. His Foreign Service career included positions in Nicosia, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Tel Aviv, London, Islamabad, Madras, Geneva, and Washington, DC. Mr. Palmer was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

Q: Okay, that's '79 to '81. So we'll come back to that. Then you moved off for a while to Geneva?

PALMER: Yes. NEA had nothing for me after I did those country reports. An ambassadorship had fallen through that NEA had laid on for me. Coincidentally, the job of Chief of the Humanitarian Affairs Section in Geneva had become open due to the illness, and shortly after the death of the incumbent, Derian asked me if I would like to do that. They wanted to upgrade the position to Minister-Counselor rank, and I'd be the third ranking person in the mission. I was delighted to accept, and we went over there in very short order. It turned out I was there a little less than a year but it was a year really packed with a lot of interesting work and developments. The job entailed maintaining high level contacts with the UNHCR, the Refugee Commission, and with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and with -- its changed its name twice since then -- the organization that helps UNHCR move the refugees.

Q: The National Committee for European Migration.

PALMER: Then, largely my staff which consisted of two officers and a secretary, and about ten Swiss nationals, spent most of its time managing a multi-million dollar program, the European part of the refugee program, and managing in a very real way, that is, making payments to ICEM and various voluntary organizations, and investigating programs. This was centered in the European theater, the movement of Soviet Jews out and into Italy and then to the States and elsewhere. That was the main element of the program, the Soviet Jews at that time. During the time I was there, an international conference on the Southeast Asia refugee problem which was at a critical point with thousands of boat people leaving, and the receiving countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand and others, not wanting to keep them. So there was a high level conference with Vice President Mondale leading our delegation, and it was successful. The governments pledged an awful lot of money, and there was a useful public focus on that issue.

There was another conference that I attended and I led our delegation; it was an observer delegation, and that was in Tanzania, Arusha, on African refugee problems. Anyway, I was very busy and usefully engaged. I particularly enjoyed and was stimulated by my contacts in the ICRC and the UNHCR senior staff. ICRC was particularly impressive, and I say this because at that time it was not so generally known in Washington, in their program for visiting political prisoners. We gave a modest donation every year to this program, and I related it to my human rights experience, gee; this is important. If they could get into places like China, or places they're not in, what a difference it could make. So we were helpful in enhancing the U.S. donations to that program, which is still going strong, and is still a very useful endeavor. UNHCR, being a UN organization, wasn't the most efficient organization, but had a lot of very dedicated people. I enjoyed very close relations with the commission.

Q: Who was the commissioner?

PALMER: Mr. Poul Hartling, he was a Dane. He had been a Foreign Minister of Denmark. And the key person and my direct contact with the ICRC was John Pierre Hocke, who was the operations director, number two under the president. In both cases the relationships was of honesty and openness and respect for each other's institutional limitations. So I was happily perking along in Geneva, in the meantime we had ambassadorial changes, and DCM changes, and I guess I was acting DCM for two of the months I was there, and I was Chargé for a while. So that was an interesting experience.

Then out of the blue, when I was back on consultations in Washington, Derian asked me to replace Mark Schneider as her senior deputy. I said, "Pat, I appreciate that trust a great deal, but I've only been eleven plus months in Geneva, its been very expensive settling in, it would be a financial disaster to leave at this point. And I just love the work and I think its important." She said, "Well, I hope you'll reconsider." And the next thing I knew, Christopher wanted to see me, and he put the arm on me and said in effect, "Pat is doing a great job, and Mark has been doing a fine job, and everything is going better than one could have expected, but what we need to do is professionalize the bureau more, and get it more accepted, get it in the mainstream." I said, "I'll consider it, and I gave him the same demurrals. Then before I left town, I've forgotten whether it was Derian or Schneider or Christopher, told me, "Would you like to be invited by the Secretary

himself to come back from Geneva to take this job?" And I said, "I'll come." So I pulled up stakes very abruptly in Geneva and came back. It was a rocky experience.

First of all, I'd been back a few days when I was catapulted off to Bucharest for the first annual round table on human rights with the Romanians.

DAVID MICHAEL WILSON
Public Affairs Counselor, USIS
Geneva (1979-1984)

Mr. Wilson was born and raised in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and educated at Columbia University and New York University Law. Joining the USIA in 1963, he served variously as Press Officer, Information Officer and Public Affairs Counselor in a variety of posts including Abidjan, Cape Town, Ottawa, Geneva and Brussels. He also served in senior level positions with USIA in Washington, DC. Mr. Wilson was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: Today is February 16, 2001. David, you are off to Geneva in 1979.

WILSON: Correct.

Q: How long were you there?

WILSON: Five and a half years.

Q: So we are talking almost '86?

WILSON: No, '84. Because I was there for almost all of '79, '80, '81, '82, '83, through August of '84.

Q: What were you doing there then?

WILSON: I started out as the deputy public affairs counselor. I ended up as the public affairs counselor. I could have stayed longer had I wanted to. We will get into that. I was in Ottawa, and I had been trying to get a transfer out. They said, "No there is no way possible." So I had just renewed my housing lease in Ottawa in November. I got a call from Washington in December saying we need you to go to Geneva immediately. I was a little put out, because it was "no, you can't leave, you certainly can't leave mid-cycle." But they had an emergency opening. The person who had the job I was to go into had just quit, and they needed somebody because they had the arms control talks going on, and the PAO needed help. I had worked in the arms control agency, so they thought that was pretty significant, and they wanted me over there. So I pulled my family out in mid-January, and we came by New York and went to Geneva directly.

Q: Well what was the status of talks when you got there in January of 1979?

WILSON: Well the arms talks hadn't done much. They were just sort of kicking around. But there were a lot of other side talks that were going on at the UN in Geneva, particularly one dealing with UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to help the developing countries. They had a major UNCTAD meeting, and I being very enthusiastic plunged right into it the day after I got there. I was very excited; we were going to achieve something. We had the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal there. The New York Times gentleman said, "Relax, nothing is going to happen." I said, "We are on the verge of something great." We stayed up, a couple of all-nighters. It was very exciting. I started to talk to some of the colleagues around me, and one was a lady from the State Department legal office. I said, "Oh what are you doing here?" She said, "Well, we have to be around in case they reach an agreement." "Can't they just send it back to you?" "No, not really, we need to be here." So the talks went on for three or four days, crisis marathon state. Nothing happened. By the time I left, every other year these same talks went on and nothing happened. Nothing still happens, but it was exciting the first time.

Q: Well tell me, did you find, you are talking about there is a whole series of talks that were going on, people who were living or sent there by the Soviets or Americans, whoever. I mean there must have grown up sort of a Geneva culture.

WILSON: Absolutely.

Q: Could you talk a bit about it?

WILSON: Sure. The Geneva culture was if you were attending a conference, and I am going to exclude arms control for a moment. We will get back to that. If you are attending a conference, the sessions usually begin three or four o'clock in the afternoon. They break for supper, and then they go into the evening. Now there was one point a couple of years into my tour where they were doing again another one of these UNCTAD conferences to help the developing nations. The developing nations always said, if you will just take half of the budget you developed countries are spending on arms and give to us as developing nations, the world will be a safer place for democracy. These talks always went on to three or four o'clock in the morning. One day the UN interpreters, these are the ones who do the simultaneous interpretation, went to the head of the conference, the president of the conference and said, "Look, we are tired. We are not going to stay up and do interpreting past midnight." The head of the conference took great umbrage at this and said, "We don't need you." Midnight came. The interpreters went. The conference went on for about 20 minutes and it fell into total disarray like a Tower of Babel. Nobody could understand anybody else. It was humorous, it was great. Interpreters are a very important part of UN procedure, any international procedure, and they are well paid.

Q: Well what was the reason for this going on past midnight?

WILSON: It became part of the culture. They start late in the afternoon because they had been working late the preceding night so they sleep in. They get up and sort of have a late breakfast or lunch, and they begin their talks about three or four in the afternoon. That's the way it works. Not all meetings obviously, but certainly the UNCTAD meeting was that way. Some of the CCD, the

Committee on Disarmament was that way. From a working perspective it was very exciting because we always had a lot of political appointees come in to head up these various delegations from the United States perspective. It was fun to deal with them and talk with them. They would come in, the congress would begin on a Monday, they would come in on Saturday night or more likely a Sunday afternoon or Sunday morning, and they would have a big meeting on Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening and state what the U.S. position was. We all would nod and say yes, yes, yes. Then they would begin their round of meetings, and not much usually resulted from them, but they had a good time. We had a good time at least at first. There was one conference dealing with hunger. Our ambassador who was a good democratic political appointee at the time, was a guy named Bill Vanden Heuvel, who claimed he had worked with the old predecessor of the CIA. He was a good guy. A liberal Democrat, he had been a Congressman from the silk stocking district of New York. His claim to fame was to sit between Jimmy Carter and Ted Kennedy to keep them apart from each other, keep them from talking to each other. Anyway, there were two things I learned from him. I learned several things from him. One when he was talking about Mrs. Carter coming over, I think. We were discussing her coming over for whatever meeting it was going to be. We were talking about getting all the other ambassadors on board. I said, "Mr. Ambassador, what does it matter what these other countries think or do?" Then he gave me a lecture on the importance of multilateral diplomacy. It was a good lesson on how it works. But when we had the food conference, he implored the delegation that came in from Washington, I forget who headed it up, he said, "Please may I ask you all delegates stand up. Please, you are Americans. While you are at this conference, don't go to all these good restaurants in Geneva and eat yourselves sick. It doesn't look good if you are discussing food and hunger, and going to and eating at all these good restaurants." It was a good point. It was a very good point. Not that anyone would listen to him, but it was a good point.

Q: Well, what was our setup there? Were you sort of assistant and then finally PAO for all the various...

WILSON: Yes, any of the delegations that came in. The PAO could take his choice of any of the delegations that he wanted to service, and I serviced others. Sometimes we would trade off, and we would try to put out statements for the people. For the leaders of the delegations, we would try to get them interviews with the various media, not only American media but international media as well. That is what it consisted of. It was a major media operation.

Q: Well during the five years you were there, I mean did the Swiss play much of a role or were they just the hosts?

WILSON: They were the hosts, but in order to achieve our objectives with people coming in and out at airports, etc., we found it very useful to be good to the Swiss, very nice to the Swiss. The Swiss often resented foreigners, but they enjoy living off the proceeds of foreigners. So we got along with the chief of protocol and with his assistants. We made sure we worked things out with them, very important. One of the problems that we faced, of course, was the relationship between the U.S. mission to the UN in Geneva and the bilateral embassy in Bern, and the relationships between ambassadors, particularly when important figures came in. Who was to greet them? Which ambassador went out to the airplane, walked at the end of the tarmac. It was a very touchy

subject, and we learned to deal with that. The underlings kind of laughed about it, but the ambassadors took it very seriously.

Q: Well did you get together with the PAO in Bern and sort of, you know, sit there and figure out how are you going to deal with these egos?

WILSON: Yes. for example, one of the things we did was once a year, we would invite the ambassador form Bern to come and address the American club, at one of the big hotels in Geneva. That always made her feel good. But the real thrust of the problem reached a boiling point when somebody like the Secretary of State came or the Vice President came or the President came in. If the President did go through Geneva, who is the first guy to greet him, or in this case, guy or woman? Then we ran into another problem. One of the ambassadors, a democratic appointee ambassador, a guy named Marvin Warner from Ohio, I think Cincinnati, was a bachelor, as was at the time our ambassador Vanden Heuvel. They used to compete for various things, but right in the middle of all this, Ambassador Warner was stopped by the Swiss police from bringing a young woman to an official Swiss government dinner in Bern. The Swiss police told us quietly this is a known prostitute. We cannot have her coming in to sit with the President of Switzerland, etc. Warner was very indignant. He was going to make a diplomatic incident of it. I counseled our ambassador to go and talk to him. Tell Marvin Warner to call it off. He didn't, but the State Department ultimately told him to cool it, so ultimately he cooled it. When he went back, when his ambassadorship ended or he was recalled, he ended up going to jail in the United States for some fraud or some of these doings. He was not the most pleasant character to deal with, but those things happen in any situation.

Q: Of course Switzerland is considered a cozy spot to send somebody who gives money, but you don't want to put an awful lot of trust in their ability.

WILSON: Yes, in the bilateral relationship. The problem though for the ambassador in Geneva, our ambassador, is if you got an activist in there, and we had one career guy who was very activist.

Q: Who was that?

WILSON: Jerry Hellman. He wanted to follow the issues, and he knew the issues. He wanted to get involved with the delegations on all the issues. Of course the delegations coming out of Washington, you know, what the hell does this guy know? He doesn't know anything; keep him out. But he did know something. It was a major problem because our ambassador felt he had nothing to do unless he dealt with these delegations. He was just a housekeeper. Hellman really got involved. Now one of our other ambassadors, a political ambassador, a guy named Jeff Swaebe, who then went on to become ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium in Brussels, happened to have been a good friend of the President. At one point, this is a true story, the director of the Arms Control Disarmament Agency came out for some talks. In an obligatory way, he had to "brief" the sitting U.S. ambassador. He sort of went in and did it with a lick and a promise, as if to say you dumb bastard, you don't know what the hell I am talking about do you? He didn't say that obviously but that was his attitude. Well, this got back to the President, and the director of the Arms Control Agency was not long for this world as director of the Arms Control

Agency. I mean, he didn't take this ambassador seriously. That was a major mistake. He belittled him; he downgraded him, and paid the price. This guy had a lot of influence with the White House, and the reason he had influence with the White House was his property in California was contiguous with the Reagan property in California, and it was contiguous with the property of a guy named Charlie Wick. The wives used to carpool, so the wives were very close. Jeff Swaebe who had been with Florsheim shoes and then with the major department stores, he had been head of the major department stores, put together a consortium of retailers to refurbish the White House when Ronald Reagan came in. This was for the White House. This wasn't for Ronald Reagan to take home afterwards as Clinton seems to have done. So he had a certain amount of influence with President Reagan, and certainly with Charlie Wick who had a lot of influence with President Reagan. So if you came out, you had to learn very quickly that you could not just slough off the ambassador to the commission in Geneva. You couldn't just ignore him, or at least you shouldn't just ignore him.

Q: How did you find your role because with the exception of Hellman, most of your ambassadors and others were political appointees, and sort of caretaking things? I would have thought that, I mean, when you are acting as a spokesperson for the various delegations that come out, at the same time you are working for the ambassador. I would think this would get kind of tricky.

WILSON: There was another political appointee, a guy named Gerald Carmen who now runs Carmen Associates. He had a tremendously lousy personality. He had been a used car parts dealer in New Hampshire. He had helped Reagan overcome a deficit. They brought him down to Washington and made him head of the General Services Administration (GSA). After about a year and a half, I don't know how this came to his attention, but he suddenly learned that several of the wives, particularly Wayne French Smith's the attorney general and a couple of the other wives, were using government cars to go shopping and do things like this. He started to crack down on that. Apparently some people got to the White House and said, get him out of there. Get him out of the GSA. So they did, and they sent him to Geneva. He was a decent guy, he really was, but he had no personality. At one point, my offices were right down on the ground floor and he had to take the elevator, or anybody did, to get upstairs where his office is and the executive offices were. One day I was standing at the elevator when he came in and he said, "What are you doing right now? Tell me what you are working on." I told him. He said, "You know, you are damn lucky." I said, "What do you mean, Mr. Ambassador?" He said, "I don't know what I am doing. I haven't got anything to do. You are lucky to have something to do." We got off to a good relationship. He tried to get me to stay on. He wanted me to stay on past the time I was there. I had already stayed on. He said, "In your Foreign Service culture, is it true you can't leave unless I give you permission to leave?" I said, "Yes, Mr. Ambassador that is correct." He said, "Is it also true that no successor can come in unless I approve of this successor." I said, "Yes, that is correct, Mr. Ambassador." He said, "Well you tell Washington that I don't approve of your successor no matter who it is. You can't leave." So we sat back for a little while. Meanwhile, this is true. This shows you how the bureaucracy works. Charlie Wick who was then director of USIA, had then come out to Geneva. He had known me, and he wanted me to come back and break my tour six or eight months early to head up, become the first program director, for something called Worldnet, which was USIA's new innovative television service. I was a little hesitant, but he wanted me to do that. I said, "Well I have got two kids in school. I really can't pull them out." He said, "Well, they can stay in Geneva until the cycle is over." "Yes, but the housing allowance

stops and the school allowance stops. I really can't do it." They said, "Well, we will see about that." The USIA person said, "Well if Charlie Wick wants you back here, you have got to come back." Well I also discovered, there was a certain regulation at USIA that said I could not come back and get per diem on a temporary assignment in Washington if I were going to be assigned to Washington afterwards. So we went back and forth on this for awhile. Wick said he wanted me back in May to deal with a NATO 25th anniversary meeting or whatever it was, to help do that one, because I had dealt with arms control stuff, and he wanted me to deal with NATO. That's fine. I talked to the personnel people, and they said, "You know you really can't get per diem, and we really can't continue your housing in Geneva once you leave." So I remembered what the ambassador said to me, and I said, "Well you know," and by that time my successor had been named. I said, "Well you know the ambassador doesn't want to accept Chris as my replacement. Moreover he doesn't want me to leave, and he won't approve my leaving." There was dead silence on the other end. They said, "Well do you think you can convince him?" I said, "I don't know; I'll talk to him, but do you think you could find a way to keep my wife and kids here while I go back and on TDY and to pay me my full per diem while I am in Washington." Within an hour, the director of personnel called me herself and said, "We have found a way to meet all of your requests. Do you think you can get the ambassador to let you go?" Well I knew I could because he told me if I wanted to go I could. I said, "Well I will get back to you in a week." Which I did. I told them yes, I found a way to do this. The ambassador will let me go. But it is a good example of how you can deal with the bureaucracy. You need to deal with it, you need to know where you want to go, and you need to be strong in your own interpretation of regulations, and you need to have something to, not hold over their heads, but something that they want that you can provide. That worked extraordinarily well.

*Q: Well tell me, while you were there, what were the hot-bellied things that were going o*n?

WILSON: I became PAO when the USIA director fired the former PAO because he spent a lot of time on a boat, and the ambassador noticed this, that he would come in from lunch after a two or three hour lunch. The ambassador would notice this. So I presume, and I don't know for a fact, that the ambassador just called his friend, the director of USIA and said, "Just get his guy out of here." When this happened, I happened to be in Paris for a conference. I got back and the ambassador called me up and said, "Well, now that your old boss is gone," because I had not been happy with the fact that they had a USIA car. They really didn't need one, and the guy was using it to go to and from his boat. He said, "Well now that Hank is gone, what are you going to do about the car?" I said, "Well we have got the car. I can't get rid of it, Mr. Ambassador, but I will use it to go to and from work. I will not use it as my predecessor did." He said, "You know, now that you are the head honcho, you have got to learn to step back, take your hands off the operation and direct it rather than run it personally." It was a good lesson. How to learn to run an operation. Once I became head, the two things which I was most intimately and directly involved were the arms control talks, the START talks, the INF talks, and the Tokyo round of the trade talks. Those were extraordinarily significant, and it required personnel developing a good relationship with several members of each delegation, and importantly, getting the heads of the delegations to trust me. Very critical, and particularly on the arms talks, there was a lot of media around. We had maybe 15 or 20 people around each week coming in from out of town to try to deal with these issues. And it was up to me to judge the people. If I recommended that an ambassador do an interview, they would do it. If not, they wouldn't. But I had to be very careful,

because if any of the people whom I recommended broke our agreement, I would have had my head handed to me.

Q: When you say broke the agreement, what was this?

WILSON: Well, the conditions of our interview, by naming the person with whom they were speaking or by not writing the thing up properly. So this became very sensitive. I had to be involved in the negotiations, where things are going. this is when we were going to station INF missiles in Germany. This is when Willy Brandt took a toy airplane and threw it at one of his opponents in the Bundestag. We were using our Worldnet operation to reach other countries in Europe and convince them to allow the stationing of U.S. missiles on their territory. A very sensitive area. Then the START talks, which were much wider ranged and were headed by a guy named Rowny.

Q: Yes, General Ed Rowny.

WILSON: The missile talks were headed by Paul Nitze. The START talks were less imminent so they were less emphasis on this, but Rowny became jealous of Nitze. He was getting all the press attention. So Rowny wanted some press attention. But then the relationship between Rowny and Nitze deteriorated markedly. For example, and this is fact, both arms control ambassadors periodically went to Brussels to brief the NATO allies. They would fly in a military plane. Nitze was always very precise and very on time. Rowny knew that being late was anathema to Nitze. Nitze hated that. So most of the time when they flew up together, Rowny either deliberately or because of his nature would always end up at the airport late, and the plane had to wait for him. This would drive Nitze crazy. It would drive him absolutely up the walls. One of the more interesting times I had with them, and I was much closer to Nitze and the intermediate nuclear force, the INF delegation than I was to the START talks. Our ambassador to the INF talks, Paul Nitze, and the Soviet ambassador, Kvitsinsky, decided to talk a walk in the woods because I think each of them felt they really couldn't trust their own people, who may be bugging their conversations, so they decided to go for a walk in the woods, literally. When they came back from that walk in the woods, they had reached an agreement as to how we could conclude the INF talks. They really had. This was then sent back to Washington by Ambassador Nitze. I don't know how the Soviet side worked, but you have to remember on the U.S. side, it was a conglomeration of interests. You had the Arms Control Agency, in which Nitze worked. You had the White House; you had the NSC; you had the joint chiefs, and they all had their own lines of communication. Everything went back with their own spin on it. This is, of course, what Nitze wanted to avoid. He wanted to get his stuff back first. The initial reaction by a guy named Allen who was National Security Advisor to President Reagan was extremely positive. Hey, this is really a good basis for concluding agreements. What no one realized, this was in August, was that a little man over in the Pentagon, a political appointee named Richard Perle, was on vacation. He had been on vacation in France. When he came back the position in Washington changed.

Q: He was known as the prince of darkness. He hated the Soviet Union.

WILSON: Correct. So Richard Perle is on vacation in France. He likes to cook and eat. He came back and he saw this agreement. Then some of the defense contractors got to him, and after

about six or seven weeks, the agreement was scuttled. We wanted to say the Soviets scuttled it, but in fact we really did. But this really opened up a whole area for responsible journalists, what the hell is going on. This is where I earned my money, because I was able to give a few journalists, these were with one exception, someone form the BBC, I took them out and showed them where the walk took place. I got them deep background briefings with Ambassador Nitze. They helped get our position our, at least the position Nitze had negotiated. Now ultimately that particular walk in the woods agreement was rejected, and in talking to Ambassador Nitze a year or so later, he said that he had made a big mistake. I said, "What was that, Mr. Ambassador?" He said, "Well I should have realized that the agreement eliminated an entire class of weapons." Which is ultimately what happened. He said, "What I did not realize is that by eliminating an entire class of weapons, instead of saying reducing this to about 100 or so, I got all the defense contractors and the sub-contractors against the agreement. If I had left in 100 or so weapons, they would have been happy. It probably would have gone through." This is speculation after the fact, but it was a very interesting point because ultimately about four years later, the agreement was put into place almost as it was negotiated five years earlier.

Q: David, you were...

WILSON: We were talking about getting briefings, reporters briefings on this walk in the woods. We had to be very careful on whom we got the briefing for, because we recommended it. If I recommended it, Ambassador Nitze would do it. And fortunately, just by good luck, no one ever crossed us up. I was very pleased about that. You always put your neck on the line when you do those things. This worked very well. Now the other thing that developed during all the arms talks, was that I would often bring both to Ambassador Nitze and Ambassador Ryan, bring in the BBC correspondent in Geneva. Again it would be on background. But the BBC correspondent was always very well informed as to what was going on, and I got to know him. I said to him, "How do you keep up on all this?" He said, "Well, to be very frank, I get a weekly briefing from the foreign office when I am back in London." I said, "Oh that is very interesting." Then in my own mind I related this back to VOA, Voice of America being very pristine, wanting to have nothing to do with the State Department, with USIA saying we are an independent news gathering organization. Now the BBC reputation worldwide is still very sterling. VOA is much less so in spite of VOA's insistence they wanted no special briefings, no special contact, just like everyone else. The BBC on the other hand got weekly briefings from the foreign ministry on whatever subjects they needed. They didn't violate the confidence, and they still were respected as an objective international news source. A rather interesting little sidelight.

Q: I'd like to go back to the walk in the woods thing. In a way, I would think that you would be playing a very complicated game of chess in this briefing . Your knees had been cut from under you by Richard Perle. By the conservatives, the contractors.

WILSON: Yes, we didn't know precisely who. We could suspect.

Q: In a way, if you are telling the press on deep background that you really came up with what appeared to be a viable thing, and it had been shot down by forces in the United States.

WILSON: Well, we didn't say that last part.

Q: Was this left unsaid?

WILSON: It was left unsaid. We presented what the U.S. position was, and we tried to frame it is such a way that the responsibility for the breakdown of these negotiations lay with the Soviets.

Q: I mean, I assume the Soviets were doing the same thing.

WILSON: Probably, but much less effectively obviously.

Q: Yes. Did you have much chance after these meetings of getting together with the Soviet spokesperson?

WILSON: Never got together with the Soviet spokesperson. One of the people who we were very close to in all of these talks was a reporter named Strobe Talbott who was a good friend of Nitze's, extremely reliable. A couple of times when we arranged for our delegation and the Soviet delegation to take a little trip down Lake Geneva, I had to contact the Soviets, and we brought Strobe along. Strobe never broke a confidence. He was very good about that. He knew the subject. He covered the Soviet Union, covered Russia. He was very good, a very reliable person. I think he did some writing well after the fact.

Q: What about the press? Can you kind of give your feeling earned after almost five years there, not just the American press, but the other press, about how things came out, or how you dealt with them or their knowledge or whatever.

WILSON: The people who were based in Geneva for various news gathering organizations around the world were very knowledgeable in the details of whatever is going on. They would normally report back on a regular basis. The stuff they would report back on would not garner headlines. It was just stuff that would fill the back pages. Whenever a major conference was taking place, these same organizations would send in "their big guns form home base." That was always a slight problem for the locals who felt ignored or shut out. It was a problem.

Q: Would they get the stories wrong too, the big guns?

WILSON: No, not if they checked with their local guys as to what the background was. They didn't care about the details. The cared about the global impression, the big picture. They wouldn't get the stories wrong. They wouldn't necessarily have all the subtle details and the nuances. The local guys did.

Q: I would have thought particularly in some of these disarmament conferences, it would be very difficult to deal. You know, I mean we are talking about almost points of theology practically. How much throw weight, how much this, that, and things moved at a glacial pace anyway. Wasn't it hard not to say, well you heard my briefing last week, and it is the same this week or something like that?

WILSON: No, because they wouldn't report on a daily basis. They would report when something was happening. You know, the big thing with the arms talks, the arms control talks. Then you had the Committee on the Conference on Disarmament, CCD or the CD. There was the question about maneuvering. What do you do about the Chinese? How do you deal with this little issue or that little issue? That would be for a period of maybe six or eight weeks once a year. Then they would go away and they would come back and take up where they left off on the arms control side. The other side of the real interesting press work or media work was the trade talks. Most of the reporters did not want to get involved in the trade issue. Obviously the guy from the Wall Street Journal did. There were people from the New York Times that did, but the New York Times when they really got going would send in, they had a permanent person, but when they really got interested in something they would send in someone who really knew the subject to give a little more global perspective. The trade talks were very important, the Tokyo round trade talks. I learned more than I ever, I didn't know much about it to begin with, but I learned very quickly. It is my background in these trade talks for about three years that ultimately got me the PAO job at the U.S. mission to the European Community in Brussels, because I knew the players, and I knew the issues. So the trade talks were very significant, though people didn't pay much attention to them because a lot of special interests were involved, cocoa interests, lumber interests. Our delegation was always filled with people from the various special interest groups. The trade talks became more over a period of time, much more significant to what we were doing than even the nuclear talks, except the nuclear talks could save us from being killed, and trade talks save us from going broke.

Q: What about the other delegations? Particularly, I think of the French, and maybe the Germans, particularly, when you get into trade talks. The French pursue their interest much more than anyone else.

WILSON: Sure, but you mention two countries that happened to be members of the European Community at the time, and the European Community had a delegation in Geneva. Whenever they dealt with trade issues, it was the European Community spokesman, or the European Community position that was critical. Now the French and the Germans obviously made their issues known within the European Community, and they helped shape the European Community position, but their role in the actual negotiation was less significant as individual countries because of the European Community and the European Union then.

Q: Well, I would have thought particularly at that period, France was sort of the major driving force in the European Union, Germany happily letting France take the lead, but basically was fine but basically a protectionist thrust, correct me if I am wrong, in agriculture and culture.

WILSON: Agriculture was very significant for the French. Culture was not really an issue in the talks as such, except when it came in to motion pictures, and then it became...

Q: I was going to say motion pictures.

WILSON: Television became a significant issue. Agriculture is still a major issue. Nothing has been solved in that. The U.S. position in all this is not always that clear. Fortunately the U.S. delegation was always headed by someone from the U.S. Trade Representative's office. While

that is a bureaucracy, it is a very small bureaucracy, less than 200 people. You could deal with them very well. It was in this sense that you could see how over the years the State Department's position on economic affairs had become eroded. State had absolutely no, I mean they had a member as part of the delegation, but they weren't significant in any way. Commerce was even more significant than State. Agriculture was more significant than State. But USTR kept the whole thing going and the whole thing together and they did an extraordinarily good job.

Q: Well did you find, say when USTR came out, a deputy?

WILSON: They have someone there permanently, a permanent ambassador.

Q: Well you acted as spokesman for this group too?

WILSON: Yes.

Q: How did you find these various delegations and I imagine each one had again its own way of doing things and all this? I would think that as you were running around you would be switching hats and outlooks, methods of working all the time.

WILSON: Well, it required learning a new culture, a new set of terms because I really had not been steeped in trade. I did that. But, it is interesting that you should mention that because that solved sort of a State Department personnel dilemma. We had been asking, when I became PAO, to get a new deputy out. He was kind of lazy, he is kind of lazy still. He is retired. I really wanted an information officer, and I put in a request to handle some of these other talks. The deputy wasn't doing diddly. I had forgotten about it, because I was told no, there is no position available. Okay. Suddenly, I don't know the date exactly, I got a call from Washington saying, you know, your request for an information officer, we are going to fill it. I said, "No, kidding! That's great. Who is coming out?" They said, I think she was an 0-1 at the time, maybe an 0-2. They said, "Ruth van Heuven." I said, "Who? Who is she?" They said, "Well, she is a State officer, and she is in the consular section." I said, "Oh, why is she coming out to be my information officer?" They said, "Well, her husband is going to be named DCM at the mission, and we need a place for Ruth to go. She can't work for her husband in any way in the mission, so we thought she could work for you and fill that slot." I said, "Oh." I had actually known Ruth on a personal basis. Our kids had gone to the same nursery school, so I had known Ruth, and she was a very fine officer, very opinionated, but all right. In any case, I knew that the consular officer was leaving. "Why don't you assign her to the consular section?" Because the consular section in Geneva was attached not to Geneva but to the embassy in Bern. The embassy in Bern was responsible for the consular activities in the whole country. I knew that the slot was vacant. They were hemming and hawing, and they said, "Well, we have already paneled a young woman named Kay Dailey," Kate Dailey, Kay Dailey, whatever her first name was, "so she is getting that job." I said, "Well why can't you unpanel her and give the job to Ruth?" They said, "She is a very feisty young Irish girl, and she said she will take us to court if we try that. We are going to leave that one alone. Since there is this opening that you have requested, and USIA has not given us a slot, we are going to fill in with Ruth." Ruth came. She knew a lot of the people on the arms control side because her husband had been dealing with a lot of them in the State Department. She didn't like the trade talks so I let her do some of the arms control. She loved it. She was very efficient, and

she got along very well with the ambassador who at that point a guy named Jeff Swaebe. So it worked out very well until, and Ruth and I always got along well, until it came time for the efficiency rating period, the old ER period. Ruth came to me and she said, "I don't want your deputy to write the efficiency rating on me. I want you to write it on me, and I want the ambassador to review it." I could understand why she didn't want my deputy to write it because, I mean they just did not get along, understandably from her perspective. So I said, "Sure, Ruth, I'll be glad to do it." I did it and it was within her prerogative as a State officer to have the ambassador do the review, fine. So I took it up to him, and he also wanted me to write his review. I did that for him and sent them both up to him in draft. He called me up, I remember it was a Friday afternoon. He said, "This is ridiculous." I said, "What do you mean, Mr. Ambassador?" He said, "What you have written for Ruth, for you rating and what you have written for my rating is absolutely wrong. It is ridiculous. No one is that good. You cannot write stuff like this. This is the problem with the State Department. You guys are always patting each other on the back and never saying the bad things. This is crazy. I come from business. I know how things are done." He said, "I want you to take this back, and I want you to think about it over the weekend. I want to talk to you on Monday. I want you to remember I write a review of your performance too. Just remember that." Well I took it back, and I thought about it. On Monday afternoon I went up and talked to the ambassador. He said, "Well did you think it over?" I said, "Yes, I did." He said, "What is your response?" I said, "Mr. Ambassador, do you think Ruth van Heuven is doing a good job?" He said, "She is doing an excellent job." I said, "Mr. Ambassador, do you want Ruth van Heuven to get promoted?" He said, "Yes, I do." I said, "Mr. Ambassador, the rating and your review stands as I have written it. If your answer to those questions are yes, that's the way it has got to go." I left. In the end he took my rating, my writing, he took his review that I had written, and made it even more glowing, because he liked Ruth, and indeed she got promoted. It was a harrowing 48 or 72 hours, because obviously I knew she wasn't as good as you are writing, but if you want to get someone promoted, you have to.

Q: Yes. So, was there any particular incident or occasion that caused great crisis or trouble while you were there that sticks in your mind?

WILSON: No, not in the outside work, nothing that would have shaken the world. There were obviously inside things. When Ambassador Swaebe left and Ambassador Carmen came in, Ambassador Carmen did not get along with van Heuven. Ambassador Carmen did not like the way Martin van Heuven parted his hair. I am serious. He didn't like Martin walking around with a superior attitude. The Ambassador had decreed that none of his staff should do representation unless they checked with him first. This is all right; it is getting into a little everybody's knickers, but you don't usually do that. In any case, Martin van Heuven was a big Yale person. It happened that the Yale Whiffenpoofs were coming out. Martin had arranged to do a reception for them. They were coming through Europe. He failed to check this with the ambassador. There were problems.

Q: Did you find yourself playing the role...

WILSON: Oh sure in the middle of this, absolutely. Particularly since Martin's wife worked for me, I mean it was a very interesting party. I learned to be an internal diplomat very quickly.

Q: I often said in the Foreign Service that real diplomacy is done in the Department or inter-departments within the U.S. government. The outside diplomacy you know where people stand, and you really don't have that much maneuvering room, but...

WILSON: That's right. But I had known Martin from back here, and I had known Ruth, and the ambassador liked me. I was literally in the middle. I think I helped out, although Martin didn't get the representation money for his Whiffenpoofs. At least he wasn't kicked out immediately. But the other thing was when they were, Ambassador Swaebe when he picked Martin van Heuven, the DCM slot was open, he was sent five files from the Department for potential DCM's. We sat up in the bubble and we discussed them. The senior State Department guy was there and was telling the ambassador about this one or that one. The ambassador finally with a big smile on his face, this was in the bubble said, "Now come on Jack, I have read all this. You can't distinguish between them. Everyone is great. You cannot tell me that one is better than the other. The only way you could really make a distinction here is from corridor reputation. I don't want your goddamn fake pile of bullshit. I want to know who is good and who is not good from corridor reputation." He was right; he was absolutely correct. Jack hemmed and hawed and he ended up with Martin.

Q: Well then, you left in '84, and you went to where?

WILSON: I came back to Washington.

JOHN J. HARTER
Delegate, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
Geneva (1981-1983)

John J. Harter was born in Texas in 1926. Harter served in the US Air Force during WWII before graduating from the University of Southern California and joining the Foreign Service. Overseas, Harter served in South Africa, Chile, Thailand and Switzerland. He also worked in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, for USIA and after retirement on Oral Histories. Harter was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1997.

Q: You were in Geneva until?

HARTER: From July 1981 until September 1983.

Q: Had anything changed since you were in Geneva in the late 1960s?

HARTER: The most conspicuous change was a dramatic hike in the Swiss franc/U.S. dollar exchange rate - from four to one in the late 1960s to about two to one by the early 1980s. There had been virtually no inflation in Switzerland, and U.S. dollars therefore stretched about half as far in the Swiss market as they did earlier. We received a slight cost-of-living allowance, but not

enough to compensate for the huge difference in the exchange rate. Otherwise, I saw relatively little change in Geneva or in Switzerland.

Q: How about UNCTAD?

HARTER: It was almost the same as before.

Q: It was still the United States against the G-77?

HARTER: Yes, but again, as in my earlier assignments to Chile, IO, and Geneva, it was almost as though I held two different positions in sequence. The first year was challenging and rewarding, but the second year was not a happy experience, largely because of several personnel changes. Gerald Helman was our Ambassador in Geneva when I arrived. That was his first and only tour as an Ambassador, but he was a first-rate career diplomat. Having been the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in IO just before he came to Geneva, he was thoroughly familiar with the United Nations. He had little interest in administrative detail, so he chose Don Eller as his DCM. Don had been the IO Executive Director, and his entire background was in administration. Gerry Helman and Don Eller had a wholesome and mutually supportive relationship that nourished a comfortable milieu for the Mission.

Q: How did you find Helman as an Ambassador?

HARTER: I was impressed with his comprehensive grasp of the Mission's entire output, complex and technical as it was. He read every cable into and out of that Mission. He was in his office by 7:00 o'clock every morning and he usually left about 7:30 in the evening unless he had an evening engagement, in which case he sometimes returned to his office after the event. Early every morning he began telephoning Mission Officers to clarify something or other. I was usually there early in the morning, and I received a number of those calls. Some people thought he was too preoccupied with detail, but I personally welcomed his interest. Also during that first year, our UNCTAD duties were imaginatively backstopped from Washington. The Deputy Assistant Secretary in IO with overall responsibility for UN economic and social matters was Marion Creekmore, who has been the senior international affairs advisor at the Jimmy Carter Center in Atlanta since he retired from the Foreign Service. Marion had a sophisticated perspective on UNCTAD, as did Gordon Brown, his officer-in-charge of the unit that backstopped our UNCTAD programs.

Q: I've interviewed Gordon Brown.

HARTER: Marion and Gordon approved my assignment to Geneva, by the way, and they briefed me thoroughly before I left Washington.

Q: Who were the principal State Department officers directly responsible for UNCTAD affairs?

HARTER: During that first year it was Chuck Meissner, representing the Economic Bureau, and Vickie Huddleston in IO. Chuck headed U.S. delegations to the principal UNCTAD meetings that first year. I met him at UNCTAD-V in Manila in 1979. He was fully attuned to the technical

and political intricacies of North-South economic relations, and he was a skilled negotiator. Tragically, Chuck died at an early age in the plane that crashed in the Balkan Peninsula with Ron Brown in 1995. Vickie Huddleston was, in effect, the UNCTAD desk officer in Washington.

Q: I know her husband, Bob Huddleston.

HARTER: Vickie was wonderful! She was patient, bright, endlessly energetic, and she always sent us timely and realistic instructions. Unfortunately, all that changed during my second year in Geneva. Less experienced and less perceptive individuals replaced all of the key players. Geoffrey Swaebe succeeded Gerry Helman. He was conscientious, but his background was utterly irrelevant to our responsibilities in Geneva. He had no previous association with the State Department or foreign affairs or the United Nations. He was in his 70s, but he seemed older. He had been a salesman for Florsheim shoes and a senior executive for the May Company. He received his Ambassadorial appointment solely because he supported Reagan's gubernatorial campaigns and 1980 presidential campaign as a fundraiser. Swaebe chose Marten Van Heuven as his DCM to replace Don Eller. I knew Marten when I was in IO and he was in the Legal Advisor's Office. He was originally Dutch, and he spoke several languages fluently.

Q: There were other personnel changes?

HARTER: Yes. Chuck Meissner's position in the Economic Bureau was abolished, and its UNCTAD-related functions were absorbed by Gordon Streeb, who replaced Marion Creekmore in IO. Gordon took a very hard line in UNCTAD. About the same time Vickie Huddleston and Gordon Brown were succeeded by individuals who shared Gordon's aggressive approach to UNCTAD.

Q: That was just as the Reagan Administration came in.

HARTER: That's right. And in 1981 Paul Volcker at the Fed pushed interest rates up sharply. That brought inflation in the United States under control, but it also accentuated a global recession, which significantly dampened U.S. imports from developing countries, contributing to a severe downturn in their economies. And they blamed the United States for that! Chuck Meissner understood those interrelationships, but most Americans who attended UNCTAD meetings in the early 1980s did not appreciate the implications for our UNCTAD agenda.

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[Begin September 8, 1997 session]

Q: Just what did your job involve?

HARTER: It was a non-stop operation from January through December, from early morning until evening, almost every day, including many weekends. Other Mission officers enjoyed occasional free days, uncluttered weekends, and all American and Swiss holidays. I didn't, because UNCTAD scheduled back-to-back meetings throughout the year, except for August, when most Europeans take their vacations. The ongoing program centered on UNCTAD

committees - shipping, commodities, financial flows, trade in manufactured goods, transfer of technology, economic cooperation among developing countries, insurance, and a few others. Each committee functioned independently of the others, and there was little coordination among them, either within the Secretariat or within governments. The UNCTAD Trade and Development Board met once or twice a year, ostensibly to review, coordinate, and approve the programs of the committees, but in practice its overall guidance was minimal.

Q: What happened when those committees met?

HARTER: In each committee the G-77 sought to devise some means of accelerating the flow of real resources from industrial countries to developing countries. Take the commodity agreements for coffee, cocoa, tin, and rubber, for example: Group B was generally willing to accept them when they were structured to stabilize prices around world trends, but the G-77 wanted to peg commodity prices at artificially high levels that would effectively require importers to subsidize commodity exports. One problem with that was that high commodity prices encouraged consumer shifts to substitutes. In practice, it was hard to find a compromise formula acceptable to both sides, and the meetings often ended in impasse.

Q: Who represented Washington at those UNCTAD meetings?

HARTER: During that first year, Chuck Meissner and Vickie Huddleston headed our delegations to the Trade and Development Board. Gordon Streeb inherited that chore the second year. A different inter-agency group came out for each committee meeting.

Q: How long did those meetings last?

HARTER: Each committee was normally scheduled to meet for two weeks, but invariably, around midnight of the second Friday, the Committee would decide - as we expected - to "stop the clock" and meet again on Saturday. More often than not, the proceedings spilled over into Sunday. After our delegations left Geneva, I usually wrote the reporting cables and our Mission transmitted them to Washington Monday morning.

Q: What has been the long-term impact of UNCTAD?

HARTER: That's a good question! UNCTAD history has not been positive overall, but one should see this in historical context. Prebisch envisaged UNCTAD as filling a vacuum left when the International Trade Organization failed in 1947. GATT was the phoenix that rose from those ashes, but GATT was only a partial substitute for the ITO, which would have had a more universal membership and a more ambitious agenda. The new WTO is more than GATT, but not quite what the ITO would have been. UNCTAD has dealt with bits and pieces of the world economy, but UNCTAD discussions lack balance. Like an adversary legal system, they tend to argue in terms of black versus white, with a view to identifying the "guilty" party, rather than seeking compromise in shades of gray.

Remember, before World War I, several European empires dominated their colonies in Asia and Africa, and by the 1960s those formerly dependent territories were politically sovereign, even

though they lacked the institutions, traditions, and resources of modern states. This posed enormous challenges to the international community, but its responses were distorted by the Cold War. Neither Group B nor the G-77 took into account the causes and consequences of decolonization during the Cold War.

Q: Wasn't the United Nations established to solve those problems?

HARTER: That's debatable! Its overriding mandate was to maintain the peace, a mission that was derailed by the Cold War. The Second Committee of the General Assembly more or less reviews international economic developments, but it isn't a viable forum for analyzing interconnections between trade policies, foreign exchange rate fluctuations, and foreign aid flows, for example. Delegates to the San Francisco Conference intended for ECOSOC to oversee and coordinate the programs and activities of international agencies concerned with economic and social developments, but ECOSOC hasn't proved to be a potent instrument. In fact, it has no authority over trade, money, and aid. The World Bank finances major development projects, the IMF more or less monitors exchange rates and balance of payments shortfalls of individual governments, and GATT/WTO facilitates international trade negotiations. Those agencies are beyond the reach of the ECOSOC and other organs of the UN.

Q: Did Prebisch think UNCTAD could fill that vacuum?

HARTER: More or less. Prebisch and the G-77 attempted to secure a very broad mandate for UNCTAD from the beginning. During the months following its initial conference in 1964, a major bureaucratic battle ensued in the U.S. Department of State between the Economic Bureau headed by Phil Trezise, and IO, represented by Dick Gardner, regarding the precise role UNCTAD would play. As I understand it, Gardner thought UNCTAD should be a decision-making body, while Trezise insisted that it could only make ***recommendations*** - which the United States and Group B could block in the other organs of the UN system. In the end, Trezise prevailed. UNCTAD's power has been limited, and UNCTAD debates have been polarized and shrill. The stereotypical image in the minds of many was that the G-77 was a tribe of whiners making unreasonable demands, while the U.S. obsession with containing communism limited our strategies for coping with the Third World. UNCTAD fora have therefore been the scene of endless wars of words in which neither side really heard the other. Nevertheless, UNCTAD may have helped, over time, to raise public awareness on both sides that global economic development is a complex and necessary phenomenon that warrants much more attention from governments than it received during the Cold War.

MELVILLE BLAKE
Delegate, US Delegation to International Telecommunications
Geneva (1983)

Melville Blake was born in Lexington, Mississippi in 1924. He attended Mississippi State College. He joined the army and served for four years and then attended Georgetown University where he studied in the school of Foreign

Service. Following his graduation he worked as an editor in the CIA for a year and then went to Germany. Mr. Blake was interview by Thomas Dunnigan in 1999.

BLAKE: I did that for about four or five months. Then, I was asked to be foreign policy adviser on the U.S. delegation to Geneva on an International Telecommunications Union negotiation, or rather, the western hemisphere region thereof. This was a satellite communications negotiation, which markedly expanded the number of channels that are available for all of the western hemisphere countries. The negotiations lasted some six weeks and were successful. The communications adviser to the Under Secretary reckoned the financial benefit to the United States at $20 billion.

Q: At that time, you were working out of Washington.

BLAKE: Yes. At that time, I was working for Diana Lady Dugan, who was a special assistant to the Under Secretary for Technology handling international telecommunications affairs.

RONALD D. FLACK
Political Counselor, European Office of the United Nations
Geneva (1983-1984)

Ronald D. Flack was born in Minnesota in 1934. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota he served in the US Army from 1957-1960. His career has included positions in Athens, Manila, Abidjan, Paris, Algiers, Geneva, and Copenhagen. Mr. Flack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 7, 1998.

Q: Fascinating. You left the management in 1983 and where did you go then?

FLACK: I was assigned as political counselor to the U.S. Mission to the UN and International Organizations in Geneva.

Q: You did that from when to when?

FLACK: I did that for one year actually, 1983-84. I was political counselor there and we had an ambassador, a very nice gentleman, Geoffrey Swaebe, who was later ambassador to Belgium, a political appointee, a friend of President Reagan's. He was there for about a year, as I recall, and left and the deputy permanent representative was Marten van Heuven. A new ambassador came in, a political appointee, who was an extraordinarily difficult man. He fired Marten a month or so after he arrived. It was one of these situations where Marten, who is an extraordinarily talented, highly professional officer, was basically trying to run the mission when this totally inexperienced and very unprofessional political appointee came in. The ambassador did not like the fact that there was somebody working under him who knew what he was doing when he didn't know what he was doing. So, he said he wanted Marten out of there and didn't want a

DCM. I was political counselor so basically I became the DCM in terms of work. The Department kept on pressing the ambassador to select a deputy. After several months and talking to a number of people he finally told them he wanted Ron Flack to be his deputy. So they assigned me to the job and brought in another political counselor. So, for two years, 1984-86, I was the deputy permanent representative in Geneva and then the ambassador resigned and I was the permanent representative in charge of the mission for a year before another ambassador came in.

Q: So, you were really there from 1983 to 1987.

FLACK: Yes, I was there for four years in three different positions, political counselor, deputy permanent representative and then acting permanent representative. That was the time when there was an awful lot going on in both the international organization and UN area and in the negotiations with the Soviets which was going on in Geneva, they were reestablished there. We had the first Reagan/Gorbachev summit there in 1985 and I was the Geneva coordinator for it. It was an extraordinarily busy time and a ry important time. It was probably one of the most interesting assignments that I had in the Foreign Service in terms of getting a feeling that I was really participating in and contributing to a major world event.

Q: The office was called what and when you arrived in 1983 what was its program?

FLACK: The United Nations has its headquarters in New York but its European headquarters are in Geneva. Also in Geneva are many of international organizations, like the ILO, WHO, etc., 22 of them, that are part of the international organization system of the United Nations. So, the main UN headquarters is in New York, but also of great importance is the U.S. mission to the European headquarters of the UN in Geneva and to the international organizations that are there. We were dealing not only with the UN activities that were in Geneva, such as ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) meeting in the summer and the Human Rights Commission meeting in the winter, but with the activities of international organizations. We had in the mission attachés for the various international organizations. There was the telecommunications attaché, a health attaché, a labor attaché, working with the ILO, ITU, etc. on a daily basis. The U.S. government has contact on a daily basis with all of these organizations. They had their meetings and conferences so delegations from Washington were constantly coming through. One of the offices in the mission was simply a conference office. We had an officer, two secretaries and a staff of national employees who were doing nothing but handling the visiting delegations to conferences. There was another office with two officers and a couple of national employees who were doing nothing but following the applications of U.S. citizens for work in the UN system and helping them. These offices, which were very, very useful, are now all gone because of the downsizing of the Department.

So, there was the UN side, the international organization side, then we had attached to the mission the U.S. negotiations team (with the Soviets), Ambassador Kampelman and his staff. At one point I remember I had 13 ambassadors living in Geneva. A lot of them, like Kampelman, would come and have a round of talks with the Soviets and would be there for perhaps two months, return to Washington for two months and then back to Geneva, etc. Back then there was the GATT, which now is the World Trade Organization, and we had the ambassador to the

GATT and his staff, which was located in part of the mission properties, and also the U.S. ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament (CD). So, all in all, it was a very big operation.

Q: What were you dealing with the first year you were in Geneva as political counselor?

FLACK: The political counselor at that point was supervising the specialized attachés, for example, the labor attaché, the health attaché, the telecommunications attaché. We had a number of officers there, like the human rights officer, who was reporting to the political counselor. So, the political counselor was kind of a general purpose officer who was a supervising officer and was not responsible for any bilateral or multilateral political activity, because the bilateral activity was handled in Bern. But the Swiss government does have a mission in Geneva dealing with its relations with the UN, even though they are not a member of the UN, so the political counselor was responsible for the relationships with the Swiss office there as well as the Geneva authorities.

Q: You had all these people working for other outfits and they had masters back in Washington, how did you handle these relations?

FLACK: This was one of the most difficult things about this mission. Many of these officers were Foreign Service officers. The labor and telecommunications officers were Foreign Service. We had a Foreign Service officer as counselor for refugee affairs, the UNHCR, the UN refugee organization, was in Geneva, and he had a rather large office and an enormous amount of money went through his office. So, the problem was trying to keep it all together, I discovered this when I was deputy permanent representative, because you had these offices who were off doing their own thing and reporting back to their own agencies back in Washington and the ambassador and I were trying to make sense of it all and keep it at least coordinated so everyone knew what the other guy was doing so that we weren't going off into totally different directions. But, it was very, very difficult to do because they did have their own agendas, they did have their people to report to back in Washington. If the counselor for refugee affairs had an issue with the assistant secretary for refugee affairs back in Washington it was an issue often that had very little to do with Geneva and the mission. It might have to do with some refugee camp in Thailand. It was hard to keep this group together. The weekly staff meetings were very difficult to handle because no one was really very interested in what the other guy was doing because it was so totally removed from what they were doing. It was no common thread of a bilateral relationship.

Q: Was anybody back in Washington trying to coordinate these things?

FLACK: IO, the Office for International Organizations, of course, is the home base for the mission and if anyone was doing this it would be the assistant secretary. While I was in Geneva we had two unusual assistant secretaries. The second one was Alan Keyes who is now running for president, and he came to Geneva many times and I got into a rather nasty fight with him over administrative issues after the ambassador left and I was in charge. The assistant secretary before Keyes was a very young man, a political appointee right out of the White House, who had no experience whatsoever. The White House just really wanted to find him a job and didn't think IO was an important one. It was said that the Reagan administration was purposely downgrading 10 by putting a young, inexperienced political appointee there.

Q: He was the one, I think, who was renown for calling staff meetings and giving long expositions to which everybody would kind of look up at the ceiling and wait until it was over because he didn't have very much to say. There wasn't much respect for him.

FLACK: That is true. He was what you would call a real light weight. But, that was done on purpose by the White House because at that time they didn't think multilateral affairs were something of great priority.

JOAN M. PLAISTED
US Trade Representative
Geneva (1983-1985)

Ambassador Joan M. Plaisted was born in 1958 in Minnesota. She attended America University and received both her Bachelor's and Master's Degree. Her postings abroad include Paris, Hong Kong, Geneva, Rabat and Marshall Island as Ambassador. Ambassador Plaisted was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: Well then in '83 you finally had to move on. Whither?

PLAISTED: Yes, in '83 I was offered a position with USTR because I had gotten to know Ambassador Mike Smith quite well through 48 hours straight of negotiating textile agreements. He offered me a job in Geneva. In fact he used to call me up from Washington at two or three o'clock in the morning in Hong Kong and give me instructions on what I was going to negotiate with Hong Kong. I said, "Mike, it is two A.M. I am not working." He said, "When you work for USTR, you work for USTR 24 hours a day." I said, "Mike, I work for the State Department. I don't work for USTR." He said, "You will." He was very persuasive, so he convinced me to work for USTR in Geneva as a trade negotiator from '83-'85. USTR stands for the Office of the United States Trade Representative. It is a White House office with a very small but important office in Geneva. Here the main function is to handle all the negotiations in what today is the World Trade Organization, the WTO. In my day it was called the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the GATT. We had some responsibilities in the United Nations Office - in the UNCTAD - the UN Conference on Trade and Development. I was the UNCTAD negotiator. I don't know if that was a blessing or not, but I handled this portfolio when I was with USTR. I did the developing countries' portfolios in the GATT and UNCTAD. I did all the commodity negotiations in UNCTAD. I may not always have been the main negotiator, but I was the one in USTR who oversaw and was involved in all the commodity negotiations in UNCTAD.

Q: What is commodity?

PLAISTED: Commodities, these are talks on just a whole host of products from jute to tropical timber. There is a lead and zinc study group, a coffee agreement, work on nickel. I was also in charge of the meetings in the GATT for the MTN codes on import licensing and civil aircraft.

Probably the most important thing I did, the legacy I left, was to help launch the work on services in the GATT so we could move forward and have trade negotiations on services. This became a more important area for the U.S. It is insurance, banking, shipping, an increasingly important segment of our trade in addition to the traditional export goods. I came up with a plan on how we could get service talks launched in the GATT which eventually led to a successful agreement in the WTO on services that took many years to negotiate.

Q: How were things constituted in Geneva? How did you operate? Would there be different subjects that would come up or was it an ongoing move from one thing to another?

PLAISTED: It was a very heavy demanding meeting schedule in the GATT. There were constant meetings of these different committees on civil aircraft and import licensing. There would be meetings or negotiations on commodities in the UNCTAD. I think I handled more meetings than most of my counterparts. I had a more diverse group of subjects to cover. Sometimes I would have overlapping meetings and be jumping in my car going from one meeting to another in the GATT and the UNCTAD. Sometimes I had to call for the help of a colleague since I couldn't physically be in two places at once. It was a very hectic meeting schedule. Of course you had to get your instructions from Washington for each meeting. The issues were often very technical, and I had to become an overnight expert on some of these topics. I made a big mistake when I first arrived in Geneva. I went directly to the office. The phone rang and I picked it up. Someone asked, “Who is going to represent the U.S. tomorrow on tropical timber?” I sure didn't know, I said, but let me find out. I will get back to you. I went and asked my boss. He said, "Oh I forgot about that. You better represent us." I said, "What's tropical timber?" He replied, "I don't know much about it. Go look in the files." I stayed up most of the night and became an overnight expert to the extent one can to prepare for the meetings the next day. To give you a little idea of the atmospherics, there was often a problem of obtaining cleared inter-agency instructions from Washington for these meetings. I have the highest respect for my colleagues at USTR. Of all the government agencies I have worked with, USTR is the most efficient little organization. But there often would be problems in getting cleared instructions. They would call me at home from Washington the night before the negotiations and start trying to give me instructions over the phone which isn't exactly what you want when you are speaking over the microphone the next day for the U.S. government. So that could be a problem. I have seen our ambassador, Peter Murphy, at one point receive his written instructions about five minutes before the meeting started. I was walking across the street to the GATT with him as he was reading his instructions. He read them, folded them up, and put them in the trash can on the street and walked into the meeting. Now I never went quite that far in treating my last minute instructions that way, but that is often when we got our instructions because of the interagency coordination problems back in Washington. Colleges offer courses on “How to Negotiate.” I always chuckle wondering if they only knew how it sometimes really happens.

Q: Well, the other delegations since it was such a varied thing must be having somewhat the same problem. In other words you didn't find a tropical timber group of experts arriving and sitting there and negotiating for Singaporeans or did you?

PLAISTED: It could be an issue for other delegations too. Do you or do you not bring in the experts from capitals? It depended on how important the meeting was. It depended on our budget

limitations. Sometimes these commodities were the absolute lifeblood to these countries, so their delegates knew all the arguments quite well. I was often learning just as much as I possibly could in a very quick period of time. There were delegates who knew these subjects cold, and who had been in their positions for years and years. In the U.S. we shift our people, so by the time I became an expert two years later, I was off to my next assignment.

Q: Well I would imagine there would be a time when you would be finding yourself in a group talking about left handed widgets or something when somebody would say does anybody here know what we are talking about?

PLAISTED: If we didn't know, I would quickly figure out what it was or find somebody to explain it to me because you had to know these commodities. I also, this is a little more on the atmospherics, noticed an incredible difference in U.S. administrations. It was so much easier to represent the U.S. in some of these meetings when Reagan became president as opposed to the Carter administration. I think back to why it should have made such a difference in these meetings in the UNCTAD. It was just very clear to me and probably to the other countries what our position was under President Reagan in many of these commodity negotiations. It became more of a negative position, more of a no, we are not about to agree to anything like a compensatory financing facility for commodities. If I didn't receive instructions from Washington, I still had a pretty good idea of what the U.S. position was. Almost overnight under Reagan, it became much clearer to me just what our U.S. government position would be.

Q: I would think under Carter with Andy Young in the U.S., somebody could say, poor little us and big you, can't you give us a chance, so our positions were a little bit loose.

PLAISTED: A little more nuanced, for example, on the compensatory financing facility.

Q: Which means what?

PLAISTED: Explaining it very simply, if developing countries had a down year in coffee or jute, the countries aren't able to produce that much, or the world market price had fallen for these commodities, developing countries would be able to make it up through dipping into this fund to subsidize their economies that year. I was quoted in the Financial Times as being very tough, with the U.S. taking a very critical attitude on these commodity pacts.

Q: You know looking at our trade, we often take a stand we are opposed to subsidies, and yet we in one way or another subsidize a lot of our products, don't we?

PLAISTED: Yes, particularly in agriculture. We could argue that the EC does this to a larger extent. It always made it quite a challenge. How can you liberalize trade dealing in a world of subsidies? One of the issues I was working on, it was one of the few trade liberalization agreements in those days, was to reach agreement on expanding the duty free treatment of aircraft parts under the MTN code on civil aircraft. It was one of the few concrete trade liberalization actions the U.S. was able to take at that time. This was an area where countries were certainly subsidizing their aircraft exports.

Q: What role was the EC playing? What was it called? It keeps changing names. It is the European Union, but was it the EC at that time?

PLAISTED: The European Economic Community, the EEC.

Q: Were they acting as one or did they sort of split off?

PLAISTED: It's a good question how they negotiated in those days. In the GATT there was an EEC spokesperson. It was based on a six month rotation among EEC countries. Whoever was in the chair for the EEC for that period of time would be the spokesperson. Then if other countries wanted to say something individually after the EEC spokesperson spoke, they could. Britain would speak as Britain if they wanted to, or the French ambassador would pipe up if he had something to add after the EEC spokesperson had made the opening remarks.

Q: Did the Soviets play any role at this time?

PLAISTED: They weren't in the GATT. They were very much in the UNCTAD. They would play quite a negative role at times. They would really take me on. Most of the time we would just ignore the Soviets because they were ranting and raving over something polemic and I wouldn't take them on. I remember one day, the Russian ambassador took on the U.S. in a most outrageous manner and I was representing the U.S. I absolutely had to go charging back at the Russian ambassador. It became well-known within the Geneva community. Everyone came up to me and said great. We are pleased to see the U.S. challenge the Russians who were getting a little out of hand every once in awhile in the UNCTAD. The Russians are still looking at how to join the WTO today. Talking about the different delegations in the GATT, it was always something of a gentlemen's club. The draft minutes of the meetings that were held would be sent to you, so you could double check your remarks. The minutes were usually quite accurate, but were not perhaps what you should have said based on the instructions you had received from your capital. You could adjust what you said for the recorded record.

Q: Just like an oral history when they get back.

PLAISTED: The GATT secretariat would send the draft minutes to me for correction. As I said, they were always quite accurate with the exception of one thing I would object to, I would call them back and say, "Excuse me, you may not have noticed, but I am a she. You always have me down as he said, and he, he, he. Please note I am a she." "Oh, we can't. We know you are a she, but we can't. You have to be a he in our minutes." I said, "Why do I have to be a he in your minutes?" He said, "Because we have a policy of non-identification of countries, and if we said she, everyone would know it was the U.S. because you are the only female." So I literally went into the minutes as having had a sex change operation. It was a problem to be a female representing the U.S. in terms of the GATT minutes and their non-identification of countries policy.

Q: What was the social life there? I am talking about among the delegates. I mean was this the sort of thing where you were fighting hammer and nails and then go out to a restaurant and chat, or did you go your own way? Were you too busy to socialize?

PLAISTED: At that time we would socialize informally. I remember doing a lot of work around the coffee bar at the UNCTAD. They had a great coffee bar. It was probably the best coffee in Geneva. On a clear day, which wasn't very often, you had a spectacular view of Mont Blanc. I would usually go a little before the meeting and pick up what I could hanging around the coffee bar. I would talk to my friends and colleagues to see what they were picking up. Again I would pick up some information on the dinner circuit. It was always very useful to speak French. The French would sometimes note that French was an official language of the UN and insist on working off French texts. It was very useful to have French and be able to negotiate in French, using the "tu" form with the French speaking delegates.

Q: How did you find the role of the French in these negotiations?

PLAISTED: I think in general they were playing a fairly positive role in the negotiations although they weren't the most active country. In some of the commodity negotiations the French would get very actively involved, defending the interests of some of the African countries where these were the major exports of their former colonies. Of course the French were very interested in what went on in aircraft. They were quite active as you can imagine in the aircraft area. It depended to some extent on the meetings we were in.

Q: Well, did you have delegates coming, essentially industry spokespeople coming over to act as delegates on some of these issues from the States?

PLAISTED: Yes, depending on the meeting. We would definitely have U.S. experts come if it was a major commodity negotiation. Some of the commodity negotiations were based in London, but most of the work would take place in Geneva. It was always a question if it was something I could handle, or if we should bring in the real experts from Washington. When we would bring in the real experts, I was often still be the head of delegation, so I was keeping a close eye on what was happening in all the negotiations.

Q: I think it would always be a problem if you brought in somebody who was an expert in something. They are fine, but they really don't understand the dynamics of the conference and how to get things done. It is not just speaking your piece, but how to work it. I imagine you would have to be the watchdog or something to keep them in line and be effective.

PLAISTED: Depending on who it was. I found that most of the delegates I worked with were real professionals. Many of them had been working on say tin for the last ten years and knew this better than I was ever going to know it. They knew their counterparts in all the delegations because they had been in negotiations for the last ten years together, and they had been together in the meeting in Malaysia, and they had been out to dinner together quite often. They were often informing me of what was going on behind the scenes because they had developed the personal relationships with these people for many years and were giving me some of the inner dynamics of what was happening in the other delegations and where the conference may eventually come out. I was always looking at it from the U.S. policy perspective.

Q: I assume the Canadians are part of this structure.

PLAISTED: Yes.

Q: Because often I have been told by people who have dealt with Canada they are very difficult, not difficult but hard negotiators. Did you find this to be true or in this particular milieu perhaps it didn't many any difference?

PLAISTED: I didn't find them particularly hard negotiators. Particularly in the GATT, their position was almost always very similar to the U.S. position. The Japanese when they would become engaged could sometimes be more difficult in negotiations. I have worked at the U.S. mission to the UN in New York three times now. I have represented the U.S. at the OECD and the UNCTAD. The Japanese had the most difficulty in dealing with me as a woman. I remember once we were very engaged in tropical timber negotiations. The Japanese wanted the headquarters to be in Japan. Eventually they got their wish, but at one point the U.S. instructions were that we not agree to this. As a courtesy, before I took the microphone to announce the U.S.' formal position, I went over to tell the Japanese delegation informally about our negative position. It was a fairly high level delegation, and I explained to their all male representatives the position the U.S. planned to take and why we were taking it at that time. They all sort of looked at me, and they all started bowing in unison.

Q: Putting their heads together.

PLAISTED: ...and said, "It is too bad your position is not as beautiful as you are." One of my great moments in diplomacy, the Japanese bowing and saying it is too bad your position isn't as beautiful as you are. They later succeeded in getting the U.S. position reversed.

Q: As if you could go back and say I would like to change our position as a personal favor.

PLAISTED: One of the things that was very important in the future negotiations that we were trying to line up on the new round, what became today the World Trade Organization, was to try and move forward with work on services in the GATT. The developing countries were having none of it. They were blocking the U.S. and the Europeans, the developed countries, from moving forward. Services were very important to us. Our exports of services were increasing. The developing countries were doing very little in services, they were very suspicious of the developed countries, and they just wouldn't agree to move forward. Part of the problem was one of our top U.S. negotiators, for whom I have the highest respect, did not want any work to go forward on services in UNCTAD. The developing countries considered UNCTAD as their organization, and it was. They really trusted that organization. I became convinced that if we were ever going to move forward on services in a new round of negotiations in the GATT, we had to let the developing countries do some preparatory work in the UNCTAD. It probably wasn't going to hurt us too much. It was going to hurt us a lot if they would never agree to allowing work on services to move forward in the GATT/WTO. We were never going to get what we ultimately wanted. So I came up with a strategy of how to turn Washington around to get Washington to stop blocking work in the UNCTAD so we could move forward with the negotiations. During a well-timed business trip back to Washington, I got some of my colleagues on board, and then we all took on the main opponent in the U.S. government. Plus, I sent in a

cable outlining a strategy on how we could move forward on services in the GATT/WTO by approving work in UNCTAD, and eventually got the top negotiator to change his position. Once the developing countries were able to start studying the issue, I think they started to realize that this really is an area of the future not just for the developed countries but for the developing countries, too. We were able to move forward with what today has become one of the major agreements in the World Trade Organization.

Q: Was third world debt at all an issue while you were there? Was this becoming a concern?

PLAISTED: All the third world issues were discussed in general, particularly in UNCTAD and to some degree in the developing country forum in the GATT, but we really didn't get into debt negotiations per se. Those were taking place in Paris, where the Paris Club was the real forum for developing country debt issues. Any rescheduling of the debt was taking place in the Paris Club.

Q: Did you ever get out and sort of have a busman's holiday and go off and see tropical timber and anything like that? I mean were these things all sort of paper things that you were learning about.

PLAISTED: Unfortunately the U.S. government never sent me to a coffee plantation; they never sent me on a tropical vacation to go look at tropical timber. They never sent me to some Club Med that had jute growing outside of it. No. So it was more theoretical. But I think our real experts on these commodities actually set foot on plantations at some point.

Q: Well, I think this probably is a good place to stop. Is there anything else on the UNCTAD that you would like to cover.

PLAISTED: I would just add in general I had a reputation at UNCTAD of being the iron lady of UNCTAD - always fighting so vociferously for the U.S. positions in UNCTAD. One of our meetings was going on endlessly. I raised the U.S. position and tried to get some support. Nobody was on board, particularly not the Scandinavian countries. They pounced all over the U.S. position. The dialogue went on for another two hours without any conclusion. I slightly rephrased the U.S. position, slipped it in again, and made it a proposal. It was essentially the same proposal of two hours earlier, with a slightly different nuance to it. This time I got everyone to support it. They had been sleeping for those two hours. Perhaps I deserved being known as the iron lady of UNCTAD.

Q: I was thinking, the level of threshold of patience or boredom or something like that must really come into play. You must have people where you know exactly what they are going to say and when they are going to say it ad nauseam. I mean, this must be quite something to keep you going.

PLAISTED: Yes, these were the days before UNCTAD was reformed which it has supposedly been now. Our meetings would literally last around the clock. I spent many a Friday night at UNCTAD until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. There was something of a slogan at that time about what UNCTAD stood for, “under no circumstances take any decision.” Another slogan was “A

day in UNCTAD lost is a day in UNCTAD gained." You had to pay attention to what other delegations were saying even if you knew what they were going to say. You would get just awfully bored. I remember sitting there and just wishing that some day I would see a punk diplomat, not just everyone dressed in three piece suits. I wanted to see a diplomat with a mohawk with a green stripe in his hair and a ring in his nose. Now I do sometimes see in the British foreign office someone with a facial ornament, but I would pass my nights in Geneva just dreaming of my becoming the first punk diplomat.

Q: Why don't we stop here, and we'll pick this up in '85? Where did you go?

PLAISTED: All right. I go to China. I was on the China desk in Washington from '85-'87. Then I attended the National War College.

BEAUVEAU B. NALLE
Counselor for Refugee and Migration Affairs
Geneva (1984-1986)

Beauveau B. Nalle was born in Pennsylvania in 1927. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956, serving in Washington, DC, Turkey, Uganda, Liberia, and Belize. Mr. Nalle was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on April 19, 1994.

Q: *Yes, now you're in Europe.*

NALLE: Now I'm in Europe, after 30 years in the Foreign Service, in a developed country, and bored to death.

Q: *What was your job there?*

NALLE: Counselor for Refugee and Migration Affairs at the US Mission in Geneva. Which was a very anomalous kind of job, I was in the Mission but not of it. The Mission is run by IO. However, my office is not run by IO. I did not report to IO, I had my own budget, I reported to RP, the Office of Refugee Programs. My own budget, my own administrative staff, everything, except that the Ambassador was my boss and that I went to staff meetings. I participated in all the embassy goings-on. But I had a 500 million dollar budget for refugee programs, and I forget what my administrative budget was.

Q: *Did you have any staff?*

NALLE: I had 3 FSOs, 7 locals. It was a very busy job. I was primarily dealing with the UNHCR but I also dealt with, do you remember Jim Carlin?

Q: *Yes.*

NALLE: Jim Carlin was there in what we call ICM, the Intergovernmental Committee on Migration, a very well run organization that Jim worked with for so many years. I dealt with both the ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross. I dealt with LiCross, the League of the Red Cross. I developed an unbelievable admiration for the ICRC. It's all Swiss, there are no non-Swiss in it. And the things they could do are incredible. They are the operating arm, you might say, of the Red Cross. Particularly in as far as the treaties regarding prisoners-of-war and all that kind of stuff and refugees are concerned.

I was sitting in an office there at Geneva, they had a little headquarters in Geneva, talking to one of the fellows who was the Director of East African Affairs. I asked him a question and he said, "I'm not sure of that, wait a minute." Then he held what I thought was a telephone on his desk, he picked it up and said something in French. Then he continued, "I have Mr. Nalle of the American mission here and he asked me about this problem in Kenya. What can you tell me?" They talked on the phone back and forth for a minute. Then he hung up. Yes, he said, that was my agent, my representative in Nairobi.

Q: *Very good communication system.*

NALLE: Then I remembered there was an antennae field a couple of miles out of town out of Geneva, along the lake. That was always said to be, theoretically it was classified but everybody always said the ICRC antenna farm for all their communications. A very well run and efficient organization.

I might dwell, if I could, on the political ambassador there. He is the 4th political ambassador I have worked for and he epitomizes everything that is wrong with political appointees. The others I worked for--Ferguson was an intelligent, thoughtful, hardworking, receptive man. Strausz-Hupé I did not get along with him at all, I did not agree with his political opinions, I didn't agree with the way he was handling Turkey, I'd have disagreed with him if he had said it's black, I'd have said it's white. But he was an able, intelligent, ill-tempered mean little man. I watched him at an archeological ruin translating the Greek and Roman inscriptions on the stones which not many career ambassadors could do today. So Strausz-Hupé was there.

Well this one was Gerry Carmen and his claim to fame was that he had been Chairman of the Republican State Committee of New Hampshire and had delivered New Hampshire to Ronald Reagan. He was a used tire salesman. Everything that was wrong could be wrong. He hated the Foreign Service, he hated Foreign Service people. I have watched him twist and torture his Admin Officer till the guy had tears running down his cheeks. The Admin Officer was no genius but he was perfectly competent. He had the mission running and running well. He was saving money, he was doing a good job, he just wasn't very dynamic.

Q: *Who was this man's DCM?*

NALLE: Ron Flack when I was there.

Q: *I know Ron.*

NALLE: Poor Ron was suffering, you can't imagine how Ron suffered under this guy.

Q: *This is our ambassador in Bern?*

NALLE: In Geneva, the US Mission in Geneva.

He could speak no French. I suppose that's all right, I don't speak that much myself, I can get along. He held the UN in contempt. He was an anti-UN guy. As I say, he hated FSOs, FSO people, he hated the diplomatic life, he was the laughing stock of the diplomatic community in Geneva. My colleagues would come up to me and make jokes about him and I had to defend him, much as the thought filled me with horror.

He got after me one time. My predecessor had quit because of him. They're on a round-the-world tour inspecting refugee camps and my predecessor, Carl Beck, sent a cable from Bangkok where they were, saying that he wanted an immediate transfer, that he could no longer get along with him (Ambassador Carmen). That relations were such that he had to leave. And the Department sent back a soothing message saying, yes, of course, as soon as you get back to Geneva we'll arrange for your transfer. Carl cabled them back and said, "You guys don't understand, I want a transfer, now, from Thailand." And they gave it to him.

I got into a fight with him one time. He wanted to do some inspecting of refugee camps in Africa, which we all thought was probably a good idea to get him out of Geneva for a couple of days, if nothing else. But he wanted to go to Washington first and he wanted me to pay for his ticket out of my RP budget. I said, "Mr. Ambassador, I really can't do that. We can get down to Africa from Geneva very quickly and easily, Swissair flies down there everyday." But no, he wanted to go into Washington first. Well, I said, I really can't do it. I'll tell you what I said, "I'll write a first person cable, I'll put your case to them in the strongest words I can, you can sign it, read it, do whatever you want. But I cannot pay for the ticket until I have written orders." He said, "Oh Beau, you fancy pants State Department guys." Those are his very words. "You fancy pants State Department guys, call somebody, your hotshot friends back in Washington, they'll cut a deal." I said, "I'm sorry Mr. Ambassador, I need written orders from the Department." And he said, "Come on, call one of your friends, they'll take care of it for you. Nobody has to know about this." I lost my temper. I stood up and said, "Make your own fucking phone calls Mr. Ambassador," and I walked out of his office.

From then on he practically never bothered me. He'd kid me at staff meetings, "You all watch out for Beau, he has a quick temper." And I looked down at him one time and I said, "Yes sir, I do," and I smiled at him. But I mean, what he did for the United States was disaster piled up on chaos.

Q: *By the way, did he go to Africa?*

NALLE: No. He couldn't stick it to Washington. And then he forgot.

Deputy Chief of Mission
Geneva (1984-1987)

Ronald D. Flack was born in Minnesota in 1934. After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota he served in the US Army from 1957-1960. His career has included positions in Athens, Manila, Abidjan, Paris, Algiers, Geneva, and Copenhagen. Mr. Flack was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 7, 1998.

Q: This was the time when the Reagan administration was turning inward. They were going to do everything themselves.

FLACK: The most remarkable and exciting thing that happened while I was in Geneva was the Reagan/Gorbachev summit, the first one, in 1985. I came in 1983 and in 1984 my second ambassador came, the one that I was the deputy to. Shultz came to Geneva many, many times for meetings with the Soviets getting things back on track to restart the negotiations. At that point I realized that this was going to happen and I remember having a meeting with the ambassador telling him, "You know, as soon as these talks get started, when we talk seriously with the Soviets, we can expect that there will be talk of a Reagan/Gorbachev summit and my guess would be that it will be here in Geneva. We had better start thinking about that because we will be responsible for it." Well, he didn't pay much attention to that. He thought I was kind of dreaming wildly, or something. But, indeed that is exactly what happened. They came in November, 1985 and had their meeting. The decision was made in the summer, I think it was July, to hold the meeting in Geneva, and the first White House contingent of 15 people arrived on August 1 and we began our work with the Soviet mission and the Swiss. I was not involved much in the substance of what was going to be discussed between Reagan and Gorbachev, but very much involved in all of the details and arrangements. Where the President and Mrs. Reagan were going to stay, the agenda, what the Swiss would be doing, what activities they would have, Mrs. Reagan's program, etc. All of these things were organized by the mission in coordination with the White House. In the end, it turned out very well.

Q: How did you find the White House staff when it came out to start working?

FLACK: I have had a lot of experience over the years, not only in Geneva, with the people from the White House and they are always extraordinarily difficult to work with. They have a very narrow view of the work they are doing and they tend to focus on just the particular job at hand and they don't see the wider implications of what they are doing. So, it is very difficult when they are telling you they want to do something and you say, "Be careful because you have to think of this implication or that implication." They don't like that. They think you are just causing problems. In meetings with foreign officials they are always aggressive and offensive, especially the secret service. They always are, it kind of goes with the territory for them. They have a job to do and have a certain mentality and attitude and creates a lot of bad will for the United States abroad.

Q: Were you both preparing your counterparts of the Swiss and others for this beforehand and then cleaning up afterwards?

FLACK: Absolutely. I have often said that when you have a presidential visit, and I have had them elsewhere, I hope relations between the U.S. and the other country involved will survive the visit. In this case, it was U.S. and Swiss relations because they were basically the host country. I also, of course, was working closely with our ambassador in Bern.

Q: Who was that?

FLACK: It was John Cabot Lodge, who was a very old man, in his eighties. I don't know if you know his story, he was a movie actor in the twenties and thirties and was a political appointee.

Q: He was in the "Scarlet Empress" with Marlene Dietrich.

FLACK: That's right. He also did a film with Shirley Temple when she was a little girl.

There was a great deal of friction between my ambassador at the mission and Ambassador Lodge, as to who was going to be the most important of the two ambassadors involved with this visit. Obviously we were the ones who were doing the work and Bern wasn't, but Bern felt they were the representatives to Switzerland. In terms of protocol they were absolutely right, the president was coming to Switzerland. For example, who was going to meet the president at the bottom of the steps? Should it be Ambassador Lodge or should it be my ambassador in Geneva? They had a very bitter time over this. Strangely enough I found this really laughable, that two grown men would be doing this, but in fact they were.

Q: At one point people used to fight duels over points of protocol. A presidential visit, particularly one of this magnitude, will tax the most organized of people and here is somebody who has almost dismissed the professionals from his view. How did this political appointee ambassador, whom we will leave unnamed, respond to the visit?

FLACK: Basically, he didn't deal with it. I was in charge of the arrangements for the meeting. He attended a few of the meetings and was involved in it in a certain way, but he was not involved in any really serious way of actually making decisions, etc. About half of his day was spent on the phone to Washington. I don't know who all he was talking to but he had been involved with a consulting firm back in Washington and I think a lot of his calls were back to that firm and the White House. He knew Mike Deaver very well, for example. I remember once he said, "Well, call Mike Deaver" and I didn't know Mike Deaver and said, "Give me his number." He gave me his number and I dialed the number thinking I would get Mike Deaver's secretary, but he answered. That was his personal number so I know that they did indeed have a close relationship. So, he was on the phone to Washington a lot but I think he was much more concerned about the domestic politics of the visit. Who will get something out of this type of thing. That is what he basically was interested in.

Q: How did you find the Swiss to deal with, particularly on this occasion?

FLACK: The Swiss can be very strict, very difficult and very serious and in fact they are also very efficient, very good at this. I remember someone in Washington saying after having dealt

for a couple of months on these arrangements describing Switzerland as the nicest police state in the world. That is what it is. They are really in control of what is going on in their country. They were good to deal with and even survived the secret service. I remember one particular meeting when we were making arrangements for things at the airport and the director of the airport was present. The secret service, as they always do, handed the director of the airport a lapel pin for him to wear so they could know who was who in the crowd, etc. He took it and said, "I'm not going to wear this. Why should I wear this?" They very patiently explained to him that it helped them know who was a member of the party and he said, "Look. I am the director of this airport, everybody knows me. I don't have to wear anything like this in my airport. I am not going to wear this." The secret service was getting more and more put out and anxious to have him do this. He finally shouted at them, "Give me one good reason why I should wear something like this?" The secret service agent looked at him and said, "We don't shoot people that are wearing these." The director turned red and shut up. It caused a diplomatic incident. He went to his government and complained that he had been threatened by the secret service. This kind of thing is always difficult but to be expected.

The Swiss are just very well organized for things like this. Their police are very effective. The local Swiss official who I dealt with, his title was chief of protocol but he was really the political officer of the region, of Geneva, not the Swiss government. You know Geneva is almost independent. I remember during the conference there was going to be a press conference, Shultz and Gromyko were going to be there, and we were waiting for them. I remember talking to Andre, the Swiss official, and saying, "I understand Gromyko is going to be about half an hour late." He said, "No, he's not." He then said, "Well, I was just told he was going to be half an hour late." He said, "No he's not." He then said, "Ron, it is impossible that you are better informed than I am." He was very sure of himself and he was right, Gromyko came in on time.

It was a very tense time. Security, as you can imagine, was incredibly tight. My wife, who is French born, was Nancy Reagan's interpreter. She visited a drug rehabilitation center, a school, laid the cornerstone of the new International Red Cross museum, and things like that.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Soviets?

FLACK: It went well. The Soviets were secretive but we got what we needed. There certainly was no openness about it. Things basically went well and in the end I can't think of any major problem that involved the Soviets. We gave the reception at the beginning and the Soviet ambassador gave the reception the next night. When I went to his reception he was decked out in all his ribbons and I said to him, "Mr. Ambassador, You look great in your uniform with all your medals. You will get another one after this visit." He said, "I just hope I will be able to keep the ones I have!"

Q: Were there any last minute problems or any stories about this meeting?

FLACK: The stories that I have, and I have lots of them, are administrative type anecdotes about where Reagan stayed or about the chairs that Reagan and Gorbachev sat in, etc. I was not involved, of course, in the substantive discussions, except only on a peripheral basis. Not many people were. The mission in Geneva is a very big mission. One of the wonderful facilities it has

is a very large international style conference room. For a press conference we put bleachers around the insides of the room because we had an enormous amount of press, as you can imagine. Shultz and Gromyko were having a meeting with just a couple of people around them in one of the offices of the mission and there were dozens of hanger-ons at the assistant secretary and under secretary level from the Department and the White House that were just milling around in the hall waiting for them to come out. The room was ready for the press conference half a hallway away and I said, "Let's go into the conference room and wait there. There is no point hanging out in the hall here." No one would move to the reception room where the press conference was going to be. I soon realized what the reason was when Shultz and Gromyko came out and then proceeded to come into the press room, where all of the cameras were on them, this group wanted to be following as closely behind as possible to make it look as if they were part of the negotiations. If they were already in the room, everyone would have seen that they, of course, were not with the Secretary in the meeting and, of course, that would ruin their credibility. There was a lot of that going on.

There were far too many people from Washington, from the Department and all the other agencies. We had a thousand people from the White House. We had 35 servants from the White House.

Q: Of course, from the historical point of view this was a very important meeting because this is the beginning of a real change. Reagan had talked about the evil empire, the Soviet Union, from the far right of the political spectrum and Gorbachev was a new man. And, these two hit it off starting at this point and things flowed from that. So, it was not just one of these humdrum summits with a lot of people.

FLACK: I do think it had a tremendous impact on Gorbachev, particularly. I think he came to realize the importance of the Reagan administration here and the president and of the weight of the responsibility that he had in this negotiation. That was the beginning of perestroika and glasnost. That was when they began to realize that they weren't doing things right, that there were better ways of doing things. Someone told me that when Gorbachev was on one of his visits to the States, he and the president were on a helicopter going up to Camp David or something, and they were flying over the northern part of Washington into Maryland and Gorbachev was looking at all these subdivisions which from the air looked beautifully laid out. He looked at Reagan and said, "How do you do that?" Reagan apparently told his aides afterwards that it is mind-boggling to even think about how you would answer a question like that. It goes back to the very basics of economics. The question of "How do you do that" showed the intellectual limits Gorbachev had and the need he felt to really do things differently and learn.

Q: What was the feeling you were getting after the summit from the people who had been involved in this?

FLACK: It was very, very up. It was a highly successful meeting. You may recall that some of the meetings following it in Iceland, etc. were less successful. This was the first one and the one where they really got together for the first time and got to know each other. It was beautifully orchestrated, if I do say so myself. I certainly had a lot to do with it, but a lot of people in the White House were good at this as well. We were able to provide the type of environment that

was really conducive, I think, to very, very good talks. When everybody left, we had a lot of work to do to clean up, so to speak, but we felt that we had been a part of an historic occasion and that it made a difference.

Q: Did you get any feelings both dealing with the Soviets and others before and after, that there was a change in atmosphere?

FLACK: No. Again, the Soviet mission in Geneva is a very large modern mission, but it is also very closed and we didn't have a lot of contact with them. Relations with them were certainly cool. Where we did have a relationship with them which was developing very rapidly was with Ambassador Kampelman's team who were negotiating with them on the nuclear question. There the Soviets had teams of negotiators and we had our teams and they met on a regular basis. This was a much more open and almost social thing. They obviously had their serious meetings, but there was a lot of receptions where you got to talk to the Soviets. Over a period of time you saw the attitude of the Soviets become more and more open and constructive.

I remember a luncheon that I gave for UN Ambassador Dick Walters with the Soviet minister of justice. We had the Soviet ambassador and I was acting permanent representative at that point, and Walters' deputy was with him. During this lunch Walters was really pushing the Soviets on human rights and criticizing them in a very severe and aggressive way. I kept on thinking to myself that the Soviets were going to get up and walk out. Instead, these people were almost apologetic saying, "You are right and we need to change and we are working on it. But, give us time." It was just a totally different attitude at a very high level than I had ever seen before. Before they would have been defensive and accused us of who knows what and maybe even walked out. Here they were apologetic and saying they were going to try to do better. It was a really big change.

Q: What was your impression of dealing with the cadre of United Nations personnel?

FLACK: For the most part they were really highly effective international civil servants. These people are highly professional, highly experienced and, I must say, highly paid. During my time there I was very critical, as were a lot of Americans, of the generosity of the UN system to their people not only in pay but in terms of benefits. I think that has changed to a certain degree since then, but back then they were certainly very generous. But, they were very good people.

Also, I must say, I was very impressed by the level of representation that other countries send to Geneva. For most countries, Geneva is a very important diplomatic posting. For the United States it is not. It is a secondary one, a political give away. This is sad because other countries do have their finest people there and they know our system and they know we don't have our best people in Geneva. For example, I found when I was deputy, the other ambassadors dealt with me, they didn't deal with the ambassador because they knew he was a political hack that landed there because he knew the president and was not a very effective ambassador. They discounted him. When anything of a serious nature came up, they called me, which was frankly the right thing to do because very often the ambassador simply wouldn't know what to do with it.

Q: It must have been a very difficult position to be in when acting as the deputy people bypassed the ambassador and he becomes aware of it. How did you deal with this?

FLACK: I don't think he cared that much, actually. He cared much more about things like how the furniture was arranged in the mission. I remember the first thing he did when he arrived was to ask the GSO to come up to his office and asked him about the maintenance of the automobiles. He wanted to know, for example, when you changed the tires, do you break the beads on the old ones. These were the kind of questions he was asking. It wasn't who is the French ambassador and what are the issues with the human rights commission and things like this. He was only interested in administrative details.

Q: Well, he was an auto parts dealer.

FLACK: Exactly, he was. One of the horrible situations I got to and one of the reasons that I had this very nasty argument with Alan Keyes after the ambassador left, was while he was there he changed the configuration of the mission several times. For example, I as DCM changed my office four times while he was there. The building was brand new having been opened in 1980. The FBO had done a wonderful construction job. The ambassador's and DCM's offices were on the top floor next to each other, perfectly done. The first thing he did was to kick me out of the DCM's office there. He didn't want me there. He put the conference room in the DCM's office. Then he moved me to another floor, etc. He cut into his own office and put a partition down it so that he could put his secretary, another secretary that he had brought in, in the other half of it. This really screwed things up because it was an office made with a restroom along the side and the partition cut him off from that. It just made a mess of it. It was like this all through the mission. He would walk through the mission and move desks and tell people to sit there instead of here, etc.

Well, after he left, the first thing I did was to put things back in order. I took down the partition in his office because I knew a new ambassador would eventually be coming in and I put my office back to where it was supposed to be. I put everything back the way FBO had designed it. Before I did this I talked to the assistant secretary for Administration and the FBO people and asked if it was okay with them. They said that it was fine. Well, the ambassador had left in place one of his executive assistants, a political type, and was trying to get him a job in Geneva, so he was hanging around. Of course he saw what I was doing and called up the ambassador, who at this point had resigned and no longer had any affiliation with the Department of State, and told him what I was doing. The ambassador then called Alan Keyes and told him that Flack was ruining everything he had done in Geneva to make things better and he should stop it. I got these phone calls from Alan Keyes asking what was going on. I explained it to him and he said, "Look, you may be right but this is kind of risky. Don't screw around with it, just leave it the way it is." I said, "No, the mission is a mess and needs to be put right. It is not operating effectively because it is physically disrupted."

So, when he tried to stop me from putting things straight, I said, "This is a minor issue. This is an issue of local management. You shouldn't be involved in this at all. The ambassador is gone and resigned and has nothing to do with this and I am going to put it right. I have the blessing of the appropriate people in the Department to do it and I'm sorry Alan, I am going to do this." He, of

course, was furious with me for making the departed ambassador angry and this cost me a couple of years on my career path because he obviously took it out on me at evaluation time.

Q: What was your impression of Keyes?

FLACK: Brilliant. Keyes has got an incredible mind. He is one of the brightest men I have ever known. In multilateral meetings he is on top of every issue. His mind is usually three steps ahead of everybody else around the table. At the same time he is thinking about issues, he loves to think up analogies or little things that he can relate to and make a story. At one meeting we were going through a number of things with seventeen countries and he was drawing a little diagram trying to relate this to some little story that he could tell about men going down a river rowing the boat and somebody is rowing the other way. He said, "Isn't that kind of like this meeting?" I had no idea what he was trying to get to but sort of nodded. When he spoke he described the meeting in terms of this analogy of men rowing the wrong way or something like that.

He was and is still very, very bright. Unfortunately, I think he is a reactionary in terms of politics but he has a right to that. I don't think he was very effective as assistant secretary in this respect because he was so outspoken and brusk. He had very strong opinions and his way of presenting them often was not very diplomatic. He was not liked by his UN counterparts.

Q: You were there during the beginning of the Reagan period. Did you feel the sort of disdain that the White House had for the international organizations at all at your level at the beginning and did you see any change?

FLACK: I felt it in the beginning in a very abrupt way. I was arriving just as the Reagan policies were falling into place. I remember one of the unpleasant policy dilemmas that I had was with the World Health Organization. The Carter administration had come up with a plan that was put forward to WHO to come to an international agreement that international pharmaceutical companies would agree to limit the way they market in developing countries. There was this problem of too much competition and too many developing countries spending unnecessarily large amounts of their scarce foreign exchange for pharmaceuticals when it was actually a duplication of what they were buying elsewhere, too many companies selling similar products. The WHO and the Carter administration were trying to address this problem by having the drug companies agree to cooperate and coordinate in their distribution and marketing in developing countries. This was a Carter administration initiative that was going forth nicely in WHO and was going to be supported by many countries. It was going very well. Then we a cable as we were going into one of these meetings, reversing the policy 180 degrees, saying we withdraw our support of our own proposal, it is not a good idea. Obviously this was major politics going on back here in Washington, but the result was I had to go in and reverse our stand on our own initiative. That is not the only time I have had to do that in my career.

Q: What was the impression of Jeane Kirkpatrick when she was our chief representative to the UN?

FLACK: She came to Geneva several times while I was there and she was always received very well with a great deal of respect and I think was very highly regarded. She is an absolutely

brilliant person, an excellent speaker and really knew her subject inside and out and was learning on the job in an exceptional way. For example, I remember something she told a group of us once in terms of human rights. She said that before she came into the job at the UN, she never really considered the Human Rights Commission to be a terribly effective group, that it was really a lot of talking and didn't amount to much. But, she said that she found out on a very personal level that she personally could make a difference by working on these things. She said that during one of the Human Rights Commission meetings, a dissident got to her and said, "Would you call the minister in this particular country and complain about this particular dissident and see what you can do about getting him out?" She said that she was reluctant to do it but the case looked good, she had researched it, and she said that she would do it. She called and got the guy out. She said that she suddenly realized that you could make a difference, that things could be done in cases where you studied it and saw that there was an injustice and that even on an individual level, but certainly on a collective level, you can make a difference and something good can come of it. So, she changed her opinion and became more favorable to human rights activities.

Q: Did you have much contact with the other delegations?

FLACK: Oh, yes. Regularly. We met on a regular basis in various groupings. I was the co-chair of what was called the Geneva Group. One of the functions of the American mission and the British Mission, the other co-chair was the British DCM, was to chair a small group of donors, the most important donors to the UN system. We had a group of six or seven major donors to the UN system that met regularly as kind of an oversight group. We were kind of an informal OMB. We would meet and discuss, for example, the budget of the ILO and look at it from a very critical point of view, because we were all interested in trying to save money, and made suggestions to the management of the organization about how we thought it could be trimmed, changed or improved. These organizations listened very carefully to what we had to say because they knew they were talking to their major donors. So, this was a very important group and we worked on a regular basis with these other countries, the French, the British, the Japanese, etc.

In other forums we would work regularly with many other missions, perhaps with the members of Human Rights Commission, which would change, or others. It would depend on the forum. From time to time you would have the full Geneva representation. As I mentioned before, other countries send their top people to Geneva, so you have very high level and very competent representation from other countries.

Q: Did you have a problem with them from time to time over the Reagan administration? The Reagan administration was a real change and like most administrations when you have almost a total change in the American political thrust overseas, there is a learning curve. It takes a while for the shake down to learn the territory and responsibilities and find that you are not going to make an earthly difference just because you think it is right in international affairs.

FLACK: Yes. Due to the type of representation that we have abroad, especially in Europe, and especially in Geneva, at that time at least, we didn't have an ambassador who could make a big difference in terms of really explaining the Reagan agenda. So, the local ambassadors and UN people basically looked to Washington. They read the "Tribune." They read the "New York

Times." They listened to CNN to find out what was going on in Washington. In the first part of the Reagan administration, I think there was a great deal of almost amusement. They thought that Reagan was the movie actor, the cowboy, etc. As time went on I think they began to see that this was a serious administration that had a real agenda. But, I don't think in Geneva that we did a very good job of conveying that. We tried to do things, for example, the State of the Union speech by inviting the diplomatic corps to see the speech, either direct or on tape. Such occasions were mildly attended. But, we didn't have a major voice in Geneva , as we should have had, to put our story forward.

Q: Did any events intrude on your work in Geneva like the problems in Central America with Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Grenada invasion, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, etc.?

FLACK: All of these things one way or another involved us in Geneva because there are so many organizations that were involved in them or through the embassy in Bern. You mention Nicaragua. Faith Whittlesey was ambassador after Lodge and her major issue was Nicaragua and the Contras. She made a real campaign out of it at the embassy with the Swiss, much to their annoyance. We felt it down in Geneva. It became an issue almost everywhere.

The invasion of Grenada occurred while I was there. I remember that very well because one of the groups that we dealt with very closely was the ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was just about a block away from us in Geneva. I had a very close relationship with the operations head and the president of the ICRC. I had been following what was happening in Grenada but I didn't know exactly when things were going to happen. I remember getting to my office one morning and there was a call waiting for me from the president of the ICRC. I got him on the line right away and he said, "I am calling you to remind you of the United States responsibility under the Geneva Convention for prisoners of war and we have a plane standing by at Cointrin Airport ready to go with our people to Grenada to start working on the prisoner of war problem. I need your authorization and clearance to let that plane take off and land in Grenada." Well, I put the phone down and called the operations center and within two hours we had the authorization for them to go. But, the U.S. military was totally unaware of the ICRC responsibility to do that and had not factored in any kind of arrangement for something like that. This was one of the ways these international events impacted on us in Geneva.

Another element that I remember with the ICRC was one of the terrorist hijackings of TWA in Lebanon. The ICRC was the intermediary on that and were negotiating with the terrorists. I remember at one point I kept getting calls from the operations center asking me to tell the ICRC this and that and find out if they had met with these people, etc. and I was going back and forth. At the same time I was watching CNN. This was the time CNN was coming into its own as a very important conveyor of information internationally. I remember watching CNN and being on the phone to the operations center and they were saying, "Get over to ICRC and find out if they have arrived at the intersection where they are suppose to be meeting with these people to negotiate. Has that meeting taken place yet? What is going on? Get back to us right away?" I told the guy at the operations center to turn on CNN, that they had cameras at that intersection waiting for something to happen. "I can tell you right now nothing has happened yet, but turn CNN on and you can watch it." Another one of those changes in the way that we do things.

Q: How about the hijacking of the "Achille Lauro," did that impact at all in Geneva?

FLACK: No, I don't remember that having an effect. I do remember the bombing in Beirut and the loss of all the Marines. That was a major blow to all of our missions around the world.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the United States as far as Geneva was concerned was the mover and the shaker of events at the international organizations we were dealing with?

FLACK: Yes, very definitely. In spite of the fact that we didn't play our hand very well, in the sense we didn't have an effective ambassador there, the other missions and organizations recognized (1) the fact that we paid so much of the budget of the UN and the budget of these other organizations, and (2) the importance in Geneva of what we were doing because all of these negotiations with the Soviets were going on there and it was a very public event. Every night on television, locally, you would see the Soviets and Americans arriving for meetings, so people knew that big and important things were going on in our mission, even things that were not related to the UN. In addition to all of this, we had a very imposing mission on top of the hill overlooking the lake. So, yes, it was an important mission and everybody knew it.

Q: On a personal note, how was it like living in Geneva as far as the cost of living, etc.?

FLACK: Well, as DCM, deputy permanent representative, you don't feel that as much. You have servants, a residence, a car and things are pretty much taken care of. But, generally I would say that was at a time when the dollar was very high, at the beginning of the Reagan administration. I remember the dollar being at close to four Swiss francs. I think it is now close to two. The French franc was at 11 and now is 6. So, it was a time when people on our staff were buying Mercedes because they were cheap. The cost of living was not a problem for us then because of the strength of the dollar. It is a lovely city. Most people don't realize that Geneva is really a small town, population of 150,000. If you take the whole metropolitan area it comes up maybe to 300,000. So, it is not a very big place. Big name, but not a very big place. However, it is close to France, close to Italy. You have the Alps and the skiing. Our Monday morning staff meeting in the winter usually began with the casualty report, to see who was in a cast, and there were a lot of them. We had to be very careful at our mission about people in wheelchairs because there were several people in wheelchairs who had broken legs skiing. Fortunately, the building was built at the time that you had to have wheelchair access and all that, so it took care of these people pretty well.

WARREN ZIMMERMAN
Deputy Chief – Arms Negotiations
Geneva (1985-1986)

Mr. Warren Zimmermann entered the Foreign Service in 1961. His career postings included Venezuela, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, France, Spain, Switzerland, and Austria. Mr. Zimmermann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

Q: Today is October 23, 1998. You were saying the time you were with Max Kampelman was actually '85-'86.

ZIMMERMANN: That's right. Of course the negotiation went on a lot longer. I stayed with it for about a year.

Q: What were the negotiations doing at that time?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, there were three of them. It was a very complex situation. There was the space negotiations of which the major component of it, of course, was Reagan's strategic defense initiative, Star Wars. Then there were the strategic negotiations, a pick up from the SALT I and SALT II negotiations. And then there were the intermediate range force negotiations which was a negotiation pegged to the SS-20s the Soviet Union targeted on Europe and the NATO missiles, Pershings and Cruise missiles, targeted on the Soviet Union. So each of those for the American delegation, each of those negotiations had a leader. Max Kampelman was the overall leader for the whole negotiation, and he was also in charge of the space negotiations.

Q: What was your role?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, my role turned out to be much less than either he or I had contemplated. I was his deputy in his function as head of the overall thing. It turned out that for a variety of reasons, on of them very strong turf consciousness of the American leaders of the strategic and the IMF, intermediate range negotiations, there wasn't a great deal for me to do other than managing the administrative structure of an enormous delegation. I didn't have nearly as great a substantive role as I had anticipated.

Q: Well, what was sort of the spirit you were seeing. I mean in a way you weren't in a day to day role and working on sort of the overall, was there a spirit of optimism or frustration or how were things going?

ZIMMERMANN: That was very interesting because we had an enormous delegation. I think over a hundred people who had come out. Most of them designated to one of these three negotiations. All the major national security elements of the U.S. government were represented. The dynamic of the negotiation was that there were a number of people who had been sent out from the Pentagon to insure that no progress was made. This is of course not what they would admit except after a few drinks, but that was indeed what they were sent to do. They would report back to their defacto leader Richard Perle in the Pentagon every night or every two nights about the progress of the negotiations or in their eyes the lack of progress in the negotiation. There were others who took the more professional point of view that if American interests could be satisfied, they would go along. So, it was with those kinds of ingredients, you can imagine this was not a negotiation that moved very fast. The Russians, I think, had their own restraints on doing very much. What they wanted to do more than anything else in the world was to block the progress of the SDI, the Strategic Defense Initiative, because it was clear they couldn't compete with it. If it actually was built, and if it worked, it would give the United States and their allies a

first strike capability, and we would have effectively won the strategic competition. So, at all costs they wanted to block.

Q: Well, what was the feeling of our delegation because the strategic defense initiative which was designed to essentially shoot down enemy missiles is still floating around, but it hasn't gone anywhere, and many people in the United States at the time including military people said this isn't going to work.

ZIMMERMANN: Again it was fascinating. You recall how this all started. It was an idea that Ronald Reagan got from Edward Teller, the old vintage Hungarian physicist and cold warrior, and it appealed to Reagan's idea that you didn't have to depend on a balance of terror or mutually assured destruction or deterrence. You could actually shoot down anything the Soviets sent over. During one of the breaks during the negotiation we were taken to the two great nuclear laboratories, Los Alamos and Livermore where the main work was being done on the SDI. I remember asking something as a devil's advocate at both of the laboratories how long would it take before we would have an operational strategic defense. The answer at both places as I recall, I may be off by some years, this is 1985 remember. The answer was somewhere in the first decade of the 21st century. In other words this was way out, several decades out. It turned out later, we didn't know it at the time, that some of the tests for this missile system were being faked. We were told, and it became public knowledge, it was in the press, that these tests had worked, and effectively we had gotten the capability at least in the testing mode of shooting a bullet with a bullet, which is what it would be like if you were shooting down a strategic missile with a defense ballistic missile. Of course, this made an enormous impression on the Soviets, that we had the technology to do that. They always tended to give us credit for much greater technological skill than we had. In this case they gave us too much credit, because it turned out and it was admitted later I think by Teller, that these tests were faked, that we hadn't actually shot a bullet with a bullet.

Q: Well, what was the motivation for Richard Perle and his cohorts to try to stop this?

ZIMMERMANN: They didn't believe in arms control. They were opposed to arms control. They felt it would weaken the United States' defense capability. The Soviets were taking advantage of it. They simply didn't believe in it. In a way there was another interesting paradox here along the lines of you should never ask for something because someday you may get it. The American position on the IMF negotiation, which was on intermediate range missiles, was a so called zero option. Missile systems on both sides, the Soviet side, the western side had to be completely destroyed. That was our position. As it turned out that was exactly what was achieved. It turned out to be a brilliant denouement to a missile rivalry which was enormously dangerous and enormously important not only in our relations with the Soviets but our relations with the allies. I am quite sure that Perle and company devised the zero option because they were convinced that it was totally non negotiable. Of course it was for many years, but ultimately it produced a result, and these missile systems have now been totally dismantled.

Q: Did you get any feel that say our representatives from the American military establishment were people on both sides of the question, or was it pretty much they were there to stop it?

ZIMMERMANN: No, it wasn't actually so much the American military that were going to stop it. Of course they had negotiated SALT I, they had negotiated SALT II. I think they had a very keen sense of the U.S. national interest. It was the more ideological people surrounding Perle, many of them coming from - again a paradox - the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency which was founded as a result of legislation by Hubert Humphrey to promote the cause of arms control. Afterwards it was almost totally taken over by people who didn't want any arms control at all and people out of Perle's office were of the same frame of mind. There were also people on the delegation who came from the Air Force who wanted to build the SDI. This would be an Air Force thing, and they were very strongly committed to that. So they didn't want a result either. Now the ones who would have been prepared to have a result, nobody was saying we should have a result at any cost of course. But those who were prepared to negotiate in good faith were some people from ACDA. The most outstanding of these was the ACDA counsel general Tom Graham who later became the head of our delegation to the non proliferation treaty renewal. He had been a veteran of earlier strategic arms control talks, and he genuinely wanted to negotiate on the basis of American interests. The military in general other than the ones I mentioned were prepared to do that. Kampelman himself had a very difficult job because he was known as a hard liner. At the same time he was an is a brilliant negotiator. He had to play his cards very close to his chest. He had to win the confidence of those who really didn't want any result at all, while at the same time he had to carry out the instructions which he was getting which were to negotiate in good faith. In the end, I think the result at least in the INF negotiations was a testament to his ability to take the opportunity to get a result when it is in the American interest.

Q: Were you feeling at this time, '85-'86 that a change was coming around in the Soviet Union?

ZIMMERMANN: You know, when were in Geneva, I think I am right on this, both Gorbachev and Shevardnadze became the leaders of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev became head of the party; Shevardnadze became the foreign minister. I actually had known Shevardnadze from my days in Moscow in the ‘70s. I had met him once. I had been traveling with Senator Kennedy in Georgia and he was the Georgia party boss. We had met him, and he was already an outstanding individual and looked like somebody who would go very far. Nobody, I think, understood then and I think he didn't either, how flexible he would turn out to be. Nobody had a sense of Gorbachev being a liberal. We had of course, all the CIA information and all the intelligence information that was amassed on Gorbachev. Not a lot was known about him, but he had visited Canada, so there was one long visit to the west. But in that year it seems to me, I went to a think tank meeting of the Columbia and Harvard schools of Russian studies which they have every year in Harriman New York. I recall that the one in 1985 was devoted to Gorbachev who had recently taken over. The consensus of all the great Russian experts from these two great universities was he was a totally traditional Soviet leader, that you could not expect any serious reforms. He would be just a younger version of what had gone on before. So, I think we in the delegation could have been pardoned for not knowing that some fairly big things were in the offing. Of course they didn't have them in arms control at least for several years more.

Q: But there is no sense that the Soviets were beginning to get concerned, say about things as simple as computers and things where information is getting out. The technical world is changing such that it is very hard to keep the Soviet system going.

ZIMMERMANN: Well, I think there were certainly no Soviets we were negotiating with would ever speculate about that sort of thing. They were totally rigid in terms of what they were prepared to tell you outside the negotiating framework. You got very little from them on things like that. I think there was a general view, and I go back to my own experience of five years in the Soviet Union that yes the technological revolution was going to leave them farther behind, was going to make their ability to keep their dictatorship working much more difficult because of duplicating machines because of computers, all the rest. But, certainly there was no sense '85 or '86 that there was going to be the collapse that there ended up being five or six years later. No sense of that at all.

Q: Well, how did you leave this position you were there, you found yourself with not as much to do as you liked.

ZIMMERMANN: Well, I talked it over with Kampelman and he was very sensitive to it. In 1986 the European Bureau of the State Department, Charlie Thomas, who was the principal deputy assistant secretary for the European Bureau, went to Kampelman, had been in charge of the last CSCE review meeting and asked him if he could recommend somebody from the outside world who could be the head of the next review meeting that was coming along in the fall of 1986. Kampelman with whom I worked earlier in the Madrid CSCE meeting, knew my work and he also knew that I was a bit frustrated in this job in Geneva, he gave Charlie Thomas my name. Kampelman told me the story that Thomas said, "No, Max, you don't understand. We are not looking for a professional foreign service officer. We are looking for somebody in the tradition of Arthur Goldberg who was the first one, and yourself who was second. someone who has a national standing and could deal with all of the pressures that come with a major human rights meeting." Max said, "No, I have thought about that and I really think Warren would be the best person." So very reluctantly my organization accepted me on the strong recommendation of somebody who was not a part of my organization. Roz Ridgway who was an extremely able assistant secretary for Europe at the time, said she had opposed my being named because she thought that no foreign service officer should have to deal with the Congress on such volatile issues as human rights performance of the Soviet Union. I said, "Look, I have dealt with the Congress before. I have been in the Soviet Union." I didn't really worry about that. I thought it would be all right and it was all right.

Q: So just to get the time frame you were working with CSCE from when to when?

ZIMMERMANN: I started in the summer of 1986 with CSCE. I left the Geneva talks, I guess the spring round of '86 was the last time I was there. I spent some of the time learning some German because the talks were going to be in Vienna. We went to Vienna in September of '86 for what was called a preparatory meeting. These meetings don't have an ending date because they all work on consensus which means that any one of the 35 countries has a veto power. The meeting can't end until all 35 are prepared to have it end. So the best guess was the entire meeting would last about a year. Some optimists thought it would last six months. As it turned out it lasted over two years. We finally did get a result, but it took us nearly two years and a half to get it. So it ended actually on the day on the last day of the Reagan administration in January '89.

Q: In the first place was there a sort of hearings before going before Congress or not? Was this an appointment?

ZIMMERMANN: I had to be confirmed, and I was with no difficulties at all. Claiborne Pell was the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and there were no questions about it at all. I don't even think I had to appear. At least I don't remember appearing so if it happened it was very pro forma. The commission on security and cooperation in Europe was created to be a kind of a watchdog group of the Helsinki process. It was created by Dante Fascell a Democrat of Florida who later became the head of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. It was created over the strong objections of then Secretary of State Kissinger. There was a lot of bad blood between the State Department and the commission. The commission had members who were both Senators and Congressmen from both parties, and a large staff which participated in all of the CSCE meetings including the one for which I was the head of the American delegation. Without that commission staff we would not have been able to find enough good people from the State Department who were available to go to these long and very complex negotiations, so they did a very good job. The commission in its Washington embodiment in Congress was always there. It was always pushing us very hard for general and specific human rights progress and sometimes actually criticizing us, the delegation, if that progress wasn't apparent. This, I think, was what Roz Ridgway was talking about primarily when she said that no professional foreign service officer should have to deal with that because it is such a political thing. Fortunately, the heads of the commission were both reasonable people. Steny Hoyer from the House and Dennis DeConcini from the senate. They were people you could talk to; they would listen. They might disagree, but they both had a good deal of understanding of the process and understanding of what is possible and what is not possible. I think we were very fortunate that they were there.

Q: What was the status when you arrived in the fall of '86 of the CSCE negotiations?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, it was in a kind of shambles because there had been an earlier meeting in Bern on human contacts which was a human rights related subject. This is one of these satellite meetings.

CHARLES E. RUSHING
Executive Assistant to the Ambassador, European Office of the United Nations Geneva (1985-1991)

Charles E. Rushing was born in Illinois in 1929. He received his bachelor's degree from Augustana College in 1951 and his law degree from Duke University in 1954. He served in the US Army from 1954-1955. His career included positions in Italy, Eritrea, Southern Rhodesia, Congo, Laos, Liberia, Denmark, and Ireland. From 1985-1991 he served as an ambassador to the UN in Geneva. Mr. Rushing was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan in July 1996.

Q: *I'm not surprised. After your three years on the Management Planning Staff, you were transferred to our mission in Geneva in 1985. Tell me about that position. What were you and to whom were you to report?*

RUSHING: After the exciting and challenging years as Director of the Management Planning Staff, I learned of a new position that was being established in Geneva. That was as Executive Assistant to our ambassador to the UN's offices in Geneva. One of the reasons for establishing this new position was that the Department wanted to be sure the U.S. was taking consistent positions in the many different fora in Geneva.

As you know, Geneva not only is the European headquarters of the United Nations, but it hosts a multitude of different international agencies and activities: GATT [General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs], WHO [World Health Organization], ILO [International Labor Organization], Multilateral Commission on Disarmament, bilateral arms reduction talks with the Soviets, etc. We could at any one time have as many as eight different U.S. ambassadors in Geneva.

Another thing that was wanted was for someone to maintain close contact with our discussions with the Russians, with the Soviets, on disarmament. In doing this, I initially spent considerable time with the head of that activity there, at the time, Max Kampelman. My job was not to put myself ahead of the mission's ambassadors or DCM, but to make sure that the management activities of the mission and that of the other elements of the United States Government represented in Geneva were fully compatable.

I expected to be transferred after the initial four-year assignment but two successive ambassadors asked the Department to extend me. In fact, as we were preparing to leave in 1991, the ambassador (my third) would have wanted me to stay even longer, but I thought that six years were enough.

Q: *Who was the ambassador when you arrived?*

RUSHING: When we arrived there, the mission ambassador was Gerry Carmen. He had been the head of the General Services Administration in Washington and was a Republican activist in New England.

Q: *You say he was effective in his role there?*

RUSHING: He was very concerned with promoting American business interests and put together a seminar on capitalism and private industry that was quite successful.

Q: *How long was he there?*

RUSHING: He was only there for about a year after I arrived. I don't remember when he came. He was succeeded by Joseph Petrone, who had retired from the Army some years earlier as a colonel. He and his wife were very active in Republican Party affairs. She was very able and engaging. They entertained graciously. He was liked by everyone who knew him. Finally, there was Morris Abram, a New York lawyer who came in '89. He had a remarkable ability to get along with people while at the same time, he was very tough-minded, effective, and intelligent. Perhaps he was one of our best ambassadors ever sent to Geneva.

Q: *What was our relation, the mission in Geneva, with our embassy in Bern?*

RUSHING: Well, there wasn't all that much, aside from protocol and social events. The mission had little to do with the U.S. bilateral relationship with the Swiss, which was handled by the embassy in Bern. There were some complications concerning the operation of the Geneva office of Embassy Bern's Consular Section.

Q: *Did we have relations with other missions in Geneva, too?*

RUSHING: Yes. I forget how many missions were there but there were a lot, maybe 50 or 60. We saw their diplomatic personnel on a continuing basis, particularly when we were trying to make some point, get something done that we wanted.

Q: *Did our various groupings there, or entities, get their instructions through the Department of State or through their own agencies?*

RUSHING: It was complex and difficult to explain briefly. Most UN activities came under the aegis of the U.S. ambassador in Geneva. I should say the "U.S. chief of mission." For, although there could be any number of U.S. ambassadors in Geneva at one time, depending on what was going on (meetings, conferences), there was only one U.S. chief of mission.

This was not always well-understood and misunderstandings resulted. The U.S.-Soviet bilateral disarmament negotiations were basically in a separate capsule. The U.S. team had its own communicators, procedures, etc. Most of the people in the mission saw little of their work. In the view of what happened later with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Petrone deserves praise for being able to halt planning for the construction of a new, separate, high-tech building solely dedicated to the bilateral arms negotiations at a price of somewhere between $50 and $100 million.

There were two (maybe I'm forgetting some others), U.S. Government residential delegations which carried on their affairs--although UN-connected - separately from the mission: the UN Conference on Disarmament and the GATT.

Q: *Did USUN [U.S. Mission to the United Nations] play any role in this? Were they interested in what you were doing?*

RUSHING: Yes. USUN was the mission's sister post back in New York and there were some joint interests and activities. In many cases, however, the mission was separate from what was going on in New York and visa versa. Our parent bureau in the Department for most matters was IO [International Organizations].

Q: *How about instructions concerning labor or the health matters? Would they be sent to Geneva directly from these bureaus in State?*

RUSHING: Theoretically, everything should have come out with IO's concurrence.

Q: *Were you inundated with visitors, VIPs [very important persons], Congressmen?*

RUSHING: We had a lot. There was a branch of Geneva's Administrative Section that did nothing except handle visitors and set up conferences. It had one officer and, I think, three national employees.

Q: *So your role was more than just housekeeping.*

RUSHING: The role was more than just housekeeping.

Q: *So, six years of that and you were transferred back to this side of the Atlantic to Norfolk, where you became Political Advisor. Was this to CINCLANT [Commander in Chief, Atlantic] or SACLANT [Senior Allied Commander, Atlantic] or both?*

RUSHING: To both. The U.S. admiral in Norfolk wears two hats. SACLANT is the NATO command. CINCLANT is the American command. Both are focused on the Atlantic although the CINCLANT territory is larger than the jurisdiction of SACLANT.

Q: *When you got to Norfolk, what did you find your duties to be?*

RUSHING: The Norfolk experience was not totally satisfactory. I was treated well, both socially and professionally. But I was never clear what I should be doing.

Q: *By the Department or by the Navy?*

RUSHING: Neither.

Q: *Fairly broad.*

RUSHING: I picked up and embroidered on what my predecessors had been doing. I was told, "Everything's just fine." Certainly the POLADs [political advisors] coming out of World War II were stellar FSOs. Think of Bob Murphy. I think that reflected that the military may not have known how to deal with the State Department; they had limited experience in the areas of diplomacy and foreign affairs. I have reflected on this and contrasted the year's training military officers receive before taking up an Attaché job at an embassy with the few days of briefings I received in Washington on my way to Norfolk. Over the years, the military has become so sophisticated and so knowledgeable about how the foreign affairs apparatus works that, in many cases, I don't think that they need a political advisor anymore, except as an ornament, although I had had close contacts with the U.S. military throughout my career, e.g. the sale of the F-16, the Norfolk experience was discouraging.

Q: *To whom did you report?*

RUSHING: Theoretically, only to the Commander in Chief, a four-star admiral.

Q: *But practically?*

RUSHING: I didn't report to anyone.

Q: *In Washington, State's Bureau of Political/Military Affairs could have cared less?*

RUSHING: Could have cared less.

Q: *They wanted to see the back of your head?*

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: *But you got your instructions from them?*

RUSHING: I didn't get any instructions and only an occasional query.

Q: *A rather interesting way to run an organization. When you sat in the staff meetings with the Admiral and the other top Naval people, did you get the impression that your views were listened to? Did they find you useful?*

RUSHING: I don't know. Yes and no. One of the things that concerned me was that, in these staff meetings, let's say, a Marine General, who was no friend of the State Department, would say, "The State Department's position on this issue is so and so." I'd say, "Not so."

Q: *You were making friends all over the place.*

RUSHING: That was the problem. Then I would call up someone in the State Department--almost never to PM. I'd call one of the geographic Desks and say, "Hey, what's our position on this? Today in this meeting, this guy said it was so-and-so." The State guy would say, "No, it's not that way. It's this way." Which coincided with my prior understanding. My discussing this with State - to rebut what I knew was not the case - was not appreciated by my colleagues at Norfolk.

Q: *Did you have access to the top at Norfolk when you needed it?*

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: *Was being near to Washington, DC a help or a hindrance? Would you have been better off if you'd been in Honolulu or not?*

RUSHING: I'm not sure but I think so, based on stories from other POLADs. One of the things that worked was that I'd go to Washington about once every three or four weeks and make the rounds (on a face to face basis) of all the people I had business with. That was helpful in keeping up-to-date, but aside from correcting Norfolk military misperceptions I'm not sure it added much to what was already known. The most useful people were outside PM. I must say, however, that there were not infrequent occasions when I could make a meaningful contribution that could shorten Norfolk's reaction time.

Q: *You had no role in Desert Storm, and yet you could probably see the messages coming back?*

RUSHING: I think Desert Storm was over by the time I got to Norfolk in August '91.

RICHARD MCKEE
Political Counselor, Human Rights Officer, European Office of the United Nations
Geneva (1986-1988)

Richard McKee was born in Pennsylvania in 1941. He attended Cornell University for a BA, the University of Virginia for a MA and then joined the Foreign Service in 1965. McKee served overseas in Bolivia, India, Pakistan, Tunis, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. McKee also served as the Office Director for the Arab Peninsula and on the Board of Examiners. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: We are not sure what happened, but we're not sure where we left off. So we're going to start with Geneva. Today is the 23rd of September, 2002. When did you go to Geneva?

MCKEE: I went to Geneva in the summer of '86…

Q: And you were there from '86 to when?

MCKEE: '86 to '88. Originally scheduled for three years, curtailed to two, because money was tight and I realized it was probably impossible for me to get promoted into the Senior Service with a political counselor / human rights officer job in Geneva.

Q: So what was your job?

MCKEE: It's an interesting story, it's a good Foreign Service story. The then Permanent Representative was a political guy, a friend of President Reagan's. He thought, in true businessman fashion maybe, that he could run the place without a DCM, a political counselor, or a human rights officer. He was prevailed upon eventually to accept a DCM; he had fired the previous one, and to combine the political counselor and human rights job into one. And I got that position. So I supervised three people, one of whom did only WHO, a civil servant, one of whom did only ILO, Foreign Service Officer, and one of whom did several things, economic commission for Europe and IPU groups of that nature. And then I did the human rights stuff myself. I also was the Mission liaison with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Q: Well now, there are a number of organizations in Geneva, what was the title of yours?

MCKEE: Well it was political counselor.

Q: But was this, of the titles, what was it?

MCKEE: Oh, it was a whole range of them, World Health Organization was there, International Labor Organization, the International Telecommunications Union.

Q: Well was it the American mission to…

MCKEE: Oh, I'm sorry, yes, it's the United States Mission to the United Nations Organizations Headquartered in Geneva or some such thing. U.S. Mission.

Q: Who was your political appointee… I mean, your Ambassador?

MCKEE: I was just trying to think of his name… Gerry Carmen was his name.

Q: What was his background?

MCKEE: He was a used car or used tire dealer, I was never sure, from New Hampshire. In the 1980 Republican primary, there was a famous scene in which Ronald Reagan commandeered the microphone in a panel discussion with other candidates for the Republican nomination, saying, 'I paid for that microphone'. Well the story was, was in fact, Gerry Carmen had paid for that microphone.

Q: So, I mean, what was the Mission's mission? What were you doing?

MCKEE: Well it's sort of a diverse mission, in the sense that most of the organizations in Geneva were technical organizations. ILO, ITU, what have you. But various groups wanted to politicize them, and State did not want to seem them politicized, and so, in a way I suppose you could say I was the anti-political counselor, I was the one who was trying to get them to focus on what the U.S. Government thought was the business at hand and not an extraneous agenda that involved political grievances and various human rights things.

Q: How did you find operating in that particular environment?

MCKEE: Well, I was very lucky, because Gerry Carmen quit about six weeks after I got there, and his successor was a very nice guy, Joe Petrone, whose wife Augusta was also a very nice person. Two very good DCMs, Ron Flack my first year and Bill Marsh my second year, so the Mission itself ran fairly smoothly after Gerry left. I've gotta confess, I was not particularly attracted to UN work, it's heavily, heavily influenced by precedent, every resolution and every meeting, practically every resolution builds on the preceding resolution. And every adverb and every semi-colon is argued about. Also, the UN organizations ran on the same regional basis on which the UN political side in New York ran - the African group, the Western European and Others Group, in those days, essentially the Soviet Group, the Latino group and all of that. This left Israel out in the cold. More to the point, in that setting there were an awful lot of awfully boring planning meetings of the group before you sat in on a very boring plenary of ITU or ILO or whatever it was.

Q: Well it was sort of, the same battles fought again and again and again?

MCKEE: Absolutely, absolutely. The same resolutions would be brought up year after year and debated year after year, and slightly modified to reflect changing political alliances and conditions, and then voted on. It was, frankly, very hard to see the relevance of all of it. Now having said that, I did enjoy the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Committee, which is an experts group. I did come to see that they couldn't function without the NGOs. NGOs are very important in the international human rights arena, as they are for example in the international environmental arena.

Q: Particularly when the Reagan administration came in, it was, if it didn't run on an anti-UN platform, it certainly, the United Nations was not its favorite organization. Was this reflected in what you all were doing?

MCKEE: Well, I think so, I think so. And that's actually one of the reasons I curtailed, because I just couldn't see that the Reagan administration had any real use for the UN. The great example of it is, for my money, the appointment of Armando Valadares as our representative to the UN Human Rights Commission in 1988. He was Cuban, who after twenty-odd years in Castro's jails was freed and went to live in Spain. He was a bit of a hero for right-wing Cubans in Florida and elsewhere. He came out in '87 as an advisor to the U. S. delegation. Then, as I think is often the case, he was named to lead it. The fact is that he got his citizenship through some special legislation, only weeks, or at the most, months before the Commission convened in the spring of 1988. He spoke rapid-fire Cuban Spanish, and actually pretty good French, but almost no English. The point here was that the only use that the Reagan administration had for the UN system was to try to politicize it, and make it serve these objectives. In this case, the goal was to get a human rights resolution targeting Cuba, which we did. That's the reason I have that Superior Honor Award on the wall. The Reagan administration was not interested in the programmatic aspects of the Human Rights Commission, the special rapporteurs on torture, on non-judicial killing, that kind of thing. And they were not interested very much in the ILO, for example. So it was in a lot of ways not a very happy environment.

Q: Well how did you find dealing with your counterparts on these various commissions? Were they more or less creatures in the UN, had they acclimated themselves or it, or did you find otherwise?

MCKEE: Well I think in the Western European and Others Group, there were thoughtful people with a lot of experience in multilateral diplomacy who did really feel that the organization had something to contribute to making the world better. I would argue that their situation was a little bit easier, in that they almost all represented parliamentary democracies, whereas of course in our system, you have to keep track of what the Executive wants, you have to keep an eye on what Congress wants, and it's a much more diffuse kind of government. The representatives of the other countries in most cases were either political appointees or sort of careerists run rampant, not a very inspiring crowd.

Q: Well you mentioned you got a Superior Honor Award, what did you do to sort of merit this?

MCKEE: Mollify the members of the Western European and Others Group by, first of all, persuading the Department and then Mr. Valadares to come two weeks earlier, earlier than usually had been the case. I took him around to call on heads of missions there, key missions there, so that they could see that he wasn't a Johnny one-note. He actually was, and this was true, he was also interested in other human rights issues such as Chile and South Africa, which were hot at that time. But also just basically I made an effort to develop a rapport between him and these other missions so that we could achieve our objective, which was this resolution about Cuba. To that end, I mean the White House moved mountains, President Reagan would call presidents of other countries to get them to vote in favor of our resolution, or at least to abstain.

Q: Did the Soviets play any particular role in what you were seeing there at the time?

MCKEE: They were not active in retrospect in the human rights commission or in the ILO or the other organizations, WHO, ITU. The country was actually beginning to fall apart a little bit. The most significant, I think, conversation I ever had in the Foreign Service was that my Russian opposite number. One of my duties was also to keep an eye on regional political issues. For example, while I was there, there were proximity talks between the Afghanistan resistance and the Soviets about the Soviets' leaving Afghanistan. And Cambodia was another regional issue, I got to know, my Soviet opposite number a bit. He called me once and asked me to come by for coffee in the Delegates' Lounge. It turned out that he was really quite distraught. He had come from a family of old Bolsheviks. His father had been a railroad engineer, what more Stalinoid occupation could there have been? He was brought up believing all this stuff. Of course the revelations of the '50s had some adverse impact. But what really hit him was his brother is coming back from serving the military in Afghanistan as a drug addict. He was just really concerned that the Soviet Union was falling apart. He made the point that, what are now the Turkic Republics in Central Asia, were all run by these family rival mafias that the USSR authorities were afraid to confront. But anyway, overall the answer to your question, I don't remember the Soviets being particularly active in these fora.

Q: How about the Arab bloc? Particularly vis a vis Israel. I mean I imagine this, did this take up quite a bit of your time?

MCKEE: Oh, absolutely, this was one of the biggest thing that the political counselor did. A whole bunch of pro-Arab resolutions would be introduced into every forum, including when the ICRC had one of its once-every-five-year meetings.

Q: The Red Cross.

MCKEE: Yes, the Red Cross, yes. While I was there, in every forum the Arab group would introduce resolutions. If it was in the ILO, it would be the Israeli suppression of Palestinian trade unions; in the WHO, it would be Israeli health practices that threaten the health of Palestinian children. And, mind you, there was a lot of sentiment among the representatives of the developing countries and also among the Europeans that this was true, that the Israelis did deserve to be censured and criticized. Of course this was not the view in Washington.

Q: What did you have, sort of an anti-Israeli sniffer that you put on everything that came out, or was it…

MCKEE: Well, that's not too far from the mark, although, we're not talking rocket science. These resolutions are published and you know who's sponsoring them and you know what they say.

Q: Were you able to beat them down?

MCKEE: Sometimes, but quite often the resolution would come out and we would either abstain or ours would be the only negative vote.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Israeli embassy?

MCKEE: The Israeli Mission, yes, I talked to them from time to time. But you know the Israelis' contempt for the UN matches the UN's contempt for Israel.

Q: I take it, for both professional reasons and sort of personal things, I mean you didn't care for this multilateral, multinational, what is it, multi…

MCKEE: Multilateral.

Q: Multilateral diplomacy. Which is a creature of its own.

MCKEE: Well it's very different from bilateral diplomacy. It combines the worse aspects of a grade school classroom and an insane asylum. Others find it challenging and rewarding, but I didn't. So an opportunity came up to go back to Pakistan, to the Consulate General in Lahore, and so I put in for it. Thanks to a couple patrons, Arnie Raphel, may he rest in peace, and Ed Abington, particularly, Bob Peck, may he rest in peace. I was assigned as Consul General in Lahore in 1988.

DAVID T. JONES
INF Negotiations Member
Geneva (1987-1989)

David T. Jones was born in Pennsylvania in 1941. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army overseas from 1964-1966. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1968, his postings abroad included Paris, Brussels, Geneva, and Ottawa. Mr. Jones was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: Today is March 3, 2000. '87-'89 in Geneva. What were you doing?

JONES: It's a little less than '87-'89, but what I'll try to talk about today is my experience with the INF negotiation at the end of the year, 1987, and the work that was done with the treaty ratification until the end of May 1988 and perhaps if we still have time I'll talk a bit about what I did in the following year, which was to have an Una Chapman Cox fellowship, a sabbatical. What I had been doing in the late summer of '87 was trying to find out what I was going to do next in the Foreign Service. I had been unable to work out an assignment. The assignment that I had to Pakistan was canceled because of family medial reasons. As a result, I stayed on in the Department. At that point, the most obvious suggestion was that I continued to work with Ambassador Mike Glitman on INF, which had been the major topic which I had worked on as the deputy in the Theater Military Policy Office in PM. In any event, for a couple of months as a result of that, I was Glitman's man coordinator in Washington on INF issues. Then, starting in late September, I moved to the U.S. delegation for the INF in Geneva. We were now at this point very much under the gun. The President had announced on September 18 that INF as a treaty had been agreed upon in principle. On September 20th, Glitman was supposedly told by the Secretary that they wanted the treaty done by October 20th, which made it potentially a very exciting month. It didn't turn out that way, but that was the initial impetus that we were given in late September. I arrived in Geneva on September 21st. Glitman had been coming from a different part of Europe. We met in Paris and went into Geneva together. I settled in in a curious role of being the major reporting and drafting officer for the delegation for the next two and a half months. This put me working also with the State Department representative at INF, a senior Foreign Service named Leo Reddy.

The exercise in Geneva was a very complicated, multifaceted, interagency exercise on the U.S. side and then dealing with the Russians on the other side. Within the delegation, we had representatives from each of the agencies – ACDA, OSD, JSC, and the State Department. At the same time at the head of the delegation there were actually two ambassadors, Mike Glitman and John Woodworth, a representative from OSD (Office of th Secretary of Defense) who was also tied personally to senior people in OSD or at least ostensibly he was to be responsible to them. Woodworth had been a longtime career DOD civilian with a great deal of experience at NATO, where I first met him in the late '70s, and then in various arms control capacities within the Department of Defense. He was indeed and still is a very knowledgeable individual on arms control and he remains a personal friend as well. But you can see what a dual-hatted, two ambassador situation and a multi-agency operation can bring in complexity. There was also a CIA representative initially. Each of them was also responsible to their home agencies and communicated by Official-Informal telegrams and "secure voice" as well as arguing their cases in Washington and in Geneva. Each side that thought themselves a loser in one set of arguments would then carry their argument either to their special representatives in Geneva or send their arguments back to their agencies in Washington so the arguments could be reviewed and renewed again. To handle our discussions, we worked many hours and almost every day in the "bubble," the secure facility within almost every embassy. These discussions would last hours and hours on many points. Then you would deal with the Russians. People dealt with the Russians on multiple levels. You had a substantial number of two-on-two negotiations in which Glitman and Woodworth would meet with their Soviet counterparts, Obukoff and Mekvedeff. You would have those meetings. Then you would have more complete groups of the INF delegations on steering groups. These often met twice a day. We would meet alternately in the U.S. delegation or we would go "down the hill" to where the Russians were centered. It was

always amusing as to how we would meet one another. It was as ritualized and formalistic as a May Day parade as we would walk in and the Russians would be standing in rank order line, and we would get out of our vehicles and walk through their rank order line shaking hands as we went through this exercise. When they came up the hill to see us, we would do exactly the same thing and there would be a yell throughout the delegation just before the time of their arrival that, "The Russians are coming!" mocking the movie title. We would rush into line knowing that holes would be left in the line for the people that were still rushing to make their spot. There were times when the Russians were virtually coming through the door and our people were hustling into position in order to shake hands and say, "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" or "Isn't it a beautiful rainy day today?" Then you would go into the conferences and discuss. The discussions were almost without exception led only by the senior people.

Later, as the negotiations became even more intense and the work became more focused on specific items, we broke down into groups handling each of the specific treaty protocols, one for verification and inspection, another for "elimination" or the destruction of the INF system. There were other people that were working on the exchanges of data which were highly statistical and highly intelligence related. Overall, there were people that were working on the format and the legal language associated with the treaty.

Q: Hanging over this whole thing, was there the feeling that the Soviet Prime Minister, Gorbachev, and the American President, Reagan, had been getting together… They wanted this and you guys had better come up with something?

JONES: Well, clearly, we had this impetus when the president had announced that the treaty was finished. It had to be worked out. But at the same time, there was an almost curious willingness by the delegation that we would sink the ship rather than have a bad treaty. There was not a single dove in this delegation. That didn't just mean that there was only a question of how fully plumed the hawks were. Any dove would have been eaten alive at the first bubble meeting. It simply wasn't that way. We perhaps by being willing to sink the whole treaty at the end regardless of how much we desired to get it, to complete it, we were absolutely convinced that we were still better off to have no agreement than to have a bad agreement or to have an agreement that was a good agreement in technical terms but couldn't be ratified.

Q: Were you getting any feel for your counterparts in the Soviet delegation, what they were working under?

JONES: In retrospect, my feeling is that they had an impetus to complete the treaty, but by no means did that entail being particularly cooperative. It was much more "Here is a problem, Americans. How are you going to solve it?" Certainly this was true on the technical end, "Here is a problem, Americans. You think this is so important. We're willing to take it another way. You find a way to solve it that won't bother us."

Q: In other words, the onus kept being thrown into the American lap?

JONES: Certainly that is the way we felt. You get yourself into a curious hothouse environment of enormous intensity and great pressure from all directions in this effort to complete it. At the

same time, there were certainly people in Washington within the office of the Secretary of Defense who did not care if it ever were completed. There were at least one or two people within the NSC who didn't care if it was ever completed. Toward the very end of this session, a representative in OSC, Frank Gaffney, who is still prominent in conservative circles and writes a column in the "Washington Times" about once a week, resigned because he was informed that he was not going to be promoted to Richard Perle's former position as the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs but, in effect, the primary person within the Office of the Secretary of Defense dealing with arms control issues. He resigned and said that we should slow down the INF process rather than push it forward. There was a representative within his office dealing with inspection, who was so ritualistically difficult that the difficulty could only be considered in my view obstructionism rather than principled concern that the very last conceivable possibility for verification had not been explored. So, yes, you did have a great impetus to get the job done, but you had some very serious conservative objections. They turned out to be objections that could be overcome, but they were overcome by a combination of great care during the negotiating process and the political impetus to move forward. There was also a degree of cooperation by the Russians that previously would not have been anticipated, a required degree of openness on their part which I think they found almost personally disconcerting, such as the degree to which information on intelligence holdings and specific holdings of different missiles and locations for them had to be provided to the Americans. There was one Russian military officer who said, "We don't even give this to our foreign ministry officials." Now they were forced to publish it in a data exchange. Each portion of these exchanges was clearly very painful for them. It was indeed as if they were making sacrifices, which in a more open society such as ours was information that wasn't being hidden. We had very little to hide, and they had, in the past, a great deal to hide. That is what made some of our problems particularly intense.

Our intelligence judgments and projections as to how many missiles of this nature they had were based on projections as to how many could be pushed out of a factory given certain production type runs. As a result, we had a high range and a low range. The Russian data figures came in much closer to our low end projection, which generated a conservative storm of criticism of saying, "Where are all these missing missiles? There is a hidden SS-20 force somewhere. We have to be able to find it." Then they would hypothesize a kind of anywhere, anytime, everywhere, all-the-time inspections in the Soviet Union, which were impossible and deliberately presented not to find the ostensibly missing SS-20 missiles but to make sure that the treaty couldn't be completed because their level of trust in the Soviet Union was so little under any circumstances that their position was that any agreement was worse than no agreement.

Q: Also, looking at production figures played to… We always assumed that the Soviets were more efficient than common sense would have told us they were from observing how they built other things, that factories were doing an extremely efficient job of producing missiles when they probably were not.

JONES: I'm not sure how the production projections were made, but if you think that they're going to run three shifts a day and push out missiles 365 days a year, and that this is their major focus to produce this missile rather than another one; then, at each level, you push the theoretical figures up. If you take other projections, you put the numbers further down. However, in the end, we would have been happier if they had come in a little closer to the midpoint in our estimates.

What it did was to make it harder for us to say where those missiles that we didn't find might have been and we had to find additional mechanisms to prevent the possibility that these theoretical missiles existed. We had to tie down and prevent any flight testing. We had to tie down and prevent any training in these systems. We had to tie down the movement of systems in and out of their major SS-20 production facility, which was also producing other missiles. So, we had to find devices and mechanisms that would allow us to inspect for SS-20s while not catching technical/intelligence information on their other missiles that were being produced at the same time. This required a lot of creative thinking and creative drafting. Then we had to find a facility on our part that would allow the Soviets an equal facility to inspect. We weren't producing that system anymore, but they still had to have something to inspect. We found a facility. We were able to find a method to inspect their facility that proved acceptable.

The work that I was doing there turned out to be an incredibly intensive drafting experience. Since I went to almost every steering group meeting and was debriefed by Mike on almost every one of his two-on-two sessions, plus doing the basic drafting requests for guidance from Washington on outstanding issues, plus doing end-of-week roundups on where things stood in the negotiations each week, plus writing Official-Informal telegrams to the PM Bureau and other people at State to keep them up to speed on what was happening, I never worked harder in my life for a more extended period of time than those months in Geneva. At the end, we counted up that I had worked 33 consecutive days. Our normal workday at the beginning of this process in September was 12 hours. At the end, it was at least 14. I by no means will say that I worked harder than most. The amount of work that I was doing was on the high end of the group, but there were many people that were working even longer hours and harder and, of course, with much more responsibility than I had specifically. I tried to be creative in the manner in which I did my drafting for guidance.

Q: Your piece of the action was to go around and draft for the different components? The technicians were working and then you would draft?

JONES: We would have the meetings and exchanges. I became very close to the person that would give the immediate record of what was most prominent that was happening in a special steering group meeting or what were the most immediate responses that were happening in the two on two meetings or what fresh guidance needed to be done, what was the status of old guidance or existing material, and what we were going to have to accomplish during this period. So, that was the kind of work that I did by and large.

Q: Was your feeling at the time that while you were all willing to go down with the ship if you had to, were the military members and the State Department members, were you a team or were you going in different directions?

JONES: The delegation in Geneva was a team. That's a reflection of the guidance and energy that Mike Glitman put into it. In the end, he managed to persuade and co-opt the agency representatives who were there, persuade them that what we were trying to do and the manner in which we were trying to do it was correct, and that there was nobody who had the slightest intention of selling us short by a millimeter. As a consequence over a longer period of time, the OSD ambassador, John Woodward, suffered professionally by not being more obstructive or

more difficult or more of a mouthpiece directly for his OSD principals. Instead, he stood on his principles and continued to push for the obtainable treaty. So, the group in Geneva was a very substantial "team" in that manner and worked on it very effectively. At the same time, my illustration of our willingness to accept a failure was the delegation photograph that was taken late in November. This was a ritualistic exercise in that the Russians would come over – perhaps in other years we had gone to the Russian delegation – and we would take joint delegation photographs of everyone who was there on this round of the negotiations. This time, we were in an absolute panic day. We were struggling to try to complete this exercise. We had just sat down and taken our formal photograph, and we were about to leap up and go away and back to our work when the executive secretary of the delegation, an Army Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Ankley, said, "Stop. Wait a minute." He went to the side and opened a box and out of the box he pulled a series of bags that had eyeholes on them labeled "INF delegation." Every single one of us was given a bag to put over our heads. This was to be the photograph of the "delegation in exile" if we failed. So, a number of us still have these bags – and I have mine framed and mounted as part of an INF memorabilia package. It is a juxtaposition of the delegation that succeeded and the delegation that failed. We were in hysterics as a result of this photograph session, but it reflected a reality that within days before the agreement was supposed to have been completed we were willing to take the ship down if it didn't meet our needs and satisfaction. Throughout the process, we also had people coming to Geneva to solve problems or to buck us up in one way or another. We had senior people from the Department and from Washington come at a couple of different junctures during these final days and final month to put additional impetus behind some of the specific issues. While I didn't mention that the entire structure for negotiating these nuclear arms control agreements was really quite complicated. INF was only one of three elements being negotiated. The other two elements with separate negotiations ongoing in Geneva were on strategic arms or START and on Star Wars, space armament, SDI. Over this entire structure there was a senior negotiator, subsequently the Counselor in the Department, Max Kampelman, a very senior and very longtime expert professional in various arms control general negotiating frameworks. He had a vested interest in how this entire process was running. Although it became clear over the months and over a couple of years that the only one that was going to be completed in the near term was an INF agreement, at the beginning of the process, there was at least some thought that each of the three would move forward in tandem and there would be one magnificent, overall, incredibly large agreement covering all aspects of nuclear armament. With considerable adroitness, the INF negotiators moved into a separate track policy in which each was able to move ahead at the speed that was appropriate for it and what the negotiating traffic could bear. But that still meant that there was this overall ostensible framework, one portion of which has never been completed. But this framework theoretically existed for many years and they still operate within the framework of how we were going about the negotiations. But what it did was lead Kampelman to come back about November 16th to deal with his senior counterpart on the Soviets side, Vorontsov, in effect waiting for him to turn up delayed progress on core issues in the treaty for somewhere between 10 days and two weeks, although people continued to struggle forward with more specific elements of it. Then finally on the 23rd and 24th of November, Secretary of State Shultz came to Geneva along with some senior people within the Department both in the European Bureau (Charlie Thomas came) and the Assistant Secretary from the Political-Military Bureau (Allen Holmes was there). Again they attempted to push forward some of the more specific problem issues and to generate more attention on the individual protocols that were being negotiated to try to solve problems of "elimination" and areas of that nature.

Probably by the end of November when the Soviets had provided technical information, official exchange of data, on the 24th of November, that indicated that they really were committed to completing the agreement also.

This final willingness of the Soviets on November 24th to provide this kind of information would have made it very difficult for them then to have walked away from a treaty. The amount of information that they provided, which had not previously been provided, assuming that it was accurate information, would have been a level of commitment on their part that would have been very difficult to walk away from and would have been considered a serious loss, a serious breach of Soviet security, if nothing had resulted from the exchange of information. Without us realizing that as clearly as we should have at the time, in retrospect, it would have been very difficult for them not to have completed the agreement having made this data exchange. This is why the data exchange was delayed as long as it was. They had information that we didn't have. We had information that was virtually public knowledge, almost down to the last millimeter of length of our systems. So, what they knew about us was perhaps 95% or more of the information. What we knew about them was maybe 50%. In the end, until they provided the information, we really didn't know how many systems they had. Then, of course, we got into the extended fight to prove the number of systems that they had provided but was accurate.

Q: When you say a "system," what do you mean?

JONES: What I meant was a missile that fell into the requirements of the INF treaty, the 500-5,000 kilometer range, that it was ground launched, either a ballistic missile or a ground launched cruise missile (a GLCM) and that it was a weapons carrying vehicle.

So, the last week of November and the first week of December '87 became an even more intense effort to get the Treaty language right and to complete the legal elements of it, and to have a legally acceptable treaty that would be signed. By then it had been announced that this treaty was going to be signed between Gorbachev and Reagan on December 7th. It didn't turn out to be December 7th because there were other people that said, "Do you know what December 7th is?" But there were, indeed, people whose sense of history was so minimal that signing the first significant arms control agreement with the Russians on Pearl Harbor Day was something that had slipped by them. You wonder still if there are people with a sense of history that feeble, but there are people that just missed that point. In any event, the treaty objective signing time was then to be on December 8th. But this didn't make it any easier. There is always a benefit to a forcing event, but all it does is ratchet up the pain rather than make it easier. People work longer hours and become more and more tired. Some years later, I saw a psychological study that said that when you're sleep deprived, it doesn't mean that you can't continue to work. You can indeed continue to work based on various stimulants whether they're simply coffee or whether they're anything more powerful than that. But what you lose is flexibility. You lose intellectual adroitness, a suppleness, a facility, a way to find an answer around a problem other than just continuing to hammer your head directly at the problem. Unfortunately, the brute force exercise of trying to complete the problems that way was what we often were forced to resort to. "Do you want this agreement or not?" "Alright, then this language, or this comma, or this word would have to be the ones that were agreed." Some of these exercises ended in very arcane studies of the Russian language versus the English language and the translation of each. One of these words

resulted in the exchange between one of our senior negotiators and the senior Russian negotiator. The senior Russian negotiator seized upon what was considered an infelicitous U.S. term, but, because it was delivered at such a senior level, it could not really be gainsayed. So, it then became our effort to find a Russian phrase and translation that would not damage us or harm the manner in which the treaty could be interpreted either by the Russians or by the U.S. Senate. As a consequence, our very adroit Russian translator spent a good deal of time with dictionaries and ultimately did locate a word that was sterile, old, but accurate Russian, and it was the term for our English word that we insisted upon. The Russians, of course, didn't like it because it deprived them of the flexibility that they had seen and seized upon. But in the end, it was the very last word in the treaty that was agreed. We left it at that. But the process itself had generated a level of exhaustion that left some of the people on our side virtually prostrate. At the end, we had one of these significantly memorable exercises where at midnight on December 6th, entering December 7th, we had a treaty signing, initialing essentially, ceremony between the head of the Russian delegation and Mike Glitman. We all gathered around this. We had glasses of champagne. We had tears from pure exhaustion. It was the first time that I had seen people cry from happiness. The combination of it was striking. We were just standing there, and all of a sudden there were just a whole group of people, including myself, with tears streaming down our face. It had taken so long and it had been such an incredible effort to get it to this point, which was as close to being the last minute as you conceivably could have.

We went from there to a very different type of exercise. You would think people who were going to fly to the United States would fly by civilian airlines, the Americans on our airlines, the Russians on their airlines. But instead, because we could see that we were going to need every minute and we just simply were not going to be able to depend on commercial air, we got a military aircraft to fly us to Washington. We took the senior Russians along with us, which was even more unique. We not only took the senior Russians along, we took their word processor, which was about the size of a small refrigerator. In the "refrigerator," buried in the core, was their copy of the text. Along with it came a little Russian secretary who had apparently typed every single word of every single aspect of their draft. We, at the same time, had it on what is now an absolutely archaic and totally antiquated disk. We took one disk with us which had our copy of the treaty in electronic form along with paper copies. On the off chance that the plane didn't make it, we FedExed copies of the disk to Washington at the same time. During the process of this exercise, we had a C-141, which I've you've never flown in a 141, it's like flying inside a vacuum cleaner. It is just incredibly noisy. It is designed to bring cargo and paratroopers. It's not designed to bring little old ladies politely from Los Angeles to Hawaii. But some of us fell asleep and we would wake up and eat a second bad lunch from the military rations that we had had. But during this process also, we had additional levels of initialing ceremony. Although the exercise was one in which two of the protocols had not been completed or not been officially initialed by the negotiators – and while we had initialed the main text and the elimination protocol in Geneva at midnight, we had not initialed the exchange of data memo of understanding or the inspection protocol. So, these were initialed with the Russians sitting on one side of a table in the front of the plane and Mike sitting on the other end of it. They would pass the papers from one to the next and we initialed it. To show you the creative aspect of the executive secretary, LTC Jeff Ankley, he sometime early on in the fall had gone out and purchased 50-75 ballpoint pens and made sure that each and every one of them worked by starting them. So, during the course of the original initialing at midnight, Mike sat with a pen and

he would initial it and then put the pen into a box, pick up another pen, initial it, and put that pen into the box. These pens were then that evening distributed to the individual members of the delegation. As the initialing went forward on the plane, we went up and handed Mike the pens that we had been given and he would use them to once again initial one of the protocols and give the pen back to us. So, that was that kind of creative exercise. It was very exhilarating; very exhausting. We arrived on the 7th. The treaty was initialed on the 8th. The people that went to the treaty signing were almost all in total those in Washington. The people that had done the work in Geneva got to see it on television at a party that we held separately at a Marriott hotel that was actually put on for us by a corporation that had contributed to it. We saw this happen and we saw Ronald Reagan say, "Trust but verify," which was the core of the agreement itself. From there, we started on the exercise to ratify the treaty.

We had to believe that the easy part of the entire experience was ahead of us, that we, having done all this work for so many years and having put so much effort into the completion of the treaty and with the President and Gorbachev having signed it in such a high level and highly visible operation, would have a relatively smooth and straightforward path to getting it ratified by the Senate. It turned out to be wrong. It was not as hard to get it ratified as it had been to get it negotiated, but it proved to be far more difficult than anybody had expected.

Q: Ever since the League of Nations treaty was rejected by the Senate, it's been an article of faith that you want to get some Senate representation on major treaties in at the beginning, at the takeoff as well as the landing. Had there been any such effort to keep informed or to keep the Senate knowing what was going on?

JONES: Yes. There are people that ignore history such as on the 7th versus the 8th of December. But these were not the people that were in the overall review of how the treaty was being negotiated. What you had for many years was a Senate oversight group, which was invited to come regularly to Geneva and look in on, discuss, and meet with the negotiators on both sides. For quite a number of years, we had this process and this group was supposed to be a relatively small group of people that were going to be there in the Senate likely a long time and had an interest in arms control, were not going to be constantly rotating because it did require a degree of expertise, and, as a consequence, also their staff people. So, the structure was there. Unfortunately, it didn't work as well as the structure should have in theory. What happened was, over a period of time, the entire negotiating process on arms control at large had gone very slowly. It was not really obvious until close to the end that we were likely to get an INF treaty. A certain number of people in the Senate, if the vote isn't on an issue that is going to take place tomorrow or that's not a constituency sensitive problem, don't pay a great deal of attention to it. The material associated with the treaty was complex, arcane, detailed, lengthy, and as a result not something that an individual normally sat down and cuddled up with. At one point, to illustrate to you that there were also slippages on the Senate side, we had a batch of questions directed to us from Senator Byrd's staff and office reflecting a treaty text that didn't exist anymore. It was old. But somehow they had never gotten him the updated, complete, final treaty text. But, no, we were aware of the need to get this through the Senate. We were particularly aware also of the need for Republican administration to get it through a Democratic Senate in an election year. Yes, this was a very popular treaty. It was endorsed by everyone from the VFW to the League of Peace. It was widely popular throughout the country. It was wildly popular within our European

allies, all of whom wanted it. It got to the point where Kissinger, who wasn't enthusiastic about the treaty, said that it should be approved because not approving it would be more damaging to NATO than approving it would be, which is the damming with faint praise that Kissinger is often able to do. But nevertheless, there was this definite inherent tension between the Executive and the Legislative Branch. The Senate had just returned to Democratic hands after six years in which they had not had controlled it. They had just resumed control of the Senate in '86. This circumstance meant that they were not going to be taken lightly. It became one of those instances where how do you endorse something that you know the Republicans want to use to run on in the next election without saying, "Gee whiz, the Republicans did such a great job. Isn't this wonderful? President Reagan's enormous expenditures of defense money have paid off with an INF treaty." At the same time, how do you turn down something that is very, very popular and essentially something that the Democrats had always wanted: more arms control. The people that wanted it least were the conservative Republicans. Why do we as liberal Democrats give something to this handful of conservative Republicans by being so obstructive that we then look as if we are just being deliberately destructive and political? The administration, after a very heavy initial dose of publicity associated with the signing itself did not go out as it had in SALT I, SALT II, and attempt with a group of people that we used to call the "SALT sellers," to beat up on any opposition and to sell the merits of the treaty throughout the country. Essentially, they felt that the treaty was selling itself. Indeed, it was and remained extremely popular throughout the entire process. The question became how to get it through all of the various hoops and over all of the hurdles that were being put in front of it. It became the view of the people that had negotiated it and were trying to get it through the Senate that the Democrats couldn't really oppose it, but they wanted to give it enough nicks and scars and damage to show that "we Democrats are smarter than you Republicans were," and this is not fatally flawed, but it's definitely not anywhere near as good as you'd like it to be. We're going to have to fix it up. So, the process was getting it through the process without having to accept reservations or amendments that would have been damaging, made it impossible for the Russians to ratify it, or force us back into negotiations with the Russians in a way that would protract the exercise even further. These were the problems. They became in the end at times almost as intensive and extensive to deal with as the original negotiations in Geneva.

Q: What was your role in this work?

JONES: My role was defined in the overall structure in which the operation was put together. Ostensibly, there was overall leadership out of the White House and an effort through the NSC to orchestrate extremely carefully all of the testimony and all of the responses to questions that were posed so that no one would be saying anything that would be contradicted by anybody else. Under that regime, each of the individual agencies, particularly DOD and JSC, and to a degree also the CIA and particularly the Department of State and the Arms Control Agency, had individual working groups that were set up for INF ratification. The State Department had an INF ratification task force that was headed by the previous State Department representative in Geneva, Leo Reddy, and I was the deputy for that task force. Ambassador Glitman, Mike, was set separately as a general resource for the community. He ended by testifying to more committees on more issues than anybody else. Although we were devoted obviously primarily to the Senate, we also did briefings for the House. This structure then within the Department of State had me as the deputy for this task force. There were other people from within the

Department of State, the European Bureau, the Political-Military Bureau, and in particularly the Intelligence and Research Bureau, who were designated as representatives on the task force. We were to do everything that we could to provide testimony, to provide speeches, to provide backup information, analysis, and among other things what turned out to be the longest, most complicated, most difficult process: to answer the questions that were posed by individual senators and official staff members. We had package after package of questions that were brought to us. Ultimately, we had more than 1,000 questions that came to us in packages, which were designed not just to ask questions about the treaty but to ask questions about virtually everything else that had the slightest connection with arms control and administration foreign policy. Because the administration was under the gun to answer these questions, we had to devise appropriate responses in one manner, shape, or form. As the questions came in packages, we also had made a decision that we would not return the questions as they were answered but return them as packages. Unfortunately, in almost every package, there was at least one problem question, a question perhaps on which the administration would be divided and which complicated answers – or ways to avoid an answer – had to be created. So, we had and were faced with this ongoing problem.

I was the orchestrator of these questions. Going back through my diary, all I can say is that for weeks and months we pushed this package forward, were answering questions on that package, or we handled another. The most complicated, labyrinthian, and extensive questions were asked by Senator Helms.

Q: Jesse Helms of North Carolina, an archconservative.

JONES: Whether "arch" or not, he was definitely a strong, direct, and committed conservative who believed that the treaty was wrong. He had some able staff members who created sometimes puerile but oftentimes difficult and intensely complicated questions which needed to be answered one-by-one-by-one. Then, having answered the questions, they had to be cleared legally. Then they had to be cleared with every other agency that had an input on this. As were the questions that were directed to their senior testifiers. You started with testimony. After the testimony, sometimes coincidental with it, and sometimes before it, you had questions. The questions had to be answered in one way or another.

We had another problem though. This is the problem of what was called the Abraham Sofaer Doctrine. Sofaer was the legal advisor to the Department of State at the time. He devised this doctrine in association with the Anti-Ballistic Missile or ABM Treaty. What he said was that the administration could make judgments or adjustments to what the text of the treaty said based on the classified record that we had held, whether or not that classified record had been shared with the Senate and whether or not that classified record perhaps was at variance with what the administration had said to the Senate officially in testimony. Well, as there was, as there is today, still an intensive ongoing debate as to what we should do in relationship to the ABM Treaty, Star Wars, the Strategic Defense Initiative, things of that nature, the Democratic Senate was certainly not going to let the Republican administration get away with a treaty, a brand spanking new shiny treaty, such as the INF treaty without making their points on the lack of validity, in their view, of the Sofaer Doctrine. So, they demanded was that the official record be presented to them. The official record then became a subject for intense negotiation as to what exactly

composed the official record. Finally, it was recognized that it would have been all of the formal presentations that we made and all of the specific direct accounts of the meetings themselves, not, however, our request for guidance or our backchannel Official-Informals. But reconstructing the official record itself became a major exercise on our part for an extended period. What I had done was the quick, extended summaries of these individual meetings and these steering group meetings that were being held in Geneva. There were also, however, semi-verbatim records of these negotiations and discussions that had not been completed simply because they were very long, and the people that were doing them in some instances were very much engaged in doing other things. For example, the translator-interpreters who were present at the two-on-two meetings between Glitman and his counterparts were to be done by the interpreters who had been taking notes as they accompanied the principals. But they for many other reasons had not produced the full text. So, this full text had to be produced, and it had to be negotiated as to what exactly was being given to the Senate, who would have access to the documents and under what circumstances they could be read. No copies of them were to be made. Things of this nature. Eventually, we set up something like five cubic feet of documentation to be held in a room in which senators or very specifically designated Senate staff were to be permitted to go and read. In the end, virtually nobody looked at them. Certainly, nobody spent any extended period of time on them. It was simply another exercise in political accountability rather than technical accountability of the negotiations themselves. But we did have a very extended set of discussions. The Intelligence Committee testimony was almost all classified. We had testimony before the Senate Armed Forces Committee and then before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. While the Foreign Relations Committee, headed by Senator Pell, was willing and indeed eager to get the treaty through, the Armed Services Committee was less enthusiastic or more skeptical and more focused on generating questions and creating a more intense analysis of the treaty. This was headed by Senator Nunn. While Senator Nunn has and retains a well deserved reputation for intelligence and concern for defense issues, he can also get himself and has gotten himself into situations where one wonders why he is taking the position that he is. Aside from that, I'll never quite understand why Senator Nunn decided to oppose U.S. participation in the Gulf War to the degree that he did. But he did. I think politically and historically, we suffered for it. Likewise, I am profoundly skeptical of his technical reasons for finding ostensible fault with the INF treaty, but he came up with two objections. One was what was called the "Double Negative Problem." This related to a relatively obscure portion of the treaty, which stemmed from the fact that the Russians used the first "stage" of their SS-20 in their SS-25 as well. So, while they were banned from producing this particular stage of the SS-20, they did not want to be caught in a situation where we would prohibit them from producing the SS-25 as well. But at the same time, neither could we permit an unlimited exception that they could simply produce endless "stages" for a missile that really could be the SS-20 as well. So, what we did was to devise a relatively complicated exception which said that a missile stage section which was outwardly similar but not interchangeable with another missile was permitted on a one time circumstance. We could do it as well. We could produce one stage of the Pershing II if we wished to for another missile so long as it was not directly interchangeable with a Pershing II. Senator Nunn chose to see that as a "double negative" in which he argued that that would allow them to produce a stage that was outwardly in effect interchangeable with the SS-20. Our answer as the negotiators was that, no, it wouldn't; something that was identical and interchangeable with an SS-20 stage would be an SS-20 stage and, therefore, banned. That was one portion of the Senator's argument.

Then there was another one which we got involved in arguing. It was called the "Futuristic Debate." This was an exercise in what conceivably could be done with future systems that might fall into the range that the INF systems included. We got ourselves wrapped terribly around the axles in whether there were "black," compartmented systems that people were conceiving of, whether you had some sort of Star Wars phaser type of weapon that conceivably could be mounted on a ground launched cruise missile. We then began arguing over what was a weapon and what wasn't a weapon. A problem for us became there, if you managed to create some sort of an exception for a ground launched cruise missile that wasn't carrying a warhead but theoretically might at some future time carry something that might be regarded as a weapon, you left yourself totally open for the Soviets to do the same thing. The problem was that there was simply no way to distinguish between a ground launched cruise missile carrying a conventional warhead or some future system and a ground launched cruise missile that was carrying a nuclear warhead. So, we had had to ban them all. But in this argument over what future weapons would be, we got ourselves into a situation where we exchanged letters between Shultz and Shevardnadze but the exchange didn't satisfy the Senate. It satisfied the people that weren't looking for invidious misunderstanding, but it didn't satisfy the most lawyerly of lawyers. So, the team including Shultz went back to Geneva on the 13th of May. I wasn't with this group. Shultz left and announced that agreement had been reached and everything was fine; then the negotiators, Glitman and his Soviet counterpart, spent 10 hours negotiating on a paragraph that lasted all night long, the contents of which I have not the slightest idea, except that, in some way, it was an effort to nail down finally, completely, and absolutely that ground launched cruise missiles would not be involved in any future weapons. Of course, what we have done is to use ALCMs [air launched cruise missiles] and SLCMs [sea launched cruise missiles] to handle any of these futuristic type weapons or to handle the navigational type radar, the observation type systems that will surveil the battlefield. The fact that we set them aside for ground launched cruise missiles and prohibited them really hasn't restricted us in the slightest. But the process, from something that people had blithely imagined was going to be finished sometime in March after a Christmas break allowed people to relax a bit and organize themselves for a quick run through the entire treaty and a rapid ratification, just started to drag. The more it started to drag, the more people got worried, that something was going to go wrong, somehow that would foul it up, somehow the obstacles that were being put forward, in our view created artificially, were going to lead people to a sense of exhaustion. We feared a conclusion of "well, no, we weren't going to be able to get it done; maybe we had better defer it until after the election." The President and the executive branch created another force in that regard. That was that they were going to go to Moscow, have a summit. At the summit, they were going to sign the treaty officially and formally, and exchange ratification instruments. This created what was an artificial deadline but which became the forcing event to push people out of the committees, out of the committee discussion, end the endless rainstorm of questions, and actually move us to official debate within the Senate. We knew that if we could get the treaty to the floor, there wasn't any question that it would be able to be done. In a test vote earlier, there had been something like a 91 to six vote on it. That had made it clear that it wasn't going to be a problem – if we could get it there to have it voted upon. So, for essentially the last week in May, we moved our operation from the State Department to the Senate. Again, we over-prepared. We created huge briefing books for both individual senators and for the leaders in this debate. We wrote floor speeches for people that we assumed would be sympathetic. Most of them were never used. We created answers to every question. We created responses for every amendment that we believed might be

presented, trying to beat back even the most ostensible motherhood-type of amendments such as "You will adhere to all previous treaties as well as to this treaty" or "We think that this treaty should be done in conjunction with conventional forces reductions," all of the things that sounded good that would either make it almost impossible to get the Russians to agree to it or would tie the hands of the administration in further negotiations. Well, this was possible finally. We sat in the Senate and listened to a lot of people make sometimes a little better educated presentations than others did, but for the most part, "speak for the record." In the end, we did indeed finish it with a situation that was predicted: the vote was 93 to six. That obviously reflected overwhelming satisfaction by everybody. But we had, of course, Jesse Helms able to vote against it. Among others, one of the more puzzling people that voted against it was Fritz Hollings. He is supposed to be so ostensibly noble, and one of the people that pursued Nixon throughout his career. I have never quite understood why Hollings elected to vote against the treaty. Helms I could understand. He just simply opposed the treaty and opposed anything to do with the Russians.

Q: What was the feeling? Was it postpartum blues?

JONES: I think there is always a degree of that. I remember noting the fact that there was a sadness in a way that this incredibly long effort had finally come to an end even though it had been the successful end that we had all sought. We did do a little bit of "after action" work to the extent of going around to people in the Senate, to staffers, and to people within the Department to try to determine what lessons we should learn from this – lessons that we thought were going to be applied perhaps fairly quickly to a START treaty, which again people thought was much closer to being completed than it turned out to be and much more complicated.

START almost had to start over again. But we did a series of what I think were useful, even thoughtful, analyses of what it meant to deal with the Senate under these circumstances, why we had had problems associated with this exercise, and what might be done to do it better.

Q: While you were having these questions, were you doing any checking with your Soviet colleagues to make sure you weren't getting out of bounds?

JONES: I would tend to say no, except on a couple of very specific areas. There were some extremely technical points that we did have to make almost tiny wording changes. Although we had all read the treaty itself, the text of the treaty, literally 100 times, we found there were tiny little grammatical difficulties. In some cases, they were periods or a word or things that were missing that we had to send a corrigendum (correction document) on these. We did have exchanges with the Russians to try to fix some of these points on "futures" and on the "double negative" to resolve these issues that had been generated by the Senate Armed Services Committee. But the thousand questions plus themselves, no, we didn't go back to the Russians.

Q: Did you have any feeling that proponents of missiles – cruise missiles and land based intermediate range missiles – within the military, within the Pentagon, were there any people that you had the feeling were going around, behind, whispering to people in particularly the Senate staff trying to sabotage this? There is always a camp of people. Maybe they build the missiles or they've been trained in the missiles and want to keep these things.

JONES: I would say less so than might be imagined, particularly not within the uniformed and military services. There were certain people – Richard Perle and Frank Gaffney in particular within the Office of the Secretary of Defense – who believed that (and this was certainly true with the concept of a conventionally armed cruise missile) that this particular type of system on a ground launched basis had a great potential. What has happened is, they have been proved right in the potential of accuracy from this type of missile. But we have used it from air platforms and sea platforms instead – and not nuclear. But we have now the incredible, precision guided munitions that are able to land within a square meter. If those had been retained on a ground launched missile basis, presumably they would be just as effective as the air and sea launched systems. It just turned out that it was impossible to make any distinction between the nuclear armed and the conventionally armed cruise missile. They simply were identical. You could not tell the difference. You could stand there and verify that "this was a conventional cruise missile and have your hand on it." You left the base and people would pull out a nuclear warhead from a bunker and it would be a nuclear armed cruise missile instantly. It was simply that easy to make an exchange. But within the uniformed services, they believed what in the end many of us believed: that the entire INF treaty was a very important but very limited first step in an arms control regime with the Soviet Union. The INF systems were very important for the Europeans, far more than they were for us. It was at best a secondary system so far as what the U.S. was using for its military and political security. For the Europeans, it was on a far higher basis. What we managed to do was to eliminate not just for the Europeans but for a variety of our Asian allies what was perceived as a specifically threatening system designed against them. Nobody bothered to argue or discuss the fact that strategic systems can always "shoot short." People elected to view this reality with a degree of psychological blindness that can be amusing but is, nevertheless, real that "if these systems aren't designed specifically to hit us, we won't be hit." Therefore, the Europeans saw the INF systems and designed to specifically threaten them. As a result, we first created the counter with our deployments and then finally the effort to eliminate them all, which was very satisfying to the Europeans.

Q: In many ways… The deployment of an SS-20 and our counter, these were really political moves anyway.

JONES: Yes, they were. They were not militarily useless. They had very specific military rationales for their deployments. But the stimulus for them was certainly political. As a result, in the end, they were argued for and against on a political basis in many instances, seen as a major political counter, and played in a very political way within Europe and then also by the Soviets in saying, "Well, look, this is part of our overall European homeland. Look at what we have done with you Europeans to demonstrate genuinely our desire for peace." So, there were political, psychological "propaganda" advantages to the elimination thereof just as there had been political advantages to their initial deployment.

But, no, to step back, I will once again emphasize that I don't think the uniformed military services were objecting, certainly not in any significant way that I ever encountered, to the treaty. They did buy onto it. Perhaps some of them bought onto it in the same way that senior military figures will indeed accept civilian control and resign if they object. If the most senior people in your civilian establishment say, "This is what we should be doing, Admiral So and So," they will

say, "Yes, Sir." We can believe when we disagree personally with what our major political leadership is doing that it wasn't a smart idea and we would appreciate a little more military objection to our political leadership decisions, but in the end, no. You really have to have military services that support the executive's decision or resign.

Q: This takes us up to when?

JONES: Essentially to the end of May 1988.

G. CLAY NETTLES
Economic Counselor
Geneva (1990-1993)

G. Clay Nettles attended the University of Alabama and served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956. In 1957 he entered the Foreign Service, having taken the exam during his final year of Law School. Mr. Nettles's postings included Japan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Lebanon, Pakistan, Zaire, Italy, Turkey, and Switzerland. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1997.

Q: Where did you go from there, Clay?

NETTLES: I went to Geneva in 1990 as economic counselor at our mission there. Primarily, the mission is for the international organizations which are based in Geneva, mostly United Nations organizations, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the International Red Cross, and various environmental organizations.

It was a good retirement post. We had good people working in the section. There was enough to do, but it was basically a nine to five job except when there were meetings going on in your area of responsibility. Then you could be very busy and work all night on the weekends. But, I still had a lot of time to travel within Europe. This was my first real European assignment and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Q: Even though Ankara was in the European bureau, Ankara is in Asia Minor. Let's talk a little bit more about the organization of the mission on the economic side in Geneva. The Office of the Trade Representative had an office there too, I believe, that handled GATT and trade negotiations which was not under you or in your section?

NETTLES: Correct, we worked very closely with them. The principle UN agency for which we had responsibility was UNCTAD which is part of the UN General Assembly. It is based in Geneva and it was seen as the UN agency primarily devoted to the developing countries. There would be meetings of all types which, of course, we attended. When the major meetings occurred, USTR would have a representative there, too, but we had primary responsibility. Unfortunately, UNCTAD had not fulfilled its early promise. It had a very low reputation.

Q: A very low reputation with whom?

NETTLES: With everyone. To give a good example of that, every four years there would be a meeting of UNCTAD almost always outside Geneva where major issues would be discussed. However, it was very difficult to find a developing country who would host such a meeting. It took five years instead of four until Colombia finally agreed to host a meeting.

When I arrived, the ambassador at our mission there, who was very capable, said, "UNCTAD is a very ineffective organization. We have withdrawn from ECOSOC because it was not effective and it was wasteful. Should we do the same for UNCTAD?" I said, "First of all, we can't withdraw from it completely because it is a body of the UN General Assembly, so we would still have to pay our contribution for it. Secondly, tactics are very important. If UNCTAD collapses, it shouldn't be seen as the fault of the Americans so since we have this major meeting coming up in a year, we should have a major campaign to persuade not just the developed countries, but the developing countries that if we don't have fundamental reforms of UNCTAD, then UNCTAD will just be a travesty - a joke." Washington supported this view. The U.S. government worked very hard and tried to persuade others, especially the developing countries that UNCTAD had to be reformed if it was going to be an effective organization. Our efforts paid off. We met for a month in Cartagena, Colombia and were able to accomplish significant reforms within UNCTAD, much more than I thought would be possible. It was an ideal way to end one's service, feeling that one had accomplished something.

Q: And, you really had a game plan, a strategy that you had developed at the Mission in Geneva? It probably couldn't have been developed say in Washington, because there probably wasn't that much interest in UNCTAD, or nobody really had the time or energy to think it through. You were able to do that because you were on the scene and got the support of the ambassador. Who was the ambassador?

NETTLES: Maurice Abrams was the ambassador. I want to give full credit to IO, the International Organization bureau within the State Department. They took UNCTAD very seriously and they gave full support, particularly Melinda Kimball who was the DAS and who actually headed our delegation in Cartagena. I gave the initial idea, but Washington supported it fully. Much of the work, if you were going to get other countries involved, had to be done outside of Geneva by demarches in foreign capitals and, of course, IO had to be the one to draft those demarches. That went on for a full year.

Q: What was the position of the Secretary General of UNCTAD? Was he resisting changes and reforms to make it a more effective and efficient organization?

NETTLES: Not really, but he was a somewhat of a controversial figure which as you know he was a Ghanian. He was a likeable person, but he had a different constituency. He had the U.S. advocating reforms and many developing countries resisting - very similar to the situation in the UN General Assembly. He was a capable individual, and once he had the developing countries themselves pushing for basic reforms, he could work with the different groups. He was very good in that sense, but he was not a natural leader. He was not an improvisor, but a capable individual and certainly likeable.

Q: When we talk about reform, not just of UNCTAD, but of the United Nations system as a whole, I think one of the proposals that we've made or perhaps the Secretary General of the United Nations has made or has been encouraged to make is to consolidate some of the economic functions of the UN system. I think some of those economic functions included UNCTAD - I'm not sure what else, ECOSOC, UNIDO, maybe, and to pull all those functions together. Is there a lot of duplication and overlap, would you say from your experience?

NETTLES: Not a great deal of overlap I don't think, but, for example, ECOSOC used to meet every year in Geneva and, of course, we would have a great deal of responsibility for that. We changed it to every other year, but there is no reason why we should meet in Geneva or any place outside of New York. There was some duplication, but duplication is not the major problem with the UN in economic functions.

Q: What is the major problem, would you say?

NETTLES: Unrealistic expectations of developing countries. Too often, the developing countries want the UN to do things or draft some resolution which the developed counties, particularly the U.S., are not willing to do.

Q: Or, even if a resolution is adopted over, say the vote of the United States, or even with our abstention, does it change anything?

NETTLES: I think our goal that the OECD should be the role model for UNCTAD. The OECD is an organization which has no real power per se. It cannot force a country to do anything, but, because of its technical research and the respect it has, when they issue guidelines which are agreed upon by everybody, these are accepted. It is a meaningful organization. We felt that this should be the model for UNCTAD and for UN economic organizations in general.

Q: This was your only assignment in the area of multilateral diplomacy, although you had gone to many OECD meetings and maybe others when you were in the Economic Bureau? What kind of observation would you have about that dimension of our diplomacy? Is it something you enjoyed or would you have liked to do more or probably less or no more?

NETTLES: I did enjoy it, but I prefer bilateral work. I'm glad the bulk of my service was bilateral as opposed to multilateral work.

Q: Where you could deal with real people about real problems, but where, not only, you could report, but sometimes exercise influence?

NETTLES: Right.

Q: What else about Geneva - anything else or does that pretty well wrap it up?

NETTLES: I think that pretty well wraps it up.

Q: I think you retired in Geneva?

NETTLES: I should add one thing - we were also, the Economic Section, had the responsibility for the environmental organizations based in Geneva.

Q: The United Nations Environmental Program is based in Nairobi, I think. What sort of organizations or meetings are you talking about that took place in Geneva?

NETTLES: There were about 15 different environmental organizations based in Geneva.

Q: Did you have any presidential visits or other major visits while you were there?

NETTLES: Yes, but none that affected me directly, but the President came so often that I was told that it was the only mission to which the Department did not send an advance team.

We did have a visit from then Senator Gore who was very interested and came because of his environmental concerns. One of the people working for me was his "control officer" and spent three days with him and he came to a Country Team meeting. He was very persuasive in what he had to say about his environmental concerns.

Q: Did you get involved with the Swiss government or Swiss officials or things in Geneva other than the international organizations?

NETTLES: None with the Swiss government per se, but the Swiss, although not a member of the UN itself, are members of various UN organizations. They assign some of their top officers to these organizations and I worked very closely with some of them.

Q: Geneva is a very expensive city, but did you enjoy living there?

NETTLES: Yes I did, but, as you know, the State Department has a system of providing a cost of living allowance which supposedly equalizes it to the cost of living in Washington, DC. I thought that worked very well.

Q: Okay, and in 1993 you retired in Geneva, because you wanted to travel in Europe a little bit more?

NETTLES: Exactly, and I spent a month traveling and staying in Spain and Portugal. By car and a month traveling by train in Austria and Italy.

STEPHEN J. LEDOGAR
US Representative, Conference on Disarmament
Geneva (1990-1997)

Ambassador Stephen Ledogar was born in New York in 1929, and received his BA from Fordham University. He served overseas in the US Navy from 1949-1952. Ledogar entered the Foreign Service in 1959 and was posted in Montreal, Milan, Quang Tri Province, Saigon, Paris, Brussels and Geneva. He was Interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Today is April 11, 2001. Steve, you arrived in Geneva in 1990?

LEDOGAR: Very early '90, yes.

Q: You were there for seven years?

LEDOGAR: Seven and a half years. I left Geneva and retired from the Foreign Service in May of 1997.

Q: We'll start there. Your title when you went to Geneva was what?

LEDOGAR: Ambassador and U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

Q: In '90, the Soviet Union was still in existence, but things were beginning to move rather rapidly. What was the situation when you got there vis a vis your work?

LEDOGAR: First of all, let me point out that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) was a direct descendant of the old UN Disarmament Committee. In 1990 the CD included 40 nations. The CD was autonomous in many respects except it was dependent upon the United Nations for rations and quarters, for funding, including office spaces and interpreters. Our meetings took place at the UN headquarters in Geneva. But the Conference on Disarmament had a rotating chairman. (The original arrangement had been an alternating U.S.-Soviet chair). Importantly, it worked by consensus, not by voting, as the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, and most UN Committees did.

Q: 40 nations by consensus?

LEDOGAR: 40 nations by consensus, which is not easy. That figure of 40 members initially diminished because when the two Germanies merged, we went to 39; when Yugoslavia fell apart, we went to 38. So the CD had 37-38 members for most of the time that I was U.S. Representative. At the same time there was increasing pressure over the course of the period I was there, which was seven and a half years, for CD expansion. Eventually in 1996, the Conference on Disarmament was expanded to 60 members, which it is today.

Q: Did it include Israel?

LEDOGAR: Yes. That was an expansion country.

Q: Why didn't it include it at the beginning? Was it just that this was considered at a state of war all the time, so it would just be unworkable?

LEDOGAR: I don't know. I wasn't around at that time, but it was a controversial country. For the most part, the early members were admitted two or three at a time and were less controversial. That was pretty much what the case was. When we went to the expansion from the old format of 40, which by that time was 37-38, to 60, it was a conscious attempt to change from the Big-Five plus non-controversial nations to add nations which were essential to the disarmament process.

Q: Was China in the original group?

LEDOGAR: China was in the original group, yes.

Q: When you got there, how did you see the prospects? What were we trying to get to?

LEDOGAR: When I got there, there was a long-festering negotiation on chemical weapons, which was just then in the process of being revivified. The reason for that is that the United States and the Soviet Union had recently gotten together and agreed that they would really be serious about chemical weapons. The period immediately prior to my arrival in Geneva, the era of Gorbachev's Glastnost and Peristroika, included a meeting at the U.S.-Soviet summit level in Wyoming which produced a memorandum of understanding on the whole subject of chemical weapons. Then there was another summit in Malta. That produced yet again some major moves on chemical weapons, so that by the time I got to the CD in Geneva, the chemical weapons issue was ripe for progress, whereas in prior years it had been just drifting along with everybody repeating their positions. Very importantly - and here I'm jumping ahead a little bit - we were soon into the Persian Gulf War. The United States CW (Chemical Weapons) position up to that point was that we would reduce chemical weapons but we would not agree to eliminate them. By the time I got into the issue, the combination of Wyoming and Malta had produced a basic change in the U.S. position to the extent that we would agree in negotiations to reduce our stockpile down by 98% to two percent, but that final two percent would be held until such time as we, the U.S., were convinced that it was safe to go to zero. We wouldn't negotiate a firm commitment to go to zero. That two percent represented the modern weapons in the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile of the so-called binary sort. Binary chemical weapons are weapons where the precursors to the final lethal substance are side by side in the bomb or shell, but not yet mixed. When the weapon is launched, either through an artillery tube or from an airplane, the trajectory to the target causes a process of mixing in flight so that when the missile arrives, it contains a lethal nerve gas. But otherwise, as the name suggests, it is much safer to handle because there are two non-lethal components.

Recognizing that the whole U.S. stockpile of unitary chemical weapons was in bad shape, beginning to deteriorate, and even becoming dangerous to us while in storage, the United States Congress ordered it destroyed. So the U.S. was in the process of gradually eliminating its own unitary chemical weapons. So, it wasn't much of a concession for us to say that we would go towards this two percent goal. But since we were going to keep two percent, we could not join with others who made a call for an immediate prohibition on any use of chemical weapons. Such weapons still factored into our national security arrangements and were in the hands of troops, including frontline troops stationed in Germany. That was a stumbling block when I arrived. The U.S. position opposed a blanket prohibition on use.

Q: What were you getting before you went out there? What was the military side of why we needed this?

LEDOGAR: The U.S. Chemical Corps had been in existence since World War I, and it was as natural to the organization of the United States Army as almost every other branch to a professional military man. But CW were always a pain in the rear end to military commanders because they had to have their troops trained and equipped for fighting in the chemical environment. That meant the big cumbersome, protective suits and the gas masks and our troops would have to carry antidotes to nerve gas and so on.

There had been a curious and fortunately substantial amount of time between when I left my previous job in Vienna and when I was able to show up in Geneva to take over in the CD. It had to do with personnel matters. My predecessor in Geneva wanted to stay on an extra month or two. I needed Senate confirmation in the new job. Thus, while waiting, I was able to go through fairly extensive training, including visiting chemical weapons facilities throughout the United States: the plant where we were making binary weapons, the places where all our unitary weapons were stored, the school where they teach U.S. troops and did the training for chemical weapons. I put on a hot suit and went into a live chemical weapons environment and actually handled a little bit of the bad stuff. It was a confidence building thing they gave to the soldiers. I developed a fairly good background in CW. I was also exposed to a little bit of the chemistry, the laboratories up in Aberdeen, Maryland where they did research on chemicals. So I was able to have a fairly good exposure to the subject matter. Then we were soon into the confrontation with Iraq in the Persian Gulf.

Q: It started in August of '90 and ended in February or so.

LEDOGAR: "Desert Shield" was about a six month period during which the U.S. and coalition allies built up our in-theater military presence and then when the shooting started, "Desert Storm" was rather rapid. Now for our negotiation, that was very important because prior to the coalition assault our intelligence indicated that the Iraqis had chemical weapons deployed forward. They had used them not only in their war with Iran, which immediately preceded "Desert Storm," but they had even used them against their own population, the Kurds in northern Iraq, who were not acting properly according to Saddam Hussein. The Kurdish Iraqis were subjected to nerve gas bombings by their own military. So Saddam was not the least bit shy about the use of CW and had a proven capability. The U.S. forces brought along our chemical defensive gear and we inoculated our soldiers against certain kinds of biological threats and the soldiers had the wherewithal to inoculate themselves. But to my knowledge, the U.S. did not bring into the theater our own offensive chemical weapons. Rather, we decided that we were going to employ just conventional weapons using our protective gear and standard tactics to blast through.

It's a pretty interesting subject. When you get down to actual war fighting as opposed to psychological warfare and static defense, there is a limited military role to chemical weapons, especially in mobile warfare. You can deny a geographical zone with persistent chemical agent, but with the straightforward nerve gas that does not stick around, once you've launched it and

the wind comes along and blows it away, that's that. Or it can get back in your own face and so forth. But in our conventional arsenal, we had and still have a system which is a multiple launch rocket system [MLRS], essentially a track vehicle with dozens of tubes, each loaded with a small rocket. These things could be armed in various ways, but if you wanted to deny an area to the enemy, you could use proximity fuses and fragmentation warheads and thus obliterate anything that was above ground in the geographical attacked area, which is pretty much the same role as a persistent chemical agent has. So, the point of all of this is that the U.S. military proved to themselves that they were not only just as well off but were probably better off without hauling around our own chemical weapons with all the logistical and political baggage that goes with them. When that conflict was over, as it was in very short order, the Washington political powers were able to obtain an agreement from Pentagon military leaders that it would be okay for the U.S. CW negotiating position in Geneva to join the protocol that would call for total elimination (going to "zero"). Therefore the U.S. could live with a prohibition on "use." So that helped to stimulate our negotiation.

Q: At the time, I think chemical weapons of one sort or another were considered the poor countries' response to the rich countries' nuclear weapons.

LEDOGAR: That was always the belief. People had started talking in terms of "weapons of mass destruction" and that included nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Of those, the cheapest and probably the easiest to acquire technologically were the chemical weapons. So it was thought from the point of view of a number of less developed countries, that having a chemical capability would be kind of an offset against the nuclear capability of major powers.

On the other hand, it's interesting that during "Desert Storm" the issue arose publicly, and the U.S. Administration was asked by the U.S. press whether we would rule out the use of chemical weapons. The answer was, "We won't rule out anything. Conflict is under way. We will not rule out anything in the course of this conflict." The follow-up question was, "Not even nuclear weapons?" The Vice President, Dan Quayle, said, "We don't rule out anything," making the threat that we would see possible linkage or an escalatory justification if the other side used chemical weapons.

Incidentally, if you ask whether the Iraqis did use chemical weapons in defense of their occupation of Kuwait, for the most part, the answer was "No." It may be that in certain places some chemical agents were released because munitions stores were blown up or something like that. But it would have been accidental. According to the best that I was able to read about CW in that war, the Iraqis had the capability of manufacturing chemical weapons but they didn't seem to have mastered the problem of shelf life. So what they were doing in the years before in the Iranian conflict was sort of pumping the stuff out of the factories, shipping it to the front, and firing. But over the long period leading up to the actual beginning of the shooting, i.e., during Desert Shield, we thought we had a pretty good line on where the Iraqi chemical capability would be. They did have good political control over it. To the best of our knowledge, there never was an attempt to authorize its use and release it. But our troops took their injections, put on their suits, and rolled straight forward with a blitzkrieg that rolled up the Iraqi forces in a few days.

Q: What was the Soviet attitude towards chemical weapons? Was that changing?

LEDOGAR: Yes, it was. Under Gorbachev, to the consternation of a lot of hardliners in the Soviet military, the USSR was apparently serious about entering into a CW prohibition. Indeed, they were quite constructive during the course of the CW negotiations. For them, and this is true even today, the problem was becoming and indeed it became one of a lack of economic resources necessary to destroy the weapons. So almost from the get-go in the negotiations, the Soviets and later Russia started trying to work out some arrangement other than the obvious one that they would have to pay themselves for destruction. Everybody else figured, "You guys have got these things and this is a convention about the destruction of all chemical weapons, all chemical weapons manufacturing facilities, storage facilities, and so forth. So, you possessors have to pay." The Soviets and then pretty soon the Russians recognized that this would present a terrible financial problem. They had by far the largest CW stockpile. We had a lot, but Russia's CW arsenal relative to ours was on the order of 40:28, or so. It was an enormous amount.

We had started pilot plant CW destruction independent of the negotiation. The first facility was out in Tooele, Utah. This pilot plant was to improve the technology and hardware for what was to become eight U.S. destruction facilities around U.S. territory and possessions, one of which was on an island in the middle of the Pacific. But essentially, the U.S. decision was to destroy chemical weapons in place or as close as possible to the military installations on which they were stored. The political problems and the environmental uproar and everything else about moving these weapons around the country were daunting. Indeed, during my period before going to Geneva, I visited Tooele among other facilities. The pilot destruction plant there proved itself. The technology was high temperature incineration. There were other technologies being explored at the time. The Russians were fooling around with a bunch of other technologies, especially reverse synthesis, i.e., you start to subject the agent to chemical processes that would reverse the process by which it had been made. The trouble is that way you create an awful lot of by-product, that while perhaps not lethal, was very bad for you and for the environment. You get twice as much in bulk waste than when you started. They were also trying out a technology that had to do with taking the weapons and dropping them into pools of liquid nitrogen. That would just shatter the CW warhead. But then you still had to deal with the substances that came out of the nitrogen and they were hazardous. So the technology that's used even today, the one that proved successful, was just high temperature incineration.

Q: You arrived there in 1990. What did your delegation consist of?

LEDOGAR: First of all, I'd like to make sure that people understand that the Conference on Disarmament is essentially a permanent forum. It deals with an agenda that is designed to change as disarmament problems are addressed and solved. So the Conference on Disarmament, in addition to work on CW, would have an agenda that included a wide variety of problems that were not yet ripe for negotiation, or that were being finished off, or that were still in a prediscussion phase. We had discussions but not negotiations on a half dozen different subjects. One of them when I got there was on nuclear testing. At the time of the chemical weapons negotiation, a ban on underground nuclear testing was an agenda item that was put there by others, but the United States was sort of politely saying, "Yes, but not now." We had other attempts to see if we could get the process of negotiations started on things like outer space, small arms, land mines, etc.

So the Delegation included representatives from all of the U.S. national security agencies. We therefore had people from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the Department of Energy, from the Department of State, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the CIA, and others.

One of the first things I noticed in Geneva was that there was a tendency on the part of the Washington agencies to send people out temporarily for specific times and not have folks assigned to my delegation who were resident in Geneva, who had their families with them, but rather, had desks, regular jobs, and inboxes back in Washington. That is a common problem with U.S. delegations to itinerant international negotiations. But the CD was permanent. I set out on a program to encourage each Agency to put at least one senior advisor in Geneva full-time and I was making considerable progress on that. It wasn't completely achieved. The Joint Chiefs couldn't assign somebody to Geneva because they didn't have the military support structure, so our JCS representative was TDY from the U.S. Army headquarters in Heidelberg, but at least he was in Geneva full-time. We got a full-time person from ACDA (U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency). They were not a problem because they were the lead agency on the chemical weapons thing. But it was always hard to get the State Department to find a slot to keep someone on my delegation permanently. Then depending upon how the negotiations were proceeding and the particular technical phase, folks would come out from Washington agencies to reinforce and to work on particular tasks. So, it was a Delegation during the time I was there that ranged from about 10 permanent core members to as much as 40 total when things were very active.

Q: I would think you would have a problem of the people who would be sent out. Often, they would be task specific and would be sent by their agency saying, "Make sure these guys in Geneva don't do this or that."

LEDOGAR: I'm one of the leading experts on that subject - how to guard against commissars. I have given lectures on it. During my time in Geneva I earned a lot of enemies in Washington by insisting that the primary loyalty of the delegates was to me, not to their Washington bosses. In a sense, it is understandable, especially if you have someone TDY from Washington. His long term career, his evaluating supervisor, his instincts and his family are all in Washington. He feels he's sent to my delegation to represent, for instance, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and therefore should bring with him the point of view the OSD expressed in the interagency process that had resulted in recommendations to the President and decisions that became foreign policy. The trouble is that the Ambassador, in this case me, is not responsible to any Agency, even though he might be, as in my case, a Foreign Service officer, but rather is responsible for carrying out the President's policy. If that's against the original State Department recommendation, then so be it. What you have to guard against is people, who have lost in the interagency push-and-shove, trying to slant policy back towards the way their home office really wanted it in the first place and still thinks it should have been. One of the things that they tend to do is to put their responsibility to their own office in first place and their responsibility to the Delegation in second place.

I can't tell you how many times I reminded, sometimes quite forcefully, young officers that their primary responsibility while serving on the Delegation was to the President and to the President's representative and they were not there to continue the Washington struggle over policy development. We were there to execute policy as handed to us in the front channel by fully cleared guidance. I would say, "If you continue to talk over the telephone to the home office or to report your version of events in backchannel messages, I'm going to rip your phone out and disconnect your private communications; accept that, or you will be sent home." I made sure that each agency in Washington understood that if they put someone on a plane to report to me in Geneva, I didn't regard them as folks from Washington that I had to accept; they were nominees to my team and if they couldn't function on my team after counseling and reminders, there were a certain number of things that I would do. One of them, the least brutal, after you finish trying to get some sense into them and get them to understand the way things must be, was to squeeze that officer out of the information loop.

An Ambassador who goes and hobnobs with all the other Ambassadors, heads of delegation, at lunches and private meetings picks up an awful lot of information. The first thing you want to do is to share that with your Delegation, but only under the circumstance that they're going to hold it as privileged information for our Delegation. If they start reporting things back to Washington on their private channels there could be chaos. For example: the British Ambassador has got this personal idea that maybe we ought to try to crack a problem this way and he comes in and talks to the American Ambassador and says, "I haven't even informed London yet. What do you think?" Lets say I report this feeler to my guys because I need technical perspective and somebody goes back to Washington with it. With the local confidentiality lost, a Washington agency that doesn't like the idea might call in the British Embassy to explain, and there is hell to pay. You try to have good relations with your British colleagues. If things like this happen, he's not going to confide in you ever again.

The trouble is that many of the people that we send out to interagency delegations in the field are unwilling or incapable of sorting out their primary loyalty and their secondary loyalty. But in my mind, it's the only way you can operate. If one of these things gets very messy you have to be very confident and be willing to say, "Either this guy goes home or you recall me. I'm not going to be out here presiding over a bunch of Washington agency commissars, each with his own independent foreign policy." This aspect of dual loyalties should be taught in this building here, the Foreign Service Institute. I've given a couple of lectures on it. For a while there was a course on how to serve on an international arms control negotiation. It requires that you have supervisors in Washington who are willing to support their ambassadors and heads of delegation. Otherwise, it's chaos. I know of a couple of negotiations which are chaotic from the U.S. point of view. The OSD and the Joint Chiefs have folks on those delegations whose first loyalty is to report back channel to the Pentagon on the U.S. Ambassador. The prejudice is to watch what that clown is doing to sell out the United States.

Q: One of the issues was nuclear testing. I understand that on the United States' side, this was always a big problem. One gets the feeling it's because the nuclear establishment in the U.S. needs something to do, so they continue to do nuclear tests.

LEDOGAR: I don't know, that's a little harsh. But trying to stay a little bit on the chronological progression of things, during the first three years I was in Geneva, which were '90-'92, the U.S. position on the question of whether we should try to negotiate a nuclear test ban was like this: "The United States, so long as it depends upon nuclear weapons for deterrence and extends our nuclear umbrella in favor of our allies, will not, indeed we think it would be immoral to, engage in a total cessation of underground nuclear testing. Some testing is essential for safety and reliability of our existing stockpile, if not for further development." That was our policy. That line on nuclear test ban continued right on through the completion and signing of the Chemical Weapons Treaty, which was in January '93. Then the Conference on Disarmament was flapping around looking for a follow-up task. What were we going to do next? Everybody in the CD who was not a nuclear weapon state wanted to have a crack at a nuclear test ban. At first, the U.S. was very reluctant, but with significant technological improvements in the test simulations, we gradually talked ourselves into agreeing to do so. We talked ourselves into joining in a total nuclear test ban negotiation with the encouragement of the U.S. Congress. But I think we're getting ahead of ourselves; let me go back to the Chemical Weapons Treaty.

Right after Desert Storm, the U.S. made two major CW policy moves, which resulted in the chemical weapons negotiations going full speed ahead. That was when President Bush announced that we would no longer insist upon the retention of two percent of our CW stockpile, but would in the course of the negotiation agree to the total elimination of our stockpile. That having been said, we therefore would join with others in seeking the total prohibition on CW use. That was the second policy change. So the negotiation really got under way with full vigor. During '92, there were several ministerial level meetings and one summit that helped encourage progress. In fact, there was a lot of East/West arms control and disarmament going on during the early years of Shevardnadze, with glasnost and perestroika and all kinds of things. In terms of East/West arms control, it was a new world. The Soviet Union was breaking up. You had the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) with full independence of many of the various states that had been part of the Soviet Union. We even had the Soviet Ambassador take over as chairman of the CD's CW negotiating committee during 1991. When the USSR dissolved during the course of his chairmanship he became the Russian Ambassador.

Recall that the Conference on Disarmament had many agenda items. When an agenda item became ripe for negotiating, the CD would form a committee which would negotiate a mandate, and then it would elect someone as chairperson for a year to preside over the negotiation. The chair usually rotated annually among East, West, and non-aligned groups. The Russian was chairman during 1991. He was extremely good and straightforward and was clearly dedicated to the achievement of a CW agreement. It shows you how the negotiations were really moving forward. Everybody had their own positions and their own requirements. The negotiation was not free of problems by a long shot, but we brought the competing draft treaty contexts together and completed a final draft in late '92, which was the last full year of the Bush administration.

A very interesting thing occurred during the U.S. election campaign in '92. It's part of the Nuclear Test Ban story. It has to do with Congress passing certain legislation that made the negotiation of a test ban treaty inevitable. But lets just stick with chemical weapons for a while. One of the final problems was to select a city in which the international CW monitoring organization that the treaty created would be located. After a certain amount of political struggle,

it was decided it would be in The Hague. Today we have the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons [OPCW] in The Hague and it is functioning. It has certain problems, but they're pretty much in the category of growing pains. That implementation regime is in pretty good shape.

Q: The group that was negotiating on our side, the Western side, was sort of the U.K., Germany, France, Italy?

LEDOGAR: Yes. In the Conference on Disarmament at that time, there were 10 participants, essentially Western-style democracies, in the Western caucus. It included Japan, Australia, and eight NATO members: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, U.K., and the U.S. The Eastern group was originally the Warsaw Treaty Organization, seven of them. All the rest of the original 40 CD participants were the so-called neutral and non-aligned. They called themselves the group of 21. Don't try to do the arithmetic because the totals don't add up. East Germany vanished, Yugoslavia self-destructed, and China stood as the "Group of One." The G-21 was made up essentially of the neutral non-aligned - India, Pakistan, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, etc. Sweden was a big leader at that time, but was always having problems because the Swedes were viewed by other neutral non-aligned as rather pro-Western and the delineations weren't too clear. But cohesion within the Western group was very good.

We also did work in smaller, informal groupings. The P3, the U.S., U.K., and France, met regularly. We had one grouping where it was the Berlin powers, which essentially were France, the U.K., the U.S., and Germany. That proved useful for certain issues. That's another thing that a lot of people don't understand. As long as you keep up a facade of every nation being treated equally, a lot of the work gets done in small ad hoc groupings. Frequently, they begin or continue around meals. Nobody can argue that a particular ambassador can't have a few colleagues of his choice over to his house for lunch. These luncheons would be very much business meetings. The idea was to get a few very important people together to try out ideas and to be the board of directors on a particular new issue, to get things launched and set out strategy and so forth. Of course if the U.S. met to coordinate strategy with the P3, these had to be very discreet gatherings. You had to be very careful that you didn't let the next level, the Italians and the Canadians, suspect that they were at the exclusion line, that they didn't make the cut. We even had a couple of meetings of the non-European Union States within the Western group. The U.S., Canada, Australia, and Japan were beginning to see political cooperation among the EU states in the Western group such that we felt that we were being confronted with pre-cooked EU positions that we hadn't been able to influence. That goes on a lot in multilateral negotiations; special groups are formed for all sorts of processes.

Q: What was China's role on the chemical side?

LEDOGAR: They tried to stay independent, but they fashioned themselves as morally and emotionally along the same line as the G21. So if the Chinese didn't have a particular national interest, they would always side with the non-aligned. In the beginning, the discipline on the Warsaw Treaty Organization was very strong, but it didn't take long in the period I'm talking about (early '90s) before you started to see the East Germans disappear. Then the Poles and the Hungarians were applying for membership in NATO, and former Eastern group solidarities

began to show cracks and then to turn around. There was quite a bit of flux. But we completed the CW treaty by the end of '92. It was and still is today a very landmark treaty. It has a verification regime the like of which the world had never before even contemplated, with enormous intrusiveness. The watchword was "verification anywhere, anytime, no right of refusal." At first, that jargon was put in by the U.S. side by Pentagon opponents of the very idea of a chemical weapons treaty. The Defense guys thought that calling for verification that strict would be a poison pill, that the Russians would never agree to it. Then within two years of that opening U.S. position, the Russians were able to accept it but we ourselves realized *we* were unable to accept it. So some of the final struggles dealt with exactly what circumstances, in terms of managed access, would obtain when there was a short-notice challenge inspection. The regime provided for routine inspections that went on all the time according to schedule. These required cooperation between the inspected states and the inspectors. But if any state party to the Treaty had any reason to suspect something illegal might be going on, it didn't have to wait for a routine inspection. Any country could challenge and say, "I don't like what I think is going on in this particular place." If your challenge met minimum requirements for reasonableness, there would be an international inspection team launched on rather short notice to go to the challenged area and take a look to see what was going on.

Then the old problem in international verification regimes arises. Offense versus defense. Short notice intrusiveness sounds pretty good if you look at it from the point of view of what access you're trying to get from potential violators. But if you look at those same levels of intrusiveness from the point of what a nation is trying to protect — secret weapons programs, intelligence facilities, nuclear weapon design labs, and the like — you want to be circumspect about how short the notice would be and what would be the permitted access of foreign inspectors when they came to take a look at someplace that someone chose, possibly on a whim. So challenge inspection was probably the toughest issue that we had. It was one on which the agencies in Washington were sharply divided. Those agencies in charge of sensitive areas that needed protection wanted to say, "No, you're not going to get any of those foreign inspectors in here until I've had a couple of weeks to get ready and then they can only come to the fence and they can't go through the buildings." There was a big struggle over challenge inspection within the U.S. Government. But it is the eternal struggle in any international arms control agreement between on the one hand the offensive angle (what it is that we want to be able to get to inspect on short notice to be sure that others are living up to this agreement), and the defensive angle (how we can protect ourselves against the prospect of losing something confidential that has nothing to do with CW prohibitions, but which has everything to do with our national security from another point of view); for example, an intelligence facility or a place where we're building some next-century weapons system. That's one of the areas where the Commissar problem within the U.S. delegation was very threatening. That was one of the times in my experience as an American negotiator when I had as much or more problem with Washington collectively than with the foreign countries with which we were negotiating.

Q: I've remarked that real diplomacy is engaged among ourselves. Dealing with other countries is in a way cut and dry. Their persuasion is not quite… You have to reach agreements, but real persuasion and muscle is in one's own Delegation, country.

LEDOGAR: Absolutely. There are old clichés that have a lot of truth to them. Kissinger said in one of his memoirs that the trouble with the United States foreign policy is that we spend 50% of our energy negotiating with ourselves, 25% negotiating with our allies, and have only 25% left for our adversaries. Let me give an example. In the early time of strategic nuclear negotiations, where I was following them from the Washington end, you could almost graph the development of a U.S. position in the SALT, START, or INF talks by the opening Joint Chiefs position and the opening Arms Control and Disarmament Agency position, and subsequently plot them as the two extreme possibilities, with the preferences of all other parties - the Congress, the allies, the adversaries - falling in between. The trick was to draw those two extremes together and when you had them very close together you had an agreement. Others could live with any of the territory between the two U.S. extremes. That has changed over time. The agencies started getting different policy azimuths on the positions at the beginning of the Reagan years.

In the period of the Cold War, the U.S. had developed - especially in the arms control and disarmament arena - an awful lot of experience, mostly in negotiating bilaterally with the Soviet Union. We had SALT I, SALT II, START, the INF treaty, the nuclear space defense negotiations, and a number of others. The establishments in the various agencies in Washington that were responsible for developing policy and for tracking what was going on were populated mostly by folks who had developed their expertise in bilateral negotiations. When we got into big multilateral negotiations, there was a significant lack of understanding. The way it showed itself in my first experience was in a Washington lack of understanding that once they developed a precise U.S. position, it was unlikely to survive in its word-for-word form very long, because it would be subjected to being shaped, twisted, and compromised, and so forth, not just in interface with one opponent, one negotiating partner, but rather with 40, or 60, or 180+. You might find that we favored something that the Australians just couldn't abide. Yet here they are, close friends. It might be a little bit easier to understand and develop an adjustment, to take into account a friendly country's position, than it would be if you ran into, say, a Chinese objection. China, Russia, and India have their own particular points of view and interests. So, it was not like a bilateral U.S./USSR negotiation where you take the U.S. position word-for-word and you bang it against the Soviet position and see what sparks fly. Oddly, there were certain Washington folks who didn't understand multilateral dynamics. I formed the opinion that if we could have had a better interface between multilateral arms control operations and multilateral trade negotiations, we probably could have been better able to cross-fertilize Washington agency interactions. In trade, they're used to working with these coalitions. The coalitions change as you go from frozen chicken to corn gluten, or whatever the subject might be. It depends upon where God or nature in his or her wisdom decided to make deposits of particular natural resources. That forms a natural coalition on that commodity; and trade-offs can be negotiated among different coalitions. In East/West or bilateral arms control negotiations, Washington though in terms of zero-sum security trade-offs, i.e., between rather fixed and permanent camps, East versus West. If we had more understanding of dynamic packages of issues and trade-offs among them, it would have been easier for some people in the arms control business in Washington to understand how multilateral negotiations were different from bilateral.

Q: I would think that one of your most difficult countries in negotiation would be India. India tends to be a difficult country for Americans to deal with anyway.

LEDOGAR: India was difficult in both of my big negotiations.

Q: Also, in this case, they have some stake in it. Other countries didn't have much of a stake. They were just there, but just to keep the big boys from having too many dangerous weapons to play with. Could you talk about India?

LEDOGAR: Yes, but if I may, I'd like to postpone that.

First of all, on the Chemical Weapons Convention, looking at it from an overall point of view, it really was a remarkable document in the history of international negotiations. It was so sweeping. The basic approach was that rather than try to pick out and isolate and prohibit certain activities in connection with chemistry, we prohibited all chemistry, if you will, and then just said, "Except that you *can* do this and that." In other words, in order to make the scope of the treaty sweeping, the text was designed so that unless a specific activity with chemicals was specifically permitted, it was banned. Thus all chemical activities would be caught in the network of the treaty. So, it had a rather wide scope.

The American chemical industry and also worldwide chemical industry very wisely chose to join with the negotiators early on, and they were cooperative. They were the ones who were going to suffer the disruption and in certain cases the expense of the intrusiveness necessary to verify compliance with the treaty. So they recognized early on that they had an interest in seeing to it that the provisions were as benign, from their point of view, as they could be. I think that was far sighted and very helpful. Indeed during the crucial final weeks of the CW negotiation, a technical advisor from the U.S. Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA), was assigned pro-bono full-time to my Delegation. From my point of view he was just an extra resource, foot soldier, and a useful advisor. From the CMA point of view if the negotiators decided a thing had to be done, and there were two ways to do it, the CMA rep would point to the way that would be less objectionable to them. That was important and was true not only of the U.S. CMA, but also the Japanese association and a Western European association. They were all pretty much on the same wavelength. So this very complex treaty was completed in late '92. It was agreed that the treaty would be opened for signature in Paris in January of '93.

Q: Why Paris?

LEDOGAR: People grabbed at Paris because there were several alternative proposals that were not very attractive. The Belgians had threatened to propose that it be signed at Ypres in Flanders, the first place poison gas was used in World War I. Paris is a good town for treaties. A lot of treaties have been signed there.

Q: The French love to host those things.

LEDOGAR: Yes, and they're very good at it. By this time, Lawrence Eagleburger was Secretary of State, and he headed the U.S. Delegation. He signed the Treaty for us in January of 1993. That was the very end of the Bush administration.

Q: I'm thinking of two countries where there were possible problems. One was Iran and the other was Libya. How did we deal with them?

LEDOGAR: Libya was not a participant in the negotiations, but they certainly were mentioned very frequently. They had a clandestine CW program disguised in various ways. We felt we had the goods on them. They had a chemical weapons facility in Rabda they claimed was a fertilizer plant, but it was very clearly used in nefarious activities. Rabda was very much at the forefront of our minds when we talked about what kind of an inspection regime would be necessary to catch a smoking gun at a place like Rabda.

Iran…? It's hard to get into all of this in unclassified discussion. We had information about chemical weapons programs in a number of countries. It was at one time contemplated that we were going to draw up a list of chemical weapons capable countries, but we soon found out that it was extremely difficult to have a single list labeled "capable" that would capture all those that you wanted to capture. In some cases, people had chemical weapons programs that were ongoing and well known. In other cases, people had chemical weapons programs that were very clandestine and in some cases not even known to the central governing authority (it may have been known only by the military). In some cases, you had countries that had stores of chemical weapons that they didn't want. Either they had made these CW's themselves and had long since abandoned them or the CW's had been left behind by previous invaders. In the 1940s, the Japanese left enormous amounts of chemical weapons behind in China. The biggest issue between those two countries was so-called "old stocks" and how those stocks would be dealt with, and who was going to be responsible to clean up and pay for destruction. You had countries like Belgium which had no chemical weapons capability of their own, but there were a number of cashes of chemical weapons left over from WWI, some individual shells and some stores collected by large farms and put somewhere. You had some countries that were not intending to have a chemical weapons program but were so sophisticated in chemistry (take for example Switzerland) that they could have a chemical weapon within a matter of days if they decided to. So an attempt at policy based on making sure that all the "chemical weapons capable countries," were included fell flat. Agreement in open negotiations on such a category was not possible. We even had a private negotiation going on at one time between myself and my Soviet counterpart to try to see if the two of us, using our sensitive sources, could agree on a single list of nations that were the problem countries in terms of CW. We couldn't agree. It was that kind of thing.

There were so many little nuances that often you had to go the route of broad sweeping prohibitions, making sure that they applied to everybody equally. I can remember at least two countries where CW programs were believed by U.S. intelligence to be unknown to the central authority of each country. So, that was taken care of in these prohibitions. If any weapons were found - and there was a special provision for old stocks - then the party who had left CW stocks behind had to share responsibility with the country in whose territory the stocks had been left. Together they had to get rid of them. It was quite an elaborate affair.

I'm sorry to say that when the Clinton Administration took over in 1993 they did not move the CW treaty immediately toward ratification, although instinctively they were in favor of the treaty. They thought, "That's the Bush Administration's business. We didn't negotiate it." So they kind

of let it languish and didn't move forward with U.S. ratification all during 1993 and 1994. By this time, the Republicans had taken over the Senate and Senator Helms, who had never met an arms control treaty that he liked, took over the Foreign Relations Committee. That was a problem. The CW treaty was before his committee. That is a story in itself. In the end the U.S. was very late in ratifying, and almost missed by a matter of hours being an original party. If we had missed out the consequences would have been fairly serious, because we would not have had the right to have our people in the international CW organization. Fortunately, with an 11th hour bi- partisan effort, we got the thing past Helms and approved by the full Senate. The treaty was actually debated in the Senate in the month or so preceding ratification. At that late date the debate, instead of being on the real implications, was being conducted in the U.S. Senate on all kinds of bogus issues. Somebody alleged that every mom and pop dry-cleaning establishment in Austin, Texas was going to be put out of business because of this treaty. The unfounded fear was that a certain chemical used in dry cleaning was proscribed. It was all nonsense and unworthy of the Senate. When you got around to it, there were some legitimate issues that should have been debated by the Senate and probably would have been if we had asked the Senate to take up the treaty promptly in early '93 when it was first signed. The near disaster was the fault of the Clinton White House and its failure to give CW treaty ratification early priority.

Q: I had asked you about India. How did India work in this?

LEDOGAR: I don't remember them as terribly prominent in the chemical weapons negotiation except that they were one of the leaders in the neutral/non-aligned movement. But they were basically in favor of the CW endeavor. It was in the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty that India created havoc. The Conference on Disarmament in '93, once the CW treaty was signed, was essentially out of major work. Incidentally, since the International CW Treaty Implementation Organization was to be established in the Hague, some Geneva delegations people moved their chemical experts to the Hague. Some countries just transferred the CW files and gave the responsibility to resident diplomats in the Hague. The United States decided that we would send a small team there, and otherwise man the periodic CW meetings with senior people out of Washington. So from the Geneva point of view we were finished with CW.

All during 1993 in the CD, we had a whole lot of conversations about what would be the next issue for negotiation. A majority of participants were interested in nuclear testing, but for a long time that was not the U.S. Administration's choice. However, towards the end of the Bush Administration, there had been increasing feeling in the U.S. that something ought to be done about the continuation of underground nuclear tests. A piece of legislation was passed in late 1992 called the Mitchell, Hatfield, Exxon Amendment to the Water and Energy Appropriations Act of 1983. It dealt with nuclear testing and essentially said henceforth there would be in the United States a one-year moratorium on testing. After the moratorium, Congress would appropriate money only for a limited number of further tests, not to exceed 15. These had to be applied for individually by the President. Those tests could only be for purposes of safety and reliability, not for development of new types of weapons, and those 15 tests had to include any British tests (the British tested in Nevada too). It also said that the U.S. should engage in Nuclear Test Ban negotiations and that by September 30, 1996, the Administration was in effect enjoined by the legislation to have completed a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. After that, there would

be no more U.S. testing, unless some other countries tested. It was a very odd piece of legislation, but it was in effect from ‘93 to ‘97.

In ’93, the CD thrashed around, but kind of exhausted the year in trying to get ourselves sorted out. In ’94, the Conference on Disarmament got serious and established a nuclear testing committee and gave that committee a negotiating mandate to begin trying to organize a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. That’s when the serious nuclear test ban negotiation started, from my point of view, and that negotiation ended in a treaty two years later in September of ‘96. That treaty was signed by what is by now over 120 states. But it has not been ratified by the United States. It failed ratification in October 2000. It is not in force, and is not beloved by the current Administration of George W. Bush. But the treaty was big stuff in international affairs at the time.

Curiously, there was much more international pressure to get rid of nuclear testing at that time than there is today, the reason being that France was still testing, China was still testing, and until the Hatfield-Mitchell Amendment, the United States was still testing. During the course of the negotiation, the pressure was really on France and China to stop testing. By the time we began the negotiation, there was a U.S. mandatory moratorium in place. When the mandatory period expired, the issue for Clinton was whether to continue it, or to seek those 15 shots that were allowed. At one time, Clinton was on the verge of asking for nine of them, of which three would go to the Brits, who had a particular need to finish off their Trident warhead. But the U.S. Administration decided that it was not going to go for any at all; that it was going to take the high road of continuing the moratorium. Therefore the last U.S. test was back in ’92. The CTBT negotiation was begun in mid-’94, completed in September of ’96. It was very intense. That may not seem rapid, but that is rapid for an endeavor of that size.

During this time, there was enormous international pressure to expand the Conference on Disarmament by increasing its membership by at least 50%. A plan was developed by the Australian Ambassador who had been commissioned by the rest of us to come up with a recommendation. He was asked to take all the applicants and screen them out and come up with a list of new members that took in a sufficient number to take the pressure off, but obviously the CD couldn’t accommodate everyone who wanted to join. In the group that he recommended to be brought in, which was essentially 22 more, bringing membership up to 60, we wanted to have a balance of interests (geographical, geopolitical, and so forth). It is important to note that at that time, in the Conference on Disarmament we long since had a category of Non-Member Participants. Any UN member country that was interested in a particular subject being negotiated in the CD could participate in the negotiations. They had all the rights and privileges of members except that they just couldn’t vote on matters. You didn’t actually vote. What you did was when a matter was put up for approval, you either sat silently and let the gavel fall, or you spoke up and denied consensus. So, when we got into the nuclear test ban negotiation, we had Israel as a Non-Member Participant working full-time with the rest of us. India and Pakistan were already members. The group that we would pick up under the recommended expansion included Austria, Finland, and Ireland. South Africa was also in the new group - very important because they immediately started playing a very important role.

The actual CD expansion was on the verge of being shouted through when suddenly, despite the fact that I had all kinds of Washington acquiescence to support the expansion, Washington finally woke up to the fact that Iraq was on the list. At 2 am Geneva time on the day expansion was to be gaveled down, I got an irate call from a senior White House official. He said, "What is it you're trying to do? Don't you realize we just fought a war with those characters? You mean to say you're going to reward them by letting them come into the Conference on Disarmament?" Now it's not terrible to have your recommendation slapped down by Washington. But all along we kept Washington fully informed on how the CD expansion issue was going. Washington had gone along with the developments, and with their concurrence, we were sort of among those who were in the leadership role to get this membership problem solved. Maybe Washington support was only at the working level and not from the top level officials. That was their problem. In any event, within hours I got an instruction from Washington telling me to break consensus and oppose the whole expansion because key Washington officials had suddenly awakened to the fact that Iraq was on the expansion list. Our allies were flabbergasted, saying "This isn't a reward to Iraq. Iraq is a rogue country and we need to have them involved in the beginning of disarmament negotiations." So it was a very difficult period for the U.S., where for a long time we stood alone, blocking CD expansion. There wasn't a single other country that had any understanding or sympathy for our position of blocking the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament.

Q: Was this Congress or was this somebody on the presidential staff?

LEDOGAR: Somebody on the presidential staff.

Q: Who was it?

LEDOGAR: I know who I got my instructions from, but he was only passing on the word from on high. Warren Christopher was probably the most responsible for this absolute prejudice against the idea of Iraq being in an international organization so long as they were flouting the agreements that had been achieved at the end of the Persian Gulf War. But he had help from William Perry, Secretary of Defense. There was no single person.

Q: What happens when you don't get consensus? This stops everything?

LEDOGAR: Yes. We were vilified by everyone else, especially since we had gone from a leadership role to breaking consensus, and at the very last minute.

Q: How did you respond?

LEDOGAR: To Washington? I just said, "Yes, Sir."

Q: I mean to the people who were blind-sided by this thing? "I have orders from Washington?"

LEDOGAR: That's right.

Q: Did the members of the Delegation of those other countries, including both in and out on the first list and the second list, go back to Washington to say, "What the hell are you doing?"

LEDOGAR: Yes, indeed. And senior U.S. officials, no matter where they went in the world, were being confronted by whomever they talked to with the proposition that there was absolutely no justification for the United States reversal. Nobody bought our reasons even though they probably believed we were sincere. It was a very awkward situation. One of the first things I did was, in order to cover my rear end, I had my people pull out every single cable in which we had reported on CD expansion developments all along, and we listed all the cables and all the responses and the non-responses from Washington, so that nobody could try to make the case that we had acted without authority. It was really a disconnect. In fact, some Washington people who were quite senior said to me, "We understand that the fault is back here. It never came to a sufficiently high level that this was occurring."

Q: Was Iran on the list?

LEDOGAR: Iran had been in the CD all along. That was not a problem.

Q: North Korea?

LEDOGAR: They were on the list.

Q: How was this resolved?

LEDOGAR: Remember most nations of the world had delegations in Geneva accredited to all the U.N. activities there. Remember also that any nation that wished could participate in CD deliberations, though only formal members could block consensus. Once the recommended list of CD expansion countries was made known, all those countries attended CD meetings even though the expansion was not yet formalized. When South Africa joined, there was a very clever guy who was the head of the South African Delegation. This ambassador was very interesting. He was obviously one of President Mandela's men. He was not an experienced diplomat himself because he had been outside the government for so long. But he was extemely intelligent and resourceful. He came up with a scheme that in essence allowed the 22 new folks to become full members without the United States having to say, "Yes." I can't remember the details, but it was a way of satisfying the U.S. fundamental refusal to give Iraq the right ever to stand alone and deny a consensus in the CD. Under the compromise, all 22 new members accepted not standing alone in a veto of progress, all the while reaffirming that everyone was exercising their sovereign rights in doing so. "I'm volunteering not to exercise my sovereign right in this case." It was sort of finessed in that way. But it was a success and expansion took place right at the end of the Comprehensive Test Ban negotiation.

Q: How did the rest of the negotiations go once the new members were accepted?

LEDOGAR: As I indicated, most if not all of the new full time CD members were already participating in the CTBT negotiations as very active observers. So their now formal status had very little new impact on the course of the ongoing test ban negotiations. There was, however, a

most important if very low profile side bar to the big CD negotiation. That was a private concurrent negotiation that the five declared Nuclear Weapons States (who also happened to be the permanent five on the UN Security Council and therefore were known as the P-5) conducted among ourselves. The P-5 realized early on that the broader negotiation looking to a test ban treaty was really about what we, the five, would stop doing. We were the known testers who would agree to do no more nuclear testing. Now let's leave aside for now the so-called "threshold" states of India, Pakistan, and Israel. We'll also leave aside the question of South Africa, which had been a clandestine nuclear state. They had built five or six nuclear weapons of a rather primitive sort, but they had never fired one off. Recently they swore them off and destroyed their stockpile. There was a question as to where North Korea was, and where was Iran regarding nuclear ambition. Lets leave all these folks aside.

The five Declared Nuclear Weapons states - and the declaration was made in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - were the ones who really brought to the table the most negotiating chips. So, we five agreed early on that we would have to talk among ourselves frequently and profoundly. Therefore, we quickly established a private negotiation among the five right there in Geneva. The curious thing was that it soon became not so much a board of directors for the larger negotiation, because we found that we were content to let the larger negotiation proceed with its deliberations and delineations as to what would be *prohibited*. What the five were primarily interested in was understanding among ourselves and reaching agreement on what would *not be prohibited* by the big treaty. Obviously we were not giving up our nuclear weapons stockpile; our stockpile would remain. As the British Ambassador at the time said, "This CTBT negotiation was about banning the bang and not banning the bomb." The subject of CTBT was explosive nuclear testing. We intended, for as far into the future as we could see, to keep our nuclear stockpiles; but we wanted to have an understanding among ourselves that there were certain things we could do to maintain our stockpiles in a safe and reliable fashion - to move them or to count them or to keep them clean and dry; just the whole business of activities not prohibited. They were activities that only the five, originally at least, were experienced enough to even debate.

Q: The five being the UK., France, Russia, the U.S., and China.

LEDOGAR: Right. We wanted to make sure that the treaty would not prohibit non- nuclear yield testing of these weapons; rather, that it would permit such testing of the hardware, the software, and even the chemicals, provided that in these simulations there was no explosion that produced nuclear yield.

There are ways that you can take a nuclear warhead and scoop out some or all of the fissile material and put in some other material that may be heavy so that it liquefies at roughly the same pressure and temperatures of a nuclear implosion. Recall that's how the chemical explosive compresses the plutonium and creates criticality. The imploded fissile material becomes a critical mass and therefore a chain reaction is set off. We five wanted it understood that we would be able to continue simulations including those so-called "hydrodynamic experiments." In other words, leaving aside all the technical blather, we were maintaining the right to conduct certain experiments short of actual nuclear yield of any sort.

For a long time during the course of the negotiation, the five of us were all over the lot about what should be the threshold between what would be permitted and what would be banned. We, the U.S., wanted to say, "You can have a little bit of yield, a very tiny whisper, equivalent to no more than four or five pounds of TNT." The Russians said, "No, we think you ought to be able to have a yield up to 10 tons of that equivalent. The French at one point were saying, "How about 200 tons?" We were all over the lot. Washington was convinced that we needed the flexibility of being allowed this little tiny whisper. During the nuclear testing moratorium in the Eisenhower years, we had perfected ways of conducting these hydronuclear experiments that would have the very tiniest bit of nuclear yield and we found we could learn a certain amount from them. The Russians and the Chinese started saying, "You guys can learn something at those very low yields, but we're not that far along on that technical road, so we're not going to authorize you to continue certain activities that benefit you and don't mean anything to us because we don't operate at that very low threshold."

We had to provide for a lot of related activities in nuclear physics. We're working, all of us, on laser fusion, inertial confinement fusion, and we wanted to be sure that nothing in the treaty would prohibit continued experiments along those lines. Inertial confinement fusion is an attempt to develop energy by creating fusion with the application of energy through very high powered lasers. Nobody has done it economically yet, but it's a field that shows promise. There were all kinds of activities that were highly technical that the five wanted to be sure that we all understood each other and these activities were not going to be ruled out. In the meantime in the broader negotiations, we were talking about what was going to be ruled out. We five wanted to be sure that the language that ruled out nuclear explosions was not so inclusive that it would impact on our ability to simulate. Simulations were necessary to assure the safety and reliability of our stockpiles. They were done in all different ways, including sometimes just as a computer exercise. You could simulate a nuclear explosion on your computer by putting in certain well-calibrated variables from actual tests. Indeed you could experiment and test all the hundreds of parts and sub-systems of a real nuclear warhead without setting it off and in a way that resulted in nuclear yield.

It was not long before the other participants in the negotiation realized that the P-5 were meeting separately and that created a little friction, but we just stiffed it out, and told the others: "Look, we're the ones who are really bringing stuff to the table and we have got problems, many of which the rest of you wouldn't even understand because you're not into the physics of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we're going to go ahead and work out these problems among ourselves." It was on this issue of non-nuclear simulation that we began to have problems with certain neutral/non-aligned countries. India, which was a closet nuclear weapons state, started to become extremely difficult. As we got closer and closer to the end of the CTBT negotiations, they got worse and worse, and finally we finished the negotiation without India. Thus, the CTBT was not formally a product of the Conference on Disarmament, because there was no CD consensus on it. But it was a product developed there. The draft final CTBT treaty text was sort of bootlegged from Geneva to New York and reintroduced in New York as an individual initiative. Because the treaty text developed in Geneva was vetoed by India, the rest of us pulled it around to the back door and put it into the UN General Assembly as an individual national paper that no one could veto. We got everybody but India and one or two others to embrace it in New York.

So, India indeed became a problem. They became a problem for a number of reasons and these were tied up with Indian politics, which I'll admit I really didn't fully understand. But essentially, India had reached a point where at least some of its major political elements wanted to resume Indian nuclear testing, and therefore did not want to sign onto prohibitions. At the same time they wanted to try to wrap into the Comprehensive Test Ban, either for altruistic reasons or for narrow national reasons - I've never been fully sure myself - commitments on the part of the five nuclear weapons states that would go beyond the cessation of any further nuclear testing, and begin the reductions of the P-5's nuclear weapons stockpiles, essentially under the supervision of the neutral/non-aligned. This of course was not acceptable to any of the nuclear weapons states, certainly not to the United States. It was not acceptable to Russia or China either. The Indians tried consistently as the negotiation went on to insert killer language that would make it impossible for the five. They tried to include in the big treaty language that went in the direction of prohibiting those activities which we five were trying to make sure were not prohibited, such as simulations. India was trying to ban all nuclear weapons activities, even simulations.

In the field of verification once the treaty was in force, Pakistan and some others were at the forefront in trying to rule out any evidence that would be introduced by anyone to the international organization if that evidence had been acquired by so-called "national technical means." In other words, if anybody's satellites picked up information, photographs or energy emissions, suggesting that something was wrong somewhere, that evidence could not be considered. We and the majority said, "That certainly *would* be admissible as evidence - not proof, but as evidence, for the international examination of what really is going on." The instinct behind this prejudice in a lot of the have-not nations is that somehow or other facts picked up by remote sensors advantage those who have satellites to the disadvantage of those who do not have satellites. So they conclude that it is necessary to ban all information that comes from satellites.

Q: This sounds more a tactical thing than…

LEDOGAR: It really was. India and Pakistan have all kinds of apparatus along their common border to look at each other and they're pretending they don't have national technical means. They have the most sophisticated ones that exist along the Kashmir border. So, we had a lot of problems from the Indians, but I think myself that most of them had to do with the fact that the pro-nuclear party in India was increasingly likely to come into power, which indeed it did. Then shortly after the treaty was signed, they popped off what they said were five nuclear test explosions. I don't know what the truth was. But they announced that there were five, all done roughly at the same time. But that was after the treaty was signed, not by them, but by the rest of us. So, India really was a fly in the ointment, so much so that they tried to veto the entire thing - veto it or wreck it.

Q: Did you ever sit down and talk to the Indian Ambassador and say, "What's going on?"

LEDOGAR: Absolutely, regularly. She and I got along very well personally. We had kind of a comic routine going. We were so frequently at odds in the broader forum. We'd get to a lunch often after a big meeting and there we would continue to take light- hearted pot shots at each other and so forth, but as a matter of fact she was quite friendly. She gave a big going away party for me when I left Geneva. She had tough instructions. But we all got along well. It was a strange

thing to be, in effect, conspiring with the Russians and the Chinese to the exclusion of the Australians, the Canadians, and the New Zealanders.

Q: You really had to. Common sense would say that you don't drag a bunch of people who don't have a stake in this and want to say something…

LEDOGAR: Absolutely. Originally, the other CD people didn't have a clue as to what the P-5 issues were, what we were talking about. A lot of these people got technical educations as the negotiations dragged on and more and more was being written about technical issues. The terminology became less and less abtruse and more in the common jargon. But it was an extremely fascinating negotiation. You had these two negotiations going on - at five and at forty [countries] - sometimes interacting with each other. The two obviously affected each other because anything you agreed to in the one forum as being allowed - you had to be sure that it was not prohibited in the other forum. And yet you didn't want to have gaps in between the scope of the two undertakings.

Q: How did you find the role of intelligence, not just from our side (I would assume that we would have our satellites and CIA and so on), but the other people, too? Everybody has their own intelligence apparatus, particularly the major nuclear powers. Did you share things?

LEDOGAR: I think U.S. intelligence served my Delegation's needs extremely well. That was especially true in the broader area. We have certain arrangements with certain friendly countries, about which I don't want to go into in much detail, but the cooperation in Geneva was particularly good because we shared intelligence with very close allies. We shared with them and vice versa. In many cases, close friends were in a better position than we to get local intelligence about what was going on. The CIA is one of those agencies which has vested interests on both sides of the subject coming under arms control negotiation. They have a responsibility on the one hand to collect intelligence about everything that's going on in the world, and to make sure that those collection capabilities remain discreet and uncompromised by foreign inspectors coming to U.S. territory or bases. So, they're very interested in not risking anything that will compromise their capabilities, their methods, their sources, and so forth. On the other hand, the CIA has a responsibility to inform U.S. leadership about what's going on everywhere in the world. So, they want to be sure that our inspectors are able to get in to places of concern, and that they can intrude enough to get sufficiently early warning about what's going on. So, CIA is an agency that must work both sides of the dynamic that is so interesting about multilateral arms control, defense and offense. There are other agencies where all they want to do is protect what they have. For example, it's not the U.S. Army's responsibility to find out what's going on at Rabda in Libya. They're not the first line of responsibility to see what the Indians and the Pakistanis are up to in their nuclear testing installations. They want to make sure that nobody finds out what is going on at the Army base at "such and such" a place, where we might be developing a new weapon. So, they are more concerned with the defensive side of U.S. negotiating policy. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency doesn't tend to have very many assets it needs to protect, but they want to push forward the arms control and disarmament process, so they're more on the offensive side. All these folks are patriots and loyal to the President, but they have different responsibilities, and therefore tend to have different perspectives.

Q: Did you run across the nuclear testers… If you were a scientist and working in nuclear testing, you don't have many other options to do. That's what you do for a living and you had built up an expertise. It's not just money. It's also what you do. Did you find yourself up against an establishment, that you were breaking their rice bowl?

LEDOGAR: I guess to a certain extent there was that. They were very well behaved. All of the nuclear laboratories are under the Department of Energy and they are very cautious about making sure that the Department of Energy is between them and the government for a variety of reasons. They're quite instinctively loyal. But there is another fascinating angle to this that a lot of people would overlook. The challenge to the nuclear weapons establishment to maintain and to be able to certify the safety and reliability of the stockpile with no explosive testing is in many ways greater than was the case when there was explosive testing. For many years we would design nuclear weapons, manufacture them, and deploy them, and then go on and try to develop a next generation which was lighter and more vigorous and could be delivered by even smaller launch vehicles, and yet was more powerful and dependable. That new generation would overtake the earlier ones, and we would move the first ones out of our stockpile. Nobody really got much into the business of how these weapons age and how long a weapon that's designed and put together a certain way can last before you might begin to be concerned as to whether or not it's being adversely affected by extended shelf life.

Nowadays, the nuclear labs are very busy trying to develop ways to assure that our stockpile of weapons is safe and reliable. The labs are actually taking apart existing weapons and examining in full detail what's going on with the highly volatile chemicals inside, and then putting them back together and making some judgement as to how much longer they will continue to be reliable. Occasionally, you take one weapon and you test it, but you can't test the actual yield, so you might take the basic weapon and subject it to a mock underground test except you have removed the fissile material and put something else in there. Or you take the materials and you bury them underground and have a chemical explosion nearby that subjects them to very high pressures short of criticality and you see what that does. All of this is going on now and there is a question as to whether it's being properly funded. In the debate over CTBT ratification, a point that those of us who are in favor of the treaty being ratified try to make to the opponents of the treaty is that you've got to maintain the stockpile anyway, whether you have a treaty or not. And you've also got to verify because you've got to keep your eye on everybody else in the world and what they're doing, whether you have a treaty or no treaty, except it would be easier if you had a treaty because you would have all the international apparatus to assist us. We've made all of these points. John Shaliskashvili put them together in a very useful report.

Q: He was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

LEDOGAR: Yes, and he was brought in during the last months of the Clinton Administration after the outrageously politicized, vindictive, and irresponsible defeat of CTBT ratification in October of 2000, to prepare a basis for a more focused, less emotional future Congressional look at the treaty. Shali points out in his report that the U.S. is not threatening the laboratories by moving from active underground testing to science based stockpile stewardship. It may be that there are some individuals in the testing community who would like to continue working on new designs. The key is that what we're doing now is maintaining the current stockpile and making

sure that it is safe and reliable. We're not developing new types. So, if you have any sour grapes on the part of individual members or organizations within the nuclear weapons community, their complaint would be that all they can do about new types is design them on the drawing boards. They can't truly test to see whether or not the designs are right and that the new types will work. You do a whole lot of testing of this component and testing of that. So, I don't know. There are folks on both sides of the issue, some who figure that the nuclear weapons labs are kind of unguided outfits that are strongly in need of adult supervision. It is said by some that the labs have been getting away with a whole lot and that their vested interest is in the continuation of testing: in a word, that the labs are a nefarious influence on policy. There are others who take the attitude that the labs are just doing what they're told to do. I'm not sure what the truth is. I've met many bomb designers. I always had somebody from the nuclear weapons labs on my delegation because of the close technical expertise they provided. I have found them to be pretty straight shooters.

Q: What was the relation of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency to all of this?

LEDOGAR: Well, the problem with ACDA was that from the time of the mid-term elections of '94 that put the Republicans in control of the Senate, ACDA's very existence was under vigorous attack. It's downfall really began even before that. Even the Democrats and the Think Tanks had convinced themselves that ACDA was an agency whose time had passed - that it was a Cold War agency and was redundant, in that it cut into the authority of the State Department. ACDA really should be folded into the State Department, they argued. In fact, in proof of this, I would point to the way the State Department was organized in the Bush Administration. There was a report called "State 2000" that was kind of a handbook adopted by the Baker State Department in 1994. They for the first time put the Under Secretaries of State directly in the chain of command, which I think was a good thing. Then they plugged the regional and functional bureaus into the 7th floor through the Under Secretaries, also okay in theory. By that time, the old Office of the Under Secretary for Security Assistance had become Security Assistance, Science and Technology and then pretty soon it became International Security Affairs. It had developed under the Republicans into quite a powerful Under Secretaryship. The study "State 2000" suggested that in the forthcoming century what was needed was to dismantle ACDA, take all of its assets, and plug them in, along with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, all under the Under Secretary for International Security Affairs. Trouble was that was not done right away. ACDA was resistant to being dismantled. So, you had the Under Secretary of Political-Affairs under whom were all the geographical bureaus, the Under Secretary of Economic Affairs, who had all of the economic affairs bureaus; but when you got over to International Security you only had the bureau of Political-Military Affairs. ACDA was still separate, but it was under attack and crippled, especially when Jesse Helms took over as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1994. Not surprisingly, the best people began to leave ACDA. They couldn't see a future. Not very many folks were anxious to try to take over the senior ACDA positions. There would be a real question as to whether or not they would get confirmed by the Senate anyway. So, ACDA began to disintegrate.

I had developed over the course of time a respect for the role of ACDA. It's a close call whether arms control should have its own bureaucracy. On the one hand, you can appreciate the discipline that a straight line structure on the State Department foreign affairs side has in

bringing forth coordinated positions. You don't have to have the interagency battles at the lower level between ACDA and PM and EUR/RPM, which I was once the director of. On the other hand, arms control and disarmament probably should be looked at in isolation from U.S.-French relations and U.S.-China relations. Somebody ought to be a spokesperson for the pure arms control aspect. That was the statutory role of ACDA. It does bring about a kind of initiative to keep arms control moving. If you're in the arms control business, you always have kind of a natural rabbi in Washington through ACDA. But there were two sides to the question. I came down in favor of an independent ACDA. I reached that conclusion just about the time that it was dissolved. Not very many people will admit this, but the administration bowing to Congress on those consolidations was part of the price that was paid by the Clinton administration to Jesse Helms in exchange for him agreeing to let the Chemical Weapons Convention go through the Senate. The reorganization included eliminating all of USIS and very substantial portions of USAID. So, these so-called Cold War agencies were disintegrating. ACDA was the important one for me. All the time that I was in Geneva, my efficiency report was written by the director of ACDA. Most of the major support and all of my budget came through ACDA. They were very important and very attentive to maintaining our arms control delegations overseas in operation and well cared for. Other agencies had particular substantive aspects that they were interested in, but they weren't interested in picking up the administration and financing.

I wanted to touch on the Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]. In a real sense, the Non-Proliferation Treaty is the background against which the Nuclear Testing Treaty has to be seen. The Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1970 is the one that codified the fact that there were five nuclear weapons states, the ones which were in existence and recognized and overt at that time. It also said that all other states were invited to sign on as non-nuclear weapon states, and would not try to acquire in any way - manufacturing or purchasing or otherwise - any nuclear weapons capability. NPT set up the International Atomic Energy Agency. That was the verification branch of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I mention this because you have the nuclear weapon states which are the so-called "legitimate" ones, the five recognized by the NPT. By the time of the CTBT almost all of the other nations in the world had already undertaken in the NPT the pledge not to acquire nuclear weapons by any means. In exchange it was agreed that certain nuclear research advantages would be shared by the nuclear weapon states and all that stuff. I mention this to support the observation I made before that the P-5 were the ones who were really bringing the most chips to the table in the nuclear test ban endeavor. In theory if you were a non-nuclear weapon state and you were in compliance with your obligations under the NPT, you had nothing to test. So if you were now giving up testing when you had already given up any possibility of acquiring nuclear weapons, it's not a great leap forward. Mind you Israel, India, Pakistan and a couple of others never did sign onto NPT.

The second point is that many countries, have limited foreign services and international expertise in specific international security subjects. When it comes to the broad and complex field of disarmament, they don't have sub-specialists. They've got disarmament guys who do everything. That's why when you have a conference on one big disarmament issue in one place, you can't have another one simultaneously elsewhere. Only countries like the U.S. and other large ones have the resources to be able to get special experts in NPT and experts in chemical weapons, and other disarmament focal points. In May of 1995, everything in Geneva stopped because everybody who was literate in international security and disarmament matters went to New York

for a big conference designed to address the fact that the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was of 25 years duration, was running out. The undertaking and the conference was called the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference. Every five years, there was a review conference to see how NPT things were doing, to try to see whether or not the regime could be strengthened without rewriting the treaty. But here in May 1995 it was going to be the expiration of the treaty unless it was renewed. So, all of us were going to New York. For the U.S. NPT Delegation, the leadership was out of Washington. We had very senior people, including the deputy director of ACDA there. Madeleine Albright as U.S. Ambassador to the UN was the nominal head of Delegation. The Vice President came for part of the conference. So, it was a pretty high powered U.S. Delegation. The U.S. was a major force in bringing about the unlimited extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I was among those who came from Geneva. There was nobody else to talk to in Geneva, so I came and served on the U.S. Delegation in New York, and had quite a bit to do with the development of certain parts of what was the end product of the NPT Review and Extension Conference. I think that's probably all I need to say about that.

Q: One question. In the renewal, were there any big issues or was everybody saying this was a pretty good thing?

LEDOGAR: There were big issues. The biggest issue of all was an attempt by the non- nuclear weapons states (NNWS) to gain a tighter, more immediate commitment by the nuclear weapons states (NWS) to accelerate nuclear disarmament. There is a commitment in the NPT treaty itself, but it's sort of general in that the NWS will engage in efforts to reduce their nuclear capability in the context of general and complete disarmament. That is kind of a panacea down the road. Gradually, the NNWS were getting more and more impatient and more belligerent about saying, "That's not good enough. We want you, the P-5, to sign on the dotted line." We would say, "Look at SALT and look at START and look at INF, and look at the unilateral efforts to dispose of fissile material." They would say, "No, we don't want just unilateral efforts. We want to have an international negotiation where you five bring your nuclear weapons, put them on the table, and we'll tell you how to dispose of them and under what kind of timetable." Well, that just wasn't in the cards. So, that was the big issue. The NNWS were trying to increase and make more immediate the obligation that was vaguely set forth in the NPT treaty itself; they wanted it to be incumbent on the NWS to get rid of their nuclear weapons as the NNA would say "in a timebound framework." We worked out some new words and they sounded a little better and a little more urgent, but we did not have the capability of rewriting the treaty which had been ratified by the Senate. So, there wasn't too much to be done except express political commitment to press on with things.

There is another effort that started at that time that looked like it was going to take off and become a real side by side negotiation with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. That was an engagement to henceforth ban the manufacture of fissile material for nuclear weapon purposes. This was known as "fizz cutoff," which again would only affect certain countries, but importantly, it would affect India, Pakistan, and Israel if we could get them in and get this regime organized. If you could in essence freeze the current levels of fissile material where they were, and ban any further production of military fissile material, then you would begin to pull India, Pakistan, and Israel, which still ignore the NPT treaty, into a kind of commitment through the back door that would say, "You may not have to give up your nuclear capability, but you can't

produce any more enriched uranium or plutonium." That was on the verge of starting, but then things went awry and it was one of the negative fallouts from the aftermath of the NPT Review and Extension Conference in '95, that and the fact that India was beginning to look to preserve its nuclear capability and flex its muscle. So, fizz cutoff keeps being on the verge of being ready for negotiation, but to my knowledge, it still hadn't started seven years later.

But getting back to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, we had indeed the usual problems with inspection and trying to detail and get right the balance between intrusiveness and protection of national interests. We had a certain amount of problem with the issue of whether or not national technical means could be used in trying to point the finger and ask for international inspections. We had a couple of other issues that we struggled with, but I can't remember any other major ones that we could elaborate on here without excessive technical explanations. The treaty came together. Towards the end, there were a lot of problems with Washington from my perspective. There were two camps that kind of grew up there about this business of intrusiveness versus protection. It had to do with what the threshold was for getting a challenge inspection. There, the State Department and CIA were kind of lined up on one side. It was a very strange arrangement. But eventually, the thing got done. President Clinton had challenged everyone to finish by the end of 1996, and by George, we did.

Going back to the fact that some nations' disarmament expertise had finite resource limitations, especially the smaller countries, in the autumn each year the UN General Assembly has a committee on disarmament called the First Committee. Literally, everybody from the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva packs up and moves to New York for about six weeks, where we reconfigure ourselves as the UN First Committee on Disarmament. The CD year ends just before we leave for New York. So, we had a real scurry to finish the CTBT treaty. Then we ran into the problem of India saying that if she didn't get the commitment to ban all tests, even simulations, and didn't get a commitment of the five nuclear weapons states immediately to begin a negotiation with oversight from the non-nuclear weapon states about further reductions in their stockpile, and all sorts of other impossible things, India couldn't see its way clear to sign the treaty, or even to allow it to go forward. So, we were in this standoff. The whole thing was ready.

Now, we had had problems of a similar sort, holdouts at the last minute, in the Chemical Weapons Convention four years before. Those of us who were around at that time realized that even in an organization that operates by consensus, you have a certain power which could be called the "tyranny of the majority." It goes like this: "Okay, you're going to veto this endeavor here? The friends of the endeavor are going to meet across the street and we're going to agree on a course of action as to how we're going to push our project forward. You by your veto can't stop the treaty. You can only stop it from being done here." That had worked in the case of the CW Treaty. So here we were in the early autumn of 1996 on the verge of going to New York. The whole draft treaty had been stuffed into a report to the UN General Assembly. Attached to the text of the treaty was a recommendation that it be opened by the Secretary General for national signatures with him as the depository. India vetoed it. So as a CD document it failed. We went to New York and got the Australians there to put the text in a resolution, saying, "Hey, by the way, I have this national initiative and it's got this nifty draft nuclear test ban treaty text attached to it. We think that it ought to be adopted by the General Assembly." The General Assembly operates by vote, not by consensus. Anybody who has a proposition can put it in

resolution form and run around and get cosponsors. So, we all ran around and got 150+ cosponsors for this Australian resolution - almost everybody but India. The resolution was adopted and there was the treaty text enshrined in it. The Secretary General declared that it was open for signature. Well, we had the P-5 leaders come to New York and the CTBT was signed by President Clinton representing the host country. He was immediately followed by China, France, Russia, and the UK in alphabetical order, then all the others. There were 70 signatures on the first day - but not India, not Pakistan, and not North Korea.

Q: How about Israel?

LEDOGAR: Israel signed. That's where the CTBT resides today, signed but not in force. The big fight, one of the last fights that we had during the negotiation, was the provision in the treaty for entry into force. The result was not very satisfactory. In the Chemical Weapons Convention, we used the simple approach that upon deposit of the 65th country's articles of accession, the clock would start ticking and 60 days later the treaty would enter into force. It was recognized that the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty would not operate quite so simply. It would be a farce if you didn't have certain countries there. You had to have the five nuclear weapons states and you really had to have the threshold states: India, Pakistan, and Israel. But to draw an entry into force provision that said, "50 or 60 states, but it must include these eight" would deeply offend all those who could have gone the nuclear route 30 years ago but chose to take the high road.

It was politically unacceptable to many countries such as Canada, Australia, and others who felt very strongly about the need to get rid of nuclear testing to have India, Pakistan, and Israel specified as essential states. They would see it as kind of a reward to India, Pakistan, and Israel for having stayed out of the otherwise almost universal NPT regime, especially since all three had gone ahead and developed nuclear weapons programs. So, we had to find some sort of a euphemistic collective rather than just call for a number of any 60 or 65 states. Then we began to worry about, suppose if we specify a collective, one member of that collective might say, "Hey, wait a minute, I want to have my rights to the islands of So and So in the South China Sea recognized by everybody as a condition for me to sign." In other words, somebody might try to hold entry into force of the CTBT as hostage for an unrelated concession. Taking the treaty hostage had to be avoided.

But a curious group that most distressingly included Russia, the UK, and a couple of others said, "If you allow for an entry into forces approach that will let you go forward despite missing one or two specified countries, then the pressure is going to be on everybody else to go ahead and let the thing enter into force and not on the countries that are trying to hold you up." So, they said, "We've got to have a collective and it's got to mean *everybody* in that collective." So, the treaty as it exists today selected a collective which, in effect, was a list of all those countries that have nuclear reactors, whether for power or for research. That includes India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, and a number of folks who are not going to be too easy to placate and get them to sign. Now, most of us believe that you can get India and Pakistan provided you get them together as part of a package where everybody moves at the same time. Neither will sign on before the other. Indeed, China will not deposit its instruments unless India is going to put its down. Indian capability is a threat to China. It is a neighbor. China does not have all that much more in way of deterrence.

So ratification - selling CTBT to the U.S. Senate - is very important, but getting the U.S. to come on board may not be the last fight. You've still got to get India and Pakistan. It's conceivable that North Korea would hold out, but I don't think they would be the last one.

That was pretty much the end of it for me. As I said, the treaty was signed in New York in September of 1996. I came and did the usual springtime disarmament stuff in New York in 1997 and was preparing to retire. I had already passed the regular Foreign Service retirement age of 65 and was staying on only until the treaty was finished. I wanted to retire. During my last two years of Foreign Service the Clinton Administration wouldn't let me retire until the treaty was put away, so I was two years overdue. I stayed and did the springtime New York business and then packed up my bags and said, "Goodbye" and left the Foreign Service on May 31, 1997.

Q: Great. I want to thank you very much. Fascinating.

PETER DAVID EICHER
Political Counselor
Geneva (1991-1995)

Mr. Eicher, son of an American oil geologist, was born in Saudi Arabia and raised in the US and abroad. He was educated at McGill University, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California, Los Angeles. Entering the Foreign Service in 1973, Mr. Eicher became an Africa and Human Rights specialist, serving at posts in Fiji, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Switzerland as well as in Washington and at the United Nations in New York. Mr. Eicher was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

EICHER: I finished the sabbatical in June of 1991.

Q: So then what?

EICHER: Then I moved on to what had been my dream job over very many years. I became political counselor in Geneva. That was the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva. You may recall I had previously served a tour in the Department's office of United Nations political affairs, so I had some experience on the UN.

Q: You did that from when to when?

EICHER: I was in Geneva from 1991 to 1995.

Q: All right. Could you explain what the job consisted of and then we'll talk about what happened while you were there.

EICHER: The job was quite diverse and interesting. Geneva is the headquarters of many United Nations agencies and other international organizations. The political counselor's title was actually "Counselor for Political and Specialized Agency Affairs." I had a variety of different organizations and issues to deal with. The main issue by far was human rights. The UN Human Rights Commission was based in Geneva, which was a highly political and very active body. There were also several UN human rights treaty bodies based there and what was then the UN Center for Human Rights, which later became the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. But my section was also responsible for the World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the International Telecommunication Union and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as helping out generally on any political negotiations which might be going on in Geneva. There were always some kind of international political talks going on in Geneva. While I was there, the principal one was the Yugoslavia peace negotiations, which started while I was in Geneva.

Q: Who was your ambassador or did you have several?

EICHER: I had two and they were both political appointees. The first was Morris Abrams, who was a very distinguished, quite well-known, elderly lawyer. He used to tell stories that he had been one of the young attorneys at the Nuremberg trials. He had also been a civil rights lawyer in the United States and was one of the people who helped break up the Ku Klux Klan. He was, therefore, well-known and well regarded. We changed administrations while I was in Geneva. Abrams, I think, had been a Democrat for Reagan, and he had been appointed to Geneva by Bush (that's the first President Bush). He was replaced by Dan Spiegel when the Clinton administration came in. Spiegel was another attorney who was active in politics and had been one of the top people in Clinton's transition team at State. Spiegel told us he had been heavily involved in the creation of the "G" position (Under Secretary for Global Affairs) because he believed that functional issues like human rights and environment and refugees were not getting enough attention at State. His interest in those issues is what made him interested in the Geneva assignment.

Q: I would imagine arriving there in 1991, which is really only two years after the breakup of the Soviet Union… in fact, the Soviet Union hadn't even broken up at that point. But I mean, obviously, such a cataclysmic event in Europe must've had a big impact in Geneva. You must've felt that you were sort of in the center of re-creating Europe.

EICHER: We did. It was a very exciting time for the United Nations in many fields. Among other things, it helped transform the Human Rights Commission, which I was dealing with, which had been kind of a backwater. The Human Rights Commission was extremely political and had been extremely unpopular. It had not been able to do much during the Cold War because one side or the other would always block everything. The West didn't like it because it didn't seem to do much and the East and Third World didn't like it because they were always potential targets of the Commission because of their bad human rights records. I got to Geneva just as things were beginning to change. In August 1991, just after I arrived, was the failed coup attempt against Gorbachev by Marxist hardliners, which led to Yeltsin's rise to power and the end of the Soviet Union. I remember being in a big UN meeting when the word of the coup attempt started

to filter through, and speaking with my Russian colleagues – who I had only just met but would later get to be friends with – and how worried they were about developments at home.

As it turned out, the Russians became our friends, as did all the Eastern Europeans. Suddenly, the Cold War dynamics that had paralyzed the United Nations fell away. It suddenly seemed possible, for the first time, to forge a coalition of Western, Eastern, and other democracies within the Human Rights Commission that could make the organization effective and start making human rights a bigger and more integral part of the UN. That became our goal over the next several years, and I think we did it quite successfully.

We never really got explicit instructions from Washington about this, but we did find strong support for almost all our ideas so we charged ahead. There was no question back then – under George H. W. Bush and Clinton – that United States policy was to support international human rights. We had pretty much free reign to develop whatever ideas we could to highlight and advance human rights. I loved working on those issues, because it seemed that it could really affect people's lives for the better and make the world a better place. I mean, we knew that things were not going to change immediately on the ground in far-off countries because of what we were doing in Geneva, but we were setting international rules and making judgments that would make a difference over time and, in some cases, could even lead to immediate changes. You could feel good working with human rights because you almost always had the moral high ground. There was a much clearer sense of right and wrong than you usually get on foreign policy issues and the United States was overwhelmingly on the "right" side back then. I get both angry and sad when I see how much that has changed under the current Bush administration. It's just so hard to believe that the United States is on the wrong side of so many human rights issues and that senior American officials are even advocating torture. It really makes me cringe and makes me happy I'm no longer associated with U.S. positions on human rights.

In any event, in the Human Rights Commission – which was a big part of our effort to advance human rights in the UN system – we were able to put together a new, often shifting coalition for progress on human rights issues. In addition to the Western countries and our new Eastern friends, we were able to bring most of the Latin American democracies on board and, occasionally, a few of the Africans and Asians. For the first time, the Commission actually started passing resolutions and taking action on difficult issues. Previously, the only time that the United Nations had spoken out against human rights violations in particular countries tended to be a very few instances in Central America countries where the United States was willing to join the Soviets in condemning a particular Latin American dictatorship. Now, we found, we were able to get resolutions against African and Asian human rights violators for the first time. We were also able to develop new mechanisms to highlight human rights problems and recommend solutions. It wasn't all so simple or straightforward, but often we felt like we were on a roll.

Q: You said that the commission had been very unpopular. Was that because it was sort of lousing up relations among different countries or creating other problems, or was it just that it was unpopular with people who were abusing human rights?

EICHER: It was mainly unpopular with the abusers, of course. It was not a very well known organization worldwide and certainly not in the United States. Interestingly, the abusers tended

to know and care much more about the Commission than the "good guys," if you will, because the abusers were afraid that they would get condemned. As a result, a lot of the abusers would work to get themselves elected to the Commission and this would sometimes lead to them being able to block progress. This, in turn, would make the Commission an easy target for critics of the UN, including in the United States. It was easy for the usual UN-bashers to say "look, you've got Cuba and China and Syria and Libya on the Human Rights Commission; that proves it's a joke." I thought that kind of argument was misguided. It just meant that the Commission was reflective of the UN members. It was still possible to beat those guys if you took a constructive approach and worked at it. We won much more than we lost at the Commission. I was deeply disappointed, therefore, that the U.S. helped lead the charge to do away with the Commission a couple of years ago and replace it with the new UN Human Rights Council. I thought that was very short-sighted and that we lost one of the most important international tools we had against human rights violators. It was another little-noticed instance of the Bush II administration undercutting long-standing U.S. policy on human rights.

One of the things that convinced me how important the Commission was and how useful and influential its words and actions really could be, was seeing how worried the "bad guys," or abusers, were that the Commission might say something about them. The abusers really, really didn't want to have the United Nations single them out. They considered it a huge stigma. A number of them would even take some positive steps on human rights to try to get out from under, so that in itself was positive. If you saw the effort that China, for example, would make every year to avoid being considered by the Human Rights Commission, it was just enormous. They would send delegations to every member of the Commission and increase aid programs to those countries. We used to joke that the China resolution in the Commission was the greatest thing for international sports, because the Chinese, in trying to line up votes, would visit many of the little African members of the Commission and offer to build stadiums in their countries. The Chinese head of state would get personally involved in appealing to different countries to support China in the Human Rights Commission. It was really important to them, and that gave us some significant leverage on human rights. The same was true for most other abusers.

Q: Yes. The bottom line is what they're doing, I mean, not the PR spin but what were they doing vis-à-vis human rights.

EICHER: Yes, of course, that was our position. When anybody is seriously violating human rights, they should be called to account. In general, the UN is not going to send in troops to deal with a human rights problem but a UN condemnation is a very significant, important stigma. For the United Nations to tell a country, "you're a human rights violator," to put them on the short list of countries condemned by name, is something countries just don't want to have happen to them.

And, in fact, as we pressed human rights issues more vigorously and they became increasing integral to broader UN issues, the UN actually did start sending in troops – in a few cases – to deal with human rights crises. The first, I think, was Haiti. But also, belatedly, in Rwanda and other countries. Widespread human rights violations came to be regarded as a threat to international peace and security and became a standard issue for peace-keeping operations.

Q.: Well, let's take China and then move on to other countries. During the time that you were there, was the Commission drawing attention to China or was China doing anything about the human rights situation?

EICHER: Well, China was the biggie. It was certainly the largest, most difficult, most time-consuming issue we dealt with. Every year the question that arose was whether there would be a resolution presented in the Human Rights Commission to criticize China's human rights policies. China's human rights situation was extremely grim in very many ways. These were the years not long after the Tiananmen massacre and there was still lots of "reeducation" going on, sentences of administrative detention, political prisoners, labor unions being suppressed, persecution of religious activities, the one-child policy being ruthlessly enforced. There were almost no civil and political rights in China. And, of course, there was Tibet, which was a huge problem in itself and a big aspect of U.S.-China policy within the Commission. I don't think anybody would deny that there was a serious human rights problem in China and that it was one of the world's big violators.

Q: Did you get the feeling in regard to China that there were those within the State Department and the body politic in the United States who were saying, you're lousing up things here. We've got trade deals, you know, in other words, were you the burr under the saddle or something of that nature?

EICHER: Absolutely. There was no question about it. There was a very tough fight in the U.S. bureaucracy every year about whether to sponsor a China resolution. I got into that fight from the Washington end in my subsequent assignments. There were a lot of Americans who put other issues ahead of human rights and thought we should not sponsor a resolution. This included lots of official Americans, senior State Department people. In particular, our main opponent was always the China desk, which never liked the idea of a resolution at all and which was a powerful opponent. I used to get irked that much of the State Department, at the instigation of the China desk, even took up the Chinese nomenclature of calling it the "anti-China resolution." We had to continually remind everyone that it was not an anti-China resolution, and it was not anti-Chinese *per se*; it was a resolution on the situation on human rights in China, and no one could really deny that there was a problem there.

From our human rights perspective, we seldom thought that there was a real chance to win a China vote because they were so big and had so much influence with many of the little members of the Commission. They not only sort of bribed countries to vote with them in exchange for aid packages, but they also engaged in a practice of taking reprisals against countries that voted against them in the Commission, by suspending trade deals, and so forth. It was serious stuff. But, sponsoring a China resolution was critical for our credibility with almost any of the other actions we were pushing on human rights. Things were so bad in China and it so dominated the international human rights scene, that for us to ignore it would just feed into the argument being used against us that we were selective and political. How could we press for action on say, Sudan or Burma or Iraq, if we were silent on China? Are human rights just to be imposed by the big guys on the little guys? Why don't you pick on somebody your own size? Are things really worse in Cuba than in China? And so forth. So, for us in Geneva, backing a China resolution was extremely important. If we were going to get anything else done in the Commission, we needed

to take on China. It didn't really matter so much if we won or lost the China vote, what we really needed was to show that we were willing to make the effort, that we didn't have a double standard.

So the battle in Washington over the China resolution was critical to us in Geneva and we inevitably got involved. Sometimes it was high drama. I remember that at my first Human Rights Commission the Europeans put forward a resolution on human rights in Tibet. This almost turned into a disaster. Washington instructed us to vote against the resolution because they thought that it could be read to suggest we supported an independent Tibet. The Chinese were gleeful – actually chortling – at the prospect that the U.S. was going to vote with them and against the Europeans about human rights in Tibet, as if everything there were just fine! We couldn't believe it and went back with *reclama* after *reclama* about the damage it would do to our human rights policy. This went on until the night before the vote, when we finally got agreement from Washington that we could vote for the resolution if the Europeans would change the title to the "the situation of human rights in Tibet/China." They reluctantly made the change and we voted in favor, but the resolution was soundly defeated since we had spent so much time on internal bickering that there was no time left to build support among other countries.

After that, we did sponsor a resolution on China every year that I was working on the issue, both while I was in Geneva and later, while I worked on human rights in the Department, but there was always an internal battle. The final decision to sponsor often came so late that we couldn't run an effective campaign, so the resolutions usually went down in flames. Still, as I said, just sponsoring was the key issue for us, not whether we won or lost.

There was one more year of very high drama on the China resolution; I can't remember which year it was, I think it was probably 1993 or 1994, possibly '95. Whatever year it was, we had actually made a decision reasonably far in advance. We had lobbied hard in capitals and in Geneva. The Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, John Shattuck, came out for the vote, together with a senior adviser from the National Security Council. We were all trying to count votes and it was very close. It was a real showdown. The usual Chinese procedure in the Commission was that when the resolution on China came up, they would make a parliamentary maneuver, introducing a motion to take no action on the resolution. There would be a vote on the "no action motion" and every year the Chinese won, so there was never even a vote taken on the actual resolution. Anyway, this particular year it was very close and we had convinced enough countries to vote against the Chinese procedural motion that we had a real chance of defeating it, and even getting the resolution adopted for the first time. The way the Commission's schedule worked out, the China vote came very late in the evening, about 11:00. There was a roll-call vote on the Chinese motion to take no action and it was defeated, for the first time ever, by just one or two votes. Everyone was startled, amazed that we had finally beat the Chinese. Even the Chinese were amazed; they had counted their votes wrong; they had been sure they would win. At that point, however, the chairman suspended the session until the next morning, when the actual vote would take place. We spent much of the night trying to make contact with some of the capitals of Commission members. I think Benin and Ethiopia might have been the key swing votes. We were trying to get to them directly and through the Department, to convey the word that we need you to stand by us on the actual vote. No doubt the Chinese were also making midnight demarches around the world. The next morning there was

another roll call vote on the actual resolution. Everyone was biting their fingernails. When the count came in, we lost by one or two votes. I think it was the Russians and Ethiopians that changed their votes and voted against our resolution even though they had voted with us to defeat the procedural motion. So, it was high drama. The big news, however, was we had defeated the no-action motion; the Commission had finally, formally considered the situation of human rights in China for the first time, even though the resolution had been narrowly defeated. It was a symbolic victory. The Chinese took it very seriously. They replaced their ambassador and in following years they redoubled their efforts. It was one of the few times our actions in the Commission actually made the front page of the New York Times.

There were a few other times we also made the front page of the Times. One was when we passed the first resolution of the UN ever condemning anti-Semitism. That was seen as a real step forward for the UN and involved another complicated drama. Remember that not long before, the UN had been equating Zionism with racism, so the anti-Semitism resolution was seen as a big victory, even though it was quite a convoluted resolution.

We also created the position of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was probably one of the greatest human rights achievements of my time in Geneva. This wasn't actually done in the Commission, but through a different mechanism I worked on a lot, the World Conference on Human Rights. The creation of the High Commissioner was a real breakthrough. Symbolically, it elevated human rights to a much higher status in the UN, and in practical terms it eventually meant that a lot more resources were devoted to human rights and that human rights became better integrated into all UN activities. Although it didn't get off to a great start, it did create an institution that has been able to do some real good.

Q: What was the problem in getting it started?

EICHER: The problem was the selection, basically. There was not enough preparation on the part of the United States or the Europeans in terms of coming up with a good candidate who could really make the most of the new office. An Ecuadorian diplomat, José Ayala-Lasso, was named as the first High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ayala-Lasso was not a human rights expert or crusader. He was quite a gray, non-confrontational kind of diplomat. He had chaired the UN General Assembly subcommittee that drafted the resolution creating the office, so he had a leg up in being associated with the new institution. As a diplomat seeking consensus, he was the kind of person the human rights violators could be more comfortable with, even though his heart was basically in the right place on human rights issues. So, he was not ready to make waves or to try to make the most out of the office, but he did do some useful things to get the office established and get its work started. He actually launched its first field mission, with a lot of U.S. help and encouragement, which set a very good precedent for future activities. And he avoided getting into any trouble, so perhaps that was also helpful in getting the office established and accepted. So, it was a modest start. A stronger personality could have made more of the office and the powers we gave it, I think. Later, when Ayala-Lasso was replaced by Mary Robinson, you got more of the fire-breathing, human rights-backing kind of leadership that I had envisioned for the position, but I was gone by that time. I understand that Robinson's style created its own kind of problems, not surprisingly, I guess, and that she was not necessarily a particularly good

administrator and was a little bit of a loose cannon. But it was good to see a UN official speaking out forcefully on human rights issues.

Q: How did information come in about abuses and that sort of thing?

EICHER: We relied a great deal on nongovernmental organizations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and dozens of smaller organizations that focused on different countries. The UN also had its own human rights mechanisms that brought in information, including the human rights treaty bodies and the special rapporteurs on particular countries or issues. One of the most important things we did, in fact was to greatly expand and strengthen the system of UN special rapporteurs, who were investigating and reporting on human rights violations around the world. There was also a UN subcommission on human rights that developed information, and various working groups, for example on indigenous people, or on "disappearances." There were other mechanisms, including ones that allowed individuals to complain to the UN about human rights violations. There was even a "confidential" procedure, the so-called "1503 procedure," under which people or groups could bring violations to the attention of the UN; I was the Western member of that group one year. And then, of course, the U.S. was also doing its own human rights reports and we had very good, first hand information from our own embassies about abuses in various countries. So, there was no lack of information coming in. If anything, there was a risk of being overwhelmed by the amount of information coming in. Even in a big mission like ours, there was no way you could get through it all.

Q: Congress mandated these human rights reports, which have gotten honed more and more over the years. There are screams and yells about them within the Foreign Service. I know in the '70s I was in South Korea and we were not too happy with them but anyway, they have become quite a force in international relations. Were other countries doing the same thing?

EICHER: Not really, no. Interestingly, China would produce a report on human rights in the U.S. every year, claiming that, you know, China is not the only country with human rights violations, which was true enough, of course. A lot of countries complained that we reported on human rights violations around the world but that we didn't report on ourselves. But I'm not aware of any other country that was writing country reports on human rights as a matter of course, certainly not in the solid manner that the U.S. was doing it.

Q: In Geneva was there a human rights alliance with, say, with the British, the French or the Scandinavians or something? I mean, were we really leading the charge or were we one of a number?

EICHER: We were out in front on a number of issues, but there really was a good bunch of reliable countries in Geneva. There was a group in the UN in Geneva that was very strong and well coordinated on human rights issues, which was called the WEOG (the Western European and Others Group). The UN is formally broken down into five geographical groups, in particular for selecting which countries will be members of different UN bodies, which are required to have balanced geographical distribution. The WEOG includes Western Europeans and others, including the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The WEOG, however, coordinated closely on issues well beyond who would be elected to which UN body. The WEOG would meet

regularly during the six weeks of the Human Rights Commission, every morning without fail, to coordinate policies and resolutions and who was going to take the lead on what and generally to plan on what we were trying to achieve and how we would achieve it. It was a very effective group which drove most of the work of the Commission. Most of the Commission's resolutions originated in the WEOG.

Q: Was WEOG pretty much of one mind?

EICHER: No, there were differences from time to time depending on the issues. At that time, the European Union didn't exist yet as it does today. It was before the Maastricht Treaty. They had what they called "the common foreign and security policy," which often was not a common policy at all. Sometimes you would get splits within the European countries on different issues, which occasionally worked to our advantage, but most often did not. In general, when the Western group was split, it just made us all weaker. The Europeans were generally pretty solid on human rights and we could normally count on them to do the right thing. Occasionally, they would want to take a weaker position on Iran or something than we would.

Q: What about the Helsinki Accords? The OSCE, the Organization for Security and Corporation in Europe? In many ways the Helsinki Accords were considered to be almost the key to the breakup of the Soviet Union and human rights were sort of at the core of that. How did the OSCE work in those days?

EICHER: It was just starting up in those days. In fact, I had virtually nothing to do with it at the time. Later in my life, I spent almost a decade with the OSCE, but at that point they were really just starting out. The Helsinki Accords dated from about 1976, I think it was. They grew out of the CSCE, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Only after the fall of communism was there enough constant activity going on, constructive activity going on, that they decided that the CSCE should become an organization, the OSCE, not just a Conference, the CSCE. They didn't set up a full-time secretariat and become the OSCE until about 1993 or 1994. The secretariat was in Vienna, rather than in Geneva, so it wasn't really in my bailiwick, and in any event it didn't get going in a big way until later. The Yugoslavia settlement was what really brought the OSCE to the fore as an active organization.

Q: Going back, still sticking on the human rights side, going back to China, was there any discernible movement on the part of the Chinese to cut out some of the human rights violations or was it more trying to keep people from criticizing them?

EICHER: That's an interesting issue. Every year as the Commission approached the Chinese would give signals that they would be ready to do a certain number of things if there was no China resolution. This would lead to discussions with them, sometimes by the United States. In fact, I got involved in some of these discussions myself, in a later job, when I went back to work on human rights in Washington. They would signal that okay, they were ready to release prisoner X, or maybe consider doing one or two of the other things we wanted them to do, like sign a new human rights treaty, or ratify one of the major human rights treaties, or move toward some other reform. They were never willing to make an explicit *quid pro quo* that they would do something in return for dropping the resolution, but the timing always seemed to be centered around the

resolution and it was perfectly clear that that's what they were aiming at. Even with no agreement from us, they would almost always do something as resolution time approached, usually release a few prominent prisoners in the weeks or days before the Commission met, or sometimes take some other kind of action. Even if it wasn't enough to stop us from sponsoring a resolution, it would help them get other countries on their side. So it was interesting to watch them. It made us feel like we were doing something right, something that forced the Chinese to take positive steps. Still, it never seemed like they would do enough or that they were sincere about it; they just wanted to do the minimum needed to avoid a resolution. You know, we used to use the term that they would "let a couple of prisoners fall off the back of the truck." Well, that was nice. It was very positive to actually get people released. It certainly made a difference in those people's lives, as well as making a political point. But, in general these were people who never should have been arrested in the first place and, meanwhile, they would be rounding up half a dozen more dissidents. So, while it was always nice to get people released, and you got a sense of accomplishment from doing it, I became a bit wary of the political prisoners game with the Chinese. They were masters at manipulation – picking up someone who never should have been picked up and then getting credit, or even concessions, for releasing them.

Q: What about Burma?

EICHER: Burma was always a big issue. We did certainly have Burma resolutions and there seemed to be a quite solid international support for condemning Burma's actions. There was a lot of support for trying to get Aung San Suu Kyi released. But Burma was one of those pariah regimes that didn't seem very concerned about international opinion. Most states, like the Chinese, would bend over backwards to avoid UN condemnation. A few, like Burma, were beyond the pale; they just didn't seem to care.

Speaking of Burma makes me think of one of the biggest events of my tenure, which I haven't really spoken about yet, the World Conference on Human Rights. This was a big UN world conference that was actually held in Vienna in 1993, but all the preparations for the conference were done in Geneva, because that's where all the international human rights officers were based. So we worked very hard on that. There were lots of preparatory meetings that went on for weeks and involved some very difficult negotiations. Difficult, but fun. I enjoyed multilateral negotiations. You would sit around a table with Iranians and Cubans and others who we don't usually talk with, and try to hammer out agreements. Or, you would sit with like-minded countries and look for ways to circumvent the "bad guys." Lots of the most important work was done informally in the coffee lounges, rounding up support and cutting deals, not in the plenary sessions, which usually consisted of boring speeches. There was a lot of parliamentary maneuvering, which I got pretty good at. After a while you could get a good sense of what could be adopted and what would face problems, even before consulting anyone else. You could tell what kind of amendments to propose that could win majority support and that might change something really bad into something OK.

Anyway, I'm digressing. The World Conference, when we finally finished all the preparatory meetings and got to Vienna, produced a declaration that actually included a number of very good things. It was far from a perfect declaration because we were laboring under the constraint that everyone wanted it to be adopted by consensus. In a way, this is a big advantage, because if it's

adopted by consensus it really reflects world opinion and no one can later say it doesn't apply to them, since they voluntarily signed on. On the other hand, consensus required very hard negotiations and meant that we couldn't get everything we wanted. Still, there was a lot of good stuff in the declaration and we even had a couple of breakthroughs. We were able to get agreement, worldwide acceptance, for the first time, that human rights is not a just a domestic issue but it is a legitimate concern of the international community. With that, we really should have put the last nail in the coffin of those who claimed that what they do domestically is none of anyone's business and that criticism on human rights issues is interference in internal affairs. The declaration that came out of the World Conference made clear that human rights violations anywhere are everyone's business. So that was a major, hard-fought, victory.

The other really big accomplishment of the World Conference was laying the basis for the creation of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. With much difficulty, we got a paragraph in the declaration saying that the United Nations General Assembly should consider, as a matter of priority, creating a High Commissioner. This was the result of a lot of really hard work. NGO's had begun floating the idea of a High Commissioner for Human Rights about the time the conference preparations began. I liked the idea, as did others at the U.S. mission in Geneva. We thought it could really make a difference in UN priorities and lead to good things around the world. Washington was much less enthusiastic. Under the Bush administration, they were worried about the "dreaded UN bureaucracy" and they didn't really want to create new UN structures, even on issues that they basically supported, like human rights. We continued to advocate for it from Geneva and won some allies. Part of the problem was that no one really had a clear concept of what a High Commissioner would be or do, or what his or her powers would be. I actually sat down at one point and sketched out in a cable exactly what I thought the concept of High Commissioner should look like and how it should fit into the UN system and sent it to the Department in a cable. That was just about the time that the Clinton administration came into office. They seemed to like it, and it eventually became U.S. policy. After the World Conference, I went to New York in the fall of 1993 and joined the U.S. delegation in to the UN General Assembly, where we actually created the High Commissioner in quite difficult negotiations.

Q: Why were they difficult negotiations?

EICHER: Well, several reasons. I think there was reluctance among much of the Third World – and particularly among the big human rights violators – to create this new position that could end up highlighting some of the problems in their countries. I think that some of the countries that went along at the World Conference with the idea that the UN General Assembly would consider creating a High Commissioner felt that they could kill the idea in New York, or just let it die a quiet death in the General Assembly. These kinds of things usually are adopted by consensus and they felt that by withholding consensus, they could block it or stall it. Even among the countries supporting the idea, there was a lot of controversy over what the new position ought to be and what it ought to look like; not every country accepted all the ideas I had gotten the U.S. to buy on to.

The negotiations in New York went very slowly, very badly, and we could see that time was running out on the General Assembly session's consideration of human rights. It was clear that

we had large majority in favor, but there were a lot of countries that were not enthusiastic and that were willing to let the clock run out. At the same time, we judged that if it came to a vote instead of relying on consensus, there were probably no more than half a dozen countries – if that many – that would actually be willing to stand up publicly and vote against a High Commissioner. Nobody wanted to look like they were blocking a High Commissioner, so that was an advantage for us. The dilemma was that most people, even our closest allies, wanted a consensus, not a vote, and that a few states – I think Cuba, Syria, and for some reason Malaysia, and a couple others – were deliberately trying to drag things out so there would be no consensus by the end of the session. We got into a squabble with our European allies, who generally wanted consensus, even if it meant waiting until the next year or longer. There was even a sharp division within the U.S. delegation about what we should do under these circumstances. Should we call their bluff and take it to a vote if need be? Or should we negotiate longer in hopes that we could bring them around to a happy solution eventually, even recognizing that this would be next year or the year after that or whatever? I was among those advocating that if we didn't seize the iron while it was hot, we would never succeed. You know, we had the momentum from the Vienna World Conference. If we couldn't do it with that, it seemed to me that the chances of doing it in subsequent years would likely be even less. I also suspected that if it came to the crunch, none of the "bad guys" would want to be seen as voting against this issue. By forcing the issue, we might yet get a consensus, and even if we didn't, we would get a High Commissioner.

The crunch point, from a procedural point of view, was the deadline for filing a resolution. If there was no resolution filed by the deadline, then there could be no vote or no adoption by the General Assembly and the issue would lapse until the next year. I argued that we should file a draft before the deadline. That would force consideration of something before the end of the UNGA session. If we achieved consensus on another text we could substitute that for ours; if not, we could still amend ours in any way we wanted and bring it to a vote. Or, we could even withdraw it later if we changed our minds for some reason. Others on the negotiating team – including especially the head of the team, who was one of our UN ambassadors – thought that it would just make people angry for us to file a draft and that it would be better to wait until next year.

By a happy circumstance, the head of our negotiating team was away somewhere on crunch day, the last day for resolutions to be filed, leaving me in charge of the team. I was able to convince Madeleine Albright, who was then the U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN, through her staff, that we really ought to go ahead and file this resolution, which would ensure that there would be a vote on a High Commissioner before the end of the session. With her approval, I gave instructions five minutes before the filing deadline for one of our team to run down and file our resolution. We waited until the last minute so that no one would have a chance to run down and file a competing resolution. We got a lot of flack from some of our own allies, who thought that filing a draft was confrontational. I remember the British representative, of all people, giving me a really hard time. And, of course, we got even more criticism from the half dozen states who were trying to drag things out. But, the bottom line was that it worked. Despite all the whining, the speed and seriousness of the negotiations improved tremendously. Once people knew that they were going have to vote on something, and that they couldn't just delay it for a year, they were far more inclined to work seriously toward an agreement. As a result, we actually did get a consensus resolution hammered out within a few days, to create a High Commissioner, which

was quite a breakthrough. Even a lot of the people who had criticized me for tabling the resolution came to me later to apologize and to admit that the strategy worked well in the end, including, to his credit, my British colleague. The resolution that we finally adopted was not great, but it was adequate. The one clause I insisted on getting in there was a phrase that the High Commissioner's job is to promote and protect all human rights. That's sort of an "elastic clause;" a good High Commissioner could take that phrase and do almost anything. So, in the end, that was one of the big victories of my time in Geneva. Certainly I can't take full credit for it, there were so many people involved. But at the risk of putting modesty aside, I can't help thinking that if I weren't there, it wouldn't have happened.

Q: Did you get any feel for, were the geographical bureaus here in Washington sort of weighing in and saying you know, don't upset our clients and all that?

EICHER: On this issue not so much, no, because this was not aimed at a particular country. In general, in Geneva we would usually get the State Department's final position sent to us, rather than hearing from individual bureaus or desks. It was later, in my subsequent assignment to the human rights bureau, that I saw – and was involved in – more internal fighting on human rights issues.

Q: When you went with the delegation to New York, did you get the feeling that this was a different world than Geneva?

EICHER: To some extent, but not a lot. I mean, I had been a delegate at previous UN General Assemblies in New York so it was not all new to me. The UN parliamentary rules and procedures were the same in New York and Geneva. More importantly, for these negotiations, I was dealing with a lot of the same people who I had been working with in Geneva and at the World Conference in Vienna. A lot of countries (but not usually the U.S.) regularly send their Geneva officers to New York to follow human rights issues that come up at the General Assembly. So, there were a lot of familiar faces at that negotiation in New York in addition to the procedures also being much the same.

Q: Did you feel that there was a change with the advent of the Clinton administration? It was more liberal, or less real politique, than, say, Bush Sr., who had a lot of experience in the United Nations and had served in China and had been around block and was perhaps more sophisticated. I may be over characterizing, but the Clinton administration came in all bright eyed and bushy tailed, sort of, on human rights. Did you feel that there was almost a fresh impetus on human rights?

EICHER: You know, interestingly, not really. The human rights policy changed only in small ways. That's one of the things I liked about it. I found it very reassuring that U.S. human rights policy changed very little, whether you had a right-wing Republican administration or a left wing Democratic administration. Everybody likes human rights. I liked working on human rights partly because you always had the moral high ground and, you know, you could feel good about what you were doing; you could believe in what you were doing. I was happy to let somebody else worry about how this might affect our trade with China or our relations with Colombia or whatever. My job was to point out that China or Colombia or whoever, were human rights

violators and that we ought to do something about it. That's not to say that I didn't understand the bigger picture, but I had the luxury of being in positions where I was supposed to be advocating for policies that would promote human rights, in whatever country.

When I started in Geneva, under Bush Sr., there was actually a lot of focus on human rights. There were probably more State Department personnel devoted to human rights in the UN under Bush than there were under Clinton, when he came in. Certainly in the Bureau of International Organizations there were more people dealing with human rights under Bush than under Clinton, including a couple of high-level envoys. There was one gentleman, Ken Blackwell – as a matter of fact, the same Ken Blackwell who is of more recent fame as the secretary of state of Ohio during the last election – who was the Bush administration's, I can't remember what his exact title was, but in effect he was a special ambassador for human rights and delegate to the Human Rights Commission. He would come out frequently to Geneva and would lead our delegation to the Commission. He did quite a nice job.

When Clinton came in, that position ceased to exist and some of the support staff which worked for that position ceased to exist. Clinton still did name ambassadors to the Human Rights Commission and very good ones. The first one was Dick Schifter, for the first year of the Clinton administration, and then it was Geraldine Ferraro. So I worked with Gerry as her deputy at the Commission for several years. She was a joy to work with and I think her appointment showed the level of interest of the Clinton administration in international human rights. But in terms of policy, it really didn't change that much. One thing that did change was that the Clinton administration supported the creation of a High Commissioner for Human Rights, while the first Bush administration had still been waffling at the time it left office; it wasn't opposed, but it hadn't made a positive decision, either. But on almost everything else, the positions were very similar on the human rights issues we were dealing with. It's only recently, under Bush Jr., that the U.S. has changed its policies so dramatically on human rights and undercut so much of what we did and lost the high ground that the U.S. always used to be able to claim on human rights.

Q: Was Israel sort of a wild card on human rights?

EICHER: Israel was a big problem for us on human rights and it was one of the instances where it was difficult to keep the high ground. Israel did have big human rights problems. It was violating human rights in a number of very nasty ways and yet the U.S. position was to support Israel and to vote against any resolutions that condemned Israeli practices. Our rationale was that Israel was being picked on unfairly, and to a large extent that was true. There were lots of resolutions condemning Israel's human rights practices, way out of proportion to what was happening there, and the language of the resolutions was often over the top. And some of the resolutions were very political, having more to do with peace negotiation issues than with human rights. But still, some of the points in the resolutions were valid, in light of Israel's violations, and I was sometimes uncomfortable in casting "no" votes in its defense. Overall, though, UN positions on Israel were often so outrageous that they deserved to be voted down.
Often, the U.S. was the only "no" vote; anti-Israel resolutions tend to draw an automatic majority in the UN.

One of the accomplishments of the Commission during my tenure was that for the first time the Commission adopted a resolution supporting the Middle East peace process. This was fun for me, having come out of Middle Eastern affairs. The resolution was a U.S. initiative and I took charge of drafting it and of the negotiations. I was actually negotiating with the PLO delegate and the Israelis on language which probably didn't belong in the Human Rights Commission at all, but we did put some human rights language in there to make it more plausible. But, basically the resolution welcomed the rapprochement between Israel and the PLO and all the good things this would mean for human rights. The resolution was adopted and it may have been the first positive words ever adopted about Israel in the Commission. So, that was another nice accomplishment.

The anti-Semitism resolution that I mentioned earlier was another plus, from the U.S. and Israeli points of view.

We also had other Middle East related problems, especially under the Bush Sr. administration, before the PLO became our friends. In particular, there was a quite nasty and ill-fated trip out to Geneva by the then-Assistant Secretary for International Organizations, John Bolton, who, as you know, later became U.S. permanent representative in New York. The goal of his mission to Geneva was to get the Human Rights Commission to disinvite Yasser Arafat from speaking before the Commission. I said this was an ill-fated mission because, if you understood the United Nations, you knew this could not happen. The PLO was accredited as an official observer organization of the United Nations and as such, it was entitled to speak. If the PLO's status at the UN was going to be changed it would have to be by a decision made in New York, not in Geneva. Now, if Assistant Secretary Bolton didn't know this much about UN procedures, or seek advice from those who did before launching a mission, this shows a real lack of both knowledge and judgment. I think Bolton was really more interested in making a political point for domestic audiences – to show how strongly pro-Israeli he was – than to really try to accomplish something useful at the Human Rights Commission.

Anyhow, when he finally accepted our explanations as to why he couldn't do what he wanted, then he changed gears slightly and his crusade became "we have to be sure that he is not given any of the honors given to a head of state." In practical terms, this meant that Arafat should sit at the PLO seat in the assembly hall to give his speech, rather than standing at the podium in the front of the chamber. I'm not at all sure this was a distinction that anyone would notice or care about, aside from those who understand the most arcane UN protocol procedures. In any event, Bolton was determined. His approach to making this happen was also a bit peculiar. He decided he would try to browbeat the WEOG into accepting his position. Once WEOG accepted, he thought, then we could force the position onto the rest of the Commission Members. The whole idea was basically a non-starter. We could have told him – and, in fact did tell him – that the WEOG would not agree and even if it did, the rest of the Commission members would not agree. There was already a precedent for Arafat to speak from the front of the room and there was no way that a majority of Commission members were going to support a change to that. Bolton brushed off any objections we tried to make. He had with him a recent tape recording of Arafat calling Jews "dogs" and he thought that would convince people to crack down on him. I don't think anyone was surprised, however, to learn that Arafat made anti-Semitic remarks. Bolton played the tape at the morning WEOG meeting and then gave an impassioned lecture – really, he was shouting and red-faced – to the assembled ambassadors telling them they had to prevent

Arafat from standing at the front of the room. His presentation was so embarrassingly out-of-control that it was followed by a stunned silence. The ambassadors, to no one's particular surprise, except Bolton's, were offended by the manner of his presentation. When no one else asked for the floor, the WEOG chairman said "Thank you. Since there are no other comments, we'll move on to the next order of business," and he changed the subject. Bolton was flabbergasted, outraged, that his proposal would not even be discussed by the WEOG, much less accepted. I remember the French Ambassador eventually took the floor and returned to the subject and gave Bolton a mild-mannered dressing down, saying that the WEOG didn't need to be lectured in that fashion by an American representative and that he disagreed also on the substance of the proposal. A couple of other WEOG members did the same. I should add that Bolton also took the liberty of inviting the Israeli ambassador to attend the WEOG meeting, which was a real no-no under WEOG procedures. The meetings were held at the German mission and they refused to let him into the meeting room, so he sat outside in the lobby while all this was going on. It was embarrassing for everyone. The only result of the whole episode was to strain our relations with the WEOG. Arafat came to the Commission and spoke from the front of the room.

Q: Bolton is, to say the least, a controversial character and in a way, this has been his modus operandi, to be a controversial character and a publicity-seeker from the far right. I mean, this is the way he gets his sustenance. How did you, when Bolton came out and before, did you just kind of roll your eyes and you know, let him do his thing and fail or how did this work?

EICHER: Well, in fact, that was the first time that I had dealt seriously with him. We did try to explain to him the procedures and the background, as well as how the Commission and the WEOG worked, what the rules were, and what could actually be achieved and what could not be achieved. But he was determined to go his own way on this. He even had a fight in front of two or three of us from the political section, a roaring fight, with Ken Blackwell, our Ambassador to the Commission, threatening to fire him on the spot because Ken pressed our views that Bolton's plan wouldn't work. Bolton just would not be dissuaded from pursuing his goal. I think he was probably egged on by Morris Abram, our Head of Mission, who was always trying to do everything he could to support Israel. But Abram should have known better. In the end, you're probably right that Bolton was looking more at politics and at his domestic audience than he was at the chances of success or of trying to do something constructive at the UN. If you want to get something adopted at the UN, you don't announce it and try to browbeat people, you have to do a lot of careful planning and speaking quietly with people to build support, especially speaking to Third World delegations. All we did in this case was alienate our friends. We never even took it up with countries other than the WEOG, which, I guess, was just as well.

Q: I guess Burma was really almost isolated. There wasn't a hell of a lot you can do about that was there?

EICHER: No, there was not a lot we could do about Burma. The other country that we really spent a lot of time on was Yugoslavia. That started to fall apart while I was in Geneva. When the war broke out, it was a big issue in Geneva.

Q: What were you doing? What was the issue, vis-à-vis Yugoslavia, in the Commission and what were the results?

We were working on it in a number of ways, although I'm not sure how much we actually accomplished. We were able to call the first-ever special session of the Human Rights Commission, which established a precedent that the Commission could be called to meet in emergency session instead of having to wait until the regular session the following spring before it could take up a fast-breaking, serious human rights issue. So that was a nice step forward. Since the U.S. had called for and organized the special session, I ended up as chairperson of very large, informal drafting committee. Since our Yugoslavia resolution was the only item on the agenda, everyone showed up; we must have had 100 delegates who wanted to make their additions and changes to the draft. And John Bolton came out again for the special session. I'll give him some credit for that. He did support us and did a quite reasonable job in helping us on that. We were able to pass a resolution that had all the appropriate condemnations of various bad things that were going on in the former Yugoslavia. I'm not sure it made any real difference on the ground, but it did help highlight some of the problems and solidify international opinion on them. Even though you could say that it didn't accomplish much concrete, it was regarded as successful enough that we organized a second special session a few months later, as things got worse in Croatia and Bosnia. The former Yugoslavia became a fixture in human rights meetings for the remainder of my time in Geneva.

Beyond the Human Rights Commission, as things got worse in Yugoslavia, we actually established a sort of little cell within the political section to follow events there, because a lot of information was coming into Geneva, primarily through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which had its headquarters about a block from the U.S. mission. The refugee section of the U.S. mission was also much involved since UNHCR (the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) was involved, as a result of all the ethnic cleansing going on. I had a political officer who would meet every day with the Red Cross and then send in a daily report to Washington on what was going on; it was one of our best sources of information before we opened embassies in Bosnia or the other new countries. When we did recognize Bosnia, it was too dangerous to actually have an embassy in Sarajevo, so the U.S. ambassador-designate, Victor Jacovic, was based in Geneva and worked out of my political section for several months.

The first peace negotiations – the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) led by Cyrus Vance - David Owen – was also based in Geneva, right in the UN headquarters building there. I had an officer responsible for follow what was going on in those negotiations and would get involved myself from time to time. Aside from day-to-day coverage, there were occasional big negotiating sessions that resulted in a team coming out from Washington, often led by Secretary of State Christopher. Christopher, in fact, became a very common visitor to Geneva.

Q: Was the enormity of the… particularly the Serbian, but also Croatian, activities, that is, what the Serbs were doing to the Bosnians and to some extent the Croats, coming through? The situation there was damn close to the Holocaust, right in Europe, forty years after the end of World War II. How was this impacting on you all?

EICHER: Well, as I said, it was an issue of overwhelming interest and generated a lot of attention and work for us. We were living comfortably in Geneva so it wasn't impacting our daily lives in that sense, but it was a major tragedy and everybody recognized it as such. There was a lot of hand wringing going on. The U.S. felt the Europeans should take the lead and the Europeans couldn't get their act together to take vigorous action. The was a UN force there – UNPROFOR – but it wasn't very effective, and administratively it was handled out of New York, not Geneva. There was an ongoing effort in Geneva to see if there was anything we could do, any way we could contribute, and that's what led to the Human Rights Commission special sessions, and to our work with the ICRC and UNHCR, and with the Vance-Owen negotiations. But, realistically, as active as we tried to be, we were to a large extent on the margins. The peace negotiations didn't really pick up steam until the Dayton talks, which was after I left Geneva, and after Vance and Owen had bowed out. One other thing we did try to do, in fact, in a very early resolution, was to help set the basis for the war crimes tribunal, but our initial effort on that in Geneva was quickly eclipsed by more serious work in Washington and New York, so war crimes moved out of the Geneva optic.

Q: Did Cuba come up at all?

EICHER: Cuba always came up. One of the main U.S. goals every year was to pass a resolution on Cuba and we did indeed do that every year. In fact, when I first arrived in 1991, my deputy, who had been there several years, briefed me and said, "Peter, there will be dozens of resolutions at the Human Rights Commission and we'll be expected to be on top of all of them, but in the final analysis, don't forget that the only one that really matters to Washington is the Cuba resolution. If we pass a Cuba resolution, the Commission is a success; if we don't, we'll be seen as having failed." I think that highlights the Cold War mentality that still prevailed when I got to Geneva. In fact, the Cuba resolution was always important for us politically, but as the Cold War dynamic ended, it was no longer the central theme of what we were trying to do at the Commission. When I got to Geneva, Cuba was the only country resolution that the U.S. took the lead on; by the time I left, we had the lead on at least half a dozen country resolutions, including China, Yugoslavia and many others that took more time than Cuba.

We actually had a lot of interaction with the Cubans, most of it very unhappy. The Cubans were extremely adept at working the Human Rights Commission and caused us an enormous amount of trouble and headaches. We succeed every year in getting our resolution adopted condemning human rights violations in Cuba. But they managed to succeed in muddying up a lot of other things we wanted to do and generally to cause trouble. In fact, they also sponsored a resolution against the U.S. every year, which was not about human rights in the United States but was one that they called "unilateral coercive measures." Basically, without naming the United States directly, it was a clear condemnation of the U.S. trade and financial embargo against Cuba. And, every year the Cubans were able to get most of the countries of the Commission, in fact a large majority of countries in the Commission, to agree to a resolution saying that "unilateral" embargos like the U.S. embargo on Cuba – our trade restrictions on Cuba, which they would call a "blockade" – were coercive measures and were a human rights violation that should be condemned. And they succeeded in that.

Q: This sounds like shadowboxing or something.

EICHER: It was shadowboxing to some extent. We would pass our resolution against them, and they would pass their resolution against us. Ours was certainly more significant, however, since it would name Cuba directly, and since it appointed a special rapporteur to investigate and report on human rights problems in Cuba. Still, you're right that there was a lot of shadow boxing going on at the Human Rights Commission and, in fact, that could sometimes be a lot of fun to work on. I much enjoyed negotiating in the United Nations and many of the endless debates and talks over how you were going to word something, or how you could promote your initiative or kill someone else's bad initiative, or how you could word an amendment that could get adopted and substantially change the meaning of a resolution you didn't like. Sometimes it would be scoring points over your opponents rather than necessarily creating anything that would really matter in the real world. So, this part of the work could be fun, or could be frustrating, but a lot of it was just a game. We realized that. I had visitors who would come out for a few days to help with one issue or another who would say, "Oh, my God. Condemn or strongly condemn? Deplore or deeply deplore, what difference does it make? How can you deal with this every day?" Once you got immersed into the minutia, however, you started to realize that in the context you were working in, it did make a bit of a difference.

Further on the Cubans, when I say they were excellent at causing trouble, it went way beyond the "universal coercive measures" resolution. Every year they would come up with some truly evil little ideas that, if adopted, would have undermined the UN human rights structure that we were trying to build up. It would be almost full-time work for a couple of members of our delegation to try to head off various bad Cuban initiatives. With the help of the Europeans, we were usually able to render them harmless, but sometimes they would score points. They were masters at coming up with things that, on the surface, would appeal to other Third World countries. There was a shifting little group of other countries that we sometimes called "the bad guys," including Iran and Syria, among others, who were always ready to work with the Cubans. It was very irritating. But, a lot of us got to know each other and there was some camaraderie, too. In later years, at the OSCE, where there were no such overt "bad guys," I sometimes actually missed not being able to have a good, parliamentary fight with the Cubans and Iranians. It could really get your adrenaline going.

Q: Let's take, still sticking to human rights, after four years there, did you see any machinery that was set up that was making a difference between whether somebody got their fingernails pulled out or not?

EICHER: I think we did. I think we really made some progress. I think the things we did really helped some people. How much of it was due directly to our work or how much was the happy confluence of events in the world that we were able to take advantage of, somebody else would have to judge. But we did create a lot of UN mechanisms which are making a difference. We created a lot of special rapporteurs, who are special UN envoys who go look at particular problems or particular countries and publicize problems and try to persuade the governments to improve practices. So, there is a special rapporteur on torture and a special rapporteur on religious freedom and a special rapporteur on independence of the judiciary and a whole string of others, most of which were created during my time in Geneva, who are out there highlighting problems, proposing solutions and making a difference. Plus, of course, the High Commissioner

for Human Rights and the advent of actual UN human rights offices in different countries of the world have started to change the international culture about human rights and the acceptability of foreigners raising human rights as an issue. I think these mechanisms have started to get some governments to behave more responsibly in some cases. We also created new treaty provisions on human rights, for example, a protocol to the anti-torture convention under which an international team could visit prisons, unannounced, to check on conditions and what was happening there. The U.S. used to support that kind of initiative; we really believed in fighting torture. And, of course, with every resolution, we were setting standards of what the international community should be abiding by. For example, I think one of our Yugoslavia resolutions was the first time that rape was labeled as a war crime. That had important implications for later efforts to prosecute crimes.

So it was rewarding in that sense. You know, as often as you didn't get the result you wanted to on a particular resolution, or even though you sometimes felt like you were only playing politics or working around the margins of important issues, very often you really did feel as if you were making a difference. I think our work did improve people's lives and cast a bit of light into the darkness. I think we did save some individuals here and there, and hold some brutal regimes to account, and establish some lasting procedures. So you could feel good about human rights work. I liked doing it; I felt like I had found my niche.

I think that perhaps one of the lasting legacies of some of the work we did – the work we participated in, and in some cases launched – is that now, within the United Nations system, human rights is truly ingrained as one of the major, mainstream issues. When I got to Geneva one of the goals I had was to try to bring human rights out of the narrow confines of the Human Rights Commissions and into the broader work of the UN and the other UN agencies. I visited a lot of agencies and I asked them about it. Almost uniformly, they would recoil. You know, the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees would say, "Oh, no. Human rights is a political issue; keep it in the Human Rights Commission," and WHO would say, "it's a political issue, keep it away from us." And this is the kind of response I got, from one agency after the other. By the time I left Geneva, every one of these same agencies was proudly saying, "We do human rights; we work on human rights; our program is based on human rights." Even UNICEF, which may be the least political of the agencies, was saying that their entire program was based on a human rights convention that originated in the Human Rights Commission, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. So it was a real change in approach. In the work of the UN now, human rights is almost always taken into account as a matter of both policy and bureaucratic procedure; there is a human rights person sitting at the table during policy discussions, and there are human rights experts attached to most UN field offices. So I think that's an important legacy.

Q: Did you see any NGOs, non-governmental organizations, taking on a stronger role as being an unofficial adjunct to the whole human rights process?

EICHER: I think so. As a result of human rights having a greater role, their influence also became greater. You also have to give them a lot of credit because they're the ones who are on the ground, around the world, finding out what the problems are and publicizing them, often at great personal risk. Very often they face persecution for trying to get the word out. I have tremendous admiration for them. They also came up with lots of ideas on how to promote human

rights, some of which were great. They were happy to share ideas and delighted if a government actually took up one of the ideas and supported it.

Q: Over the years, over time, we're talking about the last couple of decades, these groups have really become an extremely important element.

EICHER: Absolutely. We always found that you could work in partnership with them to great effect. A lot of officials, including American officials, considered NGOs a pain because they were always criticizing us as well as other countries, and they were never satisfied; they always wanted you to do more. But you need to accept that that was their job, their purpose, to urge governments to do more. As a representative of a country trying to promote human rights, I quickly came to understand that the NGOs were our natural allies, even if they didn't always agree with our positions. And they were generally easy to work with and to get along with. They were so used to being blown off or ignored by government delegations that they were really pleased when a delegation was actually willing to take them seriously and cooperate with them, even if you couldn't always agree with them. I spent a lot of time with them and gave events for them at my home. They made wonderful partners.

Q: I don't know if this is still in your province but with the rending aside of the Iron Curtain, one real negative was human trafficking, essentially the recruitment of Eastern European young women to become prostitutes. Often they did not know what they were getting into. This whole trafficking of humans and also, I guess, of young boys and all. Did that fall under your province at all?

EICHER: This was just starting to be seen as a big issue at the time I was in Geneva. It wasn't yet seen as an East European problem at the time, but it was emerging as an issue that was referred to either as "modern day forms of slavery" or as "sale of children," depending on which facet of it you were considering. There were a few activists and NGOs already doing some work on "modern day forms of slavery," which included everything from vestiges of slavery-like practices in Mauritania, to forcible recruitment of child soldiers in Sudan, to sweat shops and various kinds of indentured labor, as well as what we now call human trafficking. The U.S. had not really taken this up as a big issue yet.

The "sale of children" aspect of it, like so many other human rights issues, became very politicized. The U.S. was against taking action on this issue because, I think, there wasn't a clear understanding of what was really going on with modern day slavery and because the Cubans and some others were successfully twisting it to suggest that American adoptions of Central American children was part of the problem of "sale of children." There was even one very awkward evening at the Human Rights Commission when I was in the U.S. chair, during an effort by the Commission to get approval for drafting a new convention – or more technically a protocol to the existing Convention on the Rights of the Child – on the subject of sale of children. We had instructions that if it came to a vote, we the U.S. should vote "no." The European country that was in charge of derailing this resolution – Portugal, as I recall – managed to mangle it, and all the European countries then suddenly changed their positions to support the resolution. We were left standing alone in opposition. The optics were terrible – the U.S. was the only country in the world blocking progress on protecting children from predators. There was no time

for new consultations with Washington to modify the U.S. position. So, after a lot of unpleasant back-and-forth debate on the floor of the Commission, I made a policy decision and violated my instructions and joined consensus on the resolution. I thought Washington would be furious and worried about what kind of reprimand I might get. But, as it turned out, no one in Washington seemed to care very much, so I guess the story had a happy ending. The protocol in question was eventually drafted and adopted, and it is now part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Most countries have ratified it, but the U.S. never even ratified the Convention, much less the protocol.

As for human trafficking as we know the issue today, it had not yet become a well-publicized issue while I was working in Geneva. A bit later in my life, when I was working for the OSCE, I worked a lot on combating trafficking; I actually established the first OSCE programs to combat trafficking.

Q: What about Rwanda?

EICHER: Rwanda did happen, yes. That was one of the huge human rights tragedies that happened while I was in Geneva. Maybe the biggest. We did have a special session of the Human Rights Commission on Rwanda. I was there for the preparations but didn't attend the actual session, since I was back in the U.S. for my oldest son's wedding. The Human Rights Commission did adopt a resolution, which, I guess, helped attract world attention to the horrors that were going on there, even if it didn't change much on the ground. But on Rwanda, what can I say? The world failed Rwanda. There were just too many crises going on at once. Most Western focus was still on Yugoslavia. Even on that, the West wasn't ready to intervene militarily, and that was much closer to home and getting much more media attention. There were also little wars going on in a number of the former Soviet countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia. The war in Chechnya was also starting. Everyone was still talking about the "peace dividend" that was supposedly coming with the end of the Soviet Union and, instead, here were little wars breaking out all over the place. Governments didn't have the stomach for military intervention, especially in Africa, which seemed so much further away. In fact, only a few months before, the Clinton administration had tried a small scale military intervention in Somalia to restore peace there, which ended up being a failure; remember, the U.S. withdrew after a Blackhawk helicopter was shot down and bodies of American soldiers were dragged through the streets. So the U.S. really wasn't ready for another African adventure and other countries didn't step up to the plate, either.

The crises in Yugoslavia, and especially in Rwanda, did get people talking about the idea of "humanitarian intervention" as a right or a duty of states when horrible things were going on in a country. The idea was very controversial because normally the UN wouldn't interfere in any country's internal problems unless they also threatened international peace and security. The genocide in Rwanda helped make the idea of humanitarian intervention respectable, if not fully accepted.

Eventually, later on, Rwanda became the first country in which the UN established a human rights office, under the authority of the new High Commissioner for Human Rights. So that in that sense, looking through a bureaucratic lens, the machinery that we had set up by creating a

High Commissioner was ultimately used to help deal with the aftermath of the genocide. But international efforts on the genocide itself were totally inadequate and too late.

In fact, back then everyone – including the United States – was unwilling to concede that what was going on in either Yugoslavia or Rwanda was genocide. There is a UN Convention against Genocide, that the U.S. and most other countries have ratified, that obliges the signatories to take action to end genocide if it is taking place. So the U.S. at first avoided using the "g" word, and eventually starting using the term "acts of genocide," instead of just plain "genocide," since the lawyers said that would not trigger our obligations under the treaty. It was crazy.

Q: Was Rwanda one of these things that developed so quickly that it was almost not feasible to have a real response, or not?

EICHER: Being in Geneva, I wasn't really close enough to the policy makers to be able to make a real judgment on that. Certainly, it happened very quickly and unexpectedly, at least from our perspective in Geneva. It was also over fairly quickly; it lasted only about three months, I think, which, of course, is a long time if you're on the ground watching people get killed, but a short time in terms of building up momentum for international intervention in a crises. Yugoslavia, in contrast, went on for years. I think it would have been possible for the international community to have a more vigorous response to Rwanda, which might not have prevented the genocide from starting, but would have ended it more quickly. But for all those reasons I mentioned – and probably other reasons that I didn't know or have since forgotten – there was just no inclination by the international community to get involved, until it was way too late.

Q: Did that hang over you? Were people coming in and telling you about the horror stories or was there sort of a filter to that while you were there?

EICHER: The information we got was indirect. I didn't have a lot of people coming in telling me specifically about what was happening in Rwanda. There weren't Rwandans getting on airplanes to Geneva to tell their stories personally. But we were getting information from the International Red Cross and from UN agencies and from NGOs and even from our own government. It would be nice to say that the international community didn't act because it didn't know what was going on, but I think people had a reasonable idea what was going on. Perhaps there wasn't a full grasp of how extensive, how massive the genocide was, but there was enough information to know that there was a really big, serious problem going on in Rwanda.

Q: Before we leave Geneva, I think we'd better talk about some of the other aspects of this. We've talked almost completely on human rights. Were there any other issues you were involved in?

EICHER: Yes, there were quite a few. I spent a reasonable amount of time with the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). I had an officer working full time on each of those in my section. For me, it was mainly a supervisory role, although there were issues that I got involved in. In particular, each of those organizations would have big annual meetings, the World Health Assembly and the International Labor Conference. I was always on those delegations, which were often headed by a U. S. cabinet secretary; usually, the

Secretary of Health and Human Services and Secretary of Labor would come out for the meetings. It was often Donna Shalala and Robert Reich during most of my time. In the WHO, a lot of the issues were technical health issues which I didn't have much to do with. But there were always political issues that would come up; a certain number of political issues would always arise within these organizations and that's really what I was there to deal with.

One issue you could count on almost every year was a membership issue: are we going to let the PLO have a seat or not? We were always trying to make sure the PLO did not get admitted as a state, although we didn't try to block observer status for the PLO. But every year it seemed that there would be a fight in the credentials committee, with someone trying to sneak the PLO in while we weren't looking, so we would have to be there to object and to fight it off. Then we started to have the same kind of fight about Yugoslavia. Our position was that when Yugoslavia broke up, Serbia did not automatically become the successor state that automatically got Yugoslavia's seat in the UN and other organizations. The Serbs were already regarded as the aggressors in the Yugoslavia conflict and we didn't want them to be rewarded as the legitimate government entitled to a seat at the table at every international organization; we thought they should apply for membership, just like Croatia and Bosnia and the other successor states had to do. The Serbs, however, took the view that they were *the* successor state and acted as though they automatically inherited the UN and other agency memberships. So, one of the sometimes-tedious things we were doing at all the different agencies in Geneva was trying to make sure that the Serbian regime did not show up and claim the Yugoslavian seat. In fact, we had to brief every delegation to every small technical meeting about this and ask them to give us a call immediately if any Yugoslav appeared. This happened often, at first, and I or one of my political officers would have to run down to whatever meeting it was and give the standard speech about why Serbia should not claim the successor seat for Yugoslavia. Sometimes we had to demand a vote or obstruct proceedings until we could get them out of there. We had to deal with this issue at the Health Assembly and the International Labor Conference.

Q: Were we carrying that particular pail of water or were other delegations doing the same thing?

EICHER: Most of the Europeans were with us. Their missions weren't quite as big and well organized as we were and often didn't have people attending the little technical meetings like we always did, so very often we would be the first to hear about the problem. But, since they shared our position, one of the things we would do if a Yugoslav did show up was to phone around right away to the other missions and make sure that other representatives who shared our views appeared at whatever little technical meeting it was, to join us in our objection. Sometimes they would even take the lead in objecting. There was a period where the Serbian membership issue came up constantly, but eventually the Serbs realized they were beaten and showed up less often.

There were also other political issues that would come up. One issue that seemed to come up regularly in the World Health Assembly, for example, was an item called "the health effects of nuclear war." This was an attempt by a few of the radical Third World countries to stick it to the United States. The idea was that the U.S., being the last remaining superpower, should get rid of all of its nuclear weapons in the interest of world health. Well, I guess you can't argue that nuclear weapons aren't bad for people's health, but this was clearly a disarmament issue that had

no business being decided in the World Health Assembly. There were all kinds of strategic arms limitation talks going on in Geneva; that was the place to discuss disarmament, not in the WHO. Those were the kinds of things that would come up. There were also leadership issues. The head of the WHO was a Japanese man, Dr. Nakajima, who had proved to be a very ineffective administrator. We were trying to organize a campaign to get him replaced, but even though pretty much everyone acknowledged that he was bad for the organization, the Japanese were pretty effective in keeping him there. He was eventually replaced, but not until after I left Geneva.

One other interesting issue that kept coming up at the WHO during my time – which really wasn't a political issue that I had to deal with – was the question of whether to destroy the last remaining smallpox virus. Smallpox had been entirely eliminated as a disease all over the world; there hadn't been a single case anywhere, in years. The two last remaining samples of the virus were held by the U.S. and the Russians at secure health laboratories. So, there was this ongoing discussion of whether it was better to destroy them, and thus permanently rid the world of what had been such a terrible scourge over many centuries, or keep them, because we shouldn't be destroying the last of a species, no matter how bad it seemed to be. The inclination on all sides at the time was leaning to destroying them, but the final decision was never actually taken, so the specimens remained, hopefully, still safely locked up. In light of this background, I was amazed when I heard a couple of years ago that the current Bush administration was undertaking a massive program to produce smallpox vaccine and inoculate all the American soldiers going to Iraq against smallpox. I still can't understand why this was necessary, unless we were wrong all those years in Geneva about the last viruses being tucked safely away, or unless it was all a propaganda effort to try to show that Saddam Hussein really did have a biological warfare program.

Q: At one time, particularly early on – and my oral histories go back to the beginning of the Cold War – there was tremendous emphasis on labor unions as a bulwark against the Soviets, who were trying to establish their own unions. Particularly as the political strength of labor unions had gone down in the United States, did you get a feeling that the International Labor Organization was not really a very high priority?

EICHER: Well, certainly I would agree that it was not a very high priority among all the issues and organizations we had to deal with in Geneva. But it did get some attention; as I said, the annual delegation to the International Labor Conference was sometimes headed by a cabinet secretary, at least during the Clinton administration. Since I knew so little about the ILO before I got to Geneva, I was struck at how big and active and well regarded it was. I was impressed at how effectively it operated. The ILO actually predates the United Nations. Even though it's now considered a United Nations specialized agency, it's older than the United Nations. It operates on a tripartite basis, which is unique. Every delegation, every country's delegation, is made up of three components: government, labor and employers. So you really are including all the three of the components you need in order to try to reach some kind of consensus or agreement to move things forward on labor issues. I guess in my ignorance I had expected the ILO to be made up of a bunch of labor leaders pressing for action on their issues. And there were a lot of labor leaders, of course, but there were also a lot of chamber of commerce people and businessmen and government officials. Almost every year there would be an effort to pass a couple of new

conventions setting new and better standards on some pressing aspect of labor law or labor conditions. Some of these were major issues, like child labor, but a lot of them were just little things around the margins, say, setting agreed, minimum international safety standards in industries using some particular type of dangerous materials. There are now over 200 international labor conventions; it's a wonderful body of standards, even though some of them are not very strict. About a dozen of them make up the "core conventions" that people cared most about, but there were also many others. These conventions are treaties, which legally bind countries to abide by them once they have been ratified. The ILO continues to set standards and to monitor the implementation of standards on many, many labor and safety issues. It's quite a useful process. I was really very impressed with the ILO and was happy to have been involved with it.

Q: What about say, India and Pakistan, particularly India, a big democracy but one where an awful lot of kids, very young kids, are involved in child labor. How was it dealt with.

EICHER: The ILO wasn't generally an organization where you would take a particular country to task for what it was doing. You know, if you wanted to criticize India on child labor, you would do it in the Human Rights Commission, not at the ILO. Delegations at the ILO usually tried to maintain a constructive, cooperative approach. Because of the tripartite nature of the delegations, even India's delegation would have labor leaders who were likely to be saying the same about child labor as India's critics would be. It wasn't an organization where I recall there being a lot of high-level confrontation and finger-pointing, although sometimes that did happen. More likely, if the ILO saw a problem with child labor in India, it would look for ways of trying to put new rules in place aimed at making things better. For example, there might be a new convention that would prohibit child labor in dangerous industries, like the glass industry or the match industry, or that would limit or end some specific practices. You know, recognizing the reality that children are working, at least let's start by getting them out of the more dangerous industries, and make a step toward ending the worst abuses. The ILO also had mechanisms to check on how countries were doing in meeting their obligations.

Q: In human rights, was child labor a problem, an issue?

EICHER: It was an issue that did come up, although it was not a front-burner issue. One particular children's issue which came up during my time was street children. The Europeans, in particular, seemed to be very interested in trying to do something about the problem of street children in Latin America.

Q: Brazil, of course, is a prime example.

EICHER: Exactly. Although street children are a problem in many countries, the situation is particularly bad in Brazil and, although the Brazilians were not specifically named in a resolution, they certainly felt like it was criticism aimed at them. In fact, I have to admit that as much as I recognized street children as a problem, I was not very happy to see the Europeans take this issue up in the Human Rights Commission because, if you recall, I said that we had been able to forge a coalition of Eastern and Western Europeans and Latin Americans, that was critical in order to get enough votes to pass anything positive in the Commission. So, as the Europeans started

targeting Latin American democracies on this kind of issue, those countries started wavering on their support for us on some of the other issues, like China, or Burma or other things we wanted their help on. Still, I remember that we did pass a resolution on street children. We were able to maintain Latin support on most of the other issues, but it became more difficult once they found themselves as targets.

The other child issues that we were involved in, included negotiating a couple of protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I've already mentioned the protocol on "sale of children." Another protocol was on the age of military service. That one was an effort to make it an international standard that kids could not be recruited into the armed forces until they turned eighteen. This was a problem for the United States because at the time we could still recruit people at seventeen and a half.

Q: As far as I know, regardless of past standards, people joined the military and particularly the navy, at seventeen.

EICHER: I think the U.S. has now changed its policy on that, partly as a result of this protocol that was negotiated in Geneva and even though the U.S. has never ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I think our first gambit was, "OK, we recruit at seventeen and a half, but we'll make sure no one goes into combat until age eighteen." I was actually surprised when the U.S. changed its position on this and now, I believe, we do not recruit people younger than eighteen. This was actually a bigger problem for some of our allies than for us. The British and Dutch, I think, still had a practice of enlisting boys of sixteen on naval ships as cabin boys. They also phased that out, I think. So this, maybe, is one more example of our work at the Commission having an effect in the real world.

Q: One last question. With the political appointees coming in and out – you mentioned Bolton – was there, in the four years you were there, did you see much of a clash between the political types versus the career types in what you were doing?

EICHER: Other than that one incident with Bolton that I mentioned, very little. Again, it was very reassuring that human rights had a solid backing within all stripes of the U.S. government, under both Republican and Democratic administrations. To some extent, interestingly, the more liberal Democrats and the more conservative Republicans would tend to have the same views on human rights issues, and it was the middle-of-the-road politicians who would sometimes let you down. These were often reasonable people but, while they supported human rights, they would often look at the bigger foreign policy picture and their views on trade relations and so forth might trump their concerns about human rights. China was a good example of this; the middle-of-the-road politicians would speak out about human rights problems in China, but then vote for permanent most-favored-nation status for trade with China. But the very conservative Republicans – the libertarians and politicians concerned about individual rights and too much government meddling – and very liberal Democrats tended to be very solid supporters of human rights in any country.

Q: You know, when you think about it, it's a little hard for anyone to say, "Well, you know, yes, we know they're beating up and jailing people, but we we've got other fish to fry."

EICHER: Indeed. One of the things I loved about working in human rights was you always had the moral high ground. You could really believe in the positions you took, really have confidence that you were doing what was right. I liked human rights work enough that I spent the rest of my career on it. When I left Geneva in 1995 the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, who I had gotten to know fairly well from his trips to Geneva and through our work together at the World Conference on Human Rights, John Shattuck, asked me to come back and be his special assistant in Washington.

To wrap up on Geneva, I should just say that living there was very nice, as you might expect. It was a small city, only about 300,000 people I think, but it felt very cosmopolitan because, being a UN headquarters, there were so many international people there. There wasn't all that much to do right in Geneva, but we entertained officially quite a bit and had a busy official social life. We also made a lot of good friends. Two of our sons graduated from the international school there, which they liked very much. Geneva was beautifully situated right on the lake and within easy drive of an endless number of wonderful old castles, or medieval villages or alpine resorts. Switzerland was so beautiful we used to say it was like living in a postcard. And Geneva was a great base to get around to other places. We could drive to France in six minutes from our house, and could be in Italy within an hour's drive. Germany was only a couple of hours away. So, we ended up seeing a lot of Europe, which was a great plus.

LEON WEINTRAUB
International Relations Officer, US Mission to the UN
Geneva (1993-1997)

Mr Weintraub was born and raised in New York City, educated at Hunter College, Brooklyn College and the Universities of Pittsburgh and Wisconsin. After service in Liberia with the Peace Corps he entered government service, first with the Navy Department and then with the State Department Foreign Service. His service in Washington and abroad involved him with a variety of countries and issues including African Affairs, International Organizations, Narcotics and Peace-Keeping operations in Africa. His foreign posts were Bogotá, Tel Aviv, Lagos, Quito and Geneva. Mr. Weintraub was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

WEINTRAUB: Commerce. For the ITU (International Telecommunications Union), at senior meetings we had senior people from other agencies in the government from the ICC (International Communications Commission), International Communications, whatever it was called, I forget what we have in the United States. Perhaps it's the FCC, Federal Communications Commission.

Anyway, in the more technical agencies we had those people. For the International Labor Organization, we had senior people both from State and from the Department of Labor but Mr. Helms, Senator Helms and others had problems with the ILO. Senator Helms' constituency in the

South and others are not known to be particularly supportive of the labor movement, of union movements. But the ILO also had an interesting feature in its representation. It had what's known as tripartite representation. So in addition to the government delegates, at senior levels there were also delegates from the private employers' sector and also from the labor sector. So each senior American delegation to meetings of the ILO had government representation, which was State and Labor Department, a private sector representation which might be from the manufacturing sector or the trade sector, from management, and union representation as well, and that's built into the way the organization works.

I also did a lot of meetings with the International Committee for the Red Cross, the ICRC, concerning the aftermath of the Gulf War, the first Gulf War. This task was not a part of my original "portfolio," but it was one of the many things that often occur at embassies or missions that did not fall easily into any particular area. It concerned the issue of missing prisoners from that Gulf War. I think there were about 700 prisoners still unaccounted for. These were members of the allied forces but mainly Kuwaiti, either from the military or from the civilian sector. There were a small number of Saudis, a small number of Syrians (Syria was in the coalition), there may have been an American or two, but most of them were Kuwaitis. After the Gulf War, in one of the Security Council resolutions, the UN Security Council mandated that the ICRC would accept responsibility for a process that might find out about these people -- if they were missing, and if they could be repatriated if found. So the ICRC hosted meetings about three times a year, and the meetings typically went on maybe for three or four days. The ICRC was kind of the mediator. On the one side were members of the coalition; the U.S., the UK, France, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Syria attended some of the meetings, but not all of them. And on the other side was Iraq, all by itself. And it was just a very painstaking exercise, - and I regret that I can't say it was a particularly fruitful one. If you get the impression from these meetings that this is what multilateral diplomacy is like, I don't think anyone would ever enter it. The Iraqis were, as far as we could tell, they were stonewalling all the time.

For example, the government of Kuwait, the delegate from Kuwait, would say, well, here's a case. They'd describe an individual and according to all the records this individual was last seen being led away by an Iraqi patrol. He was last seen in the custody of Iraqi soldiers on such and such a date being led away from this particular house. So where is the person now? And these descriptions might go on individually, case by case by case. And the delegation from Iraq, of course, said something like, well, we'll have to take this under advisement. We take note of all the particulars, we have to report this information to Baghdad, we'll bring this back and see what we can find out. Then at the next meeting they would make a report and half the time it was something like, -- well, there was sheer chaos in the bombing that started the war. Our holding areas were destroyed by bombs, there was mass confusion, the people ran away and escaped, we have no way to account for them. Or they'd give some kind of other story. And this would go on back and forth, back and forth.

Q: What was it- in a way, did you feel that this essentially was an exercise in futility, not just by the Iraqi attitude but probably what happened, that they'd been killed?

WEINTRAUB: It could be. I should add, at this point, that at almost all the meetings we were joined by the American ambassador in Kuwait.

Q: Skip Gnehm.

WEINTRAUB: Skip Gnehm. He came for a couple of meetings and then he was replaced by the new American ambassador, Ryan Crocker. And I got the impression from them that the government of Kuwait was on a mission and they were unable to face the public with the potential reality that 700 of their young men were not going to come back. You know, it's a small country, it would be a large percentage of the population. And I got the impression that many of these young men were from elite families in Kuwait. Just as in the United States during and after the Vietnam War, there were families of MIAs that formed a strong lobbying group, a domestic lobbying group in the United States -- similarly in Kuwait, there was a committee for the repatriation of the Kuwaiti prisoners. As I understood it, the official line in Kuwait was that these 700 people – prisoners, if you will -- were being held somewhere, and we just had to apply enough pressure on the Iraqis, and we'd find out where they were and they'd be repatriated. And I accepted the viewpoint that Kuwait was a society that had been through such a trauma that they were not prepared to write them off, they were just unwilling to accept as a reality that they might not ever return. Obviously I was not directly involved with events in Iraq and Kuwait at the time of the occupation and liberation, so I had no way of knowing about specific events, but one could believe certainly that a lot of this happened. Whether a lot of those missing Kuwaitis survived, and whether a lot of them were taken back to Iraq and then executed in cold blood and dumped in a mass grave, we really don't know and certainly didn't know at that time. But that was quite a grueling experience.

I remember when our ambassador from Kuwait Ryan Crocker came to some of these meetings. He was obviously more used to bilateral diplomacy where things are much easier to get done . And the International Red Cross people, God bless them, had patience. The didn't get frustrated, they realized that they're the mediator, they have to keep a civil tongue to everyone, and they just kept at it. And of course while we were there, the International Red Cross lost some people in Rwanda, and other locations as well. I think they also lost some people in Angola when I was there. So I came away with very great respect for the International Red Cross, the ICRC.

Q: How'd you find this living in Geneva, pretty expensive, isn't it?

WEINTRAUB: Yes. Well, I looked at Geneva as kind of a reward for my family after the assignments we'd lived through, mainly in Third World countries. We hadn't been in a European country before. So, yes it was expensive but there was a cost of living allowance. Obviously we had housing allowances and we could live reasonably well. The cost of living allowance, as it did all over the world, took a few months to catch up after the fact, but our kids had a good school at the International School of Geneva -- not the best, perhaps, but I think it was a pretty good school. Our middle son did his full four years of high school there; our daughter finished up middle school and started high school. We traveled around a fair amount. Geneva's way in the west of Switzerland, so we were in France a lot, actually we did a lot of skiing in France. I learned to ski in my middle age. We made a few trips to Germany and we made one trip to London.

We made one trip, a very interesting trip, when we drove all the way to Bucharest, Romania. We

had a friend who was deputy chief of mission at the time in Bucharest, a friend from a Foreign Service family that we had served with in Nigeria. And, you know, in a Third World post like Nigeria you really develop camaraderie with families. And they had children about the ages of our children as well. So we drove from Switzerland through Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary and then Romania. And I think it was really an eye opener for our two kids that were with us. Our oldest was in college in the States, but our two high school-aged kids really had a front-row seat to see the differences as you drove east through Europe. Obviously Germany was a lot like Switzerland -- for the most part it looked pretty much the same. In the Czech Republic, you could see -- this was in '96 -- in the Czech Republic things were somewhat run down but humming along alright and of course downtown Prague, where we spent most of our time, was just lovely. And the roads were fairly good. Vienna and Austria were fine, of course. Hungary was another story. The roads suffered by comparison, of course. Budapest was fairly nice, though. You know, this is seven or so years after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the demise of the Soviet Union. Hungary was starting to emerge on its own but the roads, the restaurants were a bit more shabby and second rate.

But as soon as you crossed over the border into Romania it was another world completely. I mean, at the border, the road changed dramatically. There were potholes and street urchins, street beggars all around. It kind of freaked the kids out a little bit when we crossed over. Typically at a border crossings there's always a lot of people milling around, looking to change money, to sell things, to buy things. We had a mini-van which we'd driven all the way, and as soon as we crossed over the border -- we had this large vehicle, and I imagine they didn't see a lot of these large vehicles -- the little street kids were swarming around the car begging for money for food, whatever. I think it was really an eye opener for our kids. We spent the night on the road on the way to Bucharest and our kids didn't want to go out of the hotel that night. I wanted to walk around, walk around the village square. I was confident it was relatively safe around the village square of the town, but they were in a kind of a state of anxiety. And then the next day we managed to drive into Bucharest and spend a nice few days with our friends. It was quite an experience, that was.

Again, we made other trips to West Germany. We also went to Denmark one time. We went to the Netherlands. So we traveled by train and we did a lot also by car. We also made a trip to Italy, to Rome. Unfortunately we had a negative incident on the road, actually not too far, kind of near Milan. We stopped on the autostrada, on the highway, at a food court, just like you have on the New Jersey Turnpike. And when we got out after having lunch we found the car had been broken into. Someone had broken the lock on one of the doors and they rifled through the kids' backpacks and the kids had their CD players or Walkmans, whatever it was at the time, so the kids were really devastated by that. Not the monetary value; fortunately we had insurance that was able to cover that. But it was the feeling that you've been violated in your car. So that kind of took that trip down a notch, although we did continue on to see Venice, Florence, and Rome, but I think we shortened the overall length of the trip. Overall, we did a fair amount of traveling, and we did skiing. And I think the kids had a very good time. So I was happy we were able to do that after I'd taken the family through some hardship assignments.

SALLY GROOMS COWAL
Delegate, UN Program on HIV and AIDS
Geneva (1995-1999)

Ambassador Sally Grooms Cowal was born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1944. After graduating from DePauw University she joined the United States Information Service as Foreign Service Officer. Her service included assignments as Cultural and Public Affairs Officer at US Embassies in India, Colombia, Mexico and Israel She subsequently held a number of senior positions in the Department of State, including Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs and Deputy Political Counselor to The American Ambassador to the United Nations. In 1991 she was appointed Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. Ambassador Cowal was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

COWAL: I retired April 30th, I think, 1995.

Q: Then what?

COWAL: Well, just prior to my retirement, and while we were trying to decide what to do with the rest of our lives, and whether or not I would hang around for a second chance at a foreign mission, Madeleine Albright had asked me to go to Geneva with Geraldine Ferraro, who was heading the delegation to the Human Rights Commission.

Q: She is a former representative and had run on the vice presidential ticket with Walter Mondale.

COWAL: With Walter Mondale in 1984. I think she had been the human rights commissioner for a couple of years. Suddenly in that January 1995 session of the Human Rights Commission, the United States decided for the first time that they wanted to bring forth a resolution, on the human rights situation in China, which is a very difficult, very needed thing. Clearly, the human rights situation was, and I think to a certain extent remains, far from what you would consider ideal. When I was political counselor at the UN, I had gone and helped the Human Rights delegation I think twice. It's a subset of UN things. If you understand how the UN works as a political body, and I understood that, plus I had been at the Human Rights Commission, you understand that it's much, much harder to bring actions against countries that have some power and influence than against countries that don't.

It's kind of an easy deal to condemn the human rights abuses in Myanmar, for instance, because Myanmar has very little influence and very few friends.

Q: That's Burma.

COWAL: Burma. It's a much bigger deal to try to do that in China. Most countries, whether you're talking about the UN Human Rights Commission or the UN General Assembly, they only have two or three issues that really matter to them. Therefore they're willing to trade votes on everything else in return for a favorable vote on the one or two or three things that matter to them.

I think one reason the U.S. is often so isolated in the UN is really because we do play politics also, but first of all we care about a lot of issues in a lot of places in the world. And, secondly, we're usually unwilling to trade votes on things that matter to us. We have policy positions on most things, and therefore we're not very flexible in terms of trading these votes.

I think many countries, just think, "Win the few you care about and nobody at home or elsewhere will ever know how you voted on the rest of the stuff." We have this much more rigid system, much more scrutinized by the press. If we simply gave away votes on various items, that would not go unnoticed, so it's a very different thing. But in 1995 the Clinton administration and Madeline, who was about to become secretary of state but at that time was the ambassador to the United Nations, knew that it was going to be difficult to bring up anything on China. In the Clinton administration way of doing these things, they had put together a delegation to the Human Rights Commission which they thought reflected human rights, some of the good things they believed about human rights. So the delegation was large, but not very professional. In other words, they had picked a Native American and they had picked an African American, but not people who had UN political experience. They had picked someone who was handicapped, and they had picked someone who was homosexual.

You get the picture. They had put together this sort of rainbow delegation because they liked the fact that the United States stood for equality of opportunity, and that was human rights to them. But, suddenly, as the days grew shorter to the beginning of this six-week session of the Human Rights Commission, they realized they had some political issues, and really a delegation that didn't know how to work the UN as a political body. So they asked if as my last hurrah I would go and be the political adviser to Geraldine and the delegation, and I agreed. So we went off to Geneva for what was my last State Department assignment. While in Geneva, the United States was, of course, as it always is, working on several things at the same time. One of them was to be very actively involved in the organization of a new UN program that was to be called the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS.

The United States, of course, had fought hard to establish this organization. We, like many of our counterparts from Europe and Canada and other places, had felt that there was a growing AIDS crisis. I think, A, there was a growing crisis, B, the perception and the reality was that the UN wasn't taking it on very successfully, that the UN was very fragmented in its approach to this. UN agencies didn't coordinate their work, that at country level they often were either right on top of each other or leaving huge gaps. They never sat down together, so UNICEF didn't know what UNVP (United Nations Volunteer Programme) was doing, which didn't know what the World Health Organization was doing. It had been kind of relegated as a health issue, but it was becoming obvious it was more than just a health issue. And, of course, neither the United States nor these Western European countries wanted too much to take on AIDS as a bilateral issue, because it was so controversial.

It was thought to be mostly homosexually transmitted, it was all about public policy about private behaviors, and those are very difficult things for governments to deal with. I think 10 years later, nine years later, we still see some of these difficulties, this being the day after World AIDS Day, but we've come a long way, certainly. So, the United States had taken an active role in saying that there ought to be a new UN approach. It ought to be well financed and it ought to

deal with the developing world, and that it ought to do this not just from the perspective of the World Health Organization, but as a joint program of the UN. It had been agreed that this program would be established. Then the United States, as its wont, of course, decided that the candidate to run this, since it was going to have initially more American funds than funds from any other government – again, it was going to be at least 25 percent American, which at the time was the percentage we paid of all UN agencies, because we were thought to be 25 percent of the gross national product of the world. So, since we were going to be 25 percent paying for this thing, we wanted the leadership of this organization to be American, and had proposed a candidate, a qualified candidate who was at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. Suddenly the Europeans all got together, and they got together behind a different candidate. That candidate was a brilliant, young – in his early 40s, I guess – Belgian scientist and researcher and virologist and immunologist, who had discovered the Ebola virus in Africa, and who had done some of the first work on AIDS in Africa, proving conclusively that AIDS was not just a homosexual-transmitted disease, that AIDS was transmitted from a vehicle for transmission, usually sexual or blood or other means of transmission, bodily fluids, and it found a happy receptor in whatever part of the body it happened to go.

Therefore, he was beginning to see as early as the late '80s that in Africa it was not a homosexual disease, it was a heterosexual disease. So he had a lot more prominence, and he was already at the World Health Organization, working on the Global Program on AIDS, and so he got the job. The United States eventually supported his election, and this was all done via a new governing body that was set up to run this new organization. The United States was one member and I think there were 17 or 18 or 20 international members from the developing world and from the donor community.

So since we weren't going to have the director role, we decided that it would be nice to have an American deputy director, and I just sort of floated on the scene at that moment. Someone who obviously had worked for a long time with the U.S. government, who had some UN experience, who had a lot of developing country experience, who had no particular public health experience. So the U.S. ambassador in Geneva, Dan Spiegel, a Clinton appointee who had been very involved in setting up this new organization, arranged a meeting between me and Peter Piot, the Belgian who had been selected to run UNAIDS. He offered me the job as the director for external relations. I later became the deputy director, but this was to be one of the three or four senior positions in the organization.

It didn't happen quite so easily. First, because I was not USAID's candidate. Since they were going to put in the $15 million that we were going to pledge as an initial contribution, they wanted to it to be somebody who came out of USAID, and that was not me. Secondly, my husband was still alive and he looked at Geneva and said, "You know what? I don't think after Trinidad I'm not so sure I want to be in cold and gray and dark Geneva, and besides," he said, "I know you. You'll work 14 hours a day and you'll travel 50 percent of the time." Because this is not only AIDS, which we could see was going to be galloping along. This agency was not going to be out of business in six months when we had discovered how to handle the AIDS crisis. It was also this whole ambitious task of going about doing the UN's work in a very different way. So I think he was very clear about seeing this for what it was, that this was going to be an incredible challenge, and said, "If you want to do that, great, fine, do it, but I'm not going to stay

in Geneva, I'm going to go to Mexico and sort of pick up my business and my life. And when you can get to Mexico, great."

I thought about that long and hard. I had sacrificed a lot of things also to make this marriage work and so on, and so I turned the offer down and we went to Mexico. About a month after that, my husband died of a heart attack, very suddenly. This was within three weeks of my retiring from the State Department, so it was a very tough period of time. I didn't know what I was going to do, but it certainly didn't occur to me to go back and try to rethink some of these things. Anyway, making a very long story short, about six months went by. Meanwhile, Peter Piot had rejected all of these AID candidates who had been presented as possible deputy directors, because he just didn't feel it was the right mix. He just didn't feel they were the right people.

Along about August, he was visiting Washington, and they were kind of on his case about why he hadn't picked anybody, and he said, "Well, the only person I've interviewed for the job that I thought was the right person was Sally Cowal, and she turned it down." The person he was talking to said, "Well, a lot of things have happened in her life. Maybe you ought to try to get in touch with her again." By then, AID was convinced that they were not going to be able to provide the candidate, so he got in touch with me again. By then I was sort of over the shock, and I was absolutely ready for a challenge, to go and live in a different place and to do something different and to pick up a very active professional career again. So I went to Geneva for a week and looked around. I decided that it would be a challenge and an exciting thing to be a part of this new agency, which hadn't yet started – 1995 was its planning year, and it was due to start work on January 1st, 1996.

In October I accepted the job and moved to Geneva in November of 1995. My late husband was exactly right. I worked 14 hours a day and I traveled 50 percent of the time. The difference was, I didn't feel torn about this. That was exactly what I wanted to be doing, was immersing myself in a global issue and in a crisis. My own thought, as I got more mature in my State Department days, was that the world had changed a lot since I had begun. After all, you and I, Stu, are of the same generation. We began in the Cold War, and we knew where the enemy was and the enemy was the Soviet Union or it was Godless Communism, or it was a threat. I'm not a McCarthyist, but it was a threat to society and values as we saw them, and as I still believe them. I joined the State Department shortly after the assassination of Kennedy. I had been very moved and motivated by the Kennedy aura and mystique, so for years we ran in Latin America and other places on this.

This was a struggle against a country, or a group of countries – China, Russia. I came to believe, as the Berlin Wall fell and as the Soviet Union fell, that that was no longer the principal battle in the world. It was no longer Communism. That struggle had been won. The upcoming struggles were so much more for me multilateral in nature. You couldn't fight the drug problem alone, you couldn't fight the AIDS problem alone. There were a whole lot of things in the world that the United States could only do if it did it in conjunction with others. Until all of us are safe, none of us is safe. Certainly, I saw AIDS in that context. It was very interesting to me, because it was so many things. I don't think I would have gone to work for a program on tuberculosis, although I come to understand that it's also a huge challenge to human development and progress. But AIDS interested me because it was so economic and it was so political and we were losing

schoolteachers by the scores in places in Africa. Who would teach the children? So I was interested in this and interested in pursuing something at which we looked at things as countries together against poverty, disease, underdevelopment, all of the things which were part of this AIDS crisis. That's why I went to work for the UN Programme on HIV and AIDS, and it was a wonderful experience.

Q: You were doing that from when to when?

COWAL: Nineteen-ninety-five to 1999. So I spent a formative four years for the organization, and four years for myself, from when I was 50 until I was 54, still geared up. I think what we were able to do, really, in those years was to put AIDS on the political map, to overcome denial, which is what was happening in the developing world. They were denying that AIDS was a problem. And then overcome complacency, which was the issue in the United States and in Western Europe and in Japan. There had been this little blip on the radar screen 10 years earlier, when we first heard about HIV. It seemed like it was going to be on everybody's doorstep, and then it became fairly obvious it wasn't going to be on everybody's doorstep. We all went back to sleep. Not quite, but, I mean, there was a lot of complacency and a lot of denial.

I think that at UNAIDS we got the world together behind a common set of statistics. You see them again. They just came out for this World AIDS Day. 40 million people are infected and 3 million people died last year. At that time, there were no agreed-upon set of statistics. There was no agreed-upon approach. There was no treatment, of course, at that point. What was good prevention? Well, important to prevention, we began to discover, more important maybe than anything else, was political commitment: leaders of a country and business leaders and political leaders had to be open about this. They had to acknowledge it, they had to put funds for it. They had to work with groups who were clearly the sort of drivers of the epidemic, but were not normally parts of society – stigmatized communities, such as homosexuals and commercial sex workers and drug users. It's very hard for governments to get their hands around. Will they work with them? Do they run into all kinds of political opposition if they try to work with them? If they decide to work with them, how will they do that?

My job was director of external relations. At first we thought that was just raising the funds for this organization and sort of having a little press campaign which said, "Oh, there is a new agency out there and it's called UNAIDS, and here's what it does." It became obvious that really this was all about getting the political commitment necessary to really address this, with the money needed and with the political will needed, and doing things like getting it on the agenda of the UN Security Council. There had never been a disease taken up by the Security Council before, but getting Al Gore to go and sit in the U.S. chair for this debate at the Security Council, to make it part of the agenda when President Bush goes to Africa to visit, to talk about AIDS. Clinton went to Africa twice and never talked about AIDS, and so we made U.S. ambassadors aware of it. We made it part of this agenda, and I think that was an important contribution to making the world ready to deal with an unprecedented epidemic.

Q: How did you find the response of the ambassadorial or diplomatic services of Western Europe and the United States and Japan and all that?

COWAL: Well, it was very difficult to penetrate, and I think the fact that I came from that world helped a lot. I used to say I was the non-lawyer in the law firm. Pretty much everybody else in this organization was a public health physician, and damn good ones, some of the best in the world. Peter, who still heads it, is brilliant and actually is a pretty savvy politician, but was not a diplomat. The person who headed our clinical studies was a Senegalese physician and public health person and very knowledgeable. And the person who headed our country programs was an Australian physician and public health physician, worked with aboriginal communities, was a wonderful guy. They were all wonderful doctors, but they didn't necessarily know how to either work the UN or work the foreign ministries of these countries of Japan and of Western Europe. I think that was something that I was able to do, because I had not only been in the U.S. diplomatic service for so long, but having had these stints in sort of the multilateral organizations, I just knew a lot about it. I think it added a strength.

Here we are now, 10 years later, and I'm in a public health organization. To me, it added a whole dimension about international relations, international public health, that I had only had a very distant relationship with in the past. I felt it was a wonderful opportunity to learn something. It also showed how difficult it was to work in the UN system. It remains difficult. I think it's improved somewhat over the last decade, but it's still a pretty difficult environment. We used to joke in UNAIDS that we didn't know if the behavior change we needed to bring about to make the world safe from AIDS, or the behavior change to get the UN to work together was more difficult, but they were both extremely difficult.

Q: Was the problem AIDS itself? Because when you say AIDS, you're talking about sex, or was it just that this was something new?

COWAL: Well, I think it was all those things. It's basically public policy about private behaviors. It's what people do when they're in their own bedrooms or when they're shooting drugs in their own back alleys. These are very difficult things for governments to come to grips with.

End of reader